STRATEGIC PLAN

2017-2023

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

ALL MEANS ALL

QUALITY SCHOOLS

MORE OPTIONS

EDUCATORS MATTER

UPDATE JUNE 2022

COLORADO
Department of Education

CDE

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

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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. With decreased in-person learning and increased transitions between learning modes starting in March 2020 and continuing throughout much of the 2020-21 school year for many Colorado students, students faced new risks related to loss of learning opportunities, social and emotional health, and access to social supports like nutrition and childcare. Throughout that time, CDE invested significant time and resources to ensure schools had access to the relief funding, meals, expanded broadband and other basic needs necessary to support their students while also providing policy guidance and appropriate adjustments to support student instruction, health and wellness, student engagement, and equity for vulnerable populations.

Now with the historic funding made available through the American Rescue Plan Act's Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER III) Fund, CDE is working to address the needs created from or exacerbated by the pandemic by (1) supporting academic acceleration; (2) expanding learning opportunities to strengthen student engagement; and (3) strengthening state capacity to support the state's districts and schools -- both now and in the future. These new efforts strengthen CDE's long-term initiatives and goals and bring focus and precision to strategies and implementation priorities based on the newly emerging needs.

The absence of 2019-20 data connected to state assessments, the READ Act, and the preschool program child outcome system (Results Matter) also means that CDE is missing data needed to fully evaluate progress on some measures over time. These measures continue to be included in the strategic plan, as CDE intends to continue using the data even if there are some gaps during the pandemic.

Based on the realities of education during the pandemic, there has been a decrease in performance on many of the department's metrics, where data is available. In spring 2021, English language arts assessments were required in grades 3, 5 and 7 and CMAS math assessments were required in grades 4, 6 and 8. The remaining CMAS English language arts and math assessments were optional. Statewide assessment results declined significantly for most required grade levels and subjects in 2020-21. For CMAS English language arts, the percent of students who met or exceeded expectations fell between 1 and 4 percentage points since 2019. For CMAS math, the percent of students who met or exceeded expectations fell between 5 and 7 percentage points. Declines in the percent of students meeting the math college readiness benchmark were also evident for PSAT 9 (6.6% decrease) and SAT (2.6% decrease). As our understanding of learning opportunity losses continues, the department may need to add new strategies and adjust targets to best support acceleration of student learning in the future.

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Support High Quality Early Learning and Literacy for All Students

> **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 which builds 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 SB19-199, including providing no-cost options
- Support local education providers in implementing quality inclusive preschool and assist them in developing strategies across a variety of providers
- 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 training programs
- Support local education providers' use of reading instructional materials that are high quality and are based on the science of reading
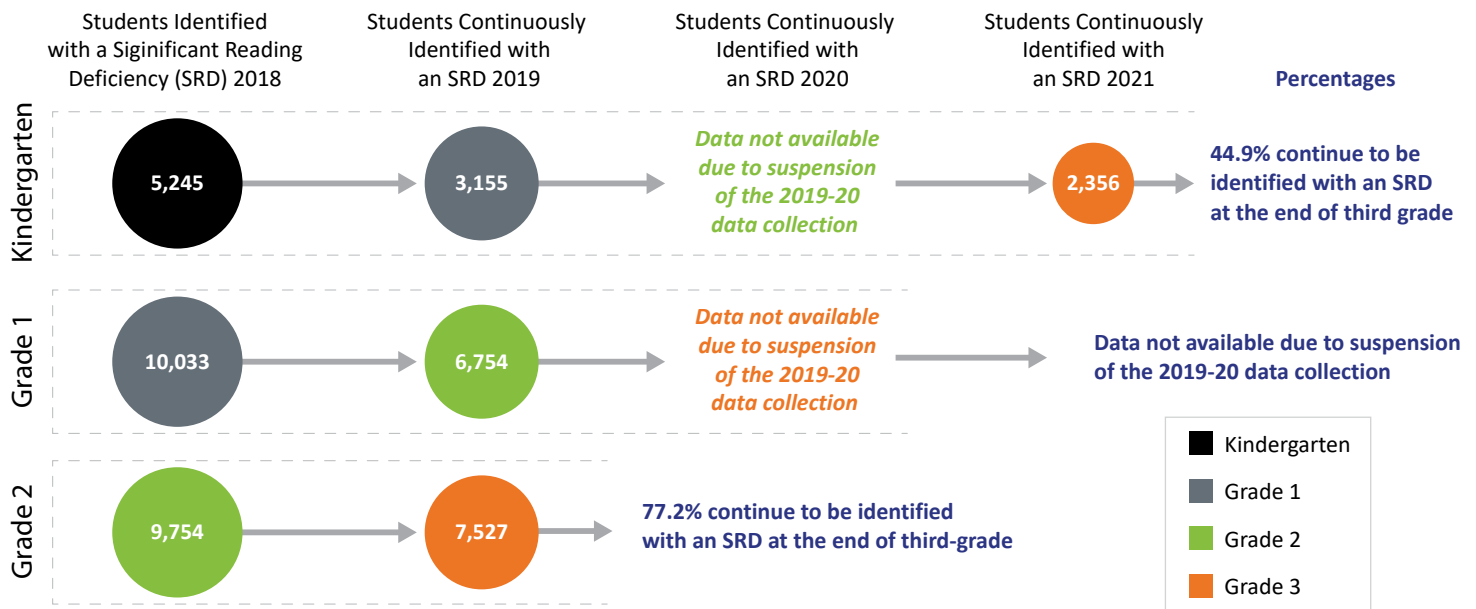
We will strengthen partnerships with the Colorado Department of Human Services as well as other state and local agencies, communities and libraries to support early learning and literacy in preschool through third grade.

