

# HANDBOOK FOR COLORADO EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

*A Guide to State Accountability and Accreditation*

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July 2004

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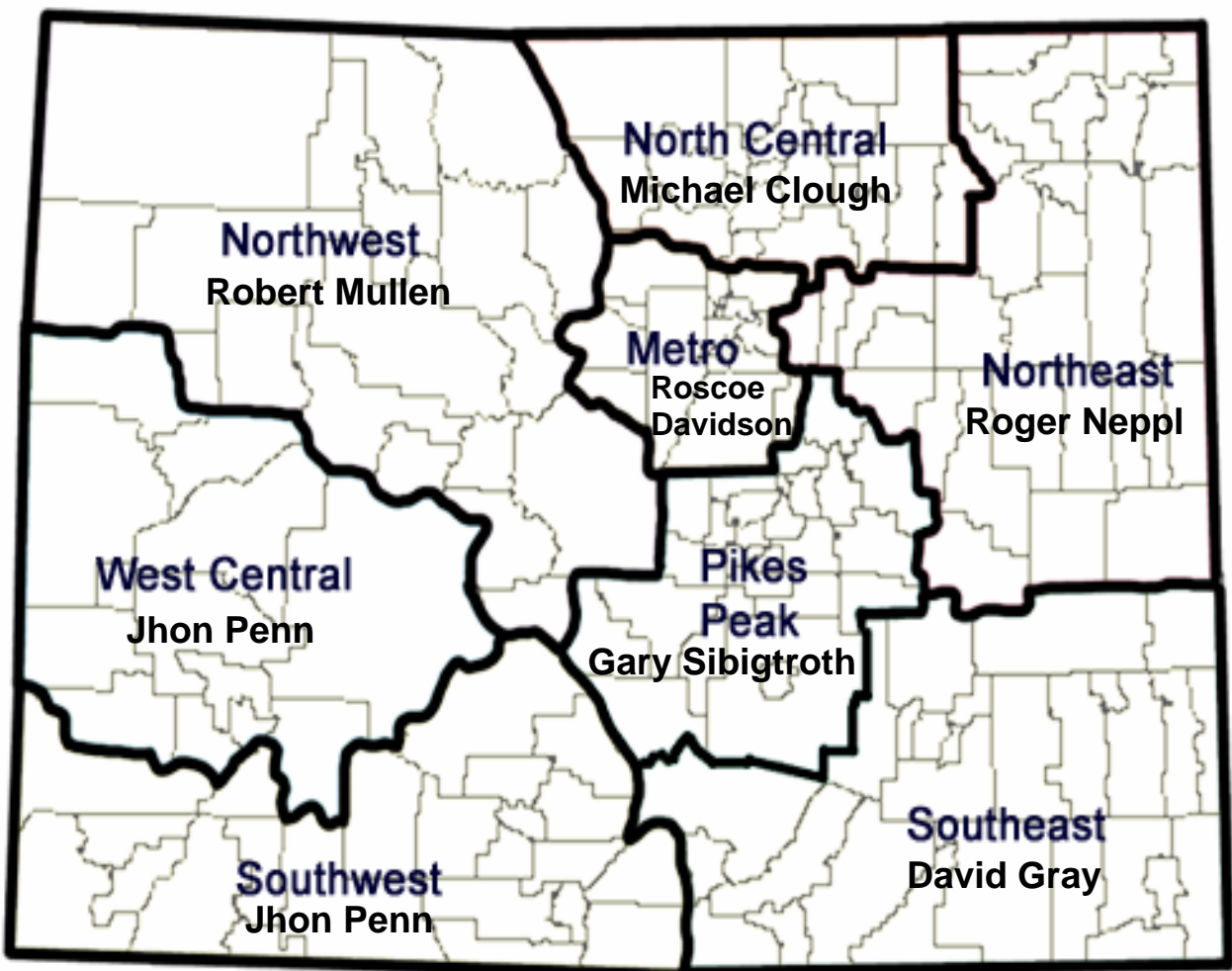
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# CDE Service Teams Unit Regional Map

The Department's Regional Education Services Unit was established to provide assistance and support to school districts in achieving educational goals. In 1999 the Department expanded its regional service efforts by establishing eight regional service teams to represent the education regions shown in the map below.






## A MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The purpose of this accountability handbook is to assist school districts and schools in implementing Colorado's accountability program. Each school district develops its own accountability system tailored to its community and supported by the following purposes:

- To foster greater accountability from public schools and school districts for the betterment of public education.
- To provide a process for the parents and community so that they may advise the schools and districts in adopting a plan for a local accountability program designed to measure the adequacy and efficiency of education programs offered by the district and/or school.
- To make recommendations to the board of education of such school district relative to the prioritization of expenditures of school district moneys.
- To support all schools and school districts in order to improve academic achievement for all students in safe schools.
- To support local efforts to reform and restructure public education.
- To support and maintain a school and community partnership and parent involvement for the ongoing improvement of public education.
- To support and enhance the public's understanding of school and school district academic achievement.

It is my pledge that the Colorado Department of Education will focus on cooperative efforts and will work with all segments of the community to improve achievement.



Gary Sibigtroth  
Assistant Commissioner  
State of Colorado





# **Chapter One**

## **An Overview of Public Educational Accountability**

This manual is designed to acquaint students, parents, teachers, school administrators, community members, and accountability committee members with the public educational accountability requirements in Colorado. The following pages are part of the Colorado Department of Education's effort to assist local school communities in developing successful local public educational accountability programs. There is a glossary of education terms in Appendix A to help those new to accountability understand the terms used in this handbook.

Colorado's public educational accountability program emphasizes school improvement planning which significantly involves the community and public disclosure of a school's educational outcomes to all of its publics.

Public educational accountability in Colorado is administered through the State Board of Education's accreditation process. In addition, the Accountability Act of 1971 provides a statutory basis for accountability in public education.

### **History**

Unlike many states, Colorado has a long history of "local control." Our state constitution and statutes give districts considerable authority, within very broad state guidelines, to decide the particulars of what textbooks to use, what curriculum to offer, and what students need to accomplish to graduate: what, in short, school looks like.

In the past, standards were for the most part locally set, with relatively little oversight from the state. From 1897 through 1952, the University of Colorado approved high school graduates for college. In 1952 accreditation became a function of the Colorado Department of Education. But this was "input" accreditation: a process focused on measuring and counting the factors that were considered contributors to a quality education, such as the number of books in the library and the number of teachers with advanced degrees.

When the Colorado Legislature first mandated accountability committees in 1971, the legislative declaration said that its purpose was to "institute an accountability program to define and measure quality in education and thus to help the public schools of Colorado to achieve such quality and to expand the life opportunities and options of the students of this state" and that "the educational accountability program developed . . . should be designed to measure objectively the adequacy and efficiency of the educational programs offered by the public schools."

In 1988, the Legislature created School Building Accountability Committees and charged the State Board of Education with creating state goals for student achievement, attendance, and graduation. In 1992, the Legislature created new responsibilities for both school and district accountability committees by requiring these committees to review and make recommendations about the prioritization of school and district

expenditures. In 1993, the Legislature passed HB 1313, which required the development and implementation of state content standards. The cycle of school improvement planning became a central part of the accountability process, against a backdrop of these clearly articulated state standards. In addition, over the past decade the Legislature has expanded accountability's role with other tasks, such as the review of charter applications at the district level and the review of school safety.

In 1998, House Bill 1267 (the Colorado Accreditation Act) mandated a new system of educational accreditation, one focused on "output" criteria — proof that students are learning as measured by objective factors, such as the Colorado Student Assessment Program tests (CSAP). This new accreditation system calls for participation from accountability committees and merges many of accountability's traditional school improvement planning tasks with the accreditation process. In addition, the bill eliminated the State Accountability Committee, which advised the State Board of Education, and this change, combined with budget cuts, eliminated the annual State Accountability Conference. You will find a summary of recent developments in Appendix B.

All of this reform is playing out against a national backdrop of education reform, starting in 1982 with *A Nation At Risk*. The latest federal legislation, House Bill 1: No Child Left Behind, will heavily impact our schools and the State Department of Education with its voluminous regulations and requirements. The good news is that Colorado's three decades of reform have put us in the forefront in implementing the requirements of No Child Left Behind. Check the Colorado Department of Education's web site ([www.cde.state.co.us](http://www.cde.state.co.us)) for education news and evolving regulations.

## **The Picture Today**

In Colorado, the governance of public education is still decentralized in comparison to other states. The state constitution and statutes provide considerable autonomy to local boards of education. The result provides high expectations for Colorado public schools but has left the authority with local boards of education for determining the best educational goals and programs for each school district.

While the means of educating students are left in the districts' hands, the ends — what students should learn and achieve — are determined by the state content standards. By developing these standards and the accompanying assessments, Colorado has moved towards a statewide system for judging and reporting the quality of its schools. This process is known as accreditation.

The CSAP (Colorado Student Assessment Program) is a series of tests that measure student achievement in relation to Colorado standards. These standards are expectations specifying what students should know at particular points in their education. As a result, CSAP provides a series of snapshots as well as a record of yearly growth and progress of student achievement in reading writing, math, and science as they move through grades 3 – 10. Scores on the CSAP are posted on the Department of Education's web site.

