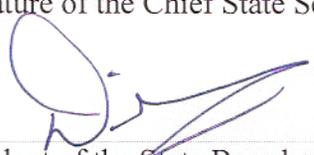


**III. RACE TO THE TOP APPLICATION ASSURANCES
(CFDA No. 84.395A)**

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor): EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE STATE OF COLORADO	Applicant's Mailing Address: 136 STATE CAPITOL BUILDING DENVER, CO 80203-179
Employer Identification Number: 84-0644739 C9	Organizational DUNS: 188589402
State Race to the Top Contact Name: (Single point of contact for communication) Nina Lopez	Contact Position and Office: Special Assistant to the Commissioner Colorado Department of Education
Contact Telephone: 303-916-5434	Contact E-mail Address: <u>Lopez_N@cde.state.co.us</u>
Required Applicant Signatures:	
To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct.	
I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:	
Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): Bill Ritter, Jr., Governor	Telephone: (303) 866-2471
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor: 	Date: 5.26.10
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Dwight D. Jones, Commissioner of Education	Telephone: (303) 866-6646
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: 	Date: 5-20-10
President of the State Board of Education (Printed Name): Bob Schaffer, Chairman	Telephone: (303) 866-6809
Signature of the President of the State Board of Education: 	Date: 5-14-10

State Attorney General Certification

I certify that the State's description of, and statements and conclusions concerning, State law, statute, and regulation in its application are complete, accurate, and constitute a reasonable interpretation of State law, statute, and regulation.

(See especially Eligibility Requirement (b), Selection Criteria (B)(1), (D)(1), (E)(1), (F)(2), (F)(3).)

I certify that the State does not have any legal, statutory, or regulatory barriers at the State level to linking data on student achievement (as defined in this notice) or student growth (as defined in this notice) to teachers and principals for the purpose of teacher and principal evaluation.

State Attorney General or Authorized Representative (Printed Name):

John W. Suthers

Telephone:

(303) 866-3557

Signature of the State Attorney General or Authorized Representative:

John W. Suthers

Date:

5/26/2010

80– Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, including the procurement provisions; 34 CFR Part 81– General Education Provisions Act–Enforcement; 34 CFR Part 82– New Restrictions on Lobbying; 34 CFR Part 84–Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance); 34 CFR Part 85–Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

SIGNATURE BLOCK FOR CERTIFYING OFFICIAL

Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name):	
Bill Ritter, Jr.	
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor:	Date:
	5.26.10

**Race to the Top
Application for Initial Funding
CFDA Number: 84.395A**



U.S. Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202
OMB Number: 1810-0697
Expiration Date: 06/30/2010
Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1810-0697. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 681 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4537. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to: Race to the Top, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., S.W., Room 3E108, Washington, D.C. 20202-3118

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I. RACE TO THE TOP APPLICATION ASSURANCES
(CFDA No. 84.395A)

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor): EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE STATE OF COLORADO	Applicant's Mailing Address: 136 STATE CAPITOL BUILDING DENVER, CO 80203-1792
Employer Identification Number: 84-0644739 C9	Organizational DUNS: 188589402
State Race to the Top Contact Name: (Single point of contact for communication) Nina Lopez	Contact Position and Office: Special Assistant to the Commissioner, Director of ARRA Colorado Department of Education
Contact Telephone: 303-916-5434	Contact E-mail Address: Lopez_N@cde.state.co.us
<p>Required Applicant Signatures:</p> <p>To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct.</p> <p>I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:</p>	
Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): Bill Ritter, Jr., Governor	Telephone: (303) 866-2471
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor: /S/Bill Ritter, Jr.	Date: 5/26/2010
Chief State School Officer (Printed Name): Dwight D. Jones, Commissioner of Education	Telephone: (303) 866-6646
Signature of the Chief State School Officer: /S/Dwight D. Jones	Date: 5/21/2010
President of the State Board of Education (Printed Name): Bob Schaffer, Chairman	Telephone: (303) 866-6809

Signature of the President of the State Board of Education: /S/ Bob Schaffer	Date: 5/19/2010
---	------------------------

State Attorney General Certification

I certify that the State’s description of, and statements and conclusions concerning, State law, statute, and regulation in its application are complete, accurate, and constitute a reasonable interpretation of State law, statute, and regulation.

(See especially Eligibility Requirement (b), Selection Criteria (B)(1), (D)(1), (E)(1), (F)(2), (F)(3).)

I certify that the State does not have any legal, statutory, or regulatory barriers at the State level to linking data on student achievement (as defined in this notice) or student growth (as defined in this notice) to teachers and principals for the purpose of teacher and principal evaluation.

State Attorney General or Authorized Representative (Printed Name): John W. Suthers	Telephone: (303) 866-3557
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Signature of the State Attorney General or Authorized Representative: /S/John W. Suthers	Date: 5/26/2010
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II. ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, REPORTING AND OTHER ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Accountability, Transparency and Reporting Assurances

The Governor or his/her authorized representative assures that the State will comply with all of the accountability, transparency, and reporting requirements that apply to the Race to the Top program, including the following:

- For each year of the program, the State will submit a report to the Secretary, at such time and in such manner as the Secretary may require, that describes:
 - the uses of funds within the State;
 - how the State distributed the funds it received;
 - the number of jobs that the Governor estimates were saved or created with the funds;
 - the State's progress in reducing inequities in the distribution of highly qualified teachers, implementing a State longitudinal data system, and developing and implementing valid and reliable assessments for limited English proficient students and students with disabilities; and
 - if applicable, a description of each modernization, renovation, or repair project approved in the State application and funded, including the amounts awarded and project costs (ARRA Division A, Section 14008)
- The State will cooperate with any U.S. Comptroller General evaluation of the uses of funds and the impact of funding on the progress made toward closing achievement gaps (ARRA Division A, Section 14009)
- If the State uses funds for any infrastructure investment, the State will certify that the investment received the full review and vetting required by law and that the chief executive accepts responsibility that the investment is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds. This certification will include a description of the investment, the estimated total cost, and the amount of covered funds to be used. The certification will be posted on the State's website and linked to www.Recovery.gov. A State or local agency may not use funds under the ARRA for infrastructure investment funding unless this certification is made and posted. (ARRA Division A, Section 1511)
- The State will submit reports, within 10 days after the end of each calendar quarter, that contain the information required under section 1512(c) of the ARRA in accordance with any guidance issued by the Office of Management and Budget or the Department. (ARRA Division A, Section 1512(c))
- The State will cooperate with any appropriate Federal Inspector General's examination of records under the program. (ARRA Division A, Section 1515)

Other Assurances and Certifications

The Governor or his/her authorized representative assures or certifies the following:

- The State will comply with all applicable assurances in OMB Standard Forms 424B (Assurances for Non-Construction Programs) and to the extent consistent with the State's application, OMB Standard Form 424D (Assurances for Construction Programs), including the assurances relating to the legal authority to apply for assistance; access to records; conflict of interest; merit systems; nondiscrimination; Hatch Act provisions; labor standards; flood hazards; historic preservation; protection of human subjects; animal welfare; lead-based paint; Single Audit Act; and the general agreement to comply with all applicable Federal laws, executive orders and regulations.
- With respect to the certification regarding lobbying in Department Form 80-0013, no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making or renewal of Federal grants under this program; the State will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," when required (34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix B); and the State will require the full certification, as set forth in 34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix A, in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers.
- The State will comply with all of the operational and administrative provisions in Title XV and XIV of the ARRA, including Buy American Requirements (ARRA Division A, Section 1605), Wage Rate Requirements (section 1606), and any applicable environmental impact requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970 (NEPA), as amended, (42 U.S.C. 4371 et seq.) (ARRA Division A, Section 1609). In using ARRA funds for infrastructure investment, recipients will comply with the requirement regarding Preferences for Quick Start Activities (ARRA Division A, Section 1602).
- Any local educational agency (LEA) receiving funding under this program will have on file with the State a set of assurances that meets the requirements of section 442 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1232e).
- Any LEA receiving funding under this program will have on file with the State (through either its Stabilization Fiscal Stabilization Fund application or another U.S. Department of Education Federal grant) a description of how the LEA will comply with the requirements of section 427 of GEPA (20 U.S.C. 1228a). The description must include information on the steps the LEA proposes to take to permit students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries to overcome barriers (including barriers based on gender, race, color, national origin, disability, and age) that impede access to, or participation in, the program.
- The State and other entities will comply with the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), including the following provisions as applicable: 34 CFR Part 74—Administration of Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations; 34 CFR Part 75—Direct Grant

Programs; 34 CFR Part 77– Definitions that Apply to Department Regulations; 34 CFR Part 80– Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, including the procurement provisions; 34 CFR Part 81– General Education Provisions Act–Enforcement; 34 CFR Part 82– New Restrictions on Lobbying; 34 CFR Part 84–Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance); 34 CFR Part 85–Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

SIGNATURE BLOCK FOR CERTIFYING OFFICIAL

Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): Bill Ritter, Jr., Governor	
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor: /S/Bill Ritter Jr.	Date: 5/26/2010

Glossary of Acronyms Used in Colorado’s Race to the Top Application

ASCENT	Accelerating Students through Concurrent ENrollment – program that allow high school students statewide to earn a diploma while simultaneously completing a college associate's degree.
ARRA	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
BizCARES	Business Coalition to Advance Reform of the Education System
BOCES	Boards of Cooperative Educational Services
CTE	Career and technical education
CERC	Colorado Educational Research Consortium
CEPA	Center for Education Policy Analysis
CRESST	Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards and Student Testing
CTLT	Center for Transforming Learning and Teaching
CAP4K	Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (SB08-212)
CASB	Colorado Association of School Boards
CASE	Colorado Association of School Executives
CCEE	Colorado Center for Educator Excellence
CCHE	Colorado Commission on Higher Education
CCABC	Colorado Community Anchor Broadband Consortium
CDE	Colorado Department of Education
CDHE	Colorado Department of Higher Education
CEA	Colorado Education Association
CEEC	Colorado Educator Excellence Center
CGM	Colorado Growth Model
CLCS	Colorado League of Charter Schools
CLS	Colorado Legacy Schools – an Advanced Placement initiative in partnership with National Math and Science Initiative
CMO	Charter Management Organization
CSN	Colorado STEM Network
CSAP	Colorado Student Assessment Program
CCS	Common Core Standards
CADI	Comprehensive appraisal for district improvement
CCSSO	Council of Chief State School Officers
ECE	Early childhood education
EDGAR	Education Department General Administrative Regulations
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ELL	English language learners
EMO	Educational Management Organization
GED	General Education Degree
HQT	Highly qualified teachers
HPHM	Means a “high-poverty” and/or “high-minority” school as defined by Colorado in its Highly Qualified Teachers Plan, as amended in January 2009, and submitted to the US Department of Education pursuant to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ICAP	Individual Career and Academic Plan
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Act
IES	Institute of Education Sciences
IIS	Instructional improvement system
K-12	Kindergarten through 12 th grade
LEA	Local education agency

LEARN	Laboratory for Educational Assessment, Research, and innovatioN
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NBPTS	National Board of Professional Teaching Standards
NCIEA	National Center for Improvement of Educational Assessment
NGA	National Governors' Association
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
PARCC	Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Consortium
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
P-20	Preschool through grade 20 (post-secondary)
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PD	Professional development
PWR	Postsecondary and workforce readiness
RttT	Race to the Top
RFP	Request for proposal
Rtl	Response to Intervention
REAL	Results through Early Advantages in Learning
SB 191	Senate Bill 10-191, Great Teachers and Leaders Bill
SSAS	Statewide System of Accountability and Support
SASID	State-assigned student identifier
SLA	School Leadership Academy
SLDS	Statewide longitudinal data system
SBE	Colorado State Board of Education
SMARTER	Summative Multi-State Assessments Resources for Teachers and Educational Researchers
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TAP	Teacher Advancement Program
TFA	Teach for America
TIF	Teacher Incentive Fund
TALON	Teaching as Leadership Online Network
TELL	Teaching, Empowering, Learning and Leading (TELL) – statewide survey of school level teaching and learning conditions
TIMMS	Trends in International Math and Science Study

III. SELECTION CRITERIA: PROGRESS AND PLANS IN THE FOUR EDUCATION REFORM AREAS

(A) State Success Factors (125 total points)

(A)(1) Articulating State's education reform agenda and LEAs' participation in it (65 points)

The extent to which—

(i) The State has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform agenda that clearly articulates its goals for implementing reforms in the four education areas described in the ARRA and improving student outcomes statewide, establishes a clear and credible path to achieving these goals, and is consistent with the specific reform plans that the State has proposed throughout its application; (5 points)

(ii) The participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) are strongly committed to the State's plans and to effective implementation of reform in the four education areas, as evidenced by Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) or other binding agreements between the State and its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) that include— (45 points)

- (a) Terms and conditions that reflect strong commitment by the participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to the State's plans;
- (b) Scope-of-work descriptions that require participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plans; and
- (c) Signatures from as many as possible of the LEA superintendent (or equivalent), the president of the local school board (or equivalent, if applicable), and the local teachers' union leader (if applicable) (one signature of which must be from an authorized LEA representative) demonstrating the extent of leadership support within participating LEAs (as defined in this notice); and

(iii) The LEAs that are participating in the State's Race to the Top plans (including considerations of the numbers and percentages of participating LEAs, schools, K-12 students, and students in poverty) will translate into broad statewide impact, allowing the State to reach its ambitious yet achievable goals, overall and by student subgroup, for—(15 points)

- (a) Increasing student achievement in (at a minimum) reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA;
- (b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, as reported by the NAEP and the assessments required under the ESEA;
- (c) Increasing high school graduation rates (as defined in this notice); and
- (d) Increasing college enrollment (as defined in this notice) and increasing the number of students who complete at least a year's worth of college credit that is applicable to a degree within two years of enrollment in an institution of higher education.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion, as well as projected goals as described in (A)(1)(iii). The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a

minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (A)(1)(ii):

- An example of the State's standard Participating LEA MOU, and description of variations used, if any.
- The completed summary table indicating which specific portions of the State's plan each LEA is committed to implementing, and relevant summary statistics (see Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b), below).
- The completed summary table indicating which LEA leadership signatures have been obtained (see Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(c), below).

Evidence for (A)(1)(iii):

- The completed summary table indicating the numbers and percentages of participating LEAs, schools, K-12 students, and students in poverty (see Summary Table for (A)(1)(iii), below).
- Tables and graphs that show the State's goals, overall and by subgroup, requested in the criterion, together with the supporting narrative. In addition, describe what the goals would look like were the State not to receive an award under this program.

Evidence for (A)(1)(ii) and (A)(1)(iii):

- The completed detailed table, by LEA, that includes the information requested in the criterion (see Detailed Table for (A)(1), below).

(A)(1)(i) The State's Comprehensive and Coherent Reform Agenda

Colorado is a land of bold ideas and courageous actions built on the characteristics of independence and innovation articulated in the State constitution: innovation is rewarded; public involvement is extensive and passionate; and school choice and open enrollment are statewide opportunities. Recognized nationally for its forward thinking¹ and progress, Colorado has blazed a 20-year trail of reform focused on providing Colorado's public school students a world-class education.

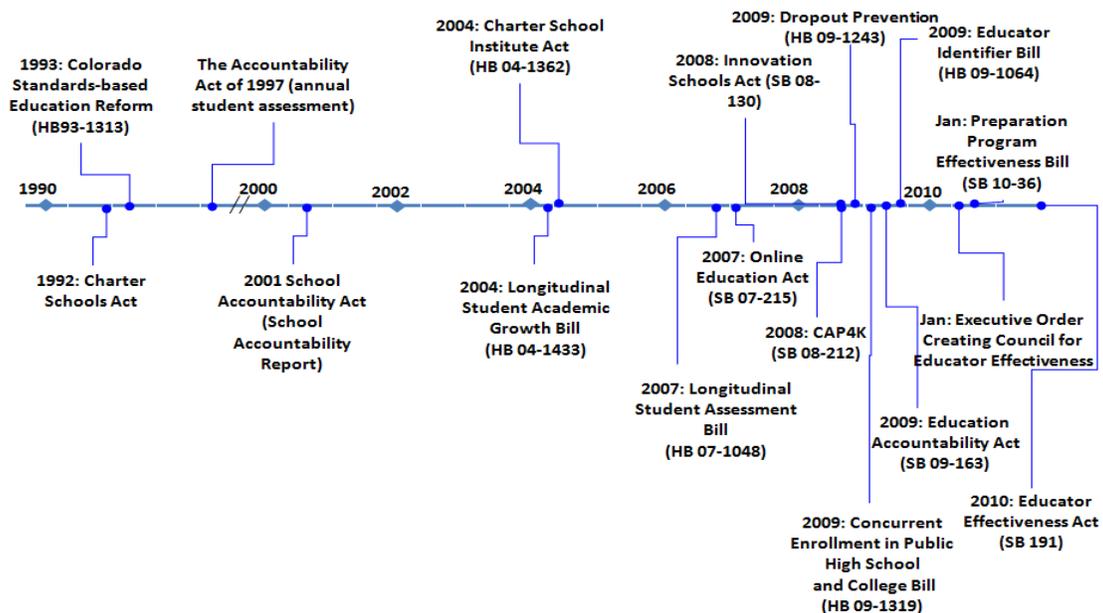
In that spirit, Colorado's legacy and long-standing leadership in education reform is punctuated by firsts. Colorado was one of the first states in the nation to pass a Charter Schools Act, paving the way for choice in public education. Colorado was among the first to adopt

¹ This focus is detailed in the strategic plan of the CDE, Forward Thinking authored by Colorado Commissioner of Education, Dwight D. Jones following his appointment in 2007. The vision articulated in Forward Thinking, "to create a purpose-driven and dynamic system of educational leadership, service, and support that relentlessly focuses on the learning of ALL students" is the foundation for Colorado's strategy to implement its Race to the Top proposal.

statewide standards and require LEAs to align to them. Colorado also was one of the first states to pass comprehensive legislation to create an aligned P-20 education system.

Known as the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids and led by Governor Bill Ritter’s 2007 “Colorado Promise” to close achievement gaps, halve dropout rates and double the number of postsecondary certificates and degrees, 2008’s CAP4K called for redefined standards and assessments which reflect a definition of *postsecondary and workforce readiness*² common to high school graduation, college entry and workplace success. CAP4K also provided for a number of other firsts, including 2009’s renewal and adoption of new internationally benchmarked P-12 academic standards in 10 content areas, as well as investments to create the nation’s first five-year dual-degree program, allowing high school students to earn an associate’s degree along with a diploma. A number of significant reform bills also have been passed by the Colorado General Assembly in support of the goals outlined in the Race to the Top application criteria.

Figure A-1: Colorado’s Legacy of Reform



Colorado was among the first to build a State longitudinal data system and the first to develop an open-source growth measure, the Colorado Growth Model, which has spurred

² Postsecondary and workforce readiness was defined by the State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education. It describes the knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential for high school graduates to be prepared to enter college and the workforce and compete in the global economy. See Appendix Exhibit A-9.

collaboration among 11 other states.³ Colorado's Internet portal, SchoolView, provides unprecedented public access to high quality information and was recently recognized by the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME) for its outstanding dissemination of educational measurement concepts to the public. SchoolView will soon link individual student growth directly to educators, providing them with access to outstanding instructional improvement systems. In May 2010, Colorado placed itself among the first states to enact legislation that requires educators to earn and retain tenure based upon annual performance evaluations, based at least 50% upon their students' academic growth, and eliminated the forced placement of teachers statewide.

This same legislation made Colorado one of the first states to eliminate the forced placement of teachers statewide. Principals in Colorado now have control over the staffing in their buildings and teachers who cannot secure a placement within 12 months are placed on unpaid leave. Colorado's Race to the Top (RttT) application outlines the State's ambitious goals for reform that address each of RttT's four assurance areas. The end result: Colorado's reform plan will rapidly increase student achievement and, supported by RttT funding, by 2014 will significantly reduce the achievement gap and transform the State's public educational system to prepare *all* Colorado students to succeed in postsecondary education and the skilled workforce.⁴

Colorado's Reform Plan

With the legislation, leadership, information systems and community support in place, the time is ripe for Colorado's next-generation of reform, designed with 21st century tools to deliver 21st century results.

Ambitious Goals and a Focus on Results. As presented in the Race to the Top proposal, Colorado's reform plan targets breakthrough performance improvements for teachers, principals and students. It diagnoses and delivers student readiness at three key points: kindergarten; transition within K-12, based on demonstrated content mastery; and entry into postsecondary education or the skilled workforce.

³ Colorado is part of an effort to create a multi-state growth and reporting consortium using the Colorado Growth Model that includes: Arizona, Indiana, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Missouri, Nevada and Washington.

⁴ A definition of "postsecondary and workforce readiness" was jointly adopted by the SBE and the CCHE in 2009. It describes the knowledge, skills and behaviors essential for high school graduates to be prepared to enter college and the workforce and compete in the global economy. See Appendix Exhibit A-9.

Colorado’s reform plan has been underway since 2007, when Governor Bill Ritter and Colorado Department of Education leadership began analyzing the student achievement outcomes they believed were inadequate. They discovered a number of critical factors that hampered student success:

- Standards were not aligned for college and career-readiness.
- Access to and use of data to inform instructional practice was spotty and scarce.
- Insufficient attention was given to educator preparation and development; insufficient support was provided to principals and teachers.
- Concerted focus on and support for the lowest-achieving schools was absent.
- The approach to capture and disseminate best practices was inconsistent.

The resulting plan accomplishes Colorado’s achievement outcomes through five strategies listed here and detailed throughout this Race to the Top proposal:

1. Increase student learning through teacher mastery and delivery of common standards and assessments.
2. Use, learn, and leverage high quality information to drive increased student performance.
3. Ensure all students have access to effective teachers and principals.
4. Turn around Colorado's persistently lowest-achieving schools.
5. Build state-wide system of accountability and support to accomplish and sustain goals.

Colorado will measure success by the following student achievement outcomes as listed below:

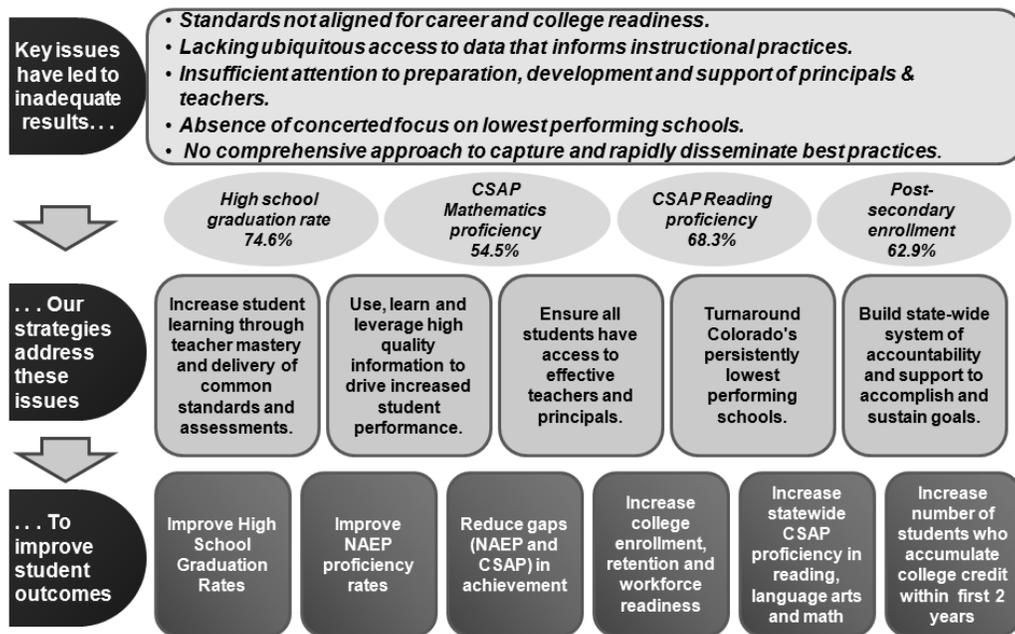
Figure A-2: Student Achievement Outcomes⁵

Student Achievement Outcomes	
1.	Increase college enrollment from 62.9% to 70%.
2.	Increase college retention from 66.3% to 75%, as measured by the percent of college students who accumulate at least one year of college credit within two years of enrollment.
3.	Increase 4th grade Math NAEP proficiency from 45% to 65%.
4.	Increase high school graduation from 74.6% to 90%
5.	Increase 4th grade Reading NAEP proficiency from 40% to 60%.
6.	Increase 8th grade Math NAEP proficiency from 40% to 60%.
7.	Increase 8th grade Reading NAEP proficiency from 32% to 52%.
8.	Increase Math CSAP proficiency for all students from 54.5% to 85%.
9.	Increase Reading CSAP proficiency for all students from 68.3% to 85 %.
10.	Reduce the achievement gap from 30% to 10% between all student subgroups,

⁵ As a result of anticipated changes to the calculation of the on-time graduation rate to include 5 and 6 year completers, Colorado’s on-time graduation rate is expected to increase. The goal of achieving a 90% high school graduation rate as a result of the Race to the Top investments reflects the anticipated change in the method of calculating this rate, whereas the current rate of 74.6 does not.

The following graphic (Figure A-3) presents an illustration of Colorado’s reform plan:

Figure A-3: Overview of Colorado’s Race to the Top Plan



Colorado’s Five Strategies for Reform

Colorado’s reform efforts ultimately will ensure that all 832,368 students in all 180 diverse LEAs are able and ready to learn at grade-level, beginning with the 20,000 at-risk children enrolled in the high-quality Colorado Preschool Program, and extending to the smallest LEA with 26 students and the largest with more than 86,000 students.

1) Increase student learning through teacher mastery and delivery of common standards and assessments: With the CAP4K framework in place, Colorado has already set fewer, clearer and higher expectations for students and teachers, as realized in the new academic standards for 10 content areas⁶ and in school readiness⁷ standards for preschool. Colorado also has embraced the rigorous Common Core Standards,⁸ which will be presented to the State Board of Education for adoption in August 2010.

⁶ The 10 content areas include: Reading, Writing and Communicating; Mathematics; Science; Social Studies; World Languages; Visual Arts; Music; Dance; Drama and Theatre Arts; and Comprehensive Health and Physical Education.

⁷ School Readiness describes both the preparedness of a child to engage in and benefit from learning experiences, and the ability of a school to meet the needs of all students enrolled in publicly funded preschool or kindergarten. School Readiness is enhanced when schools, families, and community service providers work collaboratively to ensure that every child is ready for higher levels of learning in academic content.

⁸ Developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers/National Governors Association

Race to the Top will support Colorado's creation of new curricula, instructional materials and classroom-level assessments, as well as new learning communities called Content Collaboratives and professional development/training Regional Support Teams to ensure that the educator training is effective and that the training resources support standards-based, data-driven practices. Colorado will also develop formative and summative assessments, made readily available through SchoolView, as well as interim assessments to evaluate both educators and student progress.

The State will collaborate with LEAs to train all of Colorado's more than 40,000 teachers on the new standards by August 2011. By June 2012, all educators will be trained on standards-based, data-driven instruction, and by September 2012, all teachers will have begun instructing and implementing new standards, aligned curriculum and interim assessments. By June 2013, interim assessment results will show increases in student achievement and growth and narrowing of achievement gaps. Training for Colorado educators will leverage existing incentives to improve practice, and be both job-embedded and directly relevant to the ability of individual educators to be successful.

2) Use, learn and leverage high quality information to drive increased student

performance: For every student, teacher, school and LEA in Colorado, the Colorado Growth Model (CGM) provides reports on each student's academic growth and achievement history, and delivers clear, visual analysis of that student's track to reach proficiency or advanced proficiency. CGM also highlights educator effectiveness based on student growth. Colorado has just begun the second phase of a three-phase process to assign unique identifiers to each and every educator in the State, which will further the State's ability to examine many aspects of educator effectiveness across grade levels. All of this information is or soon will be accessible through SchoolView.

Currently, Colorado's system meets 11 of the 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act. Colorado was recently awarded a \$17.4 million statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) grant to expand the SchoolView platform. When complete, SchoolView will include the outstanding element and show which educator preparation programs are producing the most effective educators. It also will provide a trove of instructional resources, social collaboration tools and support for educators, students and parents/guardians. An incentive program will help ensure best-of-breed instructional resources are submitted for statewide dissemination and use.

Race to the Top funding will provide regional data coaches to train all Colorado educators to use and incorporate the information available through SchoolView in differentiated instructional practice by 2012. By 2014, the number of SchoolView visits will increase by 25%, as a result of the system's ability to introduce and foster teacher collaboration and social networking, its enhanced data visualizations and user-friendly dashboard views, its research capabilities and its links to effective instructional materials and practices.

Most importantly this student data will now be highly leveraged to influence all components of teacher and principal evaluation, promotion, retention and dismissal.

3) Ensure all students have access to effective teachers and principals: Research shows that individual teachers are “highly significant predictors of student achievement,”⁹ and the best principals make good teachers great. Colorado's reform plan has a laser-like focus on providing educators with the tools and resources needed to develop mastery in the newly aligned content areas and to acquire the skills to effectively deliver differentiated, data-driven instruction. Race to the Top funding will allow Colorado to concentrate on and expand its efforts in four areas: ***Build the supply of effective educators.*** At present, 19 colleges and 26 alternative programs are approved to prepare teachers for Colorado licensure; and 11 colleges and 10 alternative programs are approved to prepare principals to receive a Colorado administrator license. Colorado will immediately invest in programs with a track record of preparing effective educators for the most urgent student needs. As improved metrics of impact for all educator preparation programs become available, additional investments will be made to expand by 50% candidates enrolled in those programs with the greatest success at improving academic growth among Colorado's K-12 students that are served by program graduates. In addition, Colorado, in collaboration with the Bill and Melina Gates foundation will pilot the nation's first “teacher tryout” program. While there is a great deal of national focus on how to improve the effectiveness of teachers once they arrive in classrooms, there is very little work being done to identify applicants who are effective and to weed out applicants who are ineffective before they ever enter a classroom. The teacher tryout program will aim to identify and recruit effective educators into the classrooms by accepting applicants who choose to participate in a 6 week student teaching experience to

⁹ “The Impact of Individual Teachers on Student Achievement: Evidence from Panel Data” by Jonah E. Rockoff (March 2003), and “Policy Brief: School, Teacher and Leadership Impacts on Student Achievement” by Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (1995-2006)

determine their likelihood of becoming effective teachers. This tryout program can have a profound impact on the overall effectiveness of the teaching population just by recruiting and identifying highly effective educators sooner, and by identifying ineffective educators before they arrive in the classroom.

Improve teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance. With the Governor’s signature of SB 191, Colorado has codified an incredibly ambitious plan to ensure a great teacher in every classroom and a great leader in every school. This legislation lays out Colorado’s plan to ensure every teacher and principal in the State will receive an annual evaluation comprised of at least 50% student growth data, that these evaluations will include multiple measures of effectiveness, that the most highly effective teachers will have access to career ladders that offer more pay for more responsibility to document and share practices with the rest of the profession, that teachers will only earn tenure¹⁰ based on three consecutive years of demonstrated effectiveness and will lose the privilege of tenure after two years of ineffectiveness. Participating LEAs will use the educator effectiveness rating to inform decisions on professional development, compensation, promotion, retention and dismissal.

Ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals. By December 2011, Colorado will complete its statewide plan to ensure that students enrolled in high-poverty and/or high-minority (HPHM) schools have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals and are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than other students. This plan will be informed by analysis of available data using the statewide definition of “effectiveness” that the State Council for Educator Effectiveness will develop by March 2011. Colorado will determine its baseline using this new definition and deploy strategies that will result in critical improvements: increasing effective teachers in language instruction or special education by at least 20% annually, decreasing by at least 50% each year the number of ineffective teachers and principals at HPHM schools.

Colorado’s efforts to ensure equitable distribution have been underway for several years already, using such proxies as years of experience and school-level growth data. Based upon analysis of results achieved to date, Colorado will immediately accelerate certain critical activities to ensure that improvements in equitable distribution of educators is not slowed during

¹⁰ Colorado law does not include the concept of “tenure”. Instead, teachers with non-probationary status are afforded due process rights. The term “tenure” in this proposal is used to refer to non-probationary status.

this important time of transition for the State, including increasing the number of educators with National Board Certification, increasing the number of slots available through residency-based preparation programs, and deploying additional Teach for America corps members to the most high-needs schools and students.

Improve the effectiveness of educator preparation programs. Via SchoolView, student increases will be linked directly to educators, and in turn, effective educators will be linked directly to the teacher and principal programs that prepared them. As a result of legislation passed earlier this year, every teacher and principal preparation program in the State of Colorado will be evaluated based on the impact their graduates are having on student growth. By fall 2011, Colorado will publish on SchoolView the first annual report rating Colorado's most effective educator preparation programs. Colorado preparation programs will be required to demonstrate alignment with Common Core Standards, mastery of data-driven instruction, and show a high level of performance, as measured by the student in outcomes of program graduates.

Providing effective support to teachers and principals. Through a pyramid of educator support based on level of need (explained in detail in Section (D)(5)), Colorado will provide educators the resources and professional development needed to teach the new content standards. By fall 2011, highly effective professional development programs will be developed by Content Collaboratives and delivered by Regional Support Teams, which will train educators across the State by spring 2012 both on instructional practices and leadership skills. Programs also will be available online. Districts and LEAs will offer professional development aligned with both student needs and the educators' identified areas requiring improvement; LEAs will monitor and the use and evaluate the effectiveness of these professional development programs.

By July 2014, all induction programs will meet or exceed State quality standards for preparing effective educators, and all licensed educators will have mastery of student-growth data and know how to use it to inform and differentiate instruction. Combined, these efforts will create highly effective educators.

In addition teachers and principals will have access to innovative leadership roles and master educators from around the State who have proven outstanding results on student learning. The practices of these master educators will be documented and shared online through SchoolView so any novice teacher or principal can find exemplars of effective practices. These

roles will help retain the most effective educators by offering additional leadership and compensation and will build an invaluable bank of professional development resources for people new to the profession.

4) Turn around Colorado's persistently lowest-achieving schools

Turnaround requires legislative support for State intervention, as well as a sufficient supply of effective teachers and leaders who have access to the support and information systems needed to perform. The CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit builds on the authority for State intervention established by the Education Accountability Act to provide additional capacity and support for intensive change.

At present, Colorado has 72 schools identified as persistently low-achieving. In recent years, Colorado has seen mixed results of school improvement efforts. Informed by an analysis of these results, Colorado's Turnaround Strategy (described in greater detail in Section (E)) targets two primary categories:

Intervention in lowest-achieving schools. The CDE identified all schools in the State that consistently fail to meet growth and achievement expectations, and ranked those that fell among the lowest. With Race to the Top funding, by fall 2014, all 72 of these low-performers within participating LEAs will have implemented one of the four turnaround models indicated in Race to the Top guidelines.

Long-term local capacity. In order to eradicate and prevent chronic school failure, Colorado will build long-term local capacity by:

1. Increasing the supply of talented people trained specifically for persistently low-achieving schools.
2. Building the supply of school operators to restart struggling schools and open high-quality new schools across the State.
3. Fostering conditions for successful turnarounds.
4. Using data from intervention efforts to drive further improvement.

To ensure all turnaround schools are led by high-quality leaders and teachers by fall 2014, Colorado will sponsor a Turnaround Leaders Academy. In addition, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will offer substantial financial incentives and grant funding to train a cohort of teachers and principals for low-achieving schools, and to build a cadre of operators to restart struggling schools and open high-quality schools across the State. Funding to turn around

troubled schools and to start high-quality new schools will be provided through Race to the Top funds, Federal Charter School Grants and private philanthropic funds.

5) Build State-wide system of accountability and support to accomplish and sustain goals

Colorado's reform plan is designed to build deep, long-lasting change through a focus upon strong implementation. CDE's organizational model, the Statewide System of Accountability and Support (SSAS), provides leadership and results-oriented and differentiated service and support to districts, schools and teachers. With a pyramid of support approach, the SSAS ensures that all districts receive a basic foundation of services and supports; some districts receive additional support and resources; and still others are offered targeted interventions. The SSAS is organized around three core functions:

- **Accountability:** With a framework provided by recent legislation, notably the Education Accountability Act of 2009 and the Great Teachers and Leaders Bill, clear performance objectives are being set for students, educators, schools, LEAs and the State.
- **Data and Evaluation:** The ongoing development of SchoolView promotes access to and the use of data to its greatest potential.
- **Service, Support and Leadership:** With its mission of service and support to the field, the CDE will emphasize and deepen its delivery and provision of the tools and resources educators need to be more effective.

Implementation and Oversight. Four primary business units, overseen by the CDE, will implement Colorado's reform efforts. These units (described in detail in (A)(2)(i)(a)) will monitor implementation progress, provide support to LEAs and make sure Colorado stays on track to meet its goals. CDE's evaluation framework is threefold and is fully elaborated in Section (A)(2)(i).¹¹ The following illustrates key delivery points of specific milestones. Implementation plans can be found in each assurance area, where applicable.

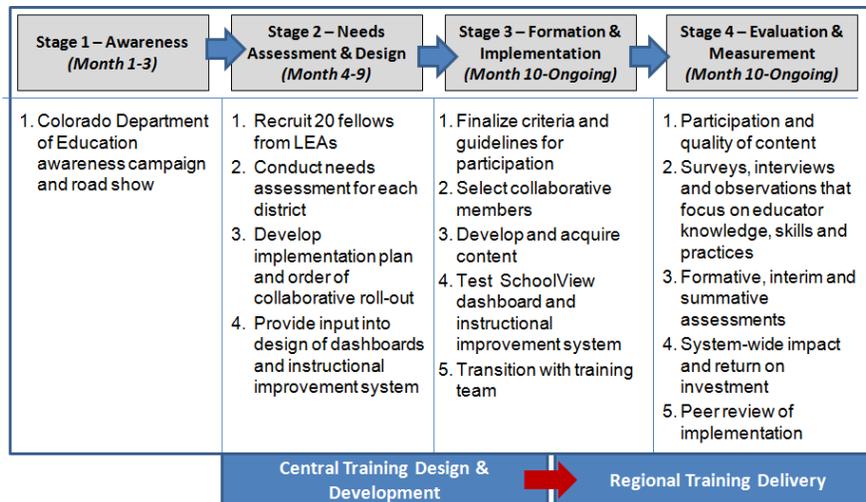
¹¹ Comprehensive Race to the Top Evaluation Plan in Exhibit A-5.

Figure A-4: Race to the Top Implementation Roadmap

2010	2011	2012	2013
CDE FTE Staffed & Educator Effectiveness Unit Launched	Updated Educator Evaluation Systems	Launch Enhanced Data on Student Growth	Evaluation of IIS Content Quality
Setup and Launch PMO and Governance	Expand CDE Turnaround Unit	Improve Research Capabilities	Evaluation Results Begin to Inform Tenure Decisions
Adoption of Core Standards	Roll-Out Engaging Dashboards & Pilot IIS	Increase Data Immediacy to Improve Performance	Annually Evaluate and Improve IIS Functionality
Procurement and Contract Execution	Develop and Launch Equitable Distribution Plan	Deploy Data Coaches to Foster Data-driven Instructional Improvement	Provide Ongoing Technical Support
Launch Awareness Campaign	Identify and Evaluate Effective Educator Preparation Programs	Identify and Certify Proven Professional Development Models	Implement Job-embedded Training on School View
Launch Content Collaborative Fellowships	Expand Drop Out Prevention Program	Full Roll-Out of Instructional Improvement System	Repurpose Resources to Sustain Key Initiatives
Prioritize Schools for Intervention	Expand Regional Support Teams		
Program Governance			
Grant Administration			
Communication and Change Management			
Evaluation and Measurement			

To build sustainable statewide capacity, the CDE will develop and implement new Content Collaboratives to engage LEAs in the creation and dissemination of standards-based assessment and instructional materials for use in the classroom. Content Collaboratives will also inform the development of SchoolView dashboards and an instructional improvement system that will house the information. Leveraging Colorado’s existing regional support structure, 12 Regional Support Teams will develop and deliver training to teachers and principals on standards-based, data-driven and blended-learning instruction. These teams also will support the roll-out of educator evaluation systems and instructional improvement systems in small and rural districts. The following chart depicts the process for creating and maintaining these communities.

Figure A-5: Overview of the Process for Development of the Content Collaboratives and Regional Support Teams



(A)(1)(ii) Strength of Participating LEA Commitment

It is important to note that many of the most important reforms included in Colorado’s Race to the Top application are already codified in State law as discussed above. This means that these policies will automatically have dramatic statewide impact and will remain in place for districts that sign on to Race to the Top and for those who don’t. In addition it means that these reforms will be in place statewide long after the Race to the Top funding has disappeared and the MOU’s are no longer valid. This gives Colorado a significant advantage over states attempting to establish statewide impact through the MOU process alone.

