



# DATA PRIVACY

## Assessment Results



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

### BACKGROUND

In this age of data-driven decision making, data are foundational to the success of many education improvement efforts. Whether discussing student-achievement, program monitoring, education funding, accountability or any other education-related conversation, data are at the center of the discussion. However, educational data must never reveal the performance of individual students. Therefore, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is required to ensure individual student data are always protected.

State and federal laws dictate how data should be protected. Specifically, the Colorado Student Data Transparency and Security Act (C.R.S. 22-16-101 et. seq) mandates CDE establish a policy outlining how Personally Identifiable Information (PII) is protected. While using data effectively to guide improvement in instruction and student achievement, the Colorado Department of Education takes seriously its moral and legal responsibility to protect student privacy and ensure data confidentiality.

### PROTECTING PERSONALLY IDENTIFYING DATA

Before assessment data become public, CDE goes through an exacting process to protect Personally Identifiable Information (PII). For the public release, schools and disaggregated groups must have at least 16 students for CDE to report their assessment data to the public.

To report individual performance level results, a minimum of three students is required in a spreadsheet field to reduce the likelihood that an individual student could be identified. In addition, other disclosure avoidance methods may be necessary to further reduce the risk of identifying specific individuals.

However, schools and districts still receive all of their data without any type of suppression. Parents, too, get the data for their own students.

CDE will release data with PII only to outside entities and individuals who have a legitimate educational purpose, such as for educational research consistent with Board priorities. CDE has a process to consider and grant outside requests for PII or individual-level data.

### Why data are collected

Capturing accurate information is necessary for public, state and federal reporting and is required by law.

The state, districts and schools need to collect data about students, including their test scores, grades, credits earned, and other related information, such as demographics, enrollment, discipline, and special education status.

Schools and districts use data to foster students' academic achievement by identifying students' talents and special requirements, monitoring their academic progress, and developing successful teaching and learning strategies.

In certain cases, third parties may have access to data for purposes such as communicating with parents, improving the effectiveness of education programs and identifying gaps in student services.

State and federal data privacy laws are in place to protect students' information. CDE takes this duty seriously and has created a robust data privacy policy.

### LEARN MORE

- <http://www.cde.state.co.us/dataprivacyandsecurity>
- <https://www.cde.state.co.us/dataprivacyandsecurity/policies>