

STRATEGIC PLAN

2017-2021



Our Vision

All students graduate ready for college and careers, and prepared to be productive citizens of Colorado.

Our Mission

Ensuring equity and opportunity for every student, every step of the way.



COLORADO
Department of Education

Our Values

ALL STUDENTS

COLLABORATION

COMMUNICATION

CUSTOMER SERVICE

HONESTY

INNOVATION

INTEGRITY

RESPECT

TRANSPARENCY

TRUST



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GOALS



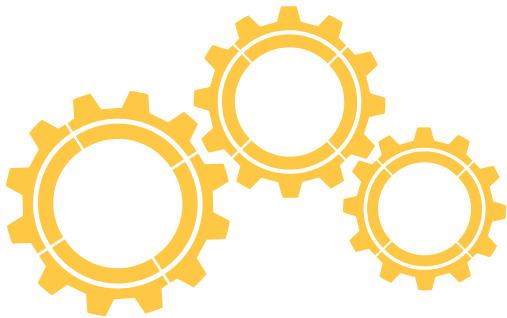
88%

of students will be reading by the end of third grade.



80%

of schools needing support and academic improvement will raise and maintain their performance.



66%

of students in the class of 2021 will earn a postsecondary credential, certificate, degree or diploma.



20%

more historically underserved students will achieve academic expectations.

KEY INITIATIVES



Support High Quality Early Learning and Literacy for All Students



Expand High School Options to Ensure All Students are Ready for College and/or Living-Wage Jobs



Expand Access and Opportunity for Historically Underserved Students



Prioritize and Maximize Support for Schools and Districts Identified for Academic Improvements



Develop a Strong Pipeline of High-Quality Teachers and Principals and Provide Deeper Support for School and District Leaders

Guiding Principles

- Equity and Access for All
- Flexibility, Choice and Innovation
- Continuous Improvement/ Building District Capacity
- Collaboration and Partnership to Decrease Negative Effects of Poverty on Learning



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Underpinning our success with each of our key initiatives will be our commitment to excellence with each of our core programs and operations. By holding ourselves to the highest degree of excellence in customer service and performance, we will effectively implement our key initiatives and accomplish our goals.



Support High Quality Early Learning and Literacy for All Students

Research shows that proficiency in reading by the end of third grade enables students to shift from learning how to read to using reading skills to master the more complex subjects in fourth grade and beyond. In fact, students who cannot read by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school. By focusing on support for our youngest students and their educators, the department can ensure more students are reading at grade level by the end of third grade and build a strong foundation for continued success in school.

Strategic Activities

We will promote high-quality, evidence-based early learning and literacy strategies.

- Support effective instruction and intervention for all students
- Increase quality preschool programming
- Coordinate CDE’s improvement planning for preschool through third-grade programming and services
- Maximize and align local, state and federal funds to increase effectiveness and value

We will expand professional training and ongoing development of our preschool through third-grade educators.

