



COLORADO
Department of Education

Colorado Standards and Indicators for Continuous School Improvement

School Level Standards and Indicators

Revised June 2015



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Introduction

Background

Colorado's Standards and Indicators for School Improvement were originally developed in 2003 in response to federal requirements that State Education Agencies provide assistance to schools and districts identified for improvement (Title I Part A, Section 117 of the No Child Left Behind Act). At that time, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) created a diagnostic appraisal to assist schools in their improvement efforts based upon the state of Kentucky's Standards and Indicators for School Improvement. Beginning in 2003, the rubric had been used extensively in Colorado schools by School Support Teams (SST). It is now used as a basis for the Diagnostic Review and Improvement Planning grant (1003a funds).

An earlier revision, in 2012, included a comprehensive review of the rubric; resulted in significant updates and a re-conceptualized tool; and was designed to meet the following intent:

- Design a school review tool for use at Priority Improvement and Turnaround schools. A high priority for use of the rubric is to address the key actions that will be needed to institute improvements at these schools, while addressing a broader set of factors that go together to produce an effective continuous improvement process at schools.
- Align with the initiatives and direction of CDE. The revision does not attempt to replicate the contents of other state level documents or tools; however, it does ensure conceptual alignment and clarity that supports a broader use of this review process across CDE units.
- Represent the best aspects of the 2008 SST rubric, both in content and format. The current rubric continues to use a framework of standards, indicators, and descriptors.
- Streamline the review process and make the rubric more succinct. The eight standards of the 2012 rubric are supported by thirty indicators (a reduction of 48 % from the 2008 edition) and 194 descriptors (a reduction of 35% from 2008).
- Include best and most current research with a focus on identifying leverage points for school transformation. Sources of information included systems of support used by states and national entities¹ and current research regarding continuous school improvement².
- Provide multiple opportunities for feedback from a variety of constituents within the development process. Contributions to the revision process by SST members, CDE staff, and current practitioners are gratefully acknowledged.

¹ See Systems of Support References on page 51

² See References beginning on page 52



Purpose and Organization

The *Standards and Indicators for Continuous School Improvement* outline the elements of systemic improvement within Colorado schools at elementary, middle, and high school levels necessary to ensure student success in postsecondary and workforce settings. These *Standards and Indicators* form the basis of the Diagnostic Review portion of this grant. Using this tool, Diagnostic Review providers deliver a comprehensive assessment of a school's current level of performance. The *Standards and Indicators* are also intended for use by professional staff from across CDE who are trained in usage of the tool.

The rubric is comprised of eight standards organized within two strands:

Strand I: Teaching for Learning³

The *Teaching for Learning* strand describes the necessary elements of a comprehensive, standards-based teaching and learning cycle informed by four primary questions:

1. What do students need to know, understand, and be able to do? (Plan)
2. How do we teach effectively to ensure students are learning? (Do)
3. How do we know students are learning? (Reflect)
4. What do we do when students are not learning or are reaching mastery before expectation? (Revise)

The four standards that organize this strand are:

Standard 1: Standards and Instructional Planning

The school implements a curriculum that is aligned to Colorado Academic Standards and ensures rigorous, effective instructional planning.

Standard 2: Best First Instruction

Instructional staff members provide aligned, integrated, and research-based instruction that engages students cognitively and ensures that students learn to mastery.

Standard 3: Assessment of & for Learning

Teachers use multiple sources of data and consistent, high quality assessment practices to guide school, department, grade-level, and classroom decisions.

Standard 4: Tiered Support

The school implements a comprehensive system of tiered academic and behavioral support to enable students to master grade-level expectations.

³ See *The Standards-Based Teaching/Learning Cycle: 2nd Edition* (2012) - a primary reference for the *Teaching for Learning* strand.



Strand II: Organizing for Results

The *Organizing for Results* strand describes key elements required for schools to function as effective learning organizations. The standards and indicators within this strand identify critical organizational supports for the standards-based teaching and learning cycle to ensure effective results for students. The strand is informed by four primary questions:

1. How do we lead the school to accomplish effective results for students? (Lead)
2. How does our school community ensure high expectations for the performance of all students and staff? (Expect)
3. How do we develop and support a high quality professional staff? (Develop)
4. How do we keep our focus on and reach the teaching and learning goals we've set? (Sustain)

The four standards that organize this strand are:

Standard 5: Leadership

School leadership ensures the school functions as a learning organization focused on shared responsibility for student success and a rigorous cycle of teaching and learning.

Standard 6: Culture and Climate

The school functions as an effective learning community and supports a climate conducive to performance excellence for students and staff.

Standard 7: Educator Effectiveness

School leadership actively develops a high quality professional staff through professional learning, supervision, evaluation, and commitment to continuous improvement.

Standard 8: Continuous Improvement

The school implements a mission-driven cycle of continuous improvement that optimizes learning and ensures organizational effectiveness.

Organization within Strands

Elements of the Rubric include:

Standards: Statements of the broad performance expectations for the eight interactive focus areas of the review.

Indicators: The major components of each standard, which receive a rating based on evidence collected for the descriptors of the indicator. The rating allows providers to determine the degree to which each standard is in place.

Descriptors: Specific statements which define and describe school review indicators and for which evidence must be collected, evaluated, and triangulated in order to determine an indicator performance level.



Diagnostic Review Process

Diagnostic Review provider(s)

A team that consists of carefully selected, trained individuals who have an extensive educational background related to school leadership and educational practices as well as a broad understanding of research related to the current *Standards and Indicators for Continuous School Improvement*.

Orientation

Once the logistics (e.g., dates, interview schedule) are determined, the school may receive an orientation facilitated by the provider to ensure that staff members are aware of the upcoming review, understand its purpose and parameters, and have the opportunity to ask questions about the process.

Diagnostic Review Deliverable

A final report (no more than 15 pages long) should provide customized and focused findings based on the Standards and Indicators for Continuous Improvement, including potential actions steps; identifies areas of commendation with supporting evidence; identifies areas of challenge or need with supporting evidence; includes guiding questions to promote continued dialogue among staff members; and contains key logistics from the review (e.g., number of staff interviewed, time spent in classroom observations, list of documents reviewed).

Exit Meeting

Prior to the debrief with school staff, the report is officially presented to school and district leadership, allowing them to review the report in advance of the rest of the staff. During the exit meeting, aspects of the completed process are reviewed, key elements in the report highlighted, results discussed, questions answered, and next steps for the process explained.

Debrief

Following the review, the entire staff participates in an interactive “debrief” of the report which enables them to read and have dialogue about the report’s contents. The debrief process also enables the staff to see the connection between their data and the report recommendations. Using that information, the staff arrives at consensus about priority areas for improvement, including validation of Root Causes, and prioritization of Major Improvement Strategies and Action Steps within the school’s Unified Improvement Plan



Supporting Documents

Glossary

A glossary is provided for users to ensure a consistent interpretation of the concepts represented in the *Standards and Indicators for Continuous School Improvement*.

References

Citations for the research used in the development of the revised *Standards and Indicators for Continuous School Improvement* are included in the References section of this document.



Teaching for Learning

Standard 1: Standards and Instructional Planning

The school implements a curriculum that is aligned to Colorado Academic Standards and ensures rigorous, effective instructional planning.

Indicator 1.a. Standards-Based Focus

Teachers plan instruction based on the district's curriculum aligned with Colorado Academic Standards and grade-level expectations.

- 1.a.1. Teaching/Learning Cycle. Teachers have a common understanding of a standards-based teaching and learning cycle.
- 1.a.2. Curriculum Analysis. Teachers and school leadership analyze and understand the academic standards and expectations for their grade level and/or content area(s).
- 1.a.3. Indicators of Mastery. The school uses indicators of mastery, such as evidence outcomes, to describe types and levels of performance expected at each grade level.
- 1.a.4. Horizontal Articulation. Teachers participate in horizontal curriculum articulation (within grade level or department/course) within the school to ensure consistency of planning and practice.
- 1.a.5. Vertical Articulation within School. Teachers participate in vertical articulation (cross-grade or content area) to ensure there are no gaps or unnecessary overlaps in curriculum.
- 1.a.6. Vertical Articulation across Schools. Teachers participate in vertical curriculum articulation across schools at key transition points to clarify expectations and ensure there are no gaps or unnecessary overlaps.
- 1.a.7. Communication with Students and Families. Standards and grade-level expectations are communicated effectively to students and families.
- 1.a.8. Job-Embedded Professional Learning. Instructional staff engages in ongoing, job-embedded professional learning opportunities (including coaching) to initiate and refine standards-based instructional planning.



Teaching for Learning: Standard 1

Indicator 1.b. Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum

Teachers consistently plan instruction to ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum is provided.

