

# **EDUCATIONAL PLAN FOR ACCREDITATION**



**Littleton Public Schools**  
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**MAY 31, 2001**



## **EDUCATIONAL PLAN FOR ACCREDITATION MAY 31, 2001 INTRODUCTION**

### **Who We Are**

Littleton Public Schools (LPS), located in the south Denver Metro area, has 27 learning sites serving 16,000 students in 15 elementary schools, four middle schools, two K-8 charter schools, three high schools, a preschool program, an alternative middle school program, an alternative high school program and a center for highly at-risk secondary students. The student population of the district by ethnic group is 0.59 percent Native American, 2.5 percent Asian, 1.32 percent Black, 89.59 percent White, and 6.01 percent Hispanic.

The district employs 1,000 teachers who are committed to ensuring the highest quality education for school-age children. Their efforts are supported and enhanced by 700 support staff who provide outstanding service with a strong sense of professionalism, pride, and enthusiasm.

LPS is committed to providing a rigorous educational experience for all students in a personalized and caring environment. Students are actively involved in academic, co-curricular, and athletic programs. LPS students are regularly recognized for academic achievement including Boettcher, National Merit, National Hispanic, and Presidential scholars, along with many winners in numerous state and national academic competitions. The U.S. Department of Education has designated schools at all three levels as Blue Ribbon schools.

The mission statement of Littleton Public Schools is:

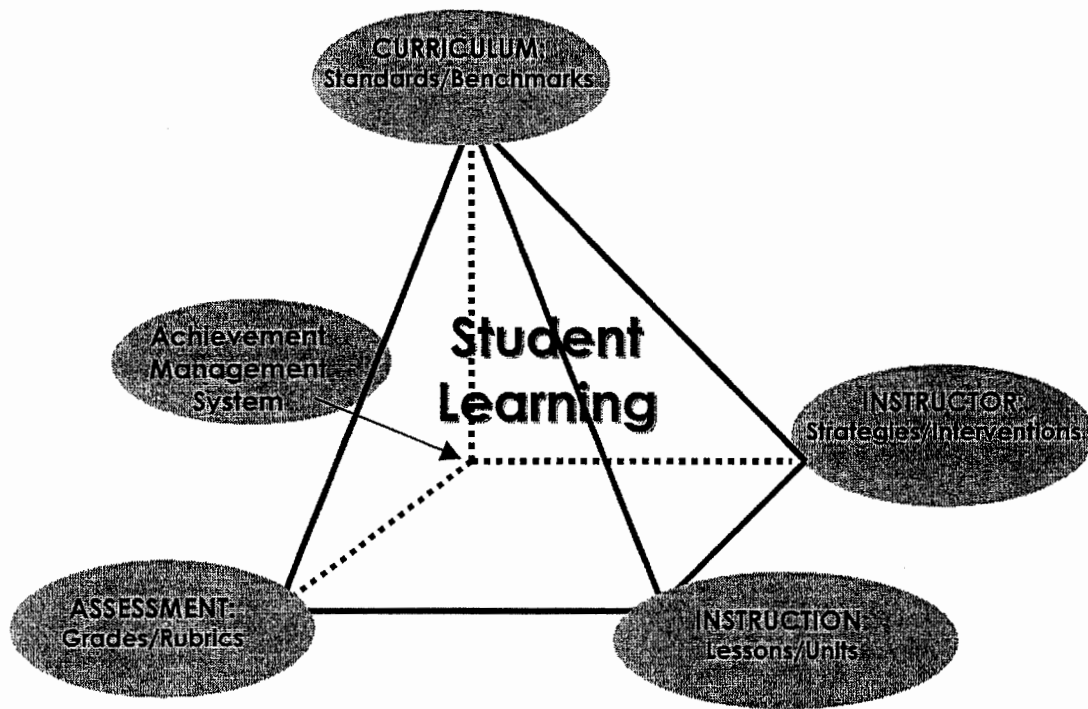
*"Littleton Public Schools is dedicated to continuous improvement of academic achievement and to the realization of individual student potential."*

The message of the mission statement reflects these values and commitments in LPS:

- high learning expectations for all students;
- a learning environment that emphasizes individual student progress;
- interventions and support to help students succeed.

