

# Definition of a Colorado Public School

## Colorado Requirements:

A Colorado public school is an institution that receives the majority of its funding from moneys raised by a general state, county, or district tax and whose property is operated by a political subdivision of the state and:

- Is an autonomous entity of a preschool through grade 12 district, the Charter School Institute or Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) which includes preschool through grade 12 grades within.
- Has its own principal who is not under the supervision of a principal of another public school,
- Has a budget separate from any other public school,
- Provides a complete instructional program that allows students to proceed to the next grade level or if a high school with twelfth grade, to graduate students. General Educational Development (GED) preparation programs do not meet this requirement. Has one or more teachers if any grade between K and 12 is being served. In schools serving only preschoolers, there must be at least one individual qualified as a Teaching Assistant as described in the Human Resources Job Classification Code 415(see below.)

***415 Teaching Assistant, Regular Education*** – Performs the day-to-day activities of teaching students while under the supervision of a teacher, program director or principal and may or may not be licensed by Colorado Department of Education (CDE). In preschool settings, this includes individuals who are functioning as assistants to a preschool lead teacher or are actually functioning as the preschool lead teacher. The teaching assistant does not make diagnostic or long-term evaluative decisions; however, individuals functioning as a preschool lead teacher are participants in teams of professionals making these types of determinations.

***Colorado Teacher*** - Provides learning experiences and care to students during a particular time period or in a given discipline.

## Colorado Public School Responsibilities:

Entities which meet the above Colorado requirements, and thus are granted a school code, are obligated to 1) report mandated student and staff information and 2) meet accountability and assessment requirements as identified below.

## **Reporting to CDE**

**Data Pipeline:** Local education agencies (LEAs) must report every school within applicable collections.

### Interchanges:

Discipline  
Special Education Individualized Education Program (IEP)  
Staff  
Statewide Standard Course Codes  
Student  
Teacher/Student Data Link  
Title I

### Snapshots:

End of Year  
Human Resources  
Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ)  
Special Education December Count  
Special Education Discipline  
Special Education End of Year  
Student October  
Teacher Student Data Link

### Year Round Collections:

Directory  
Educator Identification System (EDIS)  
Record Integration Tracking System (RITS)

### Periodic Collections:

Assessing Comprehension in English State to State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELL) – Student Biographical Data (SBD)  
Colorado Alternate Assessment (CoALT) – SBD  
Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) – SBD  
Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) - SBD  
Finance December  
Report Card March  
School Discipline and Attendance

## **Accountability and Assessment**

**Accountability:** All Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with schools will be accredited by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). All schools serving grades 1-12 must be accredited through the LEA accreditation process. These schools receive plan assignments based upon the School Performance Frameworks (SPFs). Every school serving grades 1-12 and LEAs with schools must complete a Unified Improvement Plan (UIP). If the LEA has fewer than 1,000 students it may complete a district-wide UIP instead of separate school and district UIPs. For more information, please see the [Accountability Handbook](http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/district_accountability_handbook2016) ([http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/district\\_accountability\\_handbook2016](http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/district_accountability_handbook2016)).

**Assessments:** Each school must administer the assessments appropriate to their student population including but not limited to Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS), Colorado Alternate (CoAlt), Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM), Assessing Comprehension in English State to State (ACCESS), PSAT 10, Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ), SAT, school readiness and Results Matter assessments.

### **Guidance/Restrictions on Adding School Codes:**

The automated Request for a New School Code may be found at:  
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/apps/formcenter/NewSchool>

- Once the Student October collection is complete no new school codes will be assigned or no school grade range changes will be granted.
- If a school reopens after it was closed or remained inactive for several years, that existing school code will be used and a new school code will not be assigned.
- Schools in Priority Improvement or Turnaround will be closely examined. CDE will review existing school Performance Framework data to determine if a new school code will be granted.

A local education agency may be eligible for a new school code if one or more of the following criteria are met:

- The grade span of the school changes by more than three grades, not including Preschool or Kindergarten as grades. For example: A school shifting from a K-5 to K-8 cannot request a new code because it is not changing more than 3 grades. A school changing from a K-5 to a K-12 can request a new code.
- The school's physical location changes and the attendance area changes by more than 50%.
- If two schools of about the same size merge, the school code committee will carefully consider which of the codes to maintain or if a new school code should be issued.
- One school splits into two or more schools. If a K-12 school requests new codes for K-5, 6-8, and 9-12, the high school grade levels will retain the old school

code, in order to ensure continuity of graduation rates. New codes may be issued for the K-5 and 6-8 schools, however, accountability attributions may follow all three codes.

- A new single district online school has been recognized through CDE's Blended and Online Learning Office, and has never existed in any other iteration.
- A new multi-district online school has been certified with CDE's Blended and Online Learning Office and the State Board of Education and has never existed in any other iteration.

When submitting a request for a new school code, please keep in mind the following implications:

- The new school may not be eligible for certain grants or awards.
- Trend data might be impacted (this includes assessment, growth, enrollment, demographics, graduation rate, dropout rate, mobility rate, etc.)
- Reporting of data follows the school code. If an existing school code remains, the prior data will be applied to the existing school code. If one or more previously existing schools is granted a new school code, the data associated with the previous codes will not follow the new code for accountability or reporting purposes.
  - CDE will be unable to automatically produce a 3-year School Performance Framework report based on three years of historical data until the new school code has been in operation for three years.
  - A 3-year School Performance Framework for merged schools will contain the historical data for the original school code only.

A new school code will not be assigned if (not all inclusive):

- The definition of a public school is not met.
- The grade span of the school changed by three grades or less, not including Preschool or Kindergarten.
- The school's physical location or address changed, but the attendance area did not change significantly (the student population changes less than 50%).
- A high school merges with a middle (or elementary/middle) school. In this case the high school code will be retained for the new entity in order to ensure accurate graduation rate reporting.
- A smaller school merges with a larger entity that serves essentially the same grade span. The code of the school with the larger population will be used (the historical data for the smaller school will not be connected to the new school code).
- When a school splits, the one that retains the most characteristics of the original school retains the code. Characteristics include student population, grades offered, and attendance area.
- A school changes status (i.e., charter, magnet, innovation.)
- An online school changes status (i.e., single district to multi-district or vice versa).
- A school undergoes restructuring through Priority Improvement/Turnaround consequences under provisions of C.R.S. 22-11-101 *et seq.* or under provisions in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

- The name of a school changes.
- A school changes local education agencies.
- A school code is being requested for a program (i.e. GED, vocational, etc.)
- A school is created only to provide college funding for students, through a dual enrollment program.

#### Accountability History:

- Even if a new school code is granted, the accountability history may continue to follow a school.
- For example, if a K-12 school has been required to implement a Turnaround Plan, and a request is approved to separate into a K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 school, the Turnaround status and years on the accountability clock will continue for all three schools, even though only the 9-12 will retain the school code. If the new schools are no longer identified as Priority Improvement or Turnaround, the school will come off the accountability clock.
- Another example: if the population of the new school consists of 50% or more of the population of a previous school, **or** if 50% or more of the population of the new school came from a single previous school, **and** the previous school is/was on the accountability clock, then the accountability history and status will carry over to the new school.

#### **CDE Review Process:**

- A cross-department CDE team will review each request. Considerations may include request justification, enrollment, attendance areas, federal and state program participation, and school plan type assignment.
- CDE will take into consideration any implications for accountability consequences, including a school's Priority Improvement or Turnaround status and the number of years in this status. For requests involving schools assigned Priority Improvement or Turnaround ratings, closer examination will be given. In these circumstances new school codes may not be granted, even if they meet the outlined criteria in this document. Even if new school codes are granted, the accountability history of the previous school may be maintained.
- School codes issued by CDE may be changed after the beginning of the school year if the US Department of Education requests CDE to revert to a previous code.

## **Grade Level Change:**

The automated Request for a Grade Change may be found at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/apps/formcenter/GradeChange>

Districts must submit any changes to schools' grade level ranges to the Colorado Department of Education. The superintendent of a preschool-12 school district or executive director of a BOCES or the Charter School Institute must certify grade level configurations of their schools when altered. While CDE acknowledges that school grade ranges may sometimes shift from time to time as district student populations fluctuate, grade configurations should not be vacillating year after year. Assessment, accountability and achievement tracking can be impacted as this occurs. A static grade level range within a school over a period of years assists in accountability determinations. It is also understood that some schools may have a plan to systematically implement an expansion or contraction of grade levels over a period of years until a specified range is reached. Such plans should be recorded on the "Request for a School Grade Change."

CDE has the discretion to approve or deny requests for grade changes. Changes to school grades configurations may impact accountability.

Online schools that request grade level changes will need to amend their online certifications with CDE's Blended and Online Learning Office by April 1<sup>st</sup> of the year prior to implementation of the intended grade change.

## **Special Section:**

Online:

- Online multi-district schools must be certified by CDE's Blended and Online Learning Office prior to receiving a school code.
- Single district online programs with more than 100 students must have a school code. Both single-district online schools and online programs are recognized by CDE's Blended and Online Learning Office.
- In the case of a multi-district online school, a change in the schools physical location and attendance area will not be a consideration as the geographic boundary of the school is statewide. Therefore student population changes will not be taken into account for a request for a new school code.

Private School:

A non-public school may not convert into a public charter school. C.R.S. 22-30.5-106(2)