Variance Waiver Process for 2023-2024:

Blended Learning and Supplemental Online Courses

School Auditing Office

Date: 05/17/2023

1. Defining the Variance Waiver
   - Related Guidance & Resources for Other Purposes
   - Blended Learning and Supplemental Online Course Guidance
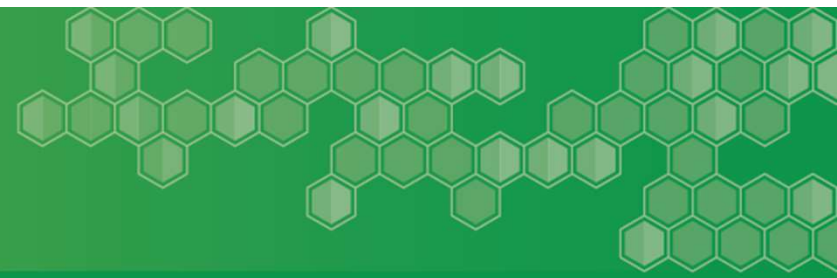   - Variances Available

2. Variance Waiver Process
   - Phases
   - Using Syncplicity

3. Required Forms
   - Data Form
   - Narrative Form

Definitions and Resources

Terminology

- **Instructional Model**
  - Planned program of services falling outside of the posted guidance for using Supplemental Online and/or Blended Learning Courses for funding purposes.
- **Supplemental Online Course**
  - As described in the posted Supplemental Online guidance, "Supplemental Online courses" refer to courses taken by students enrolled in traditional, brick-and mortar schools (i.e., those with funding codes 80, 82, 85, or 86) in which all of the instruction is received off-site, digitally (with some element of student control over the time, place, path, and/or pace of participation).
- **Blended Learning Course**
  - As described in the posted Blended Learning guidance, "Blended Learning courses" refer to courses taken by students enrolled in traditional, brick-and-mortar schools (i.e., those with funding codes 80, 82, 85, or 86) in which some of the instruction is regularly received in person on-site and some of the instruction is received regularly off-site, digitally (with some element of student control over the time, place, path, and/or pace of participation).
- **Online School Or Program**
  - An "Online School or Program" does not refer to vendors of particular software, curriculums, or "online courses" (such as Edgenuity, CDLS, Gradpoint, K12, etc.), nor to online schools or programs operating out of the state of Colorado (such as Florida Virtual Academy). It is either a Colorado online public school or online program operated by a Colorado school district or BOCES that has submitted Authorizers Assurances to the CDE Office of Blended and Online Learning and meets the statutory definition of an online school or program.

- Audit Resource Guides can be found on the [School Auditing Office's Pupil Count webpage](#)
  - http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/auditunit_pupilcount

- The 2023 Student October Count resource guide will be posted on or before July 1, 2023.

- Current posted guidance can be found in the [2022 Student October Count Audit Resource Guide](#).
  - https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/auditunit_pupilcount
  - These sections of the Guide will essentially stay the same for the 2023-2024 school year.

The Student October Count Audit Resource Guide addresses not only the general funding and audit documentation requirements at the **student level**, but also specific course and documentation requirements for **course types** such as Blended Learning and Supplemental Online courses.

Student October Count Audit Resource Guide

Table of Contents

Which Requirements Can Be Waived?

Course Requirements: Blended Learning and Supplemental Online Courses

As outlined in the posted guidance, the following <u>requirements</u> must be met in order to include Blended Learning and Supplemental Online <u>courses</u> in the determination for funding:

1. Limits on the number of courses that may be considered as instructional time for funding purposes

- Students can take at least one Blended Learning or Supplemental Online course
- Students may take up to two courses, as long as the second course does not result in a semester schedule that consists of a combined total of more than 40% Blended Learning and/or Supplemental Online courses
- Students with more than 3 Blended Learning and/or Supplemental Online courses will be evaluated as online students unless a Variance Waiver is granted

2. Courses must occupy unique positions on a student's schedule

3. Each course must be comprised of at least 20% weekly in-person or synchronous instruction

- Note: Supplemental Online courses offered through an approved or recognized online school or program are not subject to this requirement

4. Students must have access to equipment and sufficient internet access

The Variance Waiver **only** waives the following course requirements:

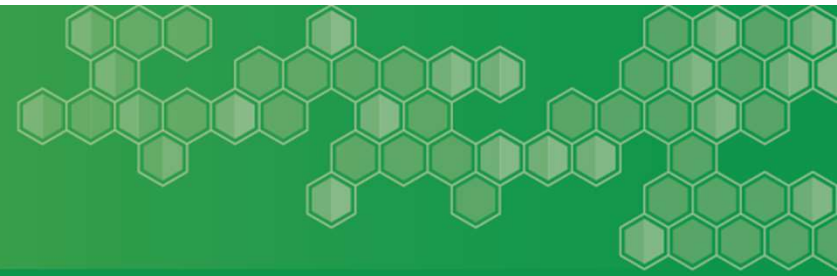**1. Limits on the number of courses that may be considered as instructional time for funding purposes**

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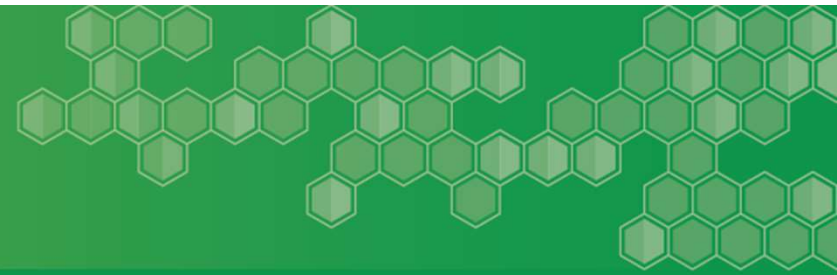
Variance Waiver

The Variance Waiver may waive course requirements 1 and 3 of the posted guidance; however, the Variance Waiver:

- Does <u>NOT</u> waive course requirements 2 or 4
    - 2: Courses must occupy unique positions on a student's schedule
    - 4: Students must have access to equipment and sufficient internet access

- Does <u>NOT</u> waive course documentation requirements

- Does <u>NOT</u> waive individual student funding or audit documentation requirements

Course Documentation Requirements: Blended Learning and Supplemental Online Courses

UPDATED: To include the digitally-delivered, off-site portion of course instruction in the determination for funding, the following <u>documentation</u> must be provided at the time of audit:

- **Governance**: Description of district policy that outlines:
  - Acceptable synchronous/asynchronous ways in which teacher-pupil instruction and contact time can occur outside of the classroom
  - Acceptable ways in which attendance/participation will be documented during the off-site portion of the class

- **Schedule** clearly indicating the dates/times in which students receive in-person/synchronous instruction (Course Requirement #3)

- **List of all Blended Learning and Supplemental Online courses** being offered during the fall term at each school

The Waiver Application Process
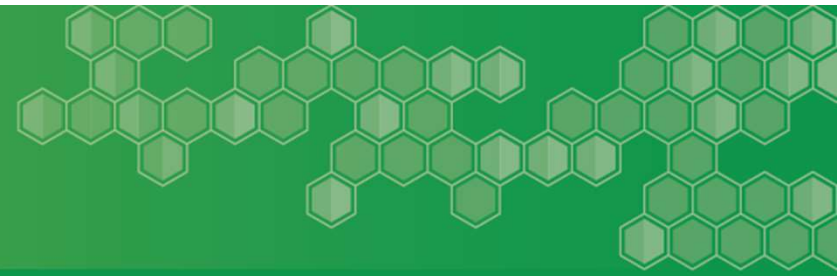
Regardless of whether a district or school had a variance waiver during previous years, ANY district or school wanting a variance waiver for the 2023-2024 school year MUST complete all steps of the variance waiver process in order to have an approved waiver for the upcoming school year.
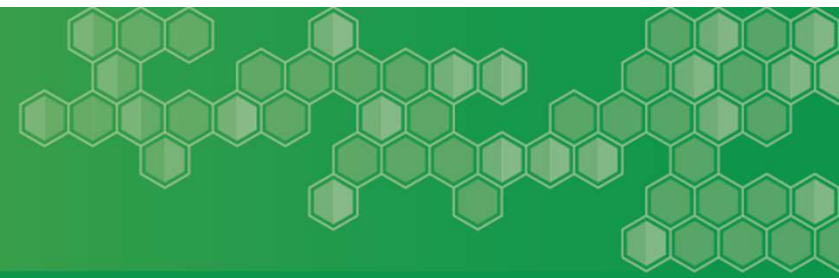
The Variance Waiver process consists of 2 steps:

1. Initial Variance Waiver Request

Inform CDE of the district's (or school's) intent to submit a formal Variance Waiver request

2. Formal Variance Waiver Request

To complete the request, submit the two required additional forms by December 8, 2023

Initial Variance Waiver Request
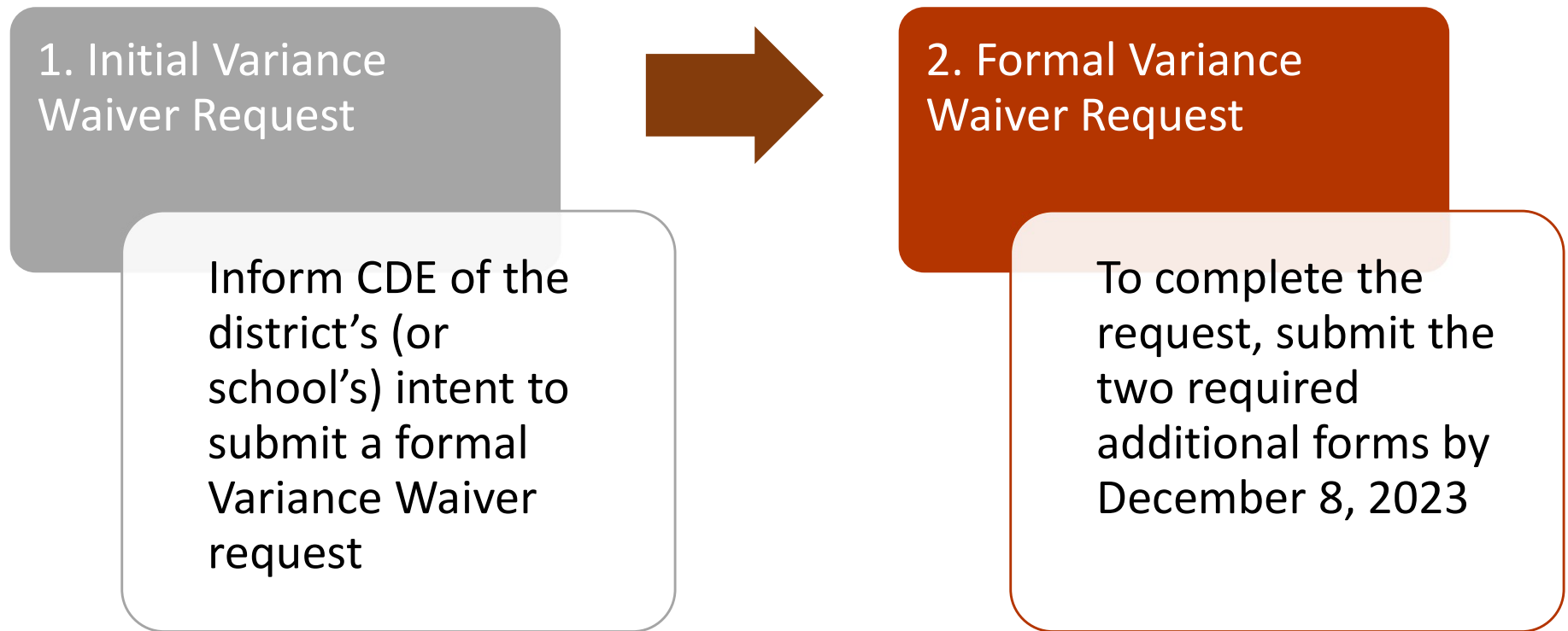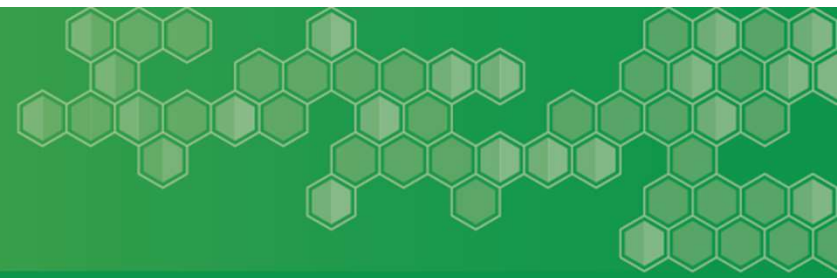
The purpose of the Initial Variance Waiver Request is for districts and schools to notify CDE of their intent to request a new waiver (by completing the formal variance waiver request step) for the 2023-2024 school year through the completion of the corresponding survey by the applicable deadline.