Each year the state, in cooperation with each local school district, distributes a School Accountability Report (SAR) for each district that reports the results of all the CSAP tests given that year. These reports summarize all of the CSAP results by awarding a rating (such as “Excellent” or “Unsatisfactory”) to each district. SARs for each school district are available on the Colorado Department of Education’s web site, and each district report is distributed to the parents of students in that district.

Each school district develops its own accountability program tailored to its community. Each school in the district is required to have an accountability advisory committee or council. This committee annually reviews the level of student performance and develops goals and plans for improving educational achievement. In addition, each district prepares an annual report to the school community.

Thus, every school in the state has become accountable for student achievement in different ways:

1. **Accountability Committees.** At the district level (since 1971) and the school level (since 1988), accountability committees consisting of parents, teachers, administrators, and community members plan for school improvement and are accountable to their communities for that improvement.
2. **Accreditation of Districts and Schools.** The implementation of House Bill 98-1267 requires school districts to enter into an accreditation contract with the state. Each district, in turn, accredits its own schools. If a school does not meet the requirements of accreditation, it will be placed on academic watch or probation and if it does not improve, may lose its accreditation.
3. **School Accountability Reports.** These public reports rate the school’s overall academic performance, based on weighted scores from CSAP tests. The cut scores for the ratings were established by a bell curve comparison of all schools at the same level (elementary, middle, high) statewide the first year the SARs were published.
4. **Federal Requirements of the “No Child Left Behind” Act.** These requirements hold schools accountable by mandating state standards, annual testing, and report cards. Schools where students do not make adequate yearly progress will be held accountable.

**In brief, the public educational accountability process requires that**

- √ the State Board of Education set high statewide goals for improvement of education;
- √ each local district develop its own goals and accountability program tailored to its community and consistent with the state’s goals;
- √ each school in a district develop its own goals and accountability program consistent with the state and district goals;

- √ each accountability program — at district and building level — be guided by a representative advisory committee which reviews improvement plans, makes recommendations, and reports its progress frequently and clearly to the appropriate audience whether it be the general public, the State Board of Education, the local school board, or the school community; and
- √ annual reports be made by each school to its community, and by each district to its community and the State Board of Education on progress toward local and state goals and improvement plans for the next year.

## **CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF ACCOUNTABILITY**

Every accountability program must

- √ measure the health and effectiveness of the school/educational system;
- √ articulate standards expected;
- √ hold the system accountable for results;
- √ respond to community needs, e.g. charter schools, other forms of choice;
- √ foster learning by improving instruction;
- √ evaluate the effectiveness of all programs;
- √ report results to the public; and
- √ examine data to reveal performance.



**An Accountability Committee Is . . .**

1. A potential public relations firm.
2. A group that makes suggestions to the Board of Education regarding budget expenditures.
3. A group to review the school report card and make suggestions as to how to improve the school rating.
4. An advisory committee.
5. A group to advise regarding school improvement plans.
6. A group to advise regarding student achievement.
7. A group that works with the school administration to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

**An Accountability Committee Is Not . . .**

8. A mini school board.
9. A group that evaluates district personnel.
10. A group that makes hiring and firing recommendations.
11. A policy-making body.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Accountability at the School Building Level**

The School Finance Act of 1988 established a school advisory accountability committee for every public school in Colorado. Because some of our state's districts are quite small, the Finance Act also allowed that, upon written approval of the Commissioner of Education, the district advisory accountability committee could fulfill the requirements for the school building advisory accountability committee.

In 2000, state law was changed to restructure school accountability committees and rename them School Advisory Councils. However, if a school already had a functioning accountability committee in place that met all the requirements of the new law, that school was allowed to retain the older accountability committee instead of adopting the new council form. Schools that were new after January 1, 2000, must have a School Advisory Council. The membership requirements listed below are for School Advisory Councils.

#### **Legal Requirements**

##### **Membership**

There shall be a school advisory council at each public school in each school district. A school advisory council shall consist of seven members designated, appointed, or elected as follows:



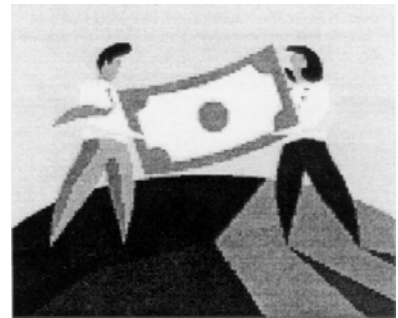
1. The principal of the school or the principal's designee;
2. One teacher who provides instruction at the school elected by a vote of all licensed professionals who provide instruction at the school or have an office in the school;
3. Three parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in the school who are elected by a vote of the parents and legal guardians of students enrolled in the school;
4. One adult member designated by an organization of parents, teachers, and students recognized by the school;
5. A person from the community who is involved in business and who is appointed by the principal;
6. No more than three members of a school advisory council shall be employed by or relatives of an employee of the school district. If an election would result in more than three school district employees or persons related to school district employees serving on the council, only the number of candidates who receive the highest number of votes that will result in three school district employees or persons related to school district employees serving on the council shall become members of the council and other employees or persons related to employees shall be disqualified;

7. Any appointment or designation required by this subsection shall be made by September 1, 2001, and by September 1 of every odd-numbered year thereafter. Any election required by this subsection shall be conducted on or before October 31, 2001, October 31, 2003 and on or before October 31 of every year thereafter;
8. Members of the council shall serve terms of two years;
9. Any vacancies that may arise on the council by reason of a member's resignation or disqualification or for any other reason shall be filled by majority action of the remaining members of the council. Except for the principal, no member of the council shall serve more than two consecutive, full terms, plus any balance remaining on an unexpired term if the initial appointment was to fill a vacancy.

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

No later than September 1 of each year, the advisory accountability committee for each school building in the state shall adopt high, but achievable, goals and objectives for the improvement of education in its building and shall adopt a plan to improve educational achievement in the school, to implement methods of maximizing the graduation rate from the secondary schools of the district, and to increase the ratings for the school's accreditation category.

In addition to any other duties and powers provided for by law, the advisory accountability committee for each school building in the state shall make recommendations to the chief executive officer of the school relative to the prioritization of expenditures of school district moneys by such school. In addition, a copy of such recommendations shall be sent to the advisory accountability committee of the school district and to the board of education of such school district. The chief executive officer shall consider such recommendations made by the school building accountability committee in formulating budget requests to be presented to the board of education.



### **Leadership**

The chair of the school advisory accountability committee should be elected pursuant to the building bylaws.

### **Additional Responsibilities**

The building and district accountability committees could be involved as part of the requirement that the board consult with parents, teachers, administrators, students, and the community-at-large when developing and adopting a conduct and discipline code.

The accountability committee may be involved with the development of the school calendar. The law now stipulates that parents and teachers must be given an opportunity to offer input prior to adoption.

## Best Practices for Smooth Committee Operations

The heart of the accountability process is the individual school committee. Change for children happens in the classroom, not the administration building. It is the cooperative efforts of teachers, parents, staff, administrators, students, and community members that build the foundations for school improvement.

1. **School Improvement Plan:** The central purpose of a School Advisory Council or School Accountability Advisory Committee is to define goals and action plans for its building and set these forth in a clear, easily understood School Improvement Plan (SIP) that is submitted to the district. These goals and action plans must fit within the district's goals established by its own Board of Education and the state standards. But it is also important that they reflect school performance data, community concerns, and the school's own philosophy.
2. **Budget:** Building-level committees make recommendations to the principal regarding priorities for budget expenditures of the building. The committee should review the staffing design, decentralized budget, and any other school monies, including "any state, federal, local, or private grants and any other discretionary funds" [CRS 22-7-107(1)]. As the committee members review the proposed expenditures, they should consider how these monies support their school improvement plan.
3. **Reporting:** One of the most important duties of the School Advisory Council or Building Accountability Advisory Committee is to report to its public. It is important to keep these reports in everyday language so that all members of the public can understand what you have to say.
  - a. The School Improvement Plan is a public document that should be available at the building to anyone who requests it; a summary of the SIP should be published to your school community.
  - b. The budget recommendations the school committee makes should be sent to the district administration and published to your school community.
  - c. The school committee must create an annual report to its school community that appraises the educational performance of the school and provides the data underlying that appraisal, reports the results of the past year's school improvement plan, and details the coming year's school improvement goals.
4. **Broad-Based Representation:** Committee membership should be representative of a school's community. A broad-based committee fosters a clearer and more complete view of the issues and helps create fresh solutions to complex problems. The committee's membership should be balanced in terms of
  - √ parents, teachers, classified staff, administrators, community and business members, and students (where appropriate)
  - √ the racial and ethnic makeup of the community
  - √ the language mix of the community



- √ adults who work outside the home and those that do not
  - √ parents of students with different abilities and special needs
  - √ gender
5. Relationship with PTA or PTO: The committee should be separate and distinct from the PTA or PTO, but have strong communication with that organization. It often works well to appoint a PTA officer as an ex-officio member of the accountability committee.
  6. Leadership: One of the most effective practices is to have a parent chair or co-chair the building committee. Many schools prefer a co-chair structure, which teams a parent with a staff member.
  7. Meetings: Committees should meet on a regular basis throughout the school year (see sample monthly agendas in the appendix). Meeting calendars should be determined by the committee within the first two months of school and published in an appropriate format (such as the school's newsletter, web site, community newsletters, and school marquee). When you choose a meeting time, make sure that everyone who wishes to serve on the committee can attend at that time. Night meetings are strongly encouraged so as to include more of your community.
  8. Public Interaction: Committees should establish procedures and identify ways for the community to have appropriate access to the accountability process. Colorado state law requires that these meetings be open to the public under the state Sunshine Law. The committee should provide a means by which anyone can add items to the committee's agenda and should publish the date, time, and location of meetings at least one week in advance.
  9. Minutes: Minutes or summaries of each meeting should be published in a timely manner in regularly distributed school newsletters or web sites and should be made available to the public at large.
  10. Communication with District: Effective communication should be maintained between the school accountability committee and the District Accountability Advisory Committee. Some districts elect representatives from the school committees to the district committee; others use newsletters or reports to keep the lines of communication open.
  11. Training: Members of the committee should receive, on a regular basis, the background information and training needed to carry out their responsibilities. Administrators and school staff should offer supporting information on particular issues of concern to the building committee.

