Operationalizing the Definition of Over-Age and Under-Credit Students in Alternative Education Campuses

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Background and Timeline

- **2011-** State Board of Education added C.R.S. 22-7-604.5 (1.5) (n) to the existing definition of “high-risk student” including a student who “is over traditional school age for his or her grade level and lacks adequate credit hours for his or her grade level”.

- **Summer of 2013-** audit of 15% of AECs showed a discrepancy in the interpretations of “over-age and under-credit”

- **September 2013-** State Board of Education denied an interpretation of elementary and middle school students not performing at grade level as “over-age and under-credited”

- **Winter 2014-** Internal Cross-Unit CDE conversations around operationalizing C.R.S. 22-7-604.5 (1.5) (n) with the following units: Accountability and Data Analysis, Dropout Prevention and Engagement, and Innovation, Choice and Engagement.

- **January 2014-** CDE announced a call for research from AEC stakeholders to operationalize the definition of C.R.S. 22-7-604.5

- **February 6, 2014-** gathering of AEC Stakeholders across Colorado to discuss the research findings for operationalizing C.R.S. 22-7-604.5.
Today’s Goal

- Receive practitioner and stakeholder input around:
  - possible options for operationalizing the over-age under-credit eligibility criteria for AECs,
  - the benefits and concerns of the different options and any remaining questions for them, and
  - determine any additional options

in order for CDE to make informed decisions around the operationalized definition of over-age and under-credit.
“As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires, a "high-risk student" means a student enrolled in a public school who:

- (n) Is over traditional school age for his or her grade level and lacks adequate credit hours for his or her grade level.”

(C.R.S. 22-7-604.5 (1.5) (n))
C.R.S. 22-7-604.5 (1.5) (n) states: “[A student who] is over traditional school age for his or her grade level and lacks adequate credit hours for his or her grade level.”

In order for a student to qualify for this definition a student must meet two criteria:

- He/she is **over traditional school age** for his or her grade level

  **AND**

- He/she **lacks adequate credit hours** for his or her grade level

**The Question:** How will CDE operationalize “over traditional school age” and “lacks adequate credit hours”?
AEC Stakeholder Recommendations
Credit Accumulation based on Anticipated Year of Graduation

Student is two or more years behind expected credit accumulation based upon anticipated year of graduation, determined at the end of a student’s 8th grade year.

- This definition would take into consideration any exceptions for social promotion based on current district policies. In this case, the anticipated year of graduation would be used as a determinant of what grade level the student should be in to graduate in 4 years.

- This definition is aligned with current New York City’s Definition of OAUC for Transfer Schools, Our Piece of the Pie’s Definition of OAUC, and Jobs for the Future Segmentation Analysis and DPS’ interpretation.

Links

www.jff.org/sites/default/files/u3/2a_tool.docx
http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/u3/2_BuildingDistrictAndCommunityCapacity.pdf
Limit eligibility to those students who are over compulsory school age as defined in C.R.S. 22-33-104 (2): “Compulsory school attendance... every child who has attained the age of six years on or before August 1 of each year and is under the age of seventeen years...”.

- Only students 17 and older would qualify if this definition is used. Students would be considered “over-age” if they are over compulsory school attendance age which exempts them from attending school for a certain number of hours during each school year.

- Students age 17 and older have different educational requirements, and thus, would be considered “over-age”.
Retention

Include students who were retained in the preceding year, regardless of grade.

- Elementary and middle school students do not typically have the opportunity to earn credits as those are typically offered at the high school level as defined in the current definition of over-age and under-credited (C.R.S. 22-7-604.5 (1.5) (n)).

- Several research organizations, namely Johns Hopkins University, produce early warning indicators for middle-grades students, but do not define these as over-age and under-credited.

Links
http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/1110EARLYDROPBALFANZ.PDF
For elementary and middle schools, students who earned multiple letter achievement grades of F’s on their course transcripts serves as an indicator of grade level deficiency resulting in loss of course attainment.

- Some school districts have policies advocating social promotion and it is not common practice for the district to retain a student at any grade level. Therefore, the over-age qualifier does not serve as a good single or combination qualifier meeting “high-risk”.

- A elementary or middle school student who is credit-deficient as a result of not passing one or more of their required middle school courses significantly impacts the school capabilities and learning strategies in educating all students.
Activity

In small groups, determine the pro’s, con’s and questions for the possible operationalized definitions. Participants on the phone can access the worksheet via the webinar link.

Add any other suggestions. To the chart. After you have filled out the pro’s and con’s, rank the options from 1-4 and put a + sign next to ones you like and a – sign next to ones you don’t like.
While you are filling out the handout, please think through the following questions:

- Should a student be able to qualify as over-age and under-credit after they enter the AEC **OR** should over-age and under-credit be considered a “pre-existing condition” upon entry to the school similar to the other 14 high-risk indicators?
- Is a student who is behind in reading and math skills as determined on interim assessments the same as over-age and under-credit?
- Is a student who performs under-proficient or partially proficient on TCAP eligible to be counted as over-age and under-credit?
Discussion

- Observations to share?
- Other options for definitions to share with the whole group?
- Criteria for CDE decision making?
Next Steps

Please hand in your worksheet when you are finished.

If you have any additional thoughts or questions after the conclusion of this meeting, please email:

Accountability@cde.state.co.us by February 17, 2014.

How CDE will operationalize the definition of Over-Age and Under-Credit Students in Alternative Education Campuses will be clarified in the 2014 AEC Applications to be released on March 3, 2014 and in an accompanying memo.