The investments made as a result of a Race to the Top award will ensure these reforms are implemented more quickly enabling Colorado to serve as a model for other states and LEAs nationally. These lasting fundamental changes to the Colorado education system are the best expression of the principles of Race to the Top.

Section A(1)(ii)(a): Participating LEAs with Colorado in Race to the Top signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) substantially similar to and containing all elements in the model MOU provided by the U.S. Department of Education.¹² In signing the MOU, all participating LEAs expressed commitment to Colorado’s plan to implement reforms related to the four education areas specified in Race to the Top guidelines.¹³

Section A(1)(ii)(b): The preliminary scope of work provided with the State’s MOU describes the expected activities to be completed by the State and by participating LEAs or charters for the Race to the Top program. This statement of work outlines expectations for each assurance area, as illustrated for Assurance Area B in Figure A-6 below.

Figure A-6: Sample MOU Statement of Work¹⁴

Assurance Area C: Data Systems (Using Data to Inform Instruction)
Primary Strategic Objective: Use, learn and leverage high quality information to drive increased student performance.

For All LEAs/Charters, the State Will...	Participating LEAs/Charters, the State Will...	Participating LEAs/Charter's Will...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create the technological base for instructional improvement systems (e.g., reports based on interim assessments) and integrate into the SchoolView Educational Dashboard Portal. • Define criteria and quality standards for instructional improvement systems. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Instructional improvement systems include collaborative planning time in which teachers analyze student data, develop plans to differentiate instruction in response to data, and review the effectiveness of prior actions. • Pre-approve methods and/or providers of instructional improvement systems meeting these quality standards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit, train, deploy, and subsidize data coaches to participate in instructional improvement systems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Data coaches will facilitate collaborative planning time to help teachers and leaders develop the technical skills to analyze data and the pedagogical skills to adjust instruction based on data. ○ Data coaches will provide teachers with feedback on instructional approaches on using data effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure implementation of instructional improvement systems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure weekly collaborative time for teachers and leaders to participate in instructional improvement systems in small, relevant groups (e.g., 6 3rd and 4th grade teachers). ○ Use the statewide system of support which includes a facilitated collaborative planning time (may choose a preapproved provider/method or may request approval for other options). ○ Integrate instructional improvement systems as a core job-embedded professional development offering). • Integrate State data coaches into instructional improvement systems. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use State data coaches to facilitate collaborative time, observe instruction, and provide feedback. ○ Provide access to classrooms for data coaches to complete observations of instruction and offer feedback.

¹² See Appendix A-3.

¹³ See Summary Table (A)(1)(ii)(b) below.

¹⁴ The full MOU scope of work for this application is presented in the Appendix Exhibit A-3.

Section A(1)(ii)(c): As one of only six states in the nation with a Constitutional requirement for local control of instruction, Colorado LEAs are highly accustomed to independence. Given this context, Colorado is exceptionally pleased to report that 114 LEAs, representing approximately 90% of Colorado students, and 139 of 153 of its charter schools, are participating in this application. Each participating LEA secured on its MOU the signature of both its superintendent and the chair of its board of education—support which reflects the success of the public engagement process, as well as reform leadership within LEAs and among State leaders.¹⁵ It is also indicative of Colorado’s desire for reform, widespread agreement with the State’s plan and the will of LEAs and local leaders to improve education across Colorado.

Colorado’s participating LEAs are extremely diverse in size, location and student population, ranging from large Denver metro-area districts like Jefferson County Public Schools, Denver Public Schools and the Boulder Valley School District, to mountain communities like Eagle and Summit counties, to rural communities on the Eastern Plains, the Western Slope and in the San Luis Valley. Even within these regions, the diversity of LEAs is profound. For example, some are recognized as national leaders in education reform, while others struggle with decreasing student enrollment and limited staff. Some districts have large and highly sophisticated central offices, while in others the superintendent serves also as the principal, a classroom teacher and IT specialist. Some boast high achievement and growth, while others consistently perform below expectations. Within the context of a local-control State, this level of participation is not only substantive, but also shows significant support for unparalleled reform that will have broad statewide impact.

(A)(1)(iii) Statewide Impact and Student Achievement Goals

Colorado’s reform plan will directly impact all of Colorado’s students not just those within the participating LEAs serving approximately 90% of Colorado’s students. While LEAs will be held accountable for achieving results, Colorado’s reform plan lays out a true partnership between the State, LEAs, schools, educators and students with clear lines of responsibility, continuous analysis of results, and a nimble structure that enables quick response when results fail to meet expectations. Colorado’s student achievement goals were informed by each of the following:

¹⁵ Because the number of LEAs participating is so large, the Detailed Table for (A)(1) has been moved to the Appendix Exhibit A-2.

- Benchmarking State goals against the nation’s best performers.
- Setting a clear outcome goal of college- and career-readiness for all Colorado students by high school graduation.
- Close analysis of historical rates of growth and achievement among Colorado students.
- Research into practices which have demonstrated either the greatest evidence or the promise to improve performance in areas where Colorado historically has struggled the most.
- Realistic expectations of results from the critical changes contained in Colorado reform plan:
 - Internationally benchmarked standards.
 - Formative and interim assessments that provide and gauge immediate results.
 - Data systems that allow user-driven inquiries and present information in an easy-to-understand and -interpret dashboard.
 - Significant focus upon improving the State’s teachers and principals by focusing on each step of the educator life cycle; from preparation to induction to placement, support through compensation, and dismissal.

Colorado high school graduation rates will increase as the impacts of several key initiatives are realized over the next 4 years and beyond, including:

- \$5 million investment in targeted investments to reduce dropout rates and re-engage students in prioritized districts.
- Final build out of the data system will identify individual students who are not on track for graduation using early warning indicators of student enabling educators to quickly identify students in need of intervention early.
- High school graduation rates are one of the four indicators of performance in Colorado’s new school accountability framework resulting in a systemic focus upon these results.
- Access to unique dual-enrollment opportunities that provide students at risk with a tangible incentive to complete high school in order to continue their education.
- Targeted efforts to turnaround the lowest-achieving schools.
- Substantial improvements in the effectiveness of the school teachers and principals.

Ambitious goals and a focus on results. Colorado’s reform efforts target breakthrough performance improvements for teachers, principals and students. If awarded Race to the Top funding, by 2014, Colorado will meet the outcomes illustrated below:

Figure A-7: Student Achievement Outcomes¹⁶

Student Achievement Outcomes	
1.	Increase college enrollment from 62.9% to 70%.
2.	Increase college retention from 66.3% to 75%, as measured by the percent of college students who accumulate at least one year of college credit within two years of enrollment.
3.	Increase 4th grade Math NAEP proficiency from 45% to 65%.
4.	Increase high school graduation from 74.6% to 90%
5.	Increase 4th grade Reading NAEP proficiency from 40% to 60%.
6.	Increase 8th grade Math NAEP proficiency from 40% to 60%.
7.	Increase 8th grade Reading NAEP proficiency from 32% to 52%.
8.	Increase Math CSAP proficiency for all students from 54.5% to 85%.
9.	Increase Reading CSAP proficiency for all students from 68.3% to 85 %.
10.	Reduce the achievement gap from 30% to 10% between all student subgroups,

¹⁶ As a result of anticipated changes to the calculation of the on-time graduation rate to include 5 and 6 year completers, Colorado’s on-time graduation rate is expected to increase. The goal of achieving a 90% high school graduation rate as a result of the Race to the Top investments reflects the anticipated change in the method of calculating this rate, whereas the current rate of 74.6 does not.

Summary tables for participating LEAs are included below. Tables showing the State’s goals overall and by subgroup with supporting narrative are included in the appendix.¹⁷

Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b)

Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(b)		
Elements of State Reform Plans	Number of LEAs Participating (#)	Percentage of Total Participating LEAs (%)
B. Standards and Assessments		
(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments	114	100%
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction		
(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction:		
(i) Use of local instructional improvement systems	114	100%
(ii) Professional development on use of data	114	100%
(iii) Availability and accessibility of data to researchers	114	100%
D. Great Teachers and Leaders		
(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance:		
(i) Measure student growth	114	100%
(ii) Design and implement evaluation systems	114	100%
(iii) Conduct annual evaluations	114	100%
(iv)(a) Use evaluations to inform professional development	114	100%
(iv)(b) Use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention	114	100%
(iv)(c) Use evaluations to inform tenure and/or full certification	114	100%
(iv)(d) Use evaluations to inform removal	114	100%
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals:		
(i) High-poverty and/or high-minority schools	114	100%
(ii) Hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas	114	100%
(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals:		
(i) Quality professional development	114	100%
(ii) Measure effectiveness of professional development	114	100%
E. Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools		
(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools	114	100%

¹⁷ See Appendix Exhibit A-4

Summary Table for (A)(1)(ii)(c)

Signatures acquired from participating LEAs:			
Number of Participating LEAs with all applicable signatures			
	Number of Signatures Obtained (#)	Number of Signatures Applicable (#)	Percentage (%) (Obtained / Applicable)
LEA Superintendent (or equivalent)	114	114	100%
President of Local School Board (or equivalent, if applicable)	114	144	100%
Local Teachers' Union Leader (if applicable)	2	38	5%

Summary Table for (A)(1)(iii)

	Participating LEAs (#)	Statewide (#)	Percentage of Total Statewide (%) (Participating LEAs / Statewide)
LEAs	114	180	64%
Schools	1,464	1,744	84%
K-12 Students	747,122	832,368	89.8%
Students in poverty	284,374	311,888	91%
<small>Note: Fall 2009 Enrollment Data; the number of LEAs includes 178 school districts, the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind, and the Colorado Charter School Institute. Although Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) may serve as LEAs for some purposes (such as provision of special education and insurance pools, for example), they are not included in the total number of LEAs in this chart. The number of K-12 students and students in poverty are taken from 2009 enrollment data.</small>			

<small>Detailed Table for (A)(1) Because of the large number of participating LEA this table is included in Exhibit A-2</small>
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(A)(2) Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up and sustain proposed plans (30 points)

The extent to which the State has a high-quality overall plan to—

(i) Ensure that it has the capacity required to implement its proposed plans by— (20 points)

- (a) Providing strong leadership and dedicated teams to implement the statewide education reform plans the State has proposed;
- (b) Supporting participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) in successfully implementing the education reform plans the State has proposed, through such activities as identifying promising practices, evaluating these practices' effectiveness, ceasing ineffective practices, widely disseminating and replicating the effective practices statewide, holding participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) accountable for progress and performance, and intervening where necessary;
- (c) Providing effective and efficient operations and processes for implementing its Race to the Top grant in such areas as grant administration and oversight, budget reporting and monitoring, performance measure tracking and reporting, and fund disbursement;
- (d) Using the funds for this grant, as described in the State's budget and accompanying budget narrative, to accomplish the State's plans and meet its targets, including where feasible, by coordinating, reallocating, or repurposing education funds from other Federal, State, and local sources so that they align with the State's Race to the Top goals; and
- (e) Using the fiscal, political, and human capital resources of the State to continue, after the period of funding has ended, those reforms funded under the grant for which there is evidence of success; and

(ii) Use support from a broad group of stakeholders to better implement its plans, as evidenced by the strength of the statements or actions of support from— (10 points)

- (a) The State's teachers and principals, which include the State's teachers' unions or statewide teacher associations; and
- (b) Other critical stakeholders, such as the State's legislative leadership; charter school authorizers and State charter school membership associations (if applicable); other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, civil rights, and education association leaders); Tribal schools; parent, student, and community organizations (e.g., parent-teacher associations, nonprofit organizations, local education foundations, and community-based organizations); and institutions of higher education.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. The State's response to (A)(2)(i)(d) will be addressed in the budget section (Section VIII of the application). Attachments, such as letters of support or commitment, should be summarized in the text box below and organized with a summary table in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (A)(2)(i)(d):

1. The State's budget, as completed in Section VIII of the application. The narrative that accompanies and explains the budget and how it connects to the State's plan, as completed in Section VIII of the application.

Evidence for (A)(2)(ii):

- A summary in the narrative of the statements or actions and inclusion of key statements or actions in the Appendix.

(A)(2) Building Strong Statewide Capacity to Implement, Scale and Sustain Proposed Plans

In recent years, Colorado's capacity to implement and sustain its reform plan increasingly has taken root. State policies such as CAP4K's new readiness and academic content standards and the recently signed Great Teachers and Leaders Bill (SB 191) embody Colorado's commitment to improve student outcomes, close achievement gaps, and deliver all students to the destination of post-secondary workforce readiness and ensure long-term sustainability. Colorado now is focusing on implementing systemic change that will build sustainable statewide capacity to execute and maintain the reforms set in motion.

(A)(2)(i) Strong Capacity to Implement:

Colorado's strong capacity to implement fundamental organizational transformation is apparent in following core tenets:

- A Governor, State Board of Education, State Legislature, and Commissioner of Education committed to the education reform agenda.
- A dedicated team prepared to implement Colorado's education reform plans with clear responsibilities and necessary authority.
- A robust and proven method for ensuring Colorado LEAs' fidelity of reform implementation.

- A strong governance structure for efficient and effective administration of Race to the Top grant administration—including budget reporting and monitoring, performance measure tracking and reporting, and fund disbursement.
- An organizational structure and approach to sustain the reform for the long- term.

Colorado also will ensure education remains a priority in the State budget (described in detail in Section (F)(1)). Embodied within existing Constitutional requirements for a minimum of annual funding increases to support K-12 education, Colorado will fund ongoing reform initiatives by continuing to leverage public and private resources, as well as by transforming over time the current organizational structure in the CDE to meet the longer-term reform plan.

(A)(2)(i)(a) Strong Leadership, Dedicated Teams Implement Statewide Education Reform

Committed state executive leadership and enterprise governance. Leadership is a critical component for systemic transformation, and Colorado’s highest leadership is committed to this work.¹⁸ Colorado’s leadership has built a strong foundation for implementation of the reform agenda. They also have the full support of the Colorado General Assembly and the State Board of Education, whose independently elected, bipartisan members represent each of Colorado’s seven congressional districts.

Perhaps more important, Colorado’s reform plan has the support of LEAs across the State. A Commission on Innovation and Reform will provide long-term, sustainable program oversight for the implementation of the reform agenda. As a steering committee, the Commission will not direct operations; but provide advisory support and through the following governance functions for Race to the Top, it will ensure sustained executive leadership and cross departmental collaboration, coordination and support for the implementation of the reform agenda; provide fiduciary oversight of the Race to the Top program; coordinate public policy and legislation to support the educational reform agenda; and ensure transparency for efforts and results. The Governor and the Commissioner of Education will be responsible for making commission appointments; the Commissioner will serve as chair. Membership will include representation from the State, LEA leadership, and the private sector.

¹⁸ See Leadership Roles, Appendix Exhibit Leadership

Strong partnerships. With its strong tradition of private-public collaborations among local foundations, the business community and non-profit private sector entities, Colorado will continue to leverage such partnerships to enhance its reform efforts throughout Race to the Top implementation. Partners in each of these areas have provided support to the development of this proposal, and have committed to its implementation, resulting in a strong investment from a broad stakeholder group. Some key partners are shown in Figure A-8 below.

Figure A-8: Partners for Each Assurance Area

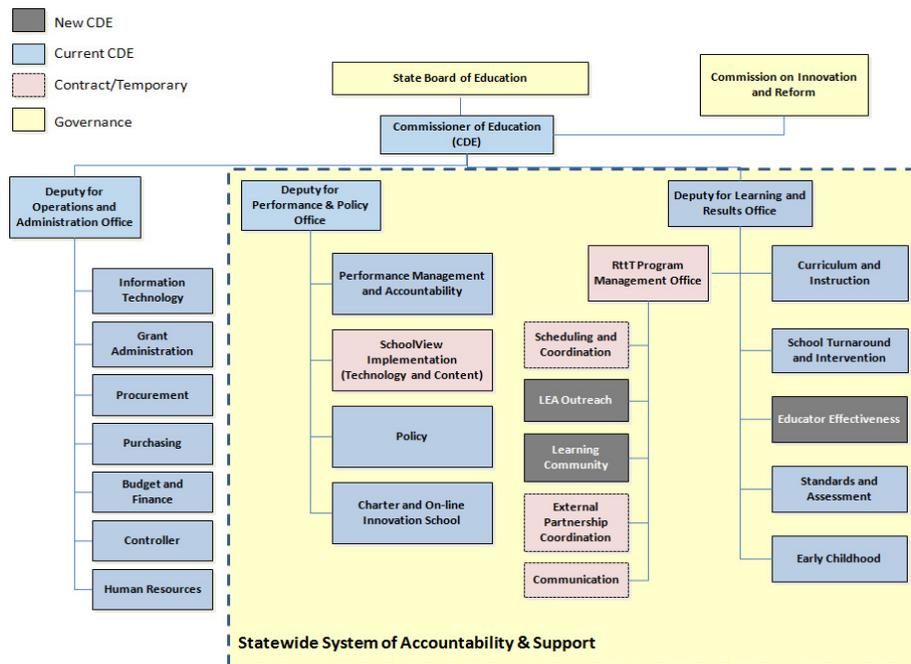
Assurance Area	Strategic Implementation Partner
All Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Education
Standards & Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Colorado's Center for Teaching & Learning West Ed
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Center for Assessment
Great Teachers & Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The New Teacher Project Colorado Legacy Foundation College Board Rose Community Foundation
School Turnaround	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Impact Project VOYCE Mass Insight
STEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donnell-Kay Foundation Colorado STEM Network STEM Coordinating Council Colorado BOCES CO Advanced Placement Initiative

Dedicated team structure and strategic partnerships drives results and transforms the CDE.

The State’s education leaders will rely on several dedicated teams to implement Colorado’s reform plan outlined in Race to the Top, monitor progress, provide support to LEAs and ensure that Colorado is on track to meet goals.

Led by a member of the Commissioner’s executive team, business units within the CDE will coordinate efforts to implement Race to the Top. For the first year, a dedicated Race Launch Team will report to the Commissioner of Education and will ensure the program is successfully initiated. Within the first year, a Race to the Top Program Office will be established to coordinate cross-unit efforts, including communications, stakeholder management, scheduling and coordination of vital resources, as well as other critical program functions. The detailed organizational structure is presented in Figure A-9, highlighting investments within the CDE to create additional capacity.

Figure A-9: The CDE Statewide System of Accountability and Support with Race to the Top Implementation



As illustrated above, the following business units are dedicated to Colorado’s Race to the Top: **The Office of Administration and Operations** provides the critical foundational support functions for the CDE such as grant administration and fiscal management (described in detail in Section (A)(2)(i)(c) and Section (A)(2)(i)(d)).

The Office of Performance and Policy is responsible for policy development, performance management and the ongoing development of the SchoolView system. The following units will be dedicated to RtT:

- **Performance Management and Accountability:** This unit manages the State’s educational accountability activities, pursuant to the Education Accountability Act of 2009 and within the Statewide System of Accountability and Support, which includes identifying persistently low-performing schools for turnaround. This unit will be expand capacity to evaluate school and LEA performance, tracking leading indicators, intervene when performance is off-track, promote effective practices and cease ineffective practices.¹⁹

¹⁹ Within this office, the Research and Evaluation Unit will work with Colorado Educational Research Consortium (CERC) to bring together researchers from academia, government, and nonprofit groups in a structure much like the Chicago Consortium on School Research. The CERC, funded in part through the budget allocated to the Research Director will support evaluation of RtT initiatives. The CERC will transition to a sustainable funding model and will remain in place after the grant to provide Colorado with coordinated education research priorities and activities into the future.

- **SchoolView Implementation:** This unit is responsible for the implementation and expansion of the Colorado Growth Model and SchoolView in conjunction with the CDE’s Chief Information Officer.

The Office of Learning and Results is responsible for core components of the reform plan, including curriculum development, standards and assessments, school turnaround, educator effectiveness and special programs. The following units will be dedicated to RttT with support from the entire office:

- **Curriculum and Instruction:** This expanded team will be led by a new Standards Implementation Director, who will work with the existing Director of Assessment and the Director of Academic Initiatives on developing, implementing and supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments. This expanded unit will ensure all LEAs select or develop high-quality curriculum, instructional materials, curriculum-embedded assessments and practices that align with the common standards.
- **Educator Effectiveness:** This new unit will oversee the reforms related to data-informed instruction, and those pertaining to recruiting, retaining, supporting and developing effective teachers and leaders. This unit will implement the recommendations from an innovative partnership among the CDE, the Colorado Legacy Foundation and The New Teacher Project, that seeks to realign a variety of CDE’s existing goals and activities under State and Federal programs and around common State goals for educator effectiveness.
- **Turnaround and Intervention:** Established in 2009, this unit will be expanded to serve a larger number of low-performing schools.
- **Race to the Top (RTT) Program Office:** The program office for Race to the Top implementation will manage the following operations outline in the table below:

Figure A-10 PMO Operations:

PMO Operations	
<i>Title</i>	<i>Description</i>
Communications	Produce coordinated communication within the program
Knowledge Management	Maintain a library of best practices, documents and other program deliverables
Issue Management	Track and resolve program issues
Organizational Change Management	Provide support in building a sustainable organizational structure for the long-term
LEA Outreach	Coordinate outreach with LEAs for support and program implementation
Learning Community Coordination	Logistical support and coordination for Content Collaboratives and Regional Support teams
External Partnership Coordination	Communication, scheduling and support for all external partners who are participating in the reform efforts

The Race to the Top Program Office will supplement existing teams within the Office of Learning and Results and Office of Performance and Policy with contractors for 24 to 36 months to support implementation of the reform plan and transition to sustainability before the end of the Race to the Top grant period. The CDE anticipates employing contractors skilled in complex program management and large-scale organizational change to help the Department realize results on time and within budget. They will also help foster a culture of change leadership, accelerate the speed of adoption, support utilization of new tools and processes, as well as help ensure proficiency within LEAs, the CDE, its partners and all stakeholders.

(A)(2)(i)(b) Supporting LEAs, Monitoring and Improving Performance

In Colorado's reform plan, local autonomy follows results, and failure to perform results in swift intervention from the CDE. Historically, intervention from the CDE came primarily in the form of responding to failure. However, the shift in culture and practice that both the CDE and Colorado's proposal embodies results in greater attention to solid front-end implementation, frequent monitoring, dissemination of best practices and the provision of resources to improve performance along the way. This practice will conserve fiscal resources, which can then be reallocated, as the need for intensive, more costly intervention due to failure is ultimately reduced. Though the shift in CDE's approach began several years ago, it will be accelerated using Race to the Top funds. CDE's evaluation framework is threefold and includes:

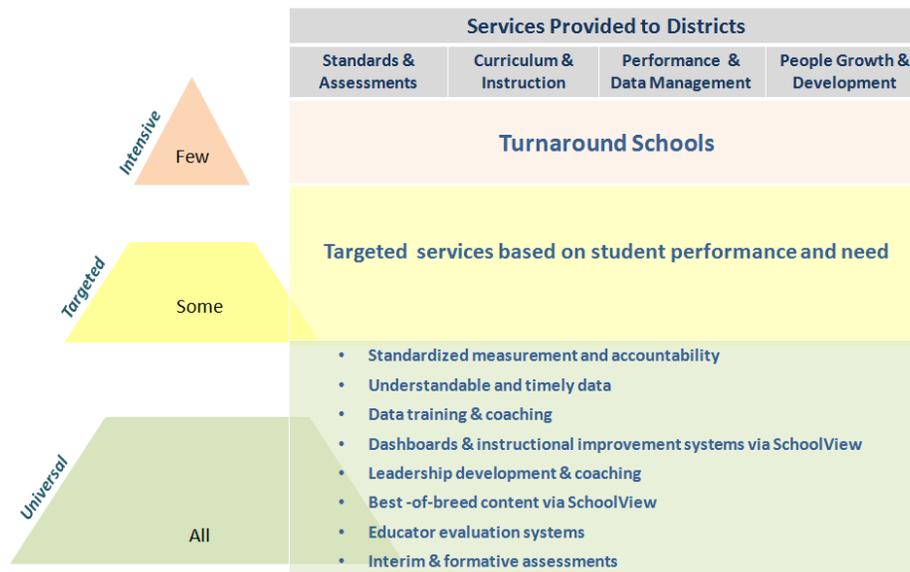
Statewide System of Accountability and Support: CDE's Statewide System of Accountability and Support was established in 2009 to build the capacity of districts to create and sustain high-performing schools where all learners demonstrate high academic growth and achievement.

SSAS will be fully rolled-out to fulfill the following core objectives:

1. **Identify** schools which require intervention using the State's performance framework and prioritized for State intervention and support
2. **Develop** performance plans that include analysis of performance and comprehensive qualitative review data, root cause analysis, strategies for improvement, and implementation and growth and achievement targets
3. **Implement** State approved performance, improvement and turnaround plans and monitor progress
4. **Evaluate** the impact of support and interventions and use evaluation data to improve outcomes in future interventions and to disseminate best practices.

Through the SSAS, the CDE offers differentiated support for districts and schools in each phase of the improvement cycle, illustrated in Figure A-11. All schools receive several universal services to ensure a fair playing field. To districts that may not be meeting specific standards or to support small, rural and underserved districts that need additional services, the CDE offers targeted resources. With ARRA and Race to the Top funding, SSAS is scaling intervention efforts to provide intense help to struggling districts.

Figure A-11: Differentiated Support Based on Improvement Cycle



Benchmarking school and district outcomes against a common set of key performance indicators (longitudinal growth measured by the Colorado Growth Model, achievement levels, extent of gaps among student groups, and postsecondary readiness) will be achieved through the State’s School and District Performance Frameworks²⁰ and the Colorado Growth Model.

With the combined information, the CDE will differentiate and identify effective strategies for dissemination across the State. CDE’s evaluation framework²¹ is threefold and includes:

²⁰ Evaluation of both LEA and school performance in Colorado is guided by a single, consistent performance framework based on the same four key performance indicators identified in the Education Accountability Act of 2009: academic achievement, academic longitudinal growth, academic growth gaps, and postsecondary and workforce readiness.

²¹ CDE Comprehensive Evaluation Plan (Appendix Exhibit A-5)

1. Expand CDE's current Performance Management and Accountability unit to conduct formative evaluation of the efficacy of Race to the Top activities, based on the following guiding questions:
 - Did what was planned actually occur as planned?
 - What evidence indicates the project impacted knowledge, skills or practices?
 - What evidence indicates the project changed outcomes for teachers and students?
 - Did the project have system-wide impact and adequate return on investment, or will the project plan be revised as a result of the evaluation data?
2. Extend external contracts for qualitative reviews of interventions in low-performing schools.
3. Partner with the University of Colorado to create a research consortium to engage in return-on-investment studies and sustain a statewide education research agenda.

(A)(2)(i)(c) Grant Administration and Oversight, Budget Reporting and Monitoring, and Fund Disbursement

Within CDE's Grants Fiscal Management Office, grants are administered from the Governor's office in accordance with applicable Federal and State requirements. Colorado has a formal contracting and procurement mechanism to award sub-grants and third-party contracts in accordance with State and Federal regulations. The CDE will make funding available to recipients in proportion to the amount received by the Federal government, on a reimbursement basis. All allocations are prepared and executed by CDE's Grants Fiscal Management Office. Contract administration resides within CDE's Accounting and Purchasing Office. Contracts in excess of \$150,000 must be reviewed and approved by the Department of Administration and Personnel and the State Controller.

When a grant is approved, the notifications of grant award are produced and disseminated, accounting documents and contracts are prepared and budget lines and spending authority are authorized. A centralized State accounting system, the Colorado Financial Reporting System (COFRS), is used to manage a chart of accounts including allocations to each LEA. Colorado has a robust and effective process for managing accounting functions for Federal grant administration. As the CDE and authorized sub-recipients expend funds, checks are

processed by the Colorado Department of Personnel and Administration in accordance with the agreement between the State of Colorado and the U.S. Treasury Department.

Once funds are disbursed, Colorado provides oversight and guidance to LEAs on grant expenditures. Through COFRS, all expenditures, encumbrances and balances are monitored. The system has very tight controls on liquidation end dates to ensure the CDE does not issue a check on purchase orders past the end date of the grant period. The CDE monitors each Federal grant's performance period closely, and COFRS does not allow reimbursements to LEAs past any Federal grant performance period.

The State also is able to roll individual LEA expenditures into the master grant level to report grant totals. This coordinated system allows the State to continually monitor LEA expenditures. Expenditures also are monitored by the CDE's Management Services Office, which is subject to review under the State of Colorado's statutory audit as required by OMB A-87. The audit is conducted annually by an independent auditing firm contracted through the CDE and the Colorado State Auditor.

(A)(2)(i)(d) Coordinating, Reallocating and Re-purposing Funds

Colorado's detailed budget narrative²² details how Race to the Top grant funds will be used to support the education reform agenda. Key sources of funds that will be re-purposed, include:

- a. Title IA to support increasing the number of effective educators serving high-poverty schools and turning around persistently lowest-achieving schools.
- b. Title III funds to close gaps in achievement among English language learners using targeted interventions and training for educators to serve these students.
- c. Title IIA, Title IA, professional development expenditures in all Federal and State programs, and Colorado educator license fees to support educator effectiveness initiatives.
- d. Title IID funds to support effective use of technology.
- e. State education funds, both general and categorical funds, distributed in the future will be informed by the evaluation of results of the Race to the Top investments.

²² Budgetary Narrative (Appendix pages 6-11 and Exhibit Financial-1)

- f. IDEA funds to close gaps in achievement among students with disabilities using targeted interventions and training for educators to serve these students.

In addition, Colorado will invest in the following core reform strategies:

Increase student learning through teacher mastery and delivery of common standards and assessments. The CDE content specialists and Assessments Unit will be deployed to ensure high-quality instructional materials, and interim and formative assessments are in use statewide. A specific focus will be supporting the field in the transition to new standards and assessments.

Use, learn and leverage high quality information to drive increased student performance. A total of \$17.4 million recently awarded to Colorado through the Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems will be used to enhance the State's data system so that it meets all 12 elements of the America COMPETES Act. Local and State funds currently devoted to local and regional data systems will be used to ensure that all LEA instructional improvements systems can directly integrate with the State system.

Ensure all students have access to effective teachers and principals. Colorado's historic Great Teachers and Leaders Bill (SB 191) will ensure all students have access to effective teachers by requiring that 50% of teacher and principal evaluates are based on demonstrated impact on student growth. Teachers will need to show 3 consecutive years of demonstrated effectiveness to earn tenure and will lose tenure after 2 years of ineffectiveness; all reductions in force will be done first based on teachers effectiveness and any tenured teacher will have to earn their position in a school through an affirmative school based hiring process that will result in a statewide end to the practice of forced placement.

Turnaround the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools. The CDE Policy and Performance office has already begun the work of identifying the lowest-achieving schools and the Turnaround Unit has initiated review of LEA turnaround plans. Both of these functions are supported by a combination of State and Federal funds. The State's \$50 million in regular and ARRA funds made available through the School Improvement Grant program will directly advance the State reform plan detailed in this proposal. In addition, Mass Insight has committed to match the \$6 million in funds Colorado will use to execute the *partnership zone* strategy.

(A)(2)(i)(e) Sustaining the Reform Agenda after the Period of Funding Has Ended

It is important to note that many of the most important reforms included in Colorado's Race to the Top application are already codified in State law. This means that these policies will automatically have dramatic statewide impact and will remain in place beyond the RttT funding period. Colorado will also implement the following strategy:

1. Under the Commission on Reform and Innovation, continue to foster executive leadership and broad support for educational reform funding efforts and legislation.
2. Implement an organizational model within the CDE consisting of full-time dedicated personnel with less dependency on contracted entities.
3. Seek operational improvement efficiencies with processes and technology to reduce FTE overhead and other costs within the CDE which can be allocated to the reform agenda.
4. Continue to identify and effectively leverage private sector and non-profit investments to supplement reform programs.
5. Leverage investments in the LEA community and encourage sharing of best practices, technology investments, and programs to maximize investments.
6. Re-purpose existing State and Federal funds as discussed in (A)(2)(i)(d) above to support proven investment strategies and cease funding for investments that fail to demonstrate results.

The Race to the Top Program Management Office will eventually be subsumed into the CDE organization or eliminated as consultants and experts are tasked to build sustainable systems of support. The operational business functions of this unit will be transitioned back to the business units over time through an aggressive change and knowledge management (succession planning) effort. In the end, the complete transformation of the CDE from a compliance entity to a service bureau which supports LEAs will be realized with this initial Race to the Top investment. The Commission on Innovation and Reform will be a critical lever to sustain momentum and political will and support for sustaining reform efforts.

(A)(2)(ii) Support from Key Stakeholders:

Colorado has support from key stakeholders, both in the private and public sectors. Colorado's process for crafting its Race to the Top proposal was uniquely inclusive. Over a series of months, more than 600 stakeholders participated in a public input process. Furthermore

Colorado has formed strategic partnerships with key entities for implementation of the Race to the Top proposal and will engage teachers and principals throughout the entire implementation process through the Statewide System of Accountability and Support (SSAS), the Content Collaboratives and Regional Support Teams. The State has secured widespread private sector and non-profit support for this reform agenda and the Race to the Top application. Ongoing partnership with key stakeholders is fundamental to the implementation strategy.

Strong political leadership in Colorado starts with Governor Ritter who has been a consistent force for the education reform agenda in Colorado. He included bold goals for educational outcomes in his first year and has been a solid advocate in producing reform-focused public policy and supporting legislation. Governor Ritter has been joined by Lieutenant Governor Barbara O'Brien who has led Colorado's Race to the Top approach and program.

The Colorado State Board of Education, a seven-member, bi-partisan board of independently elected officials vested with the Constitutional authority to exercise "general supervision of the public schools of the state", is also prepared to lead execution of the State's plan. Their leadership and commitment is demonstrated by actions already taken.²³

Other political leaders across the State have demonstrated consistent support for the education reform agenda and the Race to the Top investments. Executive Directors from the Governor's cabinet representing a wide spectrum of social services have provided their support for this application, which includes the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, the Colorado Department of Health and Human Services, the Governor's Office of Information Technology, and the Colorado Department of Public Safety. The Colorado Congressional Caucus also strongly supports the Colorado's strategy for Race to the Top. Both of Colorado's Senators, Michael Bennet and Mark Udall, have publicly supported the Colorado reform agenda outlined in this application. In addition, Colorado has a strong history of collaborating with its teachers, principals and State-level education associations and organizations, including the Colorado Association of School Executives, the Colorado Association of School Boards, the Colorado American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the Colorado League of Charter Schools, the Colorado PTA and others. These partnerships will strengthen as the Race to the Top proposal is implemented. Expanded key areas of teacher and principal involvement will be:

²³ See Appendix Exhibit D-7

- LEA leadership and participation in standards and assessment Content Collaboratives.
- LEA leadership in the planning, design and roll-out of dashboards and instructional improvement systems

Colorado's plan is a product of a strong history of collaboration. LEAs have a strong commitment to this plan as evidenced in the MOU and the preliminary scope of work. Both of the State-level teachers' unions, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the Colorado Education Association (CEA), have been invaluable partners. The CEA leaders were instrumental to the development of the Colorado Growth Model and the model content standards and helped to engage stakeholders during the Race to the Top public process. Both CEA's and AFT's insights have improved the design of Colorado's plan, and their commitment has set the stage for successful implementation of the plan.

The Colorado Association of School Boards supports the State's plan, as does the Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE), the organization representing Colorado's principals, superintendents, and other administrators. In addition, the Colorado league of Charter Schools is fully supportive of this reform agenda.

Finally, Colorado's business community has shown overwhelming support for Colorado's plan through an initiative known as the Business Coalition to Advance Reform of the Education System (BizCARES). BizCARES has 30 member organizations across the State, including chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, business roundtables, and industry associations. Leaders in BizCARES identified and suggested a core set of principles for bold education reform for inclusion in the proposal and reviewed proposal drafts to confirm that these principles were represented. In addition, the non-profit and foundation community have been highly supportive of the reform agenda, including the Race to the Top application²⁴.

Conclusion

Colorado's support for the implementation of Race to the Top is outstanding. The State has the broad-based commitment of LEAs, the State legislature, charter school authorizers and other stakeholders, as well as the capacity and strong leadership from the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Commissioner of Education, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of

²⁴ *All letters of support from private, non-profit, foundations, and public sector leaders are provided in Appendix Exhibit A-7.*

Higher Education, the State's Chief Information Officer, as well as within the Colorado Department of Education to implement the ambitious goals put forth in its Race to the Top application. Colorado's operational structure for the Race to the Top award includes all functions necessary for administration, oversight, budget reporting, monitoring, performance measures and fund disbursement. Also, Colorado will continue to analyze its funding streams and repurpose available monies to accomplish its reform plan as appropriate.

(A)(3) Demonstrating significant progress in raising achievement and closing gaps (30 points)

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its ability to—

- (i) Make progress over the past several years in each of the four education reform areas, and used its ARRA and other Federal and State funding to pursue such reforms; (5 points)
- (ii) Improve student outcomes overall and by student subgroup since at least 2003, and explain the connections between the data and the actions that have contributed to — (25 points)
 - (a) Increasing student achievement in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA;
 - (b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts and mathematics, both on the NAEP and on the assessments required under the ESEA; and
 - (c) Increasing high school graduation rates.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (A)(3)(ii):

- NAEP and ESEA results since at least 2003. Include in the Appendix all the data requested in the criterion as a resource for peer reviewers for each year in which a test was given or data was collected. Note that this data will be used for reference only and can be in raw format. In the narrative, provide the analysis of this data and any tables or graphs that best support the narrative.

(A)(3) Demonstrating Significant Progress in Raising Achievement and Closing Gaps

As a result of Colorado's progress in all four of the assurance areas, student outcomes have improved from 2003 to 2009, with increases in overall student achievement and in proficiency among many subgroups. Colorado outperforms the national average in math, reading, and high school graduation rates. Still, achievement gaps persist and NAEP scores show that overall achievement needs improvement. In response, the State's reform plan ensures

that high-needs students receive targeted interventions and are taught by highly effective teachers, and that all students receive effective instruction on new, more rigorous standards.

(A)(3)(i) Demonstrate Progress over the Past Several Years in the Four Education Reform Areas, and Use ARRA and Other Federal and State Funding to Pursue Such Reforms

Colorado has made significant progress and has used ARRA and other Federal and State funding to further its reform efforts. Progress in the four assurance areas is detailed below.

Standards and Assessments. The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) was implemented in 2001, and in the years since, Colorado continuously has maximized its use to improve student outcomes. In 2007, Colorado adopted the Colorado Growth Model, a groundbreaking means of measuring individual student academic growth. In 2008, Colorado enacted CAP4K,²⁵ which legislated the next-generation of standards and assessments to ensure that Colorado students exit high school prepared for postsecondary and workforce success. CAP4K outlined higher academic standards and the development of 21st century skills for the curriculum and instruction in Colorado schools. Additionally, CAP4K put a focus on critical points of transition with statewide standards and assessments for *school readiness* and *postsecondary and workforce readiness*. In December 2009, Colorado adopted new, internationally benchmarked content and performance standards in 10 academic content areas, and established new standards for school readiness and postsecondary workforce readiness. Assessments are in the process of being realigned to reflect the new standards and designed to capture student growth and achievement.

Data systems to support instruction. Nationally recognized, the Colorado Growth Model and SchoolView excel at the capture, analysis and display of actionable information. Easily navigated, SchoolView puts actionable data in the hands of students, teachers and parents/guardians to help guide student growth. In addition, the Educator Identifier System will be integrated into SchoolView to directly link individual educators to the academic growth of their students. As a result, the State will be able to fairly evaluate teachers and principals based on student growth; empower students, parents/guardians and teachers with resources to understand their academic progress; determine next steps for improvement; access the proven instructional resources needed for success; and build a network for sharing resources that work.

²⁵ See Appendix Exhibit A-1.

Colorado was one of only 20 states to be awarded the competitive Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grant in May 2010. The \$17.4 million in funding to be received will fund Colorado's completion of SchoolView, which will enable relevant data to transfer securely between Colorado's preschool, K-12 and higher education systems, as well as with other state agencies, such as health and human services, labor and corrections. Supported by the 2004 Longitudinal Student Academic Growth Bill, funding for the Colorado Growth Model was provided by State education funds, the National Center for Improvement of Educational Assessment (NCIEA), a 2007 \$4.2 million Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grant, \$2.5 million in State discretionary State Fiscal Stabilization Funds (SFSF) along with private foundation support.

