

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION / DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
FY 2008-09 JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING AGENDA**

**Friday, December 14, 2007
1:30 pm – 4:30 pm**

INTRODUCTIONS AND OPENING COMMENTS

1:30-2:15 QUESTIONS COMMON TO ALL DEPARTMENTS

Departmental Goals and Objectives

1. What are your department's principal goals and objectives? What are the metrics by which you measure success or failure?

Response:

Goal: Improve overall achievement statewide while closing the achievement gap in Reading and Math that is associated with race or income.

Metric: Percentage of students at or above proficient on state assessment (CSAP)

Reading

Achievement Gap Measure (income-based gap)

- Students who are not on free or reduced lunch outperform their counterparts (79.9% vs 49.3%)

Achievement Gap Measure (race-based gap)

- Students who are white outperform their counterparts (79.5% vs 52.4%)

Math

Achievement Gap Measure (income-based gap)

- Students who are not on free or reduced lunch outperform their counterparts (64.1% vs 36.9%)

Achievement Gap Measure (race-based gap)

- Students who are white outperform their counterparts (64.1% vs 38.9%)

Goal: Improve the graduation rate (from 74.1% in 2006)

Metric: Graduation rate is the number of graduates divided by the number of those enrolled four years earlier

Goal: Decrease the dropout rate (from 4.5% in 2006)

Metric: Dropout is annual percentage of students (7-12) who leave school for any reason except death or transfer.

2. Given the change in the Administration, have there been any changes to your department's principal goals and objectives since last year?

Response:

The Department produced a plan titled “Forward Thinking” that lists 20 objectives:

- Develop a mission that espouses service and support to field;
- Manage the CDE brand;
- Develop a comprehensive statewide system of support to help districts achieve ambitious outcomes;
- Restore credibility. Enlist experts with unimpeachable credentials and no ideological bias for technical panels;
- Support content/curriculum efforts via in-house expertise in math, science, social studies, arts, languages, etc.;
- Support smaller and more rural districts through a partnership with BOCES;
- Narrow and eliminate achievement gaps associated with race and income;
- Provide model curricula districts may voluntarily use that are aligned with research and shown to deliver results;
- Provide incentives that make it easy for districts to adopt and use model curricula;
- Support creative, innovative, and high quality choice solutions that are capable of efficiently delivering results;
- Revise how districts are labeled via accreditation so stigma is removed and info funnels support toward need;
- Revise standards and assessments so students exit prepared for success in life, work, or next level of schooling;
- Make budgeting transparent and understandable;
- implement a position control system at CDE;
- Develop system of discretionary CDE funding for schools that reflects priority based on student academic need;
- Implement quality standards for multidistrict online learning operations;
- Revise data management, tool development, and the research request process in ways field finds useful;
- Increase reliance on longitudinal data within state system of school accountability; and
- Implement leadership programs (Principal Center, Supt/Board Center, Futures Center, and a Coaching Center.)

“Forward Thinking” states, “enhancing student performance and eliminating gaps is the measure of success.”

3. What progress did you make during the last year in achieving your goals?

Response:

- **Increase academic achievement for all students** – The seventh annual School Accountability Reports, revealed 11.8 percent of schools rated excellent and 31.2 percent of schools rated high in 2006-2007, up from 8.3 percent rated excellent and 26 percent rated high in the year 2001-2002.

Combined, 48 percent of all students in the state attended a school rated high or excellent in 2006-07. That's up from 38.6 percent in 2001-2002.

The total enrollment in schools rated excellent is a record high of 109,848, up from 99,999 in 2005-06, 97,752 in 2004-05, and 67,341 in 2000-2001.

One hundred sixty two schools or 8.8 percent of all schools were noted for significant improvement and another 429 schools or 23.3 percent of all schools were noted for improvement.

Ratings and growth indicators are based on student performance on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP).

Twelve Title I schools showed significant academic improvement and were removed from the Title I School Improvement list based on 2006 and 2007 Adequate Yearly Progress determinations.

- **Administer the Colorado Student Assessment Program** – In 2007 the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) was administered for the eleventh year and the Colorado ACT was administered for the sixth. There were 1,551,536 CSAP tests administered to Colorado public school students, an increase of 11,506 over the 2006 CSAP administration.

Initiated in 1997 with two tests, the CSAP includes thirty-one tests in 2007. The expansion of the testing program provides an opportunity to develop tools for measuring student growth using both a student's year-to-year performance levels and year-to-year scale scores.

- **Administer the School Finance Act** – The School Finance Unit successfully distributed approximately \$3.25 billion to Colorado school districts via state taxes.

In addition to the Total Program funding provided by the Public School Finance Act, Colorado school districts may receive state funding to pay for specific programs designed to serve particular groups of students or particular student needs. These programs are referred to as "categorical" programs.

The General Assembly as a result of a settlement agreement now provides an additional stream of funding for school construction and renovation. To date \$149,271,998 has been awarded to a total of 529 projects in 141 different school districts. Local districts themselves have provided over \$87.5 million in matching funds. Grant awards were made following a careful screening and ranking process of over 1,430 applications. The last eight funding cycles have seen over \$488 million in grant requests.

The Colorado Preschool and Kindergarten Program provided the funding for up to 16,360 children (including up to 2,454 or 15% for full-day kindergarten pupils) who are eligible to be included in districts' funded pupil counts.

Over the last 20 years, 139,055 preschool children and 13,258 full-day kindergarten children have been served through the Colorado Preschool and Kindergarten Program.

- **Strengthen partnerships with the educational community/organize the department to allocate resources in order to support Colorado School Districts** – The State Board's search for the newly appointed Commissioner of Education was a national search involving Colorado educators, administrators, businesses, and other stakeholders designed specifically to strengthen partnerships with the educational community.

A June 2007 audit of CDE revealed a mismatch. "The primary function is related to compliance and monitoring" yet "the primary purpose of CDE is service and support." The implications were clear. "Function should follow purpose" and "the organizational structure should [be designed] to accomplish the primary purpose: service and support to schools." A reallocation of resources began in order to support positions that allow for a service based approach. The department has hired a new Deputy Commissioner who provides focus and urgency to closing the achievement gap and improving student achievement. Positions have been hired to streamline and improve communications with the public and the General Assembly.

Additionally, the department has partnered with WestEd a nonprofit research, development, and service agency to provide a "resource analysis" and to support the department in a "State Standards Review".

4. How is the additional money provided to your department in FY 2007-08 being used to achieve your goals? What improvements is your department making in its outputs?

Response:

Most of the increase made available to the department is being distributed to local school districts as part of Public School Finance. The bulk of the funding is distributed as part of “Total Program Funding” and the required funding for categorical programs.

The Department was allocated funding and FTE through **SB 07-215** to support a Division of On-line Learning. Three positions have been filled (including a Director of On-Line Learning, a senior consultant as well as an administrative assistant). Staff has been working to gather input from stakeholders and is now working with the Governor’s appointed Commission to develop, among other things, quality standards for online programs. This division provides support to on-line programs, students, parents, and authorizers by providing information and access to available data.

The Department requested (**Decision Item #3**) and received 1.0 FTE for the Expelled Student Services Grant Program. The addition of this FTE is allowing the Department to provide technical assistance and coaching for the school districts, Boards of Cooperative Services (BOCES) and charter, alternative and private non-parochial schools in the grant program. The Department approves four year applications for awards based on peer reviews, using a scoring rubric. The scoring rubric includes sections on research-based programs and strategies and potential for the strategies to be sustained after grant funding ends. At least 45% of the allocation is awarded to applicants who provide services to students from more than one school district.

HB 07-1320 provided FTE for the Department to develop a data dictionary. On November 14, 2007, the Colorado Department of Education announced the publication of a new Data Dictionary, available in electronic form only through the department’s site on the Web.

The department of Information Management Systems has collected, organized and defined all data elements associated with K-12 education. The result is a comprehensive information catalog of data definitions, relationships, collection groupings, validation rules, aggregations and generated reports. The primary audience for the tool is district administrators, data analysts and researchers.

The goal of the project is to provide better, consistent information to education stakeholders and to help identify duplication where it exists across CDE data collections. The project is funded by House Bill 07-1320 and a Federal Longitudinal Data Systems grant.

5. Please identify your department's three most effective programs and your three least effective programs. Explain why you identified them as such. Explain how your most effective programs further the Department's goals.

Response:

I. The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP). Initiated in 1997 the purpose of CSAP is to measure Colorado student progress in meeting the Colorado Model Content Standards in grades three through ten in the content areas of reading, writing and mathematics, in grades 5, 8, and 10 for science. Since the program was initiated it has grown from two tests to thirty-one tests.

This expansion along with the “Individual Student Identifier System” provides an opportunity to monitor individual student growth by using both a student’s year-to-year performance levels and year-to-year scale scores.

The Governor’s appointed Technical Advisory Panel charged with recommending a longitudinal model used to track student and school level growth will be making their recommendations and findings to the State Board later this year. The data provided by this model will allow a way to track student progress toward proficiency and provide teachers and administrators with additional information to support improved student outcomes.

The Colorado Student Assessment program is the measurement tool used to identify and measure progress towards improved student achievement and closing achievement gaps. The assessment program is the basis for state’s accountability system.

II. Colorado Reading First – A federal initiative authorized as part of No Child Left Behind. The ultimate purpose of Reading First in Colorado is to ensure that all children read at grade level in English by the end of third grade.

