



COLORADO
Department of Education

Blended Learning and Supplemental Online Course Guidance for Brick-and-Mortar Schools for 2021/2022

School Auditing Office

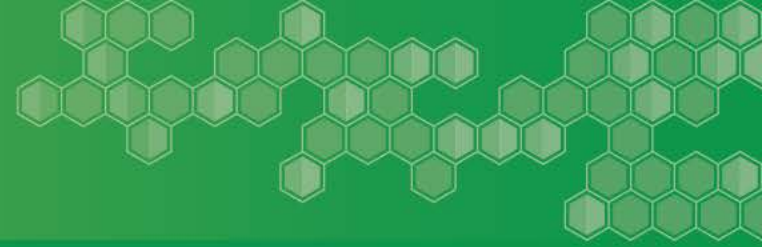
Date: **07/13/2021**

Agenda



1. Resources
2. Definitions/Descriptions
3. Course Requirements
4. Course Documentation Requirements
5. Variance Waiver Process
6. Blended Learning Initiative

 *This training does not address 100% Remote Learning due to COVID-19 Health Concerns or Emergency School Closures*



- For funding purposes, guidance regarding the inclusion of teacher-pupil instruction and contact time associated with blended learning and supplemental online courses has been updated for the upcoming 2021-22 school year.
- Districts or schools wanting to implement a learning program which falls outside of the posted guidance (and that includes these course types) may request a waiver to this guidance in order to include instructional time associated with them in the determination for funding.

Resources

Pupil Count Webpage

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/auditunit_pupilcount

Pupil Count

SCHOOL AUDITING OFFICE

Pupil Count



The School Auditing Office is hiring a Lead Regulatory Document Reviewer! For more information, please visit:

<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/colorado/jobs/3085648/lead-regulatory-document-reviewer-position-1799>

2021 Count Date: Friday, October 1

Summary

Each year all public school districts and facilities across the state of Colorado participate in the Student October Count data submission to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). The purpose of this data collection is to obtain required student level data as provided for by state statute, including information regarding students' funding eligibility as outlined in the Public School Finance Act of 1994, as amended (22-54-101, C.R.S.). The Colorado Department of Education collects these data through the Data Pipeline system with the Information Management Services (IMS) unit of CDE overseeing the collection.

The Student October Count is based on a one (1) day membership count in which districts are asked to report all students who are actively enrolled and attending classes through their district on that date. While the submission should only include those students who meet the membership and scheduling requirements as of the pupil enrollment count day, the actual submission process begins in September and closes mid-November. Districts should refer to the Student October Count data submission documentation distributed by the IMS unit at CDE for further information regarding the actual submission process and data element definitions.



[Upcoming Student October Count Webinars](#)

Resource Guides

2021-2022

[Student October Count Audit Resource Guide 2021 UPDATED 07/1/2021 \(PDF\)](#)

Prior Audit Resource Guides

Prior versions of the Audit Resource Guide can be found by clicking [here](#).

Remote Learning Options

2021-2022

Related to COVID-19 Health Concerns

- [100% Remote Learning Option \(K-12\) for the 2021-2022 School Year as a Result of COVID-19 Health Concerns \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Assurances for the 100% Remote Learning Option \(K-12\) \(link\)](#)
 - [FAQ for the 100% Remote Learning Option \(K-12\) \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Remote Learning Options for State-Funded Preschool for 2021-2022](#)
- [Temporary Remote Learning Options \(K-12\) for the 2021-2022 School Year as a Result of COVID-19 Health Concerns \(PDF\)](#)

Not Related to COVID-19 Health Concerns

- [Blended Learning Course Guidance \(UPDATED 06/15/21\)](#)
- [Supplemental Online Course Guidance \(UPDATED 06/15/21\)](#)
- [Blended Learning and Supplemental Online Course Variance Request Process \(PDF\)](#)

School Auditing Office

At-Risk Count
English Language Learner Count
Pupil Count
Transportation
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School Transportation



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Student October Count Audit Resource Guide

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/2021_student_october_count_resource_guide

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Definitions (for Funding Purposes)

Blended Learning and Supplemental Online Courses

Individual courses offered to students enrolled at traditional, brick-and-mortar schools (i.e., those with funding codes 80, 82, 85, or 86)...