- 1.b.1. **Equitable and Challenging.** Instructional planning ensures equitable and challenging learning experiences that scaffold increasing depth, breadth, and cognitive complexity to prepare all students for success at the next level.
- 1.b.2. **21st Century Skills.** Twenty-first century skills (i.e., collaboration, critical thinking, invention, information literacy, and self-direction) are routinely incorporated into instructional planning.
- 1.b.3. **Prepared Graduate Competencies.** Instructional planning (P-12) incorporates prepared graduate competencies to ensure student success in postsecondary and workforce settings.
- 1.b.4. **Relevance.** Instructional planning emphasizes the relevance and application of acquired knowledge and skills to real-world situations.
- 1.b.5. **Information Literacy and Technology.** Instructional planning includes student research, information literacy, reasoning skills, and students' routine access to available technology at each grade level.
- 1.b.6. **Resource Allocation.** Planning ensures teachers have sufficient time, materials, and instructional tools to teach the curriculum so students can learn the content and perform at mastery level.
- 1.b.7. **Access to Curriculum.** All students have access to the district's guaranteed and viable curriculum regardless of content area, level, course, or teacher.



Teaching for Learning: Standard 1

Indicator 1.c. Instructional Planning

Instructional planning is frequently collaborative and leads to instruction that is coherent and focused on student learning.

- 1.c.1. Collaborative Planning. School administrators promote collaborative planning by scheduling adequate time in the master schedule.
- 1.c.2. Backwards Design. Teachers use a backwards design process to ensure instructional planning begins with the end in mind, starting with the big ideas, learning targets, and planned criteria to assess mastery.
- 1.c.3. Data and Planning. Teachers use student data and current performance levels when planning instruction.
- 1.c.4. Common Planning Expectations. Teachers incorporate common elements in their planning, such as learning objectives, academic vocabulary, essential questions, and differentiated student activities.
- 1.c.5. Planning Tools. Teachers use aligned curricular documents and other tools (e.g., curriculum maps, pacing guides) to guide their instructional planning.
- 1.c.6. Rigor. Teachers include high expectations and academic rigor for all students in their instructional planning.
- 1.c.7. Academic Program Alignment. Curriculum is coordinated and aligned across academic programs (e.g., special education, gifted education).
- 1.c.8. Curriculum and Materials. Teachers understand the different purposes of curriculum and instructional programs/materials and use both appropriately in instructional planning.
- 1.c.9. Accountability. School administrators monitor instructional plans and hold teacher teams accountable for developing standards-based lessons.



Standard 2: Best First Instruction

Instructional staff members provide aligned, integrated, and research-based instruction that engages students cognitively and ensures that students learn to mastery.

Indicator 2.a. Standards-Based Instruction

Instructional staff consistently implements standards-based instructional practices.

- 2.a.1 Learning Goals. Teachers ensure that all students understand the goal of each lesson.
- 2.a.2 Clear Performance Expectations. Teachers consistently communicate expectations for mastery-level performance using tools such as exemplars, models, rubrics, checklists, and think-alouds.
- 2.a.3 Instructional Focus. Teachers ensure that instruction emphasizes concepts and skills to meet grade-level expectations.
- 2.a.4 Formative Assessment. Teachers continually monitor and adjust instruction and content based on multiple checks for understanding and formative assessment.
- 2.a.5 Evaluation of Instruction. Teacher teams regularly evaluate the impact of classroom instruction on student learning.
- 2.a.6 Job-Embedded Professional Learning. Instructional staff engages in job-embedded professional learning opportunities (including coaching) to improve teaching and learning.



Teaching for Learning: Standard 2

Indicator 2.b. Instructional Context

Instructional practices and resources are in place to facilitate and support effective teaching and learning.

- 2.b.1. Maximizing Learning Time. Teachers provide bell-to-bell instruction and implement classroom procedures that reduce interruptions and minimize lost instructional time.
- 2.b.2. Classroom Management. Student behavioral expectations are explicitly taught, clearly understood, and consistently reinforced in classrooms.
- 2.b.3. School-Home Communication. The school provides school-home communication focused on ways for families to support student learning.
- 2.b.4. Homework Practices. Homework is aligned to previously-taught learning targets, extends student learning, and generates instructional follow-up.
- 2.b.5. Instructional Resources. Instructional resources (e.g., textbooks, supplemental reading, library resources, technology) are sufficient to support effective teaching of the curriculum.
- 2.b.6. Access to Early Childhood Education. The school provides or collaborates with community agencies to provide early childhood instructional services aligned with the K-12 system.



Teaching for Learning: Standard 2

Indicator 2.c. Instructional Practices

Teachers consistently use instructional strategies informed by current research to raise student achievement and close achievement gaps.

- 2.c.1. Gradual Release of Responsibility. Instructional staff provides an increasing succession of student responsibility by moving from modeling and structured practice to guided and independent practice.
- 2.c.2. Direct and Explicit. Instructional staff uses modeling, demonstrations, and multiple examples to teach skills and strategies and provides frequent opportunities for student practice and response.
- 2.c.3. Review/Re-teach/Revise. Teachers review learning strengths and errors with students, re-teach as needed, and help students revise their work.
- 2.c.4. Cognitive Engagement. Teachers use strategies to ensure students are cognitively engaged (e.g., reciprocal teaching, problem-based learning, cooperative group learning, independent practice).
- 2.c.5. Skillful Questioning. Teachers plan classroom questions to help students deepen and revise their thinking and support students in asking questions as an integral part of learning.
- 2.c.6. Integration. Teachers help students make relevant connections within and between disciplines and present new concepts in multiple contexts to ensure transfer of learning.
- 2.c.7. Thinking Skills. Teachers routinely and explicitly model and incorporate higher order thinking, meta-cognition, and problem solving skills into daily lessons.
- 2.c.8. Accountability. School leadership routinely monitors classroom instruction and provides ongoing feedback to ensure teachers provide effective instruction.



Teaching for Learning: Standard 2

Indicator 2.d. Meeting Individual Needs

Instructional staff uses developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of all students.

- 2.d.1. Differentiation. Instructional staff adjusts, clarifies, or re-frames instructional strategies, routines, or content in a timely way to ensure groups of students and individual students are mastering required learning.
- 2.d.2. Learner-Centered Pedagogy. Classroom instruction provides each student with multiple opportunities to apply background knowledge, correct misconceptions, and engage in deliberate and meaningful practice as new learning is acquired.
- 2.d.3. Variety of Resources. Teachers use a variety of materials, curricula, and academic tasks that are responsive to the range of student needs.
- 2.d.4. Linguistic Strategies. The school implements a comprehensive and coherent approach to meet the needs of students who are non-English-speaking and/or who have limited English proficiency.
- 2.d.5. Enrichment. Teachers provide opportunities for students performing at grade level and beyond to ensure their learning is challenging, engaging, and sustained.
- 2.d.6. Early Childhood Instruction. Preschool instruction builds academic readiness skills, develops background knowledge, increases self-regulation, and introduces academic vocabulary.



Teaching for Learning: Standard 2

Indicator 2.e. Students as Learners

Teachers empower students to share responsibility for, and be actively engaged in, their learning.

- 2.e.1. Student Engagement. Student participation is active, purposeful, and thoughtful.
- 2.e.2. Student-Friendly Language. Teachers share learning targets, performance requirements, and assessment results in student-friendly language.
- 2.e.3. Descriptive Feedback. Teachers provide students with regular, specific, and timely descriptive feedback to help them improve their performance.
- 2.e.4. Mastery Requirements. Students know and can articulate what is required to demonstrate mastery of grade-level expectations.
- 2.e.5. Self-Evaluation. Students learn to evaluate their current performance in relation to expectations for mastery using rubrics, scoring guides, examples, and exemplars to analyze and improve their work.
- 2.e.6. Goal-Setting. Students use feedback and assessment results to set and monitor their learning goals.
- 2.e.7. Efficacy and Perseverance. Teachers develop student efficacy and help students persist when faced with a challenging task.
- 2.e.8. Student Reporting. Teachers involve students (e.g., student led-conferences, journals) in reporting their progress to families.



Standard 3: Assessment of and for Learning

The school uses multiple measures and assessment strategies to continuously inform instruction to meet student needs, measure student progress toward and mastery of grade-level expectations, and improve instruction.

Indicator 3.a. Use of Assessment and Data

Teachers use multiple sources of data and consistent, high quality assessment practices to guide school, department, grade-level, and classroom decisions.