In Colorado, we have served 91 of the 956 elementary schools in the Reading First initiative of which 49 are currently fully funded in Cohort 2. Colorado received an award in 2002 of approximately 62 million dollars distributed over 6 years. Cohort 2 is in its third year of implementation, representing K-3 students at 49 schools across 35 districts.

Additional information including key findings can be found in Appendix A of this document.

III. School Support Team and Comprehensive Appraisal for District Improvement (CADI) initiatives. This federal initiative of Title 1 of NCLB adds a necessary component to the existing approaches allowing CDE to provide ongoing, targeted support to districts.

The State School Support team process is available for Title 1 schools on improvement or corrective action. The role of school support team is to conduct a comprehensive review of all facets of a school’s program. Following the completion of the review, SEA staff and the school support team leader make a presentation to the school principal and central office staff.

A debriefing is held for school staff using the services of a trained facilitator. The facilitator assists the staff in understanding the report and in developing goals and strategic actions for a school improvement plan.

Each school that receives a school support team visit also receives a school improvement grant to assist in the implementation of the report's findings.

In addition to the school support teams and the school improvement grant, additional supports such as re-visits to schools and a facilitator cadre to provide on-going support are available for schools.

Additional Information about this program is attached as Appendix B.

Based on the "Data Infrastructure Review" initiated by HB 07-1270 the least effective programs deal with the current state of data collection and reporting processes and systems executed by the department.

The report, released to OIT November 30, 2007, states that currently the data collection process is fragmented and does not involve the stakeholders. There is no consistency in requirements management, stakeholder involvement, communications, training, or support. There is little coordination between the program units.

The review of the existing data collection systems and recent improvements in technology has revealed several opportunities for improvement. The recommendations fall into three time periods, short term, interim, and long term. Short term items can be accomplished in less than a year and could be funded by the current budget. Interim recommendations would take at least 1-2 years to implement due to the need for additional funding or staff positions that would have to come through the legislative budget process. Long term items may cost significantly more, requiring additional budget, or may take longer to implement due to the complexity or planning needed.

"There is a need for a Data Program Management Office (PMO) to oversee the entire data collection process from legislation to implementation and collection execution. By having a PMO, the entire process would become more streamlined internally and eliminate redundancies. The PMO could also ensure stakeholder involvement by guiding a Data Committee that would involve the stakeholders in the data collection process. This would result in a better understanding and acceptance of data collection elements, windows, and processes. The end result would be cleaner data being entered into the system and better results."

The report is on CDE web site (www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/index.html).

6. Are there programs that your department is required to perform that do not further your department's goals or have outlived their usefulness? If so, what are they and who requires them? Why don't they further your department's goals?

Response:

The Northhighland report (published November 30, 2007 and conducted pursuant to HB 07-1270) identified certain areas of the data collection/analysis/reporting operation within CDE where changes should be made. Although specific changes were not enumerated, the report did conclude: "it is recommended that CDE take a comprehensive view of the data that is collected and the reports that are generated and work with the legislature and other stakeholders to determine if the data answers the questions as originally intended. Some data may of be meeting the original needs, or the original premise for the data collected my be overcome by current events. Through a comprehensive study of the data and legislation, it may be possible to identify, consolidate, and eliminate duplicate or unnecessary data being reported. (Volume 3, page 7 of 76)

In addition, the department is undergoing a review this year of state standards (with a review the following year of state assessment). At this point it is unclear what changes will ensue.

Finally, the department is finalizing a resource inventory which will identify how well current programs align with the department's "Forward Thinking" goals.

Costs and savings from complying with specific bills and orders

7. What are your department's anticipated costs, anticipated savings, and potential benefits from complying with Executive Order D 028 07, Authorizing Partnership Agreements with State Employees?

Response:

The Department does not believe it is impacted by Executive Order D 028 07.

8. Provide an estimate of the costs your department will incur in FY 2007-08 in carrying out the provisions of H.B. 06S-1023. Provide an estimate of your department's savings in FY 2007-08 as a result of not providing services to individuals who are in the country illegally.

Response:

The cost of implementation of H.B. 06S-1023 is not easily measured. As a result of the legislation, the process for purchasing goods and services takes longer and has added to workload for independent consultants to do business with the Department. Prior to making most of these purchases the Department has to send information to the vendor, the vendor has to return a signed affidavit along with a copy of the appropriate photo identification back to the Department. Upon receipt, the Department must review the information, enter it into the State's Accounting system, and maintain records. Only then can the purchase be made. For Fiscal year 07-08 the Department estimates we will have about 1,300 purchase orders and contracts.

There have been no cost savings to the department as a result of not providing services to individuals who are in the country illegally. The Department provides services to school districts and teachers who in turn provide services to students and parents. These services have not changed as a result of the requirements of the bills.

2:15-3:15 FUNDING PRIORITIES

Decision Item #3: Closing the Achievement Gap

9. Please describe this request and explain how the suggested approach is likely to narrow achievement gaps. Further, how does this approach compare to past efforts to close achievement gaps?

Response:

Closing the Achievement Gap has been a focus of the Colorado Department of Education since 2001, when House Joint Resolution 01-1014 declared Closing the Achievement Gap a central element of education accountability in the state. Two groups were formed: *Closing the Achievement Gap Coalition*, and *Closing the Achievement Gap Commission (C.R.S. 22-7-612)*. The works of these groups were concluded in 2005. The Closing the Achievement Gap Commission members, including Commissioner Jones, then superintendent, found six components to be effective when implemented together in a comprehensive approach. Those six components included: 1) a data and assessment system that identifies gaps, inform instruction and monitor student progress, 2) high expectations and academic rigor, 3) seamless P-16 system ensuring access to higher education for under-represented groups, 4) administrator and teacher professional development, 5) involvement of parents and the broader community, and 6) implementing research-based best practices proven successful in closing achievement gaps.

The student population in Colorado is becoming more diverse while achievement expectations overall are rising as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act and the need to reach full proficiency by 2013. The USDOE requires states to work actively to improve achievement of schools and districts in addition to holding them accountable for meeting state achievement targets. Schools and districts are required to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) overall. In order for a school or district to make AYP overall, all subgroups within each school or districts are also required to make AYP. These subgroups include those defined by race/ethnicity and poverty. The race/ethnicity and poverty gaps are large and persistent in Colorado as they are across the nation.

The intent of the present request is to provide specific assistance to districts with the largest achievement gaps associated with race and income. Those districts with persistent and significant achievement gaps will be invited to apply. Six districts will be chosen to pilot comprehensive achievement gap interventions including: adding an expert gap consultant to work on site in the district as part of the administrative team, and purchasing and implementing an assessment and data management system to monitor student progress and training and coaching administrators

and teachers in curriculum, instruction, and assessment proven effective in closing achievement gaps. Similar projects that have been implemented in other states have resulted in reduced achievement gaps .

The pilot project in each district will be monitored quarterly and evaluated for effectiveness at the end of each year by CDE. Data used in the evaluation will be gathered from multiple sources. In addition to the yearly CSAP data results, district and school progress monitoring and formative assessments will be included in the evaluation. In addition to these quantitative measures, qualitative information will be collected via observations and interviews with the gap consultant, district and school staff regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the interventions.

In the past, CDE units and the State Board of Education have engaged in efforts to close the achievement gaps. Each project was worthy, but suffered from a lack of overall coordination with the other initiatives, resulting in fragmentation of effort and continuing achievement gaps.

The SBE adopted a methodology in January 2006 (pursuant to 22-7-611, C.R.S.) designed to identify specific schools with persistent achievement gaps (exceed the state average gap in both reading and math for two consecutive years) and offer them the opportunity to participate in a voluntary program focused on closing the achievement gaps. Each year, schools are identified. However, very limited state-funding (\$500) have been available to support closing the achievement gap (associated with race or poverty). The source of this \$500 was a gift.

The Exceptional Student Leadership Unit's (Special and Gifted education) technical assistance activities geared towards achievement gaps in districts have taken the form of professional development activities, state-wide or regionally focused. Activities have focused on specific categorical areas of special education (e.g., literacy and math training for special education teachers) as well as school-wide initiatives such as Response to Intervention (RTI), Positive Behavior Supports (PBS), and secondary literacy pilot sites. Student achievement data is currently being collected as part of the Rural Secondary Literacy Project. Student achievement data has not been collected measuring the effectiveness of past projects on closing achievement gaps.

The Regional Service Unit works directly with Colorado school districts and facilitates the state's accreditation process. Two indicators in the Educational Improvement Plan that drives the accreditation process are focused on closing achievement gaps. Indicator A specifically addresses aligned curriculum and high expectations, two components of a comprehensive approach to closing achievement gaps. Indicator C specifically addresses 'Closing the Achievement Gap' data. Data on all student groups including poverty, ethnicity, gender and gifted and talented is reviewed as part of the accreditation review. When achievement gaps are present, those areas are identified for district action and are subsequently monitored the following year. The Regional Services Unit provides technical assistance and recommendations for interventions.

The Federal Program Unit has NCLB Title I and II programs such as School Support Teams (SST) designated to improve student achievement in schools identified for improvement. Schools who receive SST visits are eligible for School Improvement Grants. Additionally, Title II

programs are in place to assure improved teacher and principal quality. These programs and funds must be targeted toward Title I schools and districts that have been identified for improvement (SI) under Title I of NCLB. An Achievement Gap Advisory Committee was convened to assist the Federal Program Unit in identifying ways to provide support to schools on improvement. In response to input from this committee, the SST review rubric was revised to identify practices that are effective in closing achievement gaps. Evidence shows that schools that were identified for improvement and received SST intervention are making AYP targets at higher rates than schools that did not. **(See Appendix B).**

In addition, another federally-funded initiative (Colorado Reading First) has shown to be effective in increasing the achievement of struggling readers. Many but not all of these struggling readers attend schools with high rates of poverty. Results follow.