Blended learning courses:

- ...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)

Supplemental online courses:

- ...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)



- For most students enrolled at a brick-and-mortar school, instructional time is determined by the number of minutes of teacher-pupil instruction and contact time that take place within a classroom setting.
- For funding purposes, learning which takes place off-site is typically not considered as instructional time.
 - ❌ Examples: homework, independent study courses, etc.
- However, although students participate in blended learning and/or supplemental online courses at least some of the time off-site, these courses may be included in the calculation of instructional time.
 - These courses must meet the outlined criteria, evidenced by appropriate documentation.

Blended Learning and Supplemental Online Courses

- These courses are meant to *supplement or augment* a student's brick-and-mortar schedule; a student enrolled in a brick-and-mortar school should never have a schedule consisting of blended learning and/or supplemental online courses only (unless a variance waiver has been requested).
- Unless a district or school has requested a variance waiver to the blended learning and supplemental online course guidance, traditional brick-and-mortar schools cannot offer these courses as a way to provide a full-time blended learning and/or supplemental online program (i.e., where the student's entire schedule is comprised of blended learning and/or supplemental online courses).

Blended Learning and Supplemental Online Courses

- Courses that are offered 100% on-site are **not** considered blended learning or supplemental online courses (for purposes of this guidance).
- Courses offered to students enrolled in brick-and-mortar schools, through CDE-approved and recognized Online Schools and Programs, will be evaluated as “supplemental online” courses.

Courses may be offered through:

1. CDE-approved and recognized Online Schools and Programs
2. Third-party course providers or vendors (e.g., CDLS, Edgenuity, Florida Virtual, etc.)
3. A district or school that has developed a course “in-house”



CLARIFICATION: Blended Learning and Supplemental Online Courses

These courses can be offered through an existing online school or program, or through a course developed independently (or purchased) by a brick-and-mortar school.

Courses offered through an existing approved or recognized CDE online school or program:

- will be evaluated like any other course offered by the approved or recognized online school/program
- will not be subject to the minimum in-person/synchronous learning requirement

Courses not offered through an existing approved or recognized CDE online school or program:

- must meet the requirements outlined in the posted guidance included in the 2021 Student October Count Audit Resource Guide
- this includes CDLS courses

Course Requirements

Course Requirement 1: Limits on Total Number of Courses

The number of blended learning and/or supplemental online courses that may be considered as instructional time for funding purposes is limited.

- Any student enrolled in a brick-and-mortar school may take **one** supplemental online or blended learning course (C.R.S. 22-5-119(8)) to be included in the determination for funding, regardless of their schedule or funding level.
- If a student enrolled in a brick-and-mortar school wishes to take **two** supplemental online and/or blended learning courses in a semester, the second course may be included for funding as long as it does **not** result in a semester schedule that consists of a combined total of more than **40%** supplemental online and/or blended learning courses.



Maximum Blended
or Supplemental:
40% or 2 Semester
Courses

Course Requirement 1: Limits on Number of Courses

If a student enrolled in a brick-and-mortar school is enrolled in three or more blended learning and/or supplemental online courses, the student will be evaluated as an online student **unless** the school/district has received an approved variance waiver from CDE.

Note: a student can only be evaluated as an online student if they are enrolled in a CDE-approved or recognized Online School or Program.

Course Requirement 2: Student Schedules

Blended learning and/or supplemental online courses must occupy unique positions on a student's schedule.

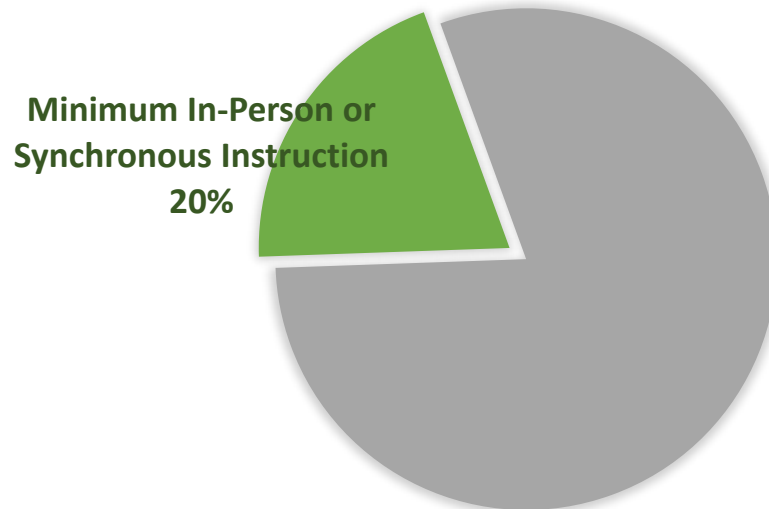
- A student should not be scheduled for another course or activity during the time frame reserved for the course.
- Supplemental online courses must be individual courses only; “study blocks” or multi-use periods may not be considered as supplemental online courses.
- When calculating the weekly instructional time for supplemental online courses, the School Auditing Office will use the average instructional time as determined by the brick-and-mortar in-person bell schedule calculation to evaluate the entire course.