## **Additional Guidelines for Effective Committees**

### **By-Laws**

By-laws are necessary for a committee to run effectively; they provide the rules of the road. While consensus decision-making is very desirable, agreement is sometimes not possible on volatile issues. Having established guidelines for decision making can foster civil discourse.

By-laws usually spell out the name of the committee, purpose, membership, officers, responsibilities, establishment of meetings, decision-making model, and methods of amendment. Additional sections can cover schedules, activities, and role of the principal.

### **Agendas**

Agendas are essential: they recognize the importance of committee members' time and keep committee work on track. A particularly effective practice is to send the agenda to the committee members a week or two ahead of time, along with a reminder of the meeting date and time. That way, members will be able to come prepared to work and participate.

Much of what is on a building agenda each month is determined by the cycle of school improvement planning. (See appendix.) But the suggested agenda is just the bare bones of what will happen in a good meeting. The chair or co-chairs should sit down with the principal or designated administrator to plan the agenda in advance. Keep in mind what background information or training the committee needs in order to get their work done. For instance, a committee with many new members will need some basic grounding in school finance in order to be able to discuss the budget.

Always leave time for members to offer concerns or suggest agenda items for the next meeting. To ignore input makes committee members feel shut out of the process. Giving people ownership in the work of the group makes people committed to the cause.

### **Reporting**

Accountability committees exist to hold schools accountable to their taxpayers. That duty cannot be met without comprehensive and accurate reporting to the community. Besides the three major required reports the committee must make (detailed above), a committee should communicate often with its public. One way to do so is to publish monthly reports summarizing committee work in the school newsletter or on a school web site. In addition, it is helpful to solicit input from the community when the committee begins to plan for the next school year.

### **Leadership**

It is all too easy to sit in a meeting and say nothing, but the quality of an accountability committee often depends upon the quality of its members. Please consider stepping forward and being engaged.

## **Chapter Three**

### **School Improvement Planning**

School improvement planning is the most essential duty of a School Advisory Council or School Accountability Committee. It is the blueprint for change that improves students' learning.

The law says that by September 1 of each year, the principal of each school, with the assistance and cooperation of the school accountability committee and school staff, must adopt ambitious goals and plans to improve graduation rates and student achievement. The annual planning cycle involves determining/re-examining the vision and mission for the school, completing a needs assessment that results in a school profile and a needs statement indicating priority goal areas, and developing an action plan for the year's school improvement. At the end of the school year, the cycle continues with the annual evaluation of those results to the public and to the local board.

Building goals shall be consistent with, but not limited to, the State Board of Education's goals and objectives. Each district's accreditation contract should delineate the district's priorities for improvement. While the planning process varies from school to school, several key elements of the planning process are described in more detail below:



## **Step One: Gather Information**

### ***Vision***

In order to envision the school's future, it is necessary to articulate the values that characterize the organization, drive its decision-making processes, and influence the way in which its members view the future. These beliefs are the foundation of the school plan. Make sure that the committee knows what the vision is.

### ***Mission***

A mission statement is a brief statement of the school's purpose or reason for existence. It can be viewed as the ultimate objectives of the school; for this reason, its contents should be both lofty and practical. It should be published in the parent or student handbook.

### ***Student Performance Profile***

In meeting the legal requirements for measurable goals expected by Colorado's accountability program, schools should develop a profile of current student performance to provide a point of reference for their school improvement goals and plans. (Refer to Appendix H for more information about assessment.)

The classroom and school student performance profiles could include the following data:

- School assessment results related to local board of education adopted student outcome and performance standards expected at designated levels;
- Number and percentage of students attaining and exceeding the district student performance standards at designated levels separated by race/ethnicity and gender;
- Indicated levels of school satisfaction resulting from surveys or community meetings of students, former students, staff, and community members representative of the different racial/ethnic populations within the school attendance area;
- Findings from research on effective educational practices;
- School demographic trends and community needs; and
- Performance of exceptional and language minority students.

## **Step Two: Analyze Data and Make Decisions**

Goals and measurable objectives for improving student performance outcomes must have a point of reference. This point is established with analysis of the current levels of student performance. The school is then able to take the next step and outline the goal and objective statements that clearly describe the desired new profile of student achievement. These objectives should be consistent with the State Board of Education's goals and objectives, district priorities, and the school community's needs. Stating

specific, measurable goals permits a welcome event to occur. A school can celebrate progress toward goals, because everyone can recognize what has been attained.

Strong goals are also SMART goals:

**S Strategic and specific**

**M Measurable**

**A Attainable**

**R Results-oriented**

**T Time-based**

The goal and objective statements should be worded simply to permit all students, parents, teachers, and community members to readily recognize how well the students are performing now and how well they will be performing if the goals and objectives are attained.

### ***Examples of Goals***

Inadequate: Washington Elementary will improve reading as measured by CSAP.

Improved: Washington Elementary will improve student reading as measured by the CSAP by 10% by 2006.

Complete: Washington Elementary will improve student reading at grades 3, 4 and 5 as measured by the Reading CSAP. Currently 50% of these students are proficient or advanced on the Reading CSAP. By June 2004, 60% of students will be proficient or advanced, and by June 2006, 75% of students will be proficient or advanced.

### ***Action Plans***

Each goal should have a detailed action plan that includes the methods/activities required to accomplish the goal and objectives, timelines, costs, assessment indicators, and reporting expectations. Many districts lay out these details in a formal matrix.

For the above reading goal, Washington Elementary might decide to improve the validity and reliability of its assessments, as well as asking teachers to learn new instructional techniques. Below is an example of what the formal action plan might look like.

## 2003–2004 Action Plan for Reading Goal

<b>Specific Activities to Accomplish Goal</b>	<b>Timeline or Target Date</b>	<b>Persons Responsible &amp; Resources Needed</b>
<p>Reading Study Team will meet to analyze data from CSAP reading assessments and local assessments.</p> <p>New assessment program for primary students (based on DRA) will be studied and implemented.</p> <p>Team will choose exemplar books at each grade level (K–5) to demonstrate exit level of reading performance expected at that grade level and choose books for benchmark levels for mid-year performance assessment.</p> <p>Intermediate teachers (3–5) will compile examples of comprehension strategies for content-area reading.</p>	<p>June to August 2003</p>	<p>Reading Study Team: one teacher from each grade level (K–5), principal, and reading consultant</p> <p>Staff will receive per-diem pay for summer work; consultant paid from grant.</p> <p>Purchase/collect DRA materials needed. Purchase one set of exemplars for each classroom.</p> <p>Create packet on comprehension strategies.</p>
<p>Train all primary teachers in DRA assessment. Train all teachers grades 3–5 in comprehension strategies.</p>	<p>August 15, 2003 (work week)</p>	<p>Reading Study Team leads training; all classroom teachers participate.</p>
<p>Assess all primary students with DRA and collect and compile data.</p> <p>Assess all grade 3–5 students with district reading assessment.</p>	<p>August through September 14, 2003</p>	<p>All classroom teachers. Substitutes needed while primary teachers do one-on-one testing.</p>
<p>Primary teachers meet to review, clarify, and reinforce training. Share compiled data and work with consultant on individualized learning plans for every student.</p>	<p>September 20, 2003</p>	<p>Reading Study Team leads training. Primary classroom teachers participate. Substitutes for teachers required.</p>
<p>Intermediate teachers meet to review, clarify, and reinforce training. Share data from district reading assessment; make plans for the year with consultant.</p>	<p>September 21, 2003</p>	<p>Reading Study Team leads training. Teachers grades 3–5 participate. Substitutes for teachers required.</p>
<p>Assess student progress with mid-year benchmark books. Compile data.</p>	<p>By January 30, 2004</p>	<p>All classroom teachers</p>
<p>All teachers will meet one-on-one with the consultant for a half-day to share data from mid-year assessment. Adjust learning plans and classroom strategies as necessary.</p>	<p>February 2–13, 2004</p>	<p>Consultant and classroom teachers. Substitutes required.</p>
<p>Assess students with year-end exemplar books. Compile data.</p>	<p>By May 21, 2004</p>	<p>All classroom teachers</p>
<p>Reading Study Team meets to correlate data from exemplar book assessment, district reading assessment, and CSAP–Reading test. Based on this analysis, team decides upon next steps.</p>	<p>June 2004</p>	<p>Reading Study Team</p>

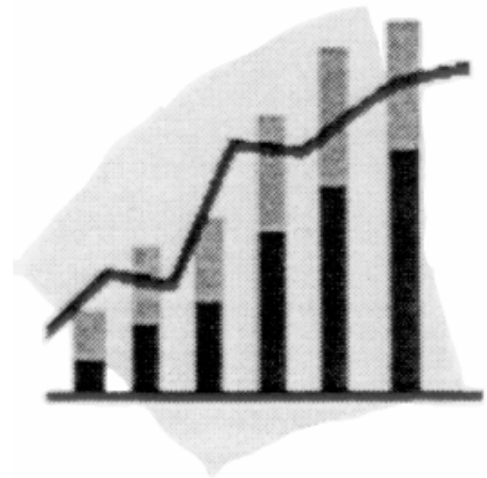
### **Step Three: Assessing and Reporting**

An effective accountability program focuses on asking the right questions, choosing the right indicators of student performance, and reporting the results to the right audience. Each level of accountability – building, district, and state – must report progress toward the improvement of education in Colorado frequently and clearly to its public.