- 3.a.1. Data System Use. School leadership and instructional staff access and use data systems to efficiently manage, disaggregate, display, and report multiple types and sources of data.
- 3.a.2. Time Scheduled. School administrators ensure time is routinely scheduled for collaborative teams to engage in data dialogue.
- 3.a.3. Data Dialogue. Common processes, protocols, and language for analyzing data are used schoolwide.
- 3.a.4. Student Assessment Practices. Teachers ensure students understand the purpose of each assessment, acquire test-taking strategies, and use assessment as a tool for learning.
- 3.a.5. Assessment Purposes. School leadership and instructional staff understand the purpose of each assessment (e.g., screening, diagnosing, progress monitoring, measuring achievement).
- 3.a.6. Common Assessments. Grade levels and departments use common assessments and scoring guides to ensure fidelity to curriculum and consistent performance expectations.
- 3.a.7. Review of Classroom Assessments. Classroom assessments are periodically reviewed to ensure alignment to grade-level expectations and learning targets and consistency in measuring intended outcomes.
- 3.a.8. Assessment Rigor. Classroom assessments evaluate student learning at a level of rigor comparable to the cognitive/performance level required by the Colorado standard(s) being assessed.
- 3.a.9. Opportunities to Demonstrate Mastery. Teachers provide students with multiple opportunities and/or strategies to demonstrate progress toward mastering grade-level expectations.
- 3.a.10. Analysis of Student Work. Teacher teams frequently analyze student work as an important source of data to evaluate both student learning and effectiveness of instruction.
- 3.a.11. Job-Embedded Professional Learning. School leadership and staff members engage in ongoing, job-embedded professional learning opportunities (including coaching) to enhance and refine assessment practices (e.g., interpreting data, participating in data dialogue, modifying instruction based on student data).
- 3.a.12. Accountability. School leadership routinely monitors the use of school and classroom-level assessments and provides ongoing feedback to ensure teachers use high quality assessment practices.
- 3.a.13. Monitoring Data-Informed Decisions. Data teams routinely evaluate the effectiveness of their data-informed decisions.



Teaching for Learning: Standard 3

Indicator 3.b. Assessment for Learning

Formal and informal assessment data are analyzed during the learning process to modify instructional strategies or content to meet the needs of learners.

- 3.b.1. Checking for Understanding. Teachers adjust classroom instruction based on frequent and regular checks for understanding/formative assessment (e.g., teacher questions, student responses, student questions, observations).
- 3.b.2. Progress Monitoring. Teachers use the results of formal and informal assessments to predict student performance, monitor and adjust curriculum and instructional practices, and identify and address group or individual needs.
- 3.b.3. Interim Assessments. Interim assessments determine progress over time (e.g., end of unit, quarter) and help guide decisions regarding the need for additional intervention.
- 3.b.4. Feedback to Students. Assessment results are shared with students to help them revise their work and improve their understanding of how they learn.
- 3.b.5. Data Analysis. Individual and disaggregated group data are routinely analyzed to identify specific student needs, evaluate classroom practices, and modify instruction.



Teaching for Learning: Standard 3

Indicator 3.c. Assessment of Learning

School leadership and instructional staff use multiple sources of summative assessment data to evaluate student learning and instructional effectiveness.

- 3.c.1. Interim and Summative Data. Interim and summative assessments provide information on student mastery and help evaluate the effectiveness of instructional practices and programs across content areas and grade levels.
- 3.c.2. External Sources of Data. School leadership and instructional staff use external assessment results (e.g., Colorado Growth Model, state assessments) to obtain information on student learning, achievement gaps, and instruction.
- 3.c.3. Patterns of Achievement. School leadership and instructional staff analyze a variety of assessment data to determine patterns of student achievement, growth, and changes in growth gaps across classrooms, grade levels, and content areas.
- 3.c.4. Reports to Families. School leadership ensures that summative assessment results are shared in timely, clear, and convenient ways with students and families.



Standard 4: Tiered Support

The school implements a comprehensive system of tiered academic and behavioral support to enable students to master grade-level expectations.

Indicator 4.a. System of Tiered Supports

The school implements a system of tiered support within the rigorous, standards-based system of teaching and learning.

- 4.a.1. Continuum of Supports. The school provides a comprehensive continuum of evidence-based, supplementary instruction and intervention.
- 4.a.2. Progression of Learning. Teachers design a progression of learning that leads students to master grade-level expectations.
- 4.a.3. Integral to Teaching/Learning Cycle. Tiered support is an integral part of a rigorous, ongoing teaching/learning cycle.
- 4.a.4. Behavior Supports. The school implements a proactive system of instruction and intervention for behavior to ensure that each student is a successful member of the school learning community.
- 4.a.5. Quality of Interventions. Classroom-level and schoolwide interventions provided for both remediation and advanced needs are systematic, timely, and intentional.
- 4.a.6. Research/Needs Based. All intervention models, programs, or strategies are research based and delivered to meet the individual learning needs of students.
- 4.a.7. Flexible Resource Allocation. The school allocates time, materials, and personnel to respond to student learning concerns based on need.
- 4.a.8. Ongoing Monitoring. The school ensures ongoing, frequent use of data to monitor that learning is accelerated or enriched as intended.
- 4.a.9. Student Participation Criteria. The school uses clear criteria and processes for making decisions regarding level and length of student participation in tiered supports.
- 4.a.10. Job-Embedded Professional Learning. The school staff engages in ongoing, job-embedded professional learning (including coaching) to help improve implementation of tiered academic and behavioral supports.



Teaching for Learning: Standard 4

Indicator 4.b. Multiple Learning Opportunities

Students who do not learn effectively through best first instruction are provided multiple opportunities to learn, first within their classroom, grade-level team, and/or department, and then beyond the classroom.

- 4.b.1. Tiered Supports. The school provides multiple opportunities and interventions for students in need using a system that includes at least three tiers including best first instruction, Tier II (targeted/supplemental), and Tier III (intensive).
- 4.b.2. Best First Instruction. Instructional staff places a primary focus on the best first instruction of all students.
- 4.b.3. Tier II Interventions. Tier II grade level or content instructional interventions are provided for students performing below mastery to supplement their classroom instruction.
- 4.b.4. Tier II Extended Enrichment. Tier II extended enrichment opportunities are available for students performing above mastery to supplement their classroom instruction.
- 4.b.5. Tier III Remedial Intervention. Tier III interventions are provided with sufficient time, intensity, and frequency to meet individual remedial needs of students at the highest risk of failure or dropping out of school.
- 4.b.6. Tier III Advanced Intervention. Tier III interventions are provided with sufficient time, intensity, and frequency to specifically meet individual student advanced needs.
- 4.b.7. Integrated Support. Support structures and programs (e.g., Title I, ESL, Special Education) are integrated into the school's tiered intervention process to provide collaborative support for student learning.
- 4.b.8. Extended Learning Opportunities. The school offers a range of extended learning opportunities within and beyond the school day and the school year.
- 4.b.9. Accountability. School leadership routinely monitors tiered supports and interventions to ensure they are delivered with fidelity and provide feedback regarding effective implementation.



Teaching for Learning: Standard 4

Indicator 4.c. Family and Community Partnerships

The school develops and sustains family and community partnerships to share responsibility for student success.

- 4.c.1. Partnerships for Student Success. Collaborative partnerships with families and the community are cultivated and emphasize shared responsibility for the success of students.
- 4.c.2. Active Family Participation. Families are active participants in the problem-solving model to identify concerns, determine strategies, and implement actions to support positive student outcomes.
- 4.c.3. Supported Family Partnerships. The school ensures families are provided opportunities to be partners in supporting student learning (e.g., math nights, parenting classes).
- 4.c.4. External Support. The school communicates timely information to students and families regarding available external support services such as health and social services.



Organizing for Results

Standard 5: Leadership

School leadership ensures the school functions as a learning organization focused on shared responsibility for student success and a rigorous cycle of teaching and learning.

Indicator 5.a. Expectations for Excellence

School leadership holds and communicates explicit high expectations for the performance of students and adults.

- 5.a.1. Student Expectations. School leadership effectively communicates a shared vision of high expectations for the academic and behavioral performance of all students.
- 5.a.2. Adult Expectations. School administrators hold staff accountable for planning, teaching, and assessing in ways that promote student learning.
- 5.a.3. Adult Learning Model. School administrators intentionally model the importance of continued adult learning.
- 5.a.4. Professionalism. School leadership models and expects professionalism from all staff members.



Organizing for Results: Standard 5

Indicator 5.b. Instructional Leadership

School leadership focuses on improving and supporting effective teaching and learning.

- 5.b.1. Visible and Accessible in Classrooms. School administrators are visible and accessible within classrooms and frequently work with teachers to address instructional needs.
- 5.b.2. Supervision and Evaluation. School administrators implement supervision and evaluation processes that develop and sustain the performance of a highly competent staff.
- 5.b.3. Culture of Collaboration. School leadership promotes and supports a schoolwide culture of collaboration.
- 5.b.4. Schoolwide Dialogue. School leadership facilitates ongoing schoolwide dialogue about standards, instruction, and assessment with a focus on integrating the use of research-based practices.
- 5.b.5. Teacher Leadership. School administrators promote teacher leadership capacity within the school.



