



End-of-Clock Pathway Guidance Innovation School or Innovation Zone

The pathway guidance documents are intended to help districts and schools understand the Accountability Clock pathways outlined in the Education Accountability Act of 2009. Please send any comments or questions to Nate Goss at Goss_N@cde.state.co.us.

	District Pathway ☒	School Pathway ☒
Overview of Pathway	Pathway Definition	The Innovation Schools Act provides a path for schools and districts to design and implement innovative ideas and practices to better meet student needs. Innovation schools can obtain waivers from state and local policies and collective bargaining agreements that challenge their ability to execute their ideas and enables flexibilities in the areas of governance, school personnel, and educational program.
	Colorado statutory reference	<p>If a district fails to make substantial progress under its turnaround plan or has been in the accredited with priority improvement plan category or lower for five consecutive years, the State Review Panel may evaluate the school district and recommend:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“That one or more of the district public schools be granted status as an innovation school pursuant to section 22-32.5-104 or that the local school board recognize a group of district public schools as an innovation school zone pursuant to section 22-32.5-104”</i></p> <p>If a school fails to make adequate progress under its turnaround plan or continues to operate under a priority improvement or turnaround plan for five consecutive years, the State Review Panel may evaluate the school and recommend:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“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”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>C.R.S. §22-11-210(5)(a)(IV)</i></p>



	What is non-negotiable?	As with all public schools, innovation schools are accountable to federal and state laws and are required to implement the Colorado Academic Standards. The Innovation Schools Act of 2008 (<i>C.R.S. § 22-32.5-101 et al.</i>) details the requirements of becoming an innovation school. Visit CDE’s website for guidance: http://www.cde.state.co.us/choice/innovationschools
	What is flexible?	Innovation schools can seek different types of autonomies, usually in the areas of personnel and educational program, which will be outlined in the innovation plan that is approved by the local school board and the State Board of Education.
Rationale for Selecting this Strategy	For which causes of underperformance might this pathway be selected?	Instructional infrastructure, leadership, human capital, academic performance and school governance are all causes of underperformance for which the innovation school pathway may be selected.
Governance Considerations	What governance and oversight structures are associated with this pathway?	The district board of education is required to review the innovation school’s performance every 3 years to determine if the school is meeting or making adequate progress towards achieving the academic performance goals identified in the approved innovation plan.(§22-32.5-110) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An innovation school is overseen by district staff. • The district remains accountable for the performance of the school.
	What is the role of the Board in implementing this strategy? For charters, what are the roles of the charter school governing board and the authorizing board in effectively implementing this strategy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% of school staff, administration, and School Accountability Committee must consent to becoming an innovation school before it can be approved. If the school will open for the first time as a school of innovation, the innovation plan must indicate when a vote will be taken with the new staff that will be hired. • In the Innovation Plan, any flexibility from district policies or procedures and/or the collective bargaining agreement is outlined, as well as the plans to do those things differently. • In the Innovation Plan, any waivers requested from the state are outlined with accompanying replacement plans.



Conditions Necessary for Success with this Strategy	What kind of leadership does the school district or Charter School Institute need to be able to provide?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An innovation school is overseen by district staff and the principal is evaluated by the superintendent or their designee (assistant sup etc.) depending on the system for evaluation in place in the district. • Requires leadership/support at the district level to develop an Innovation Plan for how the school will be reinvented and what waivers/autonomies will be needed to accomplish that. • The district board is required to approve the innovation plan before it can be submitted to the state board for approval.
	What kind of school-level leadership must be in place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An innovation school leader should be willing to maintain a strong working relationship with the district. • Requires leadership at the school level to develop an Innovation Plan for how the school will be reinvented. This may require thinking outside the box and seeking waivers from local policies and/or state statute that will be needed to implement those autonomies. • Is able to obtain buy-in from school staff and the community for the school’s innovation plan.
Funding Considerations	What are the financial considerations associated with this strategy?	<p>School planning and implementation may require financial investment to successfully accomplish the innovations desired. The innovation plan budget would specify whether the district would be responsible for any up-front costs or if the school would fundraise, obtain grants or reallocate other funding streams to cover these costs. With many existing innovation schools, the district did not provide any additional funding to what was already being provided prior to becoming an innovation school.</p>
Risks/Special Considerations	What risks associated with this pathway might a district want to consider?	<p>What capacity does the school or district have to provide financial support, if needed, or secure outside funding. For example, are there state or federal funding streams available to the school, such as SIG or TIG funds?</p>
	What other information is important to be aware of?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% of school staff, administration, and SAC must consent to becoming an innovation school before it can be approved. • An innovation plan must be approved by the local school district and then submitted to CDE for approval.



<p>Examples</p>	<p>Where has this pathway been implemented with success? What other resources would be helpful to look at if considering this pathway?</p>	<p>Denver Public Schools currently has the most innovation schools in the state. They have used innovation status as a turnaround effort and seen success. Grant Beacon Middle School and Denver Green School are two examples of successful innovation models in DPS.</p> <p>Delta County 50J is an example of a rural district that used the innovation act to merge two schools in order to continue serving a community with declining enrollment (North Fork Montessori @ Crawford).</p> <p>These innovation plans can be found in the archive on CDE’s innovation webpage: http://www.cde.state.co.us/choice/innovationschoolsarchive.</p>
<p>CDE Contact Information</p>	<p>Which unit should a district contact for more information about this pathway?</p>	<p>For further information, please visit: Innovation Schools Website http://www.cde.state.co.us/choice/innovationschools</p>