Littleton Public Schools supports a comprehensive approach to achieving the stated values and commitments through implementation of our student learning system, visually depicted in the diagram below. The student learning system calls for alignment of curricular expectations with instructional practices and with ongoing assessment of student performance. This is achieved through the collaboration of central administration and site administration in a shared decision-making framework under the direction of the Board of Education. The Board of Education sets policy and establishes direction for the district in terms of school operations and curriculum and instruction; central administration leads, guides, and supports the work to implement Board direction; decisions about strategies for daily operation and instructional delivery are the responsibility of building administrators and their parent advisory accountability committees.

### Student Learning System



LPS enjoys the support of a community with a strong economic base, but has been subject to a pattern of declining student enrollment for the past several years. Enrollment has been somewhat stabilized through significant efforts to encourage out-of-district student enrollment, with a resulting gain of approximately 1,400 students. This financial situation, plus the diversion of funds to two charter schools, has fiscally constrained the district's efforts to respond to emerging needs for modification of instructional programs or approaches and for professional development for staff members. Most recently, the district has cut the 2001-2002 budget by approximately \$3 million. Despite the financial challenges, the district continues to produce quality learning results through careful allocation of resources.



Littleton Public Schools

## **EDUCATIONAL PLAN FOR ACCREDITATION MAY 31, 2001 SPECIFICATIONS**

### **Operational Design**

Littleton Public Schools proposes the following terms for a six-year accreditation plan, from July 1, 2001 to June 30, 2007, between the LPS Board of Education and the State Board of Education. This plan is subject to review and renegotiations as changes to state statutes or the Rules for the Administration of the Accreditation of School Districts occur, or as conditions internal to the district may require. The commitments described in the district plan will be realized over the course of the six-year accreditation period.

The Littleton Public Schools Board of Education will be responsible for the final designation of accreditation status for each district school. The superintendent of schools will be responsible for implementation of the approved Educational Plan for Accreditation as outlined in the plan document, and to make recommendations to the Board of Education regarding accreditation status for each district school.

Each school's improvement plan will serve as their accreditation plan with the district. The School Improvement Plan will include learning goals, data on student performance, instructional activities to achieve learning goals for all students, student discipline information, graduation and attendance rates, and student demographic information. Each school accountability committee, with leadership from the school principal, is responsible to develop the School Improvement Plan, oversee its implementation, and monitor and report results.

The directors of elementary and secondary education will monitor and support the development of School Improvement Plans and review for quality and completeness in collaboration with the Learning Support Team. The District Accountability Committee will read each School Improvement Plan and conduct a compliance review prior to the superintendent's submission of the plans to the Board of Education. The District Accountability Committee will advise the Superintendent and Board of Education on matters relating to school accreditation in the district.

## **Content Standards and Achievement Performance Levels**

Littleton Public Schools Board of Education has adopted the State Model Content Standards and has revised district curricula to align with state standards in the following areas:

Reading	Civics
Writing	Foreign Language
Mathematics	Art
Geography	Music
History	Physical Education
Economics	Science

In each curricular area, a scope and sequence describes the grade level student learning targets. The measure of success established for each content area is that 75 to 85 percent of all students will master the learning targets at each grade level by the end of the school year. While this reflects an expectation for aggregated student performance in each content area, it is the district's practice and value that continuous improvement of learning for each student is the key focus of instructional efforts.

The primary method of assessing student mastery of learning targets is ongoing classroom assessments. The body of evidence created by individual and group assessments includes daily tests, unit and end of course assessments, teacher observation and judgment of student work, and other assigned performance tasks. In addition, more standardized test information is included in some grades in the form of CSAP results, ITBS, literacy assessments, International Baccalaureate and Advanced Placement exams.