- Support the transition of preschool programming to the new Department of Early Childhood (DEC) and the alignment of preschool special education services across CDE and DEC
- Focus Family, School and Community Partnering program on early literacy goals

We will support effective transitions between preschool and third grade with attention to the impact of the pandemic on enrollment.

- 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) 2018	Students Continuously Identified with an SRD 2019	Students Continuously Identified with an SRD 2020	Students Continuously Identified with an SRD 2021	Percentages
Kindergarten	5,245	3,155	*Data not available due to suspension of the 2019-20 data collection*	2,356	**44.9% continue to be identified with an SRD at the end of third grade**
Grade 1	10,033	6,754	*Data not available due to suspension of the 2019-20 data collection*	**Data not available due to suspension of the 2019-20 data collection**	
Grade 2	9,754	7,527	**77.2% 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 in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

What Progress Looks Like

- By spring 2023, reduce significant reading deficiency rates in kindergarten through third grade from 23% in 2021 to pre-pandemic (16%) or lower levels.

- Students on READ plans who meet or exceed expectations on the third grade CMAS English language arts assessment will return to or exceed pre-pandemic levels (3.2%) by spring 2023.

- Use newly updated Kindergarten School Readiness Assessment data collection to set a new baseline for kindergarten school readiness by 2022-23.

- Four-year-olds funded through the Colorado Preschool Program who meet age expectations will increase from 89% in 2020-2021 to 92% in 2023-24 in literacy, and from 81% in 2020-2021 to 83% in 2023-24 in math.

- Third-grade students meeting or exceeding expectations on the CMAS assessment in English Language Arts will return to or exceed pre-pandemic levels (41.3%) by spring 2023. In spring 2021, 76% of third graders participated in the CMAS English language arts assessment, with 39.1% of those tested meeting or exceeding standards. This may be an overestimate of the true percentage of enrolled third graders who met Colorado Academic Standards expectations due to participation rates.

- 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 2023. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the cancellation of programming or library closures, attendance decreased to 1,412,077 in 2020. With the addition of virtual programming, CDE hopes to still meet its pre-pandemic goal in 2023.

ALL MEANS ALL

Expand Access and Opportunity for Historically Underserved Students

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. Unfortunately, the pandemic has exacerbated opportunity and achievement gaps which have grown from pre-pandemic levels for many historically underserved student groups. By concentrating on educational equity as a foundational construct of our work at CDE, we will empower schools and districts in their efforts to increase access and opportunity for students and ultimately reduce the pervasive influence that persistent 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, specific learning opportunities for supervisors, and cross-department resource sharing
- Continue to implement the recommendations from CDE's workplace equity assessment in regards to internal climate, policies and practices and conducting 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.

- Maximize use of ESSER funds to create opportunities for high quality and accelerated learning through programs such as high impact tutoring, extended school day, week and/or year, summer opportunities, instructional and curricula supports, especially for students with disabilities, English learners, students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, migrant students and other students most impacted by the pandemic
- 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