- The number of third grade Cohort 2 students ($N=3476$) scoring proficient or advanced on the reading subtest of CSAP increased by 5% over the past two years, while the number of third grade students statewide scoring proficient or advanced has neither increased nor decreased over the same two year period.
- Third grade Colorado Reading First (CRF) English Language Learners (ELL) ($N=886$), which account for 25.5% of all third grade CRF students, are outperforming ELL students statewide on the Reading subtest of CSAP.
- More third grade CRF Non-English Proficient (NEP), Limited English Proficient (LEP), and Fluent English Proficient (FEP) students are scoring proficient and advanced on the reading subtest of CSAP than NEP, LEP, and FEP students statewide.
- 10% more CRF LEP students scored proficient and advanced in 2007 than in 2005, compared to a 10% decrease from 2005 to 2007 of LEP students statewide.
- 5% more CRF FEP students scored proficient and advanced in 2007, compared to a 1% increase shown by FEP students statewide.
- More FEP students are scoring proficient and advanced when compared to state proficient and advanced averages.

A Comprehensive Appraisal for District Improvement (CADI) review, modeled after the SST review, is also available for districts identified for Title I improvement. CDE provides grants for implementation of district improvement plans based on the CADI review findings. Both the district appraisal process and the self assessment process use rubrics based on the characteristics of high performing districts including evidence of best practices related to closing achievement gaps. The results of analyses of the CADI districts also show a pattern of overall improvement. **(See Appendix B).**

While there are pockets of evidence of increased student achievement associated with past CDE initiatives, there is little evidence that achievement gaps have systematically been narrowed or eliminated statewide as a result of past efforts. Efforts of the Department to date have included key components necessary to close achievement gaps, however, strategies have been implemented in isolation and have therefore been ineffective in adequately narrowing achievement gaps. Implementation of best practices both within the department and the districts requires coordinated

effort that has not been in place. The proposed approach is designed to be comprehensive and to replicate systemic approaches that have proven effective in closing achievement gaps elsewhere. This approach would integrate the isolated district evaluation, professional development, and technical assistance previously provided by the Department into a coherent system of support necessary to eliminate race and income achievement gaps.

10. Please provide a list of existing line items or programs that are intended to narrow the achievement gap. How does this new initiative fit in with existing efforts?

Response:

To date, there has been a lot of discussion about the topic of narrowing achievement gaps related to race or poverty. Yet, simultaneously there has been little action and virtually no state funding devoted to supporting this initiative.

While substantial funds have been dedicated to mechanisms (e.g., CSAP, AYP, SARs) that are largely designed to identify gaps that exist, the chief purpose of these tools has been to measure and sort, not support.

More specifically, while closing achievement gaps associated with race or poverty has dominated legislative activity (e.g., Closing the Achievement Gap Commission) and has received regular attention in the popular press, no existing line item or program is expressly dedicated to ameliorating gaps of this nature that currently exist. It is true that state-funded efforts are underway in various units of the Department to address closing gaps. Yet invariably these activities have a somewhat different focus (e.g., gaps separating those with disabilities and those without, etc). Some federally-funded activity is intended to support the performance of poorly-performing students in poor schools (Title I). Those existing line items and programs that do address closing achievement are splintered, lack an exclusive focus on gaps related to race or poverty, and are insufficient to make the headway that is needed."

While there are no existing line items specifically intended to narrow achievement gaps related to race or income, there are appropriations that have closing achievement gaps as a secondary emphasis. However, for the most part these federal dollars have been focused on addressing the primary objectives of the federal programs.

For example, Long Bill Line Item (3) Assistance to public schools (d) appropriated sponsored programs includes distribution of grant funds which are used to assist school districts in providing services to all students. The following table further details this example of federal funding and its purpose and use.

Grant	Funds for formula grants to school districts and BOCES	Purpose and Use
Title I, Part A – Basic Grants	\$116.2 million	Supplemental instruction in reading and math for students at risk of not meeting proficiency standards. School eligibility is determined by percentages of students on free and reduced lunch. Funds must be distributed to school districts using a formula that is written into statute and may only be used for activities written into statute and regulations. The formula is largely based on low income student population.
Title I, Part A - School Improvement Grants (competitive grants)	\$4.2 million	Funds to be awarded to schools engaged in support of school improvement and restructuring planning and implementation. Eligibility is restricted to Title I schools that have been placed on “Improvement” as a consequence of not making adequate yearly progress in increasing rates of student proficiency in reading and math.
Title II, Part A – Improving Teacher Quality	\$30.2 million	These funds may be used by school districts to improve the quality of instruction. One goal of the program is to ensure that all classrooms are taught by a highly qualified teacher. Another goal of the program is to ensure that students in high minority and high poverty schools are not taught by inexperienced and unqualified teachers at a higher rate than students in low poverty, low minority schools. Funds may also be used to provide training and support to building principals and paraprofessionals. Funds must be distributed to school districts using a formula that is written into statute and may only be used for activities written into statute and regulations. The formula is largely driven by low income student population.
Title II, Part B – Math and Science Partnerships (competitive grant)	\$1.6 million	These funds are awarded to partnerships of high poverty, low achieving districts and institutes of higher education to strengthen the quality of math and science instruction in those districts. Partnerships must meet the eligibility criteria specified in statute.
Title II, Part D – Enhancing Education Through Technology	\$1.2 million	These funds may be used to integrate technology into instruction and to provide professional development to teachers to help them better incorporate technology into instructional delivery. Funds must be distributed to school districts using a formula that is written into statute and may only be used for activities written into

		statute and regulations. School districts must be eligible and receive Title I funds in order to receive these funds. The formula is largely based on low income student population.
Title V, Part A – Innovative Education Program Strategies	\$1.2 million	These funds may be used by school districts in support of innovative programs to improve the quality of instruction as well as the health and safety of students. Funds are awarded to school districts based on student enrollment and low income student enrollment.

While there have been some overall achievement gains documented for the school and district appraisal and improvement grants, full implementation of best practices both within the department and the districts requires coordinated effort that has not been in place. As a result, significant and persistent achievement gaps remain. Allocating state funding for an initiative committed primarily to closing the achievement gap will increase the ability of the Department to blend state and federal resources to narrow race and income achievement gaps.

Professional development activities conducted by the Exceptional Student Leadership Unit are focused on closing the achievement gap for children with disabilities, which includes children from low income families and children of all races/ethnicities. Although children in these latter categories are included in these activities, there are very few professional development activities focused exclusively on race/ethnicity and low income.

One project more specifically focused on these categories addresses literacy needs at the secondary level in rural areas of the state. This includes systemic models of schools addressing the needs of struggling students. The initiative is conducted in collaboration with other units within the Department. It provides academic initiatives to ensure the needs of students with disabilities are met, gathers information on scientifically based research practices, and provides continuing work on interventions and progress monitoring. The Unit funds this project at the level of \$70,000 each year.

Many of the programs within the Prevention Initiatives Unit have initiatives that have an indirect focus on closing the achievement gap. There are two primary programs that impact this initiative.

Within the Prevention Initiatives Unit, Title X, Part C of No Child Left Behind provides funding for the education of homeless children and youth. Keeping students who are homeless connected to our schools is critical to closing the achievement gap and preventing an increase in the number of dropouts. All children eligible for this program qualify as low income. The funding level is \$.5 million a year. Seventeen districts receive funding under this program.

The State funded Expelled and At Risk Student Services program provides education for students who have been expelled and prevents suspensions and expulsions. The total state funding for this program was \$6.1 million in 2006-07. This funding was distributed to 60 programs serving a total of 7,750 students. Grantees of these programs have demonstrated success in re-engaging

non-traditional and disenfranchised students through strategies that increase their attachment to school and re-engage them in meaningful activities. Many of these strategies are also best practices for dropout prevention and closing the achievement gap. Students receiving benefit from this program come from all races/ethnicities, and all levels of income.

The Literacy Support and Competitive Grants Unit currently administers the Reading First grant for Colorado. Reading First is a grant that targets literacy achievement for kindergarten through third grade students and is currently in 49 high need schools. Colorado is in its 5th and final full year of implementing Colorado Reading First (CRF) and has received approximately 10 million dollars annually for this grant. It is important to emphasize that Reading First funds are only available for students from kindergarten through third grade and are not available for school years beyond that. Although the program does not specifically tie funding to race/ethnicity or low income, many of the students receiving benefit from the program fall under those categories.

(See Appendix A).

A focused state effort, independent of requirements of the federal programs, is necessary to target resources toward the districts with the largest achievement gaps. The current proposal would greatly facilitate a more efficient comprehensive and coordinated approach to closing achievement gaps for schools with the greatest need, increasing the impact of new and existing resources.

11. Please provide an estimate of the total number of districts that would be eligible for assistance through this initiative, as well as how the Department would determine which districts would receive assistance in FY 2008-09.

Response:

The Closing the Achievement Gap initiative is intended to pilot a comprehensive system of support specifically designed to narrow and eliminate race and income achievement gaps. Beginning in FY08, the requested funding is estimated to support six districts with the largest existing achievement gaps.

