

Introduction

Under the Accountability Act of 2009, Colorado schools and districts are required to submit an improvement plan for public posting. Schools slated for closure must comply with this requirement while simultaneously complying with Colorado's closure requirements. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on meeting the requirements of school closure within the context of the Unified Improvement Plan.

Relevant Law

The requirements for improvement plans are listed in Colorado statute and organized by plan type (e.g., Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, and Turnaround). For schools, plan requirements are listed in C.R.S. § 22-11-403 through 406. For districts, plan requirements are listed in C.R.S. § 22-11-303 through 306. While requirements intensify for schools and districts on the Accountability Clock (i.e. priority improvement and turnaround), the foundation of the plans are the same. Essentially, each plan must include a data analysis, corresponding trends, target setting and an action plan for implementation. All schools and districts use the [UIP Online System](#) to complete improvement plans.

Colorado statute details requirements for school closure in C.R.S. § 22-11-307(5). Closure requirements are intended to ensure that the school continues to implement evidence-based practices during the closure process and ensure that students who are enrolled in the closing school are fully supported in enrolling in another public school. To achieve this, districts¹ must develop and update a closure plan that includes a plan for communication; the procedures and mechanisms to solicit and consider input; a timeline for closure that includes major steps; and a plan for reassigning students.

Options for Closure Plans

Districts may choose to satisfy closure plan requirements by creating a stand-alone document. Depending on the school district's policies, districts may also choose to weave closure requirements into a written document that satisfies their own local protocol and procedure. A third option is to incorporate closure requirements into the closing school's UIP.

If a school is closing immediately, other documents describing the school closure may be accepted in place of a UIP, specifically: closure paperwork submitted to CDE; communication from the local school board about the decision for school closure; or other official documentation.

Incorporating Closure Requirements into the UIP

For districts satisfying the closure plan requirements through the UIP, CDE recommends creating at least one major improvement strategy focused on the closure process. This overarching strategy will provide the space for the district and school to outline details that meet closure plan requirements.

Beyond creating a major improvement strategy detailing the closure process, other sections of the UIP may also be useful in detailing the plans for closure. These recommendations include:

¹ Colorado law also includes specific requirements for the Charter School Institute authorizing charter schools.



Brief Description: Include an overview of the closure process, including a timeline, and an explanation or rationale for closing the school. This will provide context to the individuals reading the plan.

Action Steps: Detail each step of the school’s closure process (e.g. communication plan, soliciting input and student reassignment), including the time frame for each step.

- **Example:** Create outreach plan to discuss school options with impacted families with benchmark dates for enrollment.
- **Example:** Hold school options fair for students and families

Implementation Benchmarks: Draft benchmarks to help the school measure progress on the closure plan and ensure that families are receiving the needed support.

- **Example:** At least 75% of families report that they had input into the closure process and at least 75% report that they have clear options for the next school year.

Timing

Regardless of the format that the district uses to satisfy the closure plan requirement, schools that are closing must submit their UIP by April 15 (annual deadline).

For specific questions about acceptable posting documentation, please contact uiphelp@cde.state.co.us.

Resources

School closure guidance for schools on the accountability clock:

https://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/pathways_guidance_school_closure_2016

Case Study Report on the Vilas School District closure and transition process:

www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/school_closure_support

Charter School Closure Framework: www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/distauthinfo

Improvement planning website: www.cde.state.co.us/uiip



Colorado Revised Statute - § 22-11-307(5)

(5) (a) If a local school board or the institute decides or is directed by the state board to close a public school because of low performance, the school district and the institute must develop and update as necessary a school closure plan that implements evidence-based best practices during the school closure process to ensure that students who are enrolled in the public school that is closed are fully supported in enrolling in the successor public school, if any, or in another public school. The local school board or the institute shall make the school closure plan and any updates available in writing to the staff of the public school, the local teachers association, if any, the parents of students enrolled in the public school, and the community surrounding the public school. At a minimum, the school closure plan must include:

- **(I)** A plan for communicating in writing with parents, school staff, the local teachers association, if any, and the community surrounding the public school as early as possible after the local school board or the institute decides to close the public school and at regular intervals throughout the closure process;
- **(II)** The procedures or mechanisms by which the local school board and the institute will solicit and consider input on the school closure process from the staff of the public school, the local teachers association, if any, the parents of the students enrolled in the public school, and the community surrounding the public school;
- **(III)** A timeline for closing the public school that includes or is updated to include all major steps and decision points in completing the school closure and starts no later than the decision to close and continues at least through the reassignment of students and the opening of a new public school, if applicable; and
- **(IV)** A plan for reassigning students to other public schools, which must, to the fullest extent practicable, take into account parents' choice concerning the public schools to which students are reassigned.
 - **(b)** Notwithstanding any provision of paragraph (a) of this subsection (5) to the contrary, a school closure plan that applies to the closure of an institute charter school must specify that:
 - **(I)** The institute charter school will communicate directly with parents, school staff, and the surrounding community; and
 - **(II)** The institute and the institute charter school will work with the school district in which the institute charter school is located to ensure that students and their parents have information concerning the school district's processes for reassigning students to public schools and the school choice options that are available to the students and their parents.