The best way to ensure that assessment happens is to build it into the action plan that accompanies each goal. There should be several checkpoints for assessment during the school year, with subsequent reporting to the School Advisory Council/Accountability Committee. In addition, the committee should receive timely progress reports on the implementation of action plans from staff members throughout the year.

As these reports are given to the committee, the committee in turn can report out to its publics through school newsletters or letters to parents. Keeping parents and community members up-to-date on progress with a number of short bulletins makes the staff's and committee's efforts to foster school improvement easier to grasp.

But for the overall picture, the required annual accountability report is an opportunity to summarize where the school was, what it tried to accomplish in the past year, and where it will be headed for the next school year. Because next year, the work starts all over again: the school improvement cycle is a constant spiral of improvement, with each year building on the previous year's improvement.



## Building Successful School Improvement Plans

School Profile	Expected School Goals	Activities	Assessment of Progress
Where are we today?	Where do we want to go?	How are we going to get there?	How will we know when we're there?
<p>Provide a brief description of the school. Data should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of students, broken out by Title I, % free and reduced lunch, special education, English Language Learners, ethnicity, gender</li> <li>• Number of teachers, pupil/teacher ratio</li> <li>• Building operating budget and staff design</li> <li>• Attendance, drop-out, suspension, expulsion, and graduation rates</li> <li>• Mobility and stability</li> <li>• CSAP data and other achievement data</li> </ul>	<p>Suggestions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantifiable statements that complement the district goals/objectives. Example: All students will attain one year of academic growth for each year they are in school.</li> <li>• Quantifiable statements which focus on improving student achievement. Example: All students will exceed the state average for proficient and above in reading by 10%.</li> <li>• Quantifiable statements which focus on closing the achievement gap. Example: Students with an achievement gap will attain one year of academic growth plus 10% for each year they are in school.</li> </ul>	<p>All activities should lead directly to the attainment of a school goal, objective, or outcome.</p> <p>Suggestions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions regarding the alignment of curriculum with standards and grade-level expectations.</li> <li>• Actions which outline research-based educational strategies being implemented. Example: Six-trait writing will be implemented in grades three through five by the end of the first trimester. Example: Reading Recovery will be used for those students below grade level in reading.</li> <li>• Actions being taken to utilize student achievement data at both the administration and classroom levels.</li> </ul>	<p>What measures will be used to determine if the school has accomplished its goals?</p> <p>Suggestions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSAP data.</li> <li>• Standardized test results (Terra Nova, NWEA, ITBS, etc.).</li> <li>• Teacher-made observation/assessments.</li> <li>• Teacher evaluations aligned to the implementation of state standards.</li> </ul>



## **Chapter Four**

### **Accountability at the District Level**

By law, the local board must appoint a district advisory accountability committee to advise the board relative to the accountability program.

In addition, the district advisory accountability committee is required to compile and review the school level goals, objectives, and plans and make recommendations to the local board of education [22-7-104 C.R.S.].

As with building-level advisory accountability committees, any school district that demonstrated prior to January 1, 2000, that it had in place a committee or council that performed at least the duties specified for a school district accountability committee in sections 22-7-104 and 22-7-105 may continue the current structure of its committee and is not required to appoint or elect a school district committee pursuant to the new provisions in subsection (1) of this law.

#### **Legal Requirements**

##### **Membership**

The board shall appoint or create a process for the election of a school district accountability committee that shall make recommendations to the board relative to the program of accountability. The areas of study by the district accountability committee and other appropriate accountability committees shall be cooperatively determined at least annually by the committee and the board of education. The school district accountability committee shall consist of at least three parents of students enrolled in a public school in the school district who are not employees or related to employees of the district, one teacher, one school administrator, and one person from the community who is involved in business.



##### **Assistance to Committee**

The district superintendent or superintendent's designee serves as a resource person to the district advisory accountability committee.

##### **Responsibility**

The district accountability committee advises the board as to the effectiveness of the local educational accountability program. Each building's school improvement plan, containing its goals and objectives and plan, shall be reviewed by the district advisory accountability committee before its submission to the board of education of the district. Procedures for the implementation of the plan shall be included in the budget submitted to the board of education pursuant to section 22-44-108.

After consultation with the district advisory accountability committee and review of its recommendations, the board of education shall compile school building goals and objectives and plans and shall report a district's high, but achievable, goals and objectives for the improvement of education in the district and a district plan to improve educational achievement, maximize graduation rates, and increase the ratings for the school's accreditation category established pursuant to section 22-11-202.

In addition to any other duties and powers provided for by law, the school district accountability committee of each school district shall make recommendations to the board of education of such school district relative to the prioritization of expenditures of school district moneys. Whenever the school district accountability committee makes recommendations, it shall attempt to consult with the school advisory councils in the school district. The board of education shall consider such recommendations made by the school district accountability committee in adopting the budget of the school district for any fiscal year pursuant to article 44 of this title.

The district accountability committee must review any charter school application submitted to the local board of education.

In adopting content standards each district shall seek input from and work in cooperation with educators, the community, and the district's advisory accountability committee.

The district accountability committee could be involved as part of the requirement that the board consult with parents, teachers, administrators, students, and the community at large when developing and adopting a conduct and discipline code.

The accountability committee may be involved with the development of the school calendar. The law now stipulates that parents and teachers must be given an opportunity to offer input prior to adoption.

Upon application by the board of education of any school district, with the approval of the appropriate accountability committee, the affected administrators and teachers, the State Board of Education may waive any education law [C.R.S. Title 22].

## **Leadership**

The district advisory accountability committee should elect a chair from its members.

## **Best Practices**

1. **Strong Communication with the Board of Education.** An effective district advisory accountability committee can be very valuable to a district's Board of Education. It is a ready source of community input and comment on proposed actions; it is a built-in study committee that can research and make recommendations on problems. A good district strengthens this dialogue with frequent opportunities for the Board and the accountability committee to talk.

2. Review of School Improvement Plans. The best way to ensure that school improvement plans communicate effectively is to have them reviewed by the district accountability committee, not just the administrators. The parents and community members can be quick to flag “educationese” and unclear goal statements. In addition, in the process of reviewing all the plans, the committee can spot trends and systemic problems.
3. Implementing the Accreditation Contract. The district accountability committee can help to monitor and implement the accreditation contract.
4. By-laws, Agendas, and Minutes. Just as building committees benefit from having by-laws, so to can the district committee. The district committee draws from a wider community where people are not necessarily know to each other; by-laws help to create expectations for group behavior. Agendas and minutes also become more important, as the committee becomes more formal.
5. Leadership. We recommend that this committee be chaired by a parent or community member, not an employee. The committee will have more credibility with the membership and the community at large if it is not perceived as an extension of the staff, but as a truly independent advisory committee.

# **Chapter Five**

## **How Accreditation Works**

### **What is Accreditation?**

Accreditation is the process of certifying that an educational institution meets certain predetermined standards. In short, it's like a seal of approval for a school or district. Different states accredit their schools differently — and standards may also differ. Colorado used to accredit schools by what could be called “input” standards — were all the teachers certified? Were there enough books for every student? Were the buildings safe? But this system was not a guarantee that students actually learned.

House Bill 98-1267, mandating a new system of educational accreditation, took effect on July 1, 1998. The new system is “output” oriented: most of the factors are about how much students have learned. Requirements of this new legislation necessitated repeal and reenactment of State Board of Education Rules for the Administration of the Accreditation of School Districts, 1 CCR 301-1. The Draft Rules were created over nine months, incorporating advice from many members of the Colorado education community.

The rules were adopted in 1999 and gave all districts until June 30, 2000 to complete their accreditation contract with the State Department of Education. Under these new rules, the state accredits each district, in accordance with that district's accreditation contract, and the districts in turn accredit their own schools, again according to rules in the accreditation contract.

Each district's accreditation contract specifies the process that the district will use to accredit its schools; specifies its content standards for student learning (including achievement performance levels); specifies the assessments that will be used to measure each student's progress toward achievement of the district's content standards; specifies the goals for student achievement that the district will work on during the term of the contract, and specifies the process for informing and involving parents.

### **Colorado Accreditation Indicators**

To be accredited, districts in Colorado must meet or exceed the following accreditation indicators. School districts may develop additional indicators that assess progress on local district goals and objectives. These indicators should be described in the district's accreditation contract and district/building goals. For an at-a-glance summary, see Figure 1.

