



Introduction

If you're reading this, then you're interested in becoming a Designated Agency. A Designated Agency is recognized by the State Board of Education to help Colorado alternative teachers meet licensure requirements and thereby address the shortage of qualified teachers in our state.

This document, together with the information and links provided on the [Educator Preparation](#) website, Gives you a deeper awareness of the nature of Designated Agencies and provides everything you need to know to get started with your program.

Purpose of Alternative Licensure

The State Board of Education can allow Designated Agencies to create one-year and two-year alternative teacher programs to assist districts and BOCES that face a shortage of teachers and often struggle to find qualified persons to teach their students (State Statute 22-60.5-205 and the [Educator Licensing Act Rules](#)). Such programs shall:

- Decrease the use of emergency authorizations to hire persons who do not have teacher licenses and, in some cases, have not received any form of teacher preparation thus jeopardizing a school district's goal of providing a quality education for each student; and
- Identify persons with experience in areas other than education to help alleviate the teacher shortage faced by many school districts, so long as these persons receive adequate supervision and education in teaching methods and practices.

School District(s), BOCES, [regionally accredited Institutes of Higher Education](#) or non-profit organizations can serve as a Designated Agency in Colorado (State Statute 22-60.5-102 [10] and 22-60.5-205 [2]). Any of these entities may partner or collaborate for the operation of an approved alternative teacher program. A district or BOCES may choose to contract with an Institute of Higher Education that already provides an approved teacher preparation program. An individual's successful completion of an alternative teacher preparation program leads to a recommendation for initial licensure by the Designated Agency providing the program.

State Statute 22-60.5 was intended to address teacher shortages in public schools. Designated Agencies **must** serve an identified need(s) of a Colorado school district(s) or BOCES. Designated Agencies can create alternative preparation programs in numerous [teacher endorsements areas](#). State Statute does not allow alternative licensure pathways for Specialized Service Professionals.

To address principal shortages in public schools, districts may hire individuals as principals who can serve on a Principal Authorization. Districts create individualized learning plans for these [alternative principal candidates](#).

Components of an Alternative Licensure Program

Designated Agencies create programs that align with Colorado [Teacher Quality Standards](#), deliver high-quality educational services, and protect the interests of students (State Statute 22-60.5-205).

Eligible Participants

The alternative teacher pathway describes how candidates obtain their alternative license. The [alternative teacher checklist](#) guides candidates through the process. Alternative Licensure candidates must obtain an employment agreement with a Colorado public school as a teacher in the endorsement area for which they are qualified. Alternatively licensed teachers shall be evaluated under the same district and state requirements for licensed employees.

Program Components

The following shall serve as components for the initial and continuing approval of alternative teacher preparation programs (State Board rule 2260.5-R-18.00):

- An alternative teacher preparation program shall be designed as a one-year or two-year teacher preparation program of study and training.
- An alternative teacher preparation program for the purpose of receiving a special education generalist endorsement may be designed to be completed in a maximum of three years during which time the candidate must be teacher of record for a minimum of one year.

The responsibility of the Designated Agency shall include the organization, management, and operation of the program as follows:

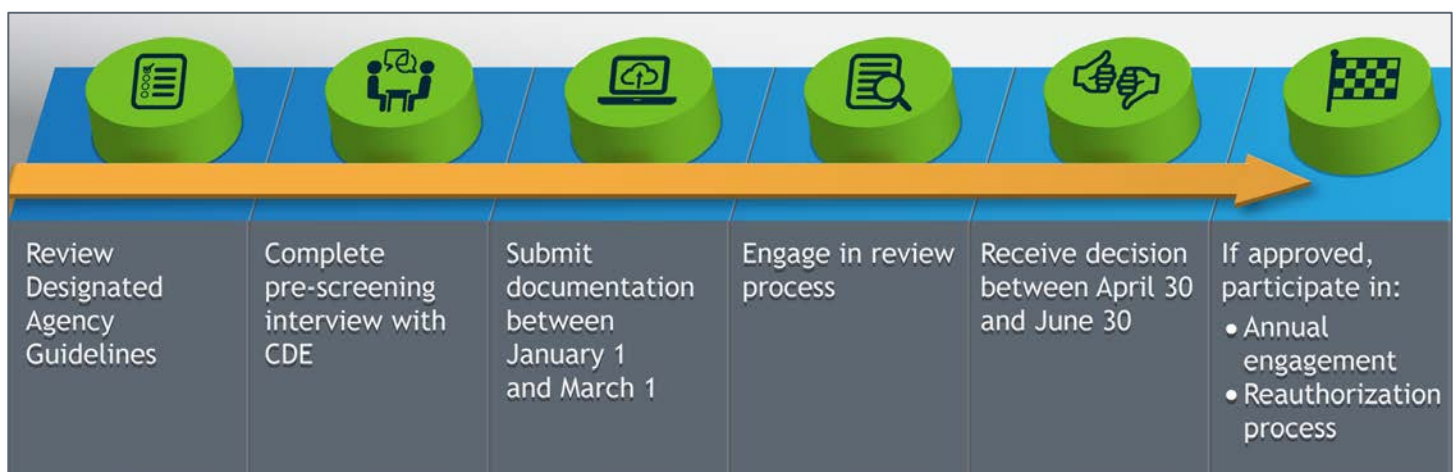
- Establish an advisory council that provides the Designated Agency with information regarding the organization, management, and operation of the approved alternative teacher program. The council, at a minimum, includes:
 - Representatives from participating school districts or BOCES
 - At least one qualified mentor teacher
 - A representative from a partnering institution of higher education (if applicable)
- Identify an alternative teacher support team that is composed of, at minimum:
 - The alternative teacher's mentor and principal
 - A representative from the Designated Agency
- Provide a minimum of 225 clock hours of training for alternatively licensed teachers aligned to the [Teacher Quality Standards](#).
- Develop guidelines that the Designated Agency uses to differentiate among alternative candidates based upon an inventory of their proven knowledge and past experiences.
- Develop a mentor selection process which shall include, but not be limited to:
 - Evidence and/or confirmation of exemplary teaching and school leadership; the ability to model and counsel the alternative teacher; relevant coursework; and a valid license and endorsement in the alternatively-licensed teacher's content area, if available.
 - If a mentor teacher in the same endorsement area is not available, the Designated Agency may submit a plan for mentor support that provides a comparable level of mentorship.

