



Chapter 7: Evaluating and Managing Programs for Multilingual Learners

7.1 Program Evaluation

Evaluating English Language Development (ELD) programs, practices and procedures involves systematic planning and implementation, aggregating and synthesizing various types of data, to learn about program success. Both formative and summative evaluation should be applied to questions about programs, practices, services, and procedures.

Evaluation should be ongoing so that data are constantly being gathered, examined, and manipulated to influence decisions about what does or does not work and why (Scriven, 1967). Formative evaluation often is employed when new or developing procedures are implemented and where evaluation feedback can be used for improvement purposes.

Summative evaluation most often serves an accountability function at the end of the year/program; it describes the characteristics and successes of the program, practices, procedures, or activities and the areas needing improvement. It determines whether the stated goals and objectives have been met and supports recommendations about whether or not practices should be continued. Formative and summative evaluations together are powerful tools for making educational decisions and setting policies about programs and practices for Multilingual Learners (MLs).

A sound system of evaluation can provide a rich source of information for teaching and guiding MLs' learning, assist in monitoring and gauging the effectiveness of programs for MLs, contribute to student achievement, and satisfy reporting requirements, especially those related to student success in meeting high standards.

Meaningful evaluation is best accomplished by planning ahead. Evaluation should not require any extraordinary procedures; rather, it should be integrated into the program activities and focused on the particular procedures, materials, programs, practices and processes that exist. The evaluation planning cycle involves the following steps:

- Assessing needs
- Establishing goals and objectives
- Implementing programs, practices, procedures, and activities to meet goals and objectives
- Assessing the extent to which the objectives have been achieved
- Communicating results of assessment to appropriate entities
- Applying the results to making improvements

For procedures related to planning and implementing services for MLs to be valuable, four questions should be asked:

Was an adequate needs assessment conducted?

Were goals and objectives adequately formulated and appropriate to student needs?

Was design and delivery of services, procedures, practices, and programs adequately described and consistent with the goals and objectives?

Were evaluation questions adequately defined and in keeping with the goals and objectives?

Wilde and Sockey (*The Evaluation Handbook*, 1995) provide examples of needs assessment instruments, goals and objectives, activity statements and procedural forms. They note that goals should be written after the needs assessment is conducted and should meet four conditions.

- The meaning of each goal should be clear to the people involved
- Agreed upon by educational planners and decision makers
- Clearly identifiable as dealing with an end product
- Realistic in terms of the time and money

An example of a goal for ML success might be *all students in the district will achieve high standards through participation in an inclusive, student-centered, multicultural curriculum.*

While goals are broad statements, objectives are specific measurable statements that focus on outcomes, performances, behaviors, expectations and timelines. An ML objective might be: *After at least six months of ELD instruction, 90% of MLs who speak little, or no English will increase their language level by one category as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs proficiency assessment.*

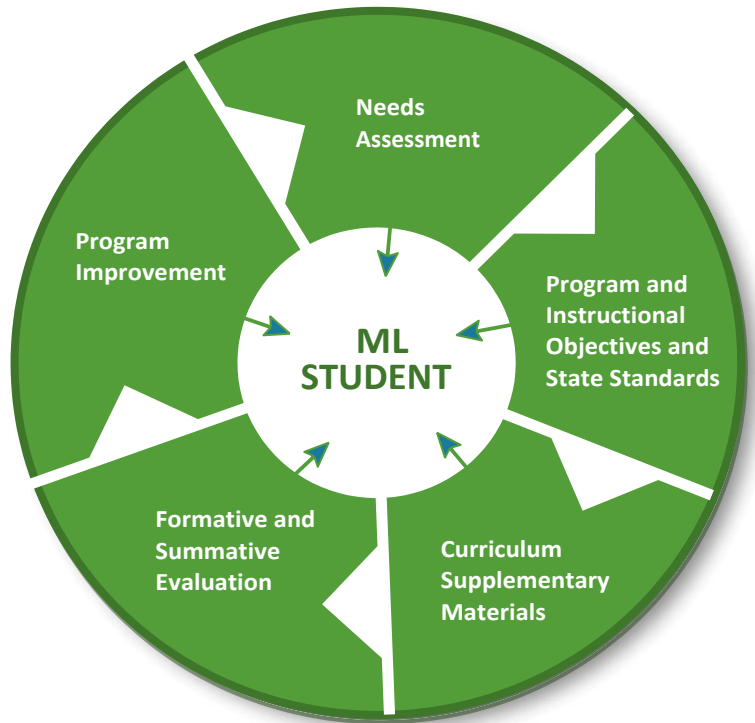
To ensure a sound evaluation, the relationship between needs assessment, program or services design, program implementation and evaluation should be clear. The following represents the evaluation decision cycle.