Course Requirement 3: Instruction



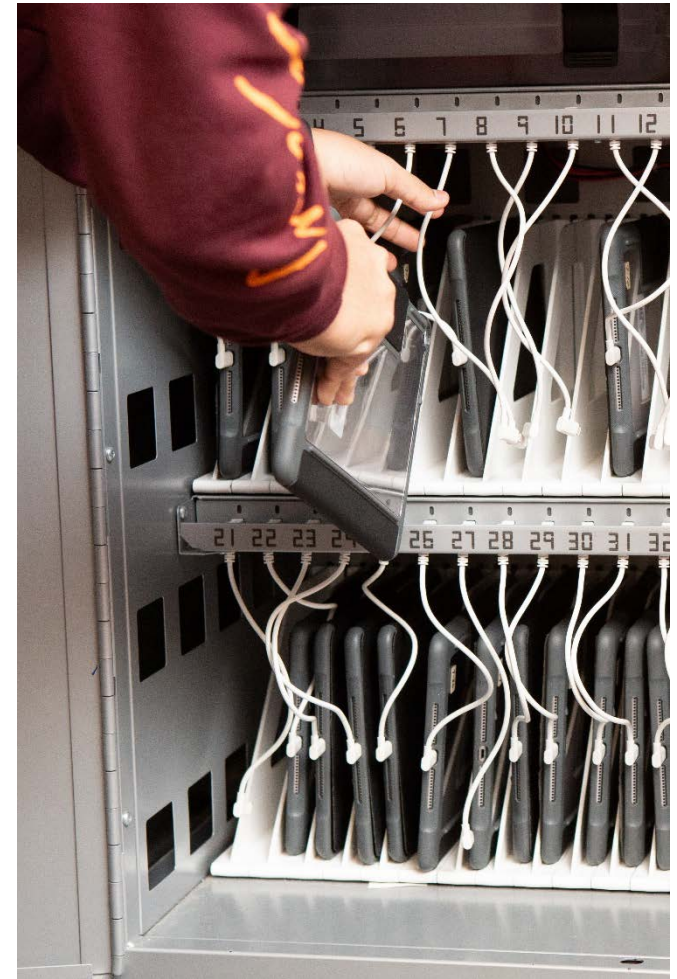
Each blended learning and supplemental online course (*not offered through a CDE-approved or recognized Online School or Program*) will require a **minimum** threshold of in-person or synchronous online instruction per course and per week.

- **20% in-person instruction** (for blended learning courses)
- **20% synchronous instruction** (for supplemental online courses)



Course Requirement 4: Access to Equipment and Sufficient Internet Access

- Districts must ensure students participating in blended learning and/or supplemental online courses have the appropriate electronic equipment and resources to participate in the course.
- Specific district and school responsibilities include ensuring blended learning and/or supplemental online courses meet the needs of students with disabilities, English learners, and any other student populations with exceptional needs.



Course Requirement 4: Access to Equipment and Sufficient Internet Access

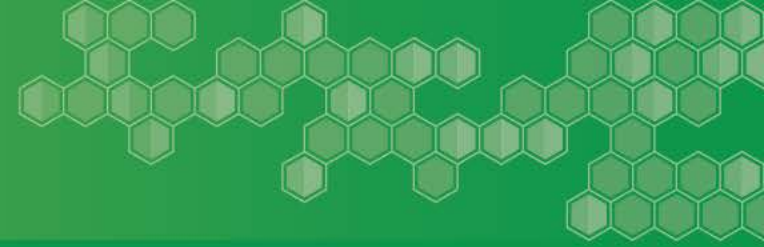
- Instruction must be aligned with Colorado Academic Standards and Colorado English Language Proficiency Standards and the course educators must meet state and federal educator licensure and qualification requirements—particularly for educators working with students with disabilities or English Learners (ELs).
- Each student with an IEP must receive the special education and related services, supplementary aids and services, accommodations, and modifications described in the IEP.