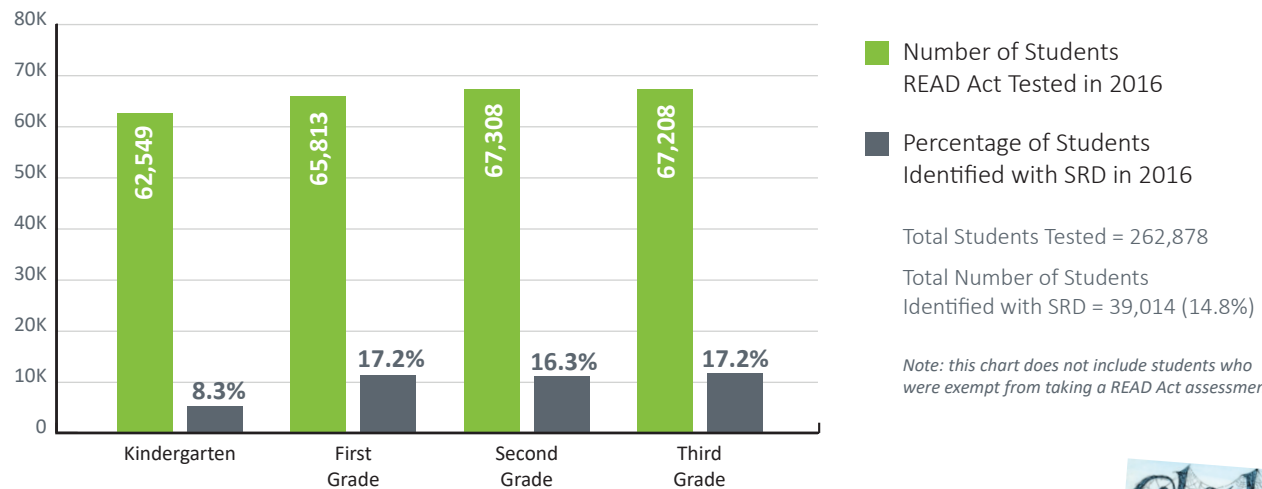
- Support evidence-based, ongoing professional development
- Align higher education programming with teacher competencies and professional learning in schools and districts

We will strengthen partnerships with state and local agencies, communities and libraries to support early learning and literacy in preschool through third grade.

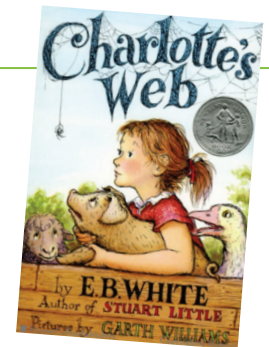
- Engage and maximize Family, School and Community Partnering program
- Partner with community and state resources to ensure needs are met among special populations, including students with disabilities, English learners, students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, migrant students and others

Prevalence of Significant Reading Deficiencies (SRD) in Colorado

Comparison of students identified as having an SRD by grade level as reported in the 2016 collection



The above data suggests that 17.2 percent of third graders cannot read *Charlotte's Web**. What seems like the most basic step in a child's education – the ability to read – is actually the foundation of a child's success. Therefore, a student who struggles to read must have every opportunity to strengthen and gain essential skills in reading before entering fourth grade to better ensure a successful future.



What Progress Looks Like in 2021

- 3% annual reduction in the number of kindergarten through third-grade students who are identified as having a Significant Reading Deficiency
- 10% increase annually in the number of early childhood settings rated as high quality by Colorado Shines Quality Rating Improvement System
- 3% increase annually in the number of students who are proficient in at least five of six areas measured by the Kindergarten Entry Assessment
- 3% increase annually in the number of 4-year-olds in the Colorado Preschool Program who meet expectations for literacy and math as measured by Results Matter assessments
- 5% increase annually in number of children completing summer learning programs in public libraries as measured by end of session reports to the State Library

*Charlotte's Web was written by E. B. White and is published by HarperCollins.



Expand High School Options to Ensure All Students Are Ready for College and/or Living-Wage Jobs

Students who graduate and work in Colorado need in-demand skills that meet business, industry and higher education standards. By 2020, three out of four jobs in Colorado will require education or training beyond high school. That adds up to three million jobs.

Already, Colorado employers cannot find enough workers to fill jobs in critical science-based industries such as health, technology and manufacturing. By increasing options for high school students and fostering expansion of successful high school models, we can ensure that students don't get left behind in Colorado's modern and ever-changing economy.

Strategic Activities

We will increase awareness and availability of public school choice options designed to support students who are at risk of not graduating.

- Expand options for more Colorado students to attain a high school credential

We will help school districts implement rigorous and useful Graduation Guidelines.

- Support community implementation strategies and expansion of options, such as apprenticeships and industry credentials

We will foster expansion of innovative models and promising practices that are making a difference.

