COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STRATEGIC PLAN

2017-2022

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

ALL MEANS ALL

QUALITY SCHOOLS

MORE OPTIONS

EDUCATORS MATTER

COLORADO
Department of Education

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

CONTENT

KEY INITIATIVES
OVERVIEW

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

GOAL:

By the end of third grade, all students can read at grade level.

Support High Quality Early Learning and Literacy for All Students

ALL MEANS ALL

GOAL:

Regardless of demographics and learning needs, all students meet or exceed state academic standards.

Expand Access and Opportunity for Historically Underserved Students

QUALITY SCHOOLS

GOAL:

All students and families have access to quality schools that meet their students' needs.

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

MORE OPTIONS

GOAL:

Students graduate high school with knowledge, skills, and experience needed for career and college success.

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

EDUCATORS MATTER

GOAL:

High quality educators in every classroom; strong leaders in every building.

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

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.

Guiding Principles

The following principles guide us as we we undertake all of our work to implement state and federal laws and support districts, schools and teachers in Colorado.

- Equity and Access for All Students
- Flexibility, Choice and Innovation
- Continuous Improvement of Systems and Structures
- Collaboration and Partnership

Responding to the COVID-19 Crisis

The challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic have required a new focus on understanding and supporting the health and safety of our education communities, while also shifting how we support a quality education for all students. Communities and school districts across Colorado experienced the pandemic in a myriad of ways. For many, there was least some decrease in in-person learning and many transitions between learning modes during 2020-21, which may extend into 2021-22. Students face new risks related to loss of learning opportunities, social and emotional health, and access to social supports like nutrition and childcare. Since March 2020, CDE has invested significant time and resources to ensure schools have access to relief funding, meals, expanded broadband and other basic needs. CDE has also provided policy guidance and appropriate adjustments to support student instruction, health and wellness, student engagement, and equity for vulnerable populations. These new efforts do not alter CDE's long-term initiatives and goals, but have modified how certain strategies are being implemented.

The loss of 2019-20 data connected to state assessments, READ Act, and the preschool program child outcome system (Results Matter) as well as some 2020-21 data related to state assessments also means that CDE is missing some data needed to evaluate progress on some measures. These measures continue to be included in the strategic plan, as CDE intends to continue using the data when it again becomes available. Unfortunately, based on the realities of education during the pandemic, we anticipate performance on many of our metrics may decrease. When learning opportunity losses are better understood, we may need to add new strategies and adjust our targets to support students in the future.

Support High Quality Early Learning and Literacy for All Students

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

GOAL: By the end of third grade, all students can read at grade level.

Research shows that proficiency in reading by the end of third grade enables students to make the shift from learning how to read to using reading skills to master more complex subjects. 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 and develop high-quality, evidence-based early learning and literacy strategies.

- Support effective reading instruction and intervention for all students by providing multiple pathways for K - 3 teachers to meet the evidence-based training requirement in S.B.19-199, including providing no-cost options
- Support local education providers in implementing quality inclusive preschool and assist them in developing strategies for multiple mixed-delivery options
- Collaborate with the Colorado Department of Higher Education and institutions of higher education to review and support implementation of evidence-based reading instruction in teacher preparation programs
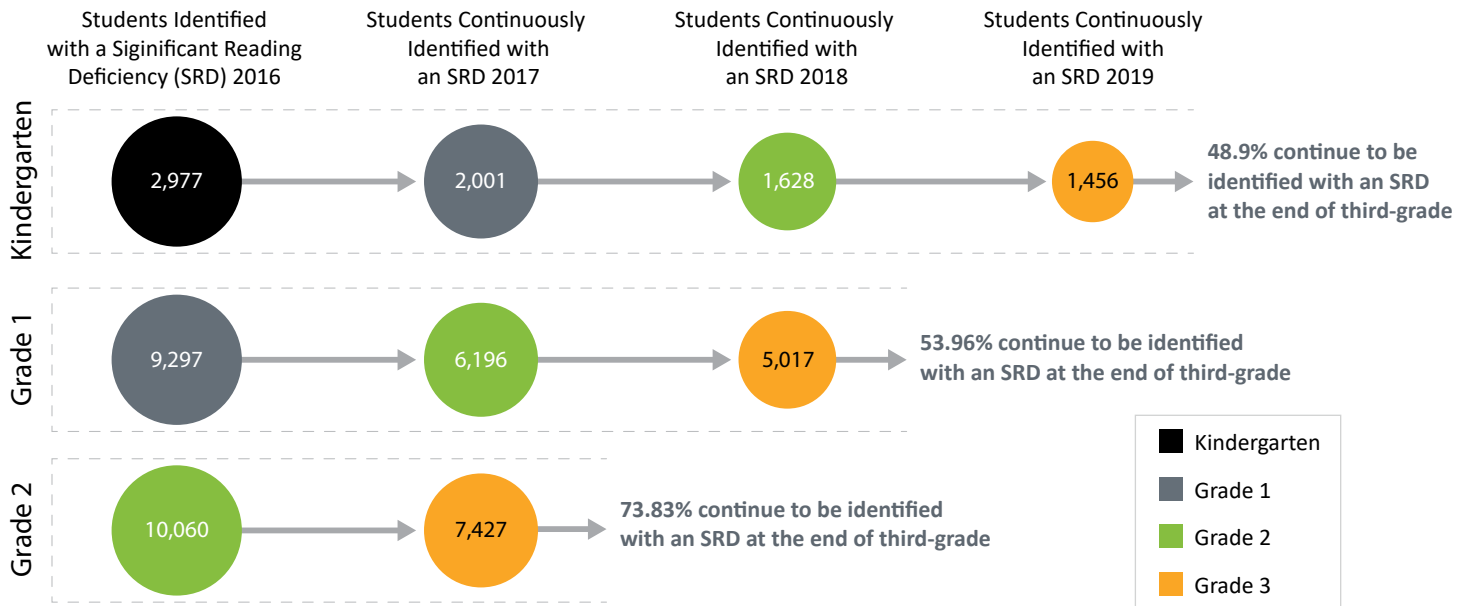
We will strengthen partnerships with the Colorado Department of Human Services as well as other state and local agencies, communities and libraries to support early learning and literacy in preschool through third grade.