- An articulated, mandatory, and intensive supervision training program for mentors that provides direction with regard to structured guidance and regular ongoing support to new teachers.

Duties of the mentor teacher	Duties of the support team
Serve as a member of the support team	Ensure all documentation, including the Statement of Assurance , is completed in a timely manner
Counsel and coach the alternatively-licensed teacher	Schedules appropriate time and compensation for mentor to plan, observe, and confer regularly with alternative teacher candidate
Document evidence of growth and development of the alternative teacher in alignment with state standards	Meets on a regular basis to discuss and document the alternative teacher's progress
	Makes determination regarding recommendation for initial licensure

Becoming a Designated Agency

There are six steps that a prospective Designated Agency must go through to receive State Board of Education approval. Each of these steps is described in more detail and supported with links and resources on the [Educator Preparation website](#).



Rubric (Quality Indicators)

To become a Designated Agency, entities must meet or exceed standard for all of the five quality indicators below. As part of reauthorization, an agency must continue to demonstrate that these indicators are met. At any time, if a Designated Agency struggles to meet one or more of these indicators, CDE may engage the agency in an improvement process. The improvement process may include documentation, such as requirements for evidence, examples of outcomes, and feedback from participants.

Proposals to become a Designated Agency for alternative teacher preparation will only be considered if they demonstrate that they serve the direct needs of a Colorado school district(s) or BOCES. If a Designated Agency does not provide evidence for meeting specific public schools' needs, the proposal does not meet statutory requirements and the agency cannot be authorized by the State Board of Education.

Quality Indicators	Explanation/Examples	Does Not Meet Standard	Partially Meets Standard	Meets or Exceeds Standard
Needs of the Field	Needs not fulfilled with current agencies, shortage or high-needs endorsement areas, district(s) partnerships, unique delivery method, feedback from stakeholders, etc.		<i>This indicator cannot be partially met.</i>	
State Statute and Rule Licensure Requirements	Candidate entry requirements, professional competencies rules, alternative licensure process, employment agreements, etc.		<i>This indicator cannot be partially met.</i>	
Program Curriculum	225 clock hours, alignment to teacher quality standards, method of delivery, instructor qualifications, etc.			
Candidate Support	Roles and responsibilities for advisory council, support team and mentor including depth, breadth and frequency of support; struggling candidate protocol, etc.			
Program Evaluation	Data reporting to state agencies, growth and continual improvement processes, documentation of candidate progress, stakeholder feedback, etc.			



Ongoing Commitments

Once approved, there are several on-going activities the Designated Agency must complete to maintain status.

- Engage in annual preparation provider update. This includes:
 - Provide program updates including but not limited to: contacts for state and federal reporting, curricular changes, new endorsement areas, etc.
 - Designated Agencies are required to maintain records of individual candidate's participation, progress and completion.
- Submit required data reports to CDE per state and federal statutes (i.e. Title II, Report to the General Assembly, Educator Preparation Report, etc.)
 - Designated Agencies are required to comply with data requests from state and federal agencies.
- Participate in required State Board of Education reauthorization process including an on-site evaluation conducted not more than every 5 years. This includes:
 - Designated Agency Report submitted prior to site visit.
 - Site-visit with stakeholders (alternative candidates, graduates, hiring principals, program instructors, etc.)
 - Final report from CDE and reauthorization decision by State Board of Education