Available to other states in open source, the Colorado Growth Model is the basis for the longitudinal student data systems adopted by Massachusetts, Indiana, Arizona and Wisconsin, and as such, will provide a high rate-of-return on Race to the Top investments for Colorado and the nation. The Colorado Growth Model (CGM) provides a transparent, easy-to-understand means that determines how each student's growth on the State assessment compares to other students with a similar academic history. It also shows educators how much growth is needed in order to keep up, catch up or move up to proficiency or advanced, providing them necessary information to drive instruction. Recently, Indiana, Arizona and Wisconsin signed an agreement with Colorado to use SchoolView visual displays of the growth model — a collaboration that will allow Colorado to compare the relative efficacy of a variety of interventions, such as turnaround efforts.

Great teachers and leaders. With Governor Ritter's signature on SB 191, Colorado is committed to an ambitious plan to ensure a great teacher in every classroom and a great leader in every school. This landmark legislation requires that every Colorado educator will receive an annual evaluation based at least 50% upon the academic growth of their students, and that evaluations will be used to inform key decisions from hiring, placement, retention and compensation to the earning and keeping of tenure. Senate Bill 191 also marked the end of "forced placements" in Colorado, requiring that any teacher placement have the consent of that teacher.

Ten years ago, Colorado revised its licensing system to require that the award of an initial teaching license be performance-based, and in 2003, required the same for principal licenses. A

focus on performance is also embodied in SB 191, requiring teacher performance evaluations to include multiple measures of student performance. The Educator Identifier System and data available through SchoolView will provide the necessary information for these evaluations.

Earlier this year, the CDE entered into a unique partnership with The New Teacher Project and the Colorado Legacy Foundation to realign CDE's structure and existing initiatives around the improvement of educator effectiveness as a central priority for the State and the agency itself.²⁶

In 2008, the State also authorized a new School Leadership Academy to provide proven models of preparing, and supporting effective school principals. Initial funding for this project was provided by a mix of local foundations, a State appropriation, and funding from the Governor's discretionary portion of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

The Colorado Commissioner of Education, Dwight Jones, is co-chairing the National Council on Accreditation for Teacher Education's Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation, Partnerships and Improved Student Learning. In late 2010, the panel will make recommendations for teacher training that builds the expertise needed for effective teaching. In addition, Colorado institutions of higher education and school districts are participating in several efforts to improve the performance of educator preparation pathways, including the Teacher Performance Assessment Consortia (TPAC)²⁷ and district residency-based alternative preparation programs.²⁸ In addition to the teacher and leader development initiatives underway at the State level, Colorado LEAs have leveraged grants from national and local foundations and Federal funds to support innovative work in developing great educators.

Turning around persistently low-performing schools. The Education Accountability Act of 2009²⁹ provides a nationally recognized framework for monitoring school and LEA performance in a transparent, real-time manner, as well as the authority to directly intervene to turn around low-achieving schools.

²⁶ The Rose Community Foundation funded this multi-year effort, with matching support from The New Teacher Project. See Appendix Exhibit A-10.

²⁷ TPAC is being sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, and led by Stanford University to develop pre-service performance assessments of teacher candidates.

²⁸ Examples of this include the Boettcher Teachers Program, Ritchie Program for School Leaders, DPS Teaching Fellows.

²⁹ See Appendix Exhibit E-1.

In fall 2009, Colorado was one of six states chosen to work with Mass Insight under a grant from the National Governors Association to develop a comprehensive State strategy aimed at improving chronically under-performing schools.

Using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and other funds to support reform. School turnaround efforts have dramatically accelerated as a result of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds through the School Improvement grants under Title IA. The CDE began in earnest to deploy these funds quickly and effectively in the fall of 2009, starting with the creation of the Turnaround and Intervention Unit, as well as partnership with Mass Insight and Public Impact, each a nationally recognized leader in the area of school turnaround.³⁰

Colorado has used ARRA funds to pursue reforms in the four assurance areas. For example, all ARRA funds distributed to LEAs under existing formula programs, including Title IA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, were subject to a distinct application process that required LEAs to demonstrate how the use of funds would support the four assurance areas within Race to the Top application criteria. In addition, Governor Ritter directed more than \$6 million of State Fiscal Stabilization Funds subject to his discretion to critical areas of K-12 education reform, including:

- Colorado’s innovative concurrent enrollment system for high school students
- Alternative Teacher Compensation Act Grants to LEAs
- The rollout of Colorado’s new academic standards
- Enhancements to the Colorado Growth Model
- Colorado’s Educator Identifier System
- Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Reengagement
- School Leadership Academy
- Enhancing the State’s longitudinal data system by expanding unique K-12 student identifiers to include students in preschool programs statewide.

Additional initiatives. In addition, Governor Ritter’s 2007 Colorado Promise was a commitment to cut the dropout rate in half and double the number of college degrees and technical certificates

³⁰ “The Turnaround Challenge” published by Mass Insight Education and Research Institute in 2007, represents the nation’s preeminent framework for improving school performance.

earned in 10 years. Governor Ritter set to work immediately by forming a P-20 Education Coordinating Council, comprised of citizen leaders from across Colorado with the charge to identify recommendations to accomplish those goals.

(A)(3)(ii) Improving Student Outcomes Overall and by Student Sub-Group Since 2003

Colorado's comprehensive approach to setting high standards and tracking student progress has resulted in improvements in reading and math proficiency on State and national measures.

(a) Increasing Student Achievement in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics

Reading/Language Arts achievement. Colorado's reading achievement was and has remained better than the national average since 2003. However, reading achievement has not significantly improved in the last seven years. Colorado's 20 year history of education reform, high standards and quality assessments contribute to the State's overall performance success. Since early in 2000, significant Federal resources have been directed toward improving reading achievement through programs such as the Reading Excellence Act and No Child Left Behind. These efforts led to pockets of improvement in the schools receiving resources but not notable statewide gains. Prior to the 2009 implementation of the CAP4K and the statewide system of accountability and support, Colorado has not provided statewide support and intervention in reading.

Prompted by the lack of improvement in overall reading scores, the CDE conducted a statewide study of reading and writing standards, research, practices and achievement similar to an earlier math study. Findings of that study identified the need for an overhaul of the State's reading standards. The CDE took important steps to respond to these findings in 2009, by creating internationally benchmarked, rigorous standards for reading, writing and communicating. A special assistant to the Commissioner was also charged to review and align statewide literacy efforts with research and best practices. The Colorado literacy alignment project will be completed by September 2010.

Both 4th- and 8th-grade NAEP reading scores remained stable and outperformed the nation, from 2003-2009. Colorado reading proficiency has increased slightly and has steadily outperformed the nation on the NAEP from 2003 to 2009:

- In 2009, 4th-graders scoring proficient or advanced exceeded the national average by 8 points.

- In 2009 8th-graders scoring proficient or advanced exceeded the national average by 2 points.

From 2003 to 2009, the rate of Colorado students scoring proficient or advanced on NAEP reading scores improved as illustrated in Figure A-12 below:

Figure A-12: NAEP Reading Scores

NAEP Reading Scores	4 th Grade Students		8 th Grade Students	
	2003	2009	2003	2009
White students	45%	51%	47%	43%
Asian/Pacific Islander students	33%	53%	43%	41%
Black students	18%	27%	16%	15%
Hispanic students	18%	18%	14%	15%
Students with disabilities	8%	15%	5%	7%
Students in poverty	19%	19%	17%	16%
English language learners	9%	4%	4%	3%

Colorado student achievement improved from 2003 to 2009 overall in spite of Colorado’s changing demographics during that same time period. Specifically, the percentage of non-native English language students and students in poverty increased dramatically during this time. Colorado schools have taken steps to meet the needs of its changing student demographics and have some initial signs of success. For example, the academic growth rate of English language learner students, as measured by CSAP exceeds the growth rate of their native English peers.

As seen in results from the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) summative assessments for reading, the overall percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced rose slightly from 66% in 2003 to 68% in 2009. From 2003 to 2009, the rate of Colorado students scoring proficient or advanced on CSAP reading scores improved as illustrated in Figure A-13 below:

Figure A-13: CSAP Reading Scores

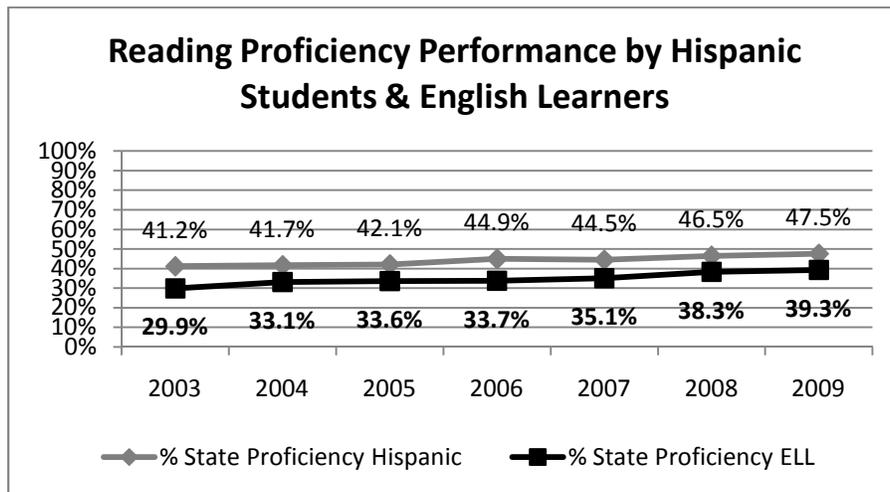
CSAP Reading Scores		
	2003	2009
White students	76.90%	79.20%
Asian/Pacific Islander students	68.60%	76.10%
Black students	47.20%	52.10%
Hispanic students	40.80%	47.40%
Native American students	52.70%	55.80%
Students with disabilities	21.30%	23.80%
Students in poverty	43.10%	49.30%
English language learners	29.90%	39.30%

Hispanic and English-language learner students experienced the greatest increases in achievement from 2003 to 2009:

- Hispanic students improved 6.3 percentage points, from 41.2% to 47.5%.
- English language learners improved 9.4 percentage points, from 29.9% to 39.3%.

Colorado proficiency in reading on CSAP, by Hispanic Students and English-Language Learners is illustrated in Figure A-14 below:

Figure A-14: CSAP Reading Proficiency by Hispanic Students and English-Language Learners



Math Achievement. In mathematics, Colorado students have made significant gains since 2003, due to a systematic statewide, aligned focus on mathematics. In 2004, the CDE conducted a year-long study of the mathematics standards, research on math instruction and existing best practices, and performance in Colorado school districts across the State (appendix “the State’s Prime Numbers” May 2005). The study resulted in a significant revision of the Colorado mathematics standards and statewide dissemination of recommended practices.

- In 2009, 4th-graders scoring *proficient* or *advanced* exceeded the national average by 7 points.
- In 2009 8th-graders scoring *proficient* or *advanced* exceeded the national average by 7 points.

From 2003 to 2009, the rate of Colorado students scoring proficient or above on NAEP math scores improved as illustrated in Figure A-15 below:

Figure A-15: NAEP Math Scores

NAEP Math Scores	4 th Grade Students		8 th Grade Students	
	2003	2009	2003	2009
White students	44%	57%	43%	51%
Asian/Pacific Islander students	44%	51%	38%	55%
Black students	13%	23%	9%	16%
Hispanic students	12%	24%	12%	18%
Students with disabilities	9%	15%	7%	11%
Students in poverty	14%	24%	13%	19%
English language learners	5%	9%	5%	4%

Looking at Colorado students through State measures, CSAP uses a definition of proficient that parallels the NAEP definition, but has a lower cut-off point for proficiency. CSAP scores had a modest improvement from 2003 to 2004. As a result of a focused effort to improve math proficiency statewide, Colorado revised its content standards for math and also expanded the grades in which it administered the math CSAP in 2005. Thus, achievement results from 2003-2004 are not comparable to the period beginning in 2005, but the change in standards resulted in significant increases in student proficiency. CSAP math scores show significant improvements as well. Overall, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on math grew 12 percentage points—from 50.6 % in 2005 to 54.5 % in 2009.

From 2003 to 2009, the rate of Colorado students scoring proficient or advanced on CSAP math scores improved as illustrated in Figure A-16 below:

Figure A-16: CSAP Math Scores³¹

CSAP Math Scores				
	2003	2004	2005	2009
White students	50.30%	51.90%	60.60%	64.30%
Asian/Pacific Islander students	52%	54%	63.10%	71%
Black students	18%	19.90%	28.80%	34.50%
Hispanic students	18.90%	21.10%	30.10%	35.90%
Native American students	25.30%	27.80%	35.70%	40%
Students with disabilities	9.50%	10.90%	18.40%	19.50%
Students in poverty	20.70%	23.10%	32.10%	37.70%
English language learners	16.70%	20.10%	27.60%	34%

³¹ 2003 and 2004 reference data is not comparable.

(b) Decreasing Achievement Gaps

Colorado, like most states, continues to experience significant gaps in achievement for poor and minority students. The gaps in achievement for Hispanic, Black and Native American students and for students eligible for free or reduced lunch average approximately 30 percent difference in proficiency.

Even with the increases in proficiencies for minority and poor student groups in reading and math, a large achievement gap remains between student subgroups as shown through CSAP reading scores in Figure A-10 above.

In addition to the Closing the Achievement Gap (CTAG) initiative (described in Section (A)(3)(i)), Colorado has already taken critical steps to close these gaps for all students statewide. In 2006, Colorado created the Closing the Achievement Gap Commission and charged it to recommend a statewide strategy to close gaps, which in time informed the development of the CTAG initiative to close persistent gaps in achievement. Colorado Reading First was also launched to improve literacy among 82 of the State's most disadvantaged schools.³² Each of these initiatives has narrowed gaps in achievement among students directly served. Results also indicate an indirect benefit for students enrolled in the participating districts even though not directly served by the interventions. Colorado will continue to improve its strategies based on outcomes of these and other initiatives.

Proficiencies increase yet gaps exist. In addition to the Closing the Achievement Gap pilot program (described in Section (A)(3)(i)), Colorado has already taken critical steps to close these gaps for all students statewide. In 2006, Colorado created the Closing the Achievement Gap Commission and charged it to recommend a statewide strategy to close gaps, which in time informed the development of the CTAG initiative to close persistent gaps in achievement. Colorado Reading First was also launched to improve literacy among 82 of the State's most disadvantaged schools.³³ Each of these initiatives has narrowed gaps in achievement among students directly served. Results also indicate an indirect benefit for students enrolled in the participating districts even though not directly served by the interventions. Colorado will continue to improve its strategies based on outcomes of these and other initiatives.

³² "Disadvantaged" schools were those with both high concentrations of poverty and persistently low performance.

³³ "Disadvantaged" schools were those with both high concentrations of poverty and persistently low performance.

Colorado’s reform plan is informed by work to date and reflects a targeted focus on increasing achievement among students in poverty, English language learners, students with disabilities and low-achieving students in high-minority, high-poverty schools.

Students from subgroup populations with historical gaps in achievement contributed significantly to the State’s overall improvements in achievement from 2003 to 2009, but the achievement gaps themselves showed only modest improvement. Gaps in achievement from 2003 to 2009 changed as illustrated in Figure A-17:

Figure A-17: Student Achievement Gap Improvements.

<i>Achievement Gap Improvements 2003 - 2009</i>				
Area	Student Subgroups	2003	2009	Gap Improvement
CSAP Reading	Hispanic and white	36.1%	31.8%	4.3%
	Black and white	29.2%	27.0%	2.2%
	Poverty	32.7%	31.1%	1.7%
NAEP Reading	4th grade Hispanic and white	27.0%	33.0%	6.0%
	4th grade black and white	27.0%	24.0%	3.0%
	8th grade Hispanic and white	30.0%	25.0%	5.0%
	8th grade black and white	27.0%	26.0%	1.0%
CSAP Math	Hispanic and white	30.5%	28.3%	2.2%
	Black and white	31.8%	29.8%	2.0%
	Poverty	27.5%	27.3%	0.2%

To date, Colorado has implemented two successful programs focused on increasing reading achievement and closing achievement gaps overall: Colorado Reading First and the Closing the Achievement Gap initiative.

More than 17,000 students were served by Colorado Reading First (CRF), affecting reading instruction in classrooms in 82 of the most disadvantaged schools in the State. More than 50% of the students in the CRF program were Hispanic, more than 70% were eligible for free- or reduced-lunches, and one-third had limited or no English proficiency. Risk of limited reading fluency essentially was reduced for all children in the program. In kindergarten, the percentage of children identified as “at risk or deficit” decreased from 5.1% to 1.2% during the years CRF was in effect; the number of children attaining “low risk” in those classrooms increased from 81.6% to 93.2%. Students that achieved proficiency in reading, as measured by CSAP, maintained their reading proficiency after leaving CRF classes through the 8th grade.

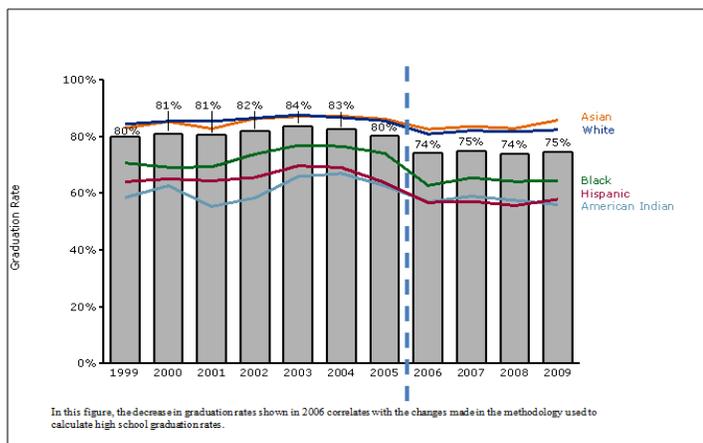
Beginning in 2008, the CDE implemented the Closing the Achievement Gap pilot in six LEAs with the largest achievement gaps statewide. Initial findings show three promising results. First, overall reading and math achievement improved. Second, the lowest achieving students in these districts had the greatest improvements. Finally, minority students and students in poverty

who received intervention made substantially greater progress than their counterparts who did not receive direct intervention and more than the state average overall.

Increasing high school graduation rates / High school graduation rates are above national average. Historically, Colorado’s high school graduation rate has exceeded the national average.³⁴ In recent years, however, Colorado has made significant changes in its method for calculating high school graduation rates in order to more accurately account for high school dropouts, and align with changed Federal guidance. As a result, Colorado’s historical graduation rate trends do not use a consistent calculation method (as illustrated in Figure A-13). Beginning with the 2003-2004 school year, the following changes were made:

- The State began collecting student end-of-year data using the State Assigned Student Identifier (SASID) system. The 2008 graduating class was the first class to be tracked through high school using this individual data.
- In 2005, Colorado legislators passed SB 05-091, requiring graduation rates to be calculated on a cohort basis from 9th grade forward.
- In 2005, the State also began requiring LEAs to retain students completing a GED in the graduation rate formula’s denominator. Adequate documentation for all students reported as transfers was also stipulated.³⁵

Figure A-18: Graduation rates by subgroup and year (1999-2009)



³⁴In 2007, the most recent data available, Colorado’s high school graduation rate was 2.7 percentage points higher than the national average. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 1986-87 through 2007-08; The Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate for Public High Schools From the Common Core of Data: School Years 2002-03 and 2003-04; and Projections of Education Statistics to 2017. (This table was prepared September 2009)

³⁵ For reporting purposes, transfer is defined as a request for records from the receiving LEA or a signature from a parent or guardian for a student exiting to a home-based education.

Several data points paint a positive picture. With the new method of calculation, the 2009 graduation rate is 75%, which is above the national average. In addition, Colorado's largest LEAs are seeing significant increases in 2009 graduation rates. Jefferson County Public Schools, the State's largest LEA, saw its graduation rate rise more than four percentage points from 2008 to 2009, to 81.3 %. Denver Public Schools' graduation rate climbed three percentage points from 2008 to 2009.

Recognizing the urgency of this issue, in 2007, Governor Ritter issued the Colorado Promise, which outlined an ambitious agenda to cut the dropout rate in half and double the number of certificates and degrees earned in the next 10 years. Since then, several steps have been taken to fulfill this promise, including passage of a statewide dual enrollment program (ASCENT) and legislation to create an Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Re-engagement. Colorado is one of six states selected to participate in the State Strategies to Achieve Graduation for All initiative,³⁶ as well as in the Colorado Graduates Initiative, a strategic partnership among national and State experts, local foundations and the LEAs in Colorado with the greatest number of high school dropouts. Colorado will accelerate these efforts by investing \$5 million of Race to the Top funds to the Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Reengagement to deploy evidence-based efforts in LEAs with the highest rates and number of high school dropouts. Although Colorado's goals for increasing high school graduation are ambitious, Colorado's efforts to date make clear that the State has the commitment and the resources in place to achieve them.

Conclusion

As a leader in standards-based, data-driven instruction, Colorado has made significant progress in the four assurance areas and is using ARRA, Federal, State and private grant funding to move its reform efforts forward. Currently, Colorado is performing above the national average in reading, math and graduation rates, and is seeing progress in overall student achievement and in proficiencies among many subgroups. But achievement gaps are still significant. Colorado's plan to narrow or eliminate these gaps is informed by past efforts and current research, and progress will be continuously monitored by improvements in student growth as measured by the

³⁶ The National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices announced the selection of Colorado in January 2010. Throughout the State Strategies to Achieve Graduation for All initiative, state teams will be afforded technical assistance opportunities aimed at increasing their breadth and depth of knowledge concerning dropout prevention and recovery. States will also receive assistance from national dropout experts and participate in policy academy meetings designed to address issues and challenges surrounding dropout prevention and recovery.

Colorado Growth Model. A substantial amount of supporting data has informed the State’s strategy, and coupled with its strong progress in the four assurance areas, Colorado is poised to succeed in improving the achievement of all students in general, and closing the achievement gap among subgroups in particular with the implementation of its Race to the Top proposal.

(B) Standards and Assessments (70 total points)
State Reform Conditions Criteria

(B)(1) Developing and adopting common standards (40 points)

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its commitment to adopting a common set of high-quality standards, evidenced by (as set forth in Appendix B)—

- (i) The State’s participation in a consortium of States that— (20 points)
 - (a) Is working toward jointly developing and adopting a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) that are supported by evidence that they are internationally benchmarked and build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation; and
 - (b) Includes a significant number of States; and
- (ii) — (20 points)
 - (a) For Phase 1 applications, the State’s high-quality plan demonstrating its commitment to and progress toward adopting a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) by August 2, 2010, or, at a minimum, by a later date in 2010 specified by the State, and to implementing the standards thereafter in a well-planned way; or
 - (b) For Phase 2 applications, the State’s adoption of a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice) by August 2, 2010, or, at a minimum, by a later date in 2010 specified by the State in a high-quality plan toward which the State has made significant progress, and its commitment to implementing the standards thereafter in a well-planned way.³⁷

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location

³⁷Phase 2 applicants addressing selection criterion (B)(1)(ii) may amend their June 1, 2010 application submission through August 2, 2010 by submitting evidence of adopting common standards after June 1, 2010.

where the attachments can be found.

4. A copy of the Memorandum of Agreement, executed by the State, showing that it is part of a standards consortium.
5. A copy of the final standards or, if the standards are not yet final, a copy of the draft standards and anticipated date for completing the standards.
6. Documentation that the standards are or will be internationally benchmarked and that, when well-implemented, will help to ensure that students are prepared for college and careers.
7. The number of States participating in the standards consortium and the list of these States.

Evidence for (B)(1)(ii):

For Phase 1 applicants:

- A description of the legal process in the State for adopting standards, and the State's plan, current progress, and timeframe for adoption.

For Phase 2 applicants:

- Evidence that the State has adopted the standards. Or, if the State has not yet adopted the standards, a description of the legal process in the State for adopting standards and the State's plan, current progress, and timeframe for adoption.

(B)(1) Participation in standards consortium:

Colorado has executed a Memorandum of Agreement³⁸ demonstrating its commitment to jointly develop and adopt a common set of K-12 standards, placing the state among 48 states and territories participating in a Common Core Standards³⁹ consortium sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).⁴⁰ Based on recommendation from the Commissioner of Education, the Common Core Standards will be presented to the Colorado State Board of Education for adoption in August 2010.

Colorado's CAP4K reform agenda requires the use of high-quality, internationally benchmarked standards that build toward college- and career-readiness by the time of high school graduation. In 2007, the Colorado State Board of Education committed to revising the Colorado Model Content Standards, and in 2008, the State Legislature codified the standards revision in CAP4K⁴¹.

³⁸ Appendix Exhibit B-1.

³⁹ Common Core Standards can be found in Appendix Exhibit B-3.

⁴⁰ Current drafts of the standards are contained in Appendix Exhibit B-2.

⁴¹ See Appendix Exhibit A-1.

Colorado’s standards revision process, assisted by national standards and assessments expert Dr. Stanley Rabinowitz of WestEd, engaged teachers, students, local boards, school leaders and other education stakeholders in the creation of modern, competitive standards in 10 content areas. Content committees were given the results of a comparison of Colorado’s existing standards with those of high-achieving states (Massachusetts and Virginia) and countries (Singapore and Finland), and were charged with developing preschool through college/workforce-ready standards that were “fewer, clearer, higher,” coherent and actionable. Informed by national experts such as Dr. Eva Baker (UCLA and CRESST), Dr. Ann Shannon (consultant), Dr. Lynn Kagan (Columbia University), and Dr. Tim Shanahan (University of Illinois), content committees engaged in an extensive and transparent process to develop recommendations for the new academic standards and provided multiple feedback opportunities for other stakeholders. As a result, there is strong statewide support among students, teachers, principals, administrators and policymakers for using internationally benchmarked standards that build toward college- and career-readiness, as defined by Colorado’s postsecondary and workforce readiness standard.

This early leadership was recognized by the CCSSO/NGA Common Core consortium, in which Colorado is participating. Because the State’s processes and guiding principles in adopting the new Colorado P-12 Academic Standards were substantially the same as those used by the CCSSO/NGA consortium, Colorado was invited to comment on and edit early drafts of the Common Core Standards as well as to integrate that early work into its own standards. In essence, Colorado was an early leader in developing world-class standards and a full participant in the CCSSO/NGA consortium.

Pursuant to Colorado State law, the authority to adopt State content standards is under the purview of the Colorado State Board of Education ⁴²for a description of the legal process for adopting State standards). In preparation for the adoption of Common Core Standards, Colorado has contracted with WestEd to perform a formal alignment study of the Colorado P-12 Academic Standards against the drafts of the Common Core Standards released by CCSSO/NGA. The formal alignment study, which will be completed within 90 days of the final release of the Common Core Standards, will allow the Colorado State Board of Education to take action in

⁴² See Appendix Exhibit B-4.

August 2010, or within 60 days of receiving the results of the formal alignment study, whichever is earlier. Colorado will implement the standards effectively using the process for implementing standards outlined in CAP4K⁴³ and the CDE Standards Implementation Project Charter as well as activities listed in its RttT proposal.

⁴³ See Appendix Exhibit A-1.

(B)(2) Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments (10 points)

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its commitment to improving the quality of its assessments, evidenced by (as set forth in Appendix B) the State’s participation in a consortium of States that—

- (i) Is working toward jointly developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) aligned with the consortium’s common set of K-12 standards (as defined in this notice); and
- (ii) Includes a significant number of States.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (B)(2):

- A copy of the Memorandum of Agreement, executed by the State, showing that it is part of a consortium that intends to develop high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) aligned with the consortium’s common set of K-12 standards; or documentation that the State’s consortium has applied, or intends to apply, for a grant through the separate Race to the Top Assessment Program (to be described in a subsequent notice); or other evidence of the State’s plan to develop and adopt common, high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice).
- The number of States participating in the assessment consortium and the list of these States.

(B)(2) Participation in assessments consortium:

Colorado has signed Memoranda of Understanding with and is participating in two consortia of states working toward jointly developing and implementing a battery of common, high-quality assessments that align with the Common Core Standards, the Summative Multi-State Assessment Resources for Teachers and Educational Researchers (SMARTER) Balanced

Assessment Consortium⁴⁴ and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Consortium.⁴⁵

Colorado believes it is important for the State and the nation to be able to make cross State comparisons on common assessments, thus its decision to have a seat at both tables. Colorado also believes a consortium of states working together is more efficient and cost-effective, and is more likely to produce higher-quality assessments than any individual state. Also, work conducted as part of a consortium increases the equity in assessment resources available across states. Colorado has successfully worked with other states in past consortia, as well as in sharing the Colorado Growth Model and the SchoolView platform on an open-source basis.

This work of improving assessments to align with the new content standards is also required by the reform agenda in CAP4K, and Colorado intends to approach it with the same level of care and focus given to developing the new Colorado P-12 Academic Standards.

The SMARTER consortium consisting of 32 states is focused on building a comprehensive assessment system that is reliable, open source, informs instruction and provides online assessments capable of measuring student growth toward college and career readiness.

The primary goals of the PARCC (consisting of 26 states)⁴⁶ consortium's work are to measure and document students' progress toward college and career readiness against Common Core Standards, and support multiple levels and forms of accountability.

This work of improving assessments to align with the new content standards is also required by the reform agenda in CAP4K, and Colorado intends to approach it with the same level of care and focus given to developing the new Colorado P-12 Academic Standards.

⁴⁴ Colorado is participating in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium with, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

⁴⁵ Colorado is part of an effort to create a multi-state growth and reporting consortium using the Colorado Growth Model that spans members in both assessment consortia (PARCC and SMARTER). Participating states include: Colorado, Indiana, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Missouri, Nevada and Washington.

⁴⁶ In addition to Colorado, the PARCC consortium includes Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

Colorado has formed an Assessment Stakeholder Advisory Committee⁴⁷ to ensure that assessment redesign is consistent with Colorado principles. The new assessment should:

- Gauge student knowledge and skill and inform teaching and learning.
- Include provisions for preschool diagnostic assessment and postsecondary/workforce assessments.
- Facilitate analysis of individual student’s yearly growth.
- Be administered electronically with real-time turnaround of results.
- Allow multiple opportunities for the student to demonstrate mastery of subject matter over the course of a school year.
- Gauge mastery⁴⁸.
- Be relevant to students, parents/guardians, and educators⁴⁹.
- Include a rich mix of items (such as multiple-choice, open-ended constructed response and online simulations).
- Be accessible to all (including English language learners and students that have a disability that requires the use of alternative assessments).

⁴⁷ See Appendix Exhibit B-8 for a list of members.

⁴⁸ See Mastery of concepts and skills v. minimum competencies or inspirational goals.
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdedocs/ASMTRev/StandardsAssessmentsandAccountabilityResource.pdf>.

⁴⁹ Relevancy requires that students, parents/guardians and educators can immediately and easily understand the assessment as a measurement of a skill that is important if not required for success in areas of meaning to him or her—the classroom, college success or entry into the workplace.

Reform Plan Criteria

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments (20 points)

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan for supporting a statewide transition to and implementation of internationally benchmarked K-12 standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time of high school graduation, and high-quality assessments (as defined in this notice) tied to these standards. State or LEA activities might, for example, include: developing a rollout plan for the standards together with all of their supporting components; in cooperation with the State's institutions of higher education, aligning high school exit criteria and college entrance requirements with the new standards and assessments; developing or acquiring, disseminating, and implementing high-quality instructional materials and assessments (including, for example, formative and interim assessments (both as defined in this notice)); developing or acquiring and delivering high-quality professional development to support the transition to new standards and assessments; and engaging in other strategies that translate the standards and information from assessments into classroom practice for all students, including high-need students (as defined in this notice).

The State shall provide its plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

(B)(3) Supporting the transition to enhanced standards and high quality assessments

Figure B-1: Strategy, Goals and Key Objectives

Overall Strategy

Increase student learning through teacher mastery and delivery of common standards and assessments.

B3 Goals – Supporting transition to enhanced standards and high-quality assessments

- By August 2010, adopt Common Core Standards.
- By August 2011, all teachers in participating LEAs trained on new standards.
- By August 2012, all teachers in participating LEAs trained on standards-based, data-driven instruction and assessment.
- By September 2012, ensure all teachers implement new standards and interim assessments.
- By June 2013, increase achievement scores and narrow achievement gaps, as demonstrated through interim assessments.

Key Activities

1. Adopt Common Core Standards as part of Colorado P-12 Academic Standards.
2. Form expert content collaboratives to develop new curricula, instructional materials and assessments, and training materials.
3. Disseminate newly developed, high-quality instructional materials and assessments.
4. Provide incentives for educators to develop and share proven materials, assessments and resources via SchoolView.
5. Revise teacher and principal preparation standards to align with and include Colorado's new P-12 Academic Standards.
6. Expand existing regional structures to deliver professional development.
7. Vet and subsidize acquisition of high-quality interim assessments aligned with standards.
8. Conduct a peer review to evaluate quality of implementation.
9. Use interim and summative assessment results to gauge student mastery of standards.

In 2008, Colorado began implementing a comprehensive preschool through post-secondary education alignment plan, supported by CAP4K. To move the plan forward, the State recently adopted common definitions of *postsecondary and workforce readiness*⁵⁰ and *school readiness*, and internationally benchmarked P-12 academic standards that map learning targets between the two readiness definitions. Next, Colorado is poised to adopt the Common Core Standards by August 2, 2010 and aligned assessments and graduation guidelines. Finally, the Colorado State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education will

⁵⁰ See Appendix Exhibit A-9.

jointly adopt assessments of postsecondary and workforce readiness as a part of the criteria for both high school graduation and entrance into Colorado State colleges.

From its pioneering work in implementing standards and assessments in the 1990s, Colorado knows it is not enough to simply disseminate the standards and expect changes in teaching and learning to result. With input from 500 classroom teachers and principals in 13 cities across the State, Colorado’s roll-out plan includes support for educators at all levels to first build awareness of the new standards; to transition to new curriculum, instruction and assessments aligned to the standards; to implement standards-based, data-driven instruction; and ultimately to transform learning. This transformation will occur when educators understand the standards and can see clearly how it will enhance instruction.

Colorado’s plan will leverage the expertise of educators across the State through already established strategic partnerships, collaborative development of standards-based assessment and instructional materials, a statewide instructional improvement resource bank, and the development of regional professional learning communities. As a result, Colorado will build a deep and long-lasting capacity of educators to improve instruction and increase student achievement. The plan includes engaging partners such as the Center for Transforming Learning and Teaching (CTLT)⁵¹, the Colorado STEM Network⁵², the CDE Unit for Educator Effectiveness⁵³, participating LEAs, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), and others to assist in successful implementation.

Colorado’s reform plan for supporting the move to new standards and assessments spans the following initiatives:

1. Supporting the creation of new curricula, instructional materials and classroom-level assessments through eight (8) subject-based Content Collaboratives.
2. Building and deploying twelve (12) Regional Support Teams to execute local professional development and support for standards-based and data-driven practices statewide.
3. Supporting the creation and dissemination of formative assessment items to be incorporated into the SchoolView platform.

⁵¹ See Appendix Exhibit B-7.

⁵² See Appendix Exhibit P-1.

⁵³ See Appendix Exhibit D-6.

4. Supporting the vetting, evaluation and purchase of interim assessments on which educator evaluation and classroom-level data-driven practice will be based.

Colorado's goals are to adopt the Common Core Standards by August 2, 2010, and to train teachers statewide on the standards by August 2011 and on standards-based, data-driven instruction by August 2012. By September 2012, all teachers will be implementing new standards and aligned curriculum, instruction and interim assessments. By June 2013, interim assessment results will show increases in achievement and student growth and the narrowing of achievement gaps. This support to the field will be bolstered by targeted efforts to train teachers and principals serving the students with the greatest need for improvement: those in poverty, minority subgroups, English language learners, and students with disabilities in all content areas with a specific focus on increasing results for underrepresented students. Targeted investments will also be made to increase educator capacity to provide rigorous courses of study in Science and Math, and expand the use of blended instructional practices in all content areas.

Colorado's theory of action is that differentiated professional learning communities build and sustain the capacity of educators to deliver standards-based, data-driven instruction that result in increased student achievement. Two fundamental assumptions are built into the plan:

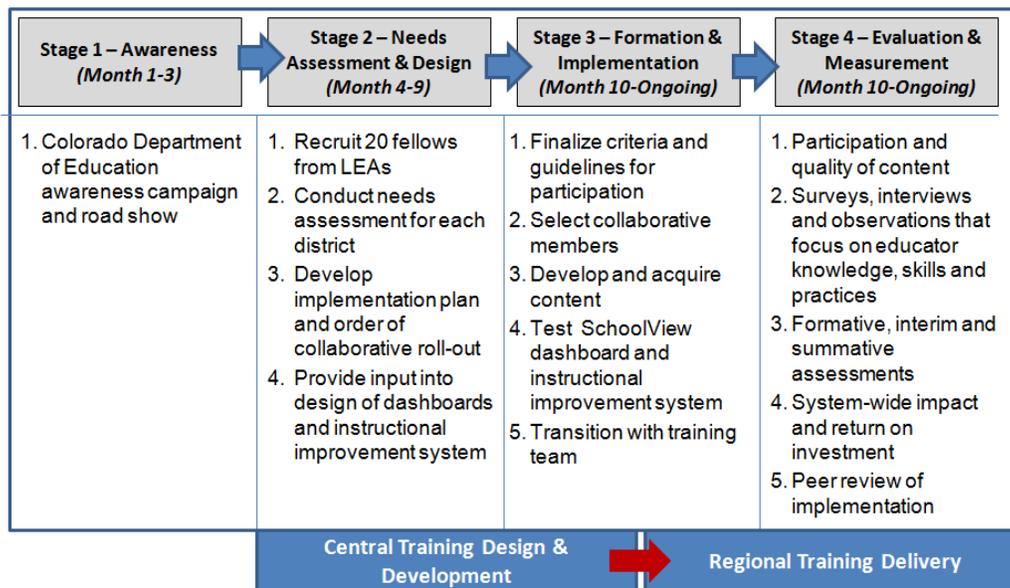
1. Professional learning communities are the most effective structure for long-term continuous capacity building.
2. Support should be differentiated to meet the specific and varied needs of educators and LEAs.

Via SchoolView, all LEAs in the State will be able to access high-quality resources and support, described in more detail in Selection Criterion (C). Additional targeted support will be provided through regional professional development and technical assistance provided by Regional Support Teams. The most intensive support is reserved for LEAs with the highest concentrations of low-achieving schools and includes State involvement in developing and delivering the LEAs professional development plan and monitoring progress on implementation and performance benchmarks.

Beginning September 2010, Colorado plans to form two types of professional learning communities: Content Collaboratives and Regional Support Teams. As outlined in Section (A)(1)(i), the CDE will facilitate the development and implementation of learning communities called Content Collaboratives to engage LEA's in the creation and dissemination of standards-

based assessment and instructional materials for use in the classroom. The Collaboratives will also be utilized to inform the development of the SchoolView dashboards and instructional improvement system that will house the information. Leveraging Colorado’s existing regional support structure, twelve regional learning communities called Regional Support Teams will be expanded to develop and deliver training to teachers and principals on standards-based data-driven instruction utilizing a blended learning approach. These teams may also be used to support the roll-out of educator evaluation systems and instructional improvement systems in small and rural districts. The learning community approach is intended to build sustainable statewide capacity to deliver training and support local use of tools and materials developed by State and national experts.

Figure B-2: Process for the Development of Content Collaboratives



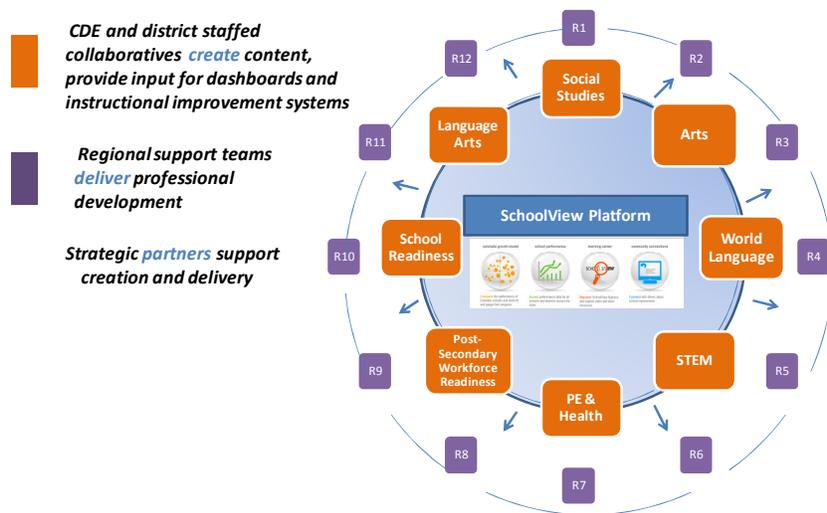
Stage 1-Awareness (Month 1-3): The Colorado Department of Education will build awareness statewide among all stakeholders of the overall Race to the Top vision and the paradigm shift that it reflects including the role of the Content Collaboratives and Regional Support Teams in sustaining the work locally. As part of this awareness campaign the CDE will communicate to each teacher, principal and district leader their specific role and expectation in carrying out this work.

