



## Background and Purpose

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### Highly Mobile Students

A highly mobile student is defined as a student who experiences (or is at risk of experiencing) multiple school moves during their K-12 education outside of regular grade promotions. Impacted populations include (but are not limited to): students experiencing homelessness, children and youth in foster care, and migrant students. There are approximately 33,000 students in Colorado classified as highly mobile students. These student groups experience low graduation rates, high dropout rates, and tend to be disproportionately represented in disciplinary actions and are above the state average in special education designations. Ensuring educational stability for students who experience mobility is imperative to improve educational outcomes. Highly mobile students benefit from educational programming tailored to their individual needs.

### Supporting Legislation 22-32-138, C.R.S.

Colorado House Bill 18-1306 passed in 2018, which updated 22-32-138, C.R.S. This bill included three sections for school districts to consider in regards to students experiencing high mobility. Given that Colorado is a local control state, school districts have the option to implement aspects of this legislation in a way that works for each individual district. This bill was created to address school stability for students in foster care; however, there is nothing precluding districts from implementing policies to support other highly mobile student populations (e.g. homeless and migrant). Practices outlined in the bill include: waiving prerequisites, competency-based credit attainment, and graduation considerations.

## Best Practices

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### Planning for Transitions

All students go through transitions in their educational careers, from moving up a grade, to moving to a different school. Schools need to provide transition programming to improve school goals by supporting youth development and reducing dropout rates. Comprehensive transition programming includes providing social and academic support for students in new grades or new schools through [counseling and mentoring](#), [family outreach](#), [community engagement](#), and by providing post-secondary and workplace readiness programming and training for educators and youth to help further support students in periods of transition.

### Student-Centered Educational Planning

All students who experience high mobility in school have unique individual learning and social/emotional needs. Schools should focus on identifying these unique needs and create an educational plan that is individual to the student. Working with students and families on an individual basis allows educators to form a trusting and meaningful relationship. Highly mobile students may excel in one academic area and be significantly behind in another. The end goal is to create a program that will help highly mobile students fill gaps in learning and enhance strengths.



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## Connecting to Legislation

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### Waiving Prerequisites

To the extent it makes sense for the student, school districts (education providers) are encouraged to waive course or program prerequisites for highly mobile students or other preconditions for placement in courses. For example, if a student has not taken foundational art courses, but excels in artistic ability and is able to demonstrate competency, that student should be allowed to take an advanced art class.

### Competency-Based Credit Attainment

School districts may waive specific courses required for graduation if similar coursework has been satisfactorily completed in another jurisdiction or the student has demonstrated competency in the content area. If the school does not grant a waiver to a child who would qualify to graduate from the sending school, the education provider is encouraged to provide an alternative means of acquiring the required course work or competency requirements so a timely graduation may occur. The receiving education provider awarding the diploma may award elective credit for any portion of the student's certified course work that is not aligned with the curriculum of the receiving education provider or for demonstrated competencies that are not aligned with the receiving education provider. For example, if an education provider requires 4 years of math to graduate, but the student's previous school only required 3 years. If the student meets minimum competencies on the SAT or ACT, the education provider has the option of waiving the 4-year requirement for that student because they have demonstrated competency in math.

### Graduation Considerations

If a highly mobile student is transferring at the beginning of or during twelfth grade is ineligible to graduate from the receiving education provider, the education provider may request a diploma from a previously attended education provider, and the previously attended education provider may issue a diploma if the student meets the education provider's graduation requirement. For example, a student may have had to move districts during their senior year and met all graduation requirements from the previous district, but not the receiving district. This student could take courses at the receiving district to fulfill the remaining requirements from the previous district. The student would get a diploma from the previous