Course Documentation Requirements



- In order to include the digitally-delivered off-site portion of a blended learning and/or supplemental online course in the determination for funding, the district or school will need to be able to provide specific documentation at the time of audit.
- ***Failure to provide the noted documentation at the time of audit will result in funding being determined based on in-person teacher-pupil instruction and contact time only.***

Policy: Definition of Educational Process



A district (or charter school) board of education definition of the educational process (e.g., in board policy, board resolution, governance document, etc.), which includes blended learning and supplemental online courses.





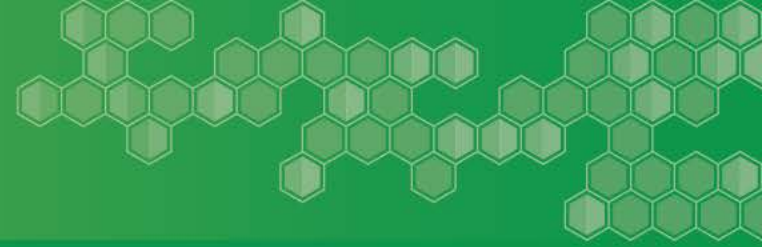
Documentation (e.g., regulations, course syllabus, handbook, etc.) outlining district policy (if not included in board policy) that describes the following:

- Acceptable synchronous and asynchronous ways in which teacher-pupil instruction and contact time can occur outside the classroom (i.e., during the off-site, digitally-delivered portion of the class).
- Acceptable ways in which attendance/participation should be documented during the off-site, online portion of the class.
 - For audit purposes, the district or school will need to be prepared to provide evidence the student was engaged in the educational process during off-site instructional time



Documentation which clearly indicates the days and times in which a student is participating in person (or synchronously)

- For courses not offered through an existing CDE-approved or recognized online school or program, at least 20% of the instruction must occur in person (blended learning courses) or synchronously (supplemental online courses).
 - When calculating the weekly instructional time for supplemental online courses, the School Auditing Office will use the average instructional time as determined by the brick-and-mortar in-person bell schedule calculation to evaluate the entire course.
- If not clearly indicated on a student's individual schedule, districts and schools must provide a list of all blended learning and supplemental online courses offered at the time of audit that matches the course titles listed on the students' individual schedules.



For audit purposes, the district or school **MUST** have at least one of the following in order to included off-site instruction associated with blended learning and/or supplemental online courses in the determination for funding:

- A. ALL course documentation requirements and/or
- B. Approved variance waiver (if applicable)

Failure to provide the noted documentation at the time of audit will result in funding being determined based on in-person teacher-pupil instruction and contact time only.

Variance Waiver to the Blended Learning and Supplemental Online Course Guidance for 2021-22



In the event a district or school has implemented a learning model that does not conform to the parameters detailed in the Blended Learning and/or Supplemental Online course guidance for 2021-22 (specifically **course requirements 1 and 3 only**), the district or school may request a variance waiver.

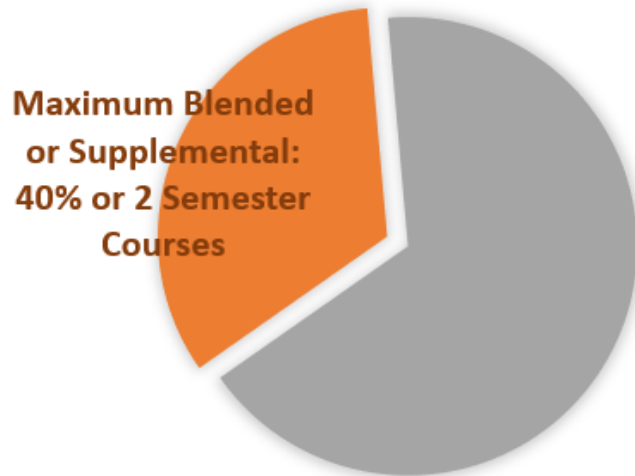
- The Variance Waiver Process is outlined in detailed in the following document:
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/blended_learning_variance_waiver_process
- Note: A district or school can **NOT** request a variance waiver of the required audit documentation requirements.