Through examination and disaggregation of data, relationships between learning and characteristics of programs, practices, services, and procedures for MLs can be explored. The best way to begin is to establish an evaluation planning team that includes instructional staff, a school building administrator, a staff member trained in ML instruction techniques, and a parent/community representative.

The evaluation planning team should determine the activities, persons responsible and timelines for conducting the evaluation. An evaluation planning calendar should be created and distributed to each member of the team. The evaluation team leader should guide the team in determining the activities to be undertaken and documented in the evaluation planning calendar.

The evaluation process culminates in an evaluation report, a powerful tool for informing and influencing policy decisions and educational practices.

A good report is written with the reader in mind; the projected audience for the report (i.e., the school board, teachers, parents, community) should dictate the report format and content: some are brief summaries with bulleted statements highlighting key features; others are more formal.



To view tools and resources for [Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Districts EL Program](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html), visit Chapter 9 at www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html



7.2 Inclusion of Multilingual Learners in the Statewide System of Accountability

The Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) is the primary assessment tool used to ensure that Colorado is in compliance with the 2015 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). States are required to adopt challenging academic and content performance standards, and standards-based assessments that accurately measure student performance. It calls for inclusion of multilingual learners in the state assessment program to ensure that schools are providing an appropriate English language acquisition program that meets the linguistic and academic needs of MLs. ESEA requires:

“...provide for assessments (using tests written in English) of reading or language arts of any student who has attended school in the United States (not including Commonwealth Puerto Rico) for three or more consecutive school years, except that if the local educational agency determines, on a case-by-case individual basis, that academic assessments in another language or form would likely yield more accurate and reliable information on what such student knows and can do, the local educational agency may make a determination to assess such student in the appropriate language other than English for a period that does not exceed two additional consecutive years, provided that such student has not yet reached a level of English language proficiency sufficient to yield valid and reliable information on what such student knows and can do on tests (written in English) of reading and language arts;” Every Student Succeeds Act 1111(b)(2)(B)(ix).

What are Accommodations?

Changes to content format or conditions for specific students that do not reduce learning expectations or change the construct but do provide access for students with a documented need. Accommodations are designed to support access to instructional or assessment content. The accommodations provided to a student may be the same for classroom instruction, classroom assessments, district assessments and state assessments. Accommodations for MLs are intended to:

- reduce the linguistic load necessary to access the content of the curriculum or assessment;
- provide scaffolding that helps students overcome social-cultural barriers that prevent them from accessing the content of the test; and
- allows MLs to more efficiently use linguistic resources to access curriculum or the content of the assessment.

What are Modifications?

Change to reduce learning or assessment expectations. Some examples of modifications include:

- requiring a student to learn less material (e.g., fewer objectives, shorter units or lessons, fewer pages or problems);
- reducing assignments and assessments so a student only needs to complete the easiest problems or items;
- revising assignments or assessments to make them easier (e.g., crossing out half of the response choices on a multiple-choice test so that a student only has to pick from two options instead of four); or
- giving a student hints or clues to correct responses on assignments and tests.

Accurate assessment of MLs always will be difficult because of the dual dimensions of language development and academic knowledge. Experts in second language acquisition and testing differ. One perspective is that accurate assessment results can only be derived from tests developed specifically for MLs to measure progress toward standards. Another is that MLs should take standards-based assessments designed for native English speakers, but with accommodations/modifications. In reality, a combination of assessments designed to build a body of evidence are needed to document language development and whether students are making progress toward meeting grade level content standards.

By Colorado law, every student is expected to take the CMAS, MLs present a unique challenge for schools that are held accountable for their performance while they are in the process of learning English. The only exceptions are newly arrived Non-English proficient (NEP) students who have been enrolled in a United States school for less than one year. This exception only applies to English language arts section of CMAS. All first year in U.S. students must take mathematics, science, and social studies (as applicable) assessments.

More information about first year MLs in the U.S. can be found on page 31 in the [CMAS Procedures Manual](#) at www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/cmas.



