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News Release

New School Accountability Process Builds on Colorado Growth Model; 2008-2009 Results Reveal How Many Students Are On Track For Proficiency

The Colorado Department of Education today released 2008-2009 school year results of the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) and detailed analyses generated by the Colorado Growth Model.

"Together these pictures of individual student, school and district performance provide a multi-dimensional portrait for parents, teachers, principals and the broader community to view the effectiveness of our schools," said Colorado Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones. "The good news is that the growth model reveals that schools are doing a good job at sustaining proficiency for students who are already performing at grade level.

"The challenge is to increase urgency within our system to reach students who have fallen behind. Our schools were built and staffed for all students. However, the number of low-performing students whose growth rates are not enough to catch up compels us to do more to create learning environments that nurture, inspire and ensure that more students reach proficiency."

Senate Bill 09-163, approved with broad bipartisan support in the Colorado State Legislature and signed by Gov. Bill Ritter, marks the beginning of a new era of school accountability in the state, said Commissioner Jones.

"We are fortunate to have strong partnerships in place to take on this challenging work," he said. "Senate Bill 09-163 sent a strong signal that Colorado's leadership cares and Colorado's leadership expects more. I know the department of education heard that message and we will work closely with the Colorado State Board of Education to set meaningful targets for schools that will set high expectations for all."

Added state board of education member Peggy Littleton, who spoke during the news event: "Under the accreditation process, there are consequences for schools and districts. The state board of education supports Commissioner Jones in partnering with those schools identified through the data that require significant improvement. Those schools will be assisted using research-based practices."

The Department of Education also unveiled School*View,* a new Web portal required under S.B.09-163 that provides unprecedented transparency for all school performance data, eventually including all the information previously available on School Accountability Reports.

The School*View* portal (www.schoolview.org or via the CDE Web site, www.cde.state.co.us) contains a tool for exploring the Colorado Growth Model data, a Learning Center option to guide users through the many kinds of information in the new portal and a Community Connections online forum.

"The combination of School*View* and the Colorado Growth Model provide a much clearer understanding of school performance than we have had in the past and invites public involvement in the urgency for improvement," said Commissioner Jones. "We strongly encourage everyone who cares about how well our education system is doing in Colorado to take a look."

Colorado Growth Model Results
Richard Wenning, Associate Commissioner, highlighted a series of statewide results from the Colorado Growth Model. (Background on the Colorado Growth Model is available at www.schoolview.org) "The Colorado Growth Model answers two basic questions we all want answers to," said Wenning. "First, how much growth are students making and, second, is it good enough? The growth model answers these questions for an individual student, group, school, district, or the state."

The Colorado Growth Model defines:

"Keep Up" as a good enough growth rate for a proficient or advanced student to remain at least proficient over three years.

"Move Up" as a good enough growth rate for a proficient student to reach an advanced level of achievement within three years.

"Catch Up" as a good enough growth rate for a student below proficient to reach proficient within three years.

Keeping Up
- Eighty-two percent of students are growing fast enough to keep up in reading.
- Seventy-four percent of students are growing fast enough to keep up in writing.
- Sixty-three percent of students are growing fast enough to keep up in mathematics.
- Among low-income students (those eligible for free- and reduced-price lunch), 72 percent of students are growing fast enough to keep up in reading, 63 percent are growing fast enough to keep up in writing and only 50 percent are growing fast enough to keep up in mathematics.

Moving Up
- Sixteen percent of students rated proficient are growing fast enough to move up to advanced in reading.
- Twenty-two percent of students rated proficient are growing fast enough to move up to advanced in writing.
- Twenty-six percent of students rated proficient are growing fast enough to move up to advanced in mathematics.

Catching Up
- Thirty-four percent of students who scored below proficiency last year in reading were growing fast enough to catch up to proficiency. In all, 143,813 students scored below proficiency in reading in 2008 (out of 485,000 students who took CSAP).
- Twenty-nine percent of students who scored below proficiency last year in writing were growing fast enough to catch up to proficiency. A total of 210,473 students scored below proficient in writing in 2008 (out of 485,000 students who took CSAP).
- Fourteen percent who scored below proficiency last year in mathematics were growing fast enough to catch up to proficiency. A total of 212,994 students scored below proficient in mathematics in 2008 (out of 485,000 students who took CSAP).

- Among students who scored "unsatisfactory" on CSAP:

  - Fourteen percent of students were growing fast enough to catch up to proficiency in reading. In all, 47,909 students scored unsatisfactory in reading in 2008.
  - Eight percent of students were growing fast enough to catch up to proficiency in writing. A total of 28,128 students scored unsatisfactory in writing in 2008.
  - Three percent of students were growing fast enough to catch up to proficiency in mathematics. A total of 82,167 scored unsatisfactory in mathematics in 2008.

"Beginning today, we are changing conversations to focus on the progress that each of our students needs to reach postsecondary and workforce readiness," said Associate Commissioner Richard Wenning. "The growth model provides a way of gauging whether students are reaching postsecondary and workforce readiness."

High-Performing Schools
"A key conversation we would like to start today is about learning how our highest performing schools sustain such strong results over time," said Associate Commissioner Wenning. "We believe by shining light on the highest performing schools, we encourage and empower educators to strive to meet higher levels of performance based on what is already happening in some schools in Colorado."

The department of education published a list of 161 schools that demonstrated the highest sustained rates of student academic progress over three consecutive years in Colorado.