Organizing for Results: Standard 5

Indicator 5.c. School Efficiency and Effectiveness

School administrators develop and align systems, processes, and resources to establish and sustain an effective teaching and learning environment.

- 5.c.1. Organizational Direction. School administrators ensure that the roles and responsibilities (tasks, processes, and relationships) of all staff members are clear.
- 5.c.2. Protecting Time. School administrators establish parameters and develop schedules that maximize instructional, preparation, and collaborative time.
- 5.c.3. School Management. School administrators ensure a safe and well-organized environment for staff and students throughout the school campus by establishing clear schoolwide expectations and procedures and ensuring their implementation with fidelity.
- 5.c.4. Decision Making. School administrators establish, communicate, and implement decision-making processes and protocols and ensure clarity about the locus of decision making.
- 5.c.5. Maximizing Resources. School leadership aligns available resources (e.g., personnel, fiscal, time, materials) with school priorities to maximize school effectiveness.



Organizing for Results: Standard 5

Indicator 5.d. Capacity Building

School leadership continually builds school capacity to impact student and staff success.

- 5.d.1. Guiding Change. School leadership facilitates improvement efforts guided by an understanding of change processes.
- 5.d.2. School Focus. School leadership effectively minimizes factors that distract from the primary purpose of raising student achievement.
- 5.d.3. Distributed Leadership. Leadership is intentionally developed and distributed among individuals and teams (e.g., building leadership team, data teams, teacher leaders) to foster shared ownership of school success.
- 5.d.4. Communication. School leadership supports school change by listening, sharing results and needs, revisiting the schools vision and goals, and cultivating input from staff, students, and the school community.
- 5.d.5. Motivation/Encouragement. School leadership motivates and encourages teachers for the challenges of teaching to mastery.
- 5.d.6. Networking. School leadership networks with colleagues, district leadership, stakeholders, and outside entities to support improvement efforts.
- 5.d.7. Family and Community Partnerships. School leadership initiates and sustains activities which result in meaningful family and community engagement, support, and ownership of the school.



Organizing for Results: Standard 5

Indicator 5.e. Knowledge and Skills

School leadership demonstrates knowledge and skills in the areas of academic performance, learning environment, and organizational effectiveness.

- 5.e.1. Rigorous Teaching/Learning Cycle. School leadership understands what is required to implement a rigorous cycle of teaching and learning and guides practices and processes for systemic implementation.
- 5.e.2. Diversity. School leadership values diversity and demonstrates the knowledge and skills needed to work effectively with staff, students, families, and community members from diverse cultures and ethnicities.
- 5.e.3. Systems Thinking. School leadership applies systems thinking to support school improvement efforts.
- 5.e.4. Conflict Resolution. School leadership uses conflict management and resolution strategies effectively.



Standard 6: Culture and Climate

The school functions as an effective learning community and supports a climate conducive to performance excellence for students and staff.

Indicator 6.a. Academic Expectations

School leadership and staff demonstrate the belief that all students can learn at high levels.

- 6.a.1. High Expectations. The school culture is one of high academic expectations, “no excuses,” and problem solving.
- 6.a.2. Learner-Centered. School leadership and staff establish and sustain a learning and learner-centered focus among all members of the school community.
- 6.a.3. Urgency/Responsibility. School leadership and staff demonstrate an understanding of and accept responsibility for the urgent need to improve student outcomes.
- 6.a.4. Institutionalized Best Practices. School leadership ensures that coherent, common research-based practices for the teaching/learning cycle are consistently evident in all classrooms.
- 6.a.5. Accountability for Quality Work. Teachers hold students accountable for producing quality work and provide students with quality criteria (indicators of mastery) and support.
- 6.a.6. Recognition of Quality Work. School staff members showcase quality student work as exemplars and use examples of student work to celebrate achievement.
- 6.a.7. Pedagogy. Teachers incorporate an understanding of how students learn into instruction.



Organizing for Results: Standard 6

Indicator 6.b. Inclusive Learning Environment

Support for the physical, cultural, and socio-economic needs of all students reflects a commitment to equity and an appreciation of diversity.

- 6.b.1. Welcoming Environment. The school demonstrates a welcoming and inviting environment for all students, families, and community members.
- 6.b.2. Accessible to Families. School leadership and staff make themselves available to work with families in addressing student needs.
- 6.b.3. Commitment to Equity. Regardless of culture, ability, life experience, socioeconomic status, or primary language, each student is expected to master grade-level expectations.
- 6.b.4. Cultural Awareness. School staff members promote understanding of and respect for all cultural backgrounds as an integral component of the learning environment.
- 6.b.5. Culturally Responsive Communication. Multiple culturally and linguistically appropriate communication strategies support engaged communication and conversation with all stakeholders.
- 6.b.6. Student Participation. The school makes an intentional effort to involve students from all sub-groups in academic and extra-curricular activities.
- 6.b.7. Professional Learning: Diversity. Staff members participate in professional learning to implement practices that support equity and an understanding of diversity.



Organizing for Results: Standard 6

Indicator 6.c. Safe and Orderly Environment

The physical condition of the school and a schoolwide understanding of behavioral expectations ensure students and staff experience a safe, orderly, and supportive environment.

- 6.c.1. Condition of the School. The physical structures and condition of the school provide students and staff members with a safe, healthy, and orderly learning environment.
- 6.c.2. Behavioral Expectations. Behavioral expectations are well defined, posted in a variety of settings, and clearly communicated to students and families.
- 6.c.3. Reinforcing Expectations. Staff members consistently teach, re-teach and reinforce behavioral expectations and classroom routines.
- 6.c.4. Classroom Consequences. School leadership ensures that a consistent sequence of consequences for negative student behaviors is equitably applied in classrooms throughout the school.
- 6.c.5. School Consequences. School leadership enforces schoolwide behavioral expectations and applies consistent and appropriate consequences.
- 6.c.6. Positive Reinforcement. Staff members use praise and positive reinforcement to motivate students to high levels of behavior and academic performance.
- 6.c.7. Environment Data. Learning environment data (e.g., culture/climate surveys, opinion surveys, focus groups) are regularly collected and analyzed to help evaluate the effectiveness of school culture and climate.



Organizing for Results: Standard 6

Indicator 6.d. Trust and Respect

The school demonstrates an inclusive culture of mutual trust, respect, and positive attitudes that supports the personal growth of students and adults.

- 6.d.1. Culture of Collaboration. A culture of collaboration is established and evident throughout the school.
- 6.d.2. Student/Adult Relationships. Students can identify at least one adult with whom they have a positive relationship. Establishing positive and trusting student/adult relationships is a school priority.
- 6.d.3. Staff/Family Relationships. Establishing positive and trusting relationships with families is a school priority.
- 6.d.4. Respect. Members of the school community respectfully consider the perspectives of others.
- 6.d.5. Motivation. Staff members challenge and inspire students to meet high expectations for performance.
- 6.d.6. Celebration. School, staff, and student success is highly valued and publicly celebrated.
- 6.d.7. Safe Environment. School leadership facilitates the creation of a safe environment for teachers and staff to work as a learning community.



Standard 7: Educator Effectiveness

School leadership actively develops a high quality professional staff through professional learning, supervision, evaluation, and commitment to continuous improvement.

Indicator 7.a. High Quality Staff

The school implements processes that support recruitment and retention of high quality professional staff.

- 7.a.1. High Expectations. School leadership communicates clear and high expectations for professional practice.
- 7.a.2. Recruitment. School leadership recruits teachers who demonstrate the content knowledge, instructional skills, and interpersonal skills necessary to perform successfully within a standards-based teaching/learning environment.
- 7.a.3. Supporting/Retaining Staff Members. The school provides active, constructive support (e.g., coaching, mentoring, peer assistance) to staff members designed to maintain and extend their capacity to contribute effectively to student learning and school improvement.
- 7.a.4. Mentors. Mentors are well-trained, selected based on effectiveness, and held accountable for engaging in frequent and meaningful activities with staff.
- 7.a.5. Support for New Staff. The school provides new educators with a school-level orientation program which includes a focus on school learning expectations, operations, culture, and community.
- 7.a.6. Performance Improvement. School administrators ensure training and mentoring is provided to low-performing teachers to improve their performance.
- 7.a.7. Staff Assignments. School administrators implement a strategic approach to staff assignments that matches teacher skills to student needs.
- 7.a.8. Staff Efficacy. Staff members exhibit confidence that they will accomplish academic and personal goals.



Organizing for Results: Standard 7

Indicator 7.b. Supervision and Evaluation

The school implements supervision and evaluation processes designed to improve professional practice, instruction, and student success.