- Support efforts to collaborate and align preschool licensing requirements for district-based programs while ensuring health, safety, and high quality early learning environments for students
- Focus Family, School and Community Partnering program on early literacy goals
- Partner with communities to ensure that instructional approaches implemented during the pandemic are meeting the needs and addressing the learning impacts of special populations, including students with disabilities, English learners, students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, migrant students and others

We will support effective transitions between preschool and third grade.

- Coordinate with university partners to develop a best practices guide for implementing effective transitions between preschool and third grade
- Provide technical assistance to districts in developing transition plans to effectively support students in preschool through third grade

Early Intervention Produces Results for Struggling Readers

Students Identified with a Siginificant Reading Deficiency (SRD) 2016	Students Continuously Identified with an SRD 2017	Students Continuously Identified with an SRD 2018	Students Continuously Identified with an SRD 2019

Kindergarten: 2,977 → 2,001 → 1,628 → 1,456 → **48.9% continue to be identified with an SRD at the end of third-grade**

Grade 1: 9,297 → 6,196 → 5,017 → **53.96% continue to be identified with an SRD at the end of third-grade**

Grade 2: 10,060 → 7,427 → **73.83% continue to be identified with an SRD at the end of third-grade**

Legend:
- Kindergarten
- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3

Early identification of reading challenges is critical to supporting struggling readers. The chart above demonstrates how students who are identified and supported in early grades are more likely to resolve their reading deficiencies by third grade. READ Act data were not available to update due to spring 2020 assessments being canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This chart will be updated again the next time data are available prior to the department's SMART Act hearing.

What Progress Looks Like

- Students who were identified with a significant reading deficiency (SRD) in kindergarten or first grade and are still identified in 3rd grade will decrease from 60.7% in 2019 to 58.7% in 2022.

- Students on READ plans who meet or exceed expectations on the third grade CMAS English language arts assessment will increase from 3.2% in 2019 to 4.7% in 2022.

- State-funded preschool programs rated as high quality by Colorado Shines Quality Rating Improvement System will increase from 50% in 2018-19 to 60% in 2021-22.

- Students who are proficient in at least five of six areas measured by the Kindergarten School Readiness Assessment will increase from 58.8% in 2019 to 61.8% in 2022. CDE met this goal ahead of its 2022 target with a rate of 64.2% in 2020.

- Four-year-olds funded through the Colorado Preschool Program who meet age expectations will increase from 89% in 2018-19 to 92% in 2021-22 in literacy, and from 80% in 2018-19 to 83% in 2021-22 in math.

- Third-grade students meeting or exceeding expectations on the CMAS assessment in English language arts will increase from 41.3% in 2019 to 50% by 2022.

- Children and young adult attendance (both in-person and virtual) at public library programs will increase by 2% from 2,362,418 in 2018 to 2,409,666 in 2022.

* When data are available again and we can better understand the impact of the pandemic, some of our strategies and targets may need to be updated to address the impacts of learning opportunity loss.

Expand Access and Opportunity for Historically Underserved Students

ALL MEANS ALL

GOAL: **Regardless of demographics and learning needs, all students meet or exceed state academic standards.**

In Colorado, we are failing to ensure that students from historically underserved backgrounds – specifically those from economically challenged communities, highly mobile families, racial minority groups, English learners and students with disabilities – report academic outcomes that are truly reflective of their talents so they have a wide variety of options to thrive in our communities and succeed in today's economy. 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.

* **Educational equity means** that every student has access to the educational resources and rigor they need at the right moment in their education across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, sexual orientation, family background and/ or family income. (Adopted from The Council of Chief State School Officers)

Strategic Activities

We will develop the capacity within CDE to create a knowledgeable organization that can model equity, diversity and inclusion in order to support our schools and districts across Colorado.

- Continue to build CDE staff members' knowledge and competency to increase student equity by engaging in equity, diversity and inclusion trainings, optional equity book clubs, and cross-department resource sharing
- Conduct a workplace equity assessment to review internal climate, policies and practices and take action to strengthen equity, diversity and inclusion within the department
- Conduct an equity analysis when developing new or revising departmental or external policies

We will expand our engagement with districts and other external partners to address issues of equity, access and opportunity through our grant programs.

- Collaborate with key stakeholders to host, organize and execute special events and activities that increase awareness and promote action to expand access and achievement throughout the state
- Convene other state agencies to assess potential collaborations to create resilient and vibrant neighborhoods that meet students' needs and support their learning
- Facilitate discussions to imagine accountability systems that put equity at the center while supporting districts and communities to implement those ideas
- Highlight and learn from schools that are exceptional at providing access to high quality learning experiences for all students and support schools that are working to provide greater access

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Strategic Activities Cont.