Participating districts will vary in size with multiple smaller districts (i.e., less than 10,000 students) sharing resources and thereby potentially increasing the number of districts to a number greater than six. In the second year, the support provided to districts will be differentiated based on their needs. Participating districts will continue with 50% of the resources provided in year one. This begins to transfer to the school district the responsibility of supporting the initiative while CDE continues to ensure the fidelity of implementation. The reduced costs for the initial districts will allow for additional districts to be added to the project. The overall funding for this initiative is expected to remain the same from year to year.

The methodology that the Department is considering to determine which districts will receive support is similar to the approved methodology currently used by the State Board of Education

pursuant to 22-7-611 CRS for determining which schools and districts would be eligible to participate in a voluntary program for closing the achievement gap. The existing methodology is to identify schools at the elementary, middle and high school levels that exceed the state average minority or poverty gap for two consecutive years in both reading and math. The methodology under consideration for this initiative would identify districts that exceed the state average minority or poverty gap for two consecutive years in both reading and math.

At this early stage, this initiative is really a pilot. It targets those few districts with the most persistent and largest gaps. As a result, the methodology under consideration could result in 13 districts that will be eligible to apply for assistance. Districts would volunteer to pilot. Once this pilot project is shown to deliver desired results, the Department intends to repurpose existing resources and pursue additional funding to increase the scale of the initiative and eliminate race and income achievement gaps statewide.

12. Explain the need for a “gap consultant.” Are all districts lacking this expertise?

Response:

First, not all districts have such a need. A few districts in Colorado have begun to narrow achievement gaps through focused efforts and expertise. Other districts do not focus on closing achievement gaps as they do not have a diverse student population. (“diverse” in terms of white v. minority or rich v. poor.) Still others struggle with low achievement for all students, requiring a different kind of expertise and support.

Second, in those districts with a large achievement gap, there is a need to provide support that will ensure that their curriculum, instruction, and assessment are all focused squarely on closing achievement gaps. As not all districts have such a gap, not all districts have this same need. While larger districts generally have greater capacity and expertise to address achievement gaps (and hence have less need for state support in this regard), that is not always the case. Whether a district is small or large, achievement gaps may persist. When that is the case, no matter how large or small a district may be, added expertise may be what is needed. For a variety of reasons, districts may find it difficult to make headway in closing achievement gaps.. Their capacity to mount a large scale change based on a comprehensive plan may be limited due to a lack of time, funding, information, data, tools, and professional development focused on addressing achievement gaps.

Whenever a gap consultant enters the picture, the consultant will assist in a systemic appraisal of the system related to closing the achievement gap and then will assist in designing and implementing needed change.

13. Explain the software tools, hardware platform, and formative assessments that would be provided to participating districts. Why can't existing assessments (CSAPs) be used for closing the achievement gap?

Response:

State assessments (CSAP) are expressly designed to provide a year-end summary of achievement that is useful in identifying how many and which students are performing well with respect to state model content standards. While these assessments draw our attention to achievement gaps that exist in schools, districts and the state, they are neither intended nor designed to provide the progress monitoring information teachers need to make daily classroom decisions.

The intent of closing the achievement gap initiative is to furnish teachers with tools that provide more frequent and accurate feedback for their teaching and learning. Software tools that will be available will have some of these characteristics:

- Capability of monitoring progress of individual students as they advance at different rates
- Longitudinal views of progress (matched cohort)
- Flexibility to display data by individual student, groups and class
- Software licensing
- Privacy for district discretion
- Graphing and export flexibility

In addition to the yearly assessments, it is envisioned that three types of assessments will be used at the classroom level in a program to develop student core skills such as reading and math:

- Screening instruments to identify which students are in need of assistance;
- Diagnostic assessments to determine which skills are stronger and which are weaker for individual students in need;
- Progress monitoring assessments to be used frequently to assess the development of student skills identified in diagnostic assessments.

The Commissioner's "Forward Thinking" Report

14. The Commissioner's report entitled, "Forward Thinking: The Voice (and Future) of the Colorado Department of Education" identifies several planned tasks, goals, or programs. Decision Items #3 (Closing the Achievement Gap) and #4 (Content Specialists) are aimed at two of the tasks outlined in the report. Please discuss other initiatives that are identified in the report which will require additional state resources or re-direction of existing resources in the next three fiscal years.

Response:

There are two areas where additional state resources may be required in the next three years (or existing resources may need to be redirected). The first is related to data management (including longitudinal growth). The second concerns the establishment of centers that are designed to build

leadership capacity (i.e., principal center, futures center, superintendent-board center, and a coaching center). As yet, these resource requirements have not yet been determined.

Decision Item #8: Legal Services

15. Please describe what is driving the need for additional legal services.

Response:

The main cost driver in the legal services billings are costs related to charter school appeals and legal costs related to exclusive chartering authority. The costs related to exclusive chartering authority are included in the “charter school appeals” category. Billings for legal services have been consistent among most categories except for charter school appeals. Charter school appeals expenditures increased \$65,759 from FY2004-05 (see table below). The Department is requesting 97,535 in FY 2008-09 to meet the projected funding shortfall.

**Colorado Department of Education
Legal Service Billings**

	FY2004-05	FY2005-06	FY2006-07
Administration (GF)	\$ 54,106	\$ 26,376	\$ 60,553
Charter School Appeals (GF)	\$ 29,074	\$ 84,010	\$ 94,833
CSDB (GF)	\$ 11,134	\$ 4,771	\$ 4,860
Library Services & Adult Ed (GF)	\$ 368	\$ 592	\$ -
Personnel (GF)	\$ 27	\$ 53	\$ -
Federal Projects (GF)	\$ 558	\$ -	\$ -
Educational Services (GF)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,994
School Finance (GF)	\$ 4,493	\$ 58,389	\$ 22,636
Special Education (GF)	\$ 8,477	\$ 4,655	\$ 9,370
Teacher Licensure (CF)	\$ 59,384	\$ 104,079	\$ 97,246
Charter School Institute (Billed to CSI)	\$ 24,452	\$ 23,972	\$ 36,970
	<u>\$ 192,072</u>	<u>\$ 306,896</u>	<u>\$ 328,463</u>
General Fund (GF) Component	\$ 108,236	\$ 178,846	\$ 194,248
Cash Fund Component	\$ 59,384	\$ 104,079	\$ 97,246
Billed to Charter School Institute	\$ 24,452	\$ 23,972	\$ 36,970
Hours of Legal Services	3,147.3	4,792.2	4,826.9

It is worth noting that this annual sum is less than what many large districts in Colorado spend each year on legal expenses.

16. What statutory changes could the General Assembly consider that would decrease the State Board's need for legal services?

Response:

The Department believes current legal services costs are reasonable given the business of the Department and the State Board of Education. The Department and the State Board of Education will continue to review current practices, but no recommendations for statutory changes are suggested at this time.

Decision Item #9: School Finance Audit Unit Travel Expenditures

17. How does the Department prioritize and schedule school district audits? Does the State Board influence these decisions?

Response:

❖ Audits are scheduled based on:

➤ Size

- Annual Audits are school districts with 20,000 or more students.
- School districts with a student population between 5,000 – 19,000 are audited every two years
- School districts with a student population between 1,000 – 4,999 are audited every three years.
- School districts with a student population between 201- 999 are audited every four years.
- School districts with a student population of less than 200 are audited by means of a desk review.

➤ Prior audit findings

- ◆ If the audit findings are out of proportion to their student population, then the district will be audited more often.

➤ High Risk factors

- ◆ Growth
- ◆ Change in key personnel
- ◆ Extensive audit findings in prior audit

➤ Special Requests

❖ Once the audit is scheduled for a fiscal year then it is divided into audits that should be done by:

➤ Calendar Year

- If a district is audited every two years and the years to be audited would increase to three years by the end of the calendar year, then the audit is considered a priority and should be scheduled by calendar year end.

➤ Fiscal Year

- If a district is audited every two years and the years to be audited would be one by calendar year end. Then the audit would be scheduled after the calendar year end.
- ❖ Audits are assigned to auditors based on the following criteria:
 - Most complex audits are assigned to an experienced auditor and/or multiple auditors
 - Areas are combined to reduce travel costs
 - If possible, audits are assigned in close proximity to an auditor's home.
 - Travel to resort towns are done in the off season
- ❖ Audit completion is dependent on a number of factors:
 - Complexity of audits
 - Condition of district records (whether district has information readily available or not)
 - If district records are not complete, may require auditor to visit school sites
 - Turnover in district personnel
 - Whether audit is under appeal to the Commissioner
 - Health of Auditors
 - Turnover in Auditing Staff
- ❖ Does the state board influence these decisions?
 - No.

3:15-3:30 BREAK

3:30-4:05 DUAL ENROLLMENT / FIFTH YEAR PROGRAMS

18. Please provide information about the number of participating students and the associated state costs of the High School Fast Track Program and the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act.

Response:

Fast Track

This program allows a pupil who fulfills his/her high school graduation requirements to take one or more higher education courses during the twelfth grade year. This program only provides college credit for the student, since the student has already earned all of the high school credits required for graduation. The offering of such a program is voluntary for school districts. Students remain eligible for all sanctioned high school events, but do not receive any rights or privileges of regularly enrolled college students. School districts receive state support for students participating in the program and colleges also claim FTE funding based on the course credit hours taken by the student. The statute requires the district to pay up to 75 percent of the per pupil operating revenues for higher education tuition. A total of 115 students are enrolled in Fast Track programs for FY2007-08.