- Districts and schools must complete the Initial Variance Waiver Request survey no later than **August 11, 2023**
  - https://forms.gle/NjAvRzeDmsadKLqj6

Formal Variance Waiver Request
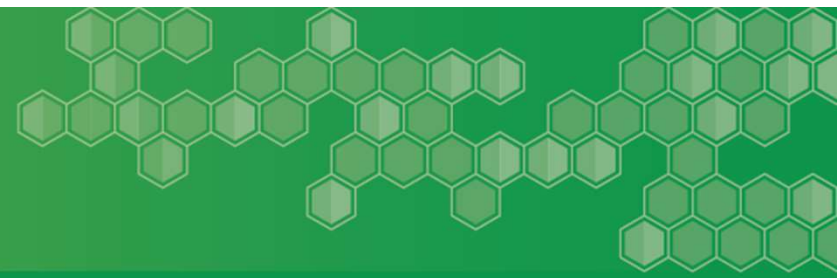
The Formal Variance Waiver Request includes the completion of two forms that must be completed and submitted to CDE via Syncplicity no later than **December 8, 2023**:

- **Data Form**
  - One data form is required for each entity for which a waiver request was submitted
  - Identifies total number of learning models the district or school has implemented and to which the Variance Waiver applies
  - Gives specific high-level information about each model
  - Lists all students reported in the 2023 Student October Count who were participating in those instructional models and to whom the waiver would apply for funding purposes

- **Narrative Answer Form**
  - One narrative form is required for **each** learning model identified in the Data Form
  - Describes various aspects of each model with context and qualitative details

Formal Variance Waiver Request Forms

- Both the Data Form and the Narrative Answer Form templates will be uploaded to the district's or school's main BLI Syncplicity folder.

Download and complete the "Data Form" and "Narrative Form(s)"

Complete the forms

Re-upload the completed forms to the "23-24_Completed Variance Waiver Forms" subfolder

Email BLI@cde.state.co.us letting us know that you have submitted your completed forms
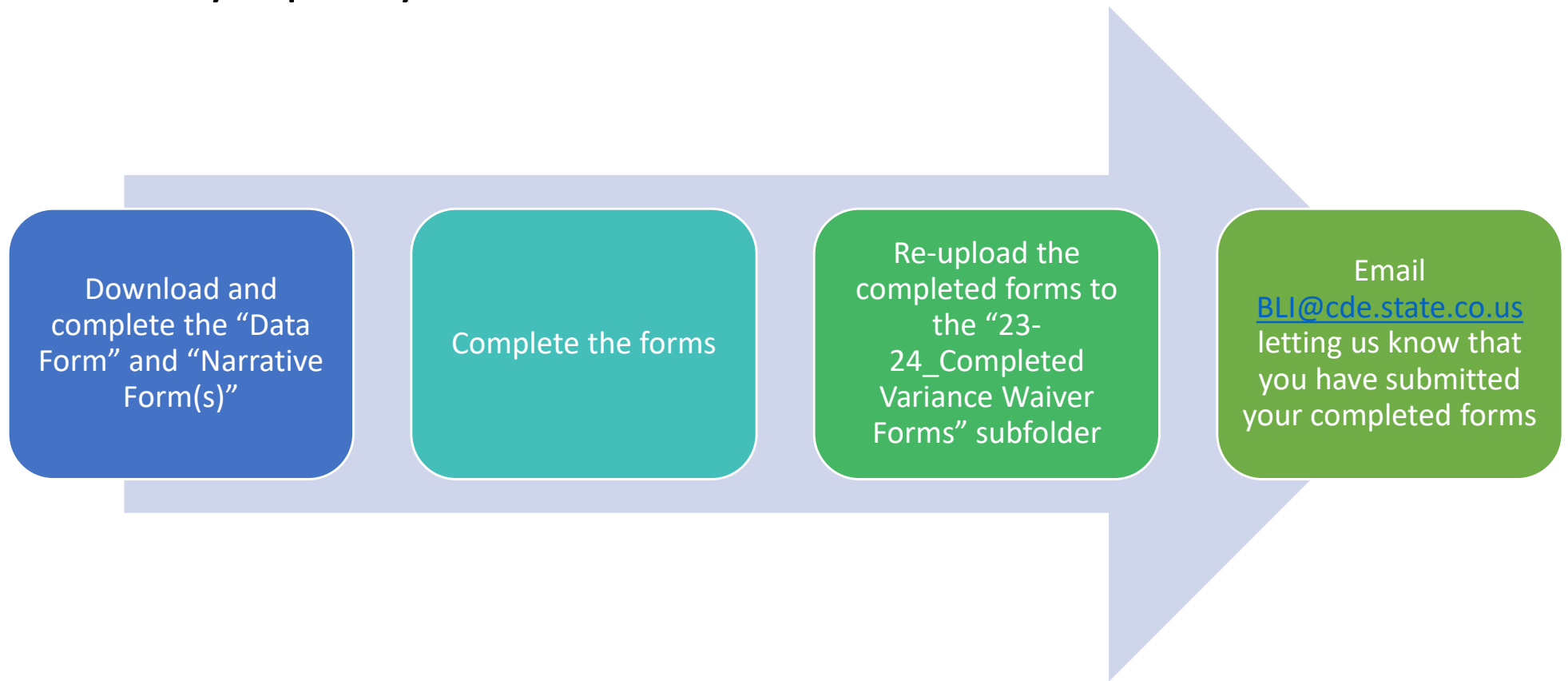
Using Syncplicity