Course Requirements That Can Be Waived

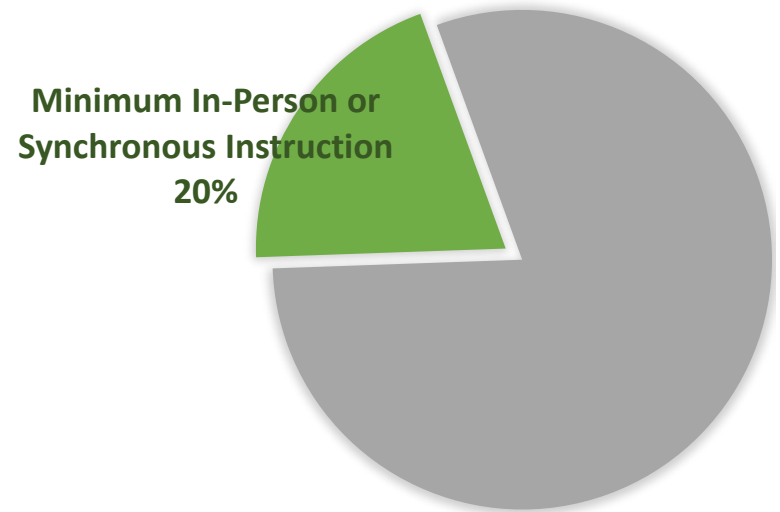


Districts and schools **may** request a variance waiver to the following course requirements:

1. Limits on number of courses



3. Instruction



Course Requirements That Can NOT be Waived

Districts and schools **may not** request a variance waiver to the following course requirements:

2. Student Schedules

4. Access to Equipment and Sufficient Internet Access



In the event that a district or school has developed a learning model that does not fall within the parameters of course requirements 1 and 3, a variance waiver will be granted, upon request, for those districts and schools that complete both of the following steps:


1. Submit an Initial Variance Waiver Request (Smartsheet)
2. Submit a Formal Variance Waiver Request

Initial Variance Waiver Request



- Inform the department of the district or school's intention to submit a formal request for a variance waiver by completing this Smartsheet form by **August 31, 2021**. As part of the initial variance waiver request process, you will be invited to join the Blended Learning Initiative during the 21-22 school year.
- Within 5 business days following receipt of the district or school's submission, CDE will respond to confirm temporary approval of the district or school's variance waiver. Final approval will be contingent upon receipt of the district or school's formal request for variance waiver.
- Formal variance waiver requests will **not** be denied for districts and schools who agree to and complete this waiver request process.

Initial Variance Waiver Request- Smartsheet



Blended Learning and Supplemental Online Course Variance Waiver Request

The Blended Learning Variance Waiver Process describes the requirements for districts and schools seeking to obtain a variance waiver for non-conforming Blended Learning and Supplemental Online course offerings. The form below will satisfy step 1 of this process.

Blended Learning Variance Waiver Process: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/blended_learning_variance_waiver_process

To have a record of your submission, click "Send me a copy of my responses" at the bottom of the form and enter your email address. You will then receive an automated email from Smartsheet with your submission.

District or School Information

Submission Type *

Select ▼

Contact Name *

Contact Title *

Contact Email *

Contact Phone Number *

Type of Variance Waiver *

What course requirement(s) is the district or school requesting a variance from?

Select ▼



Initial Variance Waiver Request- Smartsheet

Number of Students *

What is the approximate number of students for whom the district or school is seeking the variance waiver?

Formal Variance Waiver Request Acknowledgement *

The district or school acknowledges that it will need to complete the Formal Variance Waiver Request as outlined in the "Blended Learning and Supplemental Online Course Variance Waiver Process" guidance by December 17, 2021 that includes providing both learning model and student level information.

Select ▼

Variance Waiver Authorization *

By typing my name here, I confirm that I have been authorized by the noted district or school to submit this waiver request on their behalf. I have read the Blended Learning Variance Waiver Process document. http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/blended_learning_variance_waiver_process.