We will support school and district efforts to develop school climates that create a sense of belonging for all teachers and students and lead to effective learning conditions.
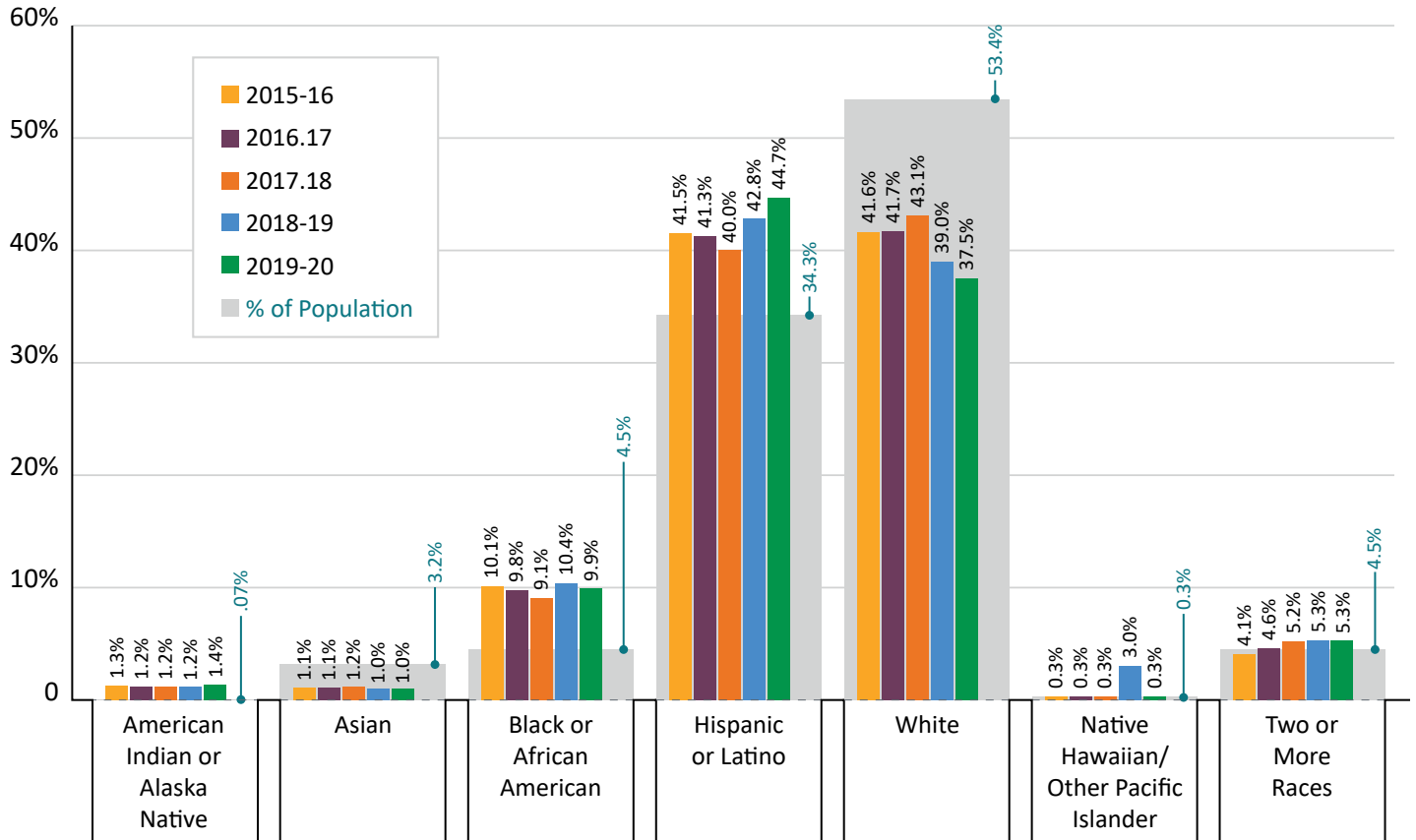
- Organize and communicate about the various grants and programs focused on school climate and student well-being so they can be easily accessed

- Continue and build upon the prototyping in the Coherence Lab Fellowship offered by the Council of Chief State School Officers, focused on ensuring are allocated to those schools and districts with the greatest student need and aligning training and support across CDE

- Identify and monitor measures of school climate in our education systems

We will continue to implement and evaluate the impact of department programs that deploy resources and supports aimed at increasing equity for different disaggregated groups of historically underserved students.

- Raise awareness of existing programs that support historically underserved students, including but not limited to students who are homeless, in foster care, eligible for free or reduced price lunches, have a disability, English learners, migrants, neglected, delinquent, and other challenges

- Leverage technical assistance partners to continue to evaluate and improve existing programs and share results with stakeholders

- Develop best practices and strategies for addressing student reengagement and learning needs focused on vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 pandemic and for addressing potential learning gaps and student needs that arise as a result of remote learning

- Continue to partner with Colorado Empowered Learning to implement a statewide open education resources platform to support schools and districts with accessing and, ideally, sharing open-source educational content

- Engage in a public-private partnership with the Governor's Office and the Attorney General's Office in coordination with internet service providers and other community focused organizations to improve broadband access for students with remote learning needs

Percent of Suspensions and Expulsions by Race/Ethnicity Over Time

Legend:
- 2015-16
- 2016.17
- 2017.18
- 2018-19
- 2019-20
- % of Population

American Indian or Alaska Native: 1.3%, 1.2%, 1.2%, 1.2%, 1.4%, .07%

Asian: 1.1%, 1.1%, 1.2%, 1.0%, 1.0%, 3.2%

Black or African American: 10.1%, 9.8%, 9.1%, 10.4%, 9.9%, 4.5%

Hispanic or Latino: 41.5%, 41.3%, 40.0%, 42.8%, 44.7%, 34.3%

White: 41.6%, 41.7%, 43.1%, 39.0%, 37.5%, 53.4%

Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander: 0.3%, 0.3%, 0.3%, 3.0%, 0.3%, 0.3%

Two or More Races: 4.1%, 4.6%, 5.2%, 5.3%, 5.3%, 4.5%

Students cannot learn if they are not in class. Reducing suspensions and expulsions from class by providing students with positive behavior supports and ensuring all students are safe increases learning opportunities for all.