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.
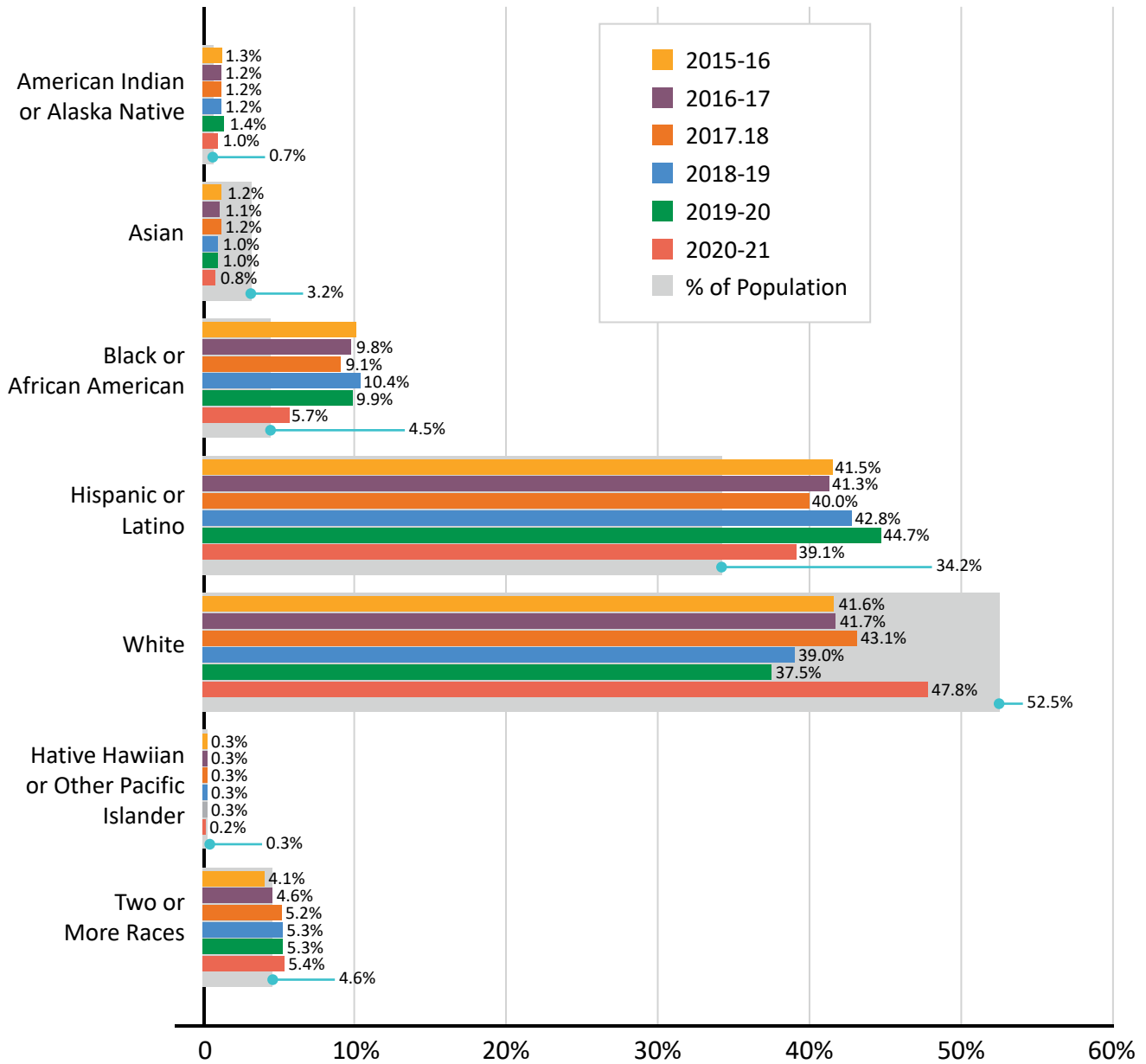
- Organize and communicate about the various resources focused on school climate and student well-being as part of an effort to decrease suspensions and expulsions involving historically underserved students

- Implement the learning and strategies gained through the Coherence Lab Fellowship offered by the Council of Chief State School Officers focused on coordination of training and grant programs related to school climate work and better directing resources to those with the greatest needs

- 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

- Conduct a state process to focus the efforts of CDE – through both existing and new ESSER programs – to transparently address the most pressing needs of Colorado's students

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

- Continue developing and disseminating best practices and strategies for addressing student reengagement and learning needs focused on vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 pandemic and support communities in addressing potential learning gaps and student needs that were caused or exacerbated by the pandemic

Percent of Suspensions and Expulsions by Race/Ethnicity Over Time

Legend:
- 2015-16
- 2016-17
- 2017.18
- 2018-19
- 2019-20
- 2020-21
- % of Population

American Indian or Alaska Native
- 1.3%
- 1.2%
- 1.2%
- 1.2%
- 1.4%
- 1.0%
- 0.7%

Asian
- 1.2%
- 1.1%
- 1.2%
- 1.0%
- 1.0%
- 0.8%
- 3.2%

Black or African American
- (2015-16 bar, unlabeled)
- 9.8%
- 9.1%
- 10.4%
- 9.9%
- 5.7%
- 4.5%