☐ Send me a copy of my responses

Submit

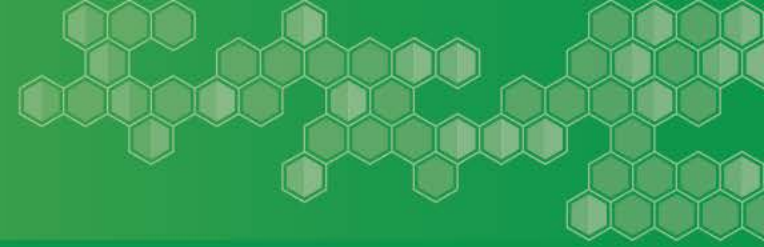
Formal Variance Waiver Request



The district or school will be required to provide the following information by **December 17, 2021**, in narrative form (CDE will be in contact with instructions for submitting this documentation; please do not email CDE with this information):

- Contact Information
- Description detailing the learning model/activities falling outside of the Guidance
- Target student population (including total number of students) for the proposed learning model/activities that fall outside the Guidance
 - **The district or school will be expected to provide the SASID's for the students participating in the proposed learning model.**
- If a district submits a variance waiver request, it must provide a list of schools within the district offering the learning model
- List of courses being offered that fall outside the Guidance including total number of anticipated weekly instructional hours being delivered synchronously and asynchronously
- Explanation as to the student needs the proposed model will meet and the possible problem the learning model might solve for students.

Formal Variance Waiver Request

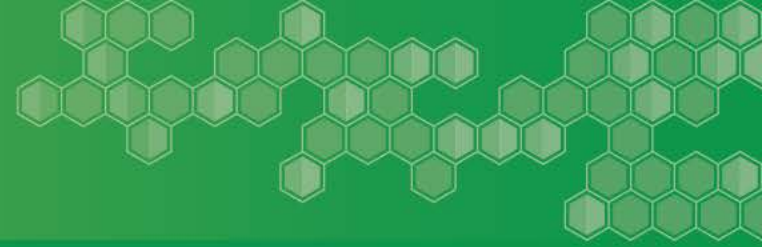


- Describe existing data or research that would support this model being effective
- List barriers or requirements of the Guidance that would prevent the district or school from implementing their proposed learning model
- What other options has the district or school explored? Are there other ways in which to meet the student needs that might still fall within the Guidance?
- Outline how the proposed plan provides access to learning opportunities for students
- Provide a copy of the local board policy that defines the district or school's blended learning and/or supplemental online approach

Blended Learning Initiative



- COVID-19 caused many schools in Colorado to completely shift their instructional models from traditional in-person to remote learning instruction and other types of hybrid models.
- This shift has in many ways upended what schools thought of as “normal” instruction for a large number of students.
- Rather than going back to business as usual, it is an important moment to step back and reassess what we know, or thought we knew, about “what works” in terms of instruction, seat time/funding requirements and—fundamentally—achieving strong student outcomes.
- As such, CDE would like to start this collective conversation through what we are calling the **Blended Learning Initiative**.
 - <https://www.cde.state.co.us/onlinelearning/remotelarningsupports>



- Through the Blended Learning Initiative, we would like to understand more about blended and online learning models that are currently being used by brick-and-mortar districts and charter schools.
- The Initiative is particularly targeted toward districts and schools that are implementing learning models that fall outside of our Guidance related to Blended Learning and Supplemental Online courses.
- Those schools and districts are eligible for a two-year waiver to the guidance.
- In addition, the Blended Learning Initiative will also welcome representatives from the online school and program community in order to facilitate a robust policy and best practices conversation.

CDE's Blended Learning Initiative is an opportunity for districts to co-create with CDE a learning cohort to reimagine blended and online learning models.

The program will take place from August 2021 to May 2022.



How to Participate



If you would like to participate in the Blended Learning Initiative, please contact Rachel Matson at matson_r@cde.state.co.us and she will add you to the list of contacts to be informed when registration information is available.

Questions

Contact:

General Audit Information
School Auditing Office
audit@cde.state.co.us

Rebecca McRee, School Auditing Office Supervisor
mcree_r@cde.state.co.us

Waiver Requests- General Information
Kate Bartlett, Executive Director of School District Operations
bartlett_k@cde.state.co.us

Waiver Requests – Technical Assistance (re Smartsheet)
Rachel Matson
matson_r@cde.state.co.us

Blended Learning Initiative (to be included as a participant)
Rachel Matson
matson_r@cde.state.co.us