District Code	District	Number of Pupils Coded as Fast Track for FY2007-08	Per Pupil Operating Revenue FY2007-08	Maximum Amount Attributable to Fast Track	Maximum Amount Attributable to Fast Track @ 75% of PPOR
0020	Adams 12 Five Star Schools	7	6,185.14	43,295.98	32,471.99
0030	Adams County 14	1	6,894.89	6,894.89	5,171.17
0880	Denver 1	10	6,812.32	68,123.20	51,092.40
0900	Douglas County RE-1	11	6,124.35	67,367.85	50,525.89
0910	Eagle County RE-50	1	6,604.38	6,604.38	4,953.29
1130	Miami-Yoder	6	8,288.63	49,731.78	37,298.84
1150	Florence Re-2	5	6,073.30	30,366.50	22,774.88
1540	Ignacio 11 JT	8	7,122.85	56,982.80	42,737.10
1590	Primero Reorganized Re-2	6	9,864.52	59,187.12	44,390.34
1990	Plateau Valley 50	1	6,912.69	6,912.69	5,184.52
2000	Mesa County Valley 51	12	5,986.96	71,843.52	53,882.64
2035	Montezuma-Cortez Re-1	6	6,058.07	36,348.42	27,261.32
2070	Mancos Re-6	4	7,653.54	30,614.16	22,960.62
2830	Telluride R-1	1	8,869.60	8,869.60	6,652.20
3050	Otis R-3	13	10,422.77	135,496.01	101,622.01
8001	Charter School Institute*	23	6,188.30	142,330.90	106,748.18
	Total	115		820,969.80	615,727.35

Funded Students with an attendance code of 01-08 coded as fast-track

* Averaged Per Pupil Funding Across all Institute Charter Schools

Post-secondary Enrollment Options

The Post-secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program is provided for students who need additional challenges during the last two years of high school, for schools who cannot offer a variety of courses to stimulate or maintain interest of students. Students must be under the age of 21 and enrolled in the 11th or 12th grade and deemed by the student, parents, and principal to be in need of coursework at a higher academic level than available at the high school or in need of a different environment. Students are automatically eligible for in-state tuition. If the student is enrolled for one or two courses and successfully completes the courses, the school district shall reimburse the student/parent. If the student is earning high school credit for three or more courses taken at the institution of higher education, the student is included in the district's pupil enrollment and the district receives the full per pupil funding. If the student is not receiving high school credit for the courses taken at the institution of higher education, the student is included in the full-time count of the institution of higher education and it is the student's responsibility to pay tuition to the institution of higher education.

In addition to the number of students listed below that have been identified as full-time PSEO students, there are slightly more than 5,000 students per year that participate in one or more courses through an institution of higher education. It is impossible to determine the amount of

funding attributable to these courses. The students are generally dual enrolled in the courses and are being funded primarily for the high school credits required for high school graduation requirements. School districts do not receive funding for courses that are not successfully completed by the student or for courses the district does not provide tuition reimbursement for.

Full-Time Post-secondary Options Enrollment and Funding for FY2007-08				
District Code		FY2007-08	Per Pupil Operating Revenue	Amount Attributable to Full-time Post-secondary Options Students
0020	Adams 12 Five Star Schools	1	6,185.14	6,185.14
0123	Sheridan 2	19	7,375.44	140,133.36
1420	Jefferson County R-1	1	6,209.04	6,209.04
1580	Trinidad 1	3	6,472.64	19,417.92
1870	Plateau Re-5	1	11,439.93	11,439.93
2000	Mesa County Valley 51	8	5,986.96	47,895.68
2690	Pueblo 60	11	6,304.91	69,354.01
2700	Pueblo 70	105	5,986.96	628,630.80
Sum	Total	149		929,265.88

Funded students with an attendance code of 06 or 07

Fifth Year Programs

Two school districts have reported students enrolled in Post-secondary Options programs that were identified as being enrolled in the 12th grade for school years 2006-07 and 2007-08.

District Code	District	20072008	Per Pupil Funding	Amount Attributable to Full-time Fifth Year Post-secondary Options Students
0123	Sheridan 2	19	7,375.44	140,133.36
2700	Pueblo 70	10	5,986.96	59,869.60
Sum	Total	149		200,002.96

19. Please provide information about how many districts and schools are participating in the new Fast College Fast Jobs (FCFJ) Pilot Program. Further, if it appears that few students are participating in FCFJ this school year, please comment on potential reasons for the low numbers.

Response:

It appears the planning processes involved in initiating a “Fast College Fast Jobs” program is the largest reason for delay. The Funding Public Schools Unit sent a request for information to the twenty-six school districts regarding their status in offering a “Fast College Fast Jobs” program. Due to the short response timeline, responses were received from only seven districts.

Denver – Enrolling 9th graders in program. The District did not code the students appropriately in the October pupil count. The Department is unable to determine the number of 9th grade students enrolled in the program.

Roaring Fork Re-1 – The district is not planning on implementing the program.

Durango 9-R – District is interested in implementing in either 2008-09 or 2009-10.

Branson Reorganized 82 – The District is not planning to implement this program.

Plateau Valley 50 – The District is not planning to implement this program. The alternative high school located at the Job Corps Center has a graduation rate lower than 75%, but already offers a job training program.

Fort Morgan Re-3 – The District is planning to take advantage of the Fast College Fast Jobs Program at Fort Morgan High School. They have had some talks with Morgan Community College and have a meeting scheduled for December 11th. Attended a Dropout Prevention Program earlier this week and heard some of the things Denver Public Schools are doing with this program and hope to learn more about how they are implementing. Next steps seem to be to align course of study between Fort Morgan High School and Morgan Community College and initiate discussions with 8th grade students. If all goes well, planning to offer to next year’s 9th grade students.

Fort Lupton Re-8 – The district would like to institute this program with Aims College and will begin the planning process to implement in 2008-09.

Lamar – Eligible school was closed.

20. [*Background:* In May 2007, the State Board of Education voted to repeal the existing rule prohibiting "Fifth Year Programs". The JBC subsequently sent a letter to the State Board of Education expressing concern about the potentially significant fiscal impact of this action, and requesting a response from the State Board clarifying the intended impact of these rule changes. The State Board did not respond to the Committee's letter. In August, the State Board adopted this rule change as a permanent rule.]
- a. State Board members are again asked to clarify the intended impact of repealing the prohibition on fifth-year programs.
 - b. State Board members are further requested to explain what statutory provision(s) authorizes local districts to continue to receive funding under the School Finance Act for students who have completed twelfth grade and who enroll in higher education courses (*i.e.*, "fifth- or sixth-year" programs).
 - c. What statutory changes related to dual enrollment programs, if any, would State Board members recommend the General Assembly consider in the coming Session?

Response:

The State Board of Education members will discuss this issue with the committee.

4:05-4:15 DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION

21. Please describe how the Department allocated performance-based pay award funding in FY 2007-08, including the percent of employees who received awards. Further, please describe how the Department would allocate performance-based pay award funding if it is appropriated as requested for FY 2008-09.

Response:

For FY2007-08 the Department of Personnel and Administration (DPA) established the guidelines for Achievement Pay which is a combination of Salary Survey and Performance Pay. The following applied to all classified employees. Effective July 1, 2007, Fully Competent, Commendable and Superior performers received an increase based on the following. An employee with a rating of Needs Improvement did not receive a pay increase (salary survey or performance based pay) on July 1, 2007. Fully Competent, Commendable, and Superior performers received the Salary Survey % based on their Occupational Group (2.54% - Financial Services, 2.74% - Administrative Support & Related and 3.44% - Professional Services). A 1% Performance Base Pay was added to Salary Survey for Fully Competent, Commendable and Superior performers. Fully Competent and Commendable performers did NOT receive the full 1% increase if their salaries reached the maximum range of their occupational group. The Superior performer received the additional as non-base building. The Superior performer also received an additional 2% non-base building award (see the following table).

FY2007-08 Achievement Pay			
Classification	Rating	# of Employees	% of Employees
Classified	Needs Improvement	2	0%
Classified	Fully Competent	27	9%
Classified	Commendable	49	16%
Classified	Superior	25	8%
At-Will	n/a	201	66%
	Total	304	

Non-Classified (at-will) employees received the statewide salary survey average of 3.7%. In addition to the statewide average at-will employees that were not on corrective action received approximately 1% (base-building) performance based pay award. At-will employees did not receive a non-base building award.

Base Building Achievement Pay				
Occupational Group	December Market %	Revised Market % After the PERA SAED	Performance Base Pay %	Total Base Pay Adjustment %
Enforcement & Protective Services	3.60	3.34	1.00	4.38
Troopers	6.90	6.63		7.70
Financial Services	2.80	2.54		3.57
Health Care Services	4.40	4.14		5.18
Labor, Trades, Crafts	2.80	2.54		3.57
Administrative Support & Related	3.00	2.74		3.77
Professional Services	3.70	3.44		4.48
Physical Sciences & Engineering	3.90	3.64		4.68
Teachers	3.70	3.44		4.48
Non-Base Building Lump-sum Achievement Payment for 'Outstanding' Performers				2.00%
Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'December Market %' is the market achievement pay component recommended by the Personnel Director for occupational groups. The statewide average for this adjustment is 3.70%. ▪ The 'Revised Market % After the PERA SAED' indicates the slight decreases made to the December recommendations so that payments could be made to PERA for SAED. The mathematical result is a .26% reduction based on June 30 payroll. ▪ The 'Performance Base Pay %' is the performance achievement pay component recommended by the Personnel Director for all occupational groups. This is a base building adjustment. ▪ The 'Total Base Pay Adjustment %' shows the final combined base adjustment to eligible employees' salaries. ▪ The 'Non-Base Building Lump-sum Achievement Payment' is the performance achievement pay component recommended by the Personnel Director for Level 4 (Outstanding) performers. It is not a base building adjustment, but may be earned (at the appropriated level) in future years by all employees rated at the highest level. ▪ Employees who are rated Level 1 (Needs Improvement) are not eligible for salary increases unless their base salary is below the new minimum of the pay range, in which case, salary will be raised to meet the new range minimum. 				