- 7.b.1. System of Supervision and Evaluation. School administrators use a transparent, clearly defined, and fully implemented system of employee supervision and evaluation to improve professional and instructional practices.
- 7.b.2. Staff Growth Goals. Staff members collaborate with their supervisor to develop annual growth goals designed to build professional capacity and improve performance.
- 7.b.3. Meaningful Feedback. School administrators provide regular and meaningful feedback to staff members to improve performance related to job responsibilities and growth goals.
- 7.b.4. Value of Evaluation. Teachers understand the evaluation process and regard it as an important factor in their professional growth.



Organizing for Results: Standard 7

Indicator 7.c. Professional Learning

Instructional staff members and school leadership participate in continuous, high-quality, research-informed professional learning.

- 7.c.1. Needs-Based Plan. The school conducts a comprehensive needs assessment to develop a plan for professional learning based on the needs of students and adults within the school.
- 7.c.2. Job-Embedded. Professional learning is ongoing and job-embedded (e.g., mentoring, coaching, lesson study).
- 7.c.3. Research-Based. Selection of professional learning opportunities is intentional and grounded in current research.
- 7.c.4. Coaching. Coaches have the technical knowledge and skills to work successfully with staff members and are held accountable for helping staff improve professional performance.
- 7.c.5. Reflection and Revision. Professional learning promotes independent and group reflection that enables teachers to share innovations and revise classroom practices.
- 7.c.6. Differentiated. Professional learning is differentiated to support the professional growth of instructional staff and school leadership.



Organizing for Results: Standard 7

Indicator 7.d. Impact of Professional Learning

Professional learning is monitored and evaluated to ensure it supports the work of the school and improves teacher effectiveness.

- 7.d.1. Follow-up. School leadership provides ongoing follow-up and support for professional learning to ensure new knowledge, skills, and practices are effectively implemented.
- 7.d.2. Expectations for Implementation. School administrators provide clear and specific expectations for implementing new skills and practices with fidelity.
- 7.d.3. Evaluation of Professional Learning. Professional learning opportunities are routinely evaluated for relevance, usefulness, and effectiveness in improving professional practice.



Standard 8: Continuous Improvement

The school implements a mission-driven cycle of continuous improvement that optimizes learning and ensures organizational effectiveness.

Indicator 8.a. School Mission and Goals

The school's vision, mission and goals are meaningful, clearly communicated, and used to provide a sense of purpose, direction, and identity for the school community.

- 8.a.1. Beliefs and Values. The school vision and mission for student success are collaboratively developed based on the beliefs and values of the school community.
- 8.a.2. Communication and Relevance. School leadership continuously communicates the vision and mission of the school and uses them to reinforce the school community's commitment to student success.
- 8.a.3. Alignment/Focus. School leadership and staff members intentionally align decisions, actions, and initiatives to the school's mission and goals.



Organizing for Results: Standard 8

Indicator 8.b. Cycle of Continuous Improvement.

The school engages in a sustained cycle of continuous improvement focused on student achievement.

- 8.b.1 Focus. School leadership establishes and sustains a focus on continuously improving student achievement.
- 8.b.2 Data Systems. The school uses systems for access and analysis that ensure timely and continuous use of data to improve student achievement.
- 8.b.3 Strategic Actions. Improvement efforts are effectively aligned with other school priorities and adjusted as needed.
- 8.b.4 Manageable Initiatives. School administrators identify a manageable number of priorities for school improvement.
- 8.b.5 Theory of Action. Improvement activities are purposefully designed to address prioritized performance challenges in a way that will result in significant improvements in student learning.



Organizing for Results: Standard 8

Indicator 8.c. Improvement Planning

School leadership and staff use an inclusive, thoughtful, and thorough process to write, implement, monitor, evaluate, and adjust the school's Unified Improvement Plan (UIP).

- 8.c.1. Collaborative Process. School leadership uses a collaborative process to develop, implement, and monitor the UIP.
- 8.c.2. Representative Group. A representative group of instructional staff, families, and community members are actively engaged in the UIP process.
- 8.c.3. Comprehensive Data Analysis. School leadership and staff regularly analyze multiple types of data (i.e., student learning, demographic, process, perception) to plan and revise school improvement efforts.
- 8.c.4. Relevant Research. The school applies current and relevant educational research to the development of the UIP.
- 8.c.5. Ownership of UIP. School leadership and staff have ownership for the implementation and outcomes of the UIP.
- 8.c.6. Implementation Checks. School leadership regularly monitors and adjusts implementation of the UIP based on performance targets, interim measures, and implementation benchmarks.



Glossary

21st Century Skills	Within the CDE standards document, 21st century skills and readiness competencies include the following: collaboration, critical thinking, invention, information literacy, and self-direction. (See Prepared Graduate Competencies)
Academic Achievement	A single, point in time score on an assessment. Achievement for an individual is expressed as a test score (or scale score), or it may be described using an achievement level. Academic Achievement is one of four performance indicators used to evaluate schools and districts in Colorado. (UIP Handbook, 2011)
Academic Growth	For an individual student, academic growth is the progress shown by the student, in a given subject area, over a given span of time. For a school or district, student growth is summarized using the median of the student growth percentiles for that grouping. Academic growth is one of four statewide performance indicators used to evaluate schools and districts in Colorado. This indicator contains measures of both normative and adequate growth. (UIP Handbook, 2011)
Achievement Gaps	A persistent, pervasive, and significant disparity in educational achievement and attainment among groups of students as determined by a standardized measure. Academic Growth Gaps is a Performance Framework indicator that reflects the academic progress of students in the following disaggregated groups: students eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch, minority students, students with disabilities, English Language Learners, and low-proficiency students. (UIP Handbook, 2011)
Adequate Growth	A growth level (student growth percentile) sufficient for a student to reach an achievement level of proficient or advanced, in a subject area, within one, two, or three years or by 10th grade; whichever comes first. The Performance Framework reports the median adequate growth rate for a school or district (this number is the growth level sufficient for the typical or median student in the district/school). (UIP Handbook, 2011)
Alignment	The degree to which assessments, curriculum, instruction, textbooks and other instructional materials, teacher preparation and professional development, and systems of accountability all reflect and reinforce the educational program's objectives and standards. Alignment can also refer to consistency, organization or linkage of information, plans, actions and decisions between standards and curriculum, instructional materials, instructional methods, skill expectations, assessments and/or data.
Articulation/Articulated Curriculum	The way things are joined or linked, similar to alignment. This most often refers to the identification of what students should know and be able to do within grade levels or content areas (i.e., horizontal articulation) and across grade levels or content areas (i.e., vertical articulation). In Colorado, a well-articulated curriculum is aligned to the state's Academic Standards, and there are no gaps or unnecessary overlaps in the learning targets within or among grade levels or content areas.
Assessment Practices, High Quality	Practices that raise the likelihood that assessments and assessment results will be accurate, reliable, and useful in shaping sound decisions.



Assessment Purposes	<p>Purposes for assessment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Formative Assessment (Assessment for Learning). Defined by CDE as a process used by both teachers and students during instruction that provides “in the moment” feedback for adjusting teaching and learning. Formative assessments are used to monitor or adjust instruction in order to improve learning. It reveals points of confusion, misunderstanding or progress toward mastery of an idea. ▪ Diagnostic Assessment. The purpose of diagnostic assessment is to ascertain, prior to instruction, each student’s strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills in order to remediate students and adjust the curriculum to meet each pupil’s unique needs. ▪ Screening Assessment. Screening (including developmental and health screening) includes activities to identify children who may need further evaluation in order to determine the existence of a delay in development or a particular disability. Screening is used to determine the child’s present level of performance and early intervention or educational needs. ▪ Interim Assessments (Benchmark Assessments). Assessments typically administered every few months to fulfill one or more of the following functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Instructional, e.g., to supply teachers with student diagnostic data, ○ Evaluative, e.g., to appraise ongoing education programs, and ○ Predictive, e.g., to identify student performance on a later high-stakes test. ▪ Summative Assessment (Assessment of Learning). Assessment that provides summary information about what students have mastered in terms of content and skills. Summative assessments are formal, more rigorous and are usually given at the end of a grading period, course, or annually to evaluate what students have learned at the conclusion of that time period or course.
Bell-to-Bell Instruction	Maximizing instructional time during the day. Students are actively engaged in learning from bell to bell. Instructional time is not lost due to transitions or unfocused class time.
Best First Instruction (First, Classroom, Tier I, Core, Universal, or Universal Tier Instruction)	High-quality, effective, and engaging instruction provided in the general education classroom as outlined in a class or course curriculum, designed to meet the needs of all students. It provides students with their first opportunity to learn standards and grade-level expectations.
Big Ideas	Sometimes referred to as “lifelong learnings” or “enduring understandings.” Big ideas go beyond discrete facts to focus on larger concepts, principles, or processes that develop over time and support students in future learning endeavors.
Capacity Building	Any strategy that increases the collective effectiveness of a group to raise the bar and close the gap of student learning through developing individual and collective knowledge and competencies, resources, and motivation.
Change	A shift in external circumstances, situational variables, or the environment. First-order change is doing more, or less, of something that’s already being done. First-order change is reversible. Second-order change is doing something significantly or fundamentally different from what’s been done before, and the process isn’t reversible: once begun, it’s impossible to return to the way you were doing before.



