Drop-in Article to parents about school/district ratings

*You can customize this basic article with details about your school/district’s rating, kudos or encouragement to your staff, and information about whether you plan to ask for reconsideration of your rating.*

**State ratings of schools and districts**

The Colorado Department of Education just released its annual ratings of every school and district in the state. There are a few things you should know about the ratings, what they are based on, and how you can access more information.

**Why does the state rate our school/district?**

Each year the taxpayers of Colorado spend more than $6 billion a year on public education, and our collective goal is to ensure that all students receive a high quality education and graduate ready for college or the workforce. Toward that end, the 2009 Accountability Act requires the Department of Education to issue annual school and district ratings, called “performance frameworks,” that let communities know how their schools and districts are doing. The ratings help identify schools and districts that are struggling, so they can receive additional support, while schools that are succeeding are recognized so that others can learn from them.

Keep in mind that the state’s rating system is just one measure of how we’re doing. As you know, so much more goes into the effectiveness of a school, including our culture, the commitment of our staff and the involvement of parents and community members like you.

**What are the ratings based on?**

Elementary and middle school ratings are based on state assessments in English language arts and math – both the average scores our students received in spring 2017 as well as the average growth they showed over the last three years. Achievement on state science assessments is also factored in. High schools and districts are also rated on graduation and dropout rates, college matriculation numbers and SAT scores. There is also information on specific groups of students, based on race, gender, free and reduced lunch eligibility, those in special education and who are English language learners.

More information about the state’s accountability system can be found here (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/stateaccountability>).