

STRATEGIC PLAN

2017-2022



UPDATE DECEMBER 2019



Our Vision

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

Our Mission

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



COLORADO
Department of Education

Our Values

ALL STUDENTS

COLLABORATION

COMMUNICATION

CUSTOMER SERVICE

HONESTY

INNOVATION

INTEGRITY

RESPECT

TRANSPARENCY

TRUST



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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

Guiding Principles

The following principles guide us as 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



**MORE
OPTIONS**

GOAL:

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



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 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 evidence-based training to teachers
- Support the increase of quality and availability on state-funded preschool programs
- Collaborate with the Colorado Department of Higher Education and institutions of higher education to review and support implementation of evidence-based reading instruction

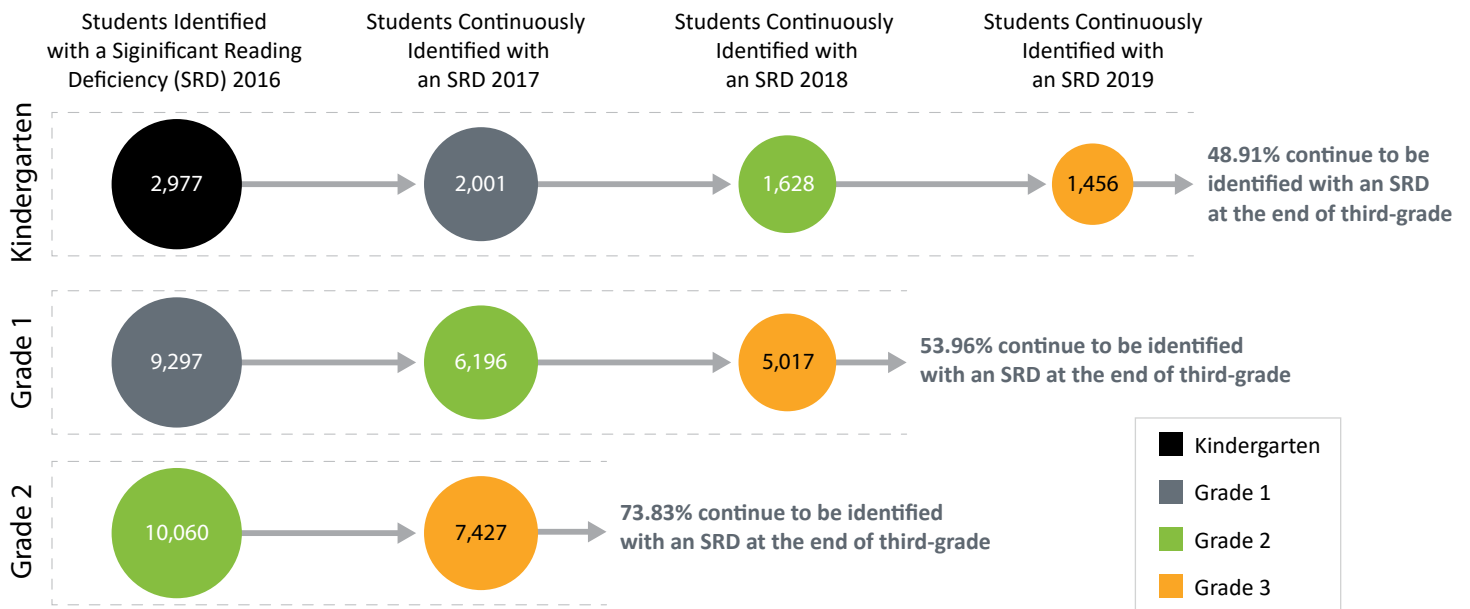
We will strengthen partnerships with the Colorado Department of Human Services as well as other state and local agencies, communities and libraries to support early learning and literacy in preschool through third grade.

- Support efforts to streamline preschool program licensing 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 community and state resources to ensure needs are met among special populations, including students with disabilities, English learners, students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, migrant students and others

We will support districts in implementing full-day kindergarten programs.

- Coordinate with university partners to develop a best practices guide for implementing full-day kindergarten
- Provide technical assistance to districts in developing plans to effectively use additional ECARE Colorado Preschool Program positions

Early Intervention Produces Results for Struggling Readers



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.

What Progress Looks Like

- Students who were identified with a significant reading deficiency (SRD) in kindergarten, first or second grade and are still identified in 3rd grade will decrease from 60.7% in 2019 to 58.7% in 2020.
- 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 2020.
- State-funded programs rated as high quality by Colorado Shines Quality Rating Improvement System will increase from 50% in 2018-19 to 60% in 2019-20.
- 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 2020.
- Four-year-olds funded through the Colorado Preschool Program who meet age expectations will increase from 89% in 2018-19 to 92% in 2019-20 in literacy, and from 80% in 2018-19 to 83% in 2019-20 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 at public library programs will increase by 3% from 2,362,418 in 2018 to 2,433,291 in 2021.