Coaching	Training and guidance provided to enhance knowledge, skill, and performance. Coaching is provided to individuals or teams of educators to provide feedback and facilitate their continued development and effectiveness as professionals. Coaching involves a cooperative relationship between a coach and teacher(s) who are mutually engaged in efforts to provide better services to students. Coaches may assist teachers in deepening cognitive processes through examining the thoughts and decisions a teacher makes within the context of teaching (e.g., using models such as Cognitive Coaching, Costa and Garmston, 2002). Coaches may also engage in collaborative problem solving – a systematic, structured process to address problems in the classroom that may be keeping students from making adequate gains (e.g., classroom observation, demonstrations, and feedback). Coaches also function as teacher/learners, sharing effective, proven strategies with groups of teachers to enhance professional learning.
Cognitive Complexity	The level of understanding that supports viewing an issue or problem from multiple and competing perspectives.
Coherence	All parts are consistent and logically related; integration of diverse elements, relationships, or values.
Colorado Academic Standards (CAS)	Colorado Academic Standards are the expectations of what students need to know and be able to do and are the basis of the annual state assessment. Colorado's standards were revised in December 2009 and again in December 2010 to align with the Common Core State Standards for mathematics and English/language arts. The content areas include mathematics, science, reading and writing, social studies, music, visual arts, theatre, dance, comprehensive health and physical education, and world languages. The state also has standards for English Language Learners – Colorado English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards.
Colorado Growth Model	The Colorado Growth Model provides a common understanding of how individual students and groups of students progress from year to year toward state standards based on where each individual student begins. The model focuses attention on maximizing student progress over time and reveals where, and among which students, the strongest growth is happening and where it is not.
Common Core State Standards (CCSS)	The Common Core State Standards are national common standards in mathematics and English/language arts, which grew out of an initiative by the National Governor's Association and the Association of Chief School Officers. The CCSS are part of state-led effort to afford all students the skills and knowledge they need to succeed. Colorado adopted the CCSS in August 2010, and fully incorporated the standards into the Colorado Academic Standards in mathematics, reading, writing and communicating.
Communities of Practice	A collection of people who engage on an ongoing basis in some common endeavor or set of practices. In schools, teachers collaborate regularly to "make sense of" the challenges of teaching and learning within their classrooms.
Cooperative Learning	A teaching method in which students work together to solve problems by using skills and content to complete an assignment. Each student has a specific responsibility within the group and the teacher acts as a facilitator of learning. Students complete assignments together and receive a common grade.



Critical Thinking	Application of thinking skills more complicated than simple recall. Critical thinking involves thinking skillfully about causal explanation, prediction, generalization, reasoning by analogy, conditional reasoning, and the reliability of sources of information and then applying them in evaluative ways.
Curriculum Framework or Guide	An organizational structure that assists in the development of a curriculum or the document itself that guides the delivery of a curriculum. Curriculum documents, guides, or frameworks are often used synonymously. Curriculum guides may provide resources for teachers to deliver the curriculum such as supportive materials, books, and or core programs.
Curriculum Map	Course of study usually linking learning objectives and targets with a designated time period through unit and/or lesson plans. A curriculum map has also been defined as a real-time collection of information about what is actually taught in classes at specific points during the school year.
Curriculum	As defined by CDE, an organized plan or program of instruction or learning that engages students in learning. A curriculum designs and communicates a scope and sequence of concepts and skills students should learn within a course or grade level.
Data Analysis	Data are gathered, disaggregated and analyzed (often collaboratively) and the resulting information is used to make informed decisions.
Data Dialogue	A process or protocol used collaboratively by school staff to make shared meaning of data using data-based facts, examining patterns and trends of performance indicators, generating “root-cause” discussions, and determining action steps to address identified concerns.
Data	<p>Most commonly defined as factual information, often in the form of facts and figures obtained through some type of observation, performance or survey. Data types include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student learning data. Results of the educational system in terms of test results, grade point averages, academic growth, reduction of academic growth gaps, etc. ▪ School demographic data. Attributes about students and staff, (e.g., socio-economic status, race/ethnicity, gender, experience, educational level, attendance). ▪ School processes data. Information on what teachers are doing to get the results their work is yielding. These data include information about programs, instructional strategies, and classroom practices. ▪ Perceptions data. Data that help school leaders understand and act on issues such as values and beliefs, organizational culture and climate, or what is important to students based on what students, parents, teachers, and others think about the learning environment.
Depth of Knowledge	A model organized around the assumption that curriculum elements may be categorized based upon the cognitive demands required to produce an acceptable response. The four levels of complexity include recall and reproduction (level 1); skills and concepts (level 2); strategies and thinking (level 3); and extended thinking (level 4).
Descriptive Feedback	Feedback that is specifically and intentionally addresses what is working and points out next steps in learning or performance. Descriptive feedback may provide information about current achievement (“Where am I now?”); with respect to a goal (“Where am I going?”); or identification of appropriate next steps (“How can I close the gap?”).



Direct Instruction	Direct instruction systematically takes learners through the steps of learning, helping them see both the purpose and the result of each step. Direct instruction is especially effective in teaching basic skills (e.g., how to use a microscope) and skills that are fundamental to more complex activities (e.g., basic study skills, the prerequisite skills for long division).
Disaggregated Data	Refers to sorting data (such as assessment scores) by specific subgroups of students, (e.g., English Language Learners, students with disabilities, students needing to catch up) in order to identify trends and patterns that can be used to inform instructional practices.
Disciplinary Concept Maps (DCMs)	Visual representations of unifying themes along with organizing and supporting concepts for each discipline and grade level within the Colorado Academic Standards. DCMs also provide a central purpose for each discipline at each grade level and depict how concepts relate to one another to inform intentional curricular and instructional planning. They provide a framework for working with the standards in a way that emphasizes 21st century learning and interdisciplinary connections.
Distributed Leadership	School leadership involving both administrators and teacher leaders and distributing at least some of the responsibilities for leadership functions and activities within a school.
Diversity	Involves recognizing a variety of student characteristics including those of ethnicity, language, socioeconomic class, disabilities, and gender.
Drop-Out Rate	The drop-out rate reflects the percentage of all students enrolled in grades 7-12 who leave school during a single school year. It is calculated by dividing the number of dropouts by a membership base, which includes all students who were in membership any time during the year.
English Language Learner (ELL)	Students whose first language is a language other than English or is a variety of English that is significantly different from the language of instruction. ELLs may require focused educational supports to assist them in attaining proficiency in English.
Equity	A commitment to a diverse population of students, demonstrated by the creation of an inclusive and positive school and/or classroom culture and strategies that meet the needs of diverse student talents, experiences, and challenges. Equity pedagogy values students' individual background as a resource and utilizes approaches to instruction and behavioral support that build on student strengths.
Evaluation (Data)	The process of making judgments about the levels of students' understanding or skill based on an assessment.
Evaluation (Personnel)	<p>In Colorado, the evaluation of educators is addressed by S.B. 10-191, the purposes of which are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emphasize that a system to evaluate the effectiveness of licensed personnel is crucial to improving the quality of education in Colorado. ▪ Ensure that one of the purposes of evaluation is to provide a basis for making decisions in the areas of hiring, compensation, promotion, assignment, professional development, earning and retaining non-probationary status, and nonrenewal of contract. ▪ Ensure that educators are evaluated in significant part based on the impact they have on the growth of their students.