These charts use the data reported to CDE to represent the percent of exclusionary disciplinary incidents by race compared to the overall population of members in that group. These data reveal that students who are American Indian, Black, Latino or are of two or more races receive exclusionary discipline at higher rates disproportionate to their population in Colorado public schools.

What Progress Looks Like

- State-reported suspensions and expulsions involving underserved students will decrease from 61% in 2019 to 58% in 2022.

- Students with IEPs who spend the majority of their time in general education settings and show high growth on the state assessment will increase from 27% in 2017 to 35% in 2022.

- Underserved students who complete an AP course or obtain college credit while still in high school will increase from approximately 40,000 in 2018 to approximately 44,000 in 2022.

- Students in high poverty and/or high minority schools will have access to the same percentage (less than 1% difference) of effective, experienced, and in-field teachers as students in low poverty and/or low minority schools by 2022. Current gaps range between 1.5% to 7.4% differences across such categories.

- Students who are able to participate in online education, when necessitated by COVID-19, will increase through greater access to devices and internet availability. In spring 2020, districts reported a need for approximately 57,063 devices and 47,655 students lacked internet connectivity; by spring 2021 we aimed to reduce these numbers by at least 20%. In December, 2020, survey results indicated a reduction in need for devices of 47% (to 29,845 devices) and a reduction in need for connectivity of 35% (to 30,841). By 2021, all districts in the state were offering in-person learning.

* When data are available again and we can better understand the impact of the pandemic, some of our strategies and targets may need to be updated to address the impacts of learning opportunity loss.

QUALITY SCHOOLS

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

GOAL: All students and families have access to quality schools that meet their students' needs.

Schools and districts that are identified for improvement through the state and federal systems all have different needs based on the context of their communities. By working with each district and school to understand their needs and invest in evidence-based strategies to be successful, we will help them progressively improve and maintain their academic performance.

Strategic Activities

We will foster relationships with districts and schools grounded in transparency and trust.

- Effectively implement the CDE district Support Coordinator role to help coordinate and deploy streamlined resources and supports from across the department
- Build a customer relationship management system to coordinate cross-office school and district support

We will partner with districts to ensure they identify school needs through a root cause analysis and match differentiated evidence-based practices to identified needs.

- Continue to develop needs assessment resources for districts and schools
- Support the capacity of districts and schools to accurately identify improvement needs through training and individualized technical assistance
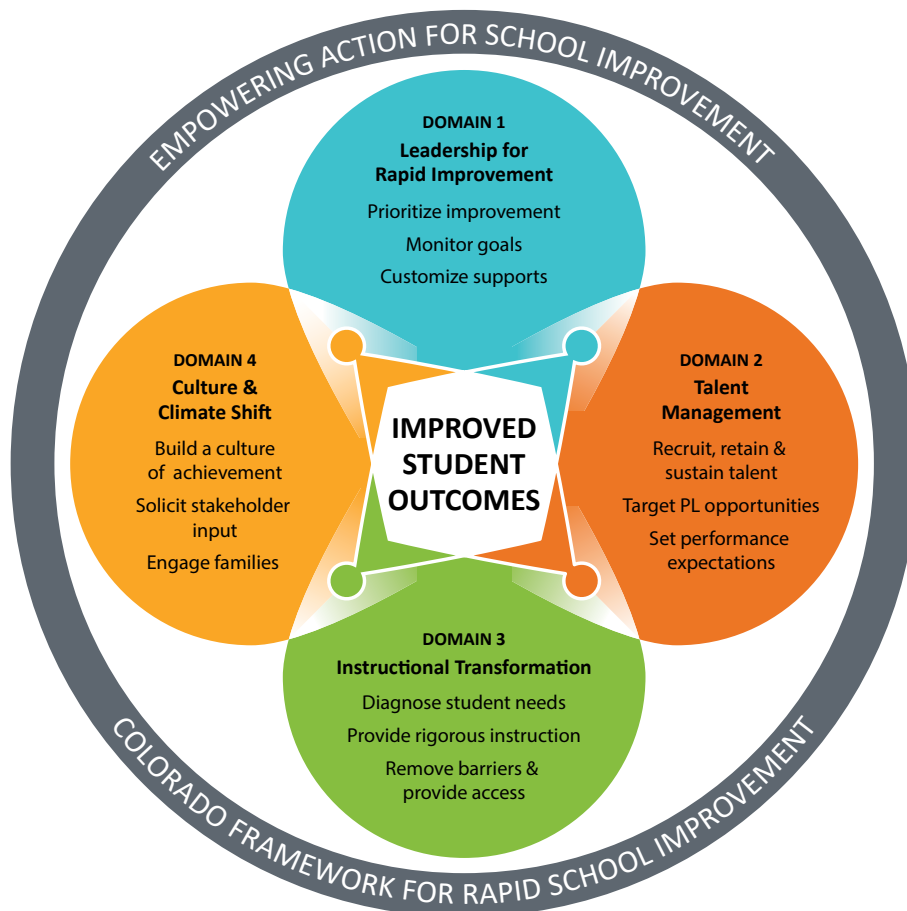

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Strategic Activities Cont.