Hispanic or Latino
- 41.5%
- 41.3%
- 40.0%
- 42.8%
- 44.7%
- 39.1%
- 34.2%

White
- 41.6%
- 41.7%
- 43.1%
- 39.0%
- 37.5%
- 47.8%
- 52.5%

Hative Hawiian or Other Pacific Islander
- 0.3%
- 0.3%
- 0.3%
- 0.3%
- 0.3%
- 0.2%
- 0.3%

Two or More Races
- 4.1%
- 4.6%
- 5.2%
- 5.3%
- 5.3%
- 5.4%
- 4.6%

(x-axis: 0, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%)

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.

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What Progress Looks Like

- State-reported suspensions and expulsions involving historically underserved students will not exceed pre-pandemic levels of 58% in 2023. While suspensions and expulsions decreased to 50% in 2021, this was likely the result of the suspension of in-person instruction. CDE aims for this metric to stay at 58% with the integration of in-person instruction.

- Students with IEPs who spend the majority of their time in general education settings and show high growth on the state assessment will return to pre-pandemic levels of 29%in English language arts and 30% in math by 2023.

- The total number of AP/IB exams completed and courses that lead to college credit attempted by underserved high school students will increase from approximately 39,000 in 2021 to approximately 41,000 in 2023.

- The percentage of districts with high-poverty schools identified as having medium and large gaps in equitable access to experienced educators and teachers teaching in-field will decrease from 38 percent in the 2020-21 school year to 37 percent in the 2022-23 school year. Note that these data are only available for districts eligible for equitable distribution of teachers analyses (small districts are exempt). They also exclude effectiveness analyses due to the pause in educator effectiveness data as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 an integrated Data Pipeline, grants management, and customer relationship management system to strengthen cross-CDE coordination in providing effective school and district support
- Establish data systems and resources to increase transparency in and strengthen the strategic allocation of funding opportunities

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

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.
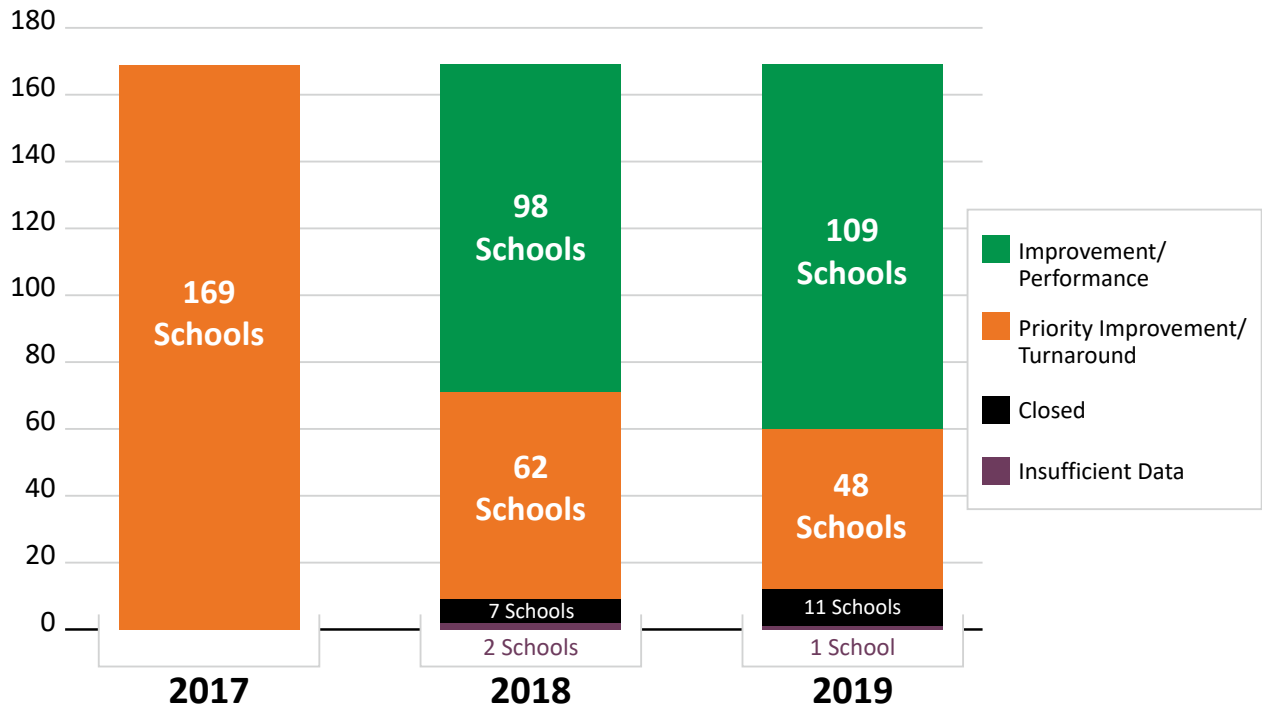
- Continue to review statewide needs, program evaluation results and CDE's resources to determine how best to leverage existing funding sources on behalf of identified schools and districts