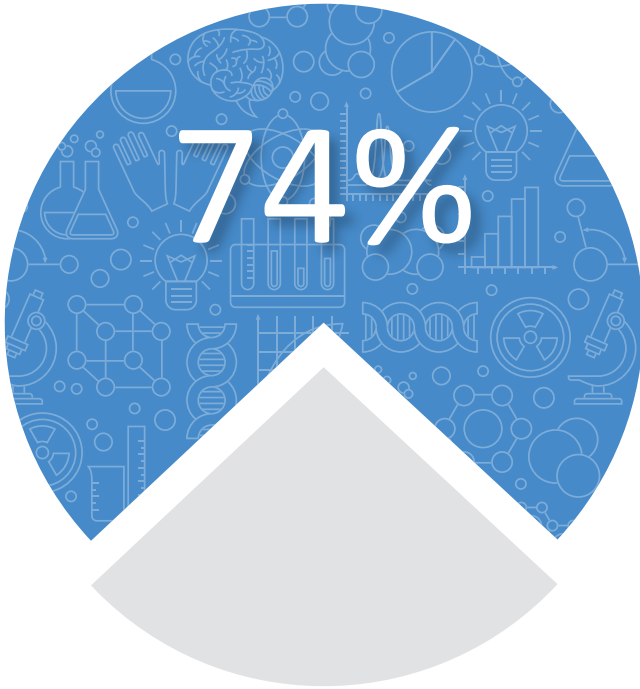
- Identify noteworthy gains in high school completion as well as college- and workforce-readiness outcomes for students
- Bring innovative practices to scale for the benefit of more students statewide

We will promote Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP) as a tool to help students complete high school and plan for their futures.

- Leverage the ICAP process to increase students' awareness of seamless pathways and opportunities beyond high school
- Equip all educators to have meaningful career conversations with students

We will engage community partners as an effective resource for getting students to the finish line and planning for their futures.

- Expand work-based learning opportunities to help students prepare for living-wage, in-demand jobs
- Assist educators in building effective partnerships with business, based on existing infrastructures
- Collaborate with other state agencies, libraries, area workforce development boards and community partners to meet students' needs, including participating in Two-Generation programs that meet the workforce training needs of students and their caregivers simultaneously



In 2020, 74% of all jobs in Colorado
3 MILLION JOBS
WILL REQUIRE
EDUCATION BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL

In 2020, new Colorado jobs requiring postsecondary education or training will grow by 716,000, compared to only 268,000 new jobs for high school graduates who have no additional training. Yet in Colorado only 85 percent of Colorado high school students are graduating within six years and 2,500 students are attaining an industry credential while still in high school. More options in high school, including internships and industry credential programs, will ensure that more students graduate and are prepared for in-demand jobs and/or additional postsecondary education.

What Progress Looks Like in 2021

- 90% of all students will complete a high school credential within six years
- 95% of all students will be making progress toward a high school credential
- 100% increase in the number of high school students attaining an industry credential by 2021
- 100% of school districts will have at least three pathways or options for students by 2021
- 50% of all students will earn college credit in high school



Expand Access and Opportunity for Historically Underserved Students

In Colorado, students from a number of historically underserved backgrounds – specifically those from economically challenged communities, racial minority groups and students with disabilities – continue to fall short of their academic potential and are missing the skill sets to compete with their middle-class peers. By concentrating on equity as a foundational construct of our work at CDE, we will empower schools and districts in their efforts to increase access and opportunity and ultimately reduce the pervasive influence that systemic inequities have on student outcomes.

