SUPPORTING Great Schools and Districts for All Students
Overview of Colorado's Accountability System

The power of Colorado's education improvement efforts lies in having a comprehensive educational system consisting of relevant and rigorous standards, aligned and meaningful assessments, excellent teachers and school leaders, and high-performing schools and districts. All aspects of the system are grounded in continuous improvement cycles; with performance frameworks aligned to improvement planning, and schools and districts focused on improving student learning and ensuring all students are ready for success in an increasingly competitive workforce.

Senate Bill 09-163: The Education Accountability Act

The Education Accountability Act of 2009 (S.B. 09-163) holds the state, districts, and individual public schools accountable for performance on the same set of indicators and related measures. The statute:

- Requires a review of all schools and districts on common measures of achievement, growth and postsecondary workforce readiness in order to consistently describe performance
- Outlines shared accountability measures for districts and schools
- Provides clear requirements for support and intervention for struggling schools and districts
- Focuses improvement through unified improvement planning

In support of S.B. 09-163, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) provides a framework that establishes performance expectations for districts and schools, defines how performance will be measured and evaluated, and outlines the assistance CDE will provide to support local efforts to create and sustain high-performing schools.

District and School Performance Frameworks

Purpose

The District and School Performance Frameworks (DPF/SPF) serve to:

- Measure and hold districts and schools accountable for student performance on the same set of indicators and measures relative to state goals
- Inform a differentiated approach to state support based on performance results
- Identify districts and schools that are the highest performing and learn from their practices

District Accreditation and School Plan Categories

The **District Performance Framework** assigns one of five accreditation categories to each district based on attainment of performance indicators:

1) **Accredited with Distinction**: Meets or exceeds indicators; required to adopt and implement a Performance Plan.
2) **Accredited**: Meets indicators; required to adopt and implement a Performance Plan.
3) **Accredited with Improvement Plan**: Does not meet indicators; required to adopt and implement an Improvement Plan.
4) **Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan**: Does not meet indicators; required to adopt and implement a Priority Improvement Plan.
5) **Accredited with Turnaround Plan**: Does not meet indicators; required to adopt and implement a Turnaround Plan.

The **School Performance Framework** assigns one of four plan types to each school based on attainment of performance indicators:

1) **Performance Plan**: Required to adopt and implement a Performance Plan.
2) **Improvement Plan**: Required to adopt and implement an Improvement Plan.
3) **Priority Improvement Plan**: Required to adopt and implement a Priority Improvement Plan.
4) **Turnaround Plan**: Required to adopt and implement a Turnaround Plan.

The performance frameworks allow the state to better support district planning, decision-making and school improvement efforts.
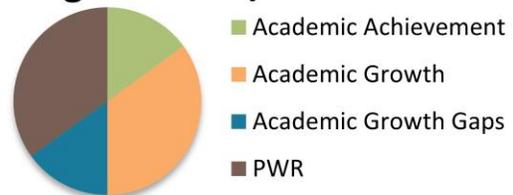
Key Performance Indicators

The performance frameworks measure attainment on the four key performance indicators outlined in S.B. 09-163 as the measures of educational success: academic achievement, academic longitudinal growth, academic gaps and postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR). These indicators and their sub-indicators represent the key information for determining the relative performance of a district/school in relation to CDE's vision for success. State identified measures and metrics for each of these performance indicators are combined to arrive at an overall evaluation of a school's or a district's performance.
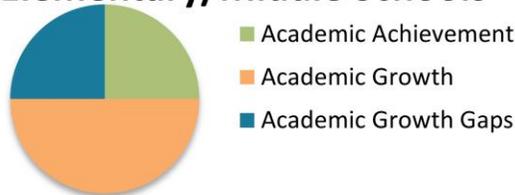
For districts, the evaluation of overall performance on these indicators leads to an accreditation designation. For schools, the evaluation of overall performance on these indicators leads to the assignment of the type of improvement plan schools will implement. Districts continue to accredit schools, and they may do so using the state's performance framework or using their own more exhaustive or stringent framework.

Unified Improvement Planning

Colorado's Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) was introduced to streamline improvement planning requirements for state (e.g., S.B. 09-163) and federal accountability (e.g., ESEA Title I). The UIP template and planning process represent a shift from planning as an "event" to planning as a critical component of "continuous improvement." This process reduces the total number of separate plans schools and districts are required to complete with the intent of creating a single plan that has true meaning for its stakeholders.

By engaging in a continuous improvement cycle, districts and schools will improve their effectiveness and the outcomes for students. Schools and districts are expected to enter the improvement planning cycle several times throughout the year to maximize outcomes. Planning teams will:

* Focus attention on the right things (performance indicators)
* Evaluate performance by gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data about performance
* Plan improvement strategies based on performance data and root cause analysis
* Implement planned improvement strategies

Where can I learn more?

Specific information on S.B. 09-163 can be found here: **www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/index.asp**

The Colorado Department of Education
CONNECTING . . . *rigorous academic standards . . . meaningful assessments . . . engaging learning options . . . excellent educators . . . for* **STUDENT SUCCESS**