

# Definition of a Colorado Public School

## Colorado School Code Change Requests

All school code change requests must be made by June 30<sup>th</sup> preceding the new school year. This includes requests for new school codes, grade changes, school closures and name changes.

## Colorado Requirements

A Colorado public school is an institution that receives the majority of its funding from moneys raised by a general state, county, or district taxes, and whose property is operated by a political subdivision of the state and that:

- Is an autonomous entity of a preschool/kindergarten through grade 12 district, the Charter School Institute (CSI) or Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) that includes preschool through grade 12.
- Has its own principal who is not under the supervision of a principal of another public school,
- Has a budget separate from any other public school,
- Provides a complete instructional program that allows students to proceed to the next grade level or if a high school with 12th grade, to graduate, with the exception of non-degree granting alternative education campuses (AECs). High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) preparation programs and home school options programs do not meet this requirement.
- Has one or more teachers if any grade between K and 12 is served. In schools serving only preschoolers, there must be at least one individual serving as a Teaching Assistant as described in Human Resources [Job Classification Code 415](#).

## Colorado Public School Responsibilities

Entities which meet the above Colorado requirements, and thus are granted a school code, are obligated to 1) report mandated student and staff information and 2) meet accountability and assessment requirements as identified below.

### Reporting to CDE

**Data Pipeline:** Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must report every school within applicable collections.

#### Interchanges:

Special Education Discipline

Special Education Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Staff  
Standard Course Codes  
Student  
Teacher/Student Data Link  
Title I

Snapshots:

Attendance  
End of Year  
Human Resources  
Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ)  
Special Education December Count  
Special Education Discipline  
Special Education End of Year  
Student October  
Teacher/Student Data Link

Year-Round Collections:

Directory  
Educator Identification System (EDIS)  
Record Integration Tracking System (RITS)

Periodic Collections:

Alternative Education Campus (AEC)  
Designated Agency  
Finance December  
Non-Public Schools  
Report Card March  
SBD Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) and Colorado Alternate Assessment (CoAlt)  
SBD Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)  
SBD PSAT9, PSAT10 and SAT  
SBD WIDA (ACCESS for ELLs)  
School Discipline  
School Readiness

## **Accountability and Assessment**

**Accountability:** All Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with schools will be accredited by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and receive plan assignments based upon the School Performance Frameworks (SPFs).

- All schools serving grades 1-12 must be accredited through their LEA accreditation process and complete a Unified Improvement Plan (UIP).
- LEAs also must complete UIPs. Those with fewer than 1,000 students may complete a district-wide UIP instead of separate school and district UIPs.

**Assessments:** Each school must administer the assessments appropriate to their student population, including but not limited to Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS); Colorado Alternate (CoAlt); Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM); PSAT9, PSAT10 and SAT; Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS); Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ); School Readiness and Results Matter.

## Guidance/Restrictions on Adding School Codes

The Request for a New School Code may be found at:

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/apps/formcenter/NewSchool>

- Once the Student October collection is complete, no new school codes will be assigned and no school grade range change requests will be granted.
- If a school reopens after it was closed or remained inactive for several years, its pre-existing school code will be used; a new school code will not be assigned.
- Requests regarding schools in Priority Improvement or Turnaround will be closely examined. CDE will review existing School Performance Framework (SPF) data to determine if a new school code will be granted.

A Local Education Agency may be eligible for a new school code if one or more of the following criteria are met:

- The grade span of the school changes by more than three grades, not including Preschool or Kindergarten. For example: A school shifting from a K-5 to K-8 will not be granted a new code because it is not changing more than three grades. A school changing from a K-5 to K-12 may be eligible for a new code.
- The school's physical location changes and the attendance area changes by more than 50%.
- Two schools of approximately the same size merge, the school code committee will carefully consider which code to maintain or whether a new school code should be issued.
- One school splits into two or more schools. If a K-12 school requests new codes for K-5, 6-8, and 9-12, the newly configured high school will retain the original school code, in order to ensure continuity of graduation rates. New codes may be issued for the K-5 and 6-8 schools, however, accountability attributions will follow all three codes. For accountability attributions, CDE will create a school performance framework for each of the new grade configurations (i.e., K-5, 6-8, 9-12) through the preliminary framework release. If the K-12 school received a priority improvement or turnaround rating in the previous school year, the year on performance watch will follow any of the new grade configurations, including performance watch--hold, if applicable. If the new grade configuration receives an Insufficient State Data rating, the year on performance watch will not advance but will hold to the prior year on performance watch.