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, students from a number of historically underserved backgrounds – specifically those from economically challenged communities, highly mobile families, racial minority groups, English Learners and students with disabilities – continue to fall short of their academic potential and are missing the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in today’s economy and thrive in our communities. By concentrating on equity as a foundational construct of our work at CDE, we will empower schools and districts in their efforts to increase access and opportunity and ultimately reduce the pervasive influence that systemic inequities have on student outcomes.

Strategic Activities

We will develop the capacity to expand access, opportunities and a sense of belonging for students to close equity gaps across Colorado.

- Continue to build CDE staff members’ knowledge and competency to increase student equity by updating the Equity Toolkit and expanding training for staff
- Review internal policies and practices to strengthen diversity, equity and inclusion within the department
- 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

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 and use the Education Leadership Council 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 get there

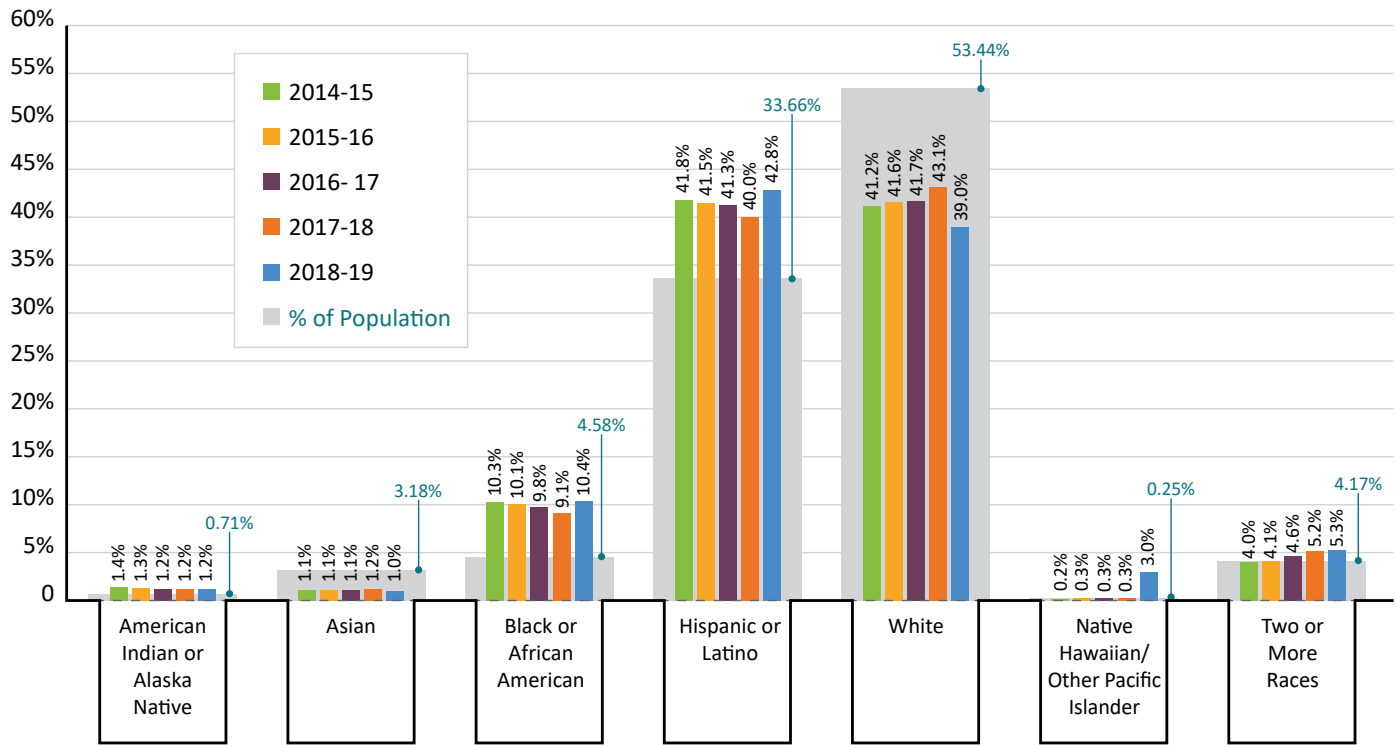
We will support school and district efforts to develop school climates that create a sense of belonging for all teachers and students and lead to effective learning conditions.