We will implement a coherent, integrated service delivery model that includes the development of evidence-based practices that are aligned with identified needs and are grounded in Colorado's Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement: leadership for rapid improvement, talent management, instructional transformation, and culture and climate shift.
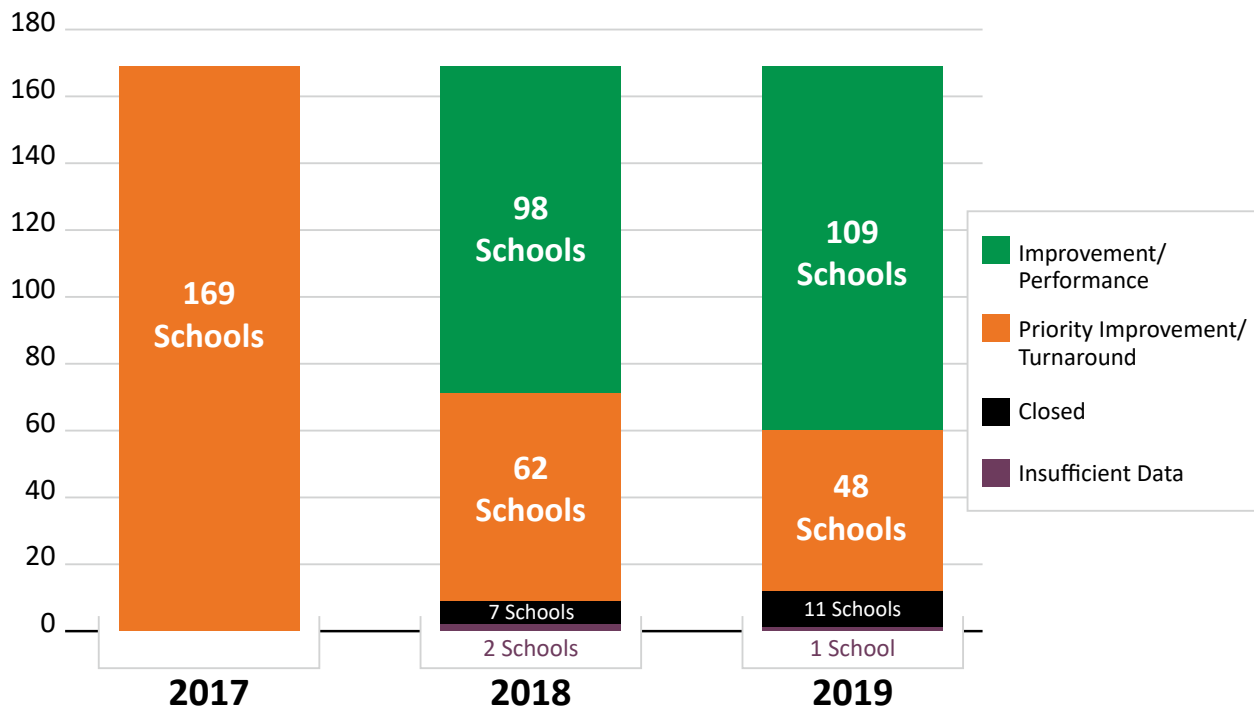
- Continue to review statewide needs, program evaluation results and CDE's resources to determine how best to leverage existing funding sources on behalf of identified schools and districts

- Continue to build and refine the single grant application process and expand the menu of supports for districts to match unique local needs with state and federal resources, decreasing the administrative burden on districts

- Focus CDE support, expertise, and resources on the Colorado Four Domains of Rapid School Improvement

We will provide resources and support districts and schools in implementing evidence-based practices, monitoring implementation progress, and consistently evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention to inform continuous improvement.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of our support for schools and districts and make adjustments needed to increase students' academic outcomes

- Use new resources from the state for program evaluation to expand our internal quantitative evaluation and partner with an external organization to better understand the qualitative impacts of state supports

- Monitor the impact of each support on student outcomes, as measured through the state School Performance Frameworks and federal ESSA indicators

EMPOWERING ACTION FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

COLORADO FRAMEWORK FOR RAPID SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

DOMAIN 1
Leadership for Rapid Improvement
Prioritize improvement
Monitor goals
Customize supports

DOMAIN 2
Talent Management
Recruit, retain & sustain talent
Target PL opportunities
Set performance expectations

DOMAIN 3
Instructional Transformation
Diagnose student needs
Provide rigorous instruction
Remove barriers & provide access

DOMAIN 4
Culture & Climate Shift
Build a culture of achievement
Solicit stakeholder input
Engage families

IMPROVED STUDENT OUTCOMES

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2017-2019 Schools Moving off of Priority Improvement or Turnaround

Each of the 169 schools in the Priority Improvement and Turnaround categories in 2017, the lowest two categories in the state's accountability system, have different challenges to overcome 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 approximately 79,000 students. Data for the above chart were not updated for the 2020-21 school year due to the accountability pause. When accountability results are available again, this chart will be updated.

What Progress Looks Like

- Of the 169 schools with the lowest two ratings (Priority Improvement or Turnaround) on the state's accountability system in 2017, at least 136 (80%) will improve to earn a satisfactory rating or higher (Improvement or Performance) by 2022 and will sustain that rating.

- Of the 115 schools with the lowest two ratings (Comprehensive Support and Improvement Lowest 5% and Low Graduation) in the federal accountability system (ESSA) in 2018-19, at least 92 (80%) will improve their ESSA indicators by 2022 and will sustain that performance.

- Districts with eligible schools that access funds for improvement will increase from 64% in 2021 to 80% by 2022.

- Final improvement plans for identified schools and districts that meet quality criteria and identify evidencebased strategies will increase from 92% in 2021 to 100% in 2022.

* When data are available again and we can better understand the impact of the pandemic, some of our strategies and targets may need to be updated to address the impacts of learning opportunity loss.

MORE OPTIONS

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

GOAL: **Students graduate high school with knowledge, skills and experience needed for career and college success.**

Students who graduate and work in Colorado need in-demand skills that meet business, industry and higher education standards. Three out of four jobs in Colorado (three million jobs currently) require education or training beyond high school.

By increasing options for high school students and fostering expansion of successful high school models, we can ensure that at least 66 percent of the class of 2022 will earn a postsecondary credential, certificate or degree within five years. When we achieve this goal, we will fuel Colorado's economy with educated students who are prepared for a college education, a good paying job or military service.

Strategic Activities

We will help local education providers implement rigorous and useful Graduation Guidelines to expand options to support student engagement.

- Support community implementation strategies and expansion of such options as work-based learning experiences and industry credentials

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

- Identify and highlight noteworthy gains in high school completion as well as postsecondary and workforce readiness outcomes for students
- Bring innovative practices to scale (such as programs where students gain workforce credentials and college credit while in high school) for the benefit of more students statewide through professional development and consultations
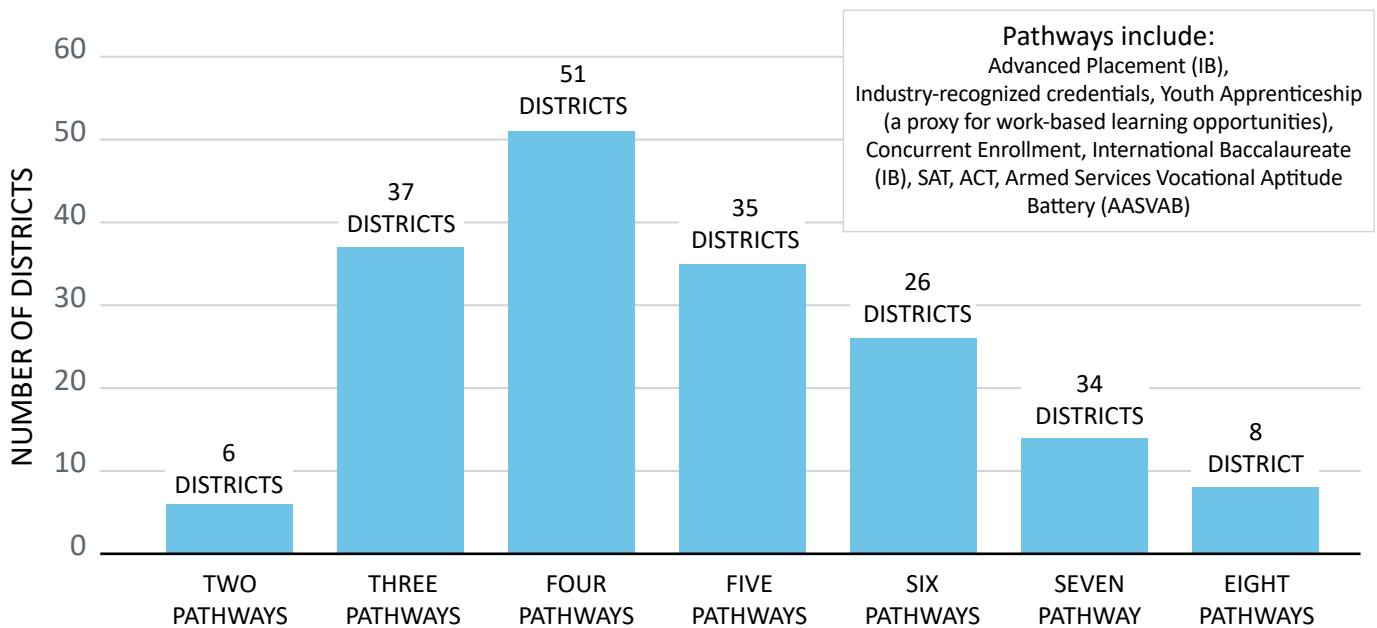
Strategic Activities Cont.

We will promote Individual Career and Academic Planning (ICAP) as a tool to help students complete high school, gain work experience 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 planning and ready for their futures.

- Expand work-based learning opportunities, with an emphasis on virtual experiences in light of COVID-19, to help students prepare for living-wage, in-demand jobs, while expanding access to certificates and credentials
- Assist educators in building effective partnerships with business, based on existing capacity
- 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

Colorado School Districts Offering Multiple-Pathways Options*

Pathways include:
Advanced Placement (IB), Industry-recognized credentials, Youth Apprenticeship (a proxy for work-based learning opportunities), Concurrent Enrollment, International Baccalaureate (IB), SAT, ACT, Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (AASVAB)

Chart: NUMBER OF DISTRICTS (y-axis, 0 to 60)
- TWO PATHWAYS: 6 DISTRICTS
- THREE PATHWAYS: 37 DISTRICTS
- FOUR PATHWAYS: 51 DISTRICTS
- FIVE PATHWAYS: 35 DISTRICTS
- SIX PATHWAYS: 26 DISTRICTS
- SEVEN PATHWAY: 34 DISTRICTS
- EIGHT PATHWAYS: 8 DISTRICT

There are many pathways to a successful career, with colleges and employers both demanding the same knowledge and skills from their incoming students and workers. Apprenticeships, internships and concurrent enrollment classes are examples of ways to earn college credit or attain a postsecondary credential while still in high school. These programs bridge the gap between education and career, increase the relevancy of high school and open a wide variety of options after high school, including meaningful careers and college.

* Represents most recent available data. Concurrent Enrollment data are from the 2018-19 school year. All other pathways data are based on the 2019-20 school year.

What Progress Looks Like

- Students completing a high school credential within six years will increase from 88.8% in 2018 to 90% by 2022.

- High school students attaining a postsecondary credential within six years of graduation will increase from 56.6% for the class of 2012 to 60% for the class of 2016.

- School districts offering at least three pathways or options for students will increase from 171 districts in 2020 to all 178 districts by 2022.

- Students earning college credit in high school will increase from 35% in 2018 to 50% of students in 2022.

* When data are available again and we can better understand the impact of the pandemic, some of our strategies and targets may need to be updated to address the impacts of learning opportunity loss.

EDUCATORS MATTER

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

GOAL: High quality educators are in every classroom; strong leaders are in every building.

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 work in partnership to 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 improvements in rules and support for educator preparation programs and the CDE licensing unit
- Review and ensure educator preparation programs are implementing high quality pedagogy in face-to-face, hybrid, and online pedagogy.
- Review and ensure programs are teaching high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction strategies to teacher candidates

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

- Align 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
- Implement relevant Teacher Shortage Strategic Plan action items to encourage teachers entering the pipeline, including kindergarten teachers
- Establish a new authorization pathway for substitute teachers to address staffing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic
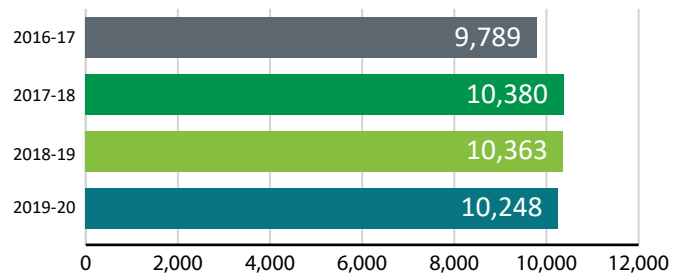
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Strategic Activities

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, school improvement and professional development for principals
- Support principals' efforts to support their workforce through implementation of educator effectiveness laws and human capital strategic systems
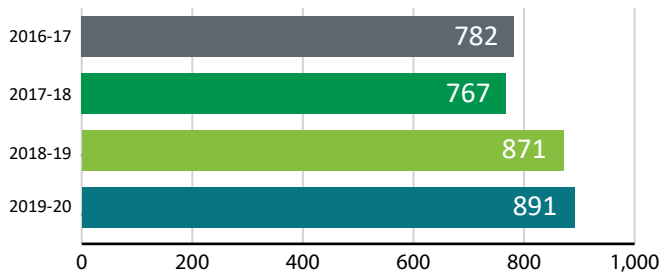- Develop a high quality principal professional development program, with an eye toward expansion when successful

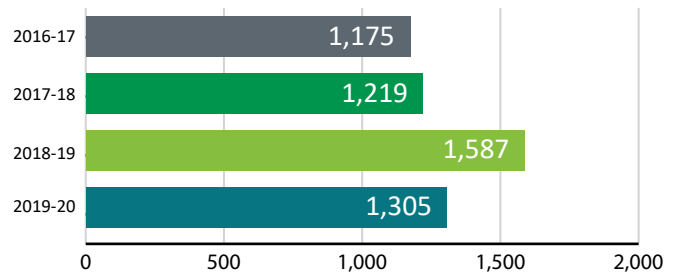**Number of individuals who completed an educator preparation program at an institute of higher education in Colorado**

Year	Value
2016-17	2,674
2017-18	2,553
2018-19	2,494
2019-20	2,168
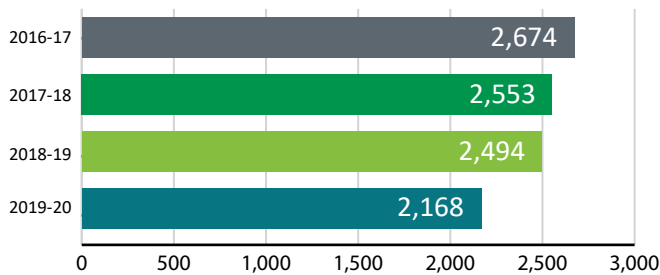
Number of individuals who enrolled in an institute of higher education, educator preparation program in Colorado

Year	Value
2016-17	9,789
2017-18	10,380
2018-19	10,363
2019-20	10,248

Number of individuals who completed an alternative licensing program in Colorado

Year	Value
2016-17	782
2017-18	767
2018-19	871
2019-20	891

Number of individuals who enrolled in an alternative licensing program in Colorado

Year	Value
2016-17	1,175
2017-18	1,219
2018-19	1,587
2019-20	1,305

Colorado has approximately 9,500 educator annual openings. Of those openings, approximately 1,368 were not able to be filled or were filled through shortage mechanisms, such as emergency licensing, in 2020-2021. Normally, these positions are filled by students graduating from educator preparation programs at colleges and universities or professionals who have completed an alternative licensure program. However, with a 7.5 percent decline in individuals completing an educator preparation program in Colorado from 2015 to 2020, some of these open positions – especially in rural areas and in specific endorsement areas including mathematics, science, early childhood and special education – end up either: (1) being filled by shortage mechanisms that make provisions for emergency authorizations, long-term substitutes, alternative licensure enrollees and retired educators; or (2) going completely unfilled during the year.