Stage 2 – Needs Assessment and Design (Month 4-9): The CDE will actively recruit 20 Fellows from the participating districts utilizing an application process and set of criteria.

Fellows will be selected based on their level of influence within their district and region as well as recognized expertise in standards-based data-driven instruction. If selected, these Fellows will be released from district duty for approximately one-third of the time and serve for 6 months. The Fellows, led by CDE’s LEA Outreach Manager and the Learning Community Manager, will conduct overall needs assessment for each district determining technical and human capacity needed to move to this new paradigm. This team will also develop an implementation plan that lays out the vision and the order of content creation and provide input into the design of the dashboards and instructional improvement system.

Stage 3 – Formation and Implementation (Month 10-Ongoing): The implementation plan for each of the eight Content Collaboratives will be formed based on needs assessment outcomes. Criteria and guidelines will be established and an application will be issued for Collaborative participation. Each Collaborative will be led by a school district representative and coordinated by the Learning Community Manager. The school district lead will be selected for their influence, track record and ability to drive change, these may or may be Fellows. Employer districts will be compensated for their participation. The school district lead will work collaboratively with the corresponding CDE content specialist. The following is illustrated in Figure B-3 which depicts the Content Collaboratives and Regional Support Teams.

Figure B-3: Content Collaboratives and Regional Support Teams



General criteria for Collaborative involvement will be as follows:

1. The Fellows, under the direction of the Learning Community Manager, will select a maximum of 25 members per Collaborative.
2. Participate in Collaborative working sessions.
3. Develop plan for content acquisition: open educational resources, educator-generated or commercially licensed.
4. Plan for acquiring educator-generated content and distributing incentives available to educators.
5. Provide input into design and testing of SchoolView dashboard and instructional improvement system.
6. Plan for rating and quality control of best-of-breed content.
7. High-level plan for training and disseminating content through the Regional Support Team.
8. Participate in peer review as necessary.

Stage 4 – Evaluation and Measurement (Month 10-Ongoing): Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Content Collaboratives and Regional Support Teams will be based on the following guiding questions:

1. Did what was planned actually occur as planned?
2. What evidence indicates the project impacted knowledge, skills and practices?
3. What evidence indicates the project changed outcomes for teachers and students?
4. Did the project have system-wide impact and adequate return on investment, or will the project plan be changed as a result of the evaluation data?

The evaluations will measure the participation in learning communities and training, as well as the amount and quality of content made available. Implementation measures will include surveys, interviews and observations that focus on educator knowledge, skills and practices. Outcome measures will include formative, interim and summative assessments of student mastery of academic standards. Overall evaluation of the impact of the project and return on investment will be part of the external evaluation of RttT and will be reported on SchoolView.

Training Delivery via Regional Support Teams. Training and professional development on content and systems developed by the Collaboratives will be delivered by Regional Support Teams using a blended-learning strategy to include pre-recorded video-based training, live

virtual webinar-based training, in-person regional sessions and follow-up reinforcement coaching. The training design and development will be done centrally by the RttT program office based on the Collaboratives' work. The training will be delivered directly to the educators in some districts and a train-the-trainer model will be used in others based on need. Both delivery models will be led by the Center for Teaching and Learning, a strategic implementation partner.

Colorado has a long history of success utilizing collaborative communities to accomplish far-reaching goals, including the Standards Stakeholders Committee, the Assessments Stakeholders Committee, the technical advisory group that developed the Colorado Growth Model, districts on the Eastern Plains that developed common course offerings, E-net development of distance learning technologies and the EagleNet project to create ubiquitous access to broadband connectivity.

Content Collaboratives will include curriculum, assessment and professional development specialists from high-capacity participating LEAs and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), students, early childhood education (ECE) providers and educator preparation program faculty from across the State. Separate Content Collaboratives will focus on one of six subject areas:

1. Language arts (reading, writing and communicating)
2. Social studies (civics, geography history, and economics)
3. World languages
4. Arts (performing and visual)
5. Health and physical education
6. STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics)

Two additional Content Collaboratives will focus on school readiness and postsecondary and workforce readiness. The members of the Content Collaboratives will be responsible for identifying and developing engaging, rigorous and relevant instructional materials, formative assessments, and professional development strategies to meet the needs of educators in implementing the enhanced standards and assessments—and all resources will be available at no cost through SchoolView. The Standards Implementation Director will ensure that the work of each Content Collaborative is coordinated and integrated with the work of the Collaboratives in other content areas. A STEM Coordinating Council will integrate the work of the STEM-related Content Collaborative and link them with the resources of the Colorado STEM Network. STEM

will also focus on providing programs for underrepresented groups such as women and girls.

The School Readiness Content Collaborative will be responsible for developing supports to assist preschool through third-grade educators in maximizing school readiness and early learning outcomes. The CDE will expand the impact of this collaborative by leveraging existing partnerships and learning from Results Matter, the existing standards-aligned early childhood State assessment program⁵⁴. Similarly, the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Content Collaborative will work with higher education and business communities to ensure that high school expectations and learning opportunities across the content areas align with postsecondary and workforce readiness expectations.

Colorado's teacher and leader preparation programs, including alternative preparation programs, will participate in the Content Collaboratives to ensure that new teacher candidates are prepared to work with the new standards and assessments. Teacher and principal preparation standards will be revised to align with and include Colorado's new P-12 Academic Standards.

In addition to the resources developed by Content Collaboratives, Colorado plans to use SchoolView to support open-source development and sharing of high-quality instructional materials and formative assessments linked to Colorado's P-12 Academic Standards. Educators will be invited to develop and share instructional materials and formative assessment items using proven collaborative peer-sharing technology. The instructional resources will be organized by the new standards, allowing educators to sort along grade levels and cognitive processes, such as critical thinking or innovation. To maintain the quality of these materials, the Standards Implementation Director will work with the Content Collaboratives and other State and national experts to create a peer review process for validating instructional materials and assessments proposed for inclusion in SchoolView. Materials, assessments and knowledge developed through this process will be in open source and available across the State and nation. Students and parents/guardians will also have access SchoolView for purposes of academic planning, choosing learning activities, monitoring progress and providing input on the relevance of materials.

Colorado is fortunate to have access to many STEM-related resources, including museums, Federal agencies and laboratories, and employers in high-tech industries, such as

⁵⁴ See Appendix Exhibit P-4.

biotechnology, space, engineering and computer technology. The Colorado STEM Network⁵⁵ will work with the CDE and the STEM Coordinating Council to create STEM in Action⁵⁶ resources. STEM in Action will showcase the everyday work of scientists, engineers, high-tech workers and researchers in Colorado’s labs, universities, museums and companies through the development of STEM-related content such as television-quality streaming videos, virtual field trips, video conferencing and other multimedia experiences that bring the world of STEM to teachers, students and parents/guardians across the State. Using relevant Content Collaboratives in math, science and postsecondary readiness to match STEM in Action segments to the Colorado P-12 Academic Standards will allow teachers and parents/guardians to use these materials to extend their learning and that of their students simultaneously.

The State will identify high-quality interim assessments aligned with standards and will assist LEAs in selecting, purchasing and implementing approved tools. In addition, the State will subsidize local purchase of interim assessments, though LEAs may continue to use interim assessment tools that meet the State criteria. Assessments in reading, writing, math and science will be identified in the first year of the project and assessments in social studies, world languages, visual arts, performing arts and physical education will be identified in the second year. New interim assessments are expected to emerge from the national assessment consortia, and Colorado will take full advantage of this work. In conducting a review of interim assessments, Colorado will rely on its State Assessment Stakeholders Committee⁵⁷ as well as contract with national experts including the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessments (NCIEA), the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST), the Laboratory for Educational Assessment, Research, and innovation (LEARN) and WestEd.

Regional Support Teams will provide targeted support to Colorado’s many smaller LEAs that have limited central capacity. Regional Support Teams will be established based on the location of participating LEAs and will include a full-time regional facilitator, high-capacity staff from LEAs and BOCES whose time is purchased on a part-time basis, and educational leaders from within the region. The Learning Communities Coordinator in consultation with the

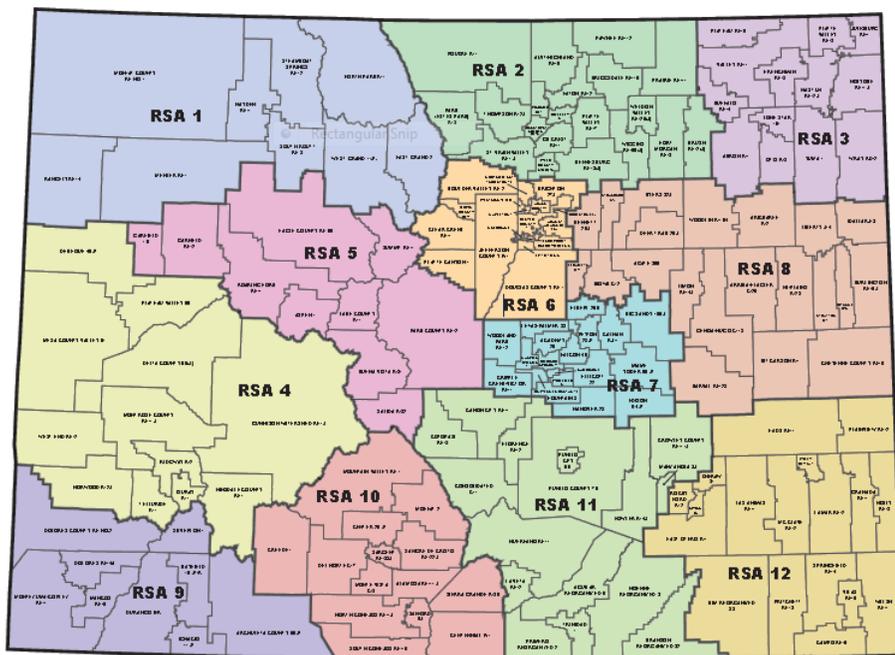
⁵⁵ See Appendix Exhibit P-1.

⁵⁶ See Appendix Exhibit P-2.

⁵⁷ See Appendix Exhibit B-8.

Standards Implementation Director will coordinate the work of the Regional Support Teams and support the development and delivery of professional development. Using the content developed by the Content Collaboratives and the Center for Transforming Learning and Teaching, the Regional Support Teams will provide and broker professional development opportunities to educators and leaders in smaller LEAs. Existing regional service delivery mechanisms including support managers, BOCES and content specialists will be used to deliver differentiated and ongoing support for networks of LEAs with similar needs and interests. The regional support structure in Colorado is depicted below in Figure B-4:

Figure B-4: Regional Support Structure



To ensure effective implementation of the transition to the new standards and assessments, the State will hold LEAs accountable for developing and implementing a plan for:

- Adopting standards and aligned interim assessments;
- Participating in statewide summative assessments aligned to the Common Core Standards;
- Developing and using high-quality instructional materials and formative assessments aligned to standards, and;
- Providing high-quality and targeted professional development programs to support the transition to standards-based, data-driven instruction.

LEAs will submit regular reports to the Standards Implementation Director on their progress in these areas. The State will develop and conduct an implementation peer review process. Findings of the implementation peer review process will be provided to LEAs and used to adjust implementation support. They will also be included in the evaluation of the State's plan.

The Office of Learning and Results primarily will be responsible for this transition. The Standards Implementation Director will lead the overall roll-out and will be supported by the Race to the Top Program Office and the Learning Community Manager to help facilitate both the Content Collaboratives and the roll-out of training via the Regional Support Teams. In addition, the SchoolView Implementation team will work closely with the Race to the Top Program Office to ensure content is loaded and procedures exist to easily disseminate information to a broad group of users. The cross-LEA structures created during this transition will be designed to persist beyond the funding period, as will the habits of collaboration when LEAs experience the benefits of working together.

Implementation Summary

Figure B-5 illustrates the implementation plan for this assurance area:

Figure B-5: B3 Implementation Summary

Assurance Area B3 Activities	2010	2011	2012	2013	Responsible Parties
1. Adopt Common Core Standards as part of Colorado P-12 Academic Standards.	▶ August 2010				Colorado State Board of Education
2. Form expert content collaboratives to develop new curricula, instructional materials and assessments, and training materials.	▶ September 2010 & Ongoing				Learning & Results Office via CDE Learning Community & Standards Implementation Director
3. Disseminate newly developed, high-quality instructional materials and assessments.		▶ Ongoing			Learning & Results Office via Learning Community & SchoolView Content Manager
4. Provide incentives for educators to develop and share proven materials, assessments and resources via SchoolView.	▶ Ongoing				Performance & Policy Office via Evaluation
5. Revise teacher and principal preparation standards to align with and include Colorado's new P-12 Academic Standards.	▶ By December 2011				State Board of Education
6. Expand existing regional structures to deliver professional development.		▶ Ongoing			Learning & Results via RtT Program Office via Learning Community & CTLT partnership
7. Vet and subsidize acquisition of high-quality interim assessments aligned with standards.	▶ Ongoing				Learning & Results Office via Standards Implementation Director and Content Collaboratives.
8. Conduct a peer review to evaluate quality of implementation.			▶ By December 2013		Performance & Policy Office via Director of Research & Evaluation, and Standards Implementation Director
9. Use interim and summative assessment results to gauge student mastery of standards.			▶ By December 2013		Performance & Policy Office via PM & Accountability

Conclusion

Colorado’s plan for supporting the transition to enhanced instruction and standards-based assessments is extensive, in keeping with the characteristics of a local-control framework, and the goal of building deep and long-lasting capacity to improve instruction and increase student achievement. Colorado has a history of success utilizing cross-functional collaborative teams to accomplish broad and far-reaching goals. By improving the quality of available instructional materials, creating collaborative learning communities, and creating a statewide instructional resource bank through SchoolView, Colorado will successfully transform teaching and learning and reach its achievement goals at an accelerated pace.

B (3) Performance Measures Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the State wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
Percentage of the P-12 Academic Standards with aligned instructional and formative assessment content publicly available on SchoolView	0%	50%	75%	100%	100%
Percentage of teachers in participating LEAs that have received training on new standards	0%	70%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of teachers from participating LEAs that are implementing new standards based on interviews and observations in random sample	0%	45%	90%	100%	100%
Percentage of teachers in participating LEAs that are using interim assessments	25%	45%	90%	100%	100%

(C) Data Systems to Support Instruction (47 total points)

State Reform Conditions Criteria

(C)(1) Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system (24 points – 2 points per America COMPETES element)

The extent to which the State has a statewide longitudinal data system that includes all of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice).

In the text box below, the State shall describe which elements of the America COMPETES Act (as defined in this notice) are currently included in its statewide longitudinal data system.

Evidence:

- Documentation for each of the America COMPETES Act elements (as defined in this notice) that is included in the State’s statewide longitudinal data system.

(C)(1) Implementation of Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS):

Colorado’s statewide longitudinal data system currently meets 11 of the 12 America COMPETES Act elements. Initiated in 2001 and expanded with a 2007 Institute of Education Sciences (IES) grant, Colorado’s P-20 longitudinal data system manages more than 3,000 separate data elements covering students, educators, schools, programs, assessments, instruction and other education factors. Colorado’s status for each of the America COMPETES Act elements is summarized in the table below, as is the State’s plan to use the Race to the Top funding to further improve future functionality.

ACA Element	Status in Colorado	Plans for Improvement
Unique student identifier that prevents individual identification of students.	Complete	Colorado has had a unique nine-digit statewide student identification (SASID) number in place since 2002 and yearly test records of individual students since 1996. This longitudinal information forms a solid analysis foundation for the Colorado Growth Model, successfully funded through a 2007 SLDS grant. Colorado won another \$17.5 million SLDS grant in May 2010. ⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Additional information on the Colorado SLDS efforts can be located in Appendix Exhibit C-1.

ACA Element	Status in Colorado	Plans for Improvement
Student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information.	Complete	Colorado has the ability to measure student-level enrollment demographics and program participation information in the current statewide longitudinal data system. Future efforts will include strengthening data quality, further automating the student transcript exchange, and supporting the recent revision of Colorado's P-12 Academic Standards to address postsecondary and workforce readiness.
Student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P–16 education programs.	Complete	Colorado manages student-level demographics, graduation / dropout data and information on students not tested, which add to the robustness of Colorado's current statewide longitudinal data system. Future investment will focus on making data more accessible and flexible for a multitude of stakeholders across the P-20 education landscape.
Capacity to communicate with higher education data systems.	Complete	The State has the capacity today to communicate effectively with higher education systems. The next generation will focus on the development and implementation of P-20 data sharing and reforms necessary to improve data sharing between the CDE and CDHE.
State data audit system assessing data quality, validity and reliability.	Complete	Colorado has a mature system for ensuring data quality, validity and reliability. As part of the next generation of SLDS, Colorado will invest in tools to ensure quality of additional data elements and expand self-service portal reporting applications and services.
Yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 1111(b) of the ESEA 20 U.S.C. 6311(b).	Complete	Colorado fully meets this requirement.
Information on students not tested by grade and subject.	Complete	While this is in place today, Colorado will continue to make system investments to enhance tracking and reporting systems for this element as other investments in SLDS reporting and integration are realized.
Educator identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students.	In Progress	Colorado has the ability to identify and track teachers to students; the development of a more robust, secure educator identifier is currently in progress, with deployment of the Educator Identifier System planned by July 2010.

ACA Element	Status in Colorado	Plans for Improvement
Student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned.	Complete	Colorado fully meets this requirement.
Student-level college readiness test scores.	Complete	While Colorado fully meets this requirement, the State plans to enhance student-level college readiness reporting in fall 2010.
Information regarding student transition from secondary school to postsecondary education.	Complete	While Colorado fully meets this requirement, the State plans to enhance reporting on student-level college readiness and transition from secondary to post secondary education by July 2011.
Other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.	Complete	While Colorado meets this requirement, Colorado's CAP4K legislation accelerated Colorado's work in the area of student transition data. The CDE and the CDHE plan to expand the Colorado Growth Model to display student transition metrics.

Under Colorado's ground-breaking IT consolidation legislation passed in May 2008⁵⁹, the State manages system assets, including cross-departmental cooperation and coordination. Therefore, Statewide IT consolidation is already establishing partnerships and initiatives that create the policy framework for expanding the P-20 statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS) into a comprehensive and integrated preschool-to-workforce information system.

⁵⁹ The 2008 IT consolidation plan enables centralized information technology management, purchasing and planning. This has led to the establishment of a Government Data Advisory Board (GDAB) and Education Data Subcommittee; bringing agency data directors together to establish state policies and drive the state towards an integrated Master Data Management strategy.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data (5 points)

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan to ensure that data from the State’s statewide longitudinal data system are accessible to, and used to inform and engage, as appropriate, key stakeholders (e.g., parents/guardians, students, teachers, principals, LEA leaders, community members, unions, researchers, and policymakers); and that the data support decision-makers in the continuous improvement of efforts in such areas as policy, instruction, operations, management, resource allocation, and overall effectiveness.⁶⁰

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

(C)(2) Accessing and using State data

Figure C-1: Strategy, Goals and Key Objectives

Overall Strategy

Use, learn and leverage high quality information to drive increased student performance.

C2 Goals – Use and leverage P-20 data to drive widespread public understanding of performance.

- By 2014,
 - o Increase visits to Colorado’s statewide SchoolView information portal by 25% per year within each user group.
 - o Provide 100% of parents and students in each LEA with individual student data
 - o Train all users on access to the SchoolView dashboard

Key Activities

1. Increase data immediacy across user groups to improve performance.
2. Implement educator collaboration and social networking capability.
3. Deploy enhanced data visualizations focusing on student growth and performance.
4. Roll-out engaging dashboards to promote access and use of P-20 data for all user groups.
5. Coordinate and deliver effective SchoolView training program through regional support teams.
6. Improve research capabilities to provide better and more reliable access to performance data.

⁶⁰ Successful applicants that receive Race to the Top grant awards will need to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), including 34 CFR Part 99, as well as State and local requirements regarding privacy.

Colorado's plan to ensure data access and use centers on maximizing the potential of P-20 longitudinal data to support local, State and Federal performance management and research purposes. Colorado was one of only 20 states to be awarded the competitive Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grant in May 2010. The \$17.4 million in funding to be received as a result of this award will enable Colorado to complete the work initiated over 5 years ago by enabling easy transfer of relevant data in a secure system between Colorado's education systems, as well as with other State agencies including health and human services, labor and corrections. The essential purpose of Colorado's strategy for data access and use is to build the capacity of stakeholders to understand student, school and system performance; to access and collaborate with resources to aid improvement; to answer critical questions about the effectiveness of these strategies; and ultimately improve student outcomes. In order to achieve the desired results, Colorado has started with the end in mind to first ensure that all students become college- and career-ready by high school graduation. Moreover, it promotes a conversation about how each student, teacher and parent must work together to ensure that the student is indeed college and/or career ready by exit.

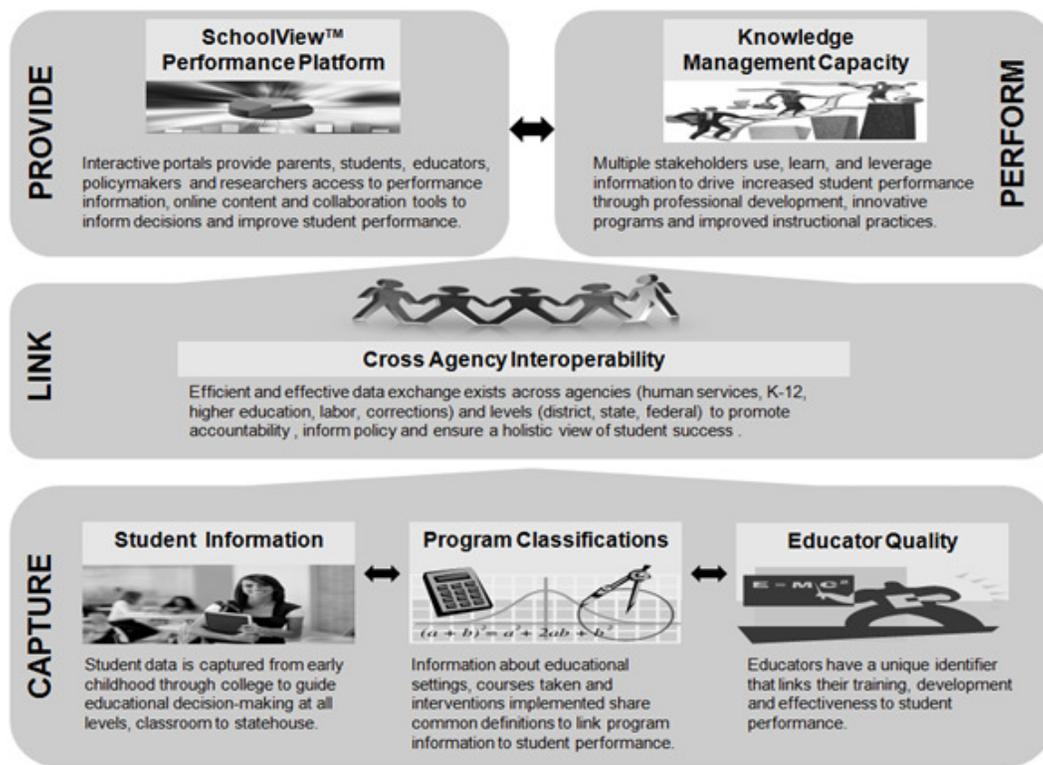
Colorado's attention to providing each stakeholder with what they need embodies its relentless focus on the user. This attention, coupled with the alignment of the educational accountability system at each level, from higher education to individual teachers, will make data system use part of Colorado's stakeholders' daily lives when it comes to educational inquiry and public accountability. Colorado's attention to presenting data in conjunction with social collaboration technologies and incentives for using data provides vital tools and breakthrough opportunities for educator collaboration about student performance and practice and widespread public understanding of educational performance.

SchoolView represents the embodiment of Colorado's current and future vision for providing meaningful and actionable data to students, parents/guardians, educators, administrators, researchers, policymakers, and the general public. The SchoolView platform, launched in 2009, provides a unified source for publicly available school, LEA, and State performance information; gives secure access to confidential student-level data to authorized users; and equips stakeholders with the data necessary to drive continuous improvement.

SchoolView and the Colorado Growth Model are State-owned tools that run on open-source software and Colorado is happy to share them with other states at no cost.⁶¹ SchoolView has been nationally recognized and rapidly adopted by other states and the general public.⁶² Colorado is pleased that there is growing excitement among states about using the tools with new common assessments—promoting cross-state collaboration and understanding about performance and practice.

SchoolView and the Colorado Growth Model make it possible to establish ambitious growth expectations for every student, based on what they need to be on track to college and career readiness and also allow a roll up of information for public reporting to meet State and Federal accountability purposes. This is illustrated in Figure C-2 below:

Figure C-2: SchoolView Functional Overview



⁶¹ As of May 27, 2010, 12 states have agreed to adopt the Colorado Growth Model and build on the reporting tools in SchoolView: Arizona, Indiana, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Missouri, Nevada and Washington.

⁶² In May 2010, SchoolView and the Colorado Growth Model won the National Council on Measurement in Education annual award for Outstanding Dissemination of Education Measurement Concepts to the Public. In addition, School View was one of 4 finalists in the 2009 Adobe MAX global design competition for education applications.

Colorado's goal is to significantly increase the number of stakeholders accessing and effectively utilizing SchoolView to advance achievement. Strategies for reaching this goal include:

- Increase Data Immediacy
- Implement Educator Collaboration and Social Networking technology
- Enhance Data Visualizations
- Provide User Friendly Dashboards
- Improve Research Capabilities

Expansion of SchoolView will provide the following tangible outcomes for Colorado:

Increase Data Immediacy. Data on performance from summative, interim and formative assessments must be timely in order to be useful. The forthcoming \$17.4 million SLDS investment in technology enhancements, process improvements and system linkages will reduce cycle times and move Colorado's education data to 'near real-time.' Availability to current information will increase SchoolView user traffic and rapidly inform instructional strategies.

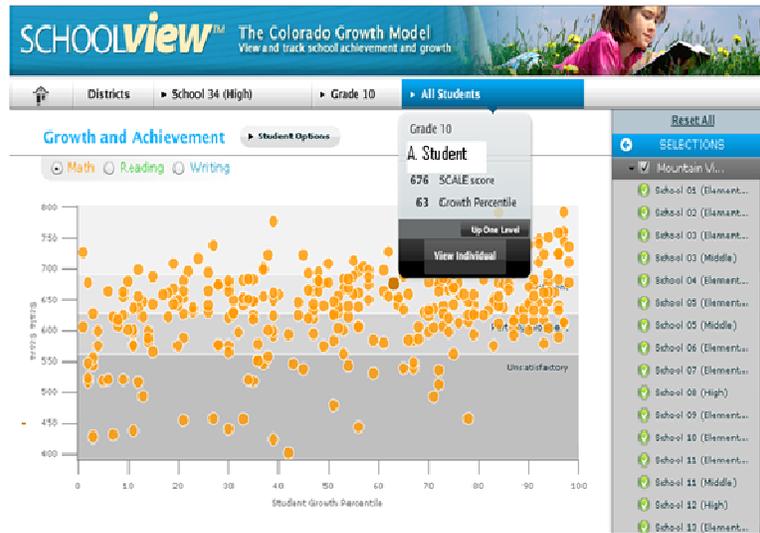
Implement Educator Collaboration and Social Networking technology. All data visualizations within SchoolView and all linked standards-based instructional resources within the Instructional Improvement System (IIS) (see Assurance Area C3) will become sharable using public and private social collaboration functionality. Online collaboration tools can dramatically improve the efficiency and effectiveness of community interaction.⁶³ Sharing evidence of performance outcomes, lesson plans, intervention strategies, curriculum guides, prevention initiatives and other educator-related information in an online community forum will greatly benefit educators across the State.

Today, several of Colorado's local education agencies benefit from social networking on a limited scale. With Race to the Top funds, Colorado will capitalize upon existing interest and work with LEA leaders to scale local chats to statewide conversations. Hosting online communications among broader education communities to include parents/guardians, policymakers and interested community members will also encourage widespread use and understanding of SchoolView.

⁶³ According to a report released on March 31, 2010, "by an overwhelming margin, technology experts and stakeholders participating in a survey fielded by the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project and Elon University's Imagining the Internet Center believe that innovative forms of online cooperation could result in more efficient and responsive for-profit firms, non-profit organizations, and government agencies by the year 2020."

Enhance Data Visualizations: Colorado has gained national recognition with innovative visualizations depicting student growth and achievement. Figure C-3 below is a sample view of growth and achievement by school.

Figure C-3: SchoolView Sample Data Visualizations



Engaging interactive displays of useful data tells a compelling story, and truly is “*Changing Conversations about school performance and educational resources across Colorado*” (SchoolView’s tagline). The plan is to implement advanced data visualizations in the areas of school, district and State performance reports as well as Educator Impact Reports. **Access for all.** Colorado has taken several steps to remove some of the barriers its intended SchoolView users face, including online access in general, broadband connectivity in particular and English literacy for speakers of other languages. In a public-private collaborative effort based on Colorado’s Recovery Act, the Colorado Community Anchor Broadband Consortium is pursuing ubiquitous high-speed broadband connectivity for the entire State. In addition, the initial set of student reports released in 2009 were translated into seven languages and were made available in print for parents/guardians and students who did not have online access. Colorado anticipates that current trends will ultimately make online access nearly universal; until then Colorado, will meet stakeholders where they are and eliminate barriers when they exist. **Provide User Friendly Dashboards.** In order to best support data access, use and understanding, SchoolView’s array of dashboards will be expanded. Future enhancements will allow any member of the public and researchers access to data through more advanced reports and customized queries. The system will initially support both English and Spanish language users

and the foundation for supporting an additional seven languages will be implemented. The previous illustration (Figure C-4) depicts an existing SchoolView interface on which future, RttT-funded enhancements will be based.

Increase Research and Policy Capabilities. These capabilities will be significantly improved for the educational research and policymaking community.

Colorado will always endeavor to provide engaging information through interactive dashboards, immediate access to underlying data suitable for secondary data analysis by researchers and policy makers, and an ad-hoc query tool allowing the user to access and export any data included in the public data warehouse. By linking school, district and State data to individual school and district improvement plans (including root causes, strategies, and expenditures), researchers and policymakers will also be able to analyze the efficacy of improvement efforts, including the return on investment.

Effectively Train Users. In order to effectively implement these goals, the State will implement a comprehensive training strategy including:

- Online training.
- Regional center and classroom training.
- Access to experienced data coaches.

Conclusion

Colorado's SchoolView provides a hub for stakeholder access and interaction with data and a platform for broad collaboration about improving educator practice and student results. Thanks to advantageous timing—major advances in technology coinciding with Race to the Top—Colorado and the nation as a whole is in a position to provide students and educators the tools they need to achieve the results expected. Colorado is primed to bring about breakthrough educator collaboration about performance and practice by promoting the use of instructional improvement systems that span multiple forms of assessments, digital instructional resources, evidence of educator outcomes and practice, and improvement strategies and their costs. These services to stakeholders, supported by coaching and regional teams, will truly deliver on the promise of the investment in State longitudinal data.

Implementation Summary: The following implementation plan for C2 is provided below:

Figure C-4: C2 Implementation Plan

Assurance Area C2 Activities	2010	2011	2012	2013	Responsible Parties
1. Increase data immediacy across user groups to improve performance.	By December 2012				Performance & Policy Office via SchoolView Implementation Team with Support from CDE Admin and Operations Team
2. Implement educator collaboration and social networking capability.	By December 2011				Performance & Policy Office via SchoolView Implementation Team with Support from the Learning Community Manager
3. Deploy enhanced data visualizations focusing on student growth and performance.	By December 2012				Performance & Policy Office via SchoolView Implementation Team
4. Roll-out engaging dashboards to promote access and use of P-20 data for all user groups.	By December 2011				Performance & Policy Office via SchoolView Implementation Team with Support from the Learning Community Manager
5. Coordinate and deliver effective SchoolView training program through regional support teams.	By December 2011 & Ongoing				Performance & Policy Office via SchoolView Implementation Team with Support from the Learning Community Manager
6. Improve research capabilities to provide better and more reliable access to performance data.	By December 2012				Performance & Policy Office via SchoolView Implementation Team with Support from Perform Mgt & Accountability

Performance Measures C (2) Performance measures for this criterion are optional. If the State wishes to include performance measures, please enter them as rows in this table and, for each measure, provide annual targets in the columns provided.	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
Percentage of public visits to SchoolView.org to access school-level data	TBD*	+25% over SY09-10	+25% over SY10-11	+25% over SY11-12	+25% over SY12-13
Percentage of authorized educator visits to SchoolView.org to access student-level data	TBD*	+25% over SY09-10	+20% over SY10-11	+15% over SY11-12	+10% over SY12-13
Reduce average data processing, validation, and posting time for data availability	90 days	< 60 days	< 30 days	< 14 days	<7 days
Percentage of authorized student-level data users who have been professionally trained in the effective use of data	0%	60%	80%	90%	100%
Increase data-access satisfaction rating for authorized researchers	establish baseline	base +5%	base +10%	base +15%	base +20%
*Note: Baseline access data will be determined in Fall 2010 following the validation and publishing of Spring 2009 State assessment data on SchoolView.org					

(C)(3) Using data to improve instruction (18 points)

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan to—

- (i) Increase the acquisition, adoption, and use of local instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice) that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with the information and resources they need to inform and improve their instructional practices, decision-making, and overall effectiveness;
- (ii) Support participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) and schools that are using instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice) in providing effective professional development to teachers, principals and administrators on how to use these systems and the resulting data to support continuous instructional improvement; and
- (iii) Make the data from instructional improvement systems (as defined in this notice), together with statewide longitudinal data system data, available and accessible to researchers so that they have detailed information with which to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional materials, strategies, and approaches for educating different types of students (*e.g.*, students with disabilities, English language learners, students whose achievement is well below or above grade level).

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note the location where the attachment can be found.

(C)(3) Using Data to Improve Instruction

Figure C-5: Strategy, Goals and Key Objectives

Overall Strategy

Use, learn and leverage high quality information to drive increased student performance.

C3 Goals – Learn about, use and leverage high quality performance information and instructional resources.

- By 2014, all Colorado LEAs will have fully implemented an instructional improvement system.
- By 2011-12, all Colorado educators will have received an initial training on use of the instructional improvement system.
- By 2011-12, provide 2-3 data coaches in each of the 12 Colorado regions to foster data-driven instructional improvement
- Increase by 25% each year, the number of teachers, principals and administrators that report using SchoolView to inform instruction and drive decision-making in their district and classroom.
- By 2013, provide researchers dedicated access to the linked P-20 instructional improvement system for evaluation of Colorado's educational programs.

Key Activities

1. Design and build instructional improvement system utilizing content collaborative expertise.
2. Pilot the state-provided instructional improvement system and integrate the locally adopted systems in existence.
3. Train all educators via regional support teams.
4. Identify and equip state data coaches to foster data-driven instructional improvement through the regional support teams.
5. Integrate local instructional improvement data with statewide longitudinal measurements.
6. Annually evaluate and improve instructional improvement system functionality via stakeholder feedback.
7. Provide ongoing technical support to LEAs.

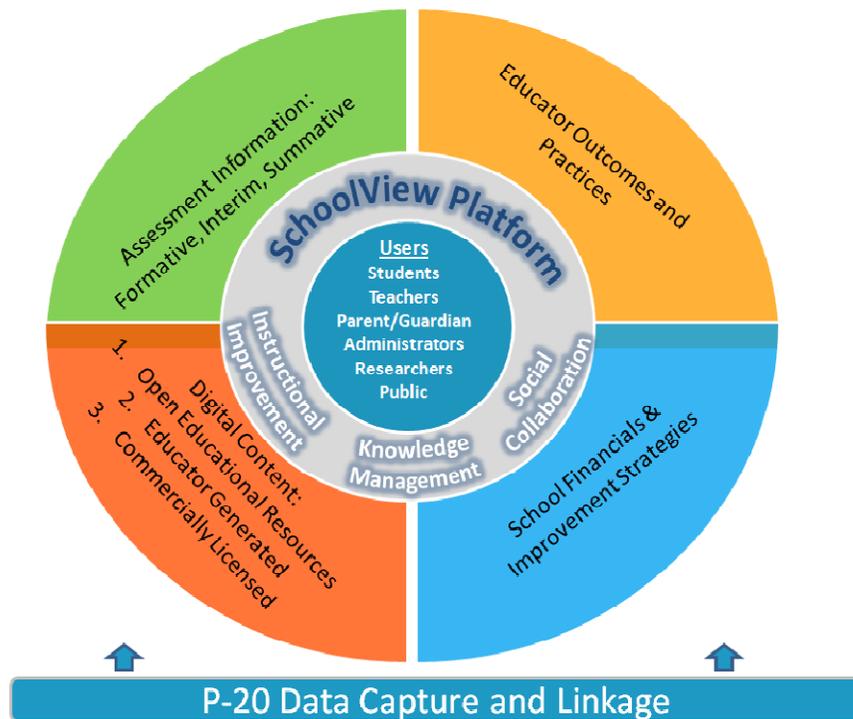
Armed with the capabilities afforded with SchoolView and the Colorado Growth Model in place, Colorado is well-equipped to increase the use of data to improve instruction. With the recently enacted Great Teachers and Leaders Bill (SB 191), principals and teachers will be held accountable for individual student growth per the Colorado Growth Model, and principals will be accountable for the effectiveness of their teachers.

This is a profound moment in time in Colorado and the nation and the State obligation is to provide educators and students with the tools they need to achieve the results expected and to hold them accountable for achieving these results. That most important tool is the Instructional Improvement System which Colorado will develop under the Race to the Top.

C3(i) Increase the Acquisition, Adoption and Use of Local Instructional Improvement Systems

Rather than asking 178 school districts to create their own system, Colorado will provide a common and basic statewide instructional improvement system, via SchoolView, which districts and schools can augment with locally adopted interoperable systems. The CDE will also provide districts technical assistance in the adoption of compatible Instructional Improvement Systems as illustrated in Figure C-6 below:

Figure C-6: SchoolView IIS Overview



With respect to educator outcomes and practices, the CDE will deploy an IIS application directed at individual teachers that integrates:

- Student growth on summative and interim assessments
- Information about the educator’s effectiveness with his or her students
- Digital instructional resources
- Opportunities for professional development

The IIS will integrate interim and summative assessment results, associate the results with individual students and educators, relate the results to appropriate instructional resources, and

make the results available using social collaboration tools. The systems will also enable the results to be incorporated into educator evaluation systems.

In addition to housing an evaluation framework, the IIS will be used to store, organize and provide instructional and assessment resources, professional development resources, evaluation data on the effectiveness of the featured resources, information about student learning opportunities, and assessment results. Teachers will be able to use the SchoolView platform to generate reports to support their instructional improvement practices. Principals and LEA leaders will have ready access to this data for all of their classrooms to improve their decision-making; and students will have access to information about their individual learning process and progress. The Educator Impact reports will be housed within the Instructional Improvement System and will provide Web-based access to information about:

- a. Students' performance on formative, interim and summative assessments at individual level against State standards.
- b. Access to instructional resources to improve students' learning in areas of weakness.
- c. Effectiveness in raising student performance against specific standards.
- d. Actions plans to improve effectiveness tied to professional development opportunities.
- e. Access to professional development resources aligned to my identified growth areas.

For example, this system will generate early warning reports on students whose patterns of attendance, behavior and course records indicate they are at risk of dropping out, thereby providing educators, educational leaders and parents/guardians advanced opportunity to take appropriate action. The IIS will be compatible with technology tools LEAs have already implemented in support of their local Instructional Improvement Systems, providing educators with both State- and locally furnished information.

As discussed in Selection Criterion (B), SchoolView will contain digital instructional content that will help educators tailor instruction to student needs and interests. This content will be created by a number of partners, including the Content Collaboratives, the STEM in Action initiative, Colorado educators identified as highly effective (see Selection Criterion (D)(5)), and individual educators and school teams.

As discussed in (B)(3), the CDE will facilitate the development and implementation of learning communities called Content Collaboratives to engage LEAs in the creation and dissemination of standards-based assessment and instructional materials for use in the classroom

and to inform the development of the SchoolView dashboards and instructional improvement system that will house the information. Leveraging Colorado’s existing regional support structure, 12 regional learning communities called Regional Support Teams will be expanded to develop and deliver training to teachers and principals utilizing a blended learning approach. Working with LEAs through Content Collaboratives, Colorado will also establish standard requirements for all current or future Instructional Improvement Systems. For example, all local Instructional Improvement Systems must utilize interim assessments and provide online reports and analysis tools that integrate with statewide summative results.