- CDE uses Syncplicity to securely share and transmit information containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

- The Formal Variance Waiver forms for 2023-2024 will be available via Syncplicity on October 16, 2023.

- A short training will be available in October on how to complete the required forms.

- Completed forms must be uploaded to Syncplicity no later than December 8, 2023.

Files

All Files ▸ 0000_Awesome School District_BLSO_Variance

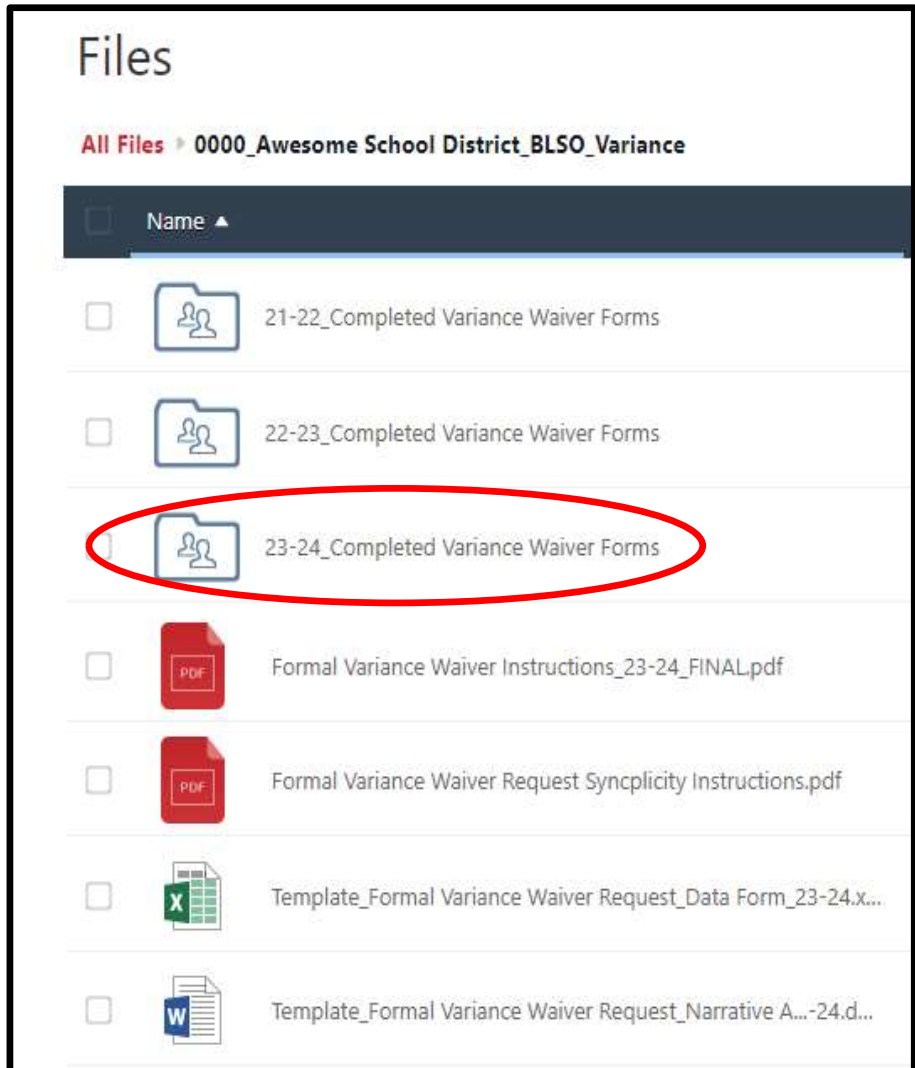|	Name ▲
☐	21-22_Completed Variance Waiver Forms
☐	22-23_Completed Variance Waiver Forms
☐	23-24_Completed Variance Waiver Forms
☐	Formal Variance Waiver Instructions_23-24_FINAL.pdf
☐	Formal Variance Waiver Request Syncplicity Instructions.pdf
☐	Template_Formal Variance Waiver Request_Data Form_23-24.x...
☐	Template_Formal Variance Waiver Request_Narrative A...-24.d...

