



Colorado Department of Education – Communications Office
201 East Colfax Ave.
Room 501
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: 303-866-3898
Fax: 303-866-6938

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News Release

New School and District Data Released to Garner Awareness for Colorado's Growth Model

The Colorado Department of Education today released data that will lead to the full implementation of a new system of accountability based on the progress of individual students over time. The system is based on Colorado's Growth Model.

The data released today is based on 2006-2007 school-year data from the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP). The data include median growth percentiles for each school by district, which is useful for benchmarking district and school performance state-wide.

The data can be found at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_accredit.htm

"This approach not only puts student achievement data in a whole new light, it provides a new prism to analyze the history of achievement for each student, school and district," said Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. "The growth model responds to the legislature's vision of a new cornerstone for our accountability system and, even in its infancy, is already generating a more thoughtful analysis of what's needed for all students, no matter their current level of achievement."

Growth displays based on the 2007-2008 CSAP data will be released to districts in August followed by displays suitable for public release. Only district and school-level views will be available to the public; individual student assessment data is protected by federal privacy laws.

Colorado's Growth Model is an essential part of CDE's goal to develop a system that relentlessly focuses on the learning of all students. This commitment is central to "Forward Thinking," the department's blueprint for transforming its role in public education.

Colorado's Growth Model offers a way for educators to understand how much growth a student made from one year to the next in the context of a student's "academic peers."

The growth model compares each student's performance to students in the same grade throughout Colorado who had similar CSAP scores in past years. The model calculates a growth percentile, much like a height and weight chart. If a student grew as well or better than 60 percent of his or her academic peers, for example, the student would be at the 60th percentile. Colorado's Growth Model also shows how much progress a student needs to make to reach proficiency within one, two, or three years.

The growth model focuses attention on maximizing student progress over time and reveals where, and among which students, the strongest growth is happening—and where it is not.

The growth model offers a means for schools and districts to learn from one another, and allows the department of education to target its limited resources toward the greatest need.

Colorado's Growth Model recognizes that the most effective schools and districts are those that produce the highest sustained rates of growth in student achievement, which may or may not be districts and schools with the highest test scores each year.

CDE is working with stakeholders throughout the state to spread the word about Colorado's Growth Model. CDE's outreach efforts include the upcoming Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE) conference, regional meetings, and individual and group visits with department's regional managers, who work directly with schools in the field.

Background

The development of the model was based on three essential questions about student, school and district performance:

- What is the growth rate of a student, a school and a district?

- What should the growth rate be in order for a student to reach a desired level of achievement?
- What are the highest sustained growth rates that exist today and under what conditions might they improve?

In addition, the model provides information based on measures that are fair, balanced, and transparent:

- Fair—as perceived by all stakeholders
- Balanced—in that the information recognizes multiple ways of understanding school quality, not just a single test score
- Transparent—in that all stakeholders can understand the language used to describe results

History

Over the last decade, CDE has actively pursued the analysis of student, school and district CSAP data over time at the individual student level.

Legislation enacted in 2004 (HB 04-1433) established growth analysis techniques employed by CDE for diagnostic purposes. Building on this initiative, legislation enacted in 2007 (HB 07-1048) directed CDE to refine the methodology and produce more useful information for schools and parents, while expanding its use for accountability purposes. A technical advisory panel was appointed by Governor Bill Ritter and tasked with recommending a model to the Colorado State Board of Education.

The advisory panel recommended that Colorado's Growth Model calculate a growth percentile for each student relative to all other students in the state with the same prior academic history (academic peers).

Prior to making this recommendation, the advisory panel relied on the resources and expertise of the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (particularly Dr. Damian Betebenner) to develop procedures used to derive student growth percentiles and to provide technical advice on their implementation in a state accountability system.

Colorado's Growth Model provides students, parents, teachers, principals, administrators, policy makers and the public with an easily

understood yet rigorous means by which to understand student progress over time. Colorado's Growth Model:

- Quantifies year-to-year growth
- Defines what constitutes "typical growth" (or "one-year's growth in one-year's time")
- Defines what constitutes "adequate growth" to reach proficient and advanced performance within one, two, or three years.

The anticipated roll out of the information from Colorado's Growth Model to school districts is scheduled for August following availability of the 2008 CSAP results. CDE is also incorporating the new growth measure into State Accreditation, School Accountability Reports, and criteria for identifying schools whose growth makes them eligible for the Governor's Improvement Award.

For more information, contact Mark Stevens, 303-866-3898, or Megan McDermott, 303-866-2334, in the CDE Office of Communications. To sign up for the CDE e-mail news service, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/index.html>.

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