The Colorado Department of Education plans to further partnerships with regional entities, such as the 21 active BOCES, to implement systems that span district boundaries. With Colorado’s evolving statewide broadband infrastructure, Web-based tools and remote hosting services will equalize the technology playing field for rural school districts.

C3(ii) Support Participating LEAs and Schools that Use Instructional Improvement Systems to Provide Effective Professional Development

Once instructional improvement systems are in place, effective professional development including both initial training and ongoing coaching, becomes absolutely critical in order to guide effective use of these systems. Colorado’s plan for increased data-driven instruction prioritizes the need to infuse effective use of instructional improvement systems in educators’ professional lives, establishing data as a fundamental part of instructional practice, oversight and support.

In addition, data will be used to ensure all educators are engaged in reflective practice and the continuous improvement of instruction. Research makes it clear that while the use of data and technology can result in substantial gains in student performance, achieving those gains requires “a comprehensive and purposeful approach to the use of data that not only informs the practices of individual teachers, but is supported as an essential and strategic part of school-wide improvement strategies.”

Training will be accomplished through data coaches deployed by the CDE coupled with a “train the trainer” model for LEAs, as well as using Regional Support Teams to directly support the LEAs in small and rural districts. Data Coaches are the essential link between the introduction and availability of data, and the effective, ongoing use of data. Two to three data coaches will be embedded within each of the Regional Support Teams. Data Coaches will

mentor educators to fully utilize data to continuously improve instruction and student achievement. Clear incentives for using data-driven instruction are in the Education Accountability Act. The data provided on SchoolView measures progress towards the required goals of college and career readiness, unified planning and educator evaluations. SchoolView is highly engaging and easy to understand, and will promote powerful social collaboration. Within one year of receiving Race to the Top funds, Colorado will employ data coaches in each of the 12 Regional Support Teams.

Data coaches will work with local education agencies to develop teachers' and principals' technical skills to analyze data, as well as their pedagogical skills to improve instructional techniques. For example, data coaches will teach how to generate early warning reports on students whose patterns of attendance, behavior and course records indicates a risk of drop-out out, thereby providing educators, educational leaders and parents/guardians advanced opportunity to take appropriate action.

Data coaches also will play a key role in each of the Regional Support Teams⁶⁴ to provide job-embedded professional development on using data to drive instructional decision-making and improvements in student learning. Data coaches will also work with the CDE, higher education staff and the Center for Transforming Learning and Teaching⁶⁵ to design, implement and continuously improve an educator preparation program portal; the use of which will be taught as part of educator preparation programs. As part of its partnership with Teach for America (TFA)⁶⁶, the State will have access to TFA's suite of online instructional management tools, which will be modified and integrated into the educator preparation program portal. All coaching will be customized to individual and LEA needs and will include both face-to-face and distance learning experiences.

C3(iii) Make the Data from Instructional Improvement Systems, Together with Statewide Longitudinal Data System Bata, Available and Accessible to Researchers

Researchers in Colorado already have access to SchoolView and Colorado Growth Model data for the State and for individual LEAs and schools. The integration and inclusion of instructional improvement system data will provide additional information about LEA- and

⁶⁴ Described in Selection Criterion (B)(3).

⁶⁵ Described in Selection Criterion (B).

⁶⁶ Described in Selection Criterion (D).

school-level formative and interim assessment results (with appropriate privacy protections for students); links between instructional activities, expenditures and student outcomes; and educator effectiveness data that can be correlated with multiple other data points housed in the longitudinal data system. The Colorado Education Research Consortium⁶⁷ will accelerate the research conducted, partner with the State in sustaining an ongoing body of cumulative research, and promote access and use of P-20 data with the research community at large.

With uniform system requirements, data interoperability standards and statewide student identifiers, Colorado's local interim assessment data will be linked with statewide longitudinal data to create a repository of academic results. Funded with an IES Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems grant, Colorado's current efforts to link K-12 data with pre-K, post-secondary, workforce and revenue data provides a research trove of instructional outcomes. Making this data available to researchers and external stakeholders helps independently evaluate effectiveness and solicit outside perspectives for improvement. Accordingly, Colorado will create a secure location within SchoolView for researcher collaboration and networking. This sandbox environment will contain raw data, the ability to build custom data queries, and a collaboration area for researchers to review and comment on posted findings. These validated research outcomes will then become feedback for SchoolView, completing a full-circle cycle of using data to improve instruction.

Expanding the information available to researchers through SchoolView, exponentially increases Colorado's ability to amass a rich body of information about the efficacy of its educational system. With this rich body of easily accessible data, researchers will be encouraged to include Colorado in their studies. As Colorado requires researchers to provide the State their results, Colorado's body of knowledge on effective practices or new developments will in turn also benefit.

Conclusion

Colorado's SchoolView affords numerous opportunities to leverage data, associate interim and summative assessment results with individual students and educators, provide appropriate instructional materials, and share results and resources with stakeholders. Colorado will encourage use of the system through effective professional development that spans initial

⁶⁷ See Appendix Exhibit A-6.

training and ongoing coaching through statewide Data Coaches. The system’s powerful visuals, rich body of data, and opportunity to obtain the underlying data for visual demonstration will compel researchers to use the system, enabling Colorado to gain access to their research results.

Implementation Summary

The following illustrates the implementation plan for this assurance area:

Figure C-7: C3 Implementation Plan

Assurance Area C3 Activities	2010	2011	2012	2013	Responsible Parties
1. Design and build instructional improvement system utilizing content collaborative expertise	By December 2012				Performance & Policy Office via SchoolView Implementation Team & Content Collaboratives
2. Pilot the state-provided instructional improvement system and integrate the locally adopted systems in existence.		Pilot - Dec. 2011 Ongoing			Performance & Policy Office via SchoolView Implementation Team with Support from the LEA Outreach Coordinator
3. Train all educators via regional support teams.		Ongoing			Learning & Results via RttT Program Office via Learning Community & CTLT partnership
4. Identify and equip state data coaches to foster data-driven instructional improvement through the regional support teams.		By December 2012 & Ongoing			Learning & Results via RttT Program Office via Learning Community & Educator Effectiveness
5. Integrate local instructional improvement data with statewide longitudinal measurements.	By May 2013				Performance & Policy Office via SchoolView Implementation Team
6. Annually evaluate and improve instructional improvement system functionality via stakeholder feedback.			Ongoing		Performance & Policy Office via SchoolView Implementation Team with Support from the LEA Outreach Coordinator
7. Provide ongoing technical support to LEA's.			Ongoing		Operations & Admin Office via IT

(D) Great Teachers and Leaders (138 total points)
State Reform Conditions Criteria

(D)(1) Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals (21 points)

The extent to which the State has—

- (i) Legal, statutory, or regulatory provisions that allow alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) for teachers and principals, particularly routes that allow for providers in addition to institutions of higher education;
- (ii) Alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice) that are in use; and
- (iii) A process for monitoring, evaluating, and identifying areas of teacher and principal shortage and for preparing teachers and principals to fill these areas of shortage.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (D)(1)(i), regarding alternative routes to certification for both teachers and principals:

- A description of the State's applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents, including information on the elements of the State's alternative routes (as described in the alternative route to certification definition in this notice).

Evidence for (D)(1)(ii), regarding alternative routes to certification for both teachers and principals:

- A list of the alternative certification programs operating in the State under the State's alternative routes to certification (as defined in this notice), and for each:
 - The elements of the program (as described in the alternative routes to certification definition in this notice).
 - The number of teachers and principals that successfully completed each program in the previous academic year.
 - The total number of teachers and principals certified statewide in the previous academic year.

(D)(1) Provide High-Quality Pathways for Aspiring Educators

From the nationally recognized Teach for America to the Troop to Teachers program to Peak to Peak Charter School, ranked by Newsweek magazine as one of the best high schools in the nation, alternative preparation routes have brought a number of talented professionals from other careers into Colorado's schools. Race to the Top funding will be used to expand the most promising alternative pathways already in use, thereby increasing the number and percentage of effective educators prepared to teach Colorado students.

(D)(1)(i) Laws Allowing Alternative Routes to Certification:

In Colorado, alternative routes for licensure⁶⁸ have been available for teacher candidates since 1990 and for principal candidates since 2004. At present, 26 entities are approved to provide alternative teacher preparation programs and 10 additional entities are approved to provide alternative preparation for principals in Colorado.⁶⁹ Each approved program must meet all five of the elements included within the definition of "alternative routes to certification" within the notice of application for the Race to the Top.

Colorado statutes and rules for alternative preparation programs have been revised over time to meet the changing needs of Colorado's educators and schools. Colorado's current list of approved alternative preparation providers are varied and include nonprofit organizations like Teach for America; private schools and public charter schools; LEAs; institutions of higher education; and cooperative associations between three private and public entities. A current list of approved alternative preparation program providers is included in the Appendix.⁷⁰ Alternative route programs are reviewed and approved by the Colorado State Board of Education and undergo a periodic site-based reauthorization process to ensure compliance with applicable statutory requirements.⁷¹

(D)(1)(ii) Use of Alternative Preparation Programs

During 2008-2009, the most recent academic year for which complete information is available, a total of 5,768 teachers and 741 principals obtained a Colorado license. Prior studies of Colorado's educator pipeline indicate that, on average, approximately half of Colorado's educators are prepared out-of-state. In addition, Colorado issues licenses each year to educators

⁶⁸ Colorado's term for "certification" is *licensure*.

⁶⁹ For a list of designated alternative teacher and principal preparation programs, See Appendix Exhibit D-1.

⁷⁰ See Appendix Exhibit D-1.

⁷¹ See Appendix Exhibit D-2.

who are returning to the work force after an absence from the field. These returning and out-of-state educators are included in the total number above.

Until Colorado's Educator Identifier system is fully built out in 2012, the State does not maintain records of where each educator licensed in Colorado was prepared. As a result, no data currently exists to indicate how many of the educators licensed each year were prepared by one of Colorado's alternative preparation programs, or what percentage of the total number of educators prepared in-state these educators represent. During 2008-2009, a total of, 793 teachers and seven principals completed one of the State's alternative preparation programs.

To date, there has not been a strong incentive to increase the number of educators prepared through alternative preparation pathways – approximately half of the State's teachers and leaders are prepared out-of-state and many of the in-state programs attract a large number of nontraditional candidates. Colorado's alternative preparation programs have typically been developed to meet an identified need of a particular school or LEA and as a result have produced a relatively small number of teachers and principals to meet such need. In addition, Colorado's institutions of higher education have been strong partners and leaders in developing innovative models of recruiting and preparing teachers and principals. Going forward, Colorado will have transparent data about the impact upon students of individual programs, a streamlined process of approving new alternative programs, and targeted incentives to expand successful programs and cease unsuccessful ones. As a result, Colorado is poised to ensure that the best and brightest are attracted to serve Colorado students and are prepared to do so effectively.

A number of Colorado programs are actively developing innovative as well as alternative paths to educator preparation, focusing on clinically based preparation programs, outcomes-based measures of program quality, and pre-service performance assessments of skills highly predictive of educator effectiveness (discussed in more detail in Section D(4)).

(D)(1)(iii) Shortages

The CDE currently monitors educator shortages on a continuous basis through the requests it receives for emergency authorization. These requests are reviewed annually to identify the geographic and content areas with the greatest needs. Based upon this information, in 2009 the CDE completed an in-depth analysis of the need for effective educators to serve

school-wide Title I and rural schools, as well as special education teachers statewide⁷². In response to the results of that analysis, the CDE has used Federal funds to make recruitment and retention grants available to LEAs with identified need, as well as made available stipends and incentives for schools to attract master teachers to these schools. Funding from Race to the Top will be used to significantly expand these efforts and supplement them by investing in other programs that prepare teachers to fill shortage areas. These investments are discussed later in Sections (D)(3) and (D)(4).

Colorado has launched two important efforts intended to significantly improve its ability to monitor and respond to educator shortages in the future. First, the Colorado legislature created the Quality Teachers Commission (QTC) and charged it to study and issue recommendations to close the “teacher gap” statewide. Their initial recommendations will be issued in January 2011 and a final report by July 2012. Second, an initial product of the QTC’s work to date was the creation of a statewide educator identifier system. This system will be included in the full-build out of SchoolView and will enable LEAs to track their own shortages, the State to identify trends by geographic area as well as content area, and for preparation programs to better anticipate and respond to those trends.

Conclusion

Colorado actively encourages and promotes innovative and effective alternative pathways to licensure. To track shortages, Colorado monitors and annually analyzes emergency licensure requests, which results in a snapshot of the geographic and content areas that require additional effective educators. With SchoolView’s capability to link educators to their preparation programs and Race to the Top financial investments in effective educator preparation programs, Colorado will successfully expand its high-quality alternative pathways for educator preparation.

⁷² “Study of Teacher Attraction and Retention: Title I Schools, Rural Schools and Special Education Teachers” published in 2009 by the CDE

(D)(2) Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance (58 points)

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to ensure that participating LEAs (as defined in this notice)—

- (i) Establish clear approaches to measuring student growth (as defined in this notice) and measure it for each individual student; (5 points)
- (ii) Design and implement rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that (a) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth (as defined in this notice) as a significant factor, and (b) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement; (15 points)
- (iii) Conduct annual evaluations of teachers and principals that include timely and constructive feedback; as part of such evaluations, provide teachers and principals with data on student growth for their students, classes, and schools; (10 points) and
- (iv) Use these evaluations, at a minimum, to inform decisions regarding— (28 points)
 - 1. Developing teachers and principals, including by providing relevant coaching, induction support, and/or professional development;
 - (b) Compensating, promoting, and retaining teachers and principals, including by providing opportunities for highly effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice) to obtain additional compensation and be given additional responsibilities;
 - (c) Whether to grant tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures; and
 - (d) Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals after they have had ample opportunities to improve, and ensuring that such decisions are made using rigorous standards and streamlined, transparent, and fair procedures.

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Figure D-1: Strategy, Goals and Activities

Overall Strategy

Ensure all students have access to effective teachers and principals.

D2 Goals – Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance.

- By September 2011, the State Board of Education adopts rigorous measures of student academic growth that are comparable across class rooms, aligned with content standards and educator performance standards to be used for educator evaluations.
- By September 2011, adopt statewide definition of principal and teacher “effectiveness”.
- By July 2013, all Colorado LEAs have implemented a performance evaluation system where annual evaluations of all teachers and principals are based at least 50% upon student growth measures.
- Beginning in July 2013, three consecutive years of demonstrated “effectiveness” shall be required in order to earn non-probationary status (Colorado’s equivalent of “tenure”).
- Beginning in July 2014, an “ineffectiveness” rating shall be considered and result in loss of non-probationary status by any teacher who is ineffective for two consecutive years.
- By July 2014, all participating LEAs use performance ratings to inform induction, support and development, compensation, promotion and retention decisions.
- By August 2014, all Colorado LEAs have an incentive system, developed with their local teachers association, to encourage effective teachers to serve in low-performing schools.

Key Activities

1. All Colorado LEAs implement performance evaluation systems aligned with new policy guidelines.
2. State Council for Educator Effectiveness develops definitions and measures of effectiveness and guidelines for implementation of evaluation systems.
3. Provide a resource bank, updated at least annually, with assessments, processes, tools and policies for use by LEAs in adopting performance evaluation systems.
4. Provide technical assistance and planning grants to LEAs to revise their hiring, promotion, compensation and staffing systems.
5. Top-rated highly effective educators provide online content and demonstration classrooms.
6. Annually report evaluation ratings statewide and by LEA, region and school via SchoolView.
7. Deliver educator impact reports to each teacher and principal that identifies individualized professional development resources and track impact and usage.
8. Publicly report results of the statewide roll-out of performance evaluations and recommend improvements for subsequent implementation.

(D)(2) Improving Teacher and Principal Effectiveness Based on Performance

By signing the Great Teachers and Leaders Bill (SB 191) into law, the Governor launched Colorado's ambitious plan to ensure that all teachers and principals are evaluated annually in a way that is rigorous, transparent and fair. In brief, SB-191 requires that each educator's evaluation will be based at least on 50% student growth and on multiple measures of effectiveness. It also stipulates that educator retention will be based on performance—that teachers will *earn* tenure (non-probationary status) based on three consecutive years of demonstrated, evaluated effectiveness, and that the privilege of tenure will be *lost* after two years of evaluation-based ineffectiveness. Senate Bill 191 sets forth criteria to increase compensation and career opportunities for the most highly effective educators, as well as the removal of those who are ineffective. While the State will create a common evaluation platform for all LEAs to use, local districts may adopt additional evaluation systems tailored to their specific goals. The CDE will work with districts to ensure system compatibility.

Senate Bill 191 sets a clear framework for the evaluation of educator effectiveness but also recognizes that thoughtful implementation will take some time and require the input of educators and policy makers statewide. Colorado's process begins with the State Council for Educator Effectiveness, initially formed by Governor Ritter in January 2010 by executive order and codified in SB 191. The State Council, comprised of 15 members representing a diverse set of key stakeholders, will develop an initial set of recommendations for each aspect of the State's performance evaluation system. The CDE assists with LEA implementation and the Council monitors the success of implementation and makes recommendations for improvement. Colorado recognizes that this work is unprecedented and will not be flawless. As a result, the implementation plan ensures broad stakeholder engagement and multiple opportunities for improvement along the way.

As outlined below, Colorado is uniquely suited to capitalize on its strong tradition of local control; the passion of its educators and leaders; its data systems and sustainable learning communities (described in detail in Section (B) and Section (C)); and its unwavering commitment to improve educator effectiveness, increase student achievement and close achievement gaps statewide.

(D)(2)(i) Measuring Student Growth. The Colorado Growth Model (as detailed in Section (C)) currently measures individual student progress for all students in grades and subjects tested on the State’s summative assessments administered under the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The State Council on Educator Effectiveness (created through executive order in January 2010⁷³), the State also will identify a body of assessments for districts to use to measure student growth in grades *not* included in the State summative assessments.

(D)(2)(ii) Evaluation systems for teachers and principals. Codified by SB 191, the State Council on Educator Effectiveness will determine the parameters for a rigorous, transparent, consistent and fair evaluation system for teachers and principals that uses at least three rating categories and student growth measures to determine at least 50% of the evaluation rating. The State Council will also ensure that educator evaluation systems are designed and developed with meaningful teacher and principal involvement. The State Council will support successful statewide implementation of a new evaluation system to:

- a. Recommend statewide definitions of teacher effectiveness and principal effectiveness.
- b. Develop quality standards for measuring teacher effectiveness and principal effectiveness.
- c. Recommend measures of longitudinal academic growth for use in educator evaluations.
- d. Recommend criteria used to differentiate between performance standards that include, at a minimum highly effective, “effective” and “ineffective”.
- e. Develop and recommend guidelines for adequate implementation of high-quality evaluation systems that are compatible with the State’s system.⁷⁴

Evaluation Systems Designed and Developed with Teacher and Principal Involvement. The 15-member State Council on Educator Effectiveness was established with the collaboration and support of Colorado’s largest teachers association, the Colorado Education Association. Comprised of four practicing teachers, three school administrators, two school board members, and students, parents/guardians and community leaders, the State Council was designed to ensure

⁷³ See Appendix Exhibit D-4.

⁷⁴ Note: The State Council will not directly develop guidelines for evaluation systems for early childhood educators. Instead, it will incorporate the professional development plans for early childhood educators created in June 2010 by the P-3 Subcommittee of the State’s P-20 Education Coordinating Council.

that teachers and principals would have a strong voice in the development of their evaluation system.

A multi-step public review process will also encourage ongoing and robust input from educators. First, the State Council will create its initial set of recommendations on definitions and measures of effectiveness, which will be distributed and/or posted online for input. Next, the State Council's recommendations will be presented to the Colorado State Board of Education, which will hold formal public hearings on the recommendations before promulgating rules regarding the proposed definitions and measures. Then, upon the State board's rule promulgation, the legislature will hold a public hearing before final approval. Finally, the Council will review annually the results of initial implementation and recommend improvements for subsequent implementation efforts.

Support for participating LEAs to implement evaluation systems. On the local level, significant resources will be devoted to evaluation system implementation. Beginning in July 2011, participating LEAs will form Local Transformation Councils, comprising district leaders, union representatives where applicable, principals, teachers, parents/guardians and students, to inform and customize the implementation of SB 191. With technical assistance from the CDE, Local Transformation Councils will consider, adopt and implement an evaluation system for their district. Participating LEAs also may use a portion of their RttT funds as needed to train teachers and principals on evaluation systems. For many LEAs, this supplemental capacity will include temporary staff to manage the evaluation roll out and training, and may also include additional professional development days for teachers and principals to participate in training.

(D)(2)(iii) Annual Evaluations that Provide Data on Student Growth: As outlined in SB 191 and by the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year, each teacher and principal in Colorado will receive a fair and consistent annual evaluation based at least 50% on student growth. Relevant student growth data for each educator's students, classes and school(s) will be provided through SchoolView and incorporated into the evaluation. Principal evaluations will be linked to those of their teachers and thus to student growth, as demonstrated through their teachers' performance.

Timely and constructive feedback. At a minimum, a number of provisions assure educators receive timely and constructive feedback. In addition to the relevant data both currently available and planned for SchoolView, SB 191 requires that all educators will receive their final

evaluations at least two weeks before the end of the school year. CDE's Educator Effectiveness Unit will provide technical assistance to make sure evaluations include timely and constructive feedback.

Where State statute once identified the principal as the only person in school who could evaluate teachers, SB-191 also allows principals' designees to conduct these reviews, which greatly expands a principal's ability to support high-quality instructional practice. Peer evaluation provides principals opportunities to strategically connect teachers to the instructional expertise that will best improve classroom practice.

CDE's Educator Effectiveness Unit will provide technical support to participating LEAs as they consider how best to align available resources and policies to sustain annual evaluations. Such support may include, as needed, a review of staffing assignments and the use of Title I, IIA, IDEA and other State and Federal resources.

Data on student, class and school-wide growth. Beginning in the fall of the 2013-2014 school year, each teacher and principal in the State will receive student growth data for their students as well as those of their school, LEA and the State as part of their evaluation process. This data will show how the educator's students' growth data compares to school-wide data, as well as how it compares to statewide data of other students with similar performance histories. School-level student growth data is currently available to principals through the Colorado Growth Model. By July 2011, Educator Impact Reports will be available to individual teachers and principals through a secure SchoolView portal, providing growth data for their students in subject areas and grades tested on the State's summative assessment. Educator Impact Reports for teachers of all other content areas will be available to LEAs as interim assessments in those areas are implemented. Participating LEAs will use these reports as part of each educator's evaluation.

(D)(2)(iv) Using Evaluations to Inform Key Decisions. Under SB 191 all LEAs will use evaluations to inform compensation, promotion and retention of effective educators, and the dismissing or non-renewal of ineffective educators. As stated previously, Colorado teachers will *earn* non-probationary status (tenure) based on three consecutive years of demonstrated, evaluated effectiveness, and teachers will again return to probationary status after two years of evaluated ineffectiveness.

Colorado will ensure that the standards and criteria applicable to teacher and principal licensure and the accreditation of preparation programs are directly aligned with and support the preparation and licensure of effective educators.⁷⁵

(a) Using evaluations to develop teachers and principals: By School Year 2012-2013, participating LEAs will use evaluations to develop teachers and principals through coaching, induction, and/or professional development. Teachers and principals in participating LEAs will be required to have individual professional development plans that (1) are informed by previous years' evaluations and Educator Impact Report data (see Selection Criterion (D)(5)i for more detail); (2) are tailored to respond to those areas of practice identified for improvement; and (3) contain professional development goals that are tied to student outcome goals. Additionally, the technical assistance support provided by the CDE Educator Effectiveness Unit will help ensure that evaluations include timely and constructive feedback. Finally, the teacher portal of SchoolView will offer professional development resources aligned with identified areas of need (see Selection Criterion (D)(5)i for detail). One important component of teacher development will be a system for principals and superintendents to use the career ladders described in the section below as a professional development tool for their educators. Principals will now have access to documented practices of model teachers in every content area and grade level that they can easily refer novice teachers to resources for developing their own practices. In addition, superintendents can help support the development of novice principals by providing them access to master principals or model principals who are demonstrating particular success in certain deficiency areas of that novice leader. This statewide body of successful practices is a key component of helping improve statewide practice by making easily available exemplars and supports who are having dramatic impact on Colorado students. As part of every in-state preparation program curriculum and each district induction and professional development plan, educators will be made aware of the opportunities for access to these resources.

(b) Using evaluations to compensate, promote, and retain teachers and principals: Colorado LEAs will use the educator evaluations to inform decisions about the compensation, promotion and retention of educators based upon their evaluation results. An innovative set of career ladder

⁷⁵ The State Board of Education unanimously adopted a resolution in May 2010 to make "improvements to the standards and criteria applicable to the preparation of teachers and principals to increase the effectiveness of" their graduates. See Appendix Exhibit D-7.

opportunities will be available to effective teachers and principals. Performance bonuses will be available to the most highly effective educators meeting the hardest educational challenges. Finally, all participating LEAs will revise their human capital management systems to ensure that evaluations inform all of their critical staffing decisions – including compensation.

Career Ladders. Colorado will use Race to the Top funds to create statewide career ladders for (1) hybrid leadership roles, (2) model teachers and principals and (3) turnaround teachers and principals.

1. **Hybrid Leadership Roles.** Historically, outstanding teachers and principals have been rewarded for their success with students through promotions that take them further away from students. Colorado will expand upon several promising models already in place in the State by awarding up to ten incentive award grants of \$75,000 to schools and LEAs that elect to develop models of hybrid leadership roles. “Hybrid” leadership roles are those that enable teachers and principals to explore talents and areas of interest outside of their traditional roles, while continuing their daily work with students.⁷⁶ Grants will be awarded based upon evidence of likely success and the degree of innovation. The goals of these models will be to identify new ways of staffing that enable effective teachers to lead while remaining in the classroom; to empower principals to redistribute responsibilities that matches professionals with their talents and interests; and ultimately to redefine the trajectory of promotion to one that does not require that promotion equate to a greater distance from students. Results of these awards will be evaluated as part of Colorado’s overall Race to the Top evaluation plan. Promising practices will be documented by the CDE Educator Effectiveness Unit and will be disseminated via SchoolView along with the support of the Colorado Legacy Foundation through its series of “best practice guides”.
2. **Model Teachers and Leaders.** The State will use the new evaluation system to identify all of the educators who have been identified as highly effective. These educators will have the opportunity to apply to be a Model teacher or leader. If accepted by the State, these model teachers and leaders will receive a \$2,500 stipend to share and document

⁷⁶ See “How Does A Realistic Hybrid Teaching Role Look?”, by Ariel Sacks at www.teacherleaders.org (April 11, 2010).

their best practices online via SchoolView. This serves two purposes: first it provides additional opportunities for professional growth and compensation to the best educators, thereby increasing the chances of retaining the best teachers and principals. Secondly, it creates a database of best practices that have been proven to set results with Colorado students. The most effective principals will also have the opportunity to document and share the key structures and leadership behaviors that are leading to success in their school including classroom observation templates, professional development plans, and staff leadership and ownership structures. In addition, all educators will be able to upload their own favorite materials. Educators whose materials receive the highest ratings by other Colorado educators who download and make use of them will receive a \$1000 royalty.

3. ***Turnaround Teachers and Principals.*** Colorado’s plan focuses upon getting the most highly effective educators to serve the students with greatest academic needs. To that end, the State’s persistently lowest-performing schools are a top priority for the State and its plans are informed by promising and proven efforts from across the State and the nation. First, the Turnaround Leaders Academy will develop 20 leaders for the State’s greatest turnaround challenges. Those principals who take on the challenge and deliver results will receive annual bonuses of \$20,000. A signing bonus of \$10,000 will be made available to effective teachers in exchange for taking on the challenge of moving to a turnaround school. Annual bonuses of \$10,000 will be available to those teachers who deliver results once they arrive at these schools. Finally, SB 191 leveled the playing field for all of the State’s schools, including high-poverty and/or high-minority schools which often are served by the least effective or experienced teachers and principals. As a result of this legislation, all teacher placements require the consent of the school principal with input from his or her teachers. This requirement can never be waived for the State’s turnaround schools.

(c)Using evaluations to inform decisions to grant tenure (non-probationary status) and/or full certification (licensure): Prior to SB 191, Colorado law required that every teacher was granted tenure on the first day of their fourth year of teaching, and, once granted, tenure could never be lost. So-called “good” teachers were not rewarded for their impact on students, and “bad” teachers were not held responsible for merely maintaining poor performance.

The passing of SB 191 radically changed the landscape of teacher tenure in Colorado, making tenure a privilege an educator earns through three consecutive years of demonstrated effectiveness, as determined through annual evaluations. If a tenured teacher is evaluated as ineffective for two consecutive years, tenure protections will be lost. Should a teacher have a mixed record of effectiveness during the early years of their career, Colorado's new evaluation system will allow teachers to stay on in their position in a probationary role until they attain the requisite three consecutive years of demonstrated effectiveness. This provision gives novice teachers fair opportunity to improve their practice before facing dismissal, while at the same time allows schools and districts to be responsive to the local hiring market.

(d) Removing ineffective teachers and principals after ample opportunities to improve (dismissal): SB 191 provides ample opportunities for ineffective teachers to improve instructional practice and fair grounds for their release if they remain ineffective after receiving adequate support. As per SB 191, with the first rating of ineffective, a teacher will receive a growth and professional development plan for the following year. Upon receiving a second consecutive rating of ineffective, the teacher again will receive a growth plan, as well as the right to appeal the evaluation to the superintendent. Should the superintendent uphold the evaluation, with this second evaluation of demonstrated ineffectiveness, tenure will be lost and the teacher will return to probationary status.

Participating LEAs have made a commitment in the Memorandum of Understanding⁷⁷ to use evaluations to remove ineffective teachers after they have had ample opportunity to improve. The retention of ineffective teachers will be tracked through the State's annual Human Resources data collection and the removal of ineffective teachers will be a necessary component of school and LEA improvement plans. However, Colorado knows that removing ineffective teachers is only part of the battle. For this reason, Colorado's plan focuses heavily upon ensuring that new teachers and principals are prepared to be effective, supported and developed into becoming effective once they are on the job; and that highly effective educators have strong incentives to take on the State's biggest educational challenges.

⁷⁷ The full MOU scope of work for this application is presented in the Appendix Exhibit A-3.

Conclusion

Colorado's vision is to have an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective principal in every school. This vision is shared by Governor Ritter, the State Board of Education, the Colorado General Assembly, Commissioner Jones, local school boards, school and district administrators, teachers, parents/guardians and students statewide. With a strong policy framework already in place and national examples of performance evaluations underway within its LEAs, from Denver to Colorado Springs to Eagle, Colorado is serious about improving teacher and principal performance. Colorado's approach to performance evaluation is part of a broader plan to support every piece of the educator pipeline, from recruitment and preparation into the profession all the way through an educator's career. No piece stands alone. However, with the passage of SB 191, Colorado has put into place the final piece needed to ensure that teachers and principals have clear expectations for their performance, receive timely feedback and relevant supports, and are treated fairly when they are unable to make progress for students.

Implementation Summary

The following illustrates the implementation plan for this assurance area:

Figure D-2: D2 Implementation Plan

Assurance Area D2 Activities	2010	2011	2012	2013	Responsible Parties
1. All Colorado LEAs implement performance evaluation systems aligned with new policy guidelines.		July 2011 & Ongoing			LEAs with support from Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
2. State Council for Educator Effectiveness develops definitions and measures of effectiveness and guidelines for implementation of evaluation systems.	March 2011				State Council for Educator Effectiveness
3. Provide a resource bank, updated at least annually, with assessments, processes, tools and policies for use by LEAs in adopting performance evaluation systems.		Nov. 2011 & Ongoing			Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
4. Provide technical assistance and planning grants to LEAs to revise their hiring, promotion, compensation and staffing systems.			July 2012 & Ongoing		Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
5. Top-rated highly effective educators provide online content and demonstration classrooms.			July 2012 & Ongoing		Educators with support from Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
6. Annually report evaluation ratings statewide and by LEA, region and school via SchoolView.			By Jan 2013		Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit & SchoolView Imp. team
7. Deliver educator impact reports to each teacher and principal that identifies individualized professional development resources and track impact and usage.			Ongoing		Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit & SchoolView Imp. team
8. Publicly report results of the statewide roll-out of performance evaluations and recommend improvements for subsequent implementation.			July 2013 & 2014		Educator Effectiveness Council

Performance Measures Notes: Data should be reported in a manner consistent with the definitions contained in this application package in Section II. Qualifying evaluation systems are those that meet the criteria described in (D)(2)(ii).		Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
Criteria	General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
(D)(2)(i)	Percentage of participating LEAs that measure student growth (as defined in this notice).	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
(D)(2)(ii)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems for teachers.	16%	30%	50%	100%	100%
(D)(2)(ii)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems for principals.	16%	30%	50%	100%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)	Percentage of participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems that are used to inform:					
(D)(2)(iv)(a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing teachers and principals. 	35%	36%	50%	100%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compensating teachers and principals. 	3%	4%	4%	40%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting teachers and principals. 	28%	28%	28%	60%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retaining effective teachers and principals. 	51%	51%	51%	60%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Granting tenure and/or full certification (where applicable) to teachers and principals. 	*N/A	*N/A	*N/A	*N/A	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removing ineffective tenured and untenured teachers and principals. 	**N/A	**N/A	**N/A	**N/A	**N/A
(D)(2)(iv)(d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The renewal of probationary teachers and all principals. 	48%	48%	48%	100%	100%
(D)(2)(iv)(d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dismissals of non-probationary teachers. 	39%	40%	40%	100%	100%

Note: Performance targets were established based on LEA responses. Targets represent a tiered evaluation system roll out.

(D)(2)(i) targets based on State's calculation of growth and existing requirement for 100 percent LEA compliance
 (D)(2)(ii) for teachers: 21 of 79 responding LEAs in baseline ; Tier 1 (including Denver Public Schools) by the end of SY 2010-2011, Tier 2 by end of SY 2011-12 & Tier 3 by the end of SY 2012-2013
 (D)(2)(ii) for principals: 47 of 79 responding LEAs in baseline; SY 2010-2014 targets based on tiered evaluation system roll out
 (D)(2)(iv)(a): 47 of 79 responding LEAs in baseline; Tier 1 is added in SY 2010-2011, all remaining LEAs added by 2012-2013
 (D)(2)(iv)(b) for compensation decisions: 4 of 76 responding LEAs in baseline; Denver Public Schools (Tier 1) is added in SY 2010-2011 and Harrison 2 is added in SY 2011-2012
 (D)(2)(iv)(b) for promotion decisions: 37 of 78 responding LEAs in baseline
 (D)(2)(iv)(b) for retention decisions: 68 of 79 responding LEAs in baseline
 *(D)(2)(iv)(c) for tenure/full certification: 0 of 78 responding LEAs in baseline; pursuant to Colorado's landmark legislation (SB10-191) all LEAs will implement qualifying evaluation systems by SY 2012-2013 and will use those systems for acquisition or loss of tenure (non-probationary status) by July 2014
 ***(D)(2)(iv)(d) In Colorado, the right to due process in dismissal is limited to teachers with non-probationary status. Probationary teachers are subject to annual contract renewals.; by SY 2014-2015 ineffective probationary teachers will be removed and ineffective non-probationary teachers will lose tenure and accumulate years toward removal
 (D)(2)(iv)(d) for renewal of probationary teachers and principals: 64 of 78 responding LEAs in baseline; SY 2010-2014 targets based on tiered evaluation system roll out noted above;
 (D)(2)(iv)(d) for dismissals of non-probationary teachers: 52 of 76 responding LEAs in baseline; Eagle County School District (Tier 1) added in SY 2010-2011 and remaining districts added by end of SY 2012-2013
 (D)(2)(ii) CDE will ask each participating LEA to report, for each rating category, the definition of each category in its evaluation system, the definition of that category, and the number of teachers and principals in that category. CDE will then organize these two categories as effective and ineffective for reporting purposes.

General data to be provided at time of application:		
Total number of participating LEAs.		134
Total number of principals in participating LEAs.		2,605
Total number of teachers in participating LEAs.		47,407
Criterion	Data to be requested of grantees in the future:	
(D)(2)(ii)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems.	
(D)(2)(ii) (See Note)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better in the prior academic year.	
(D)(2)(ii) (See Note)	Number of teachers and principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.	

(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals (25 points)

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

(i) Ensure the equitable distribution of teachers and principals by developing a plan, informed by reviews of prior actions and data, to ensure that students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools (both as defined in this notice) have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice) and are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than other students; (15 points) and

(ii) Increase the number and percentage of effective teachers (as defined in this notice) teaching hard-to-staff subjects and specialty areas including mathematics, science, and special education; teaching in language instruction educational programs (as defined under Title III of the ESEA); and teaching in other areas as identified by the State or LEA. (10 points)

Plans for (i) and (ii) may include, but are not limited to, the implementation of incentives and strategies in such areas as recruitment, compensation, teaching and learning environments, professional development, and human resources practices and processes.

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (D)(3)(i):

- Definitions of high-minority and low-minority schools as defined by the State for the purposes of the State's Teacher Equity Plan.

(D)(3) Ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals

Figure D-3: Strategy, Goals, and Activities

Overall Strategy

Ensure all students have access to effective teachers and principals.

D3 Goals – Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals.

- In March 2011, State Council for Educator Effectiveness recommends statewide definition of “principal effectiveness” and “teacher effectiveness” to be adopted by the State Board of Education.
- Starting in July 2011, publish an annual report on equitable distribution of teachers and principals by school, LEA and region.
- By September 2011, adopt statewide definition of principal and teacher “effectiveness”.
- By December 2011, complete statewide goals and plan to ensure high-poverty, high-minority schools have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals.
- Beginning in 2012-2013, increase effective teachers teaching language instruction or special education by at least 20% each year.
- Beginning in 2012-2013, reduce ineffective teachers at high-poverty and or high-minority schools by 50% each year.
- By 2013-14, increase by 800 and at least 35% the number of effective teachers teaching college-ready mathematics and science courses.

Key Activities

1. State eliminates forced placement of teachers.
2. Quality Teachers Commission issues final report for closing the teacher gap to inform creation of 2011 plan.
3. Develop annually state-level goals for increasing the equitable distribution of teachers and principals among LEAs, schools and regions.
4. Monitor progress towards goals utilizing indicators of effectiveness.
5. Revise indicators of effectiveness to reflect statewide definition adopted by the SBE.
6. Expand or cease strategies based upon annual monitoring of results:
 - a. LEA implementation of data-driven plans to improve teaching conditions in high-need schools based on TELL survey results.
 - b. Reallocate Title IA and Title II funds to recruitment and retention grants for targeted LEA's to increase number of number of effective teachers and principals in high-need schools.
 - c. Provide stipends for up to 200 educators each year to obtain national board certification and work in high –need schools and subjects.
 - d. Subsidize cost to obtain endorsement in ELL, SPED and STEM for effective teachers serving in high-need schools.
 - e. Use teachincolorado.org to attract candidates for high-need schools and subjects.
 - f. Train 400 teachers in 64 high-poverty, high-minority schools to teach math, science and English AP classes.
 - g. Subsidize cost of up to 50 teacher and principal candidates each year to participate in residency-based preparation programs and serve in high-need schools.
 - h. Deploy up to 1100 new TFA corps members.

Through a set of ambitious goals, Colorado’s reform plan reflects a solid commitment to both the development and equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals—particularly

for high-poverty and/or high-minority schools— informed by results of actions already taken. Colorado’s proposal starts with a statewide definition of “effectiveness” adopted by September 2011, to the development of a statewide plan informed by past results in December 2011, followed by frequent monitoring and annual reporting of progress towards the state’s goals, and ongoing targeted investments and interventions to assure these goals are achieved. As a result of these steps, by 2014, Colorado will:

- Increase by 35% the number of effective educators teaching college-ready mathematics and science courses.
- Increase the number of effective teachers of English language learners and students with disabilities by at least 20% annually.
- Reduce by 50% the number of ineffective teachers and principals serving at high poverty and/or high-minority schools.

Colorado is poised to fully implement reforms and, with Race to the Top funding, eliminate the inequitable distribution of teachers and principals across Colorado.

(D)(3)(i) Ensure equitable distribution of teachers and principals for high-poverty and/or high-minority schools through a plan informed by prior actions and data

By December 2011, Colorado will have a comprehensive statewide plan to ensure students in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools have equitable access to highly effective teachers and principals. Colorado will ensure these students are not served by ineffective teachers and principals at higher rates than other student populations. This plan will be informed by the recommendations of the Quality Teachers Commission to eliminate the teacher gap,⁷⁸ as well as results from the implementation of the State’s HQT plan⁷⁹, and by the strategies developed by the School Leadership Academy⁸⁰ to train leaders for high-needs areas and thus reduce the principal shortage.