- 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

- Strategically coordinate program evaluation to expand CDE capacity to develop internal quantitative and qualitative evaluations 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
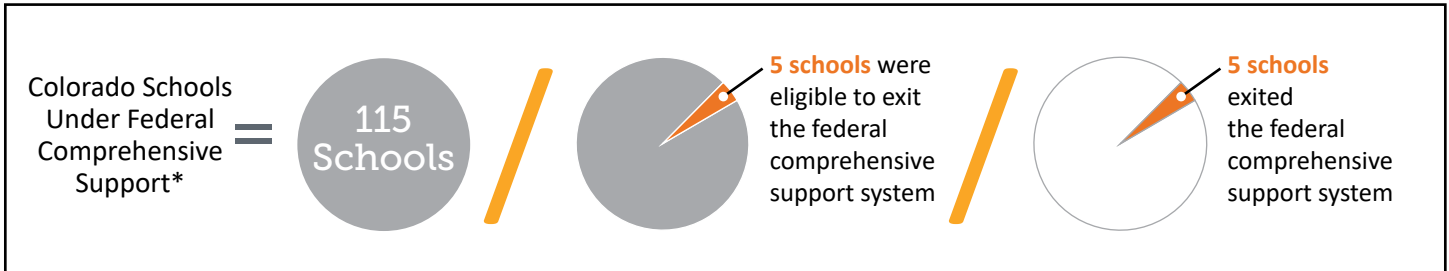
EMPOWERING ACTION FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

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

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

IMPROVED STUDENT OUTCOMES

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

COLORADO FRAMEWORK FOR RAPID SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

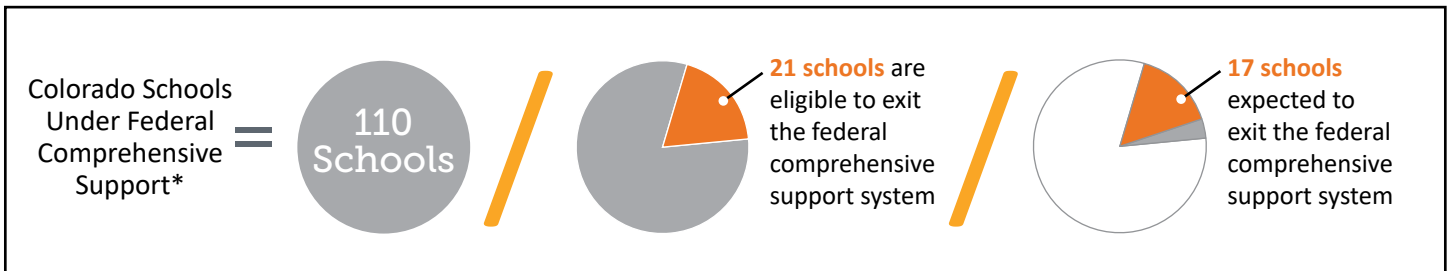# 2017-2019 Schools Moving off of Priority Improvement or Turnaround

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. These data were not updated for the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school years due to the accountability pause.

2018-2019 Identified Schools Moving off of Comprehensive Support and Improvement Lowest 5% and Low Graduation

2021 SUCCESS

Colorado Schools Under Federal Comprehensive Support* = **115 Schools**

5 schools were eligible to exit the federal comprehensive support system

5 schools exited the federal comprehensive support system

2023 GOALS

Colorado Schools Under Federal Comprehensive Support* = **110 Schools**

21 schools are eligible to exit the federal comprehensive support system

17 schools expected to exit the federal comprehensive support system

* Schools listed in the lowest two ratings: Comprehensive Support and Low Graduation

In addition to the state's accountability system, the federal accountability system provides insight into the performance of Colorado's schools. Previously, CDE expected that 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 2023 and will sustain that performance. In looking at those schools identified as Comprehensive Support-Low Graduation Rate, all (100%) of the schools eligible to exit have met the graduation rate goals.