#### **A. Educational Improvement Plan**

The educational improvement plan (which is a large part of the accreditation contract) specifies the process that the district will use to accredit its schools. It specifies the district's content standards for student learning, the district's

improvement goals, and the assessments that will be used to measure each student's progress toward achievement of the district's standards and goals. The plan also outlines the process for informing and involving parents.

## **B. CSAP Goals**

There should be high, but achievable goals and strategies to improve all students' academic achievement.

## **C. Closing Achievement Gaps**

Each district must establish goals for closing learning gaps and advancing high-achieving groups as measured by disaggregated student performance data. There must be goals to identify and reduce consistent patterns of low academic achievement and discrepancies in academic achievement related to gender, socio-economic level, at-risk status, racial, ethnic, or cultural background, exceptional ability, disability, or limited English proficiency.

## **D. Value-Added Growth**

The district must show students' growth over time through various data systems or assessments, which may include commercial assessments such as NWEA, ITBS, or Terra Nova; data-analysis projects (e.g., Sanders) or other CDE-approved assessments.

## **E. Achievement in Other Curriculum Standards Areas**

These standards and assessments should include non-CSAP tested areas such as art, civics, economics, foreign language, geography, history, music, and physical education that are needed for a full and well-rounded education.

## **F. Compliance with Colorado Basic Literacy Act**

## **G. Compliance with Educational Accreditation Act**

## **H. Compliance with Safe Schools Act**

## **I. Compliance with Colorado Basic Literacy Act**

## **J. The Annual Assessment Review**

The review includes information on the district's efforts in technology and information literacy; recruitment and retention of teachers; and contextual learning.

## **K. Budget, Accounting, and Reporting Requirements**

**Figure 1: Colorado Accreditation Indicators**

		ACCREDITATION CATEGORIES			
Accreditation Report Indicators		Accredited	Accreditation Watch	Accreditation Probation	Non-Accredited
<b>A.</b>	<p><b><u>Educational Improvement Plan 4.01 (1) (A)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High &amp; attainable student achievement goals</li> <li>• Research-based instructional strategies</li> <li>• Standards-based instruction</li> <li>• State &amp; local assessments of student achievement</li> <li>• Parent &amp; community participation</li> <li>• Other accreditation contract requirements</li> </ul>	Meets 2.01 (4) Accreditation Contract requirements	*	**	After one year on probation, failure to meet state accreditation indicators or show adequate growth on Colorado Department of Education approved improvement plan.
<b>B.</b>	<p><b><u>CSAP Goals 4.01 (1) (B)</u></b></p> <p>District established CSAP goals of longitudinal growth on district weighted score indices</p>	<b>Show progress toward achievement of goals in reading, writing, and math</b>	*	**	
<b>C.</b>	<p><b><u>Closing Achievement Gaps 4.01 (1) (C)</u></b></p> <p>District established goals for closing learning gaps and advancing high achieving groups as measured by disaggregated student performance data</p>	Show that student groups below grade level have increased <u>more than one year</u> for each year in school	*	**	
<b>D.</b>	<p><b><u>Value-Added Growth 4.01 (1) (D)</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show students' growth in district weighted score indices over time</li> <li>• NWEA, Terra Nova, or other CDE approved assessments, and Sanders and other analyses</li> </ul>	Show <u>one year's growth</u> in a year's time	*	**	
<b>E.</b>	<p><b><u>Data regarding Achievement in Other Curriculum Standards Areas 4.01 (1) (E)</u></b></p>	Standards are in place and being implemented and that performance is being assessed	*	**	
<b>F.</b>	<p><b><u>Compliance with School Accountability Report 4.01 (1) (F)</u></b></p>	Evidence of Compliance	*	**	
<b>G.</b>	<p><b><u>Compliance with Educational Accreditation Act 4.01 (1) (G)</u></b></p>	Evidence of compliance	*	**	
<b>H.</b>	<p><b><u>Compliance with Safe Schools Act 4.01 (1) (H)</u></b></p>	Evidence of compliance	*	**	
<b>I.</b>	<p><b><u>Compliance with Colorado Basic Literacy Act 4.01 (1) (I)</u></b></p> <p>Implement ILP (Individual Learning Plan) process and increase proficiency in reading, as assessed by CSAP results and other grades 1-3 reading tests</p>	Evidence of compliance	*	**	
<b>J.</b>	<p><b><u>The Annual Assessment Review will include CDE written report (2.02) to the district, available to other interested parties.</u></b></p>	Show evidence of planning and progress	*	**	
<b>K.</b>	<p><b><u>Compliance with the Budgeting, Accounting, and Reporting Requirements 4.01 (1) (K)</u></b></p>	Evidence of compliance	*	**	

In keeping with the state’s emphasis with closing the achievement gaps for all students, districts will also be required to identify performance gaps for the following groups.

***Required Disaggregated Groups***

Districts will be asked to identify differences in performance of the groups listed below when 15 or more students exist in a category.

Further, districts will be asked to set their own goals for closing existing learning gaps and increasing overall proficiency, including advancement of high-achieving students.

<b>Ethnicity/Program/Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Sub-Group Population</b>
Race	5 categories	White Non-Hispanic Hispanic African-American American Indian Asian/Pacific Islander
Exceptional Child	1 category	Gifted and Talented (GT)
ELL	1 category	Grade 4 Spanish
Gender	2 categories	Male Female
Disability	1 category	CSAP performance scores CSAPA performance scores No scores

## **Accreditation Indicator Reporting**

Annually, by December 1, the local board of education shall report in writing its progress on district and school accreditation indicators. Progress shall be reported in a way that does not identify individual students and shall contain all elements required by the Educational Accountability Act, C.R.S. 22-7-205 (2). These reports shall be disseminated to each school's local community and the district's tax payers and shall be available to the State Board of Education, the General Assembly, the governor, and the public at large.

### ***District accreditation summary***

The accreditation summary shall contain the following:

- Results of statewide assessments administered as part of the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP):
  - CSAP scores aggregated,
  - CSAP scores by grade and subject area, and
  - CSAP scores disaggregated by all student groups defined in 1.01 (9).
- Results of third grade (CSAP) literacy assessments
- The number of students taking one or more advanced placement examinations; the total number of students enrolled in advanced placement classes; the percentage of those students obtaining a passing grade on an advanced placement examination as defined in the accreditation contract; and/or equivalent indicators of high academic performance as defined in the local district/State Board of Education accreditation contract.
- Results of district assessments administered for district standards that meet or exceed state model content standards. These standards and assessments must include but are not limited to the following areas:

Art	Mathematics
Civics	Music
Economics	Physical Education
Foreign Language	Reading
Geography	Science
History	Writing
- Trend data for CSAP and for the Third Grade (CSAP) Literacy Assessment.



## ***Other State Accreditation Indicators***

The prime determiner of accreditation status will be performance on CSAP assessments.

The following indicators will be reported using procedures and definitions provided by the Department:

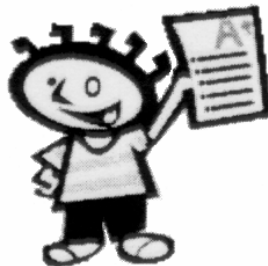
- Numbers of expelled and suspended students;
- Graduation rates;
- Dropout rates; and
- Percentage of students not taking CSAP.

The following indicators will be reported using locally developed procedures and definitions:

- Attendance rates;
- Graduation requirements;
- Evidence of a safe, civil learning environment; and
- Number and identity of schools in each accreditation category.

## ***Local Indicators***

School districts may develop additional indicators that assess progress on local district goals and objectives. These indicators would be described in the accreditation contract and reported using locally developed procedures and definitions.



***Clearly in Colorado the number one goal we have is to improve achievement and close the achievement gap.***

# **Appendix A**

## **Glossary**

### **Accreditation Contract**

A contract between the state and the district governing the accreditation of schools and the district itself, setting forth procedures used by the district to accredit schools and to carry out the functions of accountability committees.

### **Achievement gap**

Discrepancies in performance between different groups.

### **Adequate yearly progress (AYP)**

An individual school's yearly progress toward achieving state assessment targets related to NCLB.

### **Advanced Placement (AP)**

Advanced courses offered at the high school level for which students can receive college credit, based on examination scores, at the discretion of the college they attend.

### **American College Testing program (ACT)**

A college entrance test. The scores are required for application to many colleges, particularly in Colorado. The ACT assesses English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. Scores range from 1-36.

### **Anchors**

Agreed-upon standard examples of student performance or products selected to represent levels of performance within a standard or benchmark.

### **Assessments**

1. The practice of determining what level of knowledge and ability a student has attained and assigning a grade or level.
2. Tests in content areas created for district-wide use by grade and subject.
3. In Standards-Based Education, the method used to collect evidence of what students know or is able to do.

### **At risk**

A pupil who, because of physical, emotional, socioeconomic or cultural factors, is less likely to succeed in a conventional educational environment.

### **Attendance rate**

The average daily student attendance, expressed as a percent.

### **Benchmark**

A benchmark describes what the student should know and be able to do at various grade levels (e.g., first or third grade) in order to attain the performance standards at grades 5, 8, or 12.

**Bond issue/election**

In general, bond issues are elections to pay the cost of school construction. The items that these funds can be used for are stated on the ballot when the issue is presented to the people. Money can be spent only for these authorized purposes. Proceeds from bond issues cannot be used to pay the daily operating expenses of a school district.