Evidence Outcomes	Evidence outcomes define mastery expected at a specific grade level. Within each standard area, the concepts and skills students are expected to master are listed with evidence outcomes identified for each area.
Evidence-Based Educational or Instructional Practices	Those educational or instructional practices that have been shown to have a positive effect on student learning. Evidence is established through scientific research or evidence. (See Research-Based)
Exemplar	Example that illustrates the knowledge or performance characteristics of a standard, grade-level expectation, big idea, or unit of study. Exemplars provide a model of an expected level of learning or a performance.
Explicit instruction	Explicit instruction is a systematic instructional approach that includes a set of delivery and design procedures including focusing on big ideas, teaching and modeling effective learning strategies, providing scaffolding, regularly monitoring students' progress over, and drawing on student background knowledge.
Extended Enrichment	Giving students opportunities for accelerated progress and access to new, more challenging concepts or content.
Fidelity of Implementation	The delivery of instruction or assessment in the way in which it was designed to be delivered. Deviations or dilutions of program components may yield unintended consequences and different levels of results than were anticipated.
Flexible Grouping	A strategy that allows students to work in mixed groups depending on the goal of the learning as well as the students' prior knowledge, skills, etc.
Flexible Schedule/Flexible Scheduling	Flexible scheduling allows the school to respond to changes by varying time /or assignments in ways that would better meet changing needs.
Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs)	The articulation (at each grade level) of the concepts and skills that indicate a student is making progress toward being ready for high school, i.e., what students need to know from preschool through eighth grade. In the Colorado Academic Standards, evidence outcomes define mastery of grade-level expectations.
Gradual Release of Responsibility	Entails the scaffolding of student learning through instruction that provides the appropriate amounts of support to students based on their individual needs until they can independently demonstrate the intended learning.
Graduation Rate	Graduation rate is the percentage of students who received a diploma from the base membership, of a given class of students, within a district or a school. (UIP Handbook, 2011)
Growth	For an individual student, growth is the progress shown by the student, in a given subject area, over a given span of time. For a school, district, or other relevant student grouping, student growth is summarized using the median of the student growth percentiles for that group. Academic growth is one of four performance indicators used to evaluate schools and districts in Colorado. (UIP Handbook, 2011)
Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum	A curriculum is guaranteed if it gives clear guidance to teachers regarding the content (knowledge, concepts, and skills) to be addressed in specific courses or at specific grade levels. It assumes that processes and personnel are in place to ensure there is monitoring of the curriculum and delivery, and individual teachers do not have the option to disregard or replace assigned content. A curriculum is viable when there is sufficient time, materials, and instructional tools for teachers to teach the curriculum so students learn and perform at a proficient level.



Information Literacy	The ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand. A set of competencies that an informed citizen of an information society ought to possess to participate intelligently and actively in that society.
Instructional Staff	Staff members of a school who have responsibility for teaching students. This may include teachers, teaching specialists, and instructional paraprofessionals.
Intervention	<p>Systematic and explicit instruction provided in response to learner needs as determined through assessment. The response may involve remediation, reinforcement, enrichment, or support. Interventions are designed to improve performance relative to a specific, measurable goal.</p> <p>Tier II Intervention: Targeted, supplementary instructional interventions provided to students when assessment indicates that either (a) the students are not making adequate gains from Universal Tier instruction alone or (b) students whose advanced learning requires extended opportunities. These are generally smaller group interventions designed to provide targeted instruction for students with similar needs.</p> <p>Tier III Intervention: Intensive interventions that offer a student highly individualized, systematic instruction in one or more areas of assessed needs. Tier III interventions are provided with sufficient time, intensity, and frequency to specifically meet (a) individual remedial needs of students at the highest risk of failure or dropping out of school, or (b) individual advanced learning needs. These interventions may be similar to Tier II interventions but are provided with a longer duration and/or increased intensity in order to accelerate student learning.</p>
Job-Embedded Professional Learning	Learning that occurs as educators engage in their daily work activities. It can be both formal and informal and includes but is not limited to coaching, peer coaching, lesson study, mentoring, and study groups.
Keep-Up Growth	Growth needed for a student scoring at the proficient or advanced levels, in the previous year, to continue scoring at least at the proficient level in the current year and future 3 years or by 10th grade; whichever comes first. (UIP Handbook, 2011)
Key Transition Points	Key curriculum transition points include the transition from pre-school to elementary, elementary to middle, and middle to high school.
Learning Community	A group who uses a systematic, goal-directed learning process in which people work together in grade level, vertical, special topic, or subject matter teams to analyze and impact professional practice in order to improve individual and collective results for students.
Learning Environment	Any condition, setting or location inside or outside the school which contributes to the instruction of students.
Learning Organization	Organization that acquires knowledge and innovates fast enough to survive and thrive in a rapidly changing environment.
Learning Progression	A sequenced set of subskills and bodies of enabling knowledge that, it is believed, students must master en route to mastering a more remote curricular aim.
Learning Target	Identified objective for what students should know, understand, or be able to do at the end of a unit of study, course or grade level. Learning targets may sometimes be called “achievement targets” or “learning objectives.”



Mastery	The application and transfer of skills so that a student has complete expertise of a skill or concept in multiple contexts. This is not an indication that instruction at grade-level expectation begins and only occurs at that grade level. Maintenance of previously mastered concepts and skills and scaffolding future learning are the domain of curriculum and instruction - not standards.
Measure	An instrument or means to assess performance in an area identified by an indicator.
Measurement	Assigning scores to an assessment based on an explicit set of rules. Sometimes used synonymously with assessment.
Median Adequate Growth	The growth (student growth percentile) sufficient for the median student in a district, school, or other group of interest to reach an achievement level of proficient or advanced, in a subject area, within three years or by 10th grade; whichever comes first. (UIP Handbook, 2011)
Median Student Growth Percentile	Summarizes student growth by district, school, grade-level, or other group of interest. (UIP Handbook, 2011)
Mentors	Mentors are highly experienced educators. They are chosen for their special abilities to work collaboratively with others, inspire trust among colleagues, play a variety of roles comfortably, and maintain confidential relationships with coaches and teachers. Mentors are often asked to work with novice educators.
Metacognition/Metacognitive Strategies	Metacognition refers to higher order thinking which involves active control over the cognitive processes engaged in learning. Activities such as planning how to approach a given learning task, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating progress toward the completion of a task are metacognitive in nature.
Metric	A numeric scale typically associated with a measure (assessment) indicating the level of some variable of interest. For example, your credit score is a metric that companies use to decide whether to give you a loan. (UIP Handbook, 2011)
Mission	A statement of purpose to define the goals and direction; a guide for decisions and a set of criteria by which to measure the school's or district's progress toward its defined purposes. It emphasizes the conditions that must be present in organizations in which all children succeed.
Modeling	A teaching strategy in which the teacher demonstrates to student/s how to do a task, with the expectation that the student will copy the model. Modeling often involves talking about how to work through a task or "thinking aloud" and is often included as part of the "I do" - "We do" - "You do" gradual release of responsibility to students.
Move-Up Growth	Growth needed for a student scoring at the proficient level in the previous year to score at the advanced level in the current year or in the next 3 years or by 10th grade, whichever comes first. (UIP Handbook, 2011)
Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)	MTSS leverages the principles of Response to Intervention (RtI) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to integrate a system-wide continuum of evidence-based resources, strategies, structures, and practices to support an agile response to academic and social-emotional needs.



Organizational Change	When an organization transitions from one state to another, usually one that will result in greater success (e.g., increased student performance within a school). Successful organizational change usually requires strategic planning, clear and ongoing communications, attention to the needs of people in the organization, (re)allocation of resources, modifications to structures, and an understanding of change processes.
Pacing Guides	Guide that identifies periods of time or timelines that evidence outcome concepts and skills should be taught and learned. Often pacing guides are included in curriculum guides or documents. In a standards-based system, pacing guides are continuously adjusted, based on the pace and level of student learning.
Performance Description/Descriptor	Level or description of performance expected of a student within a given period of time such as at the end of a course, unit of study or lesson. A performance description usually describes how well students need to perform in various skills and knowledge to be considered proficient at their grade level.
Performance Indicator	A specific component of school or district quality. Colorado has identified four performance indicators that are used to evaluate all schools and districts in the state: student academic growth, student achievement, growth gaps, and postsecondary/workforce readiness.
Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness	The preparedness, of students, for college or a job after completing high school. This is one of the performance indicators used to evaluate the performance of all schools and districts in the state. This indicator includes graduation rate, dropout rate, and Colorado ACT scores. (UIP Handbook, 2011)
Prepared Graduate Competencies (PGC)	Colorado's goal for public education is to prepare students for postsecondary education and the workforce. Prepared Graduate Competencies (PGCs) are the preschool through 12th grade concepts and skills that all students leaving Colorado's education system must have to ensure success in postsecondary and workforce settings. PGCs highlight what all high school graduates should know and able to do in all content areas. Additionally, 21st century skills are embedded at each grade level in all content areas.
Principles of Change	A systematic, comprehensive framework regarding change that allows leaders to understand what to expect regarding change within an organization, how to manage their own personal change, and how to engage an entire group in the change process.
Problem-Based Learning	A student-centered pedagogy in which students learn about a subject in the context of complex, multifaceted, and realistic problems designed to help students develop flexible knowledge, effective problem solving skills, self-directed learning, effective collaboration skills, and intrinsic motivation.
Professional Learning	A product of both externally-provided and job-embedded activities that increases teachers' knowledge and changes their instructional practice in ways that support student learning. Formal professional development represents a subset of the range of experiences that may result in professional learning. Other opportunities for professional learning — such as common planning time, shared opportunities to examine student work, or tools for self-reflection — may occur outside the bounds of formal professional development events.
Progress Monitoring	Progress monitoring is the ongoing process of collecting and analyzing data to determine student progress toward specific skills or general outcomes. Progress-monitoring data are used to adjust instruction for individual and groups of students. (See also Formative Assessments, Interim Assessments)