Department of Personnel and Administration establishes the guidelines for Achievement Pay which is a combination of Salary Survey and Performance-based Pay. The Department has not received guidance for FY2008-09 regarding how Performance-based Pay will be distributed.

4:15-4:30 MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

22. What is the status of the reauthorization of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*? Are federal funding levels anticipated to increase?

Response:

No Child Left Behind is currently due to be reauthorized. However, there is a great deal of uncertainty as to when Congress will actually finish the reauthorization process. Relative to funding, however, it is quite likely that federal funding for No Child Left Behind has already experienced its high water mark. Unless there are significant changes instituted in reauthorization, Colorado's overall funding through No Child Left Behind will be level funded at best. Level funding will not keep up with the growth that Colorado is currently experiencing.

23. With respect to the biennial cost-of-living study that is currently being conducted, does the Department anticipate that the composition of the "basket of goods" will change?

Response:

CDE is not involved in the conduct of the study and therefore has no involvement in the composition of the market basket. Legislative Council is statutorily responsible for conducting or contracting for the services of conducting the cost-of-living study. The only part the Department plays in the study is through the withholding of the rescission amount from school districts, on behalf of Legislative Council, to pay for the contracted services costs. The amount is shown as a footnote #14 in the Long Bill as shown below:

"Department of Education, Assistance to Public Schools, Public School Finance, State Share of Districts' Total Program Funding -- Of the amount appropriated for this line item, a portion, not to exceed \$250,000 for fiscal year 2007-08, shall be transferred to the Legislative Council for the purpose of funding the biennial cost of living analysis pursuant to Section 22-54-104 (5) (c) (III) (B), C.R.S."

The school finance act references that the cost-of-living factor reflects the differences in the costs of housing, goods, and services among regions in which school districts are located. The market basket is selected to be representative of the types of housing, goods, and services purchases by a household at a specified income level. There are no major changes in the composition of the market basket. There may be minor changes in the "purchased" items to reflect changes in consumer preferences, availability of consistent products statewide, etc.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION / DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
FY 2008-09 JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING AGENDA

Friday, December 14, 2007
1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

Appendix A



Colorado Reading First
Progress Summary for Cohort 2
2005-2007 Student Achievement Data

Reading First is a federal initiative authorized by the amendments to Title I, Part B, Subpart 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act through the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. The ultimate purpose of Reading First in Colorado is to ensure that all children read at grade level in English by the end of third grade.

- Reading First is a focused nationwide effort to enable all students to become successful early readers.
- Funds are dedicated to help states and local school districts eliminate the reading deficit by establishing high-quality, comprehensive reading instruction in kindergarten through grade 3.
- Building on a solid foundation of research, the program is designed to select, implement, and provide professional development for teachers using scientifically based reading programs, and to ensure accountability through ongoing, valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based assessment (U.S. Department of Education, November 2007).¹

In Colorado, we have served 91 of the 956 elementary schools in the Reading First initiative of which 49 are currently fully funded in Cohort 2. Colorado received an award in 2002 of approximately 62 million dollars distributed over 6 years. Cohort 2 is in its third year of implementation, representing K-3 students at 49 schools across 35 districts.

¹ Department of Education (retrieved November 2007), www.ed.gov.

Third Grade Colorado Student Assessment Program Results (CSAP)

Key Findings

- The number of third grade Cohort 2 students ($N=3476$) scoring proficient or advanced on the reading subtest of CSAP increased by 5% over the past two years, while the number of third grade students statewide scoring proficient or advanced has neither increased nor decreased over the same two year period (Figure 1).
- Third grade Colorado Reading First (CRF) English Language Learners (ELL) ($N=886$), which account for 25.5% of all third grade CRF students, are outperforming ELL students statewide on the Reading subtest of CSAP (Figure 2).
- More third grade CRF Non-English Proficient (NEP), Limited English Proficient (LEP), and Fluent English Proficient (FEP) students are scoring proficient and advanced on the reading subtest of CSAP than NEP, LEP, and FEP students statewide.
- 10% more CRF LEP students scored proficient and advanced in 2007 than in 2005, compared to a 10% decrease from 2005 to 2007 of LEP students statewide.
- 5% more CRF FEP students scored proficient and advanced in 2007, compared to a 1% increase shown by FEP students statewide.
- More FEP students are scoring proficient and advanced when compared to state proficient and advanced averages (Figure 3).

Colorado Reading First
Third Grade CSAP Reading - Cohort 2
2005-2007

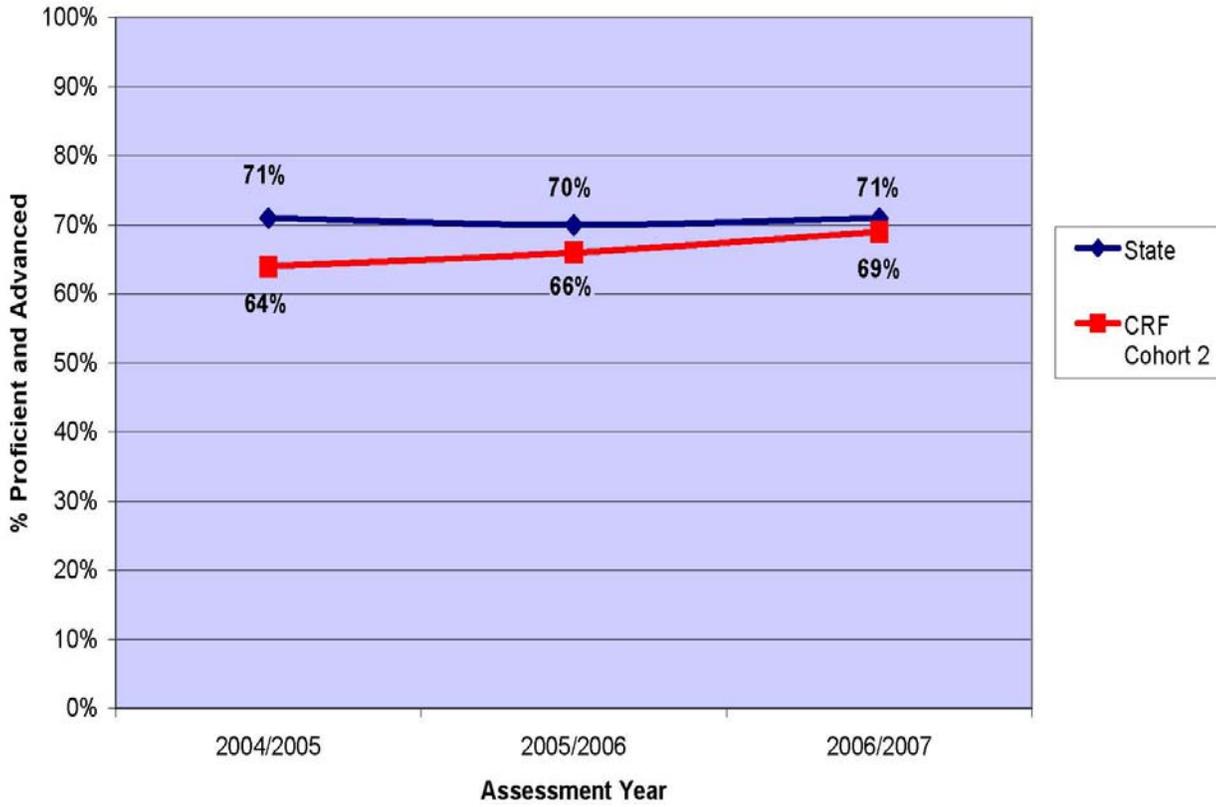


Figure 1.
Colorado Reading First Cohort 2 CSAP Trends

Colorado Reading First
 Third Grade CSAP Reading
ELL Designation - Cohort 2
 2004/2005 - 2006/2007