Strategic Activities

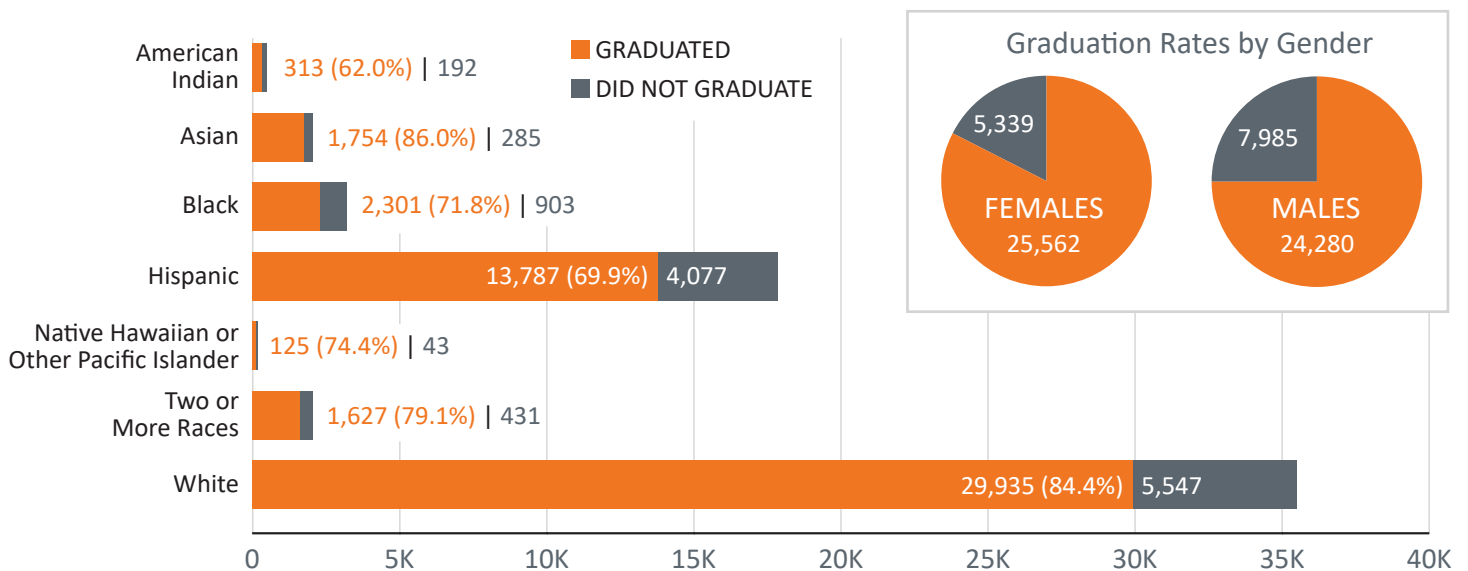
We will establish a Strategic Equity Team within CDE to align data, projects, systems, practices and programs and develop an Opportunity Plan to facilitate closing the opportunity and achievement gaps across Colorado.

- Develop an Internal Opportunity Plan to increase CDE staff's understanding of and expertise in addressing equity by closing opportunity gaps
- Inform the larger community about CDE's Opportunity Plan
- Foster the development of community-based approaches for delivering services that will decrease opportunity gaps

We will identify and engage external partners that will work collaboratively with CDE to address issues of equity, access and opportunity.

- Collaborate with key stakeholders to host, organize and execute special events, joint ventures and activities that increase awareness and promote action around reducing opportunity and achievement gaps throughout the state
- Help establish community-wide practices that address issues of equity in educational settings as well as other arenas that impact the experiences of all learners
- Establish a pilot program in two designated Colorado communities with local and state agencies, non-profits, libraries and other partners

Graduation Rates by Ethnicity and Race - 2015-16



Although the graduation gap between minority students and white students has narrowed for six consecutive years, a startling disparity continues to exist. Similarly large and pervasive gaps can also be seen through state assessment scores for third through 11th-grade students. Despite focused efforts in the education community to improve outcomes for underserved students, the impact of poverty is still too prevalent. Working in partnership with communities and other state agencies may be the best bet for reducing the impact of poverty on student achievement.