Reciprocal Teaching	An instructional activity that takes place in the form of a dialogue between teachers and students regarding segments of text. The dialogue is structured by the use of four strategies: summarizing, question generating, clarifying, and predicting. The teacher and students take turns assuming the role of teacher in leading this dialogue.
Reflection	The active thought process in which educators review past practices to better understand results and to improve future practice. Reflection implies that when current practices are observed and evaluated, effective practices are sustained and less effective practices are improved or modified. Reflection becomes an important part of a continuous improvement cycle in education.
Relevance/Relevant	Relation to the matter at hand; practical applicability; increased likelihood of accomplishing the goal. Relevant curriculum includes examples of how the grade-level expectation could be applied at home, on the job or in a real-world, relevant context.
Reliability/Inter-Rater Reliability check definition	Reproduce-ability of a set of scores under different circumstances, i.e., consistency or stability of a measuring instrument; necessary for, but sufficient for, validity.
Research Based	Educational practices, methodology, strategies, programs, or materials that have been systematically and scientifically studied and shown to have a correlation with, or positive effect on learning and achievement. While educational practices are often identified and promoted in educational literature, such practices are not defined as research based unless they have been shown, through scientific study, to have a positive correlation with, or effect on, student learning and achievement.
Research-Based Instruction (Evidence-Based, Best First Instruction, or Effective Instructional Practices)	A research-based instructional practice or intervention is one found to be reliable, trustworthy, and valid based on evidence to suggest that when the strategy or program is used with a particular group of children, the children can be expected to make adequate gains in achievement. Ongoing documentation and analysis of student outcomes helps to define effective practice. In the absence of scientific evidence, the instruction/intervention is considered "best practice" based on available research and professional literature.
Response To Intervention (Rti)	Colorado has defined Response to Intervention as a framework that promotes a well-integrated system connecting general, compensatory, gifted, and special education in providing high quality, standards-based instruction and intervention that is matched to students' academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs. A continuum of evidence-based, tiered Instruction and interventions with increasing levels of intensity and duration is central to Rti. Collaborative educational decisions for students are based on data derived from frequent monitoring of student performance and rate of learning. (See Multi-Tiered System of Supports)
Root Cause	The deepest underlying cause(s) of a problem or situation that, if resolved, would result in elimination or substantial reduction, of the symptom. If action is required, the cause should be within one's ability to control, and not a purely external factor such as poverty that is out of one's ability to control.
Rubric	Identified and described criteria for various levels of student work. Rubrics are structured differently to achieve different purposes. They may be general or task-specific; they may yield multiple or single scores; they may be criterion referenced or based on a developmental continuum.



Scaffolding	The provision of sufficient supports (e.g., learning strategies, guidance, resources) to promote learning. The “scaffolds” selected by the teacher are intended to help the student move to higher levels of achievement and transfer the responsibility for learning from the teacher to the student, thereby fostering independence.
School Climate	The sum of the values, cultures, safety practices, and organizational structures within a school that cause it to function and react in particular ways. Some schools create a nurturing environment that recognizes children and treats them as individuals; others may utilize authoritarian structures in which rules are strictly enforced and hierarchical control is strong. Teaching practices, diversity, and the relationships among administrators, teachers, parents, and students contribute to school climate. Although the two terms are somewhat interchangeable, school climate refers mostly to the school's effects on students, whereas school culture refers more to the way teachers and other staff members work together.
School Culture	The set of norms, values and beliefs, rituals and ceremonies, symbols and stories that make up the persona of the school. Teaching practices, diversity, and the relationships among administrators, teachers, parents, and students contribute to the school culture. Generally, school culture may be summarized as “how we do business here.”
School Effectiveness	The performance of a school organization, which can be expressed as the output of the school, which in turn is measured in terms of the achievement and growth of its students.
School Efficiency	The degree to which a school can maximize the access, use, and monitoring of school resources, including time, materials, space, and personnel.
School Leadership	School leadership refers to administrators (e.g., principal, assistant principal, dean), teacher leaders, teacher team leaders (e.g., department chairs, grade-level leaders), coaches, etc.
School Performance Framework (SPF)	The framework used by the state to provide information to stakeholders about each school's performance based on the four key performance indicators: student academic growth, student achievement, achievement and growth gaps, and postsecondary/workforce readiness. Schools are assigned to a type of improvement plan based on their performance across all of the indicator areas.
School Plan Type	The type of plan to which a school is assigned, by the state, on SPF report. The school plan types are: Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement and Turnaround.
School-Family Partnership	Collaborative relationships between educators and family members based on mutual respect, trust, equality and shared goals that support and focus on student academic success.
Scoring Guide	A scale that describes levels of knowledge or skill that can be demonstrated in some type of assessment or performance task. Scoring guides or rubrics utilize a clear set of criteria that describe the expected learning and quality needed to achieve a specific level of performance or grade. They describe levels of performance and usually assign some type of descriptor (e.g., no progress—fully accomplished) and/or a numerical rating (e.g., 1 – 5) to that performance.
Self-Efficacy	Beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments.



Self-Efficacy – Students	Learners' beliefs about their capacity of succeeding when learning specific topics or tasks. Efficacious students tend to “own” their own learning, see themselves as participants (not observers) in the class, and believe that adults are there to support their learning.
Self-Efficacy – Teachers	Teacher efficacy measures the extent to which teachers believe their efforts will have a positive effect on student achievement. Researchers have repeatedly related teacher efficacy to a variety of positive teaching behaviors and student outcomes.
Sheltered English Instruction	An instructional approach in which classes are composed entirely of students learning English. Students are taught using methods that make academic instruction in English understandable. In some schools, students may be clustered in a mainstream classroom.
Student-Led Conferences	Conferences that engage students in direct communication with their parents, peers and/or teacher(s) through the use of portfolios illustrating their learning and achievement. Students take the lead in walking their audiences through a selection of accomplishments and demonstrations of their work.
Supervision	Supervision is a formative process that focuses upon professional development and the improvement of instruction. It is characterized by a collegial, helping relationship between administrators and the teachers in a climate of trust and mutual understanding. Supervision encourages professional growth and development of staff and high quality classroom performance that promotes improved student learning. (See Evaluation – Personnel)
Sustainability	The continuation or maintenance of a set of activities and resources intended to achieve the original objectives of a program or initiative.
Systems Thinking	The process of understanding how things influence one another within a whole. A set of habits or practices within a framework that is based on the belief that the component parts of a system can best be understood in the context of relationships with each other and with other systems, rather than in isolation.
Teaching/Learning Cycle, Standards-Based	The interconnected cycle of instructional planning, teaching, learning, assessing, and remediating/accelerating grounded in the Colorado Academic standards and determined, monitored, and adjusted based on continuous review of data/information. The teaching/learning cycle can be thought of as a practical response to four questions: What do students need to know, understand, and be able to do? How do we teach effectively to ensure students are learning? How do we know that students are learning (and how well)? What do we do when students are not learning or are reaching mastery before expectation?
Theory of Action	A set of underlying assumptions about moving an organization from its current state to its desired future.
Unified Improvement Plan (UIP)	The Education Accountability Act of 2009 requires each Colorado district and school to create an annual improvement plan. CDE has developed a unified improvement planning template and processes to support schools and districts in their performance management efforts. The UIP template and planning processes used represent a shift from planning as an “event” to planning as a critical component of “continuous improvement.” The UIP template has been designed to meet both state and federal accountability requirements thus reducing the number of separate plans schools and districts are required to complete.
Universal Tier Instruction	See Best-First Instruction and Research-Based Instruction



Validity	The extent to which an assessment or test does the job desired of it; the evidence may be either empirical or logical. Criterion-related validity is the standard, i.e., based on the content or processes (construction) of other valid measurements or criterion that ensure the assessment measures what it is purported to measure.
Vision	A future-oriented aspiration for student outcomes (achievement levels, graduation rates, post-secondary education and adult success) and the teaching and learning environment of the school.
Walkthrough	An organized observation that requires the principal or supervisor to frequently visit classrooms to look for specific instructional practices.



Systems of Support References

The following documents were used in the development of the review process :

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Colorado Department of Education Related Tools

English Language Learners Walk Through and Program Review Tool, Colorado Dept. of Education

RtI Implementation Rubric: School-Level, Colorado Dept. of Education

Rubric for Evaluating Colorado's Principals and Assistant Principals, Colorado Dept. of Education and *Rubric for Evaluating Colorado's Teachers*, Colorado Dept. of Education

Self-Assessment for a Healthy Human Capital System in Schools and Districts, Colorado Dept. of Education

The Standards-Based Teaching/Learning Cycle (2nd Edition): A Guide to Standards-Based Practices for Districts and Schools in Colorado, Colorado Dept. of Education (May 2012).

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