

# On Track Growth

## Re-Introduction into the Performance Frameworks



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Colorado’s educational accountability law requires a metric that determines whether a student is making enough growth to reach a target level of achievement within a given timeframe. Called On-Track Growth, this measure assesses whether students are **catching up** to grade-level expectations or **keeping up** with expectations. Each student will have one of the two following On-Track designations for a given school year:

- **Catch up:** Indicates whether students scoring below grade level are catching up to grade-level expectations quickly enough.
- **Keep Up:** Indicates whether students who are already meeting grade-level expectations are maintaining their performance.

### Reintroducing the On-Track Growth Measure

The On-Track Growth measure has not been part of school and district ratings since the transition to the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) assessments in 2015, when it was referred to as adequate growth. Based upon feedback from districts that the expectations were not always reasonable, the department retired the metric and began to explore other methodologies in partnership with the state’s [Technical Advisory Panel \(TAP\)](#). After adopting a calculation methodology for elementary and middle schools in 2019 (described on the next page), discussions on how to approach this measure for high schools and districts were scheduled for late spring 2020. However, because of disruptions created by the pandemic, these plans were paused.

### Implementing the On-Track Growth Measure

Since CMAS growth will be available across all typical grades and content areas in 2023, CDE is planning on calculating On-Track Growth for elementary and middle schools. At the earliest, the new metric will be calculated and released for informational purposes only in 2023 and will count for points the following year (i.e., 2024 if data is released for informational purposes in 2023). CDE will work with the TAP and the state board throughout 2023 to investigate a methodology for high schools and districts.

#### Weighting and Inclusion in Elementary and Middle School Frameworks.

Within the School Performance Framework, the metric will account for 10% of the total framework points for elementary and middle schools, shifting the growth indicator to 55% of points and achievement to 35% of points. Thus, the target equally pulls from both achievement and growth indicators—since it is a measure that uses each student’s achievement performance level and determines, based on their growth results from year-to-year, how long it will take for that student to either advance to the next performance level or maintain grade-level proficiency. At the school level, the new On-Track Growth performance indicator will include a total percentage of students meeting On-Track targets. If there are enough students for public reporting, then the measure will be broken down by Catch Up and Keep Up categories and by student groups (e.g., students designated as English learners, students with disabilities).

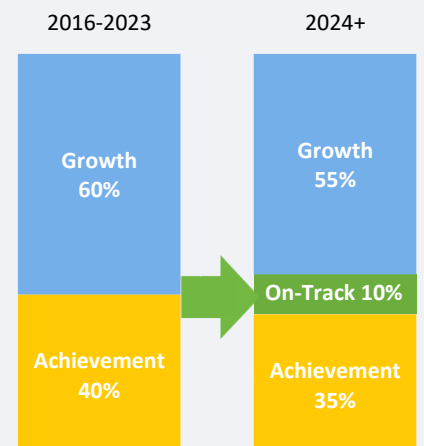
#### Colorado’s Accountability System

Currently, schools and districts receive a performance framework rating each year based on their overall performance, which includes the following categories:

- **Academic Achievement:** Average scores on state assessments for all students as well as specific groups of students
- **Academic Growth:** Progress students make in their achievement on assessments from one year to the next
- **Postsecondary Readiness:** Graduation rates, dropout rates, average scores on the SAT college entrance exam and matriculation into college and other postsecondary options

The addition of On-Track Growth will create another performance indicator (i.e., three for elementary and middle schools; four for high schools and districts).

#### Elementary and Middle School Weighting



## On-Track Growth Methodology

In October 2019, the State Board of Education voted to adopt the following methodology for grades 3-8 for inclusion in the performance frameworks:

**Student Targets.** The On-Track Growth achievement target for students designated as **“Catch Up”** is to advance to the next performance level (e.g., Did Not Yet Meet to Partially Met Expectations, Partially Met to Approached Meeting Expectations, and Approached to Met Expectations on CMAS). This allows students to show progress toward grade-level proficiency. The On-Track Growth achievement target for students designated as **“Keep Up”** is to maintain grade-level proficiency (e.g. Meets or Exceeds Expectations), ensuring that higher-performing students stay at grade level.

**Timeline.** Students that are not at grade level and need to **Catch Up** should be supported to move to the next performance level within **two years**. The two-year timeframe sets an expectation that schools can help lower-performing students increase their performance on CMAS by at least one performance level over the course of two years. The two-year timeframe for catching up is intended to balance the desire for increased student rigor with the need to create a fair and meaningful metric in the school and district performance frameworks. Students who are currently meeting expectations and need to **Keep Up** should be supported to maintain grade level proficiency for the next **two years**. For Keep Up students, this timeframe establishes that students can maintain grade level proficiency over the course of at least two years (i.e., students do not begin falling behind after reaching grade level proficiency). A student’s On-Track Target resets each year reflecting the changes in performance over time and their updated achievement target expectations.

### CMAS Performance Levels

Level 5	Exceeded Expectations
Level 4	Met Expectations
Level 3	Approached Expectations
Level 2	Partially Met Expectations
Level 1	Did Not Yet Meet Expectations

More information about CMAS performance levels is available [here](#).

The following graphic illustrates this calculation methodology for a student who took the CMAS test in grades 3-6:

