
This document was prepared by Colorado Department of Education staff, with the collaboration and approval of the Colorado Office of the Attorney General. This document is intended to work in conjunction with the attached flow-charts.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to central office administrators, district and school leaders, local and state board members, policy makers, and other interested parties, regarding potential consequences for “Priority Improvement” and “Turnaround” districts and schools approaching the end of the five-year “accountability clock”. As the accountability clock, created by the Educational Accountability Act of 2009, progresses, all stakeholders in these schools and districts will face a heightened sense of urgency to improve performance. This is to ensure that every child attends a high-quality school that prepares all students to be college/career ready.

“The general assembly hereby finds that section 2 of article IX of the state constitution requires the general assembly to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a thorough and uniform system of free public schools. The state therefore has an obligation to ensure that every student has a chance to attend a school that will provide an opportunity for a quality education. If a school is not providing a thorough and adequate education, as determined by the annual performance review conducted by the department pursuant to section 22-11-210, the state has an obligation to the students enrolled in that school to make changes to ensure that they have an opportunity to receive a quality education comparable to students in other public schools in the state.” C.R.S. § 22-30.5-301

Turning around low-performing districts and schools is a monumental process, which requires perseverance, collaboration, and flexibility. It is often asked: “What should we do?”. The solution is unique for different districts and schools. Each district and school must find the root causes and unique strategies within the context of the local community, politics, leadership, and staff capacity. With that said, there are several common conditions and factors of importance in all successful turnaround cases.

- ✓ **School culture and climate** cannot be underestimated. Not only do students and families need to feel safe and comfortable in and around their school, but every school must be permeated by a belief that every student can learn, grow, and achieve the state expectations and beyond. Such cultures are created by adults. It is incumbent upon board members, leaders, and teachers to create such consistent, positive, academic climates.
- ✓ **Leadership** for turnaround districts and schools require different competencies, actions, and strategies. By definition, these leaders must be experts in change processes. They must exercise student-centered decisions, while building professional and sustaining relationships across the community. Boards and superintendents should select district and school leaders with successful track records in this work and provide the ongoing support as they lead.
- ✓ **Effective instruction** must be informed by reliable and frequent, student-centered assessment data. Without such data, teachers can only guess what each student knows and needs. Short-cycle assessments, aligned with standards-based curricula, and effective instructional practices should become the foundation for any school. Districts must invest the time, resources, and training to build such systems.

PATHWAYS for DISTRICTS

OVERVIEW

In Colorado, every district and the Charter School Institute (CSI or the Institute) receive a rating on the District Performance Framework each year, which determines the district's accreditation status. District accreditation categories include: Accredited with Distinction, Accredited, Accredited with Improvement Plan, Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan, and Accredited with Turnaround Plan. Each district signs a new accreditation contract annually in July. State law asserts that a district may not remain with a rating of Priority Improvement or Turnaround for more than five years.

"The state board by rule shall specify how long a school district or the Institute may remain in an accreditation category that is below accredited; except that the state board shall not allow a school district or the Institute to remain at accredited with priority improvement plan or below for longer than a total of five consecutive school years before removing the school district's or the Institute's accreditation as provided in section 22-11-209." C.R.S. § 22-11-207(4)

If a Priority Improvement or Turnaround district or the Institute meet certain conditions, the state board may remove a district's accreditation per C.R.S. § 22-11-209(1).

For districts, the state board **may** take actions against schools based on recommendations from the Commissioner or the State Review Panel. The state board is not limited to the recommendations when mandating requirements to districts. This is a distinct difference from the state board's obligation for taking actions based on the recommendations of the Commissioner or the State Review Panel regarding schools. The following section describes the possible recommendations and actions that the state board may consider and take regarding Priority Improvement and Turnaround **districts or the Institute**.

LOSS OF DISTRICT ACCREDITATION

If a district is accredited with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround rating for more than five years, the State Board of Education **MUST** remove the district's accreditation. If a district is accredited with a Turnaround rating and fails to make progress under its Turnaround plan, the state board **MAY** remove the district's accreditation earlier than five years.