- More than 50% of the student population is new and does not come from a single existing entity (sending school that may or may not be closed). This does not include students in grades with natural progression of students in and out of the school.
- A new single district online school has been recognized through CDE's Blended and Online Learning Office, and has never existed in any other iteration.
- A new multi-district online school has been certified by CDE's Blended and Online Learning Office and the State Board of Education and has never existed in any other iteration.

When submitting a request for a new school code, please keep in mind the following implications:

- Schools with new codes may not be eligible for certain grants or awards.
- Trend data might be impacted (including assessment, growth, enrollment, demographics, graduation rate, dropout rate, mobility rate, etc.)
- Reporting of data follows the school code. If an existing school code remains, any historical data will be applied to that school code. If a previously existing school is granted a new code, data associated with the original code will not follow the new code for accountability or reporting purposes.
  - CDE will be unable to automatically produce a 3-year School Performance Framework report based on three years of historical data until the new school code has been in operation for three years.
  - Similarly, in the case that schools merge, a 3-year School Performance Framework will be based on historical data for the original school code only.

A new school code will not be assigned if (not all inclusive):

- The definition of a public school is not met.
- The grade span of the school changed by three grades or less, not including Preschool or Kindergarten.
- The school's physical location or address changed, but the attendance area did not change significantly (student population changed less than 50%).
- A high school merges with a middle (or elementary/middle) school. In this case the high school code will be retained for the new entity to ensure accurate graduation rate reporting.
- A smaller school merges with a larger entity that serves essentially the same grade span, the code of the school with the larger population will be used (historical data for the smaller school will not be connected to the new school code).
- When a school splits, the one that retains the most characteristics of the original school retains the code. Characteristics include student population, grade span, and attendance area.
- A school changes status (i.e., charter, magnet, innovation.)
- An online school changes status (i.e., single district to multi-district or vice versa).
- A school undergoes restructuring through Priority Improvement/Turnaround consequences under provisions of C.R.S. 22-11-101 *et seq.* or the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

- The name of a school is changed.
- A school moves to a different Local Education Agency.
- A school code is being requested for a program (HSED, vocational, etc.)
- A school is created only to provide college funding for students, through a dual enrollment program.

Accountability History:

Even if a new school code is granted, the accountability history will continue to follow a school, including the year on performance watch will follow any of the new grade configurations, including performance watch--hold, if applicable, as CDE will create a school performance framework for each of the new grade configurations (i.e. K-5, 6-8, 9-12) through the preliminary framework release. For example:

- A K-12 school has been required to implement a Turnaround Plan, and a request is approved to separate into a K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 school, the years on performance watch will continue for all three schools, even though only the 9-12 will retain the school code. If any of the new school(s) are no longer identified as Priority Improvement or Turnaround, the school(s) will be identified as Performance Watch-Hold. If the new school receives Insufficient State Data, they will remain on Performance Watch until there is enough data to warrant a plan type rating. See chart below:

K-12 School 2018 Rating: Turnaround Year 3

| New School Grade Levels | 2019 Ratings                    | 2020 Ratings                    |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| K-5                     | Insufficient State Data: Year 3 | Insufficient State Data: Year 3 |
| 6-8                     | Turnaround: Year 4              | Improvement: Hold Year 4        |
| 9-12                    | Performance: Hold Year 3        | Performance                     |

- If a new school’s population consists of 50% or more of the population of a previous school, **or** if 50% or more of the population of the new school came from a single previous school, **and** the previous school is/was on the accountability clock, that accountability history and status will carry over to the new school.
- If an online school is on Performance Watch, as defined in 22-11-103, and changes LEA(s) in its original form or as a successor school, the online school or successor school will remain on Performance Watch under the new LEA(s).
- If an online school is created as a successor school but remains with the same LEA(s), and the originating school was on Performance Watch, the successor school will remain on Performance Watch

Home School Options Programs

Home school options programs are designed to support parents who choose to educate their students at home in a non-public home school setting. Some home school students enroll in public schools on a part-time basis or for an options program, but these students are still considered home school students. If a student who is enrolled in a nonpublic

school or participating in a nonpublic home-based educational program pursuant to C.R.S. 22-33-104.5, is enrolled in a Home School Options Program, and participates in state assessments pursuant to C.R.S. 22-7-1006.3, that student's achievement results may not be included in school or district performance frameworks, because the student is not considered to be a full-time public-school student.