For students who are receiving instruction in Spanish, refer to the [Assessment Office at the Colorado Department of Education](http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/ela-additionalresources) at www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/ela-additionalresources for alternative options and current linguistic accommodations. While testing in English is required, in accordance with these guidelines, districts are not prohibited from assessing students who receive instruction in another language, in that language, in order to document progress and achievement more accurately.

Providing accommodations to established testing conditions for some students with limited English proficiency may be appropriate when their use would yield the most valid scores on the intended academic achievement constructs. Deciding which accommodations to use for which students usually involves an understanding of which construct irrelevant background factors would substantially influence the measurement of intended knowledge and skills for individual students, and if the accommodations would enhance the validity of the test score interpretations for these students.

The Use of Tests as Part of High-Stakes Decision-Making for Students: A Resource Guide for Educators and Policy-Makers U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights December 2000

7.3 Accountability for Multilingual Learners

7.3.1 ESSA Accountability

On December 10, 2015, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was reauthorized as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and added new federal accountability requirements beginning with the 2017-18 school year. Under ESSA, each SEA is required to have a system for differentiating schools based on the performance of all students, as well as the performance of student groups, including multilingual learners, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and students from major racial and ethnic groups. Therefore, ESSA expands accountability to include emphasis on the performance of student groups. The legislation requires holding districts accountable for the performance of their schools and transfers the accountability for multilingual learners from Title III, Part A to Title I, Part A*.

This chapter provides information related to Colorado's implementation of ESSA, including how schools are held accountable for the performance of multilingual learners (and other student groups), and how schools are identified for support and improvement.

To view the [ESEA & ESSA Guidance for English Learners](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiiguidenglishlearners92016.pdf), visit www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/essatitleiiiguidenglishlearners92016.pdf

7.3.2 Title IA Accountability

Under ESSA, state accountability systems must incorporate the following five indicators, calculated for all students and separately for MLs, Students with Disabilities (SWDs), economically disadvantaged students (in Colorado, qualifying for free or reduced meals, FRM), and major racial and ethnic groups:

- **Academic achievement:** based on CMAS and CoAlt mean scale scores for English language arts (and Spanish language arts for eligible 3rd and 4th graders) and math, and math and evidence-based reading and writing PSAT/SAT performance. Non-participants (including parent excusals) in excess of 5% are counted as non-proficient and assigned the lowest possible scale score.
- **Academic progress:** based on median growth percentiles for CMAS English language arts and math, and PSAT/SAT math and evidence-based reading and writing.
- **Graduation rates:** based on the 4-year and 7-year adjusted cohort rates.

*ESEA includes Title IA (Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged), Title IIA (Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers, Principals, and Other School Leaders), Title IIIA (Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students), Title IV (21st Century Schools), and Title VI (Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education).



- **Progress in achieving English language proficiency:** based on ACCESS for ELLs median growth percentiles and the percent of students on-track to fluency within the state-determined timeline.
- **Indicators of school quality or student success (SQSS):** based on CMAS/CoAlt science mean scale scores and reduction in chronic absenteeism (elementary and middle schools) and dropout rates (high schools).

ESSA School Identification Process

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 is the primary federal education legislation and has undergone several reauthorizations, the latest of which is the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015. Colorado's state plan under ESSA was approved by the U.S. Department of Education in May 2018. Colorado used a [Hub and Spoke](http://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/essa_stateplandevlopment) (www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/essa_stateplandevlopment) process to gather stakeholder input on various ESSA components, including the methodology and criteria for identifying schools for support and improvement.

ESSA requires states to develop a statewide accountability system, with long-term and interim progress goals, for all students and specific disaggregated groups, based on five indicators: academic achievement and growth in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, English language proficiency for multilingual learners, graduation rates, and school quality or student success. Colorado's accountability system already included these indicators. Therefore, Colorado's identification of schools for support and improvement under ESSA relies upon the data from the multi-year School Performance Frameworks (SPFs) where applicable and feasible. ESSA requires that states have identified schools for improvement and support in two categories: Comprehensive (CS) and Targeted (TS) Support and Improvement.

For more information about [ESSA Methods and Criteria for Identification of Schools for Support and Improvement](http://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/essa_csi_tsi), visit www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/essa_csi_tsi

Comprehensive Support and Improvement Identification

Colorado uses the methodology and criteria in its ESSA Plan that was approved by the USDE in May 2018, to identify schools for support and improvement under ESSA. Specific details and examples of identification can be viewed in the [ESSA Methods and Criteria Document](http://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/essa-identification-summary-18-19) (www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/essa-identification-summary-18-19).