As we have learned from past national disasters and emergencies, there is an anticipated long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on graduation rates, as well as the academic achievement and growth. Specifically, in addition to anticipating a decline in student performance, a decline in graduation rates is reasonable to expect and likely to occur over the next few years although we continue to provide resources and support with the goal that 80% of Comprehensive Support and Improvement schools will meet exit criteria.

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 2023 and will sustain that rating.

- Of the 21 schools that are eligible to exit Comprehensive Support and Improvement federal (ESSA) identification in 2022, at least 17 (80%) of those eligible schools will improve their ESSA indicators by 2023 and will sustain performance.

- Districts with eligible schools that access funds for improvement will increase from 64% in 2021 to 80% by 2023.

- Final improvement plans for identified schools and districts that meet quality criteria and identify evidence based strategies will increase from 91.8% in 2017 to 100% in 2023.

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 2023 will earn a postsecondary credential, certificate or degree within five years of graduating from high school. 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 school districts 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
- Leverage federal ESSER relief funding to support rural districts to collaboratively develop and expand career-connected learning opportunities.

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
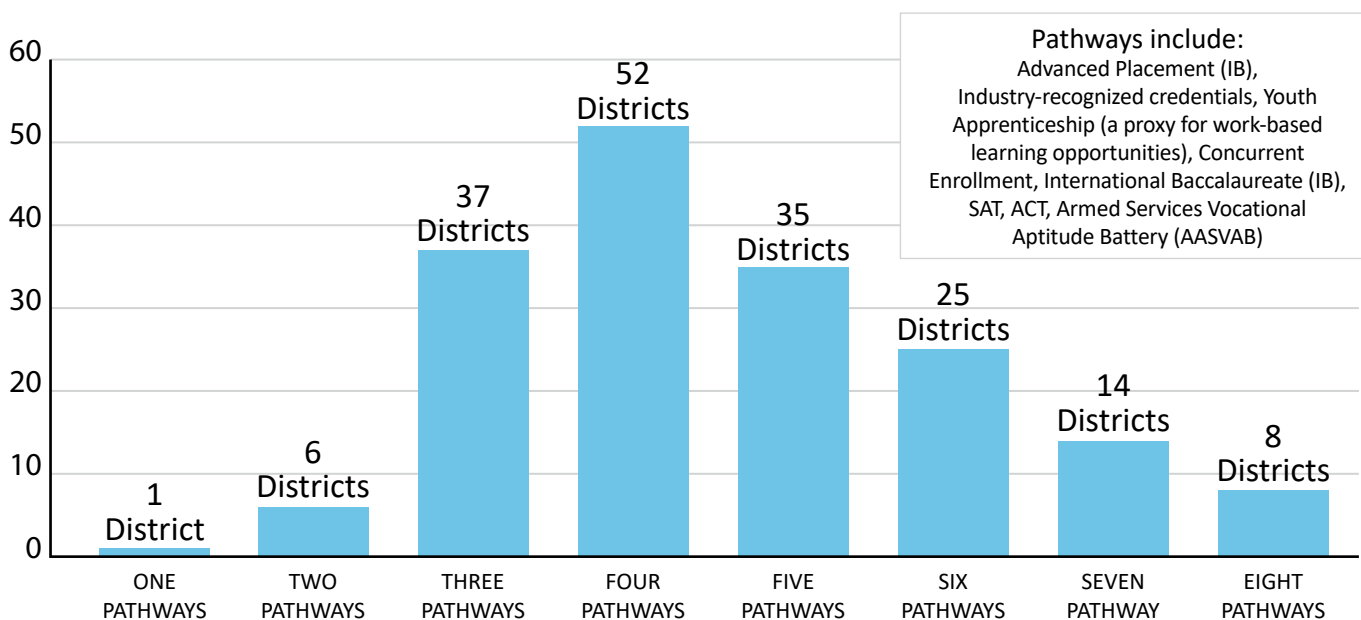
- Collect and share with stakeholders promising ICAP practices that increase students' awareness of seamless pathways and opportunities beyond high school
- Equip all educators to have meaningful career conversations with students

Strategic Activities Cont.

We will engage community partners as an effective resource for getting students planning and ready for their futures.

- Expand work-based learning opportunities to help students prepare for living-wage, in-demand jobs, while expanding access to certificates and credentials
- Use ESSER funding to support building collaborations across districts and with the communities that they serve
- 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 data:
- ONE PATHWAYS: 1 District
- TWO PATHWAYS: 6 Districts
- THREE PATHWAYS: 37 Districts
- FOUR PATHWAYS: 52 Districts
- FIVE PATHWAYS: 35 Districts
- SIX PATHWAYS: 25 Districts
- SEVEN PATHWAY: 14 Districts
- EIGHT PATHWAYS: 8 Districts

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.