What Progress Looks Like in 2021

- 25% decrease in state-reported exclusionary disciplinary actions involving underserved students
- 35% of students with IEPs who spend the majority of their time in general education settings will show high growth on the state assessment
- 50% of underserved students will complete an AP course or obtain college credit while still in high school
- 3% gap between low-income and minority students who are taught by ineffective teachers compared with their more affluent white peers



Prioritize and Maximize Support for Schools and Districts with Struggling Students

Schools and districts that are identified for improvement through the state and federal accountability systems all have different needs based on the context in their communities. By working with each district and school to understand their needs and invest in strategies to be successful, we will help them progressively improve and maintain their improvement on the state performance frameworks, which ultimately reflect whether students are being prepared for college or careers.

Strategic Activities

We will strategically allocate both human and financial resources to maximize impact for schools and districts needing improvement.

- Organize and prioritize CDE support by using four guiding principals: positive culture, instructional transformation, strong leadership and talent development
- Determine staff and financial resources that can be leveraged to support schools and districts needing improvement

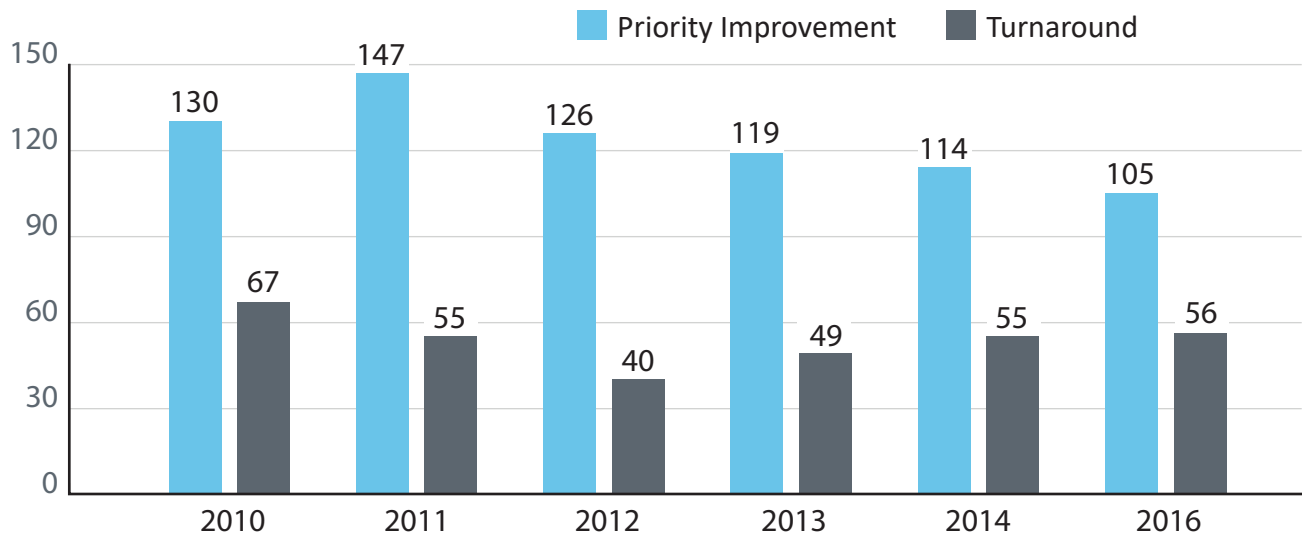
We will develop and promote a single menu of all CDE supports and interventions for districts and schools needing improvement.

- Clearly articulate the support and services available through CDE in a “menu”
- Create a single application for districts to match unique local needs with state and federal resources

We will evaluate the effectiveness of our support for districts and schools and make adjustments needed to increase students’ academic outcomes.

- Monitor the impact of each support on student outcomes
- Use impact data to drive the strategic allocation of school improvement resources

Colorado Schools with the Lowest Ratings in 2016



Each of the 161 schools in the Priority Improvement and Turnaround categories, the lowest two categories in the state’s accountability system, have different challenges to overcome in order to increase their students’ academic performance. Through grants and support programs, individual schools identified have made progress since 2010. Additional focus and clarity around support available for schools currently identified will increase the academic performance for 80,462 students.