- Organize and communicate about the various grants and programs focused on school climate and student well-being so they can be easily accessed
- Participate in the Coherence Lab Fellowship offered by the Council of Chief State School Officers with district leaders and other key stakeholders to establish greater understanding of school climate work and deepen our work on equity issues
- 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

Percent of Suspensions and Expulsions by Race/Ethnicity Over Time



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 2020.
- 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.



Prioritize and Maximize Support for Schools and Districts

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 strategically allocate both human and financial resources to maximize support for schools and districts needing improvement.

- Effectively implement the CDE district Support Coordinator role and associated processes and protocols, to help coordinate and deploy streamlined resources and supports from across the department
- Continue to review CDE's resources to determine how best to leverage existing funding sources on behalf of identified schools and districts
- Focus CDE support, expertise and resources on the four domains of rapid school improvement: leadership, educator talent, school culture, and instruction
- Directly support schools and districts through initiatives such as the Turnaround Network and the Connect for Success program

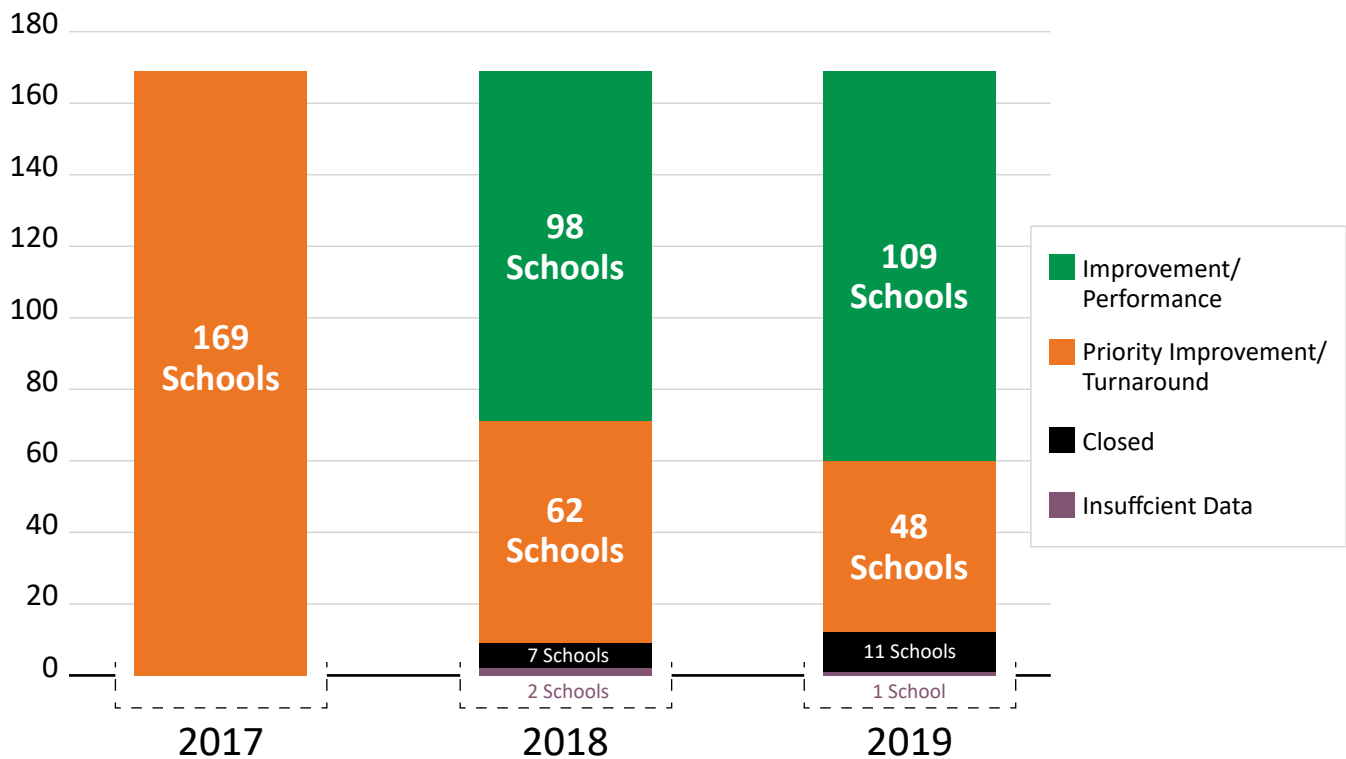
We will develop and promote a single menu of all CDE supports and interventions for schools and districts needing improvement.