Pending completion of the December 2011 plan, Colorado will take immediate steps to ensure equitable distribution through Race to the Top investments in a comprehensive set of

⁷⁸ Quality Teachers Commission was first created in statute in 2007. Its first task was to develop the state’s Educator Identifier System.

⁷⁹ See Appendix D-6.

⁸⁰ School Leadership Academy was legislated in 2008.

strategies and activities that are directly informed by the State’s efforts to date. At the same time as the State Council develops the statewide definitions of “effectiveness”, the CDE is committed to continuing to track the equitable distribution of educators using other proxy measures: years of experience and highly qualified status.⁸¹ Since 2005-06, the State has conducted a statewide analysis of the distribution of teachers; paying careful attention to attributes of teachers in high poverty and high minority schools. For schools and districts that have significant gaps, the State has provided them with a more detailed report and then required them to create an action plan to address the issues. Results since then have shown significant improvement in the equitable distribution of highly effective teachers (currently at less than 1% difference) but more modest improvement in the distribution of teachers based upon years of experience.

Action Plans Based on Identified Problems and Evaluation of Success. Colorado’s analysis and action plan (Figure D-4 below) is directly informed by review of prior efforts and analysis in this area.

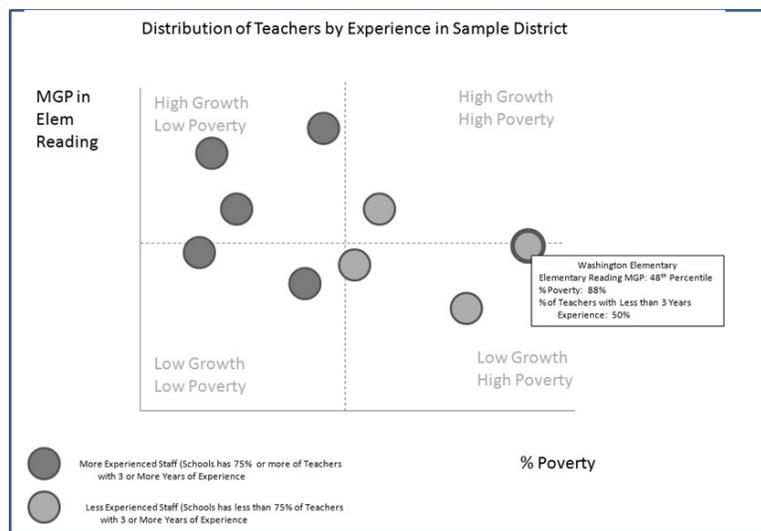
Figure D-4: Analysis and Action Plan

What Data Shows	Reasons for Results	Colorado's Response	Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High poverty schools are disproportionately served by novice teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Novice teachers are given placements perceived as less desirable Working conditions at these schools make it difficult to remain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colorado law requires that teacher placements must have consent of school principal with input from teachers Improve preparation pathways ability to prepare teachers to enter HPHM schools Analyze TELL survey data and publish customized reports for HPHM schools Incentives for effective teachers with experience to work or stay in HPHM schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educator Effectiveness Index published annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poverty exacerbates gaps in achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-school supports are absent or limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended learning opportunities Community partnerships Family engagement strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educator Impact Reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gaps in achievement correlate to race even in the absence of poverty; but students of all races can and do achieve at the highest levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Differing expectations of teachers for groups of students Student self-identity that is at odds with academic success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional development to identify and change expectations Partnering highly effective educators with less effective educators serving HPHM schools through Leadership Residency program and learning communities Project VOYCE and City Year to provide peer and near-peer leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educator Impact Reports

⁸¹ Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigdor, “How and Why do Teacher Credentials Matter for Student Achievement?” page 5 (2007) (Working Paper), available at www.caldercenter.org/pdf/1001058_Teacher_Credentials.pdf.

The CDE will use a variety of data measures to identify recruitment gaps and implement equitable distribution. First administered in the 2008-2009 school year, TELL survey results correlate with increases in student achievement and are presently guiding improvement efforts in high-needs schools statewide. Beginning in 2012, the Educator Effectiveness Index will be published annually to show the concentration of effective teachers and principals in each school, LEA and region. Reports on teacher and principal gaps by region, content and grade, and the most effective educator preparation programs will also be published annually. A sample of the visualization follows:

Figure D-5: Distribution of Effective Educators



Accountability through funding. Through the State’s school and district performance framework, the CDE will hold LEAs accountable for the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals. Through the framework, the CDE will closely review a school’s or district’s practices to recruit, support and develop, promote, retain and dismiss educators. This analysis will also identify opportunities to assure that the most effective educators are in the schools serving the students who need them most.

Where school performance indicates that existing strategies are inadequate, districts will be expected to adopt proven strategies to improve recruitment, retention, support and development of teachers. Federal monies will only be available for use by LEAs that implement proven or promising strategies and methods. In addition, the CDE will provide technical assistance and make available a variety of incentive grants to all high-poverty and/or high-

minority schools for the purpose of improving their success of recruiting and retaining highly effective educators.

(D)(3)(ii) Increase the Number and Percentage of Effective Educators Teaching Hard-to-Staff Subjects

Colorado will respond to the urgent need to increase the number and percentage of effective educators teaching hard-to-staff subjects with a combination of short-term and long-term strategies. Analysis of results to date provides inform immediate steps: math is the area in which college freshman require remediation most frequently; rural and small schools have limited access to college-ready math and science courses; and special education teachers in rural LEAs have high rates of attrition. Finally, English language learners and students with disabilities are over-represented in Colorado’s lowest-achieving schools. In response, Colorado will immediately:

1. Provide incentives to the lowest-achieving schools to recruit and retain effective teachers in English language acquisition, special education, science and/or mathematics.
2. Expand, by up to 50 each year, the number of teachers and principals prepared by one of the State’s dozen residency-based programs, who commit to teach a hard-to-staff subject for at least three years.⁸²
3. Double (to up to 200) the number of scholarships Colorado awards each year to teachers and principals that successfully complete a program of national certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)⁸³ and agree to work in high-need schools and/or subjects.

⁸² Over the last 10 years that teacher-in-residence programs have been in existence in Colorado, over 25% of graduates have been prepared to teach math or science, and over 15% have become certified to teach special education.

⁸³ NBPTS is an independent non-profit organization that offers standards-based training and professional development. Research indicates that NBPTS certification has a positive impact on student achievement, teacher retention and professional development. “Assessing Accomplished Teaching: Advanced-Level Certification Programs”, by Milton D. Hake, Judith Anderson Koenig, and Stuart W. Elliott; Committee on Teacher Certification by National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, National Research Council, (2008).

4. Accelerate the Colorado Legacy Schools initiative to expand minority student participation in Advanced Placement classes in Math, Science and English by training 400 teachers to provide these courses in high-poverty schools.⁸⁴
5. Deploy additional Teach for America corps members to teach mathematics in high-poverty schools.
6. Provide incentives for up to 500 effective teachers to obtain certification to teach English language acquisition, special education, science and/or mathematics.
7. In rural and hard-to-staff schools, provide training and technology to increase the number of students taught by effective teachers via blended and remote instruction.⁸⁵

Colorado's long-term strategy to increase the number of principals and educators in hard-to-staff subjects will be a central focus of its equitable distribution plan. Plan strategies will be shaped by the results of the initial investments described above as well as broader efforts to improve educator preparation, recruitment and retention described elsewhere in this proposal, including:

- Increasing the retention of effective educators in hard-to-staff subject areas.⁸⁶
- Expanding preparation pathways that produce effective educators to teach in these areas.
- Increasing the number of educators that apply to teach these subjects through targeted recruitment efforts on www.teachincolorado.org

Conclusion

Colorado's plan to provide all students equitable access to highly effective teachers addresses the urgency created by gaps in high-needs and hard-to-staff schools and content areas. Through information and evaluations available through SchoolView, legislation that enables evaluation based on student-growth, rewards and incentives to increase the number of highly effective educators, and a system of monitoring the success of implemented strategies, Colorado

⁸⁴ Research indicates that TFA corps members teaching math are highly effective. See "The Effects of Teach for America on Students: Findings from a National Evaluation" by Paul T. Decker, Daniel P. Mayer, and Steven Glazerman, Mathematica Policy Research (2004)

⁸⁵ "Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies", US Department of Education (2009); <http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/evidence-based-practices/finalreport.pdf>

⁸⁶ See "Study of Teacher Attraction and Retention in Title I Schools, Rural Schools and Special Education Teachers", conducted in 2008 by the CDE Office of Federal Programs; and "Shining the Light II: State of Teacher Quality, Attrition & Diversity in Colorado", by Alliance for Quality Teaching (2008).

will make an immediate and long-term impact on all schools in general, and its high-poverty and/or high-minority schools in particular.

Implementation Summary

The following illustrates the implementation plan for this assurance area:

Figure D-6: D3 Implementation Plan

Assurance Area D3 Activities	2010	2011	2012	2013	Responsible Parties
1. State eliminates forced placement of teachers.	July 2010 & Ongoing				All LEAs
2. Quality Teachers Commission issues final report for closing the teacher gap to inform creation of 2011 plan.	By July 2011				Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
2. Develop annually state-level goals for increasing the equitable distribution of teachers and principals among LEAs, schools and regions.	December 2011 & Ongoing				State Board of Education
3. Monitor progress towards goals utilizing indicators of effectiveness.	By July 2011				Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
4. Revise indicators of effectiveness to reflect statewide definition adopted by the SBE.	By July 2012				Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
5. Expand or cease strategies based upon annual monitoring of results:	Ongoing				Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
a. LEA implementation of data-driven plans to improve teaching conditions in high-need schools based on TELL survey results.					
b. Reallocate Title IA and Title II funds to recruitment and retention grants for targeted LEAs to increase number of effective teachers and principals in high-need schools.					
c. Provide stipends for up to 200 educators each year to obtain national board certification and work in high-need schools and subjects.					
d. Subsidize cost to obtain endorsement in ELL, SPED and STEM for effective teachers serving in high-need schools.					
e. Use teachincolorado.org to attract candidates for high-need schools and subjects.					
f. Train 400 teachers in 64 high-poverty, high-minority schools to teach math, science and English AP classes.					
g. Subsidize cost of up to 50 teacher and principal candidates each year to participate in residency-based preparation programs and serve in high-need schools.					
h. Deploy up to 1100 new TFA corps members					

Performance Measures for (D)(3)(i)	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or	End of SY 2010- 2011	End of SY 2011- 2012	End of SY 2012- 2013	End of SY 2013- 2014
<i>Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.</i>					
General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
Percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	N/A*	X**	X**	X**	X**
Percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	N/A*	X**	X**	X**	X**
Percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	N/A*	X**	X**	X**	X**
Percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	N/A*	X**	X**	X**	X**
Percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	N/A*	X**	X**	X**	X**
Percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are highly effective (as defined in this notice).	N/A*	X**	X**	X**	X**
Percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	N/A*	X**	X**	X**	X**
Percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who are ineffective.	N/A*	X**	X**	X**	X**
*Colorado recently passed landmark legislation (SB10-191) requiring all LEAs to implement by SY 2012-2013 qualifying evaluation systems measuring effectiveness (as defined in this notice) of teachers and principals. Colorado does not currently have in place an evaluation system that would allow LEAs to identify percentage of teachers who are effective or ineffective. Colorado state law requires that the specifications of the system be developed in 2010-2011, LEAs develop local systems in accordance with those specifications in 2011-2012, and LEAs implement qualifying systems in 2012-2013. **The State will develop a baseline distribution of effective and ineffective teachers and principals at the end of SY 2012-2013.					
General data to be provided at time of application:					
Total number of schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).		542			
Total number of schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).		602			
Total number of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).		14,445			
Total number of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).		17,039			

Total number of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	918				
Total number of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice).	1020				
Note: Number of principals has been rounded; many schools have more than one principal or zero principals.					
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:					
Number of teachers and principals in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as highly effective (as defined in this notice) in the prior academic year.					
Number of teachers and principals in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as highly effective (as defined in this notice) in the prior academic year.					
Number of teachers and principals in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.					
Number of teachers and principals in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both (as defined in this notice) who were evaluated as ineffective in the prior academic year.					
Performance Measures for (D)(3)(ii) Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
Percentage of mathematics teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.	N/A*			X**	
Percentage of science teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.	N/A*			X**	
Percentage of special education teachers who were evaluated as effective or better.	N/A*			X**	
Percentage of teachers in language instruction educational programs who were evaluated as effective or better.	N/A*			X**	
*Colorado recently passed landmark legislation (SB 10-191) requiring all LEAs to implement by SY 2012-2013 qualifying evaluation systems measuring effectiveness (as defined in this notice) of teachers and principals. Colorado does not currently have in place an evaluation system that would allow LEAs to identify percentage of teachers who are effective or ineffective. Colorado state law requires that the specifications of the system be developed in 2010-2011, LEAs develop local systems in accordance with those specifications in 2011-2012, and LEAs implement qualifying systems in 2012-2013. **The State will develop a baseline distribution of effective and ineffective teachers and principals at the end of SY 2012-2013.					
General data to be provided at time of application:					
Total number of mathematics teachers.	3,897				
Total number of science teachers.	3,419				

Total number of special education teachers.	4,864					
Total number of teachers in language instruction educational programs.	N/A					
Note: Colorado Department of Education does not collect data on statewide number of language instruction educational programs.						
Performance Measures for (D)(3)	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014	
Number of teachers and principals who complete the most effective preparation programs in Colorado	N/A*	X**				Increase by 50%
Train 400 teachers in high-poverty, high-minority schools to teach math, science and English AP classes	0	50	100	150	100	
Number of teacher and principal candidates each year participating in residency-based preparation programs to serve in high-need schools	N/A*	+50	+50	+50	+50	

(D)(4) Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs (14 points)

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

- (i) Link student achievement and student growth (both as defined in this notice) data to the students' teachers and principals, to link this information to the in-State programs where those teachers and principals were prepared for credentialing, and to publicly report the data for each credentialing program in the State; and
- (ii) Expand preparation and credentialing options and programs that are successful at producing effective teachers and principals (both as defined in this notice).

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

(D)(4) Improving the Effectiveness of Preparation Programs

Figure D-7: D4 Strategy, Goals, and Activities

Overall Strategy

Ensure all students have access to effective teachers and principals.

D4 Goals – Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs.

- Beginning July 2011, publish an annual public report that links student growth and achievement directly to preparation programs where those teachers and principals were prepared.
- By September 2011, State Board revises standards and criteria for accrediting principal and teacher preparation programs based upon recommendations of State Council.
- By 2014, increase the number of teachers and principals who complete the most effective preparation programs in Colorado by 50%.

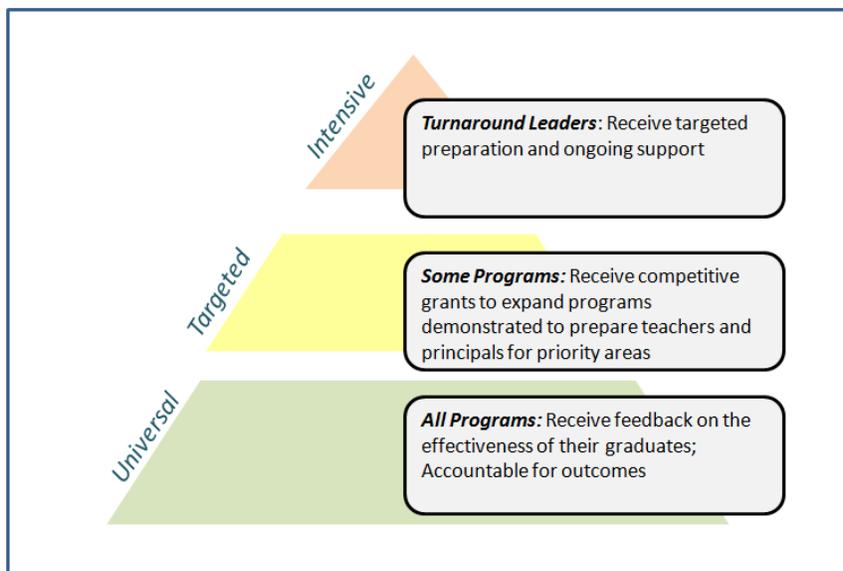
Key Activities

1. Produce an annual report showing effectiveness of educator preparation programs.
2. Develop return on investment metrics for preparation programs.
3. Identify and evaluate effective educator preparation programs.
4. Award grants to effective and high-potential programs to expand the number of teachers and principals they prepare.
5. Make targeted investments to expand teachers and principals prepared through residency-based programs, Teach for America and Turnaround Leaders Academy.
6. Revise standards and criteria for preparation program accreditation.
7. Integrate training on use of data-driven instruction via SchoolView into in-state preparation programs.
8. Provide customized SchoolView dashboard for each in-state preparation program to track graduates.
9. Provide each LEA a customized report on their teacher and principal pipeline.
10. Cease to accredit programs that are persistently ineffective.
11. Pilot outcomes-based and pre-service performance assessments with multiple preparation programs, evaluate and publish results; and use them to inform future program accreditation.

Colorado will improve the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs with three key objectives. First, the State will link student growth and achievement data directly to the programs that prepared their teachers and principals and report that information publicly each year. Second, Colorado will use this information to identify those programs that consistently prepare effective teachers and principals and those that do not, and will work with programs to identify the elements of particular programs that result in success and those that impede program impact. Third, Colorado will increase the number and percentage of teachers and principals prepared by the most successful programs by a) making strategic investments to

expand preparation programs that demonstrate the greatest success in producing effective teachers and principals, b) improving the ability of all programs to succeed as a result of aligned standards for both their accreditation and customized data portals, and c) terminating the accreditation of those programs that consistently fail to prepare effective teachers and principals. Figure D-8 illustrates differentiated preparation program services.

Figure D-8: Differentiated Preparation Program Services



(D)(4)(i) Link Student Achievement and Growth Data to Educator Preparation Programs and Report on the Effectiveness of the Programs

The Colorado legislature took an important step forward earlier this year by requiring greater transparency in the impact of educator preparation programs upon student achievement by passage of SB 036⁸⁷ within the first few days of their legislative session. As a result, beginning in July 2011, the CDE will publish on SchoolView an annual public report that will identify and evaluate the effectiveness of each teacher and principal preparation program in Colorado. The annual report will link student growth and achievement data to the programs where those teachers and principals were prepared, both in-state and, when available, out-of-state. Also included will be the placement, mobility, and retention rates for Colorado graduates employed by Colorado LEAs.

⁸⁷ C.R.S. 22-68.5-102.5 was enacted as a result of the passage of Senate Bill 10-036.

By July 2012, return-on-investment metrics for preparation programs will be developed and published, allowing LEAs and prospective education students to select the most cost-effective programs. These metrics will be included in the annual preparation program impact report.

As a result of the enhanced analysis and public reporting of data on the programs that prepare Colorado educators, schools and LEAs will be able to more accurately target their recruiting efforts; educator candidates will be able to select programs that best fit their career goals; and policymakers and the public will have transparent information about what programs are actually producing the best educators for Colorado students.

(D)(4)(ii) Expanding Preparation and Credentialing Options and Programs Successfully Produce Effective Teachers and Principals

Colorado's plan to ensure all teachers and principals are well-prepared to be effective focuses upon three strategies: expanding successful programs; enhancing efficacy of all programs; and eliminating the programs that consistently fail to prepare effective educators.

Expanding Successful Programs. By July 2012, the CDE will identify those preparation programs that are most successful in producing effective teachers and principals for Colorado schools overall and for the hardest to staff schools and subjects in particular: high-poverty and/or high-minority and rural schools; and English language instruction, special education, science and math expertise. Using this information, expansion grants will be awarded to those programs that are shown to be most successful at preparing teachers and principals that increase the achievement and growth of Colorado students. Priority for these grants will go to programs that prepare teachers and principals to be highly effective in addressing the State's toughest student achievement challenges, including:

- Leading the State's persistently lowest-performing schools.
- Increasing the academic growth rates of students with disabilities.
- Increasing the academic growth rates of students whose performance is unsatisfactory.
- Accelerating the English-language acquisition rates of non-native English-speaking students.
- Preparing students to be college-ready in math and science.

- Closing gaps in achievement among students in poverty, as well as African-American and Hispanic students overall.

Increasing the overall effectiveness of all preparation programs in the State. Colorado will ensure that preparation programs overall improve by supporting them in three critical ways. First, a customized preparation program dashboard of information about their candidates and graduates will be made available through SchoolView enabling programs to more accurately anticipate, track and respond to the success of their candidates and the needs of their employing LEAs. Second, an educator training portal will be provided for use by all in-state programs to ensure that use of the State’s data system to improve instruction is provided to every new teacher and principal prepared in Colorado. Finally, by September 2011, the Colorado State Board of Education will revise the standards and criteria for accrediting and in-state programs to ensure that they are streamlined and focused upon those elements of preparation that evidence demonstrates correlates to effective teaching and leadership.⁸⁸ Beginning in 2013, the Colorado State Board of Education will begin to review programs whose results indicate a persistent inability to adequately prepare candidates and will take steps to terminate the accreditation of those that fail to improve.

The CDE will continue to participate in and monitor a number of promising initiatives currently underway to identify and develop promising methods of preparing effective teachers and principals. These efforts include a variety of LEA, State and independent national efforts, the results of which will be evaluated and shared publicly to inform program design of in-state programs as well as additional future changes to the accreditation criteria. Current initiatives are exploring the restructuring of educator preparation to reflect a practice-based profession,⁸⁹ use of

⁸⁸ Adopted by the seven-member bipartisan board in May 2010, “the Colorado State Board of Education unanimously supports ... ensuring that every child in Colorado has access to an effective teacher in his or her classroom and an effective principal in his or her school. State Board May 2010 Resolution Appendix Exhibit D-7. See also C.R.S. 22-9-105.5

⁸⁹ The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education’s Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation, Partnerships and Improved Student Learning’s work will culminate in recommendations for restructuring the preparation of teachers to reflect teaching as a practice-based profession akin to medicine, nursing, or clinical psychology. Practice-based professions require not only a solid academic base, but also strong clinical components, a supported induction experience and ongoing opportunities for learning. This redesign is intended to bring educator preparation into better alignment with the urgent needs of P-12 schools. Such changes in the way teachers and other P-12 educators are prepared potentially have far-ranging effects on the structure of schools of education.

pre-service performance assessments,⁹⁰ outcomes measures of program effectiveness,⁹¹ earning licensure based upon demonstrated effectiveness,⁹² and the use of screening tools to improve the quality of educator hires.⁹³ An evaluation of each of these initiatives will also inform the definitions of *teacher effectiveness* and *principal effectiveness* being developed by the State Council on Educator Effectiveness.

Conclusion

With reliable information available about what matters most—the impact of program graduates on the growth and achievement of their K-12 students, Colorado will be able to identify the programs having positive impact and those that consistently fail to deliver. Armed with this information and the results of the multiple efforts to identify effective program elements and early measures of future effectiveness, Colorado programs will have an opportunity to continuously improve their performance.

⁹⁰ The Teacher Performance Assessment Consortia is an effort being led by The American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, the Council of Chief State School Officers and Stanford University to develop pre-service assessments that are highly predictive of teacher effectiveness.

⁹¹ This initiative will consider the following outcomes in measuring program impact: (i) educator impact on P-12 student learning, (ii) content and/or pedagogical knowledge, (iii) educator performance as reported on evaluations, and (iv) persistence.

⁹² Led by the Denver Public Schools' Office of the Chief Academic Officer and Executive Director of the Janus Education Alliance (an overarching framework to recruit, prepare and retain high quality urban educators in DPS), and ensures that systems and structures are in place for collection and analysis of data around alternative route teacher development and student achievement. Additional members of the committee include alternative routes, Instructional Superintendents, DPS recruitment and DPS professional development representatives.

⁹³ Colorado Legacy Foundation's Teacher Tryouts initiative, which will recruit students from selective colleges to teach in high-poverty schools using an evaluation of their effectiveness administered during a 6-8 week summer teaching experience. Conceived of by Colorado Senator, Michael Johnston, this novel program will be developed during the summer of 2010 for initial launch in 2011. Planning partners include Colorado urban school districts, alternative preparation programs as well as Colorado institutions of higher education, existing summer school programs, Colorado undergraduate institutions and their student leadership programs, among others. The development of this program is being funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Implementation Summary

The following illustrates the implementation plan for this assurance area:

Figure D-9: D4 Implementation Plan

Assurance Area D4 Activities	2010	2011	2012	2013	Responsible Parties
1. Produce an annual report showing effectiveness of educator preparation programs.		Ongoing			Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
2. Develop return on investment metrics for preparation programs.		Ongoing			Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
3. Identify and evaluate effective educator preparation programs.	By December 2011				State Board of Education via Governor's Council for Educator Effectiveness
4. Award grants to effective and high-potential programs to expand the number of teachers and principals they prepare.		By July 2011			Office of Performance & Policy via Performance Mgt. & Accountability
5. Make targeted investments to expand teachers and principals prepared through residency-based programs, Teach for America and Turnaround Leaders Academy.		Ongoing			Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
6. Revise standards and criteria for preparation program accreditation.		Ongoing			Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
7. Integrate training on use of data-driven instruction via SchoolView into in-state preparation programs.	Ongoing				Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
8. Provide customized SchoolView dashboard for each in-state preparation program to track graduates.		By January 2012			Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit with support from SchoolView Imp.
9. Provide each LEA a customized report on their teacher and principal pipeline.		By January 2012			Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit with support from SchoolView Implementation
10. Cease to accredit programs that are persistently ineffective.				Ongoing	Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
11. Pilot outcomes-based and pre-service performance assessments with multiple preparation programs, evaluate and publish results; and use them to inform future program accreditation.		By December 2012			Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit

Performance Measures for (D)(4)	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most recent)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
<i>Note: All information below is requested for Participating LEAs.</i>					
General goals to be provided at time of application:	Baseline data and annual targets				
Percentage of teacher preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth (as defined in this notice) of the graduates' students.	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of principal preparation programs in the State for which the public can access data on the achievement and growth (as defined in this notice) of the graduates' students.	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>Note: Currently, Colorado does not report data on the effectiveness of preparation programs. As required by Colorado Senate Bill 10-036, beginning in July 2011, the Colorado Department of Education will publish an annual report on the effectiveness of each teacher and principal preparation program in the state which will include data on the growth and achievement of each program's graduates' students.</i>					
General data to be provided at time of application:					
Total number of teacher credentialing programs in the State.	57				
Total number of principal credentialing programs in the State.	14				
Total number of teachers in the State.	50,701				
Total number of principals in the State.	2,783				
Data to be requested of grantees in the future:					
Number of teacher credentialing programs in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.					
Number of teachers prepared by each credentialing program in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.					
Number of principal credentialing programs in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.					
Number of principals prepared by each credentialing program in the State for which the information (as described in the criterion) is publicly reported.					
Number of teachers in the State whose data are aggregated to produce publicly available reports on the State's credentialing programs.					
Number of principals in the data whose data are aggregated to produce publicly available reports					

(D)(5) Providing effective support to teachers and principals (20 points)

The extent to which the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice), has a high-quality plan for its participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) to—

(i) Provide effective, data-informed professional development, coaching, induction, and common planning and collaboration time to teachers and principals that are, where appropriate, ongoing and job-embedded. Such support might focus on, for example, gathering, analyzing, and using data; designing instructional strategies for improvement; differentiating instruction; creating school environments supportive of data-informed decisions; designing instruction to meet the specific needs of high need students (as defined in this notice); and aligning systems and removing barriers to effective implementation of practices designed to improve student learning outcomes; and

(ii) Measure, evaluate, and continuously improve the effectiveness of those supports in order to improve student achievement (as defined in this notice).

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

(D)(5) Providing Effective Support to Teachers and Principals

Figure D-10: D5 Strategy, Goals and Activities

Overall Strategy

Ensure all students have access to effective teachers and principals.

D5 Goals – Providing effective support to teachers and principals.

- 100% of teachers and principals are provided professional development opportunities proven effective.
- 100% of participating LEAs offer high-quality induction programs to all new teachers and principals.
- 100% of principals and 80% of teachers have mastery of using data to inform instruction.
- By 2013-14, the number of teachers and principals reporting effective teaching and learning conditions improve by 25% statewide and by 50% in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools.

Key Activities

1. Create CDE Educator Effectiveness Unit.
2. Identify and certify proven professional development models.
3. Deliver educator impact reports to each teacher and principal that identifies individualized professional development resources and track impact and usage.
4. Expand leadership development programs for teachers and principals through the School Leadership Academy in two areas: 1) prepare principals for turnaround schools and 2) improving principal preparation and support statewide.
5. Leverage expert content collaboratives to inform development of the use of curricula, instructional materials and assessments that are aligned to new content standards and other data available through SchoolView.
6. Implement job-embedded training on use of School View and technology via online collaboration tools and data coaches in partnership with regional support teams.
7. Provide financial incentives for effective teachers and principals to share practices and materials with peers statewide through SchoolView.
8. Set annual goals for teaching and learning conditions, and use of data-driven instruction statewide and monitor improvements via TELL surveys.
9. Award incentive grants to LEAs or schools to implement proven models of induction, develop and implement data-driven plans for improving learning conditions, or develop innovative models for teacher career advancement.
10. Disseminate through SchoolView effective induction models.
11. Conduct an annual survey of the quality of induction programs.

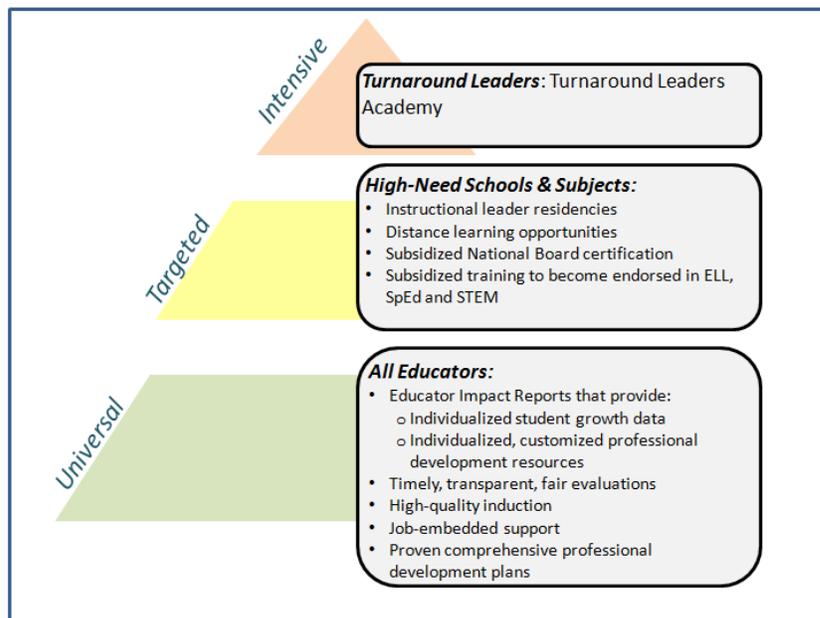
Colorado’s plan to provide effective support to teachers and principals across the State ensures that educators receive comprehensive and cohesive professional development that is proven effective and individualized to respond to specific needs and interests. Each of the key activities will be continuously monitored and improved based upon feedback received from teachers, principals and administrators in LEAs, as well as analysis of student, school and LEA

performance data. Colorado leadership is committed to ensuring that supports to teachers and principals are a top education priority, as evidenced by the passage of several key pieces of legislation in the last two years and the unanimous adoption of several resolutions by the State Board of Education that send the clear message that it is prepared to exercise the full range of their authority to improve supports to Colorado educators. CDE’s partnership with the Colorado Legacy Foundation and The New Teacher Project will result in a strategic realignment of the CDE staff and activities to ensure that program goals are explicitly focused upon the improvement of educator effectiveness, and that the use of State and Federal funds is limited to programs demonstrated to achieve that goal.

(D)(5)(i) Provide Effective Support to Teachers and Principals

Colorado will provide a pyramid of supports to teachers and principals statewide. CDE’s Educator Effectiveness Unit will be responsible for ensuring these supports are delivered efficiently and effectively to the field, using an array of methods from specific programs run by the CDE to review of supports provided by LEAs. CDE will connect practitioners in the field to each other and directly to available supports. As illustrated below, this tailored approach ensures all educators receive support and that educators working in higher need schools and subject matter receive more specific and intensive support.

Figure D-11: Differentiated Educator Support



By strategically deploying the key activities described below, Colorado will meet its ambitious goals for ensuring that the State provides effective support to all teachers and principals statewide. By January 2012, Educator Impact Reports will be provided to each teacher and principal. Available through a secure portal on SchoolView, these individualized reports will provide teachers and principals with student growth measures for their students, schools and LEAs. These reports will provide direct access to a variety of professional development resources that have been proven effective. Resources will range from information about course offerings, to online peer content and online learning opportunities.

Annual principal and teacher evaluations will include individual professional development plans that (1) are informed by previous years' evaluations and Educator Impact Report data, (2) are tailored to respond to areas of practice identified for improvement and (3) contain individual goals that are tied to student outcomes. Finally, CDE's Educator Effectiveness Unit, in conjunction with the Research and Evaluation Unit, will identify evidence-based professional development for teachers and principals and make this information available to all LEAs.

Key activities that Colorado will complete to accomplish its goals for delivering effective supports to teachers and principal are outlined below.

One hundred percent (100%) of Colorado teachers and principals are provided effective professional development opportunities. Colorado will achieve this goal by:

1. The Research and Evaluation Unit will certify professional development offerings demonstrated to be effective in improving student achievement overall, and for identified student populations (including English language learners, students with disabilities, students in poverty, and minority status students).
2. Second, Educator Impact Reports available on SchoolView will provide each educator with immediate access to proven professional development resources that address identified areas for improvement and/or development.
3. Third, significant additional supports will be directed at school principals and at teachers and principals serving high-poverty and/or high-minority schools, as well as those serving or preparing to serve in Colorado's persistently lowest-performing schools and/or hard-to-staff subject areas. These specific strategies are discussed in more detail below.

4. Next, the CDE will limit the use of funds for professional development in all grant awards that it approves (both formula as well as competitive) to only those that have been certified as effective.
5. Finally, the CDE , in partnership with the Colorado Legacy Foundation and The New Teacher Project will complete a strategic re-alignment of its “staff and activities, including the appropriate use of Federal funds, in a manner that reflects the improvement of educator effectiveness and the working conditions that foster the same, as a critical priority for the Department overall, and directly facilitates the Department’s capacity to meet or exceed its annual targets for the effectiveness of all teachers and principals in Colorado’s public K-12 schools.”⁹⁴,

This work has already begun. Through the unified planning process initiated by the CDE in 2009, each LEA will be required to ensure that professional development offerings are (1) addressing root causes of identified student growth and achievement priorities, (2) aligned with each other, and (3) implemented in a manner likely to improve performance.

Providing special supports to teachers and principals in high-need schools and hard-to-staff subject areas. The School Leadership Academy within the CDE will provide targeted training and support to turnaround principals and their leadership teams during the planning year and into the initial implementation period through the Turnaround Leadership Academy discussed in Selection Criterion (E)(2) below. The impact of these programs will be continuously evaluated through a combination of quantitative (measured primarily by student outcomes and educator effectiveness) as well as qualitative measures (including site visits and surveys). Results will be used by the School Leadership Academy to improve the program each year.

As described in Selection Criterion (D)(3), STEM teachers in participating LEAs will benefit from three new professional development opportunities. First, the Colorado Legacy School’s initiative (The AP Initiative)⁹⁵ will provide AP and pre-AP teachers with job-embedded coaching and additional training in college-ready math and science course work. The AP Initiative will provide direct training to up to 400 teachers. In addition, STEM teachers in participating LEAs will have access to asynchronous and synchronous experiential instruction⁹⁶.

⁹⁴ This goal was unanimously adopted by the State Board of Education at its meeting on May 13, 2010 in Appendix Exhibit D-3.

⁹⁵ See Appendix Exhibit D-8.

⁹⁶ Asynchronous instruction will be made available by expanding the innovative method developed by science teachers in the Woodland Park School District, located outside of Colorado Springs, CO. Teachers in this school district have expanded the

Additional courses offered by effective teachers statewide will be made available in similar format for use by students as well as for professional development for other STEM teachers statewide. Synchronous instruction will also be available through the STEM in Action initiative, providing real-time access via SchoolView to lessons conducted by practicing scientists and engineers across the country.⁹⁷ Over \$2 million in addition incentive grants will be made available to expand the use of blending learning instruction and technology across Colorado.

Focus upon unique professional development needs of school principals. Research confirms that school leadership has a measurable and meaningful impact upon student achievement⁹⁸. In short, strong leaders enable good teachers to be great. Beginning September 2011, the School Leadership Academy (SLA) will expand its leadership development program for principals. Through SchoolView, usage of professional development by principals will be monitored and programs will be identified that show the greatest impact on student achievement and the effectiveness of the teachers in their schools.

One hundred percent (100%) of LEAs offer high-quality induction programs to new teachers and principals. Colorado will achieve this goal by:

1. The CDE Educator Effectives Unit will annually survey the quality and effectiveness of local induction programs, analyze survey results to identify the most effective programs and those elements that make them successful best practices; and publish results annually to LEAs. This attention to induction is a key priority for the State Board of Education as indicated in its May 2010 resolution.
2. The CDE Educator Effectiveness Unit will provide direct technical assistance to those LEAs whose induction programs can and should be improved and award up to 10 grants to expand high-quality model induction programs and share their models statewide.

learning day by creating multi-media lessons that are duplicated on DVDs that students may take home, and watch multiple times, at their own pace and with the engagement of their family members.

⁹⁷ In addition to providing experiential learning in STEM courses to students, research has demonstrated that providing hands-on experiences to STEM teachers has a measurable difference on their impact on student learning as well as their persistence in the profession. “The Science Training Teachers Need”, by Harold Wenglinsky and Samuel C. Silverstein, *Educational Leadership*, December 2006/January 2007 | Volume 64 | Number 4.

⁹⁸ The average effect size between leadership and student achievement has been estimated to be as significant as 0.25. Waters, Marzano & McNulty (2003), as cited in “Policy Brief: School, Teacher and Leadership Impacts of Student Achievement” by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (November 2003).

3. Finally, the State Board of Education will adopt policy changes that ensure standards and criteria for induction programs include elements of induction proven to be effective, based upon the recommendations that result from the CDE partnership with the Colorado Legacy Foundation and The New Teacher Project.

One hundred percent (100%) of principals and eighty percent (80%) of teachers demonstrate mastery using SchoolView resources to improve instruction. Colorado will achieve this goal by:

First, as discussed in (C)(3), data coaches are the essential link between the introduction and availability of data, and the effective, ongoing use of data. Two to three data coaches will be embedded within each of the Regional Support Teams.

Data coaches will work with local education agencies to develop teachers' and principals' technical skills to analyze data, as well as their pedagogical skills to improve instructional techniques. For example, data coaches will teach how to generate early warning reports on students whose patterns of attendance, behavior and course records indicates a risk of drop-out out, thereby providing educators, educational leaders and parents/guardians advanced opportunity to take appropriate action.

Data coaches also will play a key role in each of the Regional Support Teams to provide job-embedded professional development on using data to drive instructional decision-making and improvements in student learning. All coaching will be customized to individual and LEA needs and will include both face-to-face and distance learning experiences.

Second, the CDE Educator Effectiveness Unit will work directly with teachers and principals in the field to continuously increase the value of information available via SchoolView to educators across Colorado. This work will be ongoing and will include a Teacher on Special Assignment, working with the CDE, the Colorado Legacy Foundation and The New Teacher Project teams who will lead focus groups of educators in the field to provide continuous feedback on how to improve the educator portals and other data analysis tools available on SchoolView.

The CDE will provide an online training module to be developed by July 2011. Finally, regional data interpretation workshops will continue to be offered by ACT to interpret ACT results, as well as PLAN and EXPLORE where available, to correlate to State content standards and college-readiness indicators.

Colorado will invest in two innovative models to engage educators as content developers, models, and mentors for their peers. The first is rewarding SchoolView contributors whose uploaded content is rated highly by their peers. Educators from across Colorado will be able to upload onto SchoolView instructional resources to help create a dynamic and relevant knowledge base for their peers. Teachers and principals who download resources through SchoolView will rate the resources' impact upon improving users' effectiveness so that available resources will be easily navigated utilizing rating systems similar to that of eBay or Amazon. In the second innovative model, the CDE will invite the State's most highly effective teachers to join a statewide cadre of up to 200 elite teachers, each of whom will receive a bonus of \$2,500 for populating in-depth instructional resources within SchoolView. In addition, all educators in the State will contribute instructional materials, videos, and other resources to a peer collaboration portal on SchoolView. The 1,000 educators whose materials receive the highest ranking from their peers will receive a royalty of \$1,000.