"...the state board shall not allow a school district or the Institute to remain at accredited with priority improvement plan or below for longer than a total of five consecutive school years before removing the school district's or the Institute's accreditation as provided in section 22-11-209." C.R.S. § 22-11-207(4)

- 8.01 The Department may recommend to the Commissioner and the State Board that the State Board remove a District's or the Institute's Accreditation for any of the following reasons:
- (A) The District or the Institute is in the Accredited with Turnaround category and the Department determines that the District or the Institute failed to make substantial progress under its Turnaround Plan, as evidenced by the District's or Institute's failure to improve attainment on the Performance Indicators or failure to meet the implementation benchmarks and interim targets and measures included in the District's or Institute's Turnaround Plan;
 - (B) For five consecutive school years, the District or Institute has remained in an Accreditation category of Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan and/or Accredited with Turnaround Plan; or
 - (C) The District or the Institute has substantially failed to comply with the provisions of Article 44 of Title 22, concerning budget and financial policies and procedures, or Article 45 of Title 22, concerning accounting and financial reporting; and

the District or the Institute has not remedied the noncompliance within ninety (90) days after receipt of notice from the Department; and loss of Accreditation is required to protect the interests of the students and parents of students enrolled in the District or Institute Charter Schools. 1C.C.R. 301-1, rule 8.00

The state board annually accredits school districts and the Institute through establishing accreditation contracts. Each contract has a term of one year and is renewed automatically so long as the accreditation category is Accreditation or higher.

Significance of loss of accreditation:

To date, the state board has not removed a district's accreditation. However, this is a significant action by the state board and would have significant consequences and implications for a district, including:

- Loss of accreditation to a district will have a major impact on a district and its community. It will publically indicate that the district has not successfully improved the educational opportunities at one or more of its schools.
- Students who are enrolled in a district that is not accredited will have limited options, regarding eligibility for athletics, scholarships, college entrance, or other significant opportunities.
- In the event of the loss of district accreditation, CDE has the authority to suspend or restrict federal funds, pending state board-required actions and district or school improvement.
- Loss of accreditation will not result in a reduction or loss of state funds.
- Loss of accreditation will decrease public confidence in the local schools and district leaders.

REINSTATEMENT OF ACCREDITATION

In order to reinstate accreditation, the state board will determine the actions a district must take and notify the district. Such actions may be informed by recommendations by CDE staff, the Commissioner, and/or the State Review Panel. However, they are not limited to these recommendations and may be broad or narrow, at the state board's discretion.

"Based on the recommendations of the department, the Commissioner, and the State Review Panel, the state board shall determine whether to remove a school district's or the Institute's accreditation. If the state board removes a school district's or the Institute's accreditation, the state board shall notify the school district or the Institute of the actions the school district or the Institute is required to take. After the school district or the Institute takes the required actions, the state board shall reinstate the school district's or the Institute's accreditation at the accreditation category deemed appropriate by the state board." C.R.S. § 22-11-209(3)

"After the District or the Institute takes the required actions, the State Board shall, upon recommendations of the Department, reinstate the District's or the Institute's Accreditation at the Accreditation category deemed appropriate by the State Board." I CCR 301-1, Rule 8.16

When the state board reinstates accreditation, they shall reinstate accreditation with an appropriate accreditation rating beyond the five-year accountability clock. The accountability statute and rules require that the state board take actions on a district or the Institute, in order to reinstate accreditation. Pursuant to statute, the state board will continue to annually review the accreditation ratings for each district, which will include districts with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround ratings beyond the initial five years. The state board may remove the accreditation of a district or the Institute for an indefinite period of time. Until a district takes the required action by the state board, the district will operate without accreditation.

Rationale for pursuing this path:

State statute requires that the state board remove a district's accreditation given the circumstances described above.

Loss of district accreditation is the primary mechanism that the state board has to influence local school districts. Loss of accreditation should be exercised thoughtfully and strategically, in order to incentivize and support needed changes in low-performing districts or in their low-performing schools.

Conditions necessary for success in this path:

In order to exercise this power to effectively improve a district and/or school's ability to serve its students, cooperation is needed between the district leadership, district board, community members, CDE, and other partner organizations.

As conditions for reinstatement of district accreditation, the state board might suggest some of the following levers to compel districts to take significant steps to address root causes of persistent low-performance in districts or their schools:

- That a local school board receives training on the specific needs of a Turnaround district or school.
- That a local school board grants autonomy, flexibility, and support to its superintendent, in order to allow him/her to successfully navigate the often-disruptive change process inherent in Turnaround schools.
- That a district grant autonomy and flexibility to one or more of their school leaders, in order to allow them to successfully navigate the often-disruptive change process inherent in turnaround work.
- Consideration should be given to multi-year contracts for district or school leaders, in order to incentivize them to persist through the change process. Leadership in turnaround environments require a different set of skills and competencies.
- That a district negotiates employment agreements, which allows them to ensure that the highest-quality teachers work in the lowest-performing schools and with the students of greatest need. Turnaround schools often require more flexibility and autonomy in human capital practices.
- That a district establishes working agreements with an educational management organization or a charter management organization to consult, manage, or operate one or more of its schools. Districts should utilize partnerships to create the conditions needed in their district or schools to make significant improvements. Such external partners have the potential to play roles that the district cannot.
- That a district release its exclusive chartering authority or make allowances, for one or more schools, so that a new or converted charter school may be created. Such a school could be authorized by the district or by the Charter School Institute.
- Other conditions for success will be needed in order to facilitate any of the other options outlined in this document. The state board will need to consider recommendations from the Commissioner and the State Review Panel in articulating requirements for reinstatement of a district's accreditation.

None of the options described below would "reset" the accountability clock for a district or school, unless it results in a new or changed school that meets the requirements for a new school code. These requirements and guidelines can be found on the CDE website, under "Definition of a Colorado Public School".

DISTRICT REORGANIZATION

"School District Organization Act of 1992" C.R.S. § 22-30-101

If the department recommends removing a district's accreditation, the State Review Panel may recommend reorganization of a district. Under certain conditions, a school district organization planning process may be initiated, potentially leading to, but not limited to: a change in district boundaries, the formation of a new district, the election of a

new LEA board, new governance and operating authorities, and more. Such a process begins when any of the following conditions exist and following when the Commissioner notifies local boards of education and appropriate committees:

- a) A school district board requires the appointment of such a planning committee.
- b) A committee presents a petition – signed by fifteen percent of that school district’s eligible electors.
- c) The state board declares a school district is no longer accredited pursuant to C.R.S. § 22-11-209.

C.R.S. § 22-30-105

Rationale for pursuing this path:

District organization might be pursued in order to intervene in a district where persistent low-achievement may be caused by ineffective governance, or leadership by a district board of directors, or by district leadership. This path may be pursued if a change in boundaries is desired.

Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- This pathway is burdensome and would require one or more special elections to: approve the final plan; elect a new board of directors; and/or decide on financial issues C.R.S. § 22-30-114(1)(i). Significant community support, or discontent, would need to exist to reach voter approval for district reorganization.
- Cooperation across district boundaries may be required, if boundaries are to be changed with one or more adjoining districts.

Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- The community within and outside of the district would need to have a shared sense of urgency, belief, and desire to support dramatic improvement to address persistent low-achievement of its students.
- The organization planning process would require considerable time and energy from district and community members. It is likely that external partnerships would be needed to facilitate the process.
- Significant political support would need to exist within CDE and the State Board of Education to persist through this process.

CHANGE DISTRICT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

The State Review Panel may recommend:

“That a private or public entity, with the agreement of the school district, take over management of the school district or management of one or more of the district public schools.” C.R.S. § 22-11-209(2)(a)(I)(B).

Rationale for pursuing this path:

This path might be effective if district leadership and operating systems prove to be ineffective over a period of time. A district board or superintendent might elect to transfer district management or management of one or more schools, to an external entity.

Districts with a Turnaround plan must annually select one or more of the required actions on the UIP Turnaround Addendum. If the turnaround option selected represents a significant and effective improvement strategy undertaken by the district, these efforts should be considered in the state board’s decisions and actions.

Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- A viable public or private entity would need to have capacity and willingness to take over management of the district or a number of schools.
- Willingness would be needed by a district board and/or leadership to engage in this path.

CHARTER SCHOOLS**Conversion of district school to charter school, 22-11-209(2)(i)(c)**

If the department recommends removing a district's accreditation, the State Review Panel may recommend conversion of one or more district schools to charter schools. The charter school may be authorized through the district or through the Institute.

Rationale for pursuing this path:

A district might convert a district school to a charter school in order to provide more autonomy and flexibility to a school from statutory and regulatory requirements. These may have created obstacles in the past. Successful recruitment of a new or existing charter school operator with proven success can ensure successful practices and positive achievement results into a community. A conversion to a charter school might provide a "fresh start" to a community of families and students. The charter school might benefit from using a district facility or the facility of the phase-out school.

Districts with a Turnaround plan must annually select one or more of the required actions on the UIP Turnaround Addendum. If the turnaround option selected represents a significant and effective improvement strategy undertaken by the district, these efforts should be considered in the state board's decisions and actions.

Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- District support would be critical in order to ensure collaborative efforts and support within the district and community.
- Consideration should be given to how the district school would close or phase-out and how the charter school would open or phase-in. Greater success seems to emerge from slow phase-in charter models.
- Funding equations must provide equivalent or greater funding for charter schools to operate effectively.
- The district would have to agree to authorize the charter application OR to release the district's exclusive chartering authority (if in effect).

Creation of an independent charter school, 22-30.5-301

The state board may recommend conversion of a public school to an independent charter school to a local board, at any time. If an independent charter school is to be organized, the state board shall issue a request for proposals for the operation of an independent charter school within a building that currently houses a public school of a school district.

The process to initiate an independent charter school in statute requires: the formation of a review committee, criteria for review, committee membership, proposal evaluation and selection. The state board shall select an applicant to recommend to the local board of education. The Commissioner or the Commissioner's designee shall assist the selected applicant in negotiating an independent charter with the local board of education pursuant to section C.R.S. § 22-30.5-305.

The independent charter school shall be entitled to use the school building in which the public school that is subject to conversion was operated... at a rent not more than twelve dollars per year. C.R.S. § 22-30.5-306

Rationale for pursuing this path:

The state board might pursue this path when the local district is hesitant to consider authorizing or allowing a charter school within the district and when such a charter school might have significant likelihood of providing an improved educational environment that the existing school. Within this pathway, the independent charter school may use an existing district facility at a low cost.

Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- District support and cooperation would be important.
- An environment where there is one or more proven charter applicants and/or charter management organizations would be critical.

Creation of a new charter school

A district may encourage the development and opening of a new charter school. Districts may create requests for proposals for new schools, recruit existing charter organizations, or develop charter school plans themselves. If a district has exclusive chartering authority (ECA) they have sole discretion about authorizing a new charter school. Districts may release ECA and/or may partner with CSI to authorize one or more schools through CSI or other authorizers. Districts boards may also approve charter authorizations without removing their ECA. C.R.S. § 22-30.5-504.

Rationale for pursuing this path:

Opening new schools may provide opportunities to: create high expectations for students; hire new staff; and refresh communities. A number of charter schools and charter management organizations (CMOs) have proven records of success. Such charters may serve districts by providing model programs for communities. Externally-authorized charter schools would remove low-performing students from a district's performance framework.

Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- In order for new charter schools to be successful, certain conditions should be created to provide enough autonomy for site-based decision making. Such conditions might include:
 - Use of existing facility
 - Choice systems that allow families to opt in or out of different schools
 - Equivalent or sufficient funding as district schools
 - Support by the local board
 - Authority to authorize internally or through the Institute

INNOVATION STATUS OR INNOVATION ZONE

The Innovation Schools Act of 2008 (Article 32.5) establishes a process and route by which district public schools can waive local and state statutory and regulatory rules in order to gain autonomies. This allows for more flexible and effective practices to meet the needs of students within a school. To date, there are 47 schools approved with Innovation plans in Colorado within six districts. Schools and districts may initiate the Innovation process which includes: innovation planning; a demonstration of at least 50% approval of administrators, staff and School Accountability Committee; and ultimately district board and state board approval. In addition, an affirmative vote of at least sixty percent of the affected teachers is required for waivers of local bargaining agreements. C.R.S. § 22-32.5-109

The state board can require a district to grant Innovation status to one or more of its schools. The district may have to honor collective bargaining agreements for any displaced teachers depending on the details of the local agreements.

Rationale for pursuing this path:

Greater autonomy for schools from statutory and regulatory rules may provide the needed flexibility for certain schools to make more-flexible decisions. Examples exist of Innovation status causing some schools to see dramatic growth and improved student achievement. Typically, Innovation plans call for more school-based autonomies in four areas: people, time, money, and program.

Districts with a Turnaround plan must annually select one or more of the required actions on the UIP Turnaround Addendum. If the turnaround option selected represents a significant and effective improvement strategy undertaken by the district, these efforts should be considered in the state board's decisions and actions.

Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- Districts would have to be open to negotiating autonomies for their school.
- School communities, including administration, staff and SACs, would need to buy into the plan and a majority of these groups must be willing to provide the necessary consent for the plans.
- School leadership would need to have a clear method for identifying statutory and regulatory barriers that have created challenges for the school in the past, and would need to develop innovative strategies for changes to people, time, money, etc.
- In the event that the requirements for Innovation status are too burdensome or not viable, a district board may request individual waivers from statute or rule, per C.R.S. § 22-2-117. A school principal may initiate such waivers but they must go through the district's board.

SCHOOL CLOSURE

If a district is persistently low-performing on the district performance framework, it may become necessary to close one or more of its lowest-performing schools. Districts may make closure decisions at any time about their schools. Schools may be closed completely, or phased out over multiple years.

If a school closes through a phase-out process, the school performance framework (SPF) will continue to be generated as long as there are state-test taking students enrolled and the school remains open. If a new school phases in, an SPF is generated once student assessment data is available. However, the district is required to accredit the school once it is opened.

There is one instance when the state board required a school to close. In August 2004, the state board required Denver Public Schools to close Cole Middle School. A study of this closure can be found at:

<http://www.dkfoundation.org/sites/default/files/files/ColeReport18Sept2006.pdf>

Rationale for pursuing this path:

School closure or phasing out and in of a school may be the best option when a school persistently fails to show adequate academic achievement for multiple years. In some cases, closing a school and opening a new school, with a new culture, program, and staff can re-invigorate a community. In other cases, students may be served better by being dispersed to other schools.

Districts with a turnaround plan must annually select one or more of the required actions on the UIP Turnaround Addendum. If the turnaround option selected represents a significant and effective improvement strategy undertaken by the district, these efforts should be considered in the state board's decisions and actions.

Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- If a school is to be closed, careful consideration should be given to ensuring that better educational opportunities exist or are created for all affected students. Phase-out and simultaneous phase-in plans are encouraged.
- If a district agrees or is required to close a school, it will need to determine whether the school closes at once, or if it closes via a phase-out model.
- Careful consideration must be given to the enrollment of all students from the closed school. CDE has supported in transitioning students in some school closure instances.
- It is acknowledged that school closure is often a difficult and painful process and can lead to detrimental conditions for students.