Three CS school categories will be identified annually based on the following criteria:

- **Lowest Performing 5% of Title I Schools.** All Title I schools will be ranked on a summative index score (total percentage points earned) based on all five ESSA indicators, using data from the three preceding years. Title I schools performing in the lowest 5% based on the total percentage points earned on the school performance framework will be identified for improvement. One Alternative Education Campus (AEC) will be identified in this category, reflecting the relative percent (5%) of Title I schools that are AECs. If the total percentage points earned on the school performance frameworks does not adequately differentiate the lowest-performing AEC, attendance and truancy data will be included for ESSA identification purposes.
- **Low Graduation Rates.** Colorado will identify all public high schools with both 4-year and 7-year graduation rates below 67% (based on three years of data) for improvement. If a school does not yet have 7-year graduation rate, three years of 4-year graduation rates will be used for ESSA identification.
- **Additional Targeted.** Title I schools identified for Additional TS (A-TS, see below) will be moved to CS if any disaggregated group(s) earns Does Not Meet Expectations on all accountability indicators for that disaggregated group(s) for four consecutive years (i.e., is chronically underperforming).

Schools identified as CS will remain in that category for three years, regardless of higher performance, to ensure adequate time to implement improvement strategies and sustain performance before supports are reduced or terminated. Schools that no longer meet identification criteria from the year they were identified will exit CS after the third year. However, a school will not exit CS if it is re-identified as CS while implementing improvement strategies (in years 2 and 3 after original identification). For example, if a school falls in the lowest 5% in either year its 2nd or 3rd year, it would not exit.



Targeted Support and Improvement Identification

TS schools will be identified annually using one of these two criteria:

- **Targeted (TS).** Any school with at least one consistently underperforming student group: FRM, students from major racial and ethnic groups, SWDs, and MLs. Colorado will use all ESSA indicators (progress toward English proficiency for MLs only) to evaluate the performance of these student groups. Schools with a student group(s) earning the lowest rating (does not meet expectations) on three or more indicators, based on 3-year performance (assuming minimum n is met) will be identified TS for that student group.

Districts are responsible for determining how long a school will remain TS and what criteria will be required to exit TS status.

- **Additional Targeted (A-TS).** Colorado identifies any TS schools with at least one student group that, on its own, meets the criteria for the lowest 5% of Title I schools for A-TS. Using the CS methodology for identifying the lowest performing 5% of Title I schools, a summative score will be calculated for each disaggregated group using all ESSA indicators based on three years of data (i.e., calculating an SPF percentage points earned based on the performance of each disaggregated group separately). Schools will be ranked based on the performance of each student group and identified A-TS if they are not already identified CS but have at least one student group that performed within the lowest 5% for that group.

Consistent with the methodology for exiting CS, schools that score above the criteria of their identification year and do not fall into the lowest 5% category in any of the three years the school is A-TS will exit improvement status after the 3rd year. Title I schools identified A-TS that fail to meet state-defined exit criteria for three consecutive years for the same student group will move to CS the 4th year.

ESSA School Improvement Plan Requirements

ESSA requires that schools identified for improvement develop and implement improvement plans in collaboration with stakeholders including, but not limited to, principals, other school leaders, teachers, and parents. Starting with the 2019 UIP cycle, CS school plans will be approved by the school, Local Educational Agency (LEA), and CDE; upon approval and implementation, CDE is responsible for monitoring and periodically reviewing CS plans. LEAs will be responsible for reviewing, approving, and monitoring TS plans.

CS plans should be documented within the UIP and must:

- Be developed by the LEA in partnership with stakeholders, including the principal, other school leaders, teacher and parents of the school.
- Be informed by student performance on accountability indicators. In Colorado, this currently refers to performance indicators on the School Performance Frameworks (i.e., English language arts and math achievement and growth, science achievement, and postsecondary workforce readiness).
- Include Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs).
- Be based on a school-level needs assessment.
- Address resource inequities.
- Be approved by the school, LEA, and CDE.

TS Plans may use the UIP for documentation and must:

- Be developed by schools in partnership with stakeholders, including the principal, other school leaders, teachers and parents.
- Be informed by student performance for identified disaggregated student group(s) on each accountability indicator that resulted in the school's identification as TS.
- Include Evidence-Based Interventions (EBIs) to address areas of need.
- For Additional TS schools only, address resource inequities.