What Progress Looks Like in 2021

- 65% of the approximately 170* schools with the lowest two ratings (Priority Improvement or Turnaround) on the state’s accountability system in 2017 will improve to earn a satisfactory rating or higher rating (Improvement or Performance) and will sustain that rating for at least three years
- 80% of districts with eligible schools will apply for support and/or funding through the new single application
- 100% of improvement plans for identified schools and districts will meet quality criteria and evidence-based strategies after working with CDE

** This number will change with final ratings in December 2017.*



Develop a strong pipeline of high-quality teachers and principals and provide deeper support for school and district leaders

Research shows that teachers have a bigger impact on student performance than any other school-based factor. And the number one reason teachers leave is lack of support by a high-quality principal. We can learn from the workforce development approaches of public and private industries that focus on growing talent in a strategic and intentional way by recruiting, developing and supporting their workforce. By developing, deploying and supporting talent management and human capital development strategies for districts and schools, we can ensure that every classroom has an effective educator and all students are prepared for college, career and life.

Strategic Activities

We will create high-quality educator preparation programs.

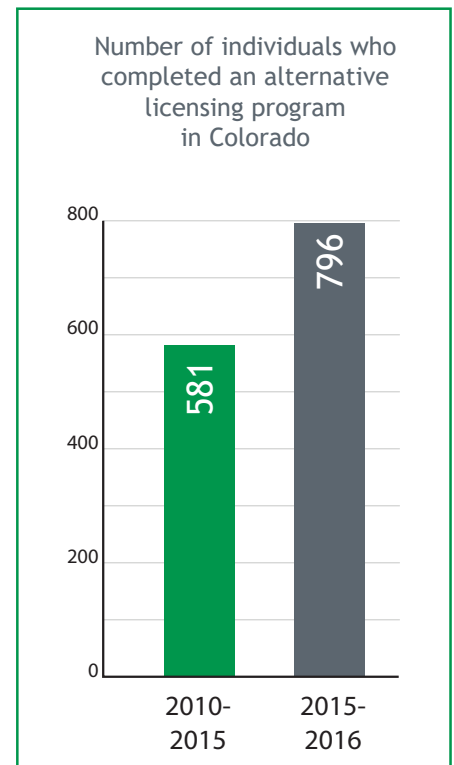
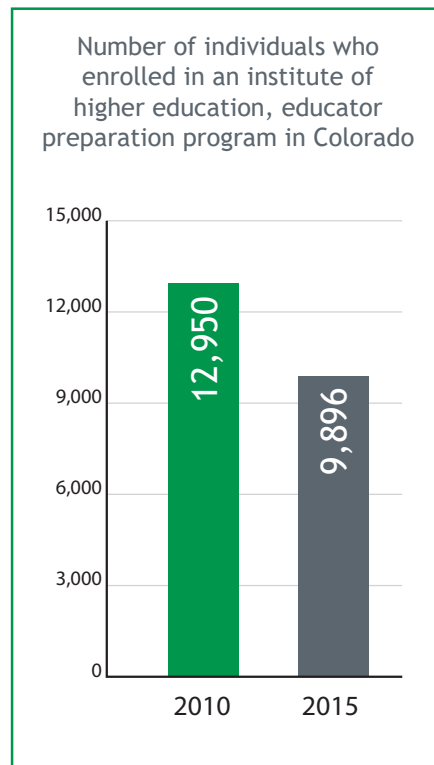
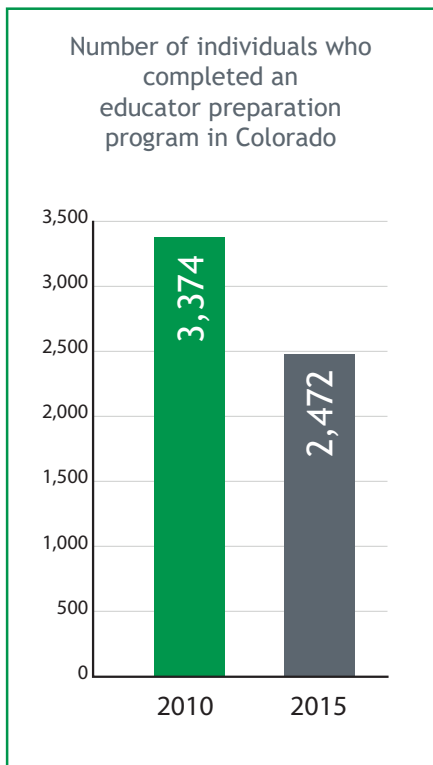
- Conduct a strategic analysis of educator preparation program rules, support and business practices involving educators in hard-to-fill content areas
- Complete necessary revisions with Educator Preparation Programs and CDE licensing

