Building a solid base for literacy is our third gateway to a life of opportunity. A child who masters literacy skills in elementary school will enjoy many more opportunities in life than a child who does not master these skills.

Literacy is the basis of all future learning. It sets the stage for mastering increasingly complex subjects in later grades and for meeting challenges throughout life.

A child who is literate at an early age is far more likely to succeed in other academic areas and to graduate from high school with the opportunity to succeed in college or the job market.

A child who does not master literacy skills in elementary school will increasingly fall behind her peers as she progresses through school and will almost certainly have fewer opportunities for financial success in adulthood.

We have chosen three indicators to measure how many of Colorado’s elementary school children are making it through this third essential gateway.

**Indicator 1: Proficiency in third-grade reading tests**

The ability to read is the basis of all future learning.

**Indicator 2: Proficiency in fifth grade math tests**

Math literacy is increasingly important to success in the 21st Century workplace.

**Indicator 3: Quality instruction in elementary school**

Small class sizes that allow for increased personal attention and teachers who are highly qualified to teach in their fields are particularly important to improving student performance in the early years of school.