

CONGRESSMAN JARED POLIS

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GROWTH TO EXCELLENCE ACT

Tracking and Improving All Students' Academic Progress

America's economic future rests in our ability to provide every student with an excellent school. The Growth to Excellence Act would reform No Child Left Behind to replace its rigid one-size-fits-all policy with a more balanced policy approach that protects every child's right to a quality education while allowing states to determine their own school reforms.

At the heart of the Growth to Excellence Act is allowing each state to develop and establish its own academic model to provide a more fair and accurate picture of student progress over time and its own school accountability and improvement system. Rather than a top-down federal approach, states could set their own robust and achievable goals for measuring student achievement in test score growth and high school graduation rates and ensuring accountability from schools and school districts.

The bill is based on Colorado's deep experience in the area of student growth and school accountability systems. Since the U.S. Department of Education established the Growth Model Pilot Project in 2005, 14 other states have joined Colorado in participating in the program to incorporate growth as a way of measuring achievement.

The Growth to Excellence Act would:

- Ensure that all high school graduates are ready for college or a career by requiring challenging standards that measure each student's preparedness;
- Consistently apply and rigorously define adequate student growth as being on track to college and career readiness within 3 years or by the last year of student testing, whichever is earlier;
- Allow states to set educationally-sound, rigorous and achievable measures of student achievement based on test score growth and high school graduation rates;
- Rate schools and school districts based on measures of student achievement and require state-developed interventions for schools that do not improve;
- Close achievement gaps by continuing academic performance targets for minority and low-income students, English language learners and students with disabilities;
- Replicate success by recognizing top performing schools and districts to encourage adoption of practices that increase student achievement; and
- Better measure student progress by allowing states to use adaptive assessments, which dig deeper into a student's knowledge base to better measure knowledge or ability, depending on the student's answers.

The bill was first introduced in the Senate by Mark Udall (D-CO) and Michael Bennet (D-CO). It is endorsed by Education Trust, a national organization focused on education reform policies.