- Expand the department's menu of support and service options available to districts based on identified needs across the state
- Continue to build and refine the single grant application process for districts to match unique local needs with state and federal resources, decreasing the administrative burden on districts
- Continue to develop criteria around matching needs of identified schools with supports that meet their needs

We will 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 School Performance Frameworks
- Use evaluation results to drive the strategic allocation of school improvement resources

2017-2019 Schools in 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.

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.
- Districts with eligible schools that access funds for improvement will increase from 58% in 2019 to 80% by 2022.
- 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 2022.



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 college and career 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 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

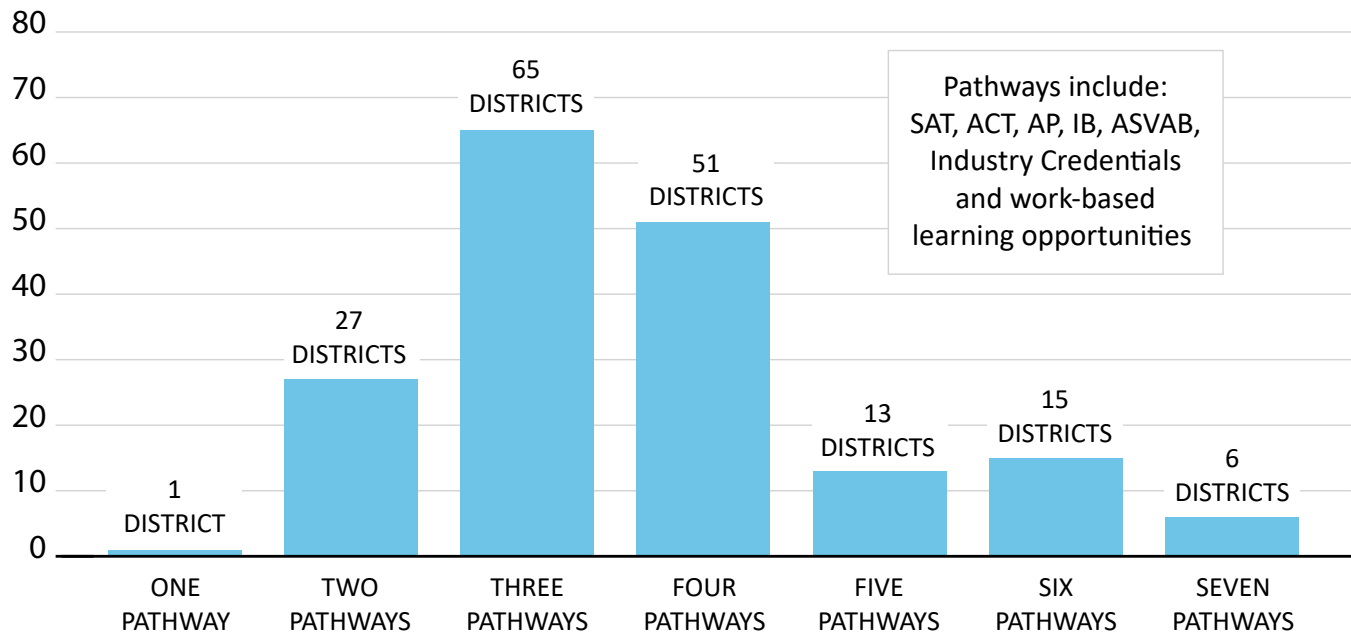
We will promote Individual Career and Academic Planning (ICAP) as a tool to help students complete high school, gain work experience and plan for their futures.

- 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 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 and their families simultaneously

2017-2018 Colorado School Districts Offering Multiple-Pathways Options



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 88.25% in 2018 to 90% by 2022.
- High school students attaining a postsecondary credential within six years of graduation will increase from 53.5% for the class of 2011 to 60% for the class of 2016.
- School districts offering at least three pathways or options for students will increase from 150 districts in 2018 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.



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 programs are teaching high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction strategies to teacher candidates

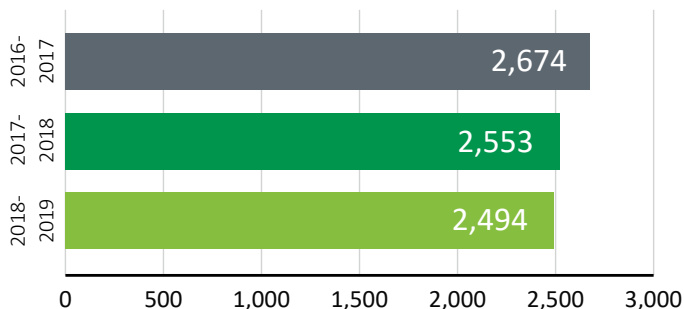
We will improve support to future and current educators and expand quality educator pipelines.