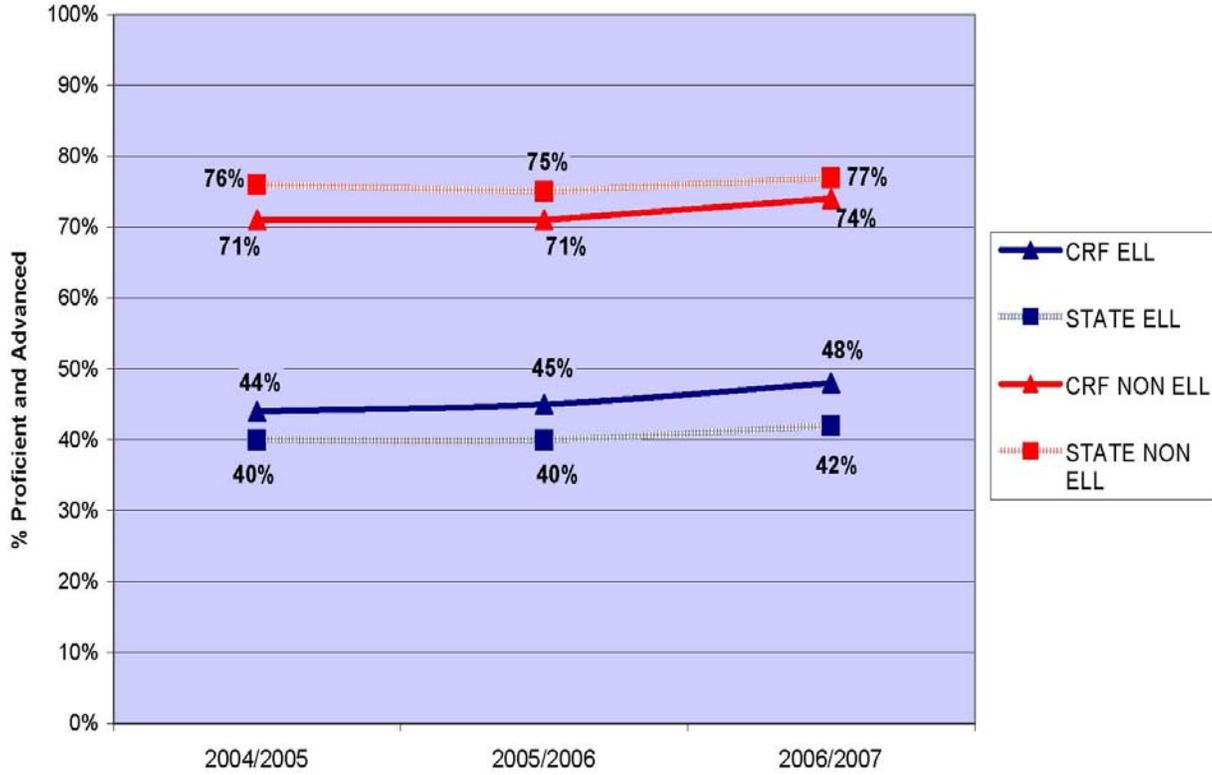


Figure 2.
Colorado Reading First Cohort 2 CSAP Trends by ELL Designation

Colorado Reading First
 Third Grade CSAP Reading
 Language Proficiency - Cohort 2
 2004/2005 - 2006/2007

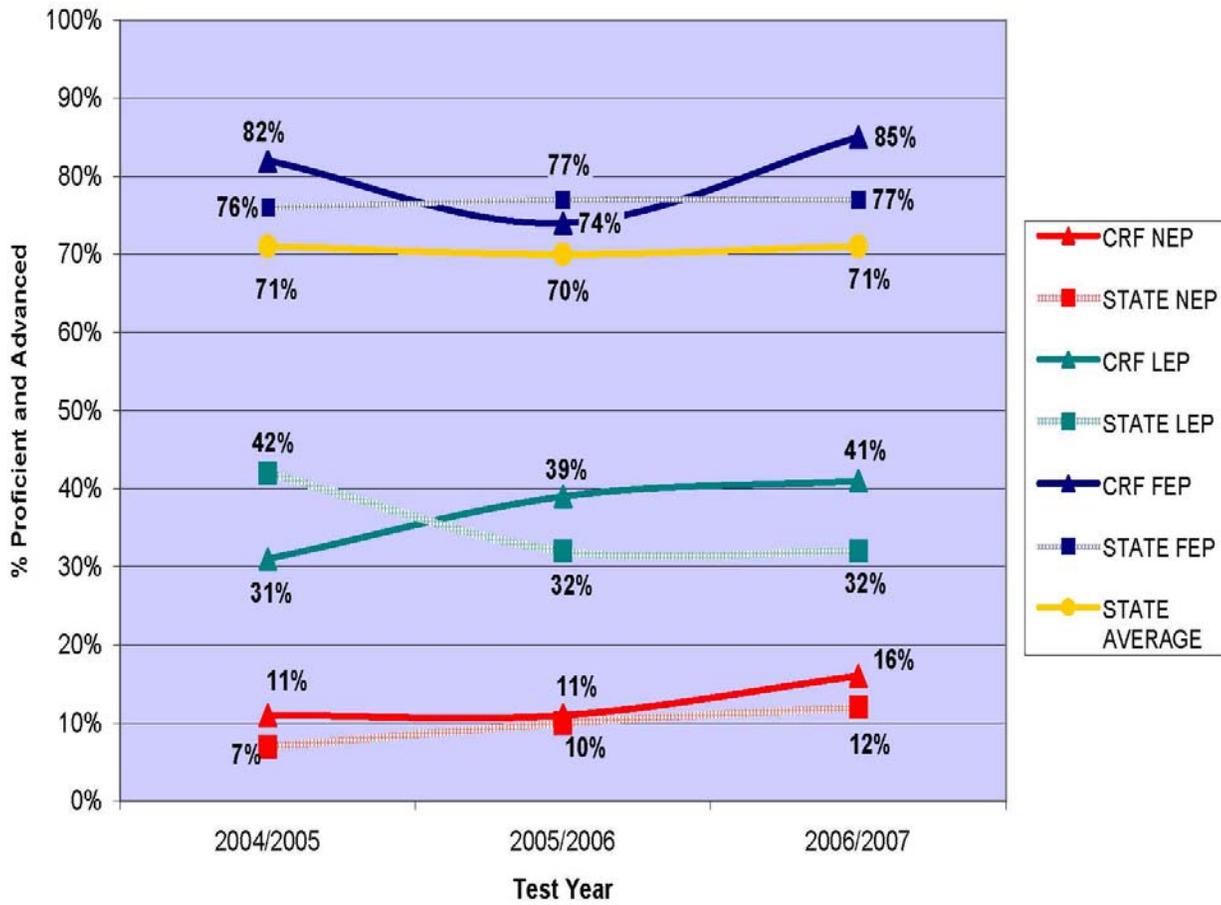


Figure 3.
 Colorado Reading First Cohort 2 CSAP Trends by Language Proficiency

K-3 Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) Results

Key Findings

- With each year of implementation the number of CRF students achieving benchmark on a progress monitoring measure (DIBELS) has increased at all grade levels (Figure 4).

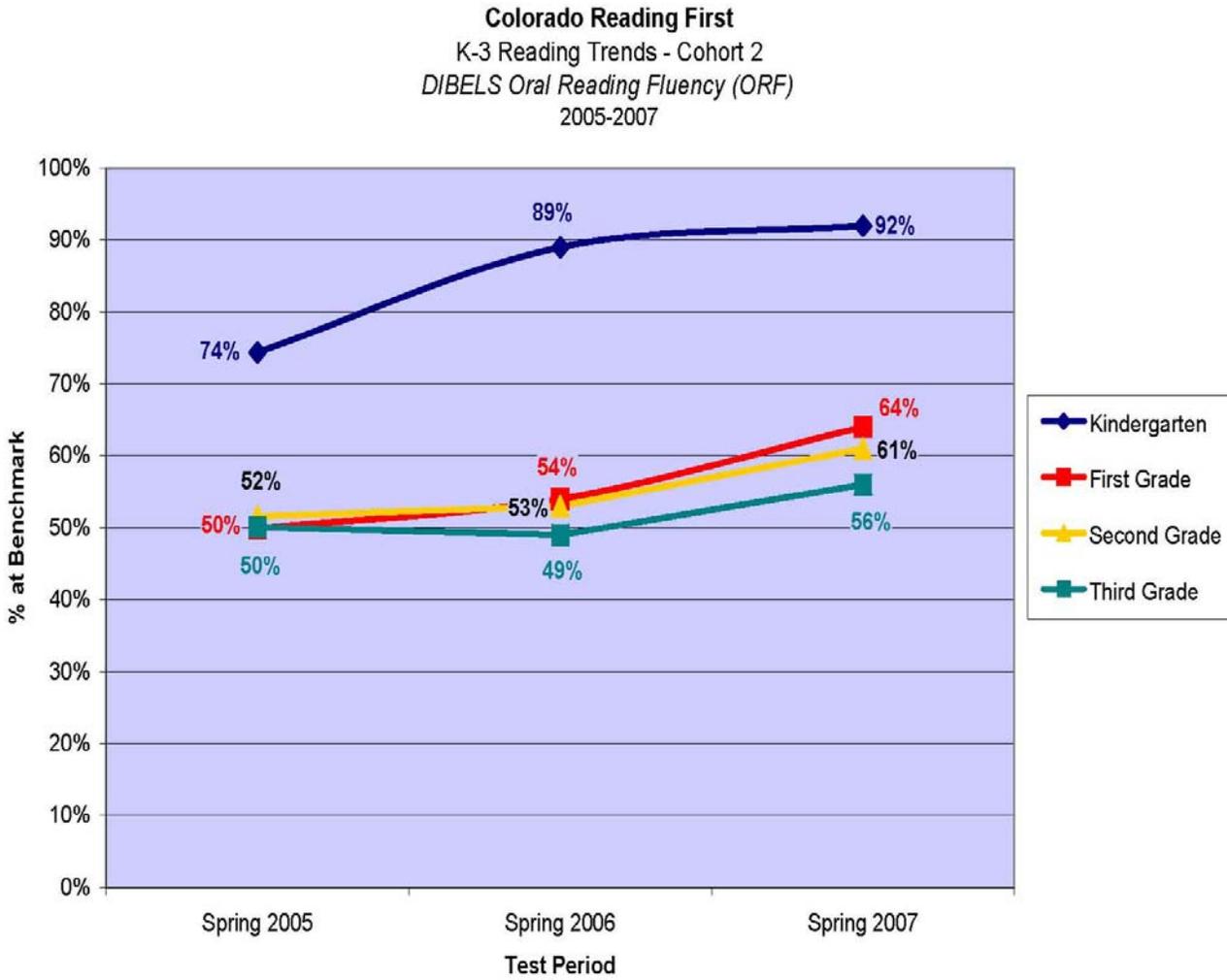


Figure 4.
Colorado Reading First Cohort 2 DIBELS Trends

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION / DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
FY 2008-09 JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING AGENDA

Friday, December 14, 2007
1:30 pm – 4:30 pm

Appendix B

One of the requirements of Title I of NCLB is that States must create a comprehensive statewide system of support for schools and districts identified as in need of support based levels of student proficiency. Initiatives that are part of that system are described below. These activities and funds must be targeted toward Title I schools and districts that have been identified for Improvement under Title I of NCLB. The proposed activities add a necessary component to the existing approaches in that they allow CDE to provide ongoing, targeted support to districts that have not been identified for Improvement under Title I but, nevertheless, have identified gaps in achievement. In addition, much of the support effort to date has focused on assisting schools and districts in identifying areas where they are in need of improvement. The proposed activities directly address a need that has repeatedly surfaced during the course of School and District Support Team reviews.