We will strategically improve support to future and current educators and expand quality educator pipelines.

- Expand the CDE Educator Talent division to focus on educator recruitment, development and career counseling within districts, communities, businesses and educator preparation entities
- Reposition licensing evaluators and call center representatives to improve customer service to educators through one-on-one licensing consultations and more proactive outreach

We will deepen our support for principals as they work to hire, develop and retain high-quality teachers to provide the highest outcomes for students.

- Facilitate collaboration with teacher-leaders, principals and principal-managers to focus on support for teachers, workforce development solutions for school improvement, turnaround strategies and cultural diversity
- Support principals' efforts to develop their workforce through implementation of educator effectiveness laws and human capital strategic systems



Colorado has approximately 3,000 to 3,500 annual openings across districts; normally, these positions are filled by teachers changing districts and students graduating from educator preparation programs at colleges and universities or professionals who have completed an alternative license program. With the 22.7 percent decline in individuals completing an educator preparation program in Colorado since 2010, some of these open positions – especially in rural areas – end up going completely unfilled during the year.

What Progress Looks Like in 2021

- 18% increase in initial educator licenses, including:
 - 6% increase in diverse educators
 - 15% increase in educators endorsed in high-need content areas
- 2% decrease in the turnover rate of teachers statewide



Organizational Excellence

By committing to excellence in our core programs and functions, we can support each of our key initiatives and ultimately accomplish our goals. Several teams within the department are responsible for essential programmatic and operational functions that allow the department to achieve our broader goals. These teams include School Finance, Human Resources, Accountability and Improvement, Standards and Assessments, Educator Talent, Communications and Information Management Services.

Key Services

Distribute funding to school districts

Districts rely on CDE to allocate funds as part of its implementation of the School Finance Act and federal grant programs. Because district budgets depend on these funds, it is imperative these allocations are made with accuracy and efficiency. As such, the distribution of funding to school districts is a foundational function of CDE and helps to ensure that the department can achieve its key initiatives and broader goals.

Strategic Operation

We will accurately and efficiently distribute federal grant funds to Colorado districts.

Metric

- 100% of the distributions by line item, per cycle will be error-free by 2021. This metric reflects an average of 4,000 payments made each quarter.

Appropriately classify and compensate CDE employees.

Human Resources is a strategic partner within CDE that works to develop, implement and support programs and processes that add value for CDE employees. The services and supports provided by HR are designed to optimize employee empowerment, mutual trust, growth, learning, retention, diversity and accountability and create an overall great place to work! To recruit and retain quality employees, HR must ensure all CDE staff are appropriately classified and compensated. In turn, this will enable quality customer service and support for school districts.

Strategic Operation

- We will review jobs and wages annually to ensure compliance with state law, findings from the comprehensive job analysis and the department's salary schedule.

