



End of Clock Pathway Guidance School Closure

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 Brenda Bautsch at Bautsch_B@cde.state.co.us.

	District Pathway ☒	School Pathway ☒
Overview of Pathway	Pathway Definition	<p>School closure includes the following scenarios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Full closure: School closes permanently. There are no longer any students at the school and the school code is “retired.” ● Partial closure: School no longer serves a particular grade span (Elementary, Middle or High). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example, a K-12 school no longer serves high school grades (9-12), or a K-8 school no longer serves middle school grades (6-8). ● Phase out: The school is slowly closed over more than one school year; eventually there are no students at the school and the school code is retired. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The phase out timeline for a high school could take four years, for example. ● The above closure options could be combined with opening a new school. A number of criteria must be met for the new school to be approved. <p>School closure does not include the following scenarios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Combining schools under a single school code. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example, a middle school and high school combining under a single school code does not count as school closure. ● Reconfiguring grade spans into different schools.



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example, if a district has four schools—a K-2 school; a 3-5 school; a 6-8 school; and a 9-12 school—and decides to reconfigure into three schools (K-5; 6-8; 9-12), that would not be considered school closure. ● A school with a 95% high-risk population applying for AEC status. ● A charter school changing its authorizer.
	<p>Colorado statutory reference</p>	<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><i>“That one or more of the district public schools be closed.” C.R.S. § 22-11-209(2)(a)(I)(E)</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 more than five years, the State Review Panel may evaluate the school and recommend:</p> <p><i>“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.”</i> C.R.S. § 22-11-210(5);</p>
	<p>What is non-negotiable?</p>	<p>If a local school board or the Charter School Institute decides to close a public school due to low performance, the district or institute must develop a school closure plan that implements evidence-based practices to ensure students are fully supported during their transition to another school. The closure plan requirements are outlined in statute: C.R.S. § 22-11-307(5).</p> <p>For charter schools, additional requirements around the non-renewal or revocation of a charter by its authorizer are detailed in C.R.S. § 22-30.5-110 & 110.3; § 22-30.5-511 & 511.3.</p>



	<p>What is flexible?</p>	<p>During the school closure process, there is flexibility around if and how the school creates an incentive structure for staff to stay during the year(s) prior to school closure. Incentives may include additional professional development, bonus pay, or other mechanisms to retain staff during school closure. Additionally, schools may choose to promote incentive options for students to stay at the school during the year(s) prior to school closure—for example, through concurrent enrollment opportunities. While communication to students, parents, staff and the surrounding community about the closure process is required, there is flexibility around how communication materials are specialized to fit the local context and different audiences.</p>
<p>Rationale for Selecting this Pathway</p>	<p>For which causes of underperformance might this pathway be selected?</p>	<p>This pathway might be selected due to a confluence of factors including all or some of the following: persistent low performance, financial insolvency, low enrollment, availability of better educational options, high staff turnover, school safety concerns, and neighborhood violence or change.</p>
<p>Governance Considerations</p>	<p>What governance and oversight structures are associated with this pathway?</p>	<p>In addition to the non-negotiable statutory requirements around school closure described above, school districts and the Charter School Institute may provide oversight through their own local closure policies and procedures.</p>
	<p>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?</p>	<p>Local Board of Education: The local board of education should oversee and enforce any school district policies and procedures related to closing a school. These may include: notifying the parents/guardian of students attending the school, notifying school staff, notifying the community, monitoring the management of finances and assets, transitioning facilities, and monitoring reporting needs, among other requirements specific to that district or school.</p> <p>Charters: The charter school governing board and authorizing board will advise the closing charter school as to closure requirements in the charter contract and the authorizer policies and procedures on closure and disposition of assets.</p>



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?	<p>District or Institute leaders must oversee the implementation of the closure plan and meet all state and local closure process requirements.</p> <p>In addition, leaders should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communicate responsively and effectively with stakeholders; ● Navigate potentially politically-charged situations with finesse; ● Lead and support community engagement around closure; ● Check in on and support school needs; ● Provide oversight to ensure smooth record keeping associated with student transitions (e.g. accessing transcripts, re-enrollment in other districts, etc.); ● Respond to emergent needs; and ● Oversee the transitioning of facilities.
	What kind of school-level leadership must be in place?	<p>School leaders are responsible for implementing the closure plan and meeting all state and local closure process requirements.</p> <p>In addition, school leaders should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communicate responsively and effectively with all necessary stakeholders; ● Sustain staff morale; ● Incentivize staff to remain at the closing school; and ● Maintain high expectations for students.
	What kind of leadership should the local board provide? For charter schools, what kind of leadership should the governing board provide?	<p>Local boards and charter governing boards should provide accountability for the implementation of the statutorily-required closure plan. Boards should be willing to engage the public and listen to the needs of all stakeholders.</p>



<p>Funding Considerations</p>	<p>What are the financial considerations associated with this strategy?</p>	<p>The financial considerations are dependent upon the specifics of the closure approach the district selects and may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staffing/master agreement considerations ● Stakeholder engagement ● Student/family transition support ● Facilities usage and transitions ● Staff incentives ● Costs to transport students, if applicable. ● Any costs to implement the closure plan
<p>Risks/Special Considerations</p>	<p>What risks associated with this pathway might a district want to consider?</p>	<p>School closure could have detrimental effects on a community, particularly if the school is one of the only schools in the area. There is the possibility that dropout rates could increase if a high school closes and student transition is not closely monitored.</p>
	<p>What other information is important to be aware of?</p>	<p>The district and Institute will want to be aware of school code implications. Accountability for improving student outcomes will be maintained through the existing school code policies. Additional information for new school codes can be found here: http://www.cde.state.co.us/datapipeline/request-for-new-school-code</p>
<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>Helpful Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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
<p>CDE Contact Information</p>	<p>Which unit should a district contact for more information about this pathway?</p>	<p>For further information, please contact: School & District Performance Unit www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/performance</p>