



COLORADO
Department of Education

Instructional Time and Attendance Policy for 20/21: What Charters Need to Know

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Objectives:



- (1) Generate awareness of instructional guidance published by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE)
- (2) Highlight key actions for charter school boards to take in the coming weeks



- On July 8th, CDE published a policy on Instructional Hours and Attendance for the 20/21 school year that responds to challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Guidance is published on our COVID “Policy Guidance” page

COVID-19 Resources for Schools

COVID-19 Resources for Schools

Mandatory Statewide Mask Order CARES Act 20-21 School Year Toolkit Learning at Home Resources

School and District Support from CDE

CDE's top priority is the health and safety of all students, educators and communities in Colorado. The department has compiled resources below about Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) to help provide guidance to schools and districts. Commissioner of Education Katy Anthes is also sending [communications to superintendents and BOCES directors](#).

Schools and districts should work directly with their local public health agency and the Colorado Department of Health and Environment (CDPHE) for guidance on COVID-19.

CDE Policy Guidance


CDE COVID-19 FAQs

From COVID Main page: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/safeschools>

From Policy Page – look under “Finance and Grants”

Policy Guidance from CDE

COVID-19 Policy Guidance



Overview

As COVID-19 continues to affect all areas of education in Colorado, CDE is shifting policies and requirements and providing resources to guide districts, schools, parents and others through this process. This page will be updated with the most current guidance on the topics below. Additional areas will be added as soon as guidance is developed.

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Finance & Grants

- [CARES Act](#)
- [Colorado's ESEA CARES Act Fiscal Waiver](#)
- [Grant Programs and COVID-19 Related Expenses](#)
- [Grants Questions and Answers](#)
- [Finance Questions and Answers](#)
- [Instructional Hours and Attendance](#)
- [Student October Count Audit Resource Guide \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Addendum to the Audit Resource Guide \(PDF\)](#)

*Make sure you are looking at the 2020-21 Guidance and not the 2019-20 Guidance



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CDE Policy on Instructional Time and Student Attendance for the 2020-21 Academic Year

Overview

Colorado state law establishes interconnected requirements concerning school calendars, instructional hours, student attendance and school finance. Generally, the law sets expectations for districts to provide minimum opportunities for student instruction, and local school boards to provide attendance policies that outline expectations for students and families to participate in that instruction. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) then collects information concerning enrollment, school calendars, instructional hours and student attendance in order to verify school funding and evaluate student engagement.



Key Take-Aways From the Documents

- Remote learning can be used by all schools
- To ensure funding, boards need to adopt specific policies that speak to how remote learning will work in their community
- Typically, district boards adopt these policies; however,
 - If charter schools have appropriate waivers (most do), then they will need to adopt their own policies
 - If charter schools plan to follow the district, they will need to know what the district statements are
 - Communicate your plans with your authorizer regardless of the direction you go

What Boards Need to Adopt or Ensure For

- Documentation that accounts for remote learning in the following ways:
 - A definition of “educational process” that includes remote learning*
 - A description of how and when remote learning may be used
 - A description of how instruction will be delivered during remote learning and activities that would demonstrate that a student is “engaged in the educational process”
 - How attendance will be taken during remote learning
- Schools will want to document equivalency statements that outline how students will be able to access equivalent learning opportunities while remote

*We also recommend language that connects remote learning days to the school’s calendar.

Example from Charter School Institute (CSI)

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Information and Resources

CSI Communications

- July 22, 2020
- June 26, 2020
- June 19, 2020
- June 12, 2020
- June 5, 2020

CSI Guidance

- CSI 2020-21 Learning Plan
- Accountability during COVID-19
- Policy Guidance for Instructional Time and Attendance
- CSI Emergency Assistance Fund
- COVID-19 Finance & HR Resources

State Guidance

- CDE Planning for 2020-21
- Public Health & Executive Orders
- CDE Graduation Guidelines
- CDE Transportation Guidance
- COVID-19 League Supports
- CDE Resources for Schools

Educational Supports

- CSI-Compiled Instructional Resources
- CDE Learning at Home
- ELL Virtual Resources
- Model-Specific Remote Learning Charter Collaboration

<https://resources.csi.state.co.us/coronavirus/>

[CSI - School Policies and Documented Practices for 2020-21 Instructional Time and Attendance](#)

Examples from their document

For the 2020-21 academic year, student contact days may include remote learning days as implemented as a result of public health and safety measures.