Required Forms for the Formal Variance Waiver Request

Formal Variance Waiver Request
Form Instructions
(2023-2024 School Year)

COLORADO
Department of Education

Your district or school requested and was granted a variance waiver to the posted funding guidance for brick-and-mortar students taking blended learning and/or supplemental online courses during the 2023-2024 school year. In order to complete the variance waiver application process and be granted the requested funding requirement flexibilities, your district or school must provide specific information regarding the instructional models and students being served during the Fall 2023 semester and were included in your district's 2023 Student October Count data collection.

Instructions

Complete the following steps to finalize the variance waiver application process:

1) Access your district's or school's BLI Syncplicity folder. This folder contains 1-3 subfolders, 2 PDF instructional documents, and two templates (as described below).
2) Download the excel document labeled: Template_Formal Variance Waiver Request_Data Form_23-24.
    a. Complete all fields in the General section of the "Questions" tab.
        i. For each Instructional Model which requires the variance waiver, answer each of the questions in the appropriate Instructional Model box.
    b. Select the "Students" tab. For every student reported in Student October 2023 who was participating in an Instructional Model that requires the variance waiver, provide the name, SASID, and the Instructional Model number.
        i. The Instructional Model number on the "Students" tab must correspond to one of the "Instructional Model" boxes on the "Questions" tab.
    c. If your district has more than 10 Instructional Models, you may copy the Data Form and submit multiple documents.
3) Download the word document labeled: Template_Formal Variance Waiver Request_Narrative Answer Form_23-24.
    a. Create a copy of the form for each Instructional Model your district or school offers.
    b. Answer each of the 8 questions in detail for each Instructional Model.
        i. Answers may be typed directly into the document or copied and pasted from another document.
4) Re-upload all completed Data and Narrative forms into the "23-24_Completed Variance Waiver Forms" subfolder found in your district's or school's BLI Syncplicity folder.
5) Send an email to BLI@cde.state.co.us to notify CDE that the required forms have been completed and uploaded to Syncplicity.
    a. DO NOT send the completed forms by email, as they contain PII.

Definitions

Instructional Model
- Planned program of services falling outside of the posted guidance for using Supplemental Online and/or Blended Learning Courses for funding purposes.

**Supplemental Online Course**
- As described in the Supplemental Online Course section of the Student October Count Audit Resource Guide, "Supplemental online courses" refer to courses taken by students enrolled in traditional, brick-and mortar schools (i.e., those with funding codes 80, 82, 85, or 86) in which all of the instruction is received off-site, digitally (with some element of student control over the time, place, path, and/or pace of participation).