Metrics

- CDE will implement its compensation analysis for 100% of its positions.
- CDE will complete a job analysis for all CDE positions and apply appropriate classifications by 2018.

Successfully Administer State Assessments to Measure Mastery of Colorado Academic Standards

The Standards and Instructional Supports team helps districts implement the Colorado Academic Standards for preschool through 12th grade. Colorado's state assessments provide critical data and feedback to determine whether educational goals are being met. CDE is responsible for administering these assessments and any subsequent changes approved by the legislature and State Board of Education.

Strategic Operation

We will successfully administer the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) and the SAT suite of assessments to Colorado students in a timely manner.

- Implement a new assessment contract required by state law due to the expiration of the state's science and social studies assessment contract in 2018.
- Implement assessments for math and English Language Arts (ELA) that result in reduced operational testing time for students and turnaround of individual student results within 30 days of receipt of all assessments at the direction of the State Board of Education.
- Review all of the CMAS assessments following the adoption of the revised standards in summer 2018.

Metrics

- 100% of state assessments will be fully developed and available for administration on the scheduled assessment date.

Create and Disseminate Academic Performance Reports

Creating and disseminating academic performance reports, including the growth summary reports and the school and district performance framework reports, are key components to providing public transparency around academic outcomes and identifying which schools and districts most need support. The work of the Assessment Unit, the Information Management Services Unit and the Accountability and Data Analysis Unit is crucial in being able to provide these reports in a timely and accurate manner.

Strategic Operations

We will provide meaningful performance data to schools, districts and the public.

- Ensure accuracy and timeliness in the school and district performance frameworks.
- Ensure accuracy and timeliness of student growth reports.

Metrics

- 100% of district and school performance frameworks will be produced error-free.
- 100% of student growth reports will be produced error-free.

Key Services Cont.

Efficiently Process Educator License Applications

The Educator Talent Unit is responsible for the regulation, support, and development of educator quality and talent, including activities related to educator licensure. For the department to meet its key initiatives and broader goals, Colorado must have a strong pool of qualified, licensed professional educators to work in our schools and support student achievement. The licensing process must be efficient to make sure these educators are available to schools in a timely manner. With this in mind, the Educator Talent Unit strives to continually decrease the amount of time it takes to process educator licenses.

Strategic Operation

- We will decrease the average cycle time between receiving an educator's completed application and issuing their license.

Metric

- Decrease the average cycle time – from receipt of a completed application and cleared fingerprint report to a PDF license sent via email – from 30.2 business days to 10 business days.

Provide secure technology, applications and information to CDE staff and school district employees

CDE's Information Management Services Unit (IMS) supports the department and Colorado school districts through multiple services, including: providing network and Help Desk services; overseeing data collection, management and reporting; delivering project management; and ensuring information privacy and security. It is essential that the IMS teams provide secure tools for everyday use across CDE, while at the same time ensuring that technology can be used in a manner that reduces burden on school and district personnel.

Strategic Operation

We will help protect state systems and sensitive information by educating CDE employees on how to identify and avoid IT security risks and threats.

- Ensure employee participation in short, web-based cyber security lessons.

Metric

- 100% of full-time employees will participate in up-to-date training on an annual basis.

Support implementation of existing and new legislation, rules and regulations

Staff across the department are responsible for implementing new and existing legislation effectively and efficiently. In carrying out our duties prescribed by federal and state laws, the department collaborates across units to address challenges proactively and in a manner that does not create unnecessary burden for districts, teachers or other stakeholders. We work to meet the intent of the legislation and strive to optimize resources.

Strategic Operation

We will build awareness and understanding of the requirements of the law among district staff and educators.

- Implement comprehensive strategies for communicating about the law to district staff, educators and other key stakeholders.
- Provide support to help districts implement laws, including training and templates as well as ideas for maximizing the intended outcomes of the law while decreasing burden of implementation.

Metric

- Hold five staff trainings per year related to effective communication.