The teacher portal will enable peer-to-peer online communities to form around common instructional needs, and areas of interest. Several communities already exist and will transition onto the SchoolView platform to reduce local burden of maintaining them as well as make them accessible more broadly.

By 2013-14 effective teaching and learning conditions improve by 25% statewide and by 50% in high-poverty and/or high-minority schools.

The CDE Educator Effectiveness Unit will continue to administer the biennial TELL survey to measure teaching and learning conditions and analyze results to identify trends, correlations with student achievement and targeted areas for improvement.

Using these results, the CDE Educator Effectiveness Unit will award grants to LEAs or schools to develop data-driven plans to improve teaching and learning conditions. These awards will be given first to high-poverty and/or high-minority schools and then to school-based teams of educators seeking to develop "hybrid roles" for educators that provide innovative means for educators to grow within the profession. Plan design and implementation, as well as results of these grant awards, will be documented, evaluated and shared publicly via SchoolView.

Third, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention will include an assessment of local teaching and learning conditions into the school and LEA improvement planning process by identifying and addressing root causes of inadequate performance related to the same.

Finally, an oversight committee of policymakers and practitioners formed by the State Board of Education will coordinate the design of future surveys based upon prior results and monitor implementation of strategies to improve teaching and learning conditions.

(D)(5)(ii) Measuring, Evaluating, and Continuously Improving the Effectiveness of Supports to Improve Student Achievement:

Each of Colorado’s key activities will be continuously monitored by the CDE Evaluation Unit and the results fed back to the CDE Unit of Educator Effectiveness. The Educator Effectiveness Unit will in turn work directly with LEAs as well as other the CDE staff and educator associations to improve the effectiveness of supports available to teachers and principals and expand the use of those supports proven to be most effective. Following is a description of Colorado’s plan to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of key activities described above and act upon the results of that evaluation.

A combination of self-reported survey data by teachers and principals as well as analysis of student, school and LEA performance will be used to continuously monitor access to and impact of effective offerings. Data on which offerings are being used and their impacts will be publicly reported at least annually on SchoolView and customized reports will be provided to LEAs. An analysis of what supports have been used and those that have been proven effective with other students of similar demographics will also be included within qualitative analyses of schools and districts that are performed by the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit.

In addition, the success of LEA and school efforts to provide effective supports will be monitored using the Colorado Educator Growth Model—a set of metrics to be developed by the CDE Educator Effectiveness Unit for measuring how well a particular LEA or school improves educator effectiveness over time. The CDE will publish annual LEA and school rankings based on these metrics via SchoolView. LEAs will use this data to drive professional development planning and implementation and to identify excellent practices that will be documented by the CDE and shared statewide via SchoolView and the Regional Support Teams.

Quality of induction programs. Quality will be monitored using self-reported data as well as an analysis of student, school and LEA performance data. Self-reported data will be collected annually using online surveys as well as the results of the biennial TELL survey. The impact of grants made to improve the quality of induction programs will be evaluated using an external

evaluation at the direction of the CDE Unit of Evaluation and Research. Results of these evaluations will be reported at least annually.

Mastery of data use to improve instruction. The effective use of data will be ultimately evaluated by improvements in student achievement. The effectiveness of Colorado’s efforts to ensure that teachers and principals have mastery of data and will use it to achieve improvements in student results will continue to be monitored using online surveys of self-reported data,⁹⁹ as well as the tracking tools embedded within SchoolView that provide ongoing detailed analysis of its use. Use of data will also be included in the biennial TELL survey.

Effective teaching and learning conditions, including common planning time, collaboration and instructional leadership. Effective teaching and learning conditions are monitored on a biennial basis through the TELL survey. The effect of steps taken to improve upon those results will be evaluated by an external evaluation conducted through the CDE Evaluation and Research Unit.

LEAs will use the results of this analysis to redirect their professional development funds toward the set of supports that are most successful in increasing educator effectiveness and improving student learning. Beginning in School Year 2012-2013, CDE will not approve the use of Federal funds for professional development activities that have been demonstrated to be ineffective.

Conclusion

Colorado will provide effective, high-quality, data-driven professional development through Content Collaborative and Regional Learning Communities. These will include Educator Impact Reports, student-growth oriented annual evaluations that include professional development, and principal-specific professional development. To engage educators in participation, Colorado will invest in two innovative models for financial reward and recognition. Particular attention will be given to those supports that have the greatest impact upon students with the greatest achievement challenges.

Implementation Summary

⁹⁹ As of May 1, 2010, 85% of 184 LEAs surveyed reported having used the District or School Growth Summaries for the purpose of supporting local district initiatives. Approximately 85% of all Superintendents, Principals and District Assessment Coordinators had used the data multiple times; 89% of teachers reported using the data at least once, with half using it multiple times as well.

The following illustrates the implementation plan for this assurance area:

Figure D-12: D5 Implementation Plan

Assurance Area D5 Activities	2010	2011	2012	2013	Responsible Parties
1. Create CDE Educator Effectiveness Unit.		By January 2011			Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
2. Identify and certify proven professional development models.			By January 2012		Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit with support from SchoolView Imp.
3. Deliver educator impact reports to each teacher and principal that identifies individualized professional development resources and track impact and usage.			Ongoing		Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
4. Expand leadership development programs for teachers and principals through the School Leadership Academy in two areas: 1) prepare principals for turnaround schools and 2) improving principal preparation and support statewide.			Ongoing		Learning & Results via RttT Program Office, Learning Community & CTLT partnership
5. Leverage expert content collaboratives to inform development of the use of curricula, instructional materials and assessments that are aligned to new content standards and other data available through SchoolView.				By December 2013	Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit & RttT Program Office
6. Implement job-embedded training on use of School View and technology via online collaboration tools and data coaches in partnership with regional support teams.				By December 2013	Office of Learning & Results via Curriculum/Instruction & RttT Program Office Learning Community
7. Provide financial incentives for effective teachers and principals to share practices and materials with peers statewide through SchoolView.				By February 2012 & Ongoing	Office of Learning & Results via Curriculum/Instruction & RttT Program Office Learning Community
8. Set annual goals for teaching and learning conditions, and use of data-driven instruction statewide and monitor improvements via TELL surveys.				By December 2013	Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
9. Award incentive grants to LEAs or schools to implement proven models of induction, develop and implement data-driven plans for improving learning conditions, or develop innovative models for teacher career advancement.				Ongoing	Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
10. Disseminate through SchoolView effective induction models.				By December 2012	Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit
11. Conduct an annual survey of the quality of induction programs.				Ongoing	Office of Learning & Results via Educator Effectiveness Unit

(E) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools (50 total points)
State Reform Conditions Criteria

(E)(1) Intervening in the lowest-achieving schools and LEAs (10 points)

The extent to which the State has the legal, statutory, or regulatory authority to intervene directly in the State’s persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) and in LEAs that are in improvement or corrective action status.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (E)(1):

- A description of the State’s applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.

(E)(1) Turning Around the Lowest Achieving Schools

Colorado’s Education Accountability Act of 2009¹⁰⁰ gives the CDE statutory authority to intervene directly in the State’s persistently lowest achieving schools and LEAs, including those that are in improvement or corrective action status, as defined under the ESEA. Each year, in addition to measuring AYP and determining Federal improvement categories, the CDE evaluates each school’s and LEA’s level of performance on four key indicators: student growth, student achievement, extent of gaps and at the high school level, postsecondary readiness measured with graduation rate, ACT scores and dropout rate.¹⁰¹

An LEA’s or school’s performance on these indicators is determined through the district and school performance frameworks. Based on their students’ results, LEAs and schools are put in one of four performance categories (Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, Turnaround). About 15% of LEA’s and schools fall in the bottom two categories with about 10% in Priority Improvement and the bottom 5% percent in Turnaround. LEAs and Schools may remain in the bottom two categories for a maximum of five years prior to a State Board of

¹⁰⁰ See Appendix Exhibit E-1 for the summary of the Colorado’s Education Accountability Act of 2009

¹⁰¹ All high school juniors in Colorado must take the ACT assessment.

Education order of restructuring that may include reorganization for an LEA and closure for a school. Restructuring options also include external management or conversion to a charter school. In Year 1 of being identified for Priority Improvement or Turnaround, the State supports LEAs and schools in implementing intensive interventions that are consistent with the four Federal strategies.

The State's authority under the Education Accountability Act is bolstered by its authority under Federal accountability statutes, reinforcing the State's ability to withhold Federal funding from LEAs and schools that are not acting appropriately in order to improve performance, and allocating other Federal resources in ways that support the use of the four school intervention models required in Race to the Top and other Federal guidance. Together, State law and Federal authority place Colorado in a very strong position to intervene directly in the State's persistently lowest-achieving schools and LEAs and ensure implementation of the four school intervention models required in Race to the Top and other Federal guidance.

Conclusion

The Education Accountability Act of 2009, supported by Federal law, gives the State the authority to directly intervene in its persistently lowest-achieving LEAs and schools, including ordering their reorganization or closure.

(E)(2) Turning around the lowest-achieving schools (40 points)

The extent to which the State has a high-quality plan and ambitious yet achievable annual targets to—

(i) Identify the persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) and, at its discretion, any non-Title I eligible secondary schools that would be considered persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) if they were eligible to receive Title I funds; and (5 points)

(ii) Support its LEAs in turning around these schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models (as described in Appendix C): turnaround model, restart model, school closure, or transformation model (provided that an LEA with more than nine persistently lowest-achieving schools may not use the transformation model for more than 50 percent of its schools). (35 points)

The State shall provide its detailed plan for this criterion in the text box below. The plan should include, at a minimum, the goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties (see Reform Plan Criteria elements in Application Instructions or Section XII, Application Requirements (e), for further detail). In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (E)(2) (please fill in table below):

- The State's historic performance on school turnaround, as evidenced by the total number of persistently lowest-achieving schools (as defined in this notice) that States or LEAs attempted to turn around in the last five years, the approach used, and the results and lessons learned to date.

(E)(2) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

Figure E-1: Strategy, Goals, and Activities

Overall Strategy

Turnaround Colorado's persistently lowest performing schools.

E2 Goals – Turning around the lowest achieving schools.

- By September 2010, identify 100% of schools in the state that have consistently failed to meet performance standards, and rank those that fall among the lowest of all Colorado schools in terms of performance and improvement.
- By 2014, 100% of persistently low-achieving schools have a school leader and leadership team with high potential for success based on competency assessment and/or participation in Turnaround Leaders Academy
- By 2014, increase by 4x times the percentage of students in persistently low-achieving schools who receive instruction from a highly effective teacher.
- By 2014, increase by 50% the number of effective teachers in persistently low-achieving schools in the fields of English language learning and special education.
- By 2013, 100% of persistently low-achieving schools are implementing one of the four intervention models.
- By 2013, 100% of persistently low-achieving schools have either met interim benchmarks for improvement or have re-tried with a new dramatic intervention.

Key Activities

1. Identify and prioritize schools for intervention based on growth data and needs.
2. Expand CDE's Turnaround Unit and services to support LEA turnaround strategy implementation.
3. Establish and implement Turnaround Leaders Academy & offer financial incentives.
4. Use financial incentives to increase the pipeline of highly effective teachers in low-performing schools.
5. Provide funds to enable the start-up of high-quality new schools.
6. Assist schools in choosing model and partners and negotiate binding agreements.
7. Provide incentives for essential elements of successful turnarounds.
8. Pilot intensive turnaround models with Mass Insight.
9. Establish performance monitoring process and metrics for turnaround strategies.
10. Generate content and share knowledge on school turnaround through SchoolView.

Colorado is committed to turning around all of its failing schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models: turnaround, transformation, restart or school closure. Seventy-two schools have been identified for turnaround during the Race to the Top grant period. To make rapid, effective progress with these schools, Colorado is working with two

outside entities, Mass Insight and Public Impact, to quickly build internal capacity the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit to implement additional school turnaround capacity.

(E)(2)(i) Plan to Identify the Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools

By September 2010, through an annual school performance review using Colorado’s performance framework and Federal AYP measures, Colorado will identify 100% of its lowest-performing schools and prioritize them for turnaround intervention. The following are the parameters with which Colorado defines *persistently lowest achieving schools*:

Any Title I school in improvement, corrective action or restructuring that:

- Is among the lowest achieving and growing 5% of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.
- Is a high school that has had a graduation rate that is less than 60% over three years.¹⁰²

Any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that:

- Is among the lowest achieving and growing 5% of secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds.
- A high school that has had a graduation rate that is less than 60% over three years.¹⁰³

Any secondary school that is eligible for Title I funds, whether receiving funds or not, that:

- Is equally low-achieving as the 5% of secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds.
- Is a high school that has had a graduation rate that is less than 60 % over three years.¹⁰⁴

Each year, Colorado publishes Performance Framework reports for each LEA and school through SchoolView, showing performance ratings and supporting evidence. Also published are the turnaround plans and other levels of improvement plans developed by every school in the State. This report will also identify within the report the persistently lowest-achieving schools.

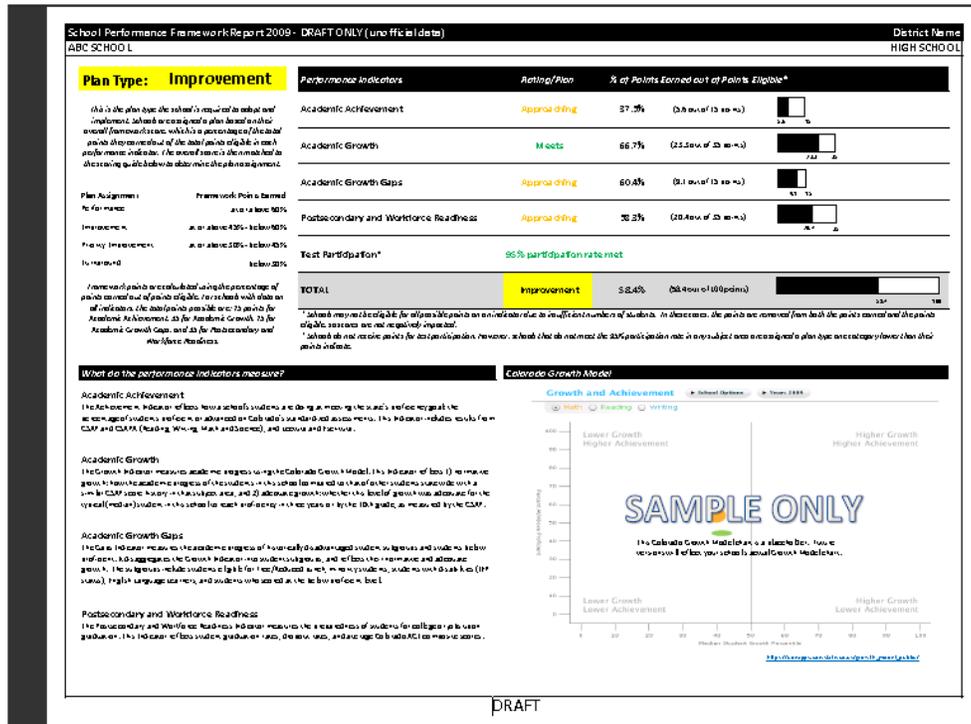
¹⁰² Reference to 34 C.F.R. § 200.19(b)

¹⁰³ Reference to 34 C.F.R. § 200.19(b)

¹⁰⁴ Reference to 34 C.F.R. § 200.19(b)

Figure E-2 illustrates the School Performance Framework below:

Figure E-2: School Performance Framework



(E)(2)(ii) Plan for Turning Around Persistently Lowest Achieving Schools

Colorado will support its LEAs by implementing one of the four intervention models to turn around 72 failing schools¹⁰⁵ by 2014. Given the State’s statutory authority, combined with an ambitious reform plan, Colorado is positioned to accomplish this goal.

Beginning in 2009, Colorado was one of five states to begin working with Mass Insight in a collaborative three-year, multi-million dollar public-private partnership to create scalable and sustainable strategies for turning around clusters of the lowest-achieving schools. In addition, Colorado has directly engaged Public Impact, a national education policy and management consulting firm, to develop a comprehensive approach for intervening in the lowest achieving schools. CDE developed partnerships with each of these entities in order to quickly and significantly enhance its internal capacity to effectively engage in school turnaround. At the same time, in 2009, the CDE established within the agency a Turnaround and Intervention Unit, dedicating resources focused specifically on the effective and efficient execution of State

¹⁰⁵ A list of these schools appears in Appendix Exhibit E-2.

turnaround strategies. By December 2011, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will be expanded in order to build internal expertise in turnaround.

To meet the State's goals, Colorado will focus on building its long-term capacity to eradicate chronic school failure by:

1. Fostering conditions for successful turnarounds.
2. Building human capital pipelines to support successful turnaround efforts
3. Training a cadre of school operators to restart struggling schools and open high-quality new schools across the State
4. Using data from intervention efforts to drive further improvement.

Objective 1. Foster conditions for successful turnarounds: To successfully implement the four Federal intervention models and raise student achievement in all identified schools, LEAs must be able to identify the best intervention model for each school, select and negotiate with providers, give school leaders and partners the full authority they need to effect dramatic change, and access necessary resources. To assist in that process, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will hire a new Principal Consultant tasked with supporting LEA efforts to apply for innovation school status. In addition, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention will foster the conditions for successful turnarounds by engaging in the following activities:

Assist schools in choosing a model and necessary partners. To support LEAs in choosing and implementing an intervention model, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will design and provide tools and a tailored process to help LEAs determine which type of dramatic intervention model is most appropriate in each identified school. For those LEAs that choose to work with an external provider in one or more schools, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will provide oversight and recommendations regarding the development of contracts between LEAs and external providers, including key terms regarding achievement goals, autonomy and financial responsibilities. As it has done in previous years, the CDE will also issue a Request for Information (RFI) or, with its Turnaround and Intervention Unit, identify and vet eligible providers that LEAs can select to manage or assist turnaround schools.

Negotiate binding agreements to guarantee conditions for success. To capitalize on Colorado's Education Accountability Act, the Innovation Schools Act and the Charter Schools Act, and to foster dramatic action by LEAs in the persistently lowest-achieving schools, the CDE

Turnaround and Intervention will secure commitments from superintendents and school boards to carry out one of the four school intervention models in each school identified for turnaround.

The agreements will also include a commitment among LEA leaders to employ highly capable turnaround leaders or partner organizations, and to provide those leaders and partners with the autonomy necessary for successful turnarounds, either by converting eligible schools to innovation or charter status or by obtaining necessary waivers from local policies. At a minimum, this autonomy will include complete decision-making authority over staffing, scheduling, programs and budgeting. Per the mutual consent hiring requirements of SB 191, agreements will also grant principals the full authority to determine which educators will teach in persistently low achieving schools, and ensure that teachers replaced in these schools are not force-placed in other LEA schools.

In negotiating these agreements, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will insist that LEAs carefully select the intervention model for each school and carefully choose external partners. The CDE will assist LEAs in making these choices. An LEA's continued receipt of Race to the Top and other funds dedicated to interventions in persistently low-achieving schools will be contingent upon meeting the terms of these agreements and meeting interim benchmarks and improving overall performance ratings.

By May 2011, provide incentives and supports for the essential elements of successful turnarounds: Financial incentives will be granted at the CDE's discretion to those LEAs who voluntarily commit to implementing one of the four Federal intervention models in eligible schools.¹⁰⁶ The CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will also provide incentives for and support dramatic change by making available grant awards up to \$250,000 per school over the duration of the Race to the Top funding period to fund critical turnaround support and engage research-based efforts to support student engagement.

In addition to Race to the Top funding that will flow under Title I formulas, LEAs that show the strongest commitment to implementing dramatic interventions will receive an additional \$250,000 per eligible school to support critical interventions, such as extended learning time, early childhood services and the like. The CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit also will partner with national providers, assist LEAs in determining which types of services

¹⁰⁶ See Appendix Exhibit E-2.

will best support school turnaround efforts, and broker relationships and agreements between schools, LEAs and service providers.

Pilot intensive turnaround models. The CDE will participate in *partnership zones* with Mass Insight’s School Turnaround Strategies Group. Mass Insight, a nationally recognized resource for dramatic school and LEA improvement, has invited Colorado to be one of six states¹⁰⁷ to implement a bold new approach to addressing chronic failure. The CDE will select LEAs based on their concentration of persistently low-achieving schools to participate in this effort. Conceptually, the partnership zone model allows participating schools to benefit from the scale efficiencies of their district’s central services while also providing the schools additional operating flexibility. Thus, in a partnership zone, principals and external turnaround partners are afforded greater flexibility in making staffing, scheduling and curriculum decisions; in return, these schools are held accountable for dramatic student achievement within two years. These pilots will take full advantage of Colorado’s strong innovation schools and charter schools policies, which create the conditions for innovative autonomous schools¹⁰⁸.

Objective 2: Build human capital pipelines to support successful turnaround efforts

Highly effective teachers and leaders are vital to Colorado’s plan to dramatically improve student outcomes. To ensure all 72 turnarounds are operated and staffed by effective leaders and teachers by 2014, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will:

By December 2011, use financial incentives to increase the pipeline of highly effective teachers in low-performing schools. As described in Section D, SB 191 requires mutual consent hiring and placement in all persistently low-achieving schools. To ensure a sufficient number of highly effective teachers from which principals will select based on educator strengths and the schools’ turnaround strategies, Colorado and participating LEAs have committed to two key strategies: (1) providing incentives to encourage effective teachers to serve in turnaround schools, and (2) building the pipeline of effective teachers available to serve in these schools.

By December 2012, establish and implement a Turnaround Leaders Academy. The CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will play a critical role in the design and implementation of the CDE Turnaround Leaders Academy, which will train and develop high-potential leaders to

¹⁰⁷ Other states are Delaware, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, and New York.

¹⁰⁸ See Appendix Exhibit F-6

serve in turnaround schools. The academy will offer an intensive, rigorous and fast-tracked program to screen and train approximately 20 leaders using a specialized curriculum designed for turnaround leadership. Participating LEAs will sponsor their high-potential leaders by subsidizing a portion of the cost for these leaders to spend a full year training and planning to serve as principals in persistently low-achieving schools.

By December 2012, offer financial incentives to high-performing turnaround leaders. The CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will offer substantial financial incentives – as much as \$20,000 per year – to individuals who assume leadership of failing schools and achieve high targets for rapid improvement of student results.

Colorado will use Race to the Top funds to provide financial incentives for teams of effective educators to teach in persistently low-achieving schools.¹⁰⁹ In addition, participating LEAs will be required to restructure their compensation systems to include an explicit focus on attracting, retaining and rewarding the most highly effective teachers to serve in Colorado’s persistently lowest-achieving schools. Participating LEAs will have the opportunity to apply to the CDE for alternative compensation grants, and will receive priority in the award of any funds available from the State to support compensation reform that attracts great teachers to failing schools.

Support LEAs to extend the reach of their best teachers to more students. To further increase the proportion of students in persistently low-achieving schools who have highly effective teachers, the CDE will work with the LEAs in which targeted schools are located to extend the reach of their best teachers to more students, or help them connect to effective teachers in other districts. Methods of reach extension may include allowing teachers to serve more children directly, lead multi-classroom clusters, provide distance learning instruction and/or peer-based professional development, and document and share proven lesson plans and instructional practices. With the CDE’s approval, LEAs will select the method(s) most appropriate for their students’ needs.

Objective 3: Build the supply of operators to restart struggling schools and open high-quality new schools across the State

¹⁰⁹ A strategy research that identifies as a key component to building strong school teams. Travers, Jonathan and Christianson, Barbara. (2010). Strategic Staffing for Successful Schools: Breaking the Cycle of Failure in Charlotte-Mecklenberg Schools. Available: www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/pubs/ED_Case_Study_Strategic_Staffing.pdf

To lead restarts and turnarounds in identified schools that successfully raise student achievement, several LEAs will require the services of external providers, such as charter management organizations (CMOs) and education management organizations (EMOs). These services are particularly critical if districts are to better serve students who are not receiving a high-quality education in their current schools. To increase the supply of great school operators in Colorado, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will:

Provide funds to enable the start-up of high-quality new schools. Building on Colorado's strong history of charter and new school creation, LEAs will issue RFPs for the creation of at least nine new (or replicated) schools across Colorado between 2011 and 2014, with a particular priority on those that can operate successful alternative schools, serve students in rural areas, and/or replicate already successful schools such as the Denver School of Science and Technology, West Denver Prep, and KIPP Colorado. Based on this process, the State will disburse funds directly to applicants that meet a high-quality bar, with LEAs also receiving funds directly to support new school start-ups in their communities.¹¹⁰

In addition to Race to the Top funds, Colorado has received Federal Charter School Grants to ensure sufficient start-up funds for new charter schools. Colorado has received a total of \$65 million in Federal charter school funds since 1998 and has awarded grants to 172 charter schools cumulatively since 2004. To create a strong flow of qualified applicants, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will partner with organizations that have the capacity to incubate new school start-ups and conduct widespread outreach to successful schools within the State and CMOs nationwide, such as the Charter School Growth Fund,¹¹¹ Get Smart Schools¹¹² and the Colorado League of Charter Schools.¹¹³ This may include incentives for a CMO to create networks of schools that integrate online, expanding access, modeling innovation and create efficiencies.

¹¹⁰ See Appendix Exhibit Financial-1.

¹¹¹ Charter School Growth Fund is a social venture investment fund dedicated to significantly increase the capacity of proven education entrepreneurs to serve more children.

¹¹² Get Smart Schools is a Colorado-based program that supports training for entrepreneurial educators to lead new schools.

¹¹³ Colorado League of Charter Schools is the State's charter school association.

Objective 4. Use data from intervention efforts to drive further improvement: National turnaround efforts suggest that dramatic school change can fail due to inadequate stakeholder support for bold action. The CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit, therefore, will support the turnaround efforts of LEAs, schools and providers to raise student achievement through the following data analysis, public engagement and communication strategies:

By May 2011, set expectations for and monitor LEA actions in turnaround schools. In line with Colorado’s commitment to openness and transparency, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will develop detailed performance goals, indicators and specific timelines for improvement to which all turnaround schools and LEAs will be held. In their MOUs, LEAs will be required to gather and report data about student achievement results and leading indicators of success and failure¹¹⁴ and to intervene quickly if these leading indicators suggest that turnaround efforts are not on track. The CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit also will design and adopt a public oversight process that will allow school staff, LEA and State leaders and other community members to monitor progress in turnaround schools on an ongoing basis. If schools fail to make adequate progress, the CDE will intervene early to induce LEAs to re-try their efforts or increase the State’s role and direction.

By December 2012, generate and share transformative knowledge about school turnaround. Consistent with Colorado’s overall approach of building and collecting knowledge about what works to improve student outcomes, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will help create and implement a turnaround knowledge management system and work with university and nonprofit partners to collect, analyze and disseminate data related to successful school turnarounds and turnaround failures to inform the continuous improvement of Colorado’s approaches. Using SchoolView, data collection will tie results from the Colorado Growth Model and other outcomes to school practices, as well as identify, share and replicate essential elements of successful turnarounds, such as leadership and governance, academic program design, resource allocation, and student and community engagement. The CDE Turnaround and Intervention also will partner with CDE’s Educator Effectiveness Unit to build a vibrant learning community among teachers and school leaders engaged in school turnarounds to ensure maximum sharing of lessons and effective practices.

¹¹⁴ Described in more detail in Appendix Exhibit E-3.

Information about successful school interventions will also help the State *build parent, student, community and public support for dramatic change*. Colorado’s extensive Race to the Top public input process included discussions with key stakeholders—students, legislators, educators, State educator associations and parents/guardians. During these discussions, stakeholders advocated for students to be involved in school turnaround efforts. Research indicates that involvement of students in changing school culture can be a powerful school improvement strategy,¹¹⁵ and several Colorado student advocacy and leadership organizations stand ready to implement this strategy in the State’s turnaround schools.¹¹⁶ In addition to the support activities described, the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit will directly engage with students and assist LEAs in choosing methods to involve students locally in all stages of the turnaround process, from selecting intervention models to implementing turnarounds and monitoring their success. The CDE also will apply for additional Federal school improvement grants and raise private funding to support dramatic change.

Based upon an analysis of past efforts and results, Colorado’s success with interventions in its lowest-achieving schools has been sporadic.¹¹⁷

Historically, CDE’s compliance-oriented approach to school improvement focused largely on conducting qualitative reviews in schools eligible for restructure, and reviewing and approving school improvement plans. Until recently, Colorado had not set clear interim targets for school performance, had not systematically gathered information about schools’ approaches or their resources used and had not typically followed up to learn what approaches were working.

The performance and knowledge management approach the CDE recently has adopted and proposes to expand in this application will allow its Turnaround and Intervention Unit to turn around the Department.

Specifically, the CDE will take greater responsibility for the direction, oversight and support of turnaround efforts in the State’s lowest-achieving schools. Also, to create

¹¹⁵ Cooke-Sather, 2002, p.3.

¹¹⁶ These organizations include Project VOYCE, City Year...list others, each of which has provided a letter in support of this proposal.

¹¹⁷ For the E-2 Evidence, please see Appendix Exhibit E-3.

environments conducive to success, the CDE will take a proactive approach to increasing the staff and organizational capacity at the local level.

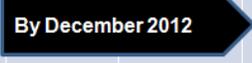
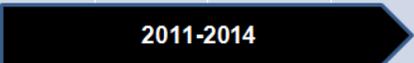
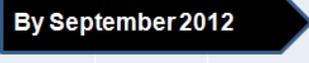
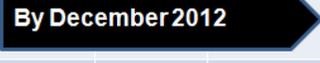
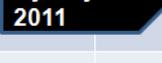
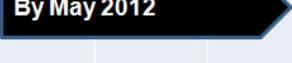
Conclusion

Colorado's commitment to turning around its lowest achieving schools and lowest-achieving LEAs is a foundational element of its reform plan to support and direct change and intervention in schools and LEAs that are not meeting performance criteria. CDE's expansion of the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit builds on the State's authority to directly intervene in persistently underperforming schools. Moving forward, Colorado's reform strategies will further guarantee local LEAs the conditions they need to successfully build and sustain dramatic improvements.

Implementation Summary

The following illustrates the implementation plan for this assurance area:

Figure E-3: Implementation Summary

Assurance Area E2 Activities	2010	2011	2012	2013	Responsible Parties
1. Identify and prioritize schools for intervention based on growth data and needs.		September 2010			Learning & Results Office via Turnaround Intervention Unit and Performance Mgt.
2. Expand CDE's Turnaround Unit and services to support LEA turnaround strategy implementation					Learning & Results Office via Turnaround Intervention Unit
3. Establish and implement Turnaround Leaders Academy & offer financial incentives.					Learning & Results Office via Turnaround Intervention Unit
4. Use financial incentives to increase the pipeline of highly effective teachers in low-performing schools.					Learning & Results Office via Turnaround Intervention, Educator Effectiveness Units
5. Provide funds to enable the start-up of high-quality new schools.					Learning & Results Office via Turnaround Intervention Unit
6. Assist schools in choosing model and partners and negotiate binding agreements.					Learning & Results Office via Turnaround Intervention Unit
7. Provide incentives for essential elements of successful turnarounds.					Learning & Results Office via Turnaround Intervention Unit
8. Pilot intensive turnaround models with Mass Insight.					Learning & Results Office via Turnaround Intervention Unit
9. Establish performance monitoring process and metrics for turnaround strategies.					Performance & Policy Office with Turnaround Intervention Unit
10. Create and implement a turnaround knowledge management system and supporting processes in SchoolView.					Turnaround Intervention Unit and SchoolView Implementation Team

Performance Measures for (E)(2)(ii)	Actual Data: Baseline (Current school year or most year)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
Percentage of the State's 72 lowest-achieving schools engaged in one of the four intervention models	2%	15%	35%	65%	100%
Number of new school starts each year serving students previously served by low-achieving schools	0	0	2	3	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of persistently low-achieving schools that have either met interim benchmarks for improvement or have re-tried with a new dramatic intervention 	0	25%	50%	75%	100%
Number of principals trained for turnaround leadership via the School Leadership Academy	0	0	10	10	10

State Reform Conditions Criteria

(F) General (55 total points)

(F)(1) Making education funding a priority (10 points)

The extent to which—

(i) The percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2009 was greater than or equal to the percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice) that were used to support elementary, secondary, and public higher education for FY 2008; and

(ii) The State's policies lead to equitable funding (a) between high-need LEAs (as defined in this notice) and other LEAs, and (b) within LEAs, between high-poverty schools (as defined in this notice) and other schools.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (F)(1)(i):

- Financial data to show whether and to what extent expenditures, as a percentage of the total revenues available to the State (as defined in this notice), increased, decreased, or remained the same.

Evidence for (F)(1)(ii):

- Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers.

F(1) State Reform Conditions Criteria

In recent years, Colorado has clearly demonstrated its commitment to education funding. During the current economic downturn, Governor Ritter increased appropriations to education in the General Fund, as well as utilized SFSF funds for furthering educational reforms in Colorado. In 2000, Colorado voters demonstrated their strong support for education funding by passing Constitutional Amendment 23 to increase base per-pupil funding, and in 2008, the largest investment to date in school facilities was enacted with the Building Excellent Schools Today

Act. Funds are equitably distributed, utilizing a formula that results in average per-pupil funding for high-needs LEAs to be higher than other LEAs. In addition, Colorado provides equitable funding for charter and innovation schools (as described in Section (F)(2)(v)).

F(1)(i) Education as Percentage of Total Revenues

The percentage of total revenues available to the State that were used to support elementary, secondary and public higher education increased from 47.9 percent in State fiscal year 2008 to 48.2 percent in fiscal year 2009. The amount of revenue spent on education increased 5.2 percent from fiscal year 2008 to fiscal year 2009.¹¹⁸

As in other States, fiscal year 2009 was an extremely difficult year for Colorado's economy and the State's revenues. The State's sales tax collections were down 9.1 percent over fiscal year 2008 and the State's individual income tax collections, which fund the State Education Fund, were down 12.9 percent. The fact that the State increased the percent of revenues and total dollars spent on education in this revenue context demonstrates its commitment to funding education.

In 2000, voters in Colorado passed Constitutional Amendment 23 in response to the decline in K-12 education spending during the 1990s. Amendment 23 requires the State to increase base per-pupil K-12 funding by at least inflation plus one percent annually for 10 years, and by at least inflation thereafter. This has shielded K-12 education in Colorado from draconian cuts seen in other States during the recent recessions.

In the 2008 legislative session, the Building Excellent Schools Today Act became law and created a program to fund K-12 school facilities statewide through the State's largest investment to date on that front. The program is expected to provide nearly \$1 billion for school capital projects, in a partnership between the State and local school districts and charter schools.

(F)(1)(ii)(a) State policies lead to equitable funding between high-need LEAs and other LEAs. In Colorado, average per-pupil funding in high-needs LEAs is higher than in other LEAs.¹¹⁹ In 2008-2009, per-pupil State and local funding for high-needs LEAs was more than \$10,100 compared to \$9,800 to LEAs not considered high-needs. Independent organizations

¹¹⁸ Description of revenues to support education (See Appendix Exhibit F-1).

¹¹⁹ See Appendix Exhibit F-1.

have rated Colorado's school funding policies as equitable relative to most other states. Quality Counts 2010, for example, ranks Colorado ninth in the nation for funding equity using restricted range differences.

This equity derives from Colorado's School Finance Act (CRS 22-54-101 et seq.), which uses a funding formula that adjusts base funding to LEAs according to student and LEA characteristics. Each LEA receives a base amount per pupil, set by the State legislature, and increased by Amendment 23, which is then adjusted by factors that take into account each LEA's cost-of-living, personnel costs and population size, to arrive at Total Per-Pupil Funding. Next, the formula calls for additional funds for the percentage of students in the LEA who are eligible for Federal free-lunch subsidies and students who did not take State assessments because of their English language learning status. An online student, regardless of LEA, is funded at a set amount. As a result, an LEA's Total Program Funding reflects the following formula:

$(\text{Funded pupil count} \times \text{total per-pupil funding}) + (\text{at-risk funding}) + (\text{online funding}) = \text{Total Program Funding.}$

The LEA's local share of education funding, from property taxes and vehicle ownership taxes, is then determined. If the local share is insufficient to fund the LEA's Total Program, State funds make up the difference. In 2009-2010, the State's share provided about 65% of Total Program Funding. Finally, LEAs are allocated categorical (additional) funds primarily in six areas: (1) small attendance center funding for LEAs operating schools with fewer than 200 students that are located more than 20 miles from any similar schools in the LEA; (2) funds for serving English language learners; (3) funds for serving students identified as gifted and talented; (4) funds for serving special education students; (5) funds to assist LEAs with transportation costs; and (6) funds to support vocational education programs.

For the 2009-2010 budget year, each LEA was guaranteed Total Program Funding of not less than \$6,856.72 per pupil enrolled in a physical school, and \$6,641 per pupil enrolled in a full-time online program. In School Year 2009-2010, Total Program Funding for LEAs ranged from a low of \$6,779 per student to a high of \$14,805.

F(1)(ii)(b): Equitable funding within LEAs is supported by State policies. The State's School Finance Act requires each LEA to allocate at least 75% of its at-risk funding to school- or LEA-wide instructional programs for at-risk students or for staff development associated with teaching at-risk students in the LEA. This is the only earmark required by the State, emphasizing

Colorado's priority on equitable distribution targeted at high-poverty students and schools a priority.

Several LEAs in Colorado are experimenting with allocating funds to their schools using variations on weighted student funding formulas.

In addition, the legislature has recently passed House Bill 10-1183, which creates the Alternative School Funding Models Pilot Program to encourage school districts and charter schools to develop alternative models for distributing funding within an LEA. The bill specifically asks the applicants to this program to address the challenges of at-risk funding, and further expresses the goal as identifying the most equitable distribution of LEA revenue.

Conclusion

Amid recent recessions, Colorado's actions demonstrate its commitment to increasing education funding, to distributing that funding equitably across high-needs schools, districts and LEAs, and to equitably fund charter schools and innovation schools.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools (40 points)

The extent to which—

(i) The State has a charter school law that does not prohibit or effectively inhibit increasing the number of high-performing charter schools (as defined in this notice) in the State, measured (as set forth in Appendix B) by the percentage of total schools in the State that are allowed to be charter schools or otherwise restrict student enrollment in charter schools;

(ii) The State has laws, statutes, regulations, or guidelines regarding how charter school authorizers approve, monitor, hold accountable, reauthorize, and close charter schools; in particular, whether authorizers require that student achievement (as defined in this notice) be one significant factor, among others, in authorization or renewal; encourage charter schools that serve student populations that are similar to local district student populations, especially relative to high-need students (as defined in this notice); and have closed or not renewed ineffective charter schools;

(iii) The State’s charter schools receive (as set forth in Appendix B) equitable funding compared to traditional public schools, and a commensurate share of local, State, and Federal revenues;

(iv) The State provides charter schools with funding for facilities (for leasing facilities, purchasing facilities, or making tenant improvements), assistance with facilities acquisition, access to public facilities, the ability to share in bonds and mill levies, or other supports; and the extent to which the State does not impose any facility-related requirements on charter schools that are stricter than those applied to traditional public schools; and

(v) The State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State’s success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (F)(2)(i):

- A description of the State’s applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- The number of charter schools allowed under State law and the percentage this represents of the total number of schools in the State.
- The number and types of charter schools currently operating in the State.

Evidence for (F)(2)(ii):

- A description of the State’s approach to charter school accountability and authorization, and a description of the State’s applicable laws, statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- For each of the last five years:
 - The number of charter school applications made in the State.
 - The number of charter school applications approved.
 - The number of charter school applications denied and reasons for the denials (academic, financial, low enrollment, other).
 - The number of charter schools closed (including charter schools that were not reauthorized to operate).

Evidence for (F)(2)(iii):

- A description of the State’s applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the State’s approach to charter school funding, the amount of funding passed through to charter schools per student, and how those amounts compare with traditional public school per-student funding allocations.

Evidence for (F)(2)(iv):

- A description of the State’s applicable statutes, regulations, or other relevant legal documents.
- A description of the statewide facilities supports provided to charter schools, if any.

Evidence for (F)(2)(v):

- A description of how the State enables LEAs to operate innovative, autonomous public schools (as defined in this notice) other than charter schools.

(F)(2) Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charter schools and other innovative schools

Colorado is a national leader in fostering a vibrant, high-quality charter school and other opportunities to increase autonomy and flexibility for school leaders. One of the first states to adopt charter school legislation in 1992, Colorado has improved upon the strength of this legislation multiple times. Today, Colorado’s Charter Schools Act ranks fifth in the country according to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools’ recent report *How State Charter Laws Rank Against The New Model Public Charter School Law*. This report assesses the strengths of each State’s charter school law against the 20 essential components of a strong law, which is contained in the new model public charter school law released by the Alliance in June

2009.¹²⁰ At the State level, Colorado has passed legislation to permit any school to gain “innovation school status,” providing charter-like autonomy.