**Budget**

An annual financial plan that identifies revenues, specifies the type and level of services to be provided, and establishes the amount of money which can be spent.

**Budget issue/election**

An election to approve raising the mill levy to create additional funds for operating expenses of the school district.

**Capital outlay**

An expenditure which results in the acquisition of fixed assets or additions to fixed assets which are presumed to have benefits for more than one year and which generally cost at least \$750. Examples include expenditures for land or existing buildings, improvement of grounds, construction of buildings, additions to buildings, remodeling of buildings, furniture, vehicles, and equipment.

**Capital reserve fund**

A special revenue fund used to account for the revenues and expenditures primarily related to the purchase and acquisition of school district equipment.

**Categorical programs**

Specific programs that are funded separately from the district's total funding under the school finance act. Examples include vocational education, special education, and pupil transportation. State funds for categorical programs must be used specifically for the program and are generally distributed based on a formula prescribed by law.

**CCR**

Colorado Code of Regulations

**CDE**

Colorado Department of Education

**Charter school**

A public school operated by parents, teachers, and/or other community groups as a semi-autonomous school of choice within a district. It operates according to the specifics of its charter, or contract with the local board of education.

**Colorado Code of Regulations (CCR)**

The State Legislature passes general laws regarding education, and the State Department of Education must specify the details of implementation of those laws in the CCR.

**Colorado Department of Education (CDE)**

The department and staff responsible for the administration of state and federal programs under the direction of the Commissioner. Provides leadership, service, supervision, professional guidance, and technical assistance for the state's educational system.

**Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS)**

The official, currently revised, laws of the State of Colorado.

**Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)**

An assessment program conducted by the Colorado Department of Education to measure knowledge and skills of Colorado students. Four levels of performance are described: Unsatisfactory, Partially Proficient, Proficient, and Advanced.

**Content standards**

Standards define what students should know and be able to do at certain levels in their schooling in order to be considered proficient in reading writing, science, math, geography, history, civics, economics, music, art, physical education, foreign language, and other subjects. All Colorado school districts must adopt content standards that meet or exceed the state's standards.

**Criterion-referenced test (CRT)**

An assessment that is designed to provide information on a student's attainment of specified knowledge and skills. The results have meaning in relation to what the student knows or is able to do (how well the student has mastered the material), rather than on the student in relation to a reference group, as in a norm-referenced test (how well the student did in comparison to other students).

**CRS**

See Colorado Revised Statutes

**CSAP**

See Colorado Student Assessment Program

**District Advisory Accountability Committee (DAAC)**

A committee comprised of parents, taxpayers, and district staff for the purpose of improving student education.

**Dropout rate**

An annual rate reflecting the percentage of all students enrolled in grades 7-12 who leave school during the reporting period and are not known to transfer to other public or private schools. Calculated for high schools only.

**English Language Acquisition (ELA)**

A program for students of all ages whose first language is not English. This program used to be called English as a Second Language (ESL).

**Enterprise fund**

A fund used to account for operations that are financed and operated in a manner similar to private business enterprises where the intent is that the cost of providing services to the general public to be financed or recovered primarily through user charges or where it has been decided that periodic determination of revenues earned, expenses incurred, and/or net income is appropriate.

**Graduation rate**

The number of students who completed locally defined requirements for graduation from high school, expressed as a percent. The rate is a cumulative or longitudinal rate that calculates the number of students who actually graduate as a percent of those who were in membership and could have graduated over a four-year period. Used by high schools only.

**International Baccalaureate Program (IB)**

A world-recognized education program that allows students to earn an international baccalaureate diploma as well as their high school diploma.

**Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)**

Standardized, norm-referenced tests that measure content areas such as reading, language, mathematics, and using sources of information.

**Mill**

Local tax rates against property are always computed in mills. A mill is one-one thousandth of a dollar of assessed value (.001). One mill produces \$1 in tax income from every \$1,000 of property (assessed value) it is levied against.

**Mill levy**

The rate of taxation based on dollars per thousand of assessed valuation.

**Mission statement**

A general statement of focus and priority for an organization.

**Norm-referenced test (NRT)**

An assessment (often a commercially published test) that is designed to provide information on how well a student performs in comparison to other students. The scores on a norm-referenced assessment have meaning in their relation to the scores of an external reference group (the norm group). The ITBS is an example of a norm-referenced test.

**North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA)**

One of six regional voluntary accrediting associations in the United States. The University of Colorado at Denver sponsors NCA in Colorado. Colorado is one of 19 states in the NCA region.

**Performance level**

The level of achievement by a student on assessments relative to a content standard.

**Performance standards**

Statements that describe what the student has to demonstrate to meet the criteria for a certain level of performance (e.g., Advanced, Proficient, Partially Proficient, and Unsatisfactory).

**Per pupil operating revenue (PPOR)**

The equalization program funding of a district for any budget year determined in accordance with the provisions of the Public School Finance Act, as amended, divided by the funded pupil count of the district for said budget year, minus the minimum amount per pupil required to be transferred from the General Fund to the Capital Reserve and Insurance Reserve Funds.

**PLAN**

A standardized, norm-referenced test administered to 10<sup>th</sup> graders. Developed by ACT, the PLAN assesses the areas of language, reading, math, and science. Scores range from 1 to 32.

**Portfolios**

1. A collection of student work used to set improvement goals, show student progress, and demonstrate achievement. Portfolios are sometimes used for reporting to parents and other educators.
2. Collections of the work of a student, the contents of which may contribute to the course grade. Working portfolios may contain work in progress for an individual class and presentation portfolios may contain material from multiple classes and years.

**Profile**

An overview of the school or district community, including characteristics of the students, parents, teachers, and staff. It is a component of good school and district improvement plans so that improvement goals are aligned with the needs of the community served.

**Public School Finance Act**

CRS 22-53-101, et seq., enacted in 1994 seeks to provide for a thorough and uniform system of public schools throughout the state. It requires that all school districts operate under the same finance formula and that equity considerations dictate all districts be subject to the expenditure and maximum levy provisions of this act. Under the previous 1988 act, Colorado's 176 school districts were classified into eight setting category groups with similar characteristics for funding purposes. The 1994 act, created under House Bill 94-1001, replaces the eight setting category groups with individually determined school district per pupil funding amounts.

**Rubric**

A scoring guide for evaluating student work; it provides common agreement on evaluating performance.

**Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT)**

A college entrance test taken by high school students, usually in their junior and/or senior years. The scores are required for application to many colleges. Scores range from 200 to 800 on each section of the SAT.

**School Improvement Plan (SIP)**

A plan created by each individual school's building advisory council or advisory accountability committee which details how that school will address the district requirements for accreditation. The document serves as the basis for efforts to improve school performance.

**Special education**

Services to students with special needs.

**Title I**

A federally funded program providing additional resources for low-achieving students in schools with large percentages of families eligible for free/reduced price meals.

*Some material for this glossary was derived from the Accreditation Handbook published by the Cherry Creek School District.*

# Appendix B

## Recent Development in Colorado Education

### LEGISLATURE

- H.B. 93-1313 Content Standards: Anchor for educational reform
- H.B. 96-1139 The Colorado Basic Literacy Act
- 1997 Colorado Student Assessment Program – 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading and writing
- H.B. 98-1267 Colorado Accreditation Act – accredit school districts by contract
- S.B. 99-154 Performance-Based Teacher Education Programs
- S.B. 00-133 School Safety Issues
- S.B. 00-186 School Report Cards, CSAP grades 5 through 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> ACT
- S.B. 01-80 Bullying Policies requires for schools
- S.B. 01-98 Modifies 00-186 (School Accountability Reports – Formally the School Report Cards)
- S.B. 01-129 Data Collection/Grant \$ for preschool-summer school-unsatisfactory schools-BOCES \$ (17 to 22) and revisions to S.B. 00-186 included Value-Added Longitudinal Growth
- 01-1014 House Joint Resolution-Closing the Learning Gap
- 01-Amendment 23 (S.B. 204 & S.B. implement) (H.B. 1262 - \$ textbooks - \$ categorical programs - \$ at risk)
- H.B. 01-1303 School Improvement Grant Program
- S.B. 01-222 Capitol Construction
- H.B. 01-1292 Encouraged Character Education
- H.B. 01-1348 CSAP-A (Severe Special Needs)
- H.B. 01-1365 Science & Technology Ed. Center Grant Program
- S.B. 03-248 School Finance Accreditation Indicator
- S.B. 03-254 Closing the Achievement Gap Program and Commission
- H.B. 04-1124 SAR – Adds AYP Indicator
- H.B. 04-1217 SAR – Parental Questions
- H.B. 04-1433 Longitudinal Student Academic Growth

**Federal Legislation-ESEA**  
 “No Child Left Behind Act”  
 Bipartisan Majorities 2001

### COLORADO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

- 1999 Adopted Accreditation Rules based on H.B. 98-1267 – Accredit School Districts
- 1-00 Adopted Performance-Based Licensure Standards for Colorado Teachers beginning 7-1-00 requires the Commission on Higher Education, in conjunction with the State Board of Education, to review each teacher preparation program and ensure that it meets the statutory requirements.
- 00-SBE Resolution Concerning Character Education
- 6-01 Adopted Revised Accreditation Rules aligned with S.B. 00-186
- 01-Amendment 23 SBE support position for – Closing the Learning Gap – the Central Element of Educational Accountability in Colorado – Categorical Funding, etc.
- 11-13-03 Adopted Amended Accreditation Rules to include the School Finance Indicator (K) S.B. 03-248
- May 2004 SB Adopted Rules for the Administration of Colorado Cyber Schools

### COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Educational Services and Service Teams implement rules and regulations adopted by Colorado State Board of Education. Provide technical assistance and general services to assist school districts and schools to be successful in advancing academic achievement for all students and closing the achievement gap.

