Strategic Policy Initiatives

The Department of Education has identified several strategic policy initiatives for FY 2016-17 and beyond. For this performance evaluation, the Department has updated progress on the initiatives identified in the FY2017 Performance Plan that capture the Department's strategic and operational priorities, and reflect the overall direction as identified by Department leadership. The updates reflect data as of June 30, 2017.

Additional detail for these, and other, strategic policy initiatives is available in the Department's Performance Plan, which may be accessed here.

Goal 1: Start Strong. Every student starts strong with a solid foundation in grades preschool-3.
Increase the school readiness of our youngest learners by increasing the percentage of four-year-olds served by the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) meeting age expectations in literacy and math by 4 percentage points in 2017 and by 6 percentage points in 2019. Primary strategies to reach this goal are:
- Incentivize and support state-funded preschool sites to pursue a higher quality rating
- Support family engagement by providing professional development to state-funded preschool programs
- Provide professional development resources to early childhood educators to support high quality instruction

Goal 2: Read at grade level by the end of third grade. Every student reads at grade level by the end of third grade.
Ensure every student reaches benchmark in reading by third grade by increasing achievement on the state assessment. Previously, the Department has set a goal to increase third grade reading proficiency on TCAP from 74% in 2013 to 80% in 2016, with the goal of nearly 85% proficient by 2018. With the new state assessment, the Department aims to increase the number of third graders scoring at benchmark on the English Language Arts assessment by 2% in 2017 and by 6% by 2019. Primary strategies to reach this goal are:
- Provide resources and professional development to improve universal instruction by those who serve K-3 students
- Provide resources focused on students with disabilities

Goal 3: Meet or exceed standards. Every student meets or exceeds standards.
Ensure that all students meet or exceed benchmarks in state summative assessments by increasing the percentage of students scoring at benchmark or above in English language arts, mathematics and science by 2% in 2017 and 6% by 2019. Primary strategies to reach this goal are:
- Ensure all technical assistance, outreach and other support offered through CDE includes a focus on the importance of demonstrating high expectations for all students, and provide examples and resources of how this expectation would manifest in schools and classrooms;
- Provide resources and technical assistance to advance teacher knowledge and skills in standards-based instruction;
- Provide resources and technical assistance to advance teacher knowledge and skills in using student data;
- Provide resources and technical assistance to advance principal knowledge and skills in advancing quality instructional practice; and
- Provide targeted technical assistance to Priority Improvement and Turnaround Schools

Goal 4: Graduate Ready. Every student graduates ready for college and careers.
Ensure every student graduates college and career ready by increasing the graduation rate to 84.1% in 2016 with the goal of 87.2% by 2018. Primary strategies to reach this goal are:

- Graduate
    - Create a framework that defines characteristics of effective Alternative Education Campus (AEC) systems
    - Increase use of effective Early Warning Systems (EWS) in secondary schools (6-12)
    - Increase use of effective interventions in non-AEC secondary (6-12) schools
- Graduate Ready
    - Increase number of districts that have diploma policies relevant in terms of 21st century skills, postsecondary and workforce readiness
    - Ensure Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAPs) are being used effectively
    - Provide tools to help districts evaluate their programs against their diploma policies

Operational Measures

School Finance – **The School Finance Program area is responsible for allocating funds and monitoring costs of providing public education. The units in this program area provide coordinated, quality and efficient supports for funding and infrastructure to districts and schools.**

Process – Federal grant fund distributions

Measure	FY13 Actual	FY14 Actual	FY15 Actual	FY16 Actual	Q1 FY17	Q2 FY17	Q3 FY17	Q4 FY17	1-Year Goal	3-Year Goal
Percentage of error-free distribution, by line item, per cycle	N/A	99.8%	99.9%	99.9%	99.8%	99.9%	100%	99.9%	100%	100%

Colorado districts receive money from multiple sources including federal grants. It is essential that these grant funds are distributed in an accurate and timely manner to districts so they may use them to achieve their goals. The Q1 data reflect the accuracy level of 2,660 payments. The Q2 data reflect the accuracy level of 4,142 payments. The Q3 data reflect the accuracy level of 4,148 payments. The Q4 data reflect the accuracy level of 3,758 payments.

