



Colorado Department of Education – Communications Office
201 East Colfax Ave.
Room 103
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: 303-866-3898
Fax: 303-866-6938

Jan. 8, 2009

News Release

U.S. Department of Education Approves Use of The Colorado Growth Model In NCLB Pilot

U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings today announced approval of the Colorado Growth Model as part of a pilot measuring adequate yearly progress (AYP) under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) school accountability system. The approval followed a rigorous evaluation of the Colorado Growth Model by peer reviewers selected by the U.S. Department of Education.

“This is a welcome announcement that validates the integrity of the Colorado Growth Model as a tool that is providing a valid picture of student progress toward reaching state standards,” said Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. “This continues our momentum as we work to align and improve cohesion between state and federal accountability systems.”

Fifteen states have now been approved for the pilot since 2006. They include Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Texas. Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Texas were also approved today.

Secretary Spellings said the four new growth models in the group “will support educational innovation while continuing to hold schools

accountable for the goal of every student performing at or above grade level by 2014. I look forward to seeing the positive results these changes will help produce for students.”

The Colorado Growth Model provides a common understanding of how individual students and groups of students progress from year to year toward state standards based on where each individual student begins. The 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 Colorado Department of Education will now determine the best approach for implementing the Colorado Growth Model for AYP purposes, given the changing administrations in Washington and the upcoming reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The U.S. Department of Education used a rigorous peer review process to ensure that the selection process was fair and transparent.

A panel of nationally recognized experts reviewed and made recommendations on states' proposals. The department is gathering data to test the idea that growth models can be fair, reliable and innovative methods to measure student improvement and to hold schools accountable for results. Growth models track individual student achievement from one year to the next, giving schools credit for student improvement over time.

The principles of approved, high-quality growth models are that they:

1. Insure that all students are proficient by 2014 and set annual state goals to ensure that the achievement gap is closing for all groups of students;
2. Set expectations for annual achievement based upon meeting grade-level proficiency and not upon student background or school characteristics;
3. Hold schools accountable for student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics;
4. Ensure that all students in tested grades are included in the assessment and accountability system; hold schools and districts accountable for the performance of each student subgroup and include all schools and districts;
5. Include assessments, in each of grades three through eight and high school, in both reading/language arts and mathematics that

- have been operational for more than one year and have received approval through the NCLB standards and assessment review process. The assessment system must also produce comparable results from grade to grade and year to year;
6. Track student progress as part of the state data system;
 7. Include student participation rates and student achievement as separate academic indicators in the state accountability system.

The peer reviewers, who represent academia, private organizations and state and local education agencies, reviewed each proposal based on the Peer Review Guidance. For more information about the Peer Review Guidance process, please visit

<http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/growthmodel/index.html>

For more information on the federal Growth Model Pilot, please visit:

<http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/growthmodel/index.html>

For more information about The Colorado Growth Model, visit:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/growthmodel.html>

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>.

#