PATHWAYS for SCHOOLS

OVERVIEW

Every school in Colorado receives a School Performance Framework each year which determines the school's type of Plan assignment. Each year, the state board approves the assigned plan types as: Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, or Turnaround. Districts are responsible for accrediting their schools. Schools with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround plan are considered to be "on the accountability clock" and should feel a sense of urgency to make dramatic improvements.

"The state board by rule shall specify how long a public school may implement a... plan; except that the state board shall not allow a public school to continue implementing a priority improvement or turnaround plan for longer than a combined total of five consecutive school years before requiring the school district or the Institute to restructure or close the public school." C.R.S. § 22-11-210(1)(d)

If a Priority Improvement or Turnaround school meets certain conditions, the State Review Panel will critically evaluate the school's improvement plan and capacity and report recommendations to the Commissioner and the state board.

"If a public school fails to make adequate progress under its turnaround plan or continues to operate under a priority improvement or turnaround plan for a combined total of five consecutive school years, the Commissioner shall assign the State Review Panel to critically evaluate the public school's performance and determine whether to recommend..." one or more of the actions listed below. C.R.S. § 22-11-210(5)(a)

For schools, the state board **is required** to take actions on schools from the State Review Panel's recommendations. The State Review Panel reviews schools with a distinct lens C.R.S. § 22-11-210(4) and makes recommendations per those articulated in C.R.S. § 22-11-210(5). Taking the recommendations into account, the state board shall determine which actions the local board "shall take regarding the public school and direct the local school board or institute accordingly." C.R.S. § 22-11-210(5)(b). This is a distinct difference from the state board's options for reinstating district accreditation.

The following section describes the possible recommendations and actions that the state board may consider and take regarding Priority Improvement and Turnaround schools.

SCHOOL PLAN TYPE ASSIGNMENTS AND STATE BOARD ACTIONS

The state board does not accredit schools, districts accredit schools. The state board may not direct a district to remove a school's accreditation; however the state board may direct a district to close a school.

PRIVATE OR PUBLIC MANAGEMENT (for District Schools)

The state board can require that a school district identify and utilize a private or public entity to manage one or more of the district's schools. "With regard to a district public school that is not a charter school, that the district public school should be managed by a private or public entity other than the school district;" C.R.S. § 22-11-210(5)(a)(I) This action goes beyond simply hiring new leadership, but rather it compels a district to utilize an outside manager and operator for a particular school or cluster of schools.

Rationale for pursuing this path:

This path might be effective if a school's leadership and practices prove to be ineffective over a period of time. A district board or superintendent might elect to transfer management for one or more schools, to an external entity that has a track

record of success. An outside management entity might bring in different and successful practices, such as in human resource management; instruction and assessment; student culture and climate; finances; schedules and time; parent engagement; and more.

Schools with a Turnaround plan must annually select one or more of the required actions on the UIP Turnaround Addendum. If the turnaround option selected represents a significant and effective improvement strategy undertaken by the school, these efforts should be considered in the state board's decisions and actions.

Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- A viable public or private entity would need to have capacity and willingness to take over management of the one or more schools.
- Willingness would be needed by a district board and/or leadership to engage in this path.

REPLACEMENT OF OPERATOR OR GOVERNING BOARD (for Charter Schools)

The state board can require that the operator or governing board of a district or institute charter school be replaced.

“With regard to a district or institute charter school, that the public or private entity operating the charter school or the governing board of the charter school should be replaced by a different public or private entity or governing board;” C.R.S. § 22-11-210(5)(a)(II)

Rationale for pursuing this path:

If an operator or governing board of a charter school proves to be ineffective, the district or state board should make decisive and timely changes. Charter schools, by contract, must fulfill their promises to serve students. It is incumbent on a local authorizer or the Institute to either hold operators and their governing boards accountable or to replace them. Many believe a charter school should be closed if it is not meeting the needs of its students.

Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- If a charter operator or governing board were to be replaced – rather than closed – a suitable replacement operator or governing board would need to exist in order to improve the conditions for the school's students.