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Standards, Assessments, and Learning Supports – **This major program area refers to instructional supports for students from preschool through twelfth grade, including design and implementation of the Colorado Academic Standards and Colorado English Language Proficiency Standards and the assessments aligned to those standards.**

Process – Implementation of Early Literacy Assessment Tool program to reduce students identified as having a significant reading deficiency

Measure	FY13 Actual	FY14 Actual	FY15 Actual	FY16 Actual	Q1 FY17	Q2 FY17	Q3 FY17	Q4 FY17	1-Year Goal	3-Year Goal
Reduce the percentage of students scoring at the well below benchmark level (significant reading deficiency) from beginning of the year to end of the year	N/A	12.0%	44.0%	44.0%	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	23.0%	41%	15%	15%

This measure reflects the implementation of the Assessment Literacy Tool in select schools. As part of this program, CDE has set a goal of reducing the number of student identified as having significant reading deficiencies at the start of the school year by 15 percent (performance indicator measure specified within vendor contract) when assessed at the end of the school year. Data is measured twice a year, based on the reduction from the beginning of the school year to the middle of the school year and again from the beginning of the school year to the end of the school year. Q3 data reflects the reduction from the beginning of the school year to the middle of the school year. Q4 data reflects the reduction from the beginning of the school year to the end of the school year.

Educator Effectiveness – **This major program area comprises all sub-programs and projects connected to the licensure, support, evaluation and development of educators.**

Process – Licensure approval

Measure	FY13 Actual	FY14 Actual	FY15 Actual	FY16 Actual	Q1 FY17	Q2 FY17	Q3 FY17	Q4 FY17	1-Year Goal	3-Year Goal
Average cycle time, in days, from receipt of application and cleared fingerprint report to PDF license is sent via email	42	21	14	30.2	35	10	14	9.79	14	14

Colorado needs to have a pool of qualified, licensed professionals to work in our schools and support student achievement. It is essential that the process by which potential educators are licensed and available for hire into Colorado schools be efficient in order to make sure these educators are available to schools. The FY16 increase in the number of days in the average cycle time resulted from changes to the electronic system which caused unanticipated downtimes and delays as bugs were worked out. We returned closer to our FY 15 average of 14 days by June 2017.

Accountability, Improvement, Innovation, and Choice – **The purpose of this program area is to: establish standards, expectations, and criteria for school and district performance; assess school and district performance against those standards; and utilize that information to identify and support schools districts that are struggling to meet the state's student performance goals. The goal is to foster and implement the conditions and policies which will allow for quick and dramatic improvements in student learning and services.**

Process – Creation and dissemination of District and School Performance Frameworks

Measure	FY13 Actual	FY14 Actual	FY15 Actual	FY16 Actual	Q1 FY17	Q2 FY17	Q3 FY17	Q4 FY17	1-Year Goal	3-Year Goal
Percent of error-free District and School Performance Frameworks produced per annual cycle	100%	100%	Unavailable*	100%	Data gathered annually	Data gathered annually	Data gathered annually	Not yet available	100%	100%

The data in District and School Performance Frameworks are used by the state for district accreditation and by the districts and schools to evaluate their own performance and target areas for improvement. For this reason, it is essential these reports be error-free.
* Data for 2015 is not applicable due to a change in assessment systems and legislation requiring that CDE not assign accreditation ratings for school districts and the Charter School Institute in the 2015-16 school year.

Information and Communication – **This program area comprises all work related to collecting and providing data and information on the Colorado education system.**

Process – Creation and dissemination of student growth reports

Measure	FY13 Actual	FY14 Actual	FY15 Actual	FY16 Actual	Q1 FY17	Q2 FY17	Q3 FY17	Q4 FY17	1-Year Goal	3-Year Goal
Percentage of error-free student growth reports produced per cycle	100%	100%	Unavailable**	Unavailable**	Data gathered annually	Data gathered annually	Data gathered annually	Not yet available	100%	100%

As with the data in the District and School Performance Frameworks, student growth data are used by districts and schools to evaluate their own performance and target areas for improvement. For this reason, it is essential these reports be error-free.** Data for 2015 are not applicable. Due to a change in assessment systems, growth was not reported for 2015. Similarly, individual student reports weren't released in 2016 due to report redesign work. Student level reports will be released again during fall 2017.