### SCHOOL DISTRICTS

July 2001-2007 – Accreditation Contract (Educational Plan to improve student achievement)  
 Colorado Accreditation Program Indicators – Districts accredit schools and focus on learning and results  
 Reasonable Progress over Reasonable Time (Value-Added Longitudinal Growth)



## ***Appendix C***

### **The Essential Building Blocks of an Instructional Review**

Many districts find conducting an instructional review helps schools improve achievement.

#### ***Are grade-level expectations in place?***

- Are grade level expectations visible?
- Have we determined the extent to which our curriculum is aligned with state standards?
- Do we know exactly what needs to be learned?
- Do your teachers communicate a clear focus?
- Does your use of time communicate a clear focus?
- Does everyone in the organization believe that all students can learn?
- Have we provided additional learning opportunities for students who do not initially achieve standards?

#### ***Is there alignment of instruction to standards?***

- Are teachers using research based instructional models and strategies?
- Have teachers determined the most effective manner of teaching?
- Have we designed an instructional system that closely matches the standards?

#### ***Are day-to-day classroom assessments designed so they are aligned with standards, grade-level expectations, and CSAP?***

- Have we established teacher study groups to design standards based lessons, units and assessments?
- Are there high expectations for all students and how can we tell?
- Does each teacher have specifically defined results-based classroom instruction plans?
- Is the classroom assessment plan a component of routine instruction, which clearly aligns with standards and grade level expectations?
- Are we integrating process with product as a way of attaining educational improvement and involving a close examination of instructional practices based on assessment?
- Do people believe a student's effective effort + confidences are key ingredients to success?

- Do adults have an “I won’t give up on you” attitude?
- Do we use classroom assessments to improve students’ test taking skills?
- Do we encourage teachers to give classroom assessments or portions of their assessments in the same format as large-scale assessments?

### ***How is student data being used?***

- Do teachers use data to drive instruction and programs?
- Do teachers regularly diagnose and monitor student learning?
- Do we use student data to understand, predict and control the learning environment?
- Have we expanded our report card to reflect student’s progress in meeting standards?

### ***Are professional development plans appropriate, focused and implemented?***

- Have we provided teachers with training on using different instructional strategies to teach different types of knowledge addressed by standards?
- Have we examined student achievement data to identify priorities for staff development?
- Have we used student achievement data to evaluate the impact of staff development efforts?
- Is there a clear plan for professional development based on needs assessment and student achievement data?
- Is the professional development program embedded in direct instruction, data analysis, work time, examination of student work, follow-up, coaching, and support in the classroom?
- Are teachers consistently engaged in activities to improve their instructional effectiveness?

### ***Classroom, Building and District Leadership Questions***

- Have we created clear expectations of continuous learning and improvement?
- Have we identified, and clarified our reform initiative?
- How will our organization support the success of this initiative?
- Is there committed and persuasive leadership focused on improving student achievement for all students?
- Are staff and students held accountable for results?
- Does our leadership actively manage the change process?

- To what extent do we provide our community with easily understood information about standards and expectations for student achievement?
- Do we align our evaluation efforts with state standards?
- What aspects of our school's environment provide support for our pursuit of comprehensive reform?
- Do we have a problem solving strategy included within our administrative procedures?
- Do we have staff ownership in the identification of challenges or problems and are they truly part of the solution?
- What aspects of our school's environment hinder our ability to pursue comprehensive reform?
- Are we a better school today with regard to student achievement than we were yesterday?

## ***Appendix D***

### **Successful Literacy Programs**

While CDE does not endorse specific literacy programs, we believe the following criteria should guide the selection of a literacy program that will improve achievement in a school district:

- 1) Validated over time by research
- 2) Philosophically supported and used by all teachers in the building
- 3) Able to provide specific professional development steps for teachers to learn how to implement the program
- 4) Provides a balanced literacy approach
- 5) Is supported by the district over time

Generally we have found that schools that showed solid progress on the recent CSAPs do much of the following:

**Focus** (Clear, consistent attention to local and state model content standards)

**Time** (daily literacy block)

**Intensity** (continued practice, enrichment, remediation, tutoring and parent support)

**Effective Professional Development** (standards-based, data-driven, job-embedded, discipline focused, sustained over time, and intensive follow-ups)

**Coherence** (one common approach to literacy in the building)

## ***Appendix E***

### **Involving Your Community in Improvement Planning**

One of the major challenges facing Colorado educators is the integration of significant community involvement into the school improvement planning process. Many of the school improvement models used in Colorado's schools effectively involve the school's instructional staff but do not provide for significant involvement of students, parents and community members. Neither rubber-stamping nor confronting staff decisions provides a satisfying sense of involvement with school improvement. One of the more important skills of a principal is the ability to involve students, parents, and other community members in a meaningful way as part of the planning team. Following are a few principles to guide educators in this important area:

#### ***Role and Purpose***

One of the biggest impediments to student, parent, and community member participation on accountability advisory committees is vagueness in purpose and duty. A school needs a well-organized plan describing the roles, duties, function, and goals of the committee.

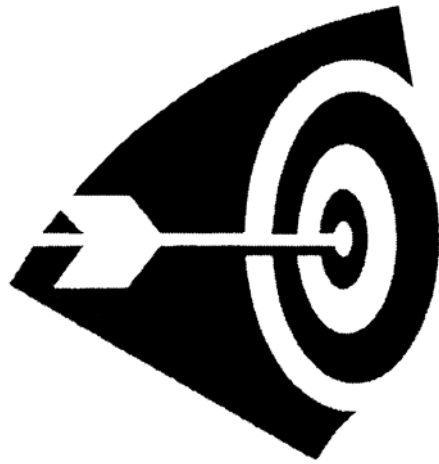
- A clear purpose allows a good understanding of what can and cannot be accomplished.
- Definition of roles and duties associated with the advisory accountability committee helps to differentiate its function from those of other school committees.
- Guidelines and leadership training must be provided so that students, parents and other community members can fulfill the roles and duties of the group.

#### ***Involvement Strategies***

Several conditions have been found to assure greater integration of significant community involvement in the school improvement process.

- The atmosphere in the school and the attitude of the principal and staff make it clear that the involvement of committee members is highly valued.
- Committee members are given pertinent information about current student outcomes related to school expectations.
- The principal or designee serves as an intermediary who understands both the culture of the community and the culture of the school.
- The school advisory accountability committee understands how, when, and where to assess the educational needs and opinions of parents and members of the community.
- Parents are provided access to the school's resources.
- Parents and their opinions are treated with great respect.

- There is a written statement of the school's desire to get parents involved in their children's schooling and in the school's overall mission.
- Committee members are provided with necessary background information on current activities and educational issues including effective schools research and information on restructuring and reform.



## **Appendix F**

### **Is Our Committee Effective?**

Do you wonder if your accountability committee is effective? The following short survey can be useful for feedback.

#### Rate your school

- 3 = We're in great shape!
- 2 = We're on our way.
- 1 = We need some work here.

- \_\_\_\_\_ The individuals who serve on our accountability committee represent the entire community. In other words, there is representation from all racial/ethnic groups, people with differing viewpoints, mothers, fathers, individuals from business, staff, and students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Our accountability school improvement process is designed to measure the quality and effectiveness of the school and its educational programs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Accountability members understand and take into account the wishes and desires of the community as they relate to the educational programs being offered.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Our accountability committee has open communication with school and district administrators and school board members.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The atmosphere in our school makes it clear that the involvement of committee members is highly valued.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Parents and their opinions are treated with respect and understanding.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Our accountability committee has a sense of direction and purpose (we're asking the "right questions").
- \_\_\_\_\_ In asking the "right questions," accountability members are able to understand what is and is not working in the school relative to student achievement. A well thought-out school profile forms the basis for this discussion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Our accountability committee is keeping the community informed about the work we're doing and the results for students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Accountability members understand and agree to how the school's budget is tied to the implementation of our goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Leadership training is provided to accountability members on an ongoing basis so that they can fulfill their responsibilities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The school's goals are measurable; they are based on school profile information. They focus the energy of the school community toward the attainment of the adopted goals.

## **Appendix G**

### **Month-by-Month Planning**

Below are suggestions for each month's agenda throughout the school year. You will probably need to modify this timeline to fit your district's schedule and your school's needs. Before the school year starts, the chair of the committee should sit down with the administrator who serves on your committee and discuss how the year will go. Month by month, the chair should make sure to check in with the administrator to see what school or district issues need to be added to the agenda.

The planning cycle below is not perfect. In a more ideal world, results from assessments would be available before the end of the school year and coming-year budgets would not be finalized until after the goals and action plans for that year are written. You will see that the schedule below reflects the reality that decisions must often be made before testing results are available. One of the strengths of writing multi-year goals is that your committee will have a better sense of direction and can cope more easily with the less-than-perfect timing of the planning cycle when they are making decisions.