CONVERSION TO CHARTER SCHOOL

The state board can require that a district convert one or more of its schools to a charter school.

“With regard to a district public school, that the district public school be converted to a charter school if it is not already authorized as a charter school;” C.R.S. § 22-11-210(5)(a)(III)

Rationale for pursuing this path:

A district might convert a district school to a charter school in order to provide more autonomy and flexibility to a school from statutory and regulatory requirements, which may have created obstacles in the past. Successful recruitment of a new or existing charter school operator with proven success can ensure successful practices and positive achievement results into a community. A conversion to a charter school might provide a “fresh start” to a community of families and students. The charter school might benefit from using a district facility or the facility of the phase-out school.

Schools with a Turnaround plan must annually select one or more of the required actions on the UIP Turnaround Addendum. If the turnaround option selected represents a significant and effective improvement strategy undertaken by the school, these efforts should be considered in the state board's decisions and actions.

Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- District support would be critical in order to ensure collaborative efforts and support within the district and community.
- Consideration should be given to how the district school would close or phase-out and how the charter school would open or phase-in. Greater success seems to emerge from slow phase-in charter models.
- Equations must provide enough funding for charter schools to operate effectively (at least equal effective funding as for district schools).
- The district would have to agree to authorize the charter application OR to release the district's exclusive chartering authority (if in effect).

INNOVATION STATUS

The state board can require a school be granted Innovation status.

"With regard to a district public school, that the district public school be granted status as an innovation school pursuant to section 22-32.5-104;" 22-11-210(5)(a)(IV)

Such a requirement by the state board would still require approval of an innovation plan by the school's administrators, staff and by the district's board.

Rationale for pursuing this path:

Greater autonomy for schools from statutory and regulatory rules may provide the needed flexibility for certain schools to make more-flexible decisions. There are examples of Innovation status causing some schools to see dramatic growth and improved student achievement. Typically, Innovation plans call for more school-based autonomies in four areas: people, time, money, and program.

Schools with a Turnaround plan must annually select one or more of the required actions on the UIP Turnaround Addendum. If the turnaround option selected represents a significant and effective improvement strategy undertaken by the school, these efforts should be considered in the state board's decisions and actions.

Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- Districts would have to be open to negotiating autonomies for their school.
- School communities, including administration, staff and SACs, would need to buy into the plan and a majority of these groups must be willing to provide the necessary consent for the plans.
- School leadership would need to have a clear method for identifying statutory and regulatory barriers that have created challenges for the school in the past. They would also need to develop innovative strategies for changes to people, time, money, etc.

SCHOOL CLOSURE OR REVOKED CHARTER

The state board can suggest to a district or the Institute that a school be closed.

“That the public school be closed or, with regard to a district charter school or an institute charter school, that the public school’s charter be revoked.” C.R.S. § 22-11-210(5)(a)(V).

Rationale for pursuing this path:

School closure or phasing out and in of a school may be the best option when a school persistently fails to show adequate academic achievement for multiple years. In some cases, closing a school and opening a new school, with a new culture, program, and staff can re-invigorate a community. In other cases, students may be served better by being dispersed to other schools.

Schools with a Turnaround plan must annually select one or more of the required actions on the UIP Turnaround Addendum. If the turnaround option selected represents a significant and effective improvement strategy undertaken by the school, these efforts should be considered in the state board’s decisions and actions.

Conditions necessary for success in this path:

- If a school is to be closed, careful consideration should be given to ensuring that better educational opportunities exist or are created for all affected students. Phase-out and simultaneous phase-in plans are encouraged.
- If a district agrees or is required to close a school, it will need to determine whether the school closes at once, or if it closes via a phase-out model.
- Careful consideration must be given to the enrollment of all students from the closed school. CDE has supported in transitioning students in some school closure instances.
- It is acknowledged that school closure is often a difficult and painful process and can lead to detrimental conditions for student