Summary of CS and TS Improvement Plan Requirements and their Relationship to the UIP

ESSA Planning Requirements	UIP Connection	CS	TS	A-TS
LEA ensures a plan is developed with stakeholders (including school leaders, teachers and parents).	Data Narrative – Brief Description	◆	◆	◆
Plan is informed by student performance against state-determined long-term goals in ESSA.	Data Narrative – Current Performance	◆	◆	◆
Plan includes EBIs.	Major Improvement Strategy or Action Step	◆	◆	◆
Plan includes a school-level needs assessment.	Data Narrative – Trend Analysis, Priority Performance Challenge, Root Cause Analysis	◆		
School, LEA, and SEA must approve plan.	ESSA requirements are documented within the UIP template	◆		
Only LEA approves plan prior to implementation.	LEA may choose the format, including the UIP, to document ESSA requirements.		◆	◆
Upon approval and implementation, SEA monitors and periodically reviews plan.	Plan must be submitted by October 15	◆		
LEA monitors and reviews plan upon submission and implementation.	LEA sets timeline		◆	◆

2022 District Accountability Handbook (www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/stateaccountability), page 32

Grants and Technical Assistance

CDE will engage districts that have CS or TS/ATS schools to improve the effectiveness of programs supported with federal funds. CDE staff will continue to work with districts to identify the needs of schools identified for improvement and how federal funds can be more effectively leveraged in support of student achievement. Districts with CS or TS/ATS schools have access to a wide array of services and supports, including additional grant dollars through the [Empowering Action for School Improvement \(EASI\) Application](http://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/easiapplication) (www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/easiapplication).

For more information about [ESSA Planning Requirements and Evidence-Based Interventions](#), visit www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/essaplanningrequirements

Title IIIA Accountability

NCLB required states to establish Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs), performance and progress targets that Title III grantees had to meet each year. Colorado’s provisions remained the same under the ESEA flexibility waiver. While ESSA calls for equitable supports and opportunities for MLs, it has shifted state- and district-level accountability requirements from Title III to Title I. State ESSA plans require indicators and targets for MLs developing English and attaining proficiency, in addition to meeting academic growth and proficiency targets.

Districts must report the numbers and percentages of MLs served by Title III programs and activities, as well as how many attain English proficiency, are on-track to attaining English proficiency within the state-determined timeline, exit ML services based on attaining English proficiency, and meet academic standards for four years after exiting Title III services (Monitored Years 1 and 2, Exited Years 1 and 2). CDE is required to determine and report the LEA-level number and percentage of MLs who attain English proficiency within five years of initial classification, as well as the number and percentage who do not. Districts must report the Language Instruction Educational Programs (LIEPs) offered.

To view [Title III Program Requirements and Eligibility](http://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/tiii/index), visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/tiii/index>

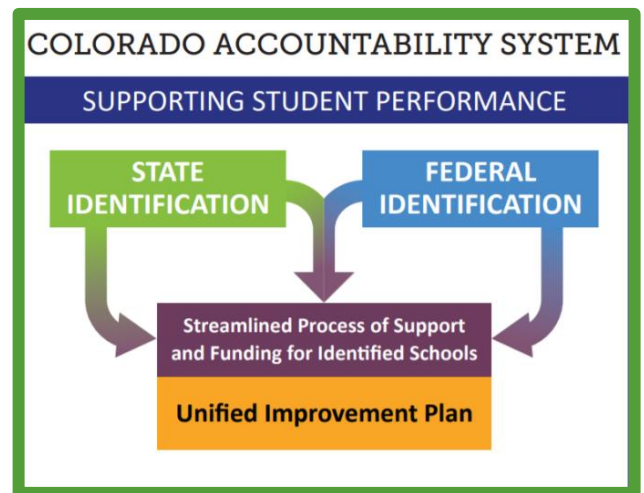
7.4 Statewide System of Accountability and Support

Colorado’s education accountability system is based on the belief that every student should receive an excellent education and graduate ready to succeed. Success is determined by goals outlined in the [Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids Act \(CAP4K\)](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdedepcom/cap4klegislativeannualreport) (www.cde.state.co.us/cdedepcom/cap4klegislativeannualreport), which aligned the public education system from preschool through postsecondary and workforce readiness. The intent is to ensure that all students graduate high school ready for postsecondary and workforce success.