What Progress Looks Like

- Students completing a high school credential within six years will increase from 89.0% in 2021 to 90% by 2023.

- High school students attaining a postsecondary credential within six years of graduation will increase from 58.9% to class of 2015 to 60% for the class of 2017.

- School districts offering at least three pathways or options for students will increase from 172 districts in 2020 to all 178 districts by 2023.

- Students earning college credit in high school will increase from 48% in 2021 to 50% of students in 2023.

* 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.

Even more workforce challenges have come forward since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Colorado faces record shortages in other education-related areas including bus drivers, school nutrition staff, and school health professionals (such as school nurses). To help support this great need across the state, CDE has partnered with other agencies, such as the Colorado Community College System, the Department of Higher Education, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment and the Colorado Workforce Development Council to recruit educational support staff from every corner of the state.

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

Strategic Activities

**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

- Implement relevant Teacher Shortage Strategic Plan action items to encourage teachers entering the pipeline through focused programs and partnerships with school districts via grow your own programs, community colleges and state educator preparation programs utilizing concurrent enrollment, and through the establishment of a residency based alternative educator program with AmeriCorp members

- Establish a new statewide mentoring program for preservice and new-to-the-profession educators

- Establish a new authorization pathway for substitute teachers to address staffing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and use ESSER funding to provide stipends to offset the costs of applying to be a substitute educator

- Support the preparation of substitute educators through a monthly statewide substitute teaching professional development program

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.
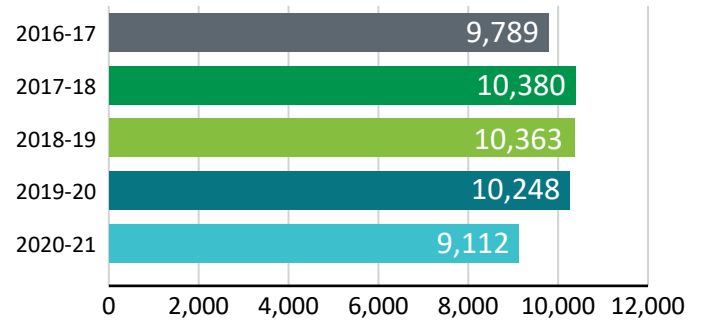
- Facilitate the Principal Leadership Institute to support principals in creating a sense of collective teacher efficacy and an empowering culture and climate to increase teacher retention and satisfaction

- Assist principals' efforts to support their workforce through strategic implementation of educator effectiveness laws and human capital strategic systems

- Administer the Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey (TLCC) and assist school leaders in understanding, analyzing, and utilizing the data to improve school climate and working conditions
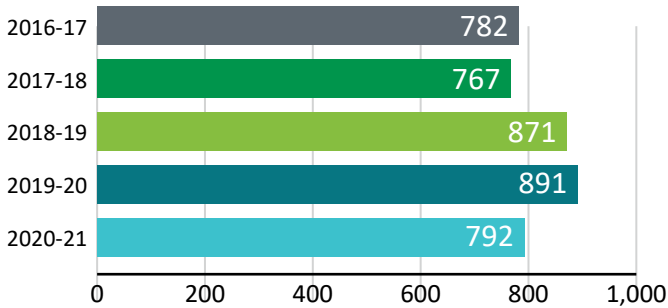
Number of individuals who completed an educator preparation program at an institute of higher education in Colorado
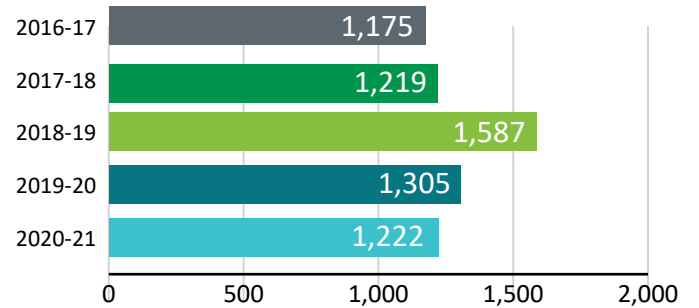
Year	Value
2016-17	2,674
2017-18	2,553
2018-19	2,494
2019-20	2,168
2020-21	2,249
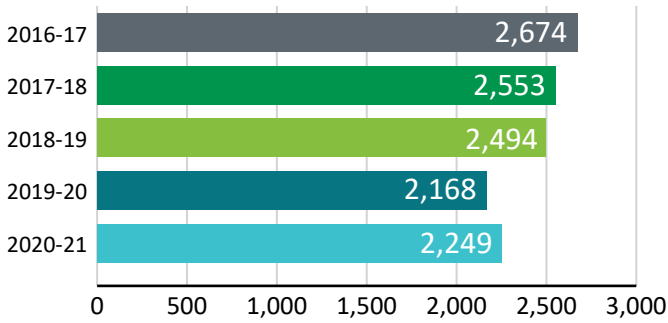
Number of individuals who enrolled in an institute of higher education, educator preparation program in Colorado

Year	Value
2016-17	9,789
2017-18	10,380
2018-19	10,363
2019-20	10,248
2020-21	9,112

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
2020-21	792

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
2020-21	1,222

During the 2021-22 school year, Colorado had approximately 7,100 educator openings. Of those openings, approximately 1,875 were not able to be filled or were filled through shortage mechanisms, such as emergency licensing. Normally, these positions are filled by students graduating from educator preparation programs at colleges and universities or professionals who have completed an alternative license program. Although we have seen a 7.5% increase in the last few years in educators completing Colorado educator preparation programs, we still see areas of content and geographical shortage. Some of the open positions – especially in rural areas and in specific endorsement areas including mathematics, 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. The programs set in motion in the last five years are showing improvement in creating a stronger educator pipeline, however, the need for educators, especially specialized service professionals, like school nurses, has increased significantly. Continued focus on recruiting and retaining our educators is a must.

What Progress Looks Like

- Initial educator licenses issued by CDE will increase from 6,995 in 2019 to 7,274 in 2023.

- Statewide teacher turnover rate will decrease from 17.10% in 2021 to 15.50% in 2023.

Organizational Excellence

By strengthening our capacity to best support Colorado's schools and districts – both now and in the future – and 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, Information Management Services and Policy & Legislative Relations.

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 billion for Colorado, the majority of which CDE is responsible for allocating and distributing to districts, as well as conducting on-going monitoring and reporting.

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. By September 2024, CDE will establish integrated data systems (including a grants management system) to provide greater transparency into the allocation of funding to districts and schools and improve strategic decisions in those allocation processes.

Metric

- Error-free fund distributions per cycle will increase from 99.9% to 100% by 2023. This metric reflects over 4,000 payments made each quarter.

Key Services Cont.

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.

CDE has experienced a moderate increase in turnover in 2021 (estimated at 19% in 2021 compared with 15% in 2019). The increase is attributed to the larger nationwide labor market conditions. Due to this turnover and the additional workload associated with federal stimulus funding, CDE has experienced a notable increase in recruitment and onboarding activities.

Strategic Operation

We will connect CDE employees and our work to CDE's values, creating a mission driven and values-based culture. We will refine and learn from flexible work arrangements, utilizing mobile technologies to maximize efficiency and continue to meet business needs. We will identify or develop tools and resources to support the use of hybrid meetings, allowing collaboration between both remote and in-person colleagues. 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.
- CDE will develop metrics for recruitment processes.

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 improving the functionality of the state's Data Pipeline, as well as 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.
- Establish integrated data systems that improve the data submission experience for districts and schools.

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.*
- Create a comprehensive and improved public data reporting system with first phase roll-outs by 2024.

* These reports were paused for 2020 and 2021 as a result of the suspension of state assessments in 2019-20 and limited assessments given in 2020-21 due to COVID-19.

Key Services Cont.

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. To further assist in supporting educators through the licensing process in a seamless, transparent and informative way, a new educator licensing system was launched, Colorado Online Licensing (COOL). The system has proven to streamline the process of applying for licensure while giving the applicant more real time information.

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 2022 and 2023.

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.
- Maintain industry-established security procedures by:
    ◊ Implementing two-factor authentication for CDE supported applications
    ◊ Implementing an upgraded Information Security Plan
    ◊ Providing cyber security training to all permanent CDE employees
- Establish integrated data systems (including an upgraded Data Pipeline, a grants management system and customer relations management system) to provide greater transparency into grant funding and associated processes, better visibility into CDE touchpoints with districts and to improve access to and visibility of integrated data.

Metric

- Implement SharePoint by December 2021. Once implemented and training is complete, securely transfer data by June 2023.
- Implement two-factor authentication for supported applications by June 2023.
- 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.

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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 while maximizing coherence with existing structures and systems.

Strategic Operation

- 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.
- Conduct an equity analysis when developing new 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, with timelines dependent on the amount of staff coordination required.
- Engaging regularly 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 internal and external policies to consider possible biases in policies, potential burden created by policies, how to involve those who are impacted in decision-making, and strategies for reducing or mitigating negative impacts and reducing disparities.