

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

CDE has been working with the TAP and the state board to investigate a calculation methodology for high schools and districts, however the transition to digital PSAT and SAT assessments in spring 2024 prevents implementation of an On Track Growth measure until 2025 at the earliest. In response, the State Board of Education voted to delay implementation of the On Track Growth indicator in the performance frameworks until all school levels are available for inclusion. In the meantime, because CMAS growth is available across all typical grades and content areas, CDE is planning on calculating On Track Growth for elementary and middle schools. The department will be expected to release public reports on this measure, as they are available. Once On Track Growth is available for all school levels, CDE will first release the data for informational purposes, with the intention of including the measure for points in the performance frameworks the following year.

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).

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.

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](#).

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 **three years**. For Keep Up students, this timeframe establishes that students can maintain grade level proficiency over the course of at least three 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.

The following graphic illustrates this calculation methodology for a student who took the CMAS test over multiple years:

