



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

## **ESSA Accountability Work Group Decision Point: Long-Term Goals and Interim Targets**

The ESSA Accountability Work Group is made up of a diverse group of stakeholder perspectives, coming together to think through the decision points for Colorado's ESSA state plan, specific to school accountability. This presentation will share information around the decision point pertaining to the long-term goals and interim targets to be used in accountability calculations.

## Decision Point

### How will Colorado measure interim progress and progress towards long-term goals?

#### A. Academic Achievement.

- i. **Description.** Describe how the SEA established its ambitious long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for academic achievement.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Sample Grade-level Table

Subgroups	Reading/ Language Arts	Reading/ Language Arts	Mathematics	Mathematics
	Starting Point (Year)	Long Term Goal (Year)	Starting Point (Year)	Long Term Goal (Year)
All students				
Economically disadvantaged students				
Children with disabilities				
English learners				
African American				
American Indian or Alaska Native				
Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander				
Hispanic or Latino				
White				

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The specific decision point is around how Colorado will measure interim progress and progress towards long-term goals, for students overall and for each disaggregated group.

The language in the box is the language that the U.S. Department of Education has drafted for the state plan application, specific to the goals for academic achievement.

## Decision Point, Cont.

### B. Graduation Rate.

- i. **Description.** Describe how the SEA established its ambitious long terms goals and measurements of interim progress for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate and, if applicable, the extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate. Add additional tables as necessary.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate		
Subgroup	Starting Point (Year)	Long Term Goal (Year)
All students		
Economically disadvantaged students		
Children with disabilities		
English learners		
African American		
American Indian or Alaska Native		
Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander		
Hispanic or Latino		
White		

- ii. If the State has an extended-year rate or rates, indicate the length of the cohort (*i.e.*, 5-year, 6-year, 7-year):

[Click here to enter text.](#)

<INSERT #>-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate		
Subgroup	Starting Point (Year)	Long Term Goal (Year)
All students		
Economically disadvantaged students		
Children with disabilities		
English learners		
African American		
American Indian or Alaska Native		
Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander		
Hispanic or Latino		
White		

Similarly, this represents the language that the U.S. Department of Education has drafted specific to goals for graduation rates.

# Requirements

## ■ Federal Statute (ESSA)

- Ambitious long-term goals which include measurements of interim progress
- Same timeline for all students and disaggregated groups
- Takes into account the improvement necessary to make significant progress in closing statewide proficiency and graduation rate gaps

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Additional information – Long-term goals materials from 9/21:  
[www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/accountabilityworkgroup](http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/accountabilityworkgroup)



The requirement outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act exists to ensure that each state sets ambitious, yet attainable, long-term goals which include measurements of interim progress. Federal statute requires that states set the same timeline for all students and each disaggregated group. Federal statute also requires the state plan to take into account the improvement necessary to significantly close achievement and graduation rate gaps. The notice of proposed rulemaking, provided by the U.S. Department of Education in May of 2016, clarifies some of the requirements, but does not propose additional requirements.

For additional information, and to read the full statutory language from the Every Student Succeeds Act and the relevant section of the proposed rulemaking, you can access the long-term goals materials using the link on the slide.

## Starting Point: What We've Heard

- Consider raising expectations
- Consider what other states are doing
- Consider goals aligned to adequate growth percentiles (AGP)
- Consider including growth goals

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The Accountability Work Group started off by reviewing the input heard from stakeholder groups that have shared their thoughts on this topic, in order to inform the possible options being shared.

Although stakeholders did not express a preference regarding the explicit long-term goals and interim targets to be used, they expressed the need to reflect on specific considerations. In particular, the Accountability Work Group was asked to take into consideration the work of other states, to consider how to ensure we are raising expectations for all students, and to consider how Colorado's long-term goals could include measures of growth.

# Options Regarding Achievement Goals


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The Accountability Work Group is looking for feedback on the recommendation regarding long-term achievement goals.

Recommended Option		
Set targets based on mean scale scores		
Pros	Cons	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aligned with current Performance Frameworks</li> <li>• Takes incremental performance of all students into consideration, regardless of where they fall within the full range of scale scores</li> <li>• Encourages educator conversations around instructional improvement to focus on every student</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not show how many students are meeting assessment expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not encourage systems to target “bubble” students, on the verge of making “proficient”</li> <li>• Protects PII and can be publicly reported without data suppression</li> </ul>

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The Accountability Work Group recommended that long-term goals and interim targets for academic achievement are set based on mean scale scores. This recommendation is aligned with the current performance frameworks, and takes into account the incremental performance of all students, regardless of where they fall within the full range of scale scores. For example, the results for a school with all students scoring near the cut-point for meeting expectations would be differentiated from the results of a school with all students greatly exceeding expectations. Using a metric such as the percentage of students meeting assessment expectations instead, however, might not differentiate between the performance of these two schools.

A potential disadvantage of this option, however, is that it does not show how many students are explicitly meeting assessment expectations.

It is important to note considerations regarding this option. Specifically, this option encourages conversations around instructional improvement for every student, rather than a narrowed focus on students close to the cut-point for meeting expectations. This option also helps to protect personally identifiable information, and more results can be publicly reported without data suppression.

## Not Recommended

- **Targets based on the percentage of students in specific performance level categories**
  - Shows how many students are meeting assessment expectations, but doesn't take performance of all students into consideration (e.g., students close to the cut-point are not differentiated from students far below/above the cut-point)
  - Doesn't align with current accountability practices
  - Requires stringent data suppression around public reporting to ensure personally identifiable information (PII) is protected

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An additional option was also discussed and considered, but was not ultimately recommended by the Accountability Work Group. This option considered the setting of long-term goals and interim targets based on the percentage of students scoring within specific performance-level categories. For example, considering the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations.

Although this option explicitly shows how many students are meeting the assessment expectations, this option was not preferred because of the potential disadvantages. Specifically, this option does not take the incremental performance of all students into consideration. For example, students just below the cut-point for meeting expectations are not differentiated from students who scored well-below the cut-point. These students are all treated as not having met expectations, regardless of their distance to the cut-point. Similarly, additional weight is not given to students who far surpassed the cut-point, for instance those students scoring in the “Exceeded Expectations” category, compared to those students just meeting expectations. Another disadvantage of this option is that it does not align with the current performance frameworks, which utilize the mean scale score metric.

It is important to consider that this option would require more stringent data suppression for public reporting of the results, in order to ensure that personally identifiable information is protected. For example, results for a school in which all students did not meet assessment expectations could not be publicly reported, as



those results would reveal that all students tested in the school did not meet expectations.

# Options Regarding Graduation Goals

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The Accountability Work Group is also looking for feedback on the recommendation regarding long-term graduation goals.

Recommended Option		
<p><b>Establish long-term goals taking into consideration the four-year, <u>and extended-year</u>, adjusted cohort graduation rates</b></p>		
Pros	Cons	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considers factors such as concurrent enrollment</li> <li>• Considers students who are in 5-year programs (e.g., ASCENT)</li> <li>• Considers students with disabilities who may take longer than 4 years to graduate</li> <li>• Acknowledges and honors success of every student</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doesn't recognize alternative completion pathways; relies solely on graduation diploma</li> </ul>

Federal statute requires that all states establish long-term goals based on the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, but states are given the option to also set goals based on the extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate as well.

The Accountability Work Group recommended that long-term goals and interim targets for graduation take into consideration the four-year, as well as the extended-year, adjusted cohort graduation rates. This recommendation considers factors such as concurrent enrollment and enrollment in 5-year programs, such as ASCENT. This recommendation also acknowledges and honors the success of every student, and gives additional consideration to students with disabilities who may take longer than 4 years to graduate.

Federal statute requires the use of graduation rates, but it should be noted that graduation rates may not recognize alternative completion pathways, which are factored into completion rates.

## Not Recommended

- **Establish long-term goals based on the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate only (exclude extended-year graduation rate)**
  - Does not address stakeholder concerns
  - Does not accommodate a variety of factors that may lead to extended enrollment, such as ASCENT programs and concurrent enrollment

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An additional option was also discussed and considered, but was not ultimately recommended by the Accountability Work Group. This option considered the use of the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate only, excluding additional goals around the extended-year graduation rate. This option does not accommodate for those factors that may lead to extended enrollment, such as ASCENT programs and concurrent enrollment, and may not address the concerns of some stakeholders advocating for the recognition and acknowledge of the success of every student.

# Options Regarding Long-Term Goals



The Accountability Work Group is also looking for feedback on the recommendation presented to establish and calculate the long-term goals.