In 2019 CDE updated the school code policy and is currently phasing out school codes for homeschool options programs with the expectation that all students attending a homeschool option program will be associated with another district school by the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year. CDE will no longer assign a school code for homeschool option programs and will discontinue all school codes previously assigned to stand alone homeschool option programs.

Previously assigned school codes for home school options programs will be discontinued since CDE's Accountability Analytics team will be able to remove homeschool students from school and district frameworks utilizing the Home-Based Education flag. Doing so will allow these students to be removed from school and district performance frameworks more completely and cleanly. Local education agencies are asked to utilize the "Request for Closing a School" form found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/apps/formcenter/SchoolChangeForms> to discontinue an existing school code assigned to a home school options program.

Beginning with the 2020-21 school year, all home school options students should be flagged as "1 Yes" for Home Based Education within the Student Interchange if receiving home school instruction and any type of instructional service from a public school. Home school options students will be flagged as "1-Yes" in October Count and in End of Year. These students should be reported as being served under an existing school code within the reporting local education agency. Districts will need to determine which brick and mortar school these home-based students will be placed in once the school code for the homeschool option program has been discontinued. Districts may decide to assign all home-based students to one school or assign to a variety of schools within the district.

## **CDE Review Process**

- A cross-department CDE team will review each request. Considerations may include request justification, enrollment, attendance areas, Federal and State program participation, and school plan type assignment.
- CDE will carefully consider any implications for accountability consequences, including school Priority Improvement or Turnaround status and the number of years in this status. Requests involving schools assigned Priority Improvement or Turnaround plans will be closely examined. In these circumstances:
  - New school codes may not be granted, even if schools meet the outlined criteria in this document.
  - Even if new school codes are granted, the accountability history of the previous school may be maintained.

- School codes issued by CDE may be changed after the beginning of the school year if the US Department of Education requests that CDE to reinstate a previous code.

## Grade Level Change

The Request for a Grade Change may be found at:  
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/apps/formcenter/GradeChange>

Districts must submit any requests to change school grade ranges to the Colorado Department of Education. The superintendent of a preschool/kindergarten through grade 12 school district or executive director of a BOCES or the Charter School Institute must certify school grade level configurations. While CDE acknowledges that school grade ranges may sometimes shift from time to time as district student populations fluctuate, grade configurations should not be vacillating year to year which impacts assessment, accountability and achievement tracking. A stable school grade level range assists in accountability determinations. Some schools plan to systematically implement an expansion or contraction of grade levels over a period of years until a specified range is reached. Such intentions should be noted on the “Request for a School Grade Change.”

CDE has the discretion to approve or deny requests for grade changes. Changes to school grades configurations may impact accountability.

Online schools that request grade changes will need to amend their online certifications with CDE’s Blended and Online Learning Office by April 1<sup>st</sup> of the year prior to the grade change implementation.

## Special Section

### Online:

- Online multi-district schools must be certified by CDE’s Blended and Online Learning Office prior to receiving a school code.
- Single-district online programs with more than 100 students must have a school code. Both single-district online schools and online programs are recognized by CDE’s Blended and Online Learning Office. In the case of a multi-district online school, a change in the schools physical location and attendance area will not be a consideration as the school’s geographic boundary is statewide. Therefore, student population changes will not be taken into account for a request for a new school code.
- If a multi-district online school changes LEA(s) and is seeking a new LEA(s) code, the new LEA(s) must first apply to the Blended and Online Office for new certification prior to requesting the new LEA(s) code.

### Private School:

- A non-public school may not convert into a public charter school. C.R.S. 22-30.5-106(2)