The list includes schools that demonstrated 60th percentile or higher median growth percentiles in any one subject for at least three years running (2007, 2008 and 2009).

The complete list is posted on the CDE Web site:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/newsreleases.html

Among these 161 schools, 24 percent were in rural areas and 28 had percentages of low-income students of 40 percent or higher.

Ten schools of the 161 were recognized at the event: Tollgate Elementary School (Aurora Public Schools); Crowley County Elementary School (Crowley County Schools), McMeen Elementary School, Denver School of Science and Technology and West Denver

Preparatory School (Denver Public Schools); Bradford Intermediate School (Jefferson County Schools); Harris Bilingual Elementary (Poudre R-1 School District, Fort Collins); South Park High School (Park County Re-2 School District); Mead Middle School (St. Vrain Valley School District); and Delta Middle School (Delta County Schools).

2009 Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) Results
The CSAP achievement results show the percentage of students that score at the unsatisfactory, partially proficient, proficient and advanced levels in grades three through 10 in the content areas of reading, writing and mathematics, and in grades five, eight and 10 for science.

Details of note from the 2009 CSAP results:

- 98.9 percent of students completed the CSAP in the 2008-2009 school year.

- In all, nearly 1.6 million tests were given.

- In reading, the results reveal an increase in the percentage of students in the proficient and advanced categories from 2008 to 2009 for five grades and a decline in three grades.

- In writing, the results reveal an increase in the percentage of students in the proficient and advanced categories from 2008 to 2009 for five grades and a decline in two grades. One grade was unchanged.

- In mathematics, the results show an increase in the percentage of students in the proficient and advanced categories from 2008 to 2009 for four grades, a decline in three grades and unchanged in one grade.

- In science, the results show score increases in all three grade levels tested (grades five, eight and 10). It is worth noting that data are not comparable in science from 2008 to 2007 because the Colorado State Board of Education adopted revised model content standards for science in 2007 and with those came new cut scores for determining achievement levels.

Lectura and Escritura

- In 2009, 63 percent of third-grade students scored in the proficient and advanced categories on the Spanish reading test *Lectura*. The results were up from 2008. The number of third grade students taking the third grade *Lectura* declined by 131 students from 1,498 in 2008 to 1,367 in 2009.

- In 2009, 36 percent of fourth grade students scored in the proficient and advanced categories on *Lectura*; in 2008, this percentage was 39 percent. The number of fourth grade students taking the *Lectura* in 2008 declined from 178 in 2008 to 168 in 2009.

- The percentage of students in the proficient and advanced categories on the third grade Spanish writing test, *Escritura*, increased by four percentage points, from 59 percent proficient and advanced to 63 percent, between 2008 and 2009. Performance on the fourth grade *Escritura* increased by six percentage points—from 21 percent proficient and advanced to 27 percent.

ACT Results

Results on the overall composite increased to 19.6, up .2 points from 2008. All content areas showed increases except English, which stayed the same at 18.6. Note: all juniors in Colorado are required to take this college entrance exam, given in April and May.

CSAPA

The CSAP alternate assessment is administered to students with significant cognitive disabilities, about 4,900 students during the 2007-2008 school year. The fully revised CSAPA enables students to demonstrate what they know and are able to do based on the state's adopted standards.

On the reading assessment between 26 percent and 45 percent of CSAPA test takers were in the developing or novice categories.

On the writing assessment between 28 percent and 42 percent of CSAPA test takers were in the developing or novice categories.

On the mathematics assessment between 24 percent and 51 percent of CSAPA test takers were in the developing or novice categories.

In science between 35 percent and 48 percent of CSAPA test takers were in the developing or novice categories.

Aligned Accountability Systems
The Education Accountability Act (S.B.09-163) was signed into law by Governor Ritter on May 21, 2009. The major purposes of the bill include:

1. Aligning conflicting accountability systems into a single system that passes federal muster.
2. Modernizing and aligning reporting of state, district and school performance information.
3. Creating a fairer, clearer and more effective cycle of support and intervention.
4. Enhancing state, district and school oversight of improvement efforts.

The bill builds off of past legislation and actions by incorporating:

- H.B.07-1048, which established student academic growth as the cornerstone of Colorado's educational accountability system.
- S.B.08-212, which establishes readiness for postsecondary and workforce success as Colorado's overarching goal for all students.
- S.B.00-186, by updating its core concepts in recognition of lessons learned and new technology, while retaining its high expectations and accountability for student results.
- Revised district accreditation process established by CDE in 2008 in cooperation with school districts throughout the state.

The bill calls for a new statewide system of accountability, support and intervention. It requires the State Board of Education to annually reaffirm or revise statewide targets for achievement on the four key performance indicators—student longitudinal growth, student levels on statewide assessments, the extent of growth and achievement gaps and postsecondary and workforce readiness.

Under the bill, the state board will promulgate rules defining the criteria by which CDE will assign districts to accreditation categories. Those categories will be accredited with distinction, accredited, accredited with improvement plan, accredited with priority improvement plan and accredited with turnaround plan. The bill spells

out that the state board shall not allow a district to remain at "accredited with priority improvement plan" status or below for longer than a total of five consecutive school years before removing accreditation.

In creating district accreditation contracts, the bill calls for the commissioner to confirm that districts establish an accreditation system for their schools that is aligned with and meets or exceeds the rigor of the state's accreditation system for districts.

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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