The accountability system is designed to describe performance of schools and districts and direct attention to areas of promise and areas of need. Colorado’s system is informed by both state and federal legislation and highlights overall student performance, graduation rates, and performance of historically underserved students. The Education Accountability Act of 2009 repositioned the state’s education accountability system to focus on the goals of CAP4K by holding the state, districts and schools accountable through consistent, objective measures and reporting performance in a manner that is highly transparent and builds public understanding.

Through Colorado’s accountability system – integrating both state and federal expectations -- successful schools and districts are recognized and serve as models, while those that are struggling receive additional support and increased monitoring. Colorado identifies those schools and districts for support and monitoring based on their overall performance, their graduation rates, and/or the performance of historically underserved students. More recently, the state has begun to build infrastructure to unify its system of supports. For example, the state offers a single application for school improvement funds through the EASI Grant and a common improvement planning process known as the Unified Improvement Plan (UIP).

For more information about [Unified Improvement Planning](http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip), visit www.cde.state.co.us/uiip or to view the [UIP Handbook](http://www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/20192020uiphandbook), visit www.cde.state.co.us/uiip/20192020uiphandbook.





Colorado Educational Accountability

In conducting its annual review of performance, the Colorado Department of Education will consider the results on the [District and School Performance Framework](http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/performanceframeworks) at www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/performanceframeworks. In a typical year, the Performance Framework measures attainment on the key Performance Indicators identified in the Education Accountability Act of 2009 (article 11 of title 22):

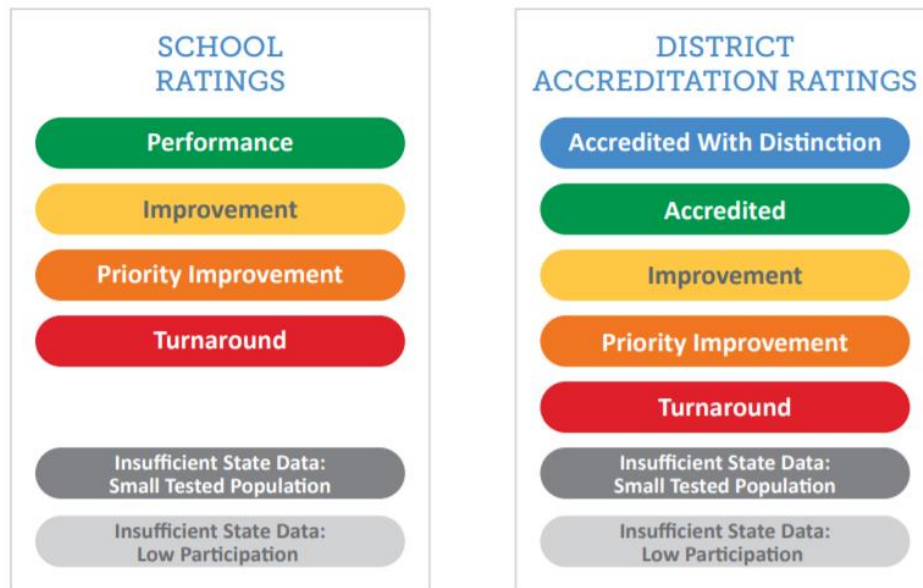
- **Academic Achievement:** The Academic Achievement Indicator reflects how students are doing at meeting the state’s proficiency goal, based on mean scale scores and percentile ranks of schools on Colorado’s standardized assessments. This Indicator includes results from CMAS English language arts and mathematics; Colorado Spanish language arts (CSLA); CMAS science; PSAT 9 & 10 evidence-based reading and writing and mathematics; and the alternate CoAlt DLM assessments. Performance is determined overall by content area, as well as by disaggregated student groups. Disaggregated groups include multilingual learners, free/ reduced price lunch eligible, minority students, and students with disabilities.
- **Academic Growth:** The Academic Growth Indicator reflects academic progress using the Colorado Growth Model. This Indicator reflects normative (median) growth: how the academic progress of the students in the school compared to that of other students statewide with a similar content proficiency score history or similar English language proficiency (WIDA ACCESS) score history. As is the case with the achievement indicator, results are calculated at both the overall level and for disaggregated student groups. Note that a measure indicating the proportion of multilingual learners on track to reach English Language Proficiency (ELP) within a designated timeframe was included for informational purposes on the 2018 performance frameworks and will be included for points in 2019. For additional information on [WIDA ACCESS On-Track Growth to Standard Fact Sheet](http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/access-growth-to-standard-fact-sheet_final_july-2018), visit www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/access-growth-to-standard-fact-sheet_final_july-2018.
- **Postsecondary Readiness:** The Postsecondary Readiness Indicator reflects student preparedness for college or careers upon completing high school. This indicator reflects student graduation rates, disaggregated graduation rates for historically disadvantaged students (free/reduced price lunch eligible, minority students, students with disabilities, multilingual learners), dropout rates, Colorado SAT mean scale scores for evidence-based reading and writing and mathematics, and matriculation rates that represent the percent of high school graduates that go on to CTE programs, community colleges, or 4-year institutions. Additionally, for 2018, industry credentials, as recognized by the Colorado Workforce Development Council, were included in CTE and overall matriculation rates calculations.