Your committee should receive regular reports on the implementation of the current year's SIP goals and action plans, but instead of brief updates on all the goals every month, you may wish to focus on one or two goals at a time so that you can look at each one in depth. It is often useful to have teachers report on what they are doing in the classroom to implement your goals, instead of asking your administrator to do the report each time.

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>August/September</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recruit and welcome new members</li><li>• Provide training for new members<br/>(may be at district event or a separate meeting)</li><li>• Review School Improvement Plan</li><li>• Receive report from District Accountability Committee</li><li>• Ask for community concerns and input</li></ul>  |
| <b>October</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check on implementation of SIP action plans</li><li>• Have administrator report on issues concerning the new school year, such as the October count</li><li>• Review draft of the school's annual report to the community</li><li>• Receive report from District Accountability Committee</li><li>• Ask for community concerns and input</li></ul> |
| <b>November</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review last spring's CSAP scores and their implications for this year's goals and action plans</li><li>• Check on implementation of SIP action plans</li><li>• Receive report from District Accountability Committee</li><li>• Ask for community concerns and input</li></ul>  |
| <b>December</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check on implementation of SIP action plans</li><li>• Review the State Accountability Report for your school</li></ul>   |



- Consider drafting an article for your school newsletter that explains the State Accountability Report
  - Receive report from District Accountability Committee
  - Ask for community concerns and input
- January**
- Review testing schedule for CSAP and any other standardized assessment
  - Check on implementation of SIP action plans
  - Review budgets from previous years and current year to begin consideration of next year's budget
  - Look at last year's school survey to make suggestions for the survey you will send out no later than April
  - Receive report from District Accountability Committee
  - Ask for community concerns and input
- February**
- Review this year's staffing design and begin to collect recommendations for next year's design
  - Review draft of parent and/or student survey
  - Check on implementation of SIP action plans
  - Receive report from District Accountability Committee
  - Ask for community concerns and input
  - Prepare an article for your school newsletter about your work on the school improvement goals for the next year; ask for parent and/or student input
- March**
- Adopt final form of parent and/or student survey
  - Solicit input from teachers and administrators about areas of need for next year's school improvement plan
  - Check on implementation of SIP action plans
  - Receive report from District Accountability Committee
  - Ask for community concerns and input
- April**
- Reach agreement on areas of need for next year's school improvement plan and start draft of goals and action plans
  - Make final recommendations on budget and staffing design
  - Check on implementation of SIP action plans
  - Receive report from District Accountability Committee
  - Ask for community concerns and input
- May**
- Receive final report on implementation of this year's SIP action plans and the results
  - Review results of survey
  - Complete working draft of School Improvement Plan
  - Receive report from District Accountability Committee
  - Ask for community concerns and input
  - Prepare an "end-of-year" report for your school newsletter
  - Hold elections for the next year's committee
  - Don't forget to celebrate a job well done!

## **Appendix H**

### **Assessment**

Building and District Accountability Committees will want to review the results of various assessment tools and surveys to provide a knowledge base for their understanding of district and school progress and to help formulate their recommendations. Many tools are utilized by districts to analyze student achievement data and should be combined with other district and school collected information to provide a more complete analysis of performance. This analysis should include the following:

A. School District Annual Report to the Public

The annual report will contain much of the data indicated below in a summary form.

B. CSAP and district selected measures of achievement results and analysis

C. School Accountability Report (SAR)

D. Regional Manager's Annual Accreditation Report

This report will include an analysis of how the district is doing on all indicators of achievement including achievement, closing the learning gap, school safety, and technology and teacher retention.

E. Report on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

F. District assessments of achievement in non-CSAP tested areas

G. District and School surveys of parents, students and staff

H. Other data pertinent to the progress of specific district or school goals

\*For additional information on assessments contact on the CDE website

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/csap/ref/ParentsGuideENG.pdf>

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/action/assess.htm>

# Appendix I

## State Laws on Accountability: A Synopsis

The following synopsis excerpts or paraphrases the sections of Colorado State Law that outline the responsibilities of the various building and district committees charged with implementing the program of Educational Accountability in the State of Colorado. The referenced sections of the Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS) should be reviewed for the complete description of the specific responsibilities and their context. Each year, the Colorado Department of Education publishes a new edition of *Colorado School Laws*, which is a useful compendium of all statutes pertaining to education. It is available from CDE for \$10.00.

### **The Purpose of the Educational Accountability Program**

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- To define and measure quality in education and thus to help the public schools of Colorado to achieve such quality and expand the life opportunities and options of the students in this state — CRS 22-7-102 (1)
- To provide to local school boards assistance in helping their school patrons to determine the relative value of their school program as compared to its cost — CRS 22-7-102 (1)
- To measure objectively the quality and efficiency of the educational programs offered by the public schools — CRS 22-7-102 (2)

### **The School Advisory Councils (School Building Accountability Committees)**

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- School advisory councils are required for every school in Colorado, unless the school or school district had in place a committee or council that performed at least the duties specified for school advisory councils in this section prior to January 1, 2000. — CRS 22-7-106 (4)
- School advisory councils consist of (at least) seven members designated, appointed, or elected as follows: the principal or principal's designee; one teacher; three parents; one adult designed by the PTA or PTO; a community member involved in business. — CRS 22-7-106 (1) (a)

### **School Advisory Councils — Duties**

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- **School budget priorities:** the school advisory council of each public school shall make recommendations to the principal of the school regarding the prioritization of expenditures of school moneys. . . . [including] any state, federal, local, or private grants and any other discretionary funds. — CRS 22-7-107 (1)
- **Reporting on budget priorities:** a copy of the recommendations for the prioritization of school expenditures shall be sent to the accountability committee of the school district and to the board of education. The chief executive officer shall consider such recommendations in formulating budget requests to be presented to the board of education. — CRS 22-7-207

- **Student achievement:** the school advisory council shall meet at least quarterly to discuss means for determining whether decisions affecting the educational process are advancing or impeding student achievement. — CRS 22-7-107 (2) (a)
- **Reporting to the public:** the school advisory committee shall meet at least quarterly to discuss reporting to students, parents, boards of education, educators, and the school district board of education on the educational performance of the school and providing data for the appraisal of such performance. — CRS 22-7-107 (b)
- **Safety:** the school advisory committee shall meet at least quarterly to discuss safety issues related to the school environment. — CRS 22-7-107 (d)
- **School goals, objectives, and improvement planning, including the budget:** No later than September 1, the school advisory council for each school building shall adopt high, but achievable, goals and objectives for the improvement of education in its building and shall adopt a plan to improve educational achievement in the school, to implement methods of maximizing graduation rates from the secondary schools of the district, and to increase the ratings for the school's accreditation category established pursuant to section 22-11-202. Procedures for the implementation of the plan shall be included in the budget submitted to the board of education. — CRS 22-7-205 (1)

### **School District Accountability Committees**

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- The board of education of each school district shall adopt a plan for a local accountability program designed to measure the adequacy and efficiency of educational programs offered by the district. — CRS 22-7-104 (1)
- The board of education shall appoint or create a process for the election of a school district accountability committee. — CRS 22-7-104 (1)
- The school district accountability committee shall consist of at least three parents of students enrolled in a public school in the school district who are not employees or related to employees of the district, one teacher, one school administrator, and one person from the community who is involved in business. — CRS 22-7-104 (1)

### **School District Accountability Committees — Duties**

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- **Areas of study beyond those specified in statute:** The areas of study by the district accountability committee shall be cooperatively determined at least annually by the committee and the board of education. — CRS 22-7-104 (1)
- **Budget priorities:** The school district accountability committee shall make recommendations to the board of education relative to the prioritization of expenditures of school district moneys. — CRS 22-7-105
- **Review of school improvement plans:** Each building's goals and objectives and plan shall be reviewed by the district accountability committee before its submission to the board of education of the district. — CRS 22-7-205 (1)

- **Review of charter school applications:** The charter school application shall be reviewed by the district accountability committee prior to consideration by the local board of education. — CRS 22-30.5-107 (1)
- **Review of content standards:** In adopting content standards, each district shall seek input from and shall work in cooperation with educators, parents, students, business persons, members of the general community who are representative of the cultural diversity of the district, and the district's accountability committee. — CRS 22-7-407 (1) In revising such standards, each district shall seek recommendations from and work in cooperation with educators, parents, students, business persons, members of the general community who are representative of the cultural diversity of the district, and the district's accountability committee. — CRS 22-7-407 (4)
- **Establishment of comprehensive health education advisory councils:** Instead of appointing a separate health education advisory council, a district may choose to add necessary representatives to the school district's accountability committee so that the accountability committee can carry out these functions. — CRS 22-25-106 (1)
- **Review of applications to waive state law:** Any application submitted by a school district that has a funded pupil count of three thousand or more pupils shall demonstrate that such application has the consent of a majority of the appropriate accountability committee. — RS 22-2-117 (1) (d)
- **Appointment of members to serve on a School Organization Planning Committee:** A School Organization Planning Committee is formed when a new school district is being created or a district is annexing part of another district. If reorganization involves multiple school districts, the school district accountability committees for each district shall appoint one parent to the School Organization Planning Committee. If a single district is involved, the district accountability committee shall appoint three members who are parents. — CRS 22-30-106 (2) (a) (I and II)