The district believes that students realize the greatest benefit when teachers have profound and current knowledge of each student's present status in relation to the content learning targets to guide their instructional decisions and planning. Therefore, the district dedicates resources to support quality ongoing classroom assessment aligned with content standards. Over the course of the accreditation period, professional development will emphasize sound classroom assessment practices with the goal that student grades will more closely align with curriculum expectations, which are aligned with state content standards and with CSAP results. Under the leadership of the office of curriculum and instruction and the office of assessment, district curriculum councils will participate in activities to more clearly define student mastery of the curriculum learning targets, and appropriate assessments to demonstrate proficiency.

To support these efforts, the district is exploring technology strategies to manage student data. An achievement management system would allow teachers more ready access to achievement information linked to standards and to instructional resources. During the six-year accreditation period, the Information and Technology Services department will lead efforts to identify an appropriate system and to plan the implementation of that system including hardware and software purchases, data entry, training, and support services.

## District Goals and Requirements

The instructional program of Littleton Public Schools, as indicated by the district mission statement, is focused on the continuous improvement of academic achievement and the realization of individual student potential. The district's goal, like that of the state, is for students to function at the proficient level or above on CSAP exams. It is, therefore, important to improve the performance of students at all points on the CSAP score scale. Students performing at the unsatisfactory level should progress to partially proficient, those performing at the partially proficient level should become fully proficient, and students achieving proficiency should move to the advanced performance level, if possible. The rescaling of CSAP through state efforts will allow schools to monitor student improvement along a continuous scale to ascertain if continuous growth is being realized.

The following goal statements represent the learning expectations of Littleton Public Schools as described by school and district results:

**Goal one:** At each grade level, 75-85 percent of all students will achieve grade level learning targets as defined in district adopted curricula and demonstrated by classroom assessment results.

**Goal two:** A minimum of one year's growth in one year's time in reading, writing and math will be demonstrated by the weighted scoring of CSAP results.

**Goal three:** Discrepant subgroups will achieve more than a year's growth in a year's time in reading, writing, and math as demonstrated by CSAP results, and supported by other achievement information. (Discrepant subgroups or sub-populations are identified student groups who are below or above grade level.)

Modifications to the district instructional program are made as student achievement results indicate and warrant. The district's comprehensive plan for staff development provides a variety of ways through which teachers renew and strengthen their knowledge and skills and gain the ability to adjust teaching practice as necessary to improve student learning. This staff development plan is available upon request. In addition, each elementary and middle school will have additional licensed staff to support novice and veteran teachers in the necessary instructional skills to achieve learning goals.

Schools are required to examine data from a variety of assessments to establish achievement goals aligned with state accreditation indicators. These requirements and the strategies through which they will be met are specified in each school's improvement plan. Results will be presented in the annual progress report prepared, published, and distributed by each school. The school improvement plan template is shown in Appendix A.

## **Assessments to Measure Student Progress**

As already noted, Littleton Public Schools focuses on quality assessment at the classroom level. This approach developed as the district aligned local curriculum targets with the State Model Content Standards. The most significant body of data on student performance is necessarily unique to the course and curriculum being taught and the measures appropriate to assess student achievement. The cumulative data on student performance collected and analyzed by each teacher during the course is reflected in the grade given to the student at the end of the course. The grade earned by a student should indicate if he/she has mastered curricular learning objectives.

Classroom based results are augmented by results from district, state, and national assessments. The schedule for these assessments can be seen in Appendix B.

## **Colorado Literacy Act**

The strategic plan for Littleton Public Schools emphasizes the importance of meeting the academic needs of students, with a particular focus on reading, writing, and mathematics. In response to these priorities, a literacy committee was formed in August 1997 to develop a plan to achieve reading and writing proficiency for all LPS students. The committee recommended that while it might mean more students would be identified as needing intervention, the district should heed the findings of research that show reading and writing must be addressed together if reading is to be improved. The committee also recommended that another aspect of the research receive priority attention, that is, no other factor bearing on the learning of students is more important than the effectiveness of the classroom teacher.

In order to establish an adequate literacy plan for LPS, the Board of Education approved additional staff to address literacy needs at elementary and middle schools. The Board also allocated funds for literacy instructional materials and for training of teachers and specialists.