What Progress Looks Like

- Initial educator licenses issued by CDE will increase from 5,974 in 2020 to 7,274 in 2022.

- Statewide teacher turnover rate will decrease from 16.39% in 2018 to 15.50% in 2022. CDE has met this goal ahead of the 2022 target with a teacher turnover rate of 14.35% in 2021; although the impact of the pandemic may change results for 2022.

* When data are available again and we can better understand the impact of the pandemic, some of our strategies and targets may need to be updated to address the impacts of learning opportunity loss.

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 Continuous Improvement, Standards, Assessment, 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 various other state and federal programs. Because district budgets depend on these funds, it is imperative that these allocations are timely, accurate and efficient. In addition, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress has passed three stimulus bills which include funding for education: the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (March 2020), the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act (December 2020), and the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act (March 2021). This has resulted in additional education funding of over $2.3 billion for Colorado, a portion of which CDE is responsible for allocating and distributing to districts.

Strategic Operation

We will accurately and efficiently distribute state and federal funds to Colorado districts, including state and federal recovery funds related to COVID-19.

Metric

- Error-free fund distributions, per cycle will increase from 99.9% to 100% by 2022. This metric reflects over 4,000 payments made each quarter.

Recruit and Retain Quality Employees

CDE's Human Resources Office (HR) 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 provide appropriate systems and structures, talent engagement, talent lifecycle management, and support and growth for CDE employees.

Strategic Operation

We will connect CDE employees and our work to CDE's values, creating a mission driven and values-based culture. In addition, we will revise CDE policies based on the CDE Workplace Equity assessment and in response to the recommendations from the third party evaluator. We will then develop metrics to track the progress of these new policies and efforts.

Metrics

- CDE will monitor and measure both retention and turnover rates.
- CDE will reduce the unfavorable turnover rate by 5% annually.
- CDE will develop metrics specific to equity, diversity and inclusion in our HR processes.

Key Services Cont.

Create and Disseminate Academic Performance Reports

One of CDE's primary responsibilities is to securely collect, store and publicly report key education data. CDE is prioritizing creating easy-to-understand reports to empower families and communities to make informed education-related decisions.

Strategic Operation

- Provide meaningful performance data to schools, districts and the public.
- Publicly provide accurate and timely school and district performance frameworks.*
- Publicly provide accurate and timely student growth reports.*
- Design, develop and launch an accessible, easy-to-understand reporting system intended for the general public.

Metric

- Ensure that 100% of district and school performance frameworks continue to be produced error-free annually.*
- Continue to ensure that 100% of student growth reports will be produced error-free annually.*
- Launch a new/improved public reporting system in 2022. (This can be accelerated if additional resources are secured.)

* These reports were paused for 2020 as a result of the suspension of state assessments in 2019-20 due to COVID-19.

Efficiently Process Educator License Applications

The Educator Talent Division 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 Division strives to continually decrease the amount of time it takes to process educator licenses.

Strategic Operation

Decrease the average cycle time between receiving an educator's completed application and issuing their license.

Metric

- The average cycle time – from receipt of a completed application and cleared fingerprint report to a license notification sent by email – will decrease from 12.33 business days in 2019 to 10 business days in 2020 and hold consistent at 10 business days throughout 2021.

Key Services Cont.

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 support internal and external customer data needs and technology tools, while protecting state systems and sensitive information.

- Enable secure data transfer across Colorado districts by implementing Sharepoint 365 by the end of the 2021-22 school year.
- Maintain industry-established security procedures by:
  - ◊ Implementing two-factor authentication for CDE supported applications by the end of the 2021-22 school year
  - ◊ Implementing an upgraded Information Security Plan
  - ◊ Providing cyber security training to all permanent CDE employees
- CDE will continue to evaluate the value of a potential Student Information System that could reduce the time it takes districts to submit required data to CDE.

Metric

- Implement SharePoint by December 2021. Once implemented and training is complete, securely transfer data by April 2022.
- Implement two-factor authentication for supported applications by December 2021.
- Following OIT's approval of the department's security plan, continue to implement security upgrades on an ongoing basis.
- Ensure 100% compliance with cyber security training yearly, by June 30, annually.

Key Services Cont.

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 the 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 coordinate implementation of education laws while prioritizing CDE's values.

- Collaborate with cross-department staff to understand and communicate the requirements of the law and state board rules to district staff, educators and other key stakeholders
- Apply CDE values when evaluating potential changes to and implementation of CDE policy, state board rule, and state statute.
- Adjust CDE policies and procedures as needed due to COVID-19 impacts on learning models.
- Conduct an equity analysis when developing or revising departmental or external policies.

Metric

- Develop and disseminate an integrated timeline document that provides superintendents with key dates for implementation of new and existing legislation annually by September 1.
- Respond to internal and external inquiries promptly, depending on the amount of staff coordination required.
- Regularly engaging with a broad set of stakeholders in order to gather feedback, listen to concerns, and provide updates on implementation of laws and CDE policy.
- Review current legislative reports to identify ways to more efficiently analyze and communicate about the impact of programs and policies