Based on state-identified measures and metrics, schools/districts receive a rating on each of these Performance Indicators that reflects if they exceeded, met, approached, or did not meet the state’s expectations. These performance indicators are then combined to arrive at an overall evaluation of performance. Additionally, schools and districts are accountable for meeting minimum participation rates on the state assessments. If the school or district does not make the 95% accountability participation rate requirement in two or more content areas (English language arts, math, and science) the plan type/ rating will be lowered one level. Parents who chose to excuse their students from state assessments are not factored into accountability participation calculations, per state board motion.

Additionally, districts and schools with low overall participation rates (regardless of the reason) of less than 95% will be noted– as “Low Participation.” Similarly, those that have participation rates above 95% in two or more content areas will receive a descriptor of “Meets Participation” along with their accreditation rating.

Points assigned in each of the above Performance Indicators results in schools and districts receiving one of the ratings listed below. In the case of an insufficient data rating, the number of participants was inadequate to assign a rating.

For more information about [Colorado Accountability - Fact Sheet](http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/accountabilityfactsheet2019), visit www.cde.state.co.us/communications/accountabilityfactsheet2019



District Accreditation Contracts

The Department must annually accredit all districts and does so through an accreditation contract between the state and the district. A district that is “Accredited with Improvement,” “Accredited with Priority Improvement” or “Accredited with Turnaround” will have its contract annually reviewed and agreed upon. For districts “Accredited with Distinction” or “Accredited,” accreditation contracts have a term of one year and are renewed automatically each July so long as the district remains in one of these accreditation categories.

Consequence of Poor Performance

Entering the Accountability Clock

Pursuant to the Education Act of 2009, Article 11 of Title 22, C.R.S., a district or the Charter School Institute (Institute) may not remain Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan or Accredited with Turnaround Plan for five consecutive years before the State Board removes the district’s/Institute’s accreditation. In State Board of Education rules, 1 CCR 301-1, section 5.07, the calculation of the five consecutive years begins July 1 of the summer immediately following the fall in which the district/Institute is notified that it is Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan or Accredited with Turnaround Plan. With the passage of House Bill 18-1355, this timeline will be adjusted for the 2019-20 school year and beyond.

The Education Act of 2009, Article 11 of Title 22, C.R.S., outlines similar consequences for schools. Schools may not implement a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan for longer than five consecutive years before the district or Institute is required to restructure or close the school. According to State Board of Education rules, 1 CCR 301-1, section 10.05, the calculation of the five consecutive years begins July 1 of the summer immediately following the fall in which the school is notified that it must implement a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan. With the passage of House Bill 18-1355, this timeline will be adjusted for the 2019-20 school year and beyond.

These statutory timelines are referred to as the “Accountability Clock.” The processes associated with each year of the clock, including the process required at end of the Accountability Clock, are detailed in the timeline that begins on page 4 found in the [2022 District Accountability Handbook](http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/stateaccountability) (www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/stateaccountability).



Exiting the Accountability Clock

The Accountability Clock is in effect for a district or school as long as it is assigned a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan. Previously and through the 2018 performance frameworks, the Accountability Clock stops for a district or school once the State Board adopts an SPF/DPF with a rating of Improvement or higher. At that point, the district or school would be considered to have exited Priority Improvement or Turnaround status. If a district or school is on Turnaround and moves to Priority Improvement the Accountability Clock is not reset.