Priorities for use of these resources are focused on supporting and improving classroom instructional practices, along with providing intervention for the most at risk readers and writers. In elementary and middle schools, Instructional Coaches co-plan, co-teach, model, instruct, assist, and consult with staff on strategies for improving students' literacy skills. Literacy Specialists collaborate with teachers to monitor individual student achievement in reading and writing, help identify students who need modifications to instruction or additional assistance, develop Individual Literacy Plans as needed, and coordinate compliance with the expectations of the Colorado Basic Literacy Act. The district assessment plan, intervention and support systems, and monitoring and reporting of results, meet the requirements of the literacy act.

## **Strategies to Address Achievement Discrepancies**

While it is clear from both a research and an experience perspective that differences typically exist between various groups of students defined by ethnicity, gender, language, and/or cognitive ability, a standards-based philosophy dictates that achievement goals be based on standards that all students are expected to achieve. The ultimate goal is no discrepancy exists between the achievement of the majority group and that of any of the targeted subgroups of students identified by ethnicity, gender, disability, or limited English proficiency. The subgroup of exceptional ability students is expected to achieve above the majority group.

CSAP results and other indicators of student performance will be tracked for sub-populations. When subgroups are identified as performing below the majority group, strategies to accelerate student academic growth will be implemented. District support is provided systematically to special populations that typically experience learning challenges: special education, English language learners, at-risk students, and below grade-level performers in literacy per the Colorado Basic Literacy Act. Intervention strategies include additional staffing through the allocation of specialists to serve students, differentiated instructional strategies in regular classrooms, parent education support, and expanded instructional materials for student and teacher use. Schools with identified underperforming subgroups implement interventions as described and develop other school-based strategies as defined in their school improvement plans.

For the subgroup of students identified as gifted and talented in various areas of strength, a different, yet parallel criterion is appropriate. As an ultimate goal, the entire subgroup of identified gifted and talented students should score in the “advanced” category for the tested content area in CSAP and other assessments. Interventions to support learning growth include staffing gifted education facilitators in every school to work with students and consult with teachers, differentiated instruction and aligned materials, extended learning opportunities, parent education, and other instructional strategies as described in the Personalized Learning Plan developed for each identified gifted student.



## **EDUCATIONAL PLAN FOR ACCREDITATION MAY 31, 2001 ASSURANCES**

1. Littleton Public Schools has adopted the State Model Content Standards and has aligned local curricula and grade-level learning objectives in the different content areas of the state standards.
2. Littleton Public Schools teachers are using their classroom assessments as part of the body of evidence to demonstrate student learning.
3. Littleton Public Schools assures the Colorado Department of Education that schools will undergo a three-year review cycle through the school improvement planning process. However, each school's progress on student achievement indicators will be monitored annually by the central office Learning Services Team according to the Data Use and Interpretation Flow Chart process described in Appendix C.
4. The Littleton Public Schools Board of Education will recognize high performing schools and has authorized administrative procedures to structure supportive interventions for schools with unsatisfactory performance or progress toward accreditation benchmarks.
5. The Littleton Public Schools Board of Education will place schools on a corrective action cycle if they fail to accomplish required growth over the three-year period.
6. Littleton Public Schools has a long-standing and recently reviewed set of policies in place that provides a means to inform and involve parents and families in the programs of its schools. The policies provide direction for inclusion of the business community, local advisory accountability committees, and other interested citizens in setting goals and priorities for school improvement. The policies also establish means for participating in the district and school accountability committees and processes.
7. The Littleton Public Schools Board of Education requires each school within the district to participate in CSAP assessments at the respective grade levels and content areas.
8. The Littleton Public Schools Board of Education assures the Colorado Department of Education that it has adopted and will implement adequate policies to comply with and carry out state statutes and State Board of Education rules and regulations. This includes adherence to the requirements of the Educational Accreditation Act of 1998 CRS 22-11-101 through 204, Senate Bill 186 CRS 22-7-601 through 610, the Colorado Basic Literacy Act CRS 22-7-501 through 506, and the Safe Schools Act CRS 22-32-109 (1) and (2).