(F)(2)(i) Cap on Charter Schools/Enrollment:

Colorado’s Charter Schools Act places no limits on the number of charter schools in the State or the number of students who may attend charter schools.¹²¹ In fact, the Act expressly prohibits LEAs from placing moratoria on the number of charter schools in their LEAs, and provides that authorizers may not place limits on enrollment at a specific school. The exception is that a charter school and its authorizer may agree upon limits that are necessary to achieve the school’s mission and goals or to stay within the school’s physical capacity. As a result, 100% of the schools in Colorado may be charter schools, and 100% of Colorado’s students may attend charter schools.¹²²

Enrollment in charter schools has steadily increased each year, with approximately 66,000 students currently enrolled in the more than 150 charter schools across the State. This is approximately 8% of the State’s total public school enrollment. Furthermore, Colorado has actively sought Federal funds for charter schools and applies for Federal charter school grants to ensure sufficient start-up funds for new charter schools. Since 1998, the State has garnered a total of \$65 million in Federal charter school funds and has used these funds to award grants to 178 charter schools cumulatively since 2004. The following tables demonstrate the total number of charter schools in Colorado, broken out by authorizer type and school reform model.

¹²⁰ A copy of Colorado’s Charter Schools Act is attached to this application as Appendix Exhibit F-3.

¹²¹ See Appendix Exhibit F-2

¹²² See Appendix Exhibit F-2

(F)(2)(i) Table 1

Number of Currently Operating Colorado Charter Schools by Authorizer Type, 2009

Authorizer Type	Number of Charter Schools
Charter School Institute	23
All other LEAs	130
TOTAL	153

(F)(2)(i) Table 2

Number of Currently Operating Colorado Charter Schools by School Reform Model, 2009

Recognized School Reform Model	Number of Charter Schools
Core Knowledge (K-8)	49
Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (K-12)	4
Montessori (PreK-6)	4
Coalition of Essential Schools (K-12)	2
Edison Project (K-12)	2
Montessori (PreK-8)	2
Direct Instruction (K-6)	1
Paideia (K-12)	1
Success for All (PreK-6)	1
Other	27
No School Reform Model Noted	60
TOTAL	153

(F)(2)(ii) Standards for Charter School Authorizing

Under the Charter Schools Act, a charter school may be authorized by an LEA, by the Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI) or by the State as a result of a turnaround process. Each of these is described in turn.

Until recently, charter authorizing practices were left largely to local development efforts. However, in the last few years, several important efforts have improved the quality and ease of authorizing and overseeing charter schools. For example, in 2004, a partnership between the CDE, the Colorado League of Charter Schools, LEA charter school liaison, and CSI resulted in a recommended common charter school application and rubric.¹²³ Improvements in authorizing practices have led to fewer appeals to the State Board of Education from would-be charter schools from the denial of charter applications. Colorado recently was one of six states selected

¹²³ See Appendix Exhibit F-3.

by the National Governors Association (NGA) to receive a grant to improve state support for quality authorizing practices and its work in that effort has been nationally recognized.

Any person or entity may apply to open a charter school. The application itself must include a mission statement, goals and objectives with respect to student performance; evidence of adequate public support; a research-based educational program; the process by which the school will collect and analyze longitudinal student data; procedures for corrective action in the event student learning goals are not met; a proposed budget and other evidence that the plan for the school is financially sound; a description of proposed governance and operation; the relationship between the charter school and its employees; employment policies; a transportation plan; an enrollment policy; and a dispute resolution process.¹²⁴ A charter school application is considered at a public hearing of the local board of education for the board may approve or deny. If the application is denied, the applicant may appeal to the Colorado State Board of Education, which may reverse the local board's decision if it finds the decision was contrary to the best interests of students, the school, the LEA or the community.

If an application is approved, the applicant and the LEA negotiate final terms of the contract, which is based on the application. Contracts must include the following provisions: identification of LEA policies from which the school is released; the manner in which the LEA intends to support any start-up and long-term facility needs; the process by which the charter school's construction needs may be placed on the LEA's next ballot issue; required financial reporting (including annual governmental audits); any provisions for LEA transportation of charter students; and any State statutes and regulations to be waived. The LEA then submits a waiver request to the State Board of Education for waiver of the pertinent State statutes and regulations.¹²⁵

The LEA is responsible for holding its charter schools accountable for local and State performance expectations consistent with Colorado's Education Accountability Act of 2009 and for reporting information on its charter schools to the State. Charter schools may apply for renewal of their contracts, and the renewal application must contain information about the progress of the school on its goals and objectives with respect to student and operational performance. The LEA may revoke or non-renew a contract with a charter school if the school

¹²⁴ See Appendix Exhibit F-2.

¹²⁵ See Appendix Exhibit F-2.

committed a material violation of its contract; failed to make reasonable progress towards its goals for student performance; failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; or violated any provision of applicable law.¹²⁶ There are currently 130 charter schools in Colorado operating under a charter with an LEA.¹²⁷

Part 5 of 2004's Charter Schools Act¹²⁸ governs charter schools authorized by CSI. A charter school applicant may apply for authorization from the CSI unless the LEA in which the charter school is located has applied for and has received exclusive chartering authority from the State Board of Education, based on a showing that the LEA has a pattern of providing fair and equitable treatment to its charter schools.¹²⁹ CSI is governed by a nine-member board selected for their experience and expertise in matters related to charter schools. By statute, CSI is charged to serve as a model of best practices in charter school authorizing and oversight.¹³⁰ There are currently 23 charter schools operating under a charter with the CSI.¹³¹

Part 3 of the Charter Schools Act¹³² governs the formation of independent charter schools that may be created as part of a strategy to turn around a persistently lowest-achieving school. This statute has been infrequently invoked, but recently was incorporated into the school restructuring choices available under the Education Accountability Act of 2009.

(F)(2)(ii) Table 1 below shows the number of charter school applications made, approved, and denied in Colorado in the last five years, and the number of charter schools that have been closed in the last five years. These numbers show that Colorado authorizers welcome high-quality applications, but will deny applications or close schools that are not performing academically or financially.

¹²⁶ See Appendix Exhibit F-2.

¹²⁷ See Appendix Exhibit F-4.

¹²⁸ See Appendix Exhibit F-2.

¹²⁹ See Appendix Exhibit F-2.

¹³⁰ See Appendix Exhibit F-2.

¹³¹ See Appendix Exhibit F-4.

¹³² See Appendix Exhibit F-2.

(F)(2)(ii) Table 1
Charter School Applications and Closures in Colorado, 2006-2010

	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
Number of charter school applications made	36	27	27	16	33
Number of charter school applications approved	16	12	13	14	15
Number of charter school applications denied	10	4	8	1	11
Number of charter schools closed	N/A	3	1	4	1

(F)(2)(iii) Charter School Funding and Share of Funds

The CDE has made clear to participating LEAs that they must equitably share funding obtained from Race to the Top with the charter schools they authorize.

Under the School Finance Act, charter schools in Colorado receive 100% of LEA per-pupil operating revenues. The authorizer may choose to retain up to 5% of these funds for the charter school’s share of central administrative overhead costs and must provide an accounting for all such funds withheld. The authorizer must refund any of these funds not actually used for central overhead costs. (For LEAs with fewer than 500 students, the LEA may retain up to 15% for overhead costs.) Any charter school that began operations in the 2004-2005 school year or after, is located within an LEA that has been given exclusive chartering authority *and* has a student population consisting 40% or more of at-risk students receives additional funds through the alternate at-risk funding calculation. This formula gives charter schools a proportionate share of the at-risk funds provided to the LEA through the School Finance Act.

Unless the school and the LEA specify otherwise, the LEA provides Federally required educational services.¹³³ The charter school and the LEA may also negotiate for the LEA to provide other services to the school, such as transportation, custodial services, food services and the like. The amounts to be paid for these services are to be calculated based either on (1) the LEA-wide per-pupil cost, multiplied by the number of students in the charter school; (2) the actual cost; or (3) a single set fee negotiated by the parties for a bundle of services.¹³⁴ The LEA may withhold agreed-upon funds for these purposes. At the close of the fiscal year, the LEA

¹³³ See Appendix Exhibit F-2.

¹³⁴ See Appendix Exhibit F-2.

must provide an itemized accounting of other services provided to the charter school for which the parties had not negotiated a specific amount.¹³⁵ LEAs must direct a proportionate share of Federal and State categorical aid programs to charters (except for federally required education services that the parties agree will be provided by the LEA).¹³⁶

(F)(2)(iv) Facilities Funding for Charter Schools

Although costs for facilities continue to represent a significant cost to charter schools, charter schools in Colorado have access to a wide variety of potential funding sources for their facilities, including a dedicated annual appropriation, equal access to certain State funds, a dedicated bond enhancement program and an opportunity to participate in local bond issues to support facilities.

For example, the Charter School Capital Facilities Financing Act¹³⁷ provides that charter school capital needs must be considered for inclusion on LEA ballot issues using the same priority assessment used for other LEA schools. The Public School Capital Assistance Fund, established in 2008, uses monies from income derived from State school land trusts to provide cash grants and enter into lease-purchase agreements for capital construction purposes. Charter schools and LEAs may apply for funds, and decisions about prioritizing projects are made by the Public School Capital Construction Assistance Board.¹³⁸ In the most recent round of funding, three charter schools received cash grants totaling nearly \$1.8 million, and three received funds for lease-purchase agreements totaling \$14.3 million. In addition, \$5 million in the 2009-2010 fiscal year will be distributed from the State Education Fund to charter schools for capital construction costs, based on a per-pupil share for all students enrolled in a qualified charter school that is not operating in a LEA facility, and on half of the per-pupil share for qualified charter schools operating in a LEA facility with capital needs.

To enhance the ability of charter schools to receive favorable terms on bonds issued by a governmental agency other than an LEA, the charter school may request that the State Treasurer make direct payments of principal and interest on the bonds on the charter school's behalf, up to

¹³⁵ See Appendix Exhibit F-2.

¹³⁶ See Appendix Exhibit F-2.

¹³⁷ See Appendix Exhibit F-2.

¹³⁸ CRS 22-43.7-101

the amount the charter school is entitled to receive from the State Public School Fund.¹³⁹ To provide additional security for charter school capital financing from the State's educational and cultural facilities authority, Colorado also created a State charter school debt reserve fund consisting of appropriations, transfers from the State Education Fund and interest earned by the fund.¹⁴⁰

The part of the Charter Schools Act creating CSI charter schools specifies that such charter schools receive a proportionate share of State Education Fund moneys distributed each year, and that this money is to be used for capital purposes.¹⁴¹ Charter schools authorized by the CSI also have access to the Institute Charter School Capital Assistance Fund.

Charter schools also may negotiate with their LEAs concerning the use of LEA facilities, and if the LEA chooses to make space available to the charter school, it must provide these services at cost. LEAs cannot charge charter schools rent for LEA space that is available, although the parties may agree on the cost of operations and maintenance. The charter school may also agree to purchase LEA facilities.¹⁴²

(F)(2)(v) Other Types of Innovative Schools

Innovation and autonomy in Colorado's public schools is not limited to its charter schools.¹⁴³ Most prominently, the Innovation Schools Act of 2008 was passed to give schools increased flexibility to meet the changing needs of students. It also encourage LEAs to manage diverse portfolios of schools that can meet different needs, and to encourage innovation in areas such as curriculum, educational programs, provision of services, teacher recruitment, hiring, compensation, governance and school management practices.

The Innovation Schools Act provides a means for LEAs to authorize one or more schools to implement a package of waivers. These waivers are from LEA policy, State laws and regulations and collective bargaining agreement provisions, if applicable. In addition to authorizing individual innovation schools, the act also provides for the authorization of innovation zones, consisting of a set of schools with common interests.

¹³⁹ See Appendix Exhibit F-2.

¹⁴⁰ See Appendix Exhibit F-2.

¹⁴¹ See Appendix Exhibit F-2.

¹⁴² See Appendix Exhibit F-2.

¹⁴³ See Appendix Exhibit F-5 for an overview of options for autonomous schools in Colorado published by members of Colorado's education reform and business communities.

Any public school may apply to its LEA for Innovation School status, and groups of schools may apply for Innovation Zone status. LEAs are encouraged to collaborate with their schools to streamline the process. The innovation plan must include the school's mission, reason for seeking innovation school status, proposed innovations and State, LEA and collective bargaining agreement waivers required to implement the innovations. A majority of the teachers, administrators and members of the school accountability committee at the school must indicate support for the application. It is within the discretion of the LEA to approve the application, which results in waiver of the requested LEA policies. The LEA then applies to the Colorado State Board of Education for the waivers of State law and regulations on behalf of the school, which the State board is required to grant unless it determines that the waivers are likely to result in a decrease in student achievement or are not fiscally feasible. Upon the granting of waivers by the State board, the question of collective bargaining agreement waivers is presented to bargaining unit members at the school, who must approve such waivers by a 60% vote. Waivers continue for as long as the school remains an innovation school.

In 2009, Denver Public Schools presented three schools to the State board for its approval to receive innovation school status. All three were approved. A fourth DPS school was approved in 2010 and at least two additional schools (one in Denver and another in Colorado Springs) will be presented to the State board later this year.

Even before the passage of the Innovation Schools Act, Colorado provided avenues for LEAs to waive State statutes and regulations. For example, CRS 22-2-117, adopted by the State Board of Education in 1990, allows LEAs to apply to the board for waivers of a variety of statutes and regulations (except for those expressly prohibited from waiver, such as accountability and child safety requirements). The State board is to grant the waiver if it determines that the waiver would enhance educational quality and opportunity, and that the cost of compliance with the requirement to be waived is significantly limiting educational opportunity. LEAs with fewer than 3,000 students can apply directly for waivers, while larger LEAs must obtain the consent of a majority of the relevant accountability committee, affected principals and licensed teachers. LEAs that have been granted exclusive chartering authority need not obtain this consent, except for matters directly relating to licensed personnel requirements.

In addition, LEAs are free to experiment with their own versions of school autonomy. For example, the Aurora Public Schools, a highly diverse LEA in the Denver-metro area and in collaboration with its teachers' union, is experimenting with pilot schools modeled after Boston Public School's Pilot Schools initiative. Denver Public Schools has created an Office of School Reform and Innovation that uses a public RFP process to actively solicit and support the creation of new high-quality schools in Denver, including new or redesigned district schools, contract schools, performance schools and charter schools. These multiple avenues which provide greater flexibility and freedom at the school or local level ensure Colorado's educators have a variety of approaches to operate innovative, autonomous schools.

Conclusion

Colorado's charter and innovation school success is demonstrated by steadily increasing enrollment, which is now at approximately 8% of the total student population. A leader and trendsetter in charter and innovation schools, Colorado continues to support these schools through legislation, equitable funding, and by improving the quality and ease of authorizing, as it has done over the last several years.

(F)(3) Demonstrating other significant reform conditions (5 points)

The extent to which the State, in addition to information provided under other State Reform Conditions Criteria, has created, through law, regulation, or policy, other conditions favorable to education reform or innovation that have increased student achievement or graduation rates, narrowed achievement gaps, or resulted in other important outcomes.

In the text box below, the State shall describe its current status in meeting the criterion. The narrative or attachments shall also include, at a minimum, the evidence listed below, and how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion. The narrative and attachments may also include any additional information the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Evidence for (F)(3):

- A description of the State's other applicable key education laws, statutes, regulations, or relevant legal documents.

(F)(3) Demonstrating Other Significant Reform Conditions

Colorado's key education reforms over the past decade are closely aligned with the Race to the Top selection criteria and encompass a P-20 alignment strategy. The Great Teachers and Leaders Bill (SB 191), Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K), the Education Accountability Act of 2009, the Educator Identifier Act, the Innovation Schools Act, the establishment of the School Leadership Academy, the Colorado Growth Model and other critical advancements have been central to Colorado's reform plan described throughout this Race to the Top proposal.¹⁴⁴

In addition to these efforts previously described, Colorado's ability to achieve its student achievement goals are bolstered by policies directly aimed at decreasing high school dropout rates, closing achievement gaps and increasing students' accumulation of college degrees and certificates.

All of these reforms are the result of bipartisan support and a cumulative effort across three gubernatorial administrations. Standards reform and public school choice began with Democratic Governor Roy Romer in the 1990s, were strengthened by Republican Governor Bill Owens, and culminated in CAP4K and the Education Accountability Act supported by

¹⁴⁴ A comprehensive summary of the state's education reform environment can be found in Appendix Exhibit A-8.

Democratic Governor Bill Ritter. Colorado’s progress in education reform has moved swiftly and steadily ahead, supported by people across the political spectrum.

State Commissioner of Education Dwight D. Jones has radically transformed the Colorado Department of Education by setting a vision for choice and innovation in Colorado¹⁴⁵ and partnering with the Southwest Comprehensive Center at WestEd to conduct a review of the department and its structural and fiscal alignment with new strategic priorities. WestEd’s report, issued in 2008, recommends six strategies and 27 action items for the CDE—a plan currently being implemented using 90-day objectives and WestEd’s progress monitoring. A new nonprofit organization, the Colorado Legacy Foundation, was formed to leverage private partnerships and resources in supporting, overseeing and implement the strategic, educational priorities of the State. Existing statutes, coupled with strategic leadership, bipartisan support and collaborative relationships set Colorado firmly on track to systematically improve student outcomes and close achievement gaps. Meeting the student achievement goals set forth in this proposal will rely upon the execution of several key reform efforts not previously discussed:

Closing the achievement gap. Passed in 2003, the Closing the Achievement Gap Assistance Law requires the CDE to identify schools with significant achievement gaps and provide technical assistance to those districts. Subsequently, State Board of Education rules, promulgated in 2006 and 2009, respectively define, schools as having student gaps by income and race in reading and math test scores that exceed the State average; and as the lowest 10% of districts and schools with achievement gaps in test scores and growth. Beginning in 2009, Colorado has funded and has appropriated \$1.8 million each year for three years. The CDE continues to pilot private-public partnerships with six LEAs identified as having significant achievement gaps, and is completing the program’s second year. Although insufficient data exists to draw final conclusions as outcomes of these efforts, initial results indicate that achievement among students receiving services through this program are increasing at a higher rate than their peers who do not receive direct services. In addition, it appears that overall student achievement in LEAs participating in this effort are also improved, indicating a potential “halo effect” of the interventions.

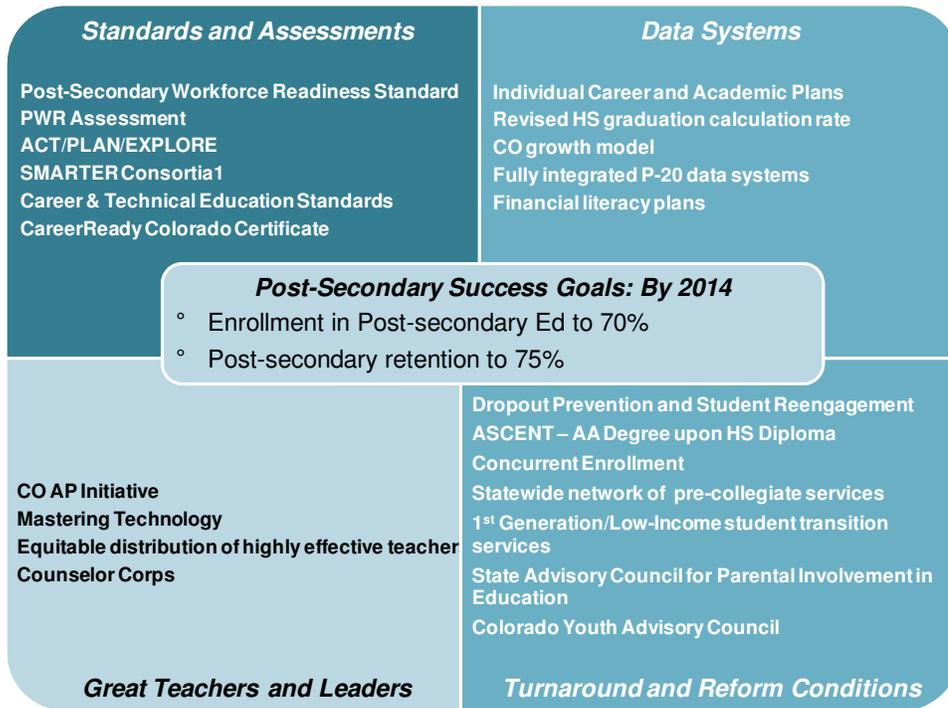
¹⁴⁵ See Appendix Exhibit F-7.

Reducing high school dropout rates. Colorado will devote \$5 million of its Race to the Top budget towards accelerating its efforts to reduce high school dropout rates statewide. The CDE Office of Dropout Prevention and Student Reengagement will make awards to LEAs identified as “high-priority districts” according to the criteria adopted by the State Board of Education. Awards would be made available to up to 20 LEAs each year in an average amount of \$225,000 (disbursed as \$75,000 per year for up to three years). Grants will be used to implement a plan approved by the CDE to deliver services demonstrated to reduce high school dropout rates, including but not limited to credit recovery, attendance mediation, social-emotional skill building and related supports, tutoring, mentoring, family-school-community engagement, dropout recovery and professional development for school administrators and educators.

Approximately 1,200 students each year will potentially and directly benefit from services made available with these funds. These awards will be supported through direct technical assistance and results of those efforts will be monitored closely. Legislation is in place to support the improvement in high school drop rates, including the School Counselor Corps Law, which provided 70 new counselors for high schools with low-graduation rates over three years; the Habitual Truancy Law, which provides insight into the truancy rate by school district; the Compulsory Age of Education Law, which increased compulsory attendance to a child’s 17th birthday, and reduced it to age 5; and the Graduation Rate Law, which gives the State Board of Education authority over reporting graduation and other rates.

Increase college- and career-readiness of high school graduates. Colorado has a comprehensive set of initiatives in place to increase the number of high school graduates that complete high school ready to succeed in postsecondary education. An overview of those initiatives and how they relate to each of the four assurance areas is in the illustration below.

Figure F-1: Overview of College and Career Readiness Initiatives and the Four Assurance Areas



Expanded learning options. Colorado is currently in the planning stages of a multi-year partnership with Colorado Legacy Foundation, Ford Foundation and the Mott Foundation to foster and directly create extended learning options within Colorado schools and in communities statewide. This effort will unify the work currently being done in before- or after-school programs, weekend or summer classes or in the form of an expanded school day, week or year. Similarly, this partnership will serve as a national model for bringing about a clear, comprehensive and aligned State vision – one that is shared by legislators, practitioners and national experts in expanded learning opportunities and education policy, and one that results in greater academic achievement for students.

School health and wellness. The CDE, in partnership with the Colorado Health Foundation and the Colorado Legacy Foundation, has developed a set of programs to support implementation of school health and wellness policies across Colorado school districts. Colorado’s health and wellness initiatives are targeted at ensuring all students are prepared to learn, incorporate health and wellness into their educational day, and that educators have access to health and wellness resources within their work day.

Blended learning. Colorado is a leader in online learning, demonstrated by State-level attention to quality and the number of full-time online schools that exist in the State. Several districts have created opportunities for students to take online courses full-time or to accelerate the pace at which students can get through school, provide additional time for students to catch up on key credits, or provide access to courses that may not be offered within their respective schools. Colorado's Online Education Law establishes quality and accountability standards for full-time online learning centers, and expands address access to online programs by eliminating funding restrictions.

The Commissioner of Education, in partnership with Donnell-Kay Foundation and the Colorado Legacy Foundation, have been convening experts from across the State and country expand the use of blended learning, specifically what Colorado can do to create the next generation of classrooms and schools that fully integrate online and leading technologies into education programs to prepare students for success in the 21st century. Approximately 200 participants from Colorado attended a highly-regarded summit on this topic in March 2010 that kicked-off the conversation. Over \$2 million of RttT funds will be devoted to expanding the use of technology, multi-media instructional materials, and blended learning practices.

Early childhood education. Authorized in 1988, the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP) currently serves more than 20,000 at-risk children in 170 LEAs. In 2007, State law expanded the Early Childhood Councils statewide to increase local innovation through waivers and provide better coordination among preschool, child care and family support programs.

Conclusion

Colorado continues to lead the nation in its support for charter and innovation schools, and for reforms aimed at closing the achievement gap, increasing school and postsecondary and workforce readiness, and increasing the high school graduation rate. The State's laws, regulations and other policies provide solid support for improvement in these areas. Student outcomes have shown improvement over time, and with Race to the Top funding, Colorado will accelerate the increase in student achievement, growth and readiness, ultimately preparing all of Colorado's students to succeed in postsecondary education and the skilled workforce by the time of graduation.

COMPETITION PRIORITIES

Priority 1: Absolute Priority -- Comprehensive Approach to Education Reform

To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address all of the four education reform areas specified in the ARRA as well as the State Success Factors Criteria in order to demonstrate that the State and its participating LEAs are taking a systemic approach to education reform. The State must demonstrate in its application sufficient LEA participation and commitment to successfully implement and achieve the goals in its plans; and it must describe how the State, in collaboration with its participating LEAs, will use Race to the Top and other funds to increase student achievement, decrease the achievement gaps across student subgroups, and increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for college and careers.

The absolute priority cuts across the entire application and should not be addressed separately. It is assessed, after the proposal has been fully reviewed and evaluated, to ensure that the application has met the priority.

Priority 2: Competitive Preference Priority -- Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). (15 points, all or nothing)

To meet this priority, the State's application must have a high-quality plan to address the need to (i) offer a rigorous course of study in mathematics, the sciences, technology, and engineering; (ii) cooperate with industry experts, museums, universities, research centers, or other STEM-capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, in promoting effective and relevant instruction, and in offering applied learning opportunities for students; and (iii) prepare more students for advanced study and careers in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including by addressing the needs of underrepresented groups and of women and girls in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

The competitive preference priority will be evaluated in the context of the State's entire application. Therefore, a State that is responding to this priority should address it throughout the application, as appropriate, and provide a summary of its approach to addressing the priority in the text box below. The reviewers will assess the priority as part of their review of a State's application and determine whether it has been met.

Priority 2: Competitive Preference Priority -- Emphasis on Science, Technology,

Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM): Colorado's RttT proposal integrates STEM initiatives throughout the Selection Criteria. These initiatives will help Colorado further its agenda to

increase capacity, replicate best practices, and increase representation of minorities and girls in STEM-related careers. Over \$2 million of Colorado’s budget will be invested in a variety of initiatives discussed throughout the application that advance this agenda including:

- Aligning STEM instructional content with Colorado’s standards and creating STEM content learning communities,
- Increasing the social network capacity of the existing Colorado STEM Network¹⁴⁶ and its regional STEM Centers, previously created through an NGA grant,
- Developing a STEM in Action¹⁴⁷ multimedia outlet that links informal science education organizations, universities, and business and industry scientists and research to K-12 schools through SchoolView,
- Connecting STEM teachers to resources outside their school and LEA boundaries,
- Expanding the use of technology, multimedia materials, and blended instructional practices.
- Ensuring high quality STEM content is available to all LEAs statewide through the STEM Content Collaborative.
- Increasing the capacity of educators to use blended learning practices through the expanded SchoolView,
- Partnering with a nonprofit organization to build a “grow-your-own” STEM educator program for rural areas,
- Providing rigorous training for high school Advanced Placement (AP) teachers through a partnership with the National Math and Science Initiative, and,
- \$1 million in incentive grants will be awarded by the State Board of Education, with input from the Colorado STEM Network, to expand additional proven or promising efforts that align with the State’s STEM agenda.

Colorado already has a rich STEM community that includes higher education, industry, business, Federal and university laboratories, and education partners. The State is home to many well-established employers, including Lockheed Martin, United Launch Alliance, Qwest, Sun

¹⁴⁶ See Appendix Exhibit P-1.

¹⁴⁷ See Appendix Exhibit P-2.

Microsystems, and entrepreneurial start-ups in areas such as bioscience, nanotechnology, and renewable energy.

In the past five years, Colorado organizations focused on STEM have received significant funding to promote STEM education from the Department of Labor, the National Science Foundation, the Colorado Department of Education, the National Governors Association for Best Practices, the National Institutes of Health, and related businesses and industries in aerospace, bioscience, energy, and information technology. These investments have promoted partnerships and alliances among higher education, LEAs, informal education organizations, government agencies, and business and industry to focus on the broad, complex issues of STEM education. In addition, Colorado partners with NASA's Elementary and Secondary Education efforts to provide K–12 educators with tools, experiences, and opportunities to further their education. Students participate in unique NASA learning experiences that enhance their knowledge of STEM and inspire the pursuit of STEM careers. The program provides the framework to bring together students, families, and educators for educational improvement.

Through this work, there is evidence that all students across the P-20 continuum need access to certain skills and experiences in order to be competitive in a STEM workforce, including technology skills, career exploration and experience, high-quality teachers, social environments that support STEM education, scholarships and funding, and extracurricular experiences through informal organizations. The reform plans outlined in this application articulate the strategies Colorado will use to meet those needs.

Priority 3: Invitational Priority – Innovations for Improving Early Learning Outcomes

(not scored)

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications that include practices, strategies, or programs to improve educational outcomes for high-need students who are young children (prekindergarten through third grade) by enhancing the quality of preschool programs. Of particular interest are proposals that support practices that (i) improve school readiness (including social, emotional, and cognitive); and (ii) improve the transition between preschool and kindergarten.

The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Colorado has a strong early childhood system that provides a foundation for successful educational reform. This system, which includes 30 local early childhood councils serving 160 of the 178 school districts and covering 58 of the 64 counties, focuses on cross-sector (education, health, mental health, and family support) collaboration to improve outcomes for young children. The *Early Childhood Colorado Framework*¹⁴⁸ provides a common vision and language for public and private cross-sector State and local partners and outlines the efforts needed to make positive change for children and families. Colorado’s commitment to improving school readiness is also demonstrated through the State’s annual investment of \$74 million in the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP). CPP serves 20,160 children in 171 school districts using a diverse delivery system of preschools (66 percent), Head Start centers (15 percent) and community based programs (19 percent). Finally, Denver’s Preschool program has been recognized as one of the best in the country. Additionally, Colorado has a legislated Early Childhood and School Readiness Commission working to create policy that improves school readiness. Race to the Top will accelerate Colorado’s efforts to improve school readiness and improve transitions through focused strategies in each of the Selection Criteria.

Early Learning Standards and Assessments: Colorado’s landmark CAP4K legislation aligns the educational system from preschool through college and focuses on the readiness of all students at key transition points. As part of CAP4K, the Colorado State Board of Education adopted a definition of school readiness and by 2013 all LEAs will be required to administer a

¹⁴⁸ See Appendix Exhibit P-3.

school readiness assessment that aligns with the early learning standards and definition of school readiness. Race to the Top funds will support a School Readiness Content Collaborative that will be responsible for identifying and developing aligned instructional materials and model curricula. To ensure the quality of these materials, the CDE will work with the Content Collaborative and other experts to create a Content Peer Review Process for validating instructional materials and assessments proposed for inclusion in SchoolView.

Data Systems to Support Instruction: Race to the Top funds will enhance the capability of SchoolView, allowing administrators to access data at the classroom and individual student level from Results Matter, Colorado’s standards-aligned early childhood assessment and accountability system. This data will inform professional development planning and assist administrators in analyzing trends and indicators related to student achievement¹⁴⁹.

Parents/guardians will also be able to access information about their children. Kindergarten teachers and principals will access Results Matter assessment data through SchoolView to improve transition planning and inform the development of Individual Readiness Plans. All CPP, Head Start, and special education students are assessed through this system, representing 44,000 students statewide.

Great Teachers and Leaders : The P-3 Subcommittee of the Governor’s P-20 Council created a Professional Development Task Force to develop a three-year strategic plan by June 2010 focused on advancing the effectiveness of early childhood teachers through improved professional development opportunities, coaching support, and increased compensation¹⁵⁰. The plan will include defining an effective early childhood educator, identifying valid and reliable measures to evaluate effectiveness, and expanding the educator identifier to include all teachers working in licensed early education centers that serve publicly funded children. The State Council for Educator Effectiveness will use this definition as it makes recommendations for “teacher effectiveness” and principal effectiveness.” By 2011, the P-3 Subcommittee will make recommendations to the Colorado State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education for rule-making changes to ensure preparation programs demonstrate the ability to prepare effective early childhood educators. By 2012, the accreditation of two- and four-year higher education institution’s early education preparation programs will be aligned

¹⁴⁹ See Appendix Exhibit P-4.

¹⁵⁰ See Appendix Exhibit P-5.

with the State’s definition of early childhood educator effectiveness.

Turnaround Schools: Race to the Top Funds will be used to support the CDE Turnaround and Intervention Unit. This unit will provide technical assistance to Colorado’s persistently lowest-achieving schools and LEAs in purchasing and delivering research-based parent education, home visitation, and family engagement programs.

Priority 4: Invitational Priority – Expansion and Adaptation of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (not scored)

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications in which the State plans to expand statewide longitudinal data systems to include or integrate data from special education programs, English language learner programs, early childhood programs, at-risk and dropout prevention programs, and school climate and culture programs, as well as information on student mobility, human resources (i.e., information on teachers, principals, and other staff), school finance, student health, postsecondary education, and other relevant areas, with the purpose of connecting and coordinating all parts of the system to allow important questions related to policy, practice, or overall effectiveness to be asked, answered, and incorporated into effective continuous improvement practices.

The Secretary is also particularly interested in applications in which States propose working together to adapt one State’s statewide longitudinal data system so that it may be used, in whole or in part, by one or more other States, rather than having each State build or continue building such systems independently.

The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Priority 4: Invitational Priority – Expansion and Adaptation of Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems: In May 2010, Colorado was awarded a \$17.4 million grant to expand its statewide longitudinal data system to integrate data from special education programs, English language learner programs, early childhood programs, at-risk and dropout prevention programs, and school climate and culture programs, as well as information on student mobility, human resources (i.e., information on teachers, principals, and other staff), school finance, student health, postsecondary education, and other relevant areas. This integration will connect and coordinate all parts of the system to allow important information related to policy, practice,

and overall effectiveness to be incorporated into continuous improvement practices.

Colorado is also leading an effort to work together with other states to adapt the Colorado Growth Model and its information visualizations so that it may be used, in whole or in part, by one or more states, rather than having each state build such systems independently. Colorado supports CCSSO's LEARN initiative, which will promote unprecedented cross-state knowledge about educational performance and access to educational content. As an initial step in this collaborative effort, the CDE has led a multi-state adoption of a common student longitudinal growth measure and data visualization platform as used by the Colorado Growth Model. Massachusetts, Indiana, and Arizona now use the growth percentile methodology developed for the Colorado Growth Model. In addition, Indiana and Arizona recently signed an agreement to adopt the data visualization tools employed by the Colorado Growth Model and will begin co-development of the Indiana Growth Model and Arizona Growth Model displays. Several other states are expected to join the co-development effort soon.

This collaboration makes it possible to evaluate the relative productivity of educational systems (i.e., groupings of schools undergoing turnaround) in Colorado, Massachusetts, Indiana, and Arizona as measured by student growth rates toward state standards. With the advent of common core standards and assessments, such collaboration holds tremendous promise for building a breakthrough national awareness and improved discourse about education reform. CDE has an agreement that defines the outcomes of this collaboration. No RttT grant funds are requested to directly implement this work.

Priority 5: Invitational Priority -- P-20 Coordination, Vertical and Horizontal Alignment
(not scored)

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications in which the State plans to address how early childhood programs, K-12 schools, postsecondary institutions, workforce development organizations, and other State agencies and community partners (*e.g.*, child welfare, juvenile justice, and criminal justice agencies) will coordinate to improve all parts of the education system and create a more seamless preschool-through-graduate school (P-20) route for students. Vertical alignment across P-20 is particularly critical at each point where a transition occurs (*e.g.*, between early childhood and K-12, or between K-12 and postsecondary/careers) to ensure that students exiting one level are prepared for success, without remediation, in the next. Horizontal alignment, that is, coordination of services across schools, State agencies, and community partners, is also important in ensuring that high-need students (as defined in this notice) have access to the broad array of opportunities and services they need and that are beyond the capacity of a school itself to provide.

The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Priority 5: Invitational Priority -- P-20 Coordination, Vertical and Horizontal

Alignment: Colorado is currently implementing a seamless alignment of education from preschool through postsecondary education, with a focus on ensuring smooth and successful transitions for all students. This alignment is required by CAP4K (Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids) legislation, passed in 2008. CAP4K requires implementation of a standards-based framework with three key foundations:

- Statewide School Readiness Standard that expresses a student’s readiness for entry into Kindergarten
- “Fewer, clearer, and higher” standards in 10 content areas for K-12 education
- A statewide postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR) standard that all high school graduates must meet or exceed.

CAP4K was the culmination of broad collaboration, marked by implementation of Results Matter, a national model of a standards-aligned early childhood assessment system and the creation of the Governor’s P-20 Education Coordinating Council¹⁵¹. This P-20 Council made several recommendations¹⁵² which have resulted in key actions that underlie Colorado’s current reform plan. These actions include:

- A Postsecondary Workforce Readiness definition¹⁵³ adopted by the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado Department of Higher Education in an unprecedented joint action,
- State concurrent enrollment policies,

¹⁵¹ See Appendix Exhibit P-7.

¹⁵² See Appendix Exhibit P-8.

¹⁵³ See Appendix Exhibit A-9.

- A statewide educator identifier system to link individual teachers and principals to students and the programs that prepare them,
- Guaranteed transfer policies in higher education, Colorado Counselor Corps, and College in Colorado, and
- An online planning and resource site for students and their families.

Through investing in the plans laid out in this application, Colorado will enhance P-20 alignment statewide. For example, Colorado intends to use RttT funds to accelerate and strengthen the implementation of CAP4K so that all students in Colorado are ready by entry into K-12 and ready by exit for postsecondary education and the workforce. In addition, the implementation of SchoolView is essential to facilitating seamless P-20 alignment and horizontal integration of data relevant to students, educators, school leaders and their communities. As described in Selection Criterion (C), SchoolView will allow for the integration of data from the Colorado Department of Education, the Colorado Department of Higher Education, the Colorado Department of Human Services, the Department of Labor and Employment, and the Department of Corrections. The end result will be an integrated policy framework and data system that equips all education stakeholders with the tools to increase student performance and close achievement gaps.

Priority 6: Invitational Priority -- School-Level Conditions for Reform, Innovation, and Learning *(not scored)*

The Secretary is particularly interested in applications in which the State’s participating LEAs (as defined in this notice) seek to create the conditions for reform and innovation as well as the conditions for learning by providing schools with flexibility and autonomy in such areas as—

- (i) Selecting staff;
- (ii) Implementing new structures and formats for the school day or year that result in increased learning time (as defined in this notice);
- (iii) Controlling the school’s budget;
- (iv) Awarding credit to students based on student performance instead of instructional time;
- (v) Providing comprehensive services to high-need students (as defined in this notice) (*e.g.*, by mentors and other caring adults; through local partnerships with community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and other providers);
- (vi) Creating school climates and cultures that remove obstacles to, and actively support, student engagement and achievement; and
- (vii) Implementing strategies to effectively engage families and communities in supporting the academic success of their students.

The State is invited to provide a discussion of this priority in the text box below, but such description is optional. Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful must be described and, where relevant, included in the Appendix. For attachments included in the Appendix, note in the narrative the location where the attachments can be found.

Priority 6: Invitational Priority -- School-Level Conditions for Reform, Innovation, and Learning:

As described in Selection Criterion (F), Colorado’s Innovation Schools Act provides the ability for schools to gain full control over virtually all aspects of operations, including staffing, scheduling, and budget. The Act provides mechanisms for waiving State statutes and regulations, LEA-level policies, and collective bargaining agreement provisions in the service of improving student achievement. The Colorado State Board of Education also has separate statutory authority to grant waivers to LEAs from most of the State’s education laws and regulations, and the Charter Schools Act supports the development of new charter schools that are free from most State and LEA requirements.

Stakeholder discussions over the past few years have demonstrated great support for student progress based on demonstrated mastery rather than seat time, and CAP4K encourages schools and LEAs to take this approach. A few LEAs are beginning to experiment with this

approach, most notably Adams 50, one of the RttT participating LEAs. Other LEAs, such as participating LEA Mapleton Public Schools, are adopting mastery requirements, rather than coursework, for graduation. The State's turnaround strategy, described in Selection Criterion (E), specifically encourages critical community services and engaging students, parents/guardians, and communities in supporting dramatic change at their schools. The combination of these laws, practices, and strategies demonstrates Colorado's commitment to providing opportunities for schools to have flexibility and autonomy.