Currently, if a district or school improves to a Performance or Improvement Plan assignment one year, then drops back down to a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan the next year, the clock would restart at Year 1. The Accountability Clock and associated year-by-year actions and consequences would begin again. With the passage of House Bill 18-1355, however, the exit criteria will change beginning in the 2019-20 school year.

Consequences of Poor Performance: Performance Watch

House Bill 18-1355 made several modifications to Colorado's accountability law, in particular to the Accountability Clock. For a full summary of changes, please see the [House Bill 18-1355 Fact Sheet](http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/housebill1355-factsheet) at www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/housebill1355-factsheet.

Changes pertaining to the re-naming and re-defining of the [Accountability Clock](http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/accountabilityfactsheetaccountabilityclock2019) as described on the fact sheet found at www.cde.state.co.us/communications/accountabilityfactsheetaccountabilityclock2019 will go into effect with the 2019 performance frameworks.

- **Performance Watch:** "Performance Watch" replaces what was previously referred to as the "Accountability Clock." A school, district or the Institute in Priority Improvement or Turnaround (PI/T) is on performance watch. After receiving two consecutive PI/T ratings, a school, district or Institute must receive an Improvement rating or higher for two consecutive years to exit performance watch. If a school, for example, is on Year 2 of performance watch and then receives an Improvement rating, the school will be on a "hold year" and will still be considered to be on performance watch in Year 2. If the school receives another Improvement rating or higher the following year, the school will be off of performance watch. If the school, however, receives another PI/T rating then the count of years continues where it left off and the school advances to Year 3 of performance watch. After five years of consecutive or nonconsecutive PI/T ratings while on performance watch, the State Board must direct the school, district or Institute to take one of the actions, or pathways, outlined in statute.
- **Timing:** Beginning with the 2019 performance frameworks, school and district ratings will go into effect immediately upon State Board approval of the final ratings. This means that the state board will direct an action in the fifth year of a PI/T rating for schools and districts on performance watch. This will shorten the current process (under which schools and districts receive six years of PI/T ratings before the state board directs an action) by a year.
- **Early Action:** Schools, districts or the Institute can request that the state board direct an action prior to the completion of the five years on performance watch, after consulting with the district accountability committee.
- **Beyond 5 Years:** One of the critical changes of HB 18-1355 is to specify that if student academic performance continues to put a school or district in Priority Improvement or Turnaround beyond Year 5 of performance watch, then the state board may in any year—and must every two years—require the district to continue the previously directed action or undertake additional or different actions. The state board will consider the State Review Panel's recommendation and the length of time a district has had to implement the previously directed action, whether that was enough time and whether the action was implemented with fidelity. Beginning with the 2019 frameworks, schools and districts beyond Year 5 of performance watch are also still required to earn two consecutive years of Improvement ratings or higher before being considered off of performance watch. This provision applies to all schools or districts who have already had a state board directed action and remain in Priority Improvement or Turnaround on the 2018 performance frameworks.

Support for Low-Performing Systems

CDE offers a differentiated approach to support and intervention based on performance and need. This is being carried out through the Empowering Action for School Improvement (EASI) grant application.

EASI Grant Application

With the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and with revisions to the state’s Educational Accountability Act (HB 17-1355), Colorado is taking the opportunity to change the way school improvement (1003a through ESSA and the Transformation grant through HB 17-1355) funds are awarded to LEAs.

Rather than multiple applications on separate timelines, CDE now streamlines school improvement opportunities into a single application and using a “needs-based approach” to award services and funding. Ultimately, the intent is to develop a robust process of matching schools’ needs with rigorous, evidence-based strategies and adequate resources. Additionally, awarded funds will enhance districts’ and schools’ ability to meet the ESSA and state requirements (e.g., stakeholder engagement, improvement plan, implementation of evidence-based interventions) in a way that directly benefits students.

Colorado is committed to aligning federal and state accountability to the degree possible. These grant funds are aimed at districts with schools that are designated as (1) Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CS) and Targeted Support and Improvement (TS), Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (A-TS) under ESSA, and (2) Priority Improvement Turnaround or Watch through the state accountability system. Specific eligibility and prioritization requirements for each support is detailed in the Menu of Supports and the application.

The application has been organized into four different routes: Exploration Supports, District Designed and Led, Offered Services, and Piloted Services. The routes have different criteria and ways of awarding funds geared to a specific intent. A summary of the routes and the individual services or opportunities can be found at [EASI Grant Application](http://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/easiapplication) (www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/easiapplication).