The State School Support team process is available for Title I schools on improvement or corrective action. The role of school support teams is to conduct a comprehensive review of all facets of a school's program to include an analysis in the areas of:

- Curriculum;
- Assessment;
- Instruction;
- School culture;
- Parent/community involvement;
- Professional development and evaluation;
- Leadership;
- Organizational efficiency; and
- Comprehensive planning.

The teams conduct the analyses through the use of document examination, observations, and interviews. Team members interview every staff person and a sample of students and parents. They also interview central office administrators. The team observes each teacher twice.

Each school receives a comprehensive report of the findings of the week's review. There is a narrative summary of themes and recommendations, a detailed report of findings by each indicator (sub tasks of the areas identified above) and an overall summary of ratings per indicator.

Each team is lead by a team leader and includes six members. The team composition includes a variety of individuals with backgrounds as former teachers, principals, independent consultants, superintendents, curriculum directors and school board members.

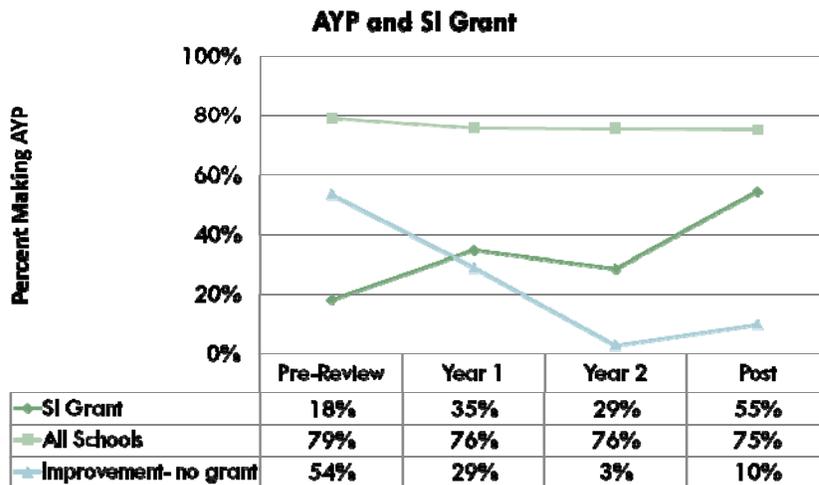
Following the completion of review, SEA staff and the school support team leader make an exit presentation to the school principal and central office staff. Another debriefing is held for school staff using the services of a trained facilitator. The facilitator assists the staff in understanding the report and in developing goals and strategic actions for a school improvement plan.

Each school that receives a school support team visit also receives a school improvement grant to assist in the implementation of the report's findings. The Title I staff serve as liaisons to the schools in order to assist them in further developing the improvement plan so that the funding is actually provided.

In addition to the school support teams and the school improvement grant, the following additional supports are available for schools:

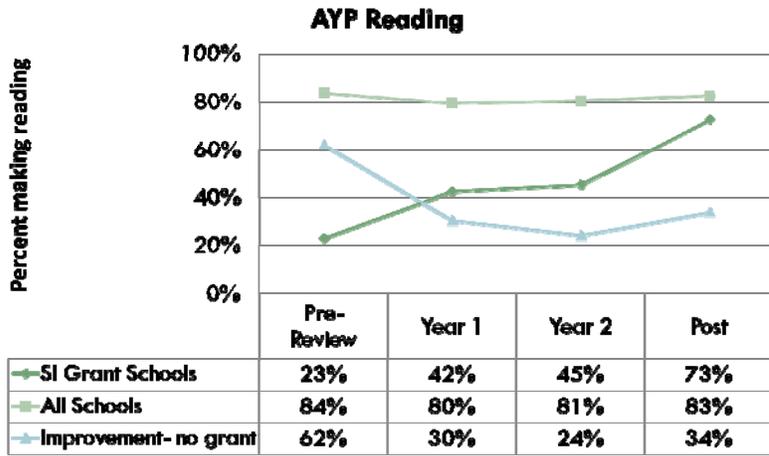
- Re-visits to schools that have had the SST process
- A facilitator cadre to provide on-going support to schools following the review
- Web-based resources
- Math and Science Partnerships
- Support for Family Literacy
- High Quality Professional Development in the following areas:
 - Mathematics
 - Leadership
 - On-line courses

School Improvement Grants



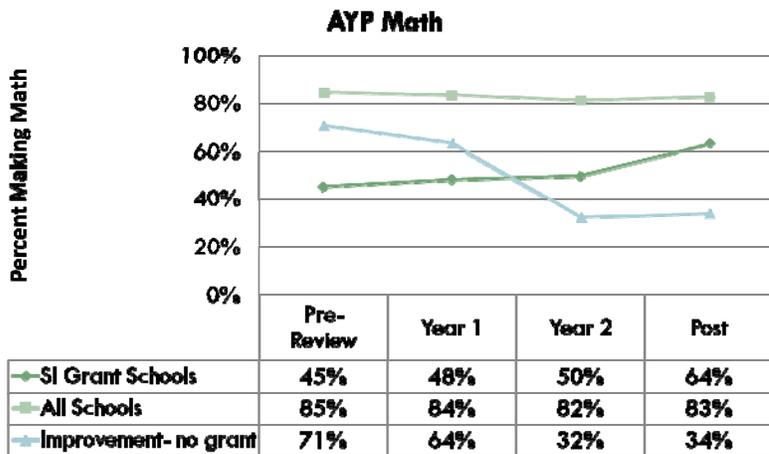
This chart shows that schools identified for Improvement that received an SST visit and implementation grant are making adequate yearly progress at a much higher rate than schools identified for Improvement that have not received an SST visit and implementation grant.

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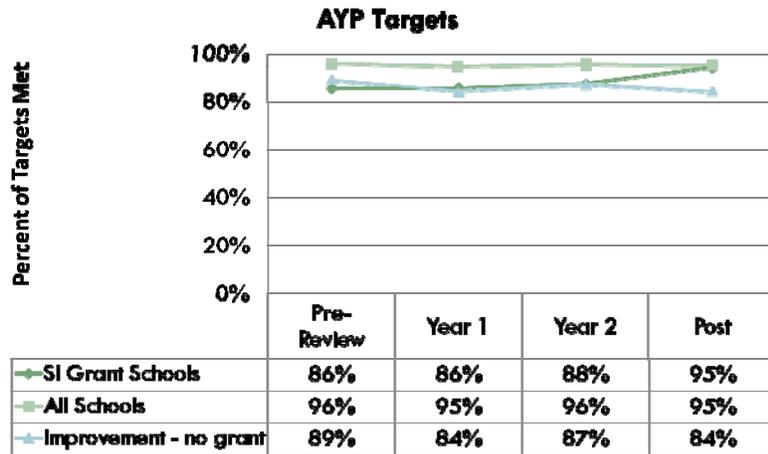
This chart shows that schools identified for Improvement that received an SST visit and implementation grant are making adequate yearly progress reading targets at a much higher rate than schools identified for Improvement that have not received an SST visit and implementation grant.

School Improvement Grants



This chart shows that schools identified for Improvement that received an SST visit and implementation grant are making adequate yearly progress math targets at a much higher rate than schools identified for Improvement that have not received an SST visit and implementation grant.

School Improvement Grants



This chart shows that schools identified for Improvement that received an SST visit and implementation grant are making a higher percentage of adequate yearly progress at a much higher rate than schools identified for Improvement that have not received an SST visit and implementation grant.

CDE has also developed a system of support for school districts modeled after the School Support Team process. CDE provides grants for district improvement processes. The District Improvement Grant can be used for a comprehensive appraisal of district programs, a self assessment process, or implementation of the findings from either of the previous processes.

Both the district appraisal process and the self assessment process use rubrics based on the characteristics of high performing districts. The rubrics are used to assess performance in the following areas:

- Curriculum;
- Assessment;
- Instruction;
- District Culture;
- Parent Community engagement;
- Professional Development and Evaluation;
- Leadership;
- Organizational Effectiveness; and
- Comprehensive Planning

CDE utilized the services of staff from the Southwest Comprehensive Center (SWCC) to assist in District Improvement efforts. The Center conducted an analysis of the Comprehensive Appraisal for District Improvement (CADI) approach. The results of the analysis will be used to make improvements to the system and to develop tools to further assist districts in their improvement efforts.