Blended Learning Course
- As described in the Blended Learning Course section of the Student October Count Audit Resource Guide, "Blended learning courses" refer to courses taken by students enrolled in traditional, brick-and-mortar schools (i.e., those with funding codes 80, 82, 85, or 86) in which some of the instruction is regularly received in person on-site and some of the instruction is received regularly off-site, digitally (with some element of student control over the time, place, path, and/or pace of participation).
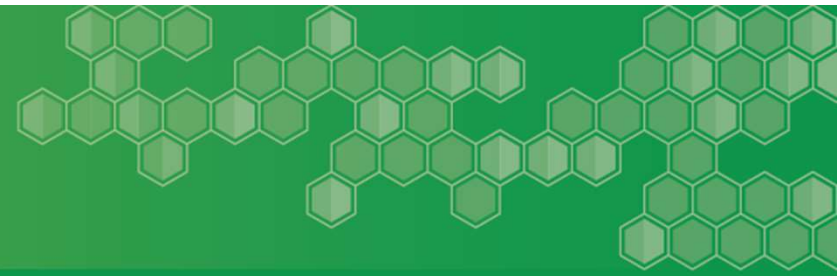
Data Form— "Questions" tab
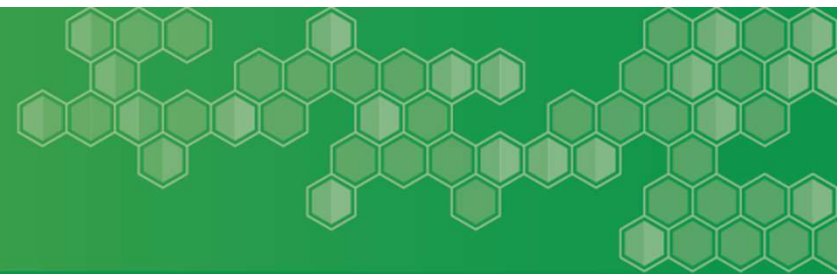
Formal Variance Waiver Request Data Form (2023-2024 School Year)
COLORADO Department of Education

GENERAL	
District Code	
District Name	
Submission Type	
Requestor Last Name	
Requestor First Name	
Requestor Job Title	
Requestor Email	
Requestor Phone Number	
How many different types of instructional models has the district or school implemented that have aspects that fall outside of the posted Blended Learning and/or Supplemental Online course guidance for funding?	

Instructional Model 1

Is this instructional model designed to serve a unique student type as described in the Student October Audit Resource Guide?	
Does the instructional model require that students **exceed the limits** on the number of blended learning and/or supplemental online courses allowed for funding purposes per the posted guidance (Course Requirement #1)?	Yes/No
Does the instructional model provide for **less than the minimum** amount of in-person or synchronous instruction (20%) per course described in the posted guidance (Course Requirement #3)?	Yes/No
Does the model incorporate **supplemental online** courses?	Yes/No
Does the model incorporate **blended learning** courses? (A student attending both in-person and online/remote for the same course)	Yes/No
Does the model incorporate traditional in-person on-site courses?	Yes/No

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Data Form— "Student Data" tab

Narrative Form

Formal Variance Waiver Request
Narrative Answer Form
(2023-2024 School Year)

COLORADO
Department of Education

Your district or school requested and was granted a variance waiver to the posted funding guidance for brick-and-mortar students taking blended learning and/or supplemental online courses (as described in the 2023 Student October Count Audit Resource Guide) during the **2023-2024 school year**. Answer the following questions by typing or pasting your response to each of the 8 questions below.

For high-level instructions on using this form (including definitions), see the "Formal Variance Waiver instructions" document that was posted in the same folder.

1) Download the Narrative Answer Form and **complete a separate form for each instructional model** your district identified on the Formal Variance Waiver Request Data Form (Excel form).
2) Re-upload all completed Data and Narrative forms into the "Completed Forms" subfolder inside the Syncplicity folder where you found the templates.

District Name:	
District Code:	
Instructional Model Number (Per the Formal Variance Waiver Request Data Form):	
List any schools using this Instructional Model:	
List any (non-school) programs using this Instructional Model:	
Additional school or program contact information (optional):	

1) Describe <u>in detail</u> the instructional model that you are providing that involves blended learning and/or supplemental online activities for brick-and-mortar students falling outside of the posted guidance (i.e., number of courses and/or synchronous/in-person instruction).

[Type or paste your answer here.]

2) How are courses in this model being staffed?

[Type or paste your answer here.]

3) What is the target student population for this learning model?

[Type or paste your answer here.]

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4) Explain the student needs that this model meets.

[Type or paste your answer here.]

5) What is the problem that this instructional model is anticipated to solve for students?

[Type or paste your answer here.]

6) Do you have any data/evidence indicating that this instructional model will be effective? If so, please describe (and include citations, if available).

[Type or paste your answer here.]

7) What other options have you explored? Are there other ways to meet the identified student needs that might fall within the parameters of the posted guidance?

[Type or paste your answer here.]

8) Outline how the proposed plan provides students equitable access to the blended learning and/or supplemental online courses, including but not limited to how the plan provides improved access to learning opportunities for students.

[Type or paste your answer here.]

Contact:

BLI@cde.state.co.us