For the 2020-21 school year, in response to COVID-19 and the flexibilities made available by the state, the Board expands its definition of "educational process" to include:

- Instruction delivered electronically*
- Independent, remote work time for students that is directed and monitored by educators*

For remote instruction, calculations for contact time may be based off of academic content covered, student demonstrations of learning, estimated times for students to complete independent work, and/or other methods identified by the school to compare in-person learning to remote learning. Additional information about how teacher-pupil instruction will occur during remote learning days as well as a bell schedule equivalency statements shall be further detailed in [\[identify document; ex: Family Handbook; Course Manual; 2020-21 Learning Plan, 2020-21 Remote Learning Plan\]](#).

- Elementary Example:*
Remote learning offers some flexibility regarding when and where students complete coursework. Nevertheless, they are held fully accountable for meeting all state-mandated attendance requirements. Attendance is expected to be recorded by the parent daily and is verified by teachers to ensure the school is properly calculating and adequately monitoring that students complete a minimum of 12.5 hours per week or 450 hours per year in kindergarten, 27.5 hours per week or 990 hours per year for students in grades 1-5, and 30 hours per week or 1,068 hours per year for students in grades 6-12 based on an 180 instructional day school calendar year.

Resource: The examples below are from the [2019 October Count Audit Guide](#).

- ABC School follows a semester calendar structure. For each semester-long course into which the student is scheduled as of the pupil enrollment count date, the equivalent teacher-pupil instruction and contact time is 60 minutes/day per course.*

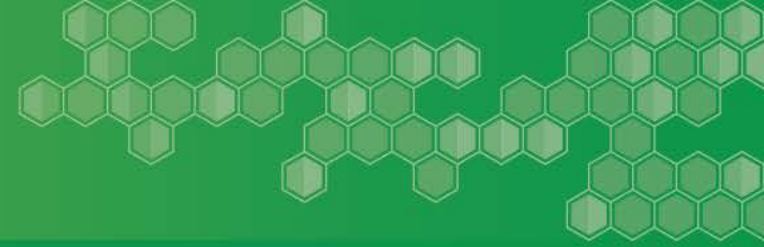
Applicable Waivers that Specify Charter Board Authority

- C.R.S. 22-32-109(1)(n)(I) – School Calendar
- C.R.S. 22-32-109(1)(n)(II)(A) – Teacher-pupil contact hours
- C.R.S. 22-32-109(1)(n)(I)(B) – District Calendar
- C.R.S. 22-32-109(1)(t) – Education program, curriculum and textbooks (automatic if invoked)
- C.R.S. 22-33-104(4) – Attendance policies and excused absences (automatic if invoked)

Recommended Next Steps for Charter Schools

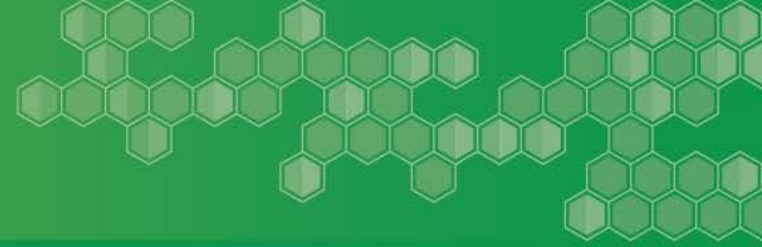
- Work with your board to schedule a meeting to adopt applicable policies
- Prepare language to support your board with policies
 - Review CDE guidance
 - Review CSI guidance
 - Consult your school's attorney for feedback/advice
 - We are also happy to answer any questions
- Communicate with your authorizer on your plans and how they might want information
- Adopt policies/document determinations as appropriate

Applicable links



- COVID-19 Main Page
 - <https://www.cde.state.co.us/safeschools>
- COVID-19 Policy Guidance Main Page
 - <http://www.cde.state.co.us/safeschools/policyguidancefromcde>
- New Policy on Instructional Time & Attendance for 20/21
 - [CDE Policy on Instructional Time and Student Attendance for the 2020-21 Academic Year](#)
- FAQ on Instructional Time & Attendance
 - [Corresponding FAQ's](#)
- Addendum to 20/21 Student October Audit Guide
 - Audit Guide - https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/auditunit_pupilcount
 - Addendum related to remote learning - https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/2020_pupilcount_addendum
- CSI Resource Document
 - <https://resources.csi.state.co.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/School-Policies-Documented-Practices-for-2020-21-Instructional-Time-and-Attendance-.pdf>

Questions?



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