## Recommended Option

Establish long-term goals based on cut-scores informed by historical data (e.g., percentile ranks)

Pros	Cons	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still ambitious but more likely to be attainable</li> <li>• Aligned with current Performance Frameworks</li> <li>• Based on Colorado data</li> <li>• Allows meaningful differentiation among schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not allow comparisons beyond Colorado</li> <li>• Does not compare students to a theoretical criterion, but to a normed baseline year and to each other, within and across disaggregated groups, schools, and districts</li> <li>• Dependent on baseline performance, there are risks that bar could be set too low/high</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should normative system be applied to all indicators? Would require a change in the growth calculations</li> <li>• Can't baseline every year; creates moving target</li> <li>• May not encourage highest performing schools/districts to grow or reward them for growth</li> </ul>

The Accountability Work Group recommended establishing long-term goals based on cut-scores informed by historical baseline data. Specifically, long-term goals would be established using percentile ranks normed based on the distribution of school performance. This recommendation allows the state to set ambitious yet attainable targets, and is aligned with the current performance frameworks. Another advantage of this approach is that targets are set based on the actual performance of schools in Colorado, which would allow for meaningful differentiation among schools.

A potential disadvantage of this recommendation, however, is that it does not compare students to a theoretical criterion, such as progress towards an explicit cut-point which indicates whether students are meeting assessment expectations. Because this approach is dependent on baseline performance, another potential disadvantage is the risk of establishing targets that may be too low or too high. A baseline must be established initially, as creating a new baseline each year would result in constantly moving targets.

A few additional considerations of this recommendation should also be noted. Specifically, should a normative system be applied to all indicators? This would require a change in the way growth is currently calculated. It should also be considered that this approach may not encourage the highest performing schools to grow if they are already exceeding the established targets.

## Not Recommended

- **Goals based on theoretical criteria (e.g., a specific percentage of students should be able to meet PARCC achievement objectives, all students should graduate in 4 years)**
  - Establishes very ambitious targets directly aligned to state assessment expectations, and communicates a sense of urgency around student improvement
  - Goals may not be attainable (unrealistically high), however, and this approach may be seen as unfair or even punitive by the field, and may result in an accountability system that does not meaningfully differentiate among schools
  - Not aligned to current Performance Frameworks

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An additional option was also discussed and considered, but was not ultimately recommended by the Accountability Work Group. This option considered established long-term goals based on theoretical criteria, such as achievement expectations explicitly aligned to the state assessment. Although this option would establish ambitious targets directly aligned to the state assessment expectations, goals may not be attainable. Some stakeholders expressed concerns that this approach may be seen as unfair or even punitive by the field, and may result in a state accountability system that does not meaningfully differentiate among schools. For example, if very few or no schools reach the long-term goals established, the system would not appropriately differentiate school performance. Another disadvantage of this approach is that it is not currently aligned to the performance frameworks.

# Options Regarding Timeline



The Accountability Work Group is also looking for feedback on the timeline used to establish long-term goals. The Accountability Work Group did not identify an explicit recommendation, but put forth options regarding the minimum and maximum time span for which to base the long-term goals.



## Options Regarding Timeline

Options	Pros	Cons	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimum of 5 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 years – minimum amount of time to make systemic change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can just wait until the system changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change in assessments</li> <li>5 -10 years – too long for any individual student</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum of 10 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 years – holds systems accountable to making change</li> </ul>		

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The Accountability Work Group recommended a minimum of 5 years for the long-term goals timeline. The group expressed that using a minimum of 5 years would give schools enough time to make systemic change. Establishing a shorter timeline, however, could result in schools just waiting for the targets to change. The group recommended, however, that the established timeline should not exceed 10 years. Using a longer timeframe ensures the targets are not continually re-adjusted, holding systems accountable to making changes.

In establishing a final recommendation, consideration should be given to the impact of changes in state assessments, and whether new timelines would need to be established as a result. In addition, although the Accountability Work Group recommended the use of a timeline between 5 to 10 years, they acknowledge that even 5 years would be too long from an individual student perspective.


# Options Regarding Interim Measures



The Accountability Work Group is also looking for feedback on the two options presented to establish interim targets.

Option 1		
Establish same interim targets for all students and all disaggregated groups		
Pros	Cons	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easier to communicate to public and for public to understand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doesn't take into consideration that some disaggregated groups, schools, and districts are starting at a lower point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doesn't take into consideration the research around systemic change</li> </ul>

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The first option is to establish the same interim targets for all students and all disaggregated groups. This option is easier to communicate to the public, as the identified targets are consistent across all groups. A potential disadvantage of this approach, however, is that it does not take into consideration the fact that some disaggregated groups may be starting at a lower point, and therefore may have different growth trajectories in reaching the established long-term goals.

Research regarding systemic change should be taken into consideration when established these interim targets.

## Option 2

**Establish different interim targets based on starting point of disaggregated groups (with the same long-term goal)**

Pros	Cons	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interim goals that take starting point into consideration may be more feasible for traditionally low-performing disaggregated groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More difficult to communicate to the public and for the public to understand</li> <li>Disaggregated groups are held to different targets each year (except for the final long-term goal)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assumes that change is linear—not necessarily the case</li> <li>Low-performing disaggregated groups will have to make more progress each year than their higher-performing counterparts</li> </ul>

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The second option is to establish different interim targets based on the actual starting point of each disaggregated group, leading to the same eventual long-term goals. Unlike Option 1, this option would take into consideration the fact that some disaggregated groups may be starting at different levels, allowing for different growth trajectories in reaching the established long-term goals. This option would be more difficult to communicate to the public, however, and may be more difficult to understand. Some stakeholders have also expressed concern that holding disaggregated groups to different targets each year could reflect inequitable expectations for students.

It is important to note that the approaches recommended would be based on an assumption of linear change, which may not necessarily be the case. Disaggregated groups may not make equal incremental change from year to year, but might instead demonstrate slower or faster growth at different time points. Because the long-term goals will be equal for all students and all disaggregated groups, it is important to also consider that lower performing student groups will have to make more progress each year than their higher performing counterparts.


# Options Regarding Frequency of Interim Targets



The Accountability Work Group is also looking for feedback on the two options presented regarding the frequency of interim targets.

Option 1		
Raise interim targets every year		
Pros	Cons	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicates a sense of urgency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires more resources to implement</li> <li>Complicates communication because targets change so often</li> </ul>	


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The first option is to establish interim targets which are incrementally raised every year. An advantage is that this option communicates a strong sense of urgency, as expectations increase each year. Potential disadvantages to consider are that this option could require additional resources to implement, as targets, and therefore the performance frameworks, would need to be adjusted yearly. This option may also complicate communication regarding the state accountability system, as targets would frequently change.

Option 2		
Raise interim targets every 2 (or 3) years		
Pros	Cons	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simplifies communication because targets don't change so often</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Every 3 years might be too infrequent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depends on the timelines (e.g., 5 years, 7 years, etc.)</li> </ul>

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The second option is to establish interim targets which are incrementally raised every 2 or 3 years. Communication regarding the state accountability system might be simplified, as targets wouldn't change as often, but this approach could result in a decreased sense of urgency, if the need for yearly incremental progress is not perceived. The Accountability Work Group expressed concerns that every 3 years might be too infrequent to hold schools accountable to improvements necessary to make systemic long-term change.

It is important to consider the impact of the timeline selected on these options, as a shorter timeline would require more frequent interim targets.

## Input Needed

- Please use this link to respond to the following questions:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JM28XFR>

- 1. What is your role? (Parent, educator, public, hub member)
- 2. Where are you from? (rural, urban, or suburban setting)
- 3. In the case of multiple options, please indicate your preferred option.
- 4. In the case of single recommendations, please indicate whether you recommend the proposed option (1=do not recommend, 5=strongly recommend)
- 5. Optional, provide any rationale or considerations for your responses.

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Now, we need your input. Please use the provided survey link to answer the following questions:

1. What is your role? It is important for us to consider the results of this survey disaggregated by whether or not you are a parent, an educator, a member of the public, and/or a hub member. You will be able to select all categories that represent your role(s).
2. Where are you from? It is also important for us to consider the results of this survey disaggregated by whether you represent rural, urban, or suburban settings.
3. For the interim measure options recommended by the Accountability Work Group, please indicate which option you most prefer.
4. For the remaining recommendations, please indicate whether you recommend the proposed options using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates that you do not recommend the option proposed and 5 indicates you strongly recommend the option proposed.
5. We will also ask you to provide any rationale or considerations you may have for the responses you provided.

We appreciate the time you have given to this information regarding long-term goals and interim targets, and we appreciate your time in providing feedback. It will be a tremendous help as we further develop the ESSA state plan. Thank you.