- 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

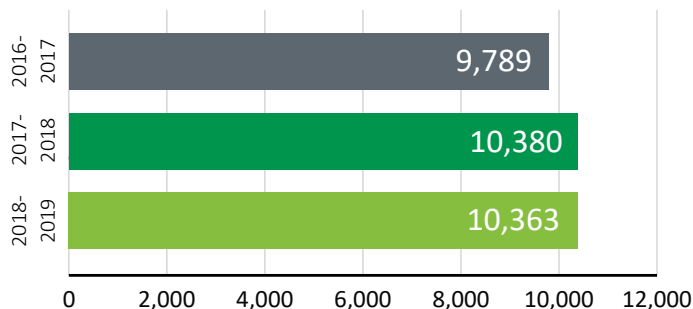
We will deepen our support for principals as they work to hire, develop and retain high-quality teachers to provide the highest outcomes for students.

- Facilitate collaboration with teacher-leaders, principals and principal-managers to focus on support for teachers, solutions for 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

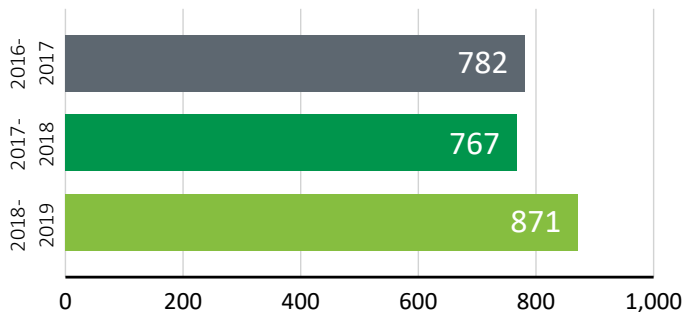
Number of individuals who completed an educator preparation program at an institute of higher education in Colorado



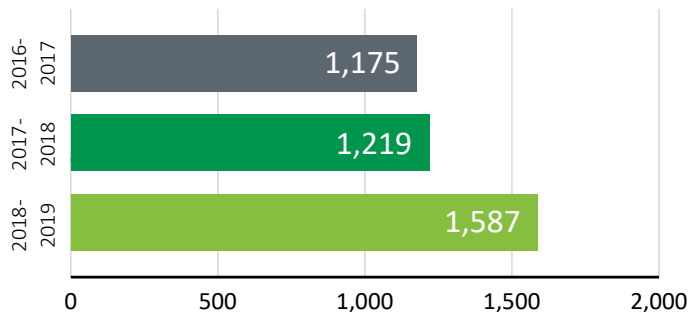
Number of individuals who enrolled in an institute of higher education, educator preparation program in Colorado



Number of individuals who completed an alternative licensing program in Colorado



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



Colorado has approximately 9,000 educator annual openings. Of those openings, approximately 1,400 are not able to be filled or are 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. However, with a 16 percent decline in individuals completing an educator preparation program in Colorado from 2010 to 2016, some of these open positions – especially in rural areas and in specific endorsement areas including mathematics, science 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 6,995 in 2019 to 7,274 in 2022.
- Statewide teacher turnover rate will decrease from 16.39% in 2018 to 15.50% in 2022.



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.

Strategic Operation

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

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.

Metrics

- CDE will monitor and measure both retention and turnover rates.
- CDE will reduce the unfavorable turnover rate by 5% annually.

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.

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 Operations

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

Metrics

- The average cycle time – from receipt of a completed application and cleared fingerprint report to a license sent via email – will decrease from 12.33 business days in 2019 to 10 business days in 2020.

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.
- 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
- 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 Office 365 by June 2020. Once complete, SharePoint will be implemented in 2020. Secure data transfer will be accomplished after these implementations are complete and training has occurred, targeted for the third quarter of 2020.
- Implement two-factor authentication for supported applications by June 2020.
- Implement an upgraded Information Security Plan by June 2020.
- Ensure 100% compliance with cyber security training yearly, by June 30.

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 build awareness and understanding of the requirements of the law among CDE staff, SBE members, district staff and educators.

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

Metric

- Develop and disseminate an integrated timeline document that provides superintendents with key dates for implementation of new and existing legislation annually by September 1
- Survey staff and develop strategies for better leveraging fiscal note submissions process to assist with implementation of new legislation
- Survey staff and partner organizations to understand ways to improve cohesive implementation of laws and regulations, making connections to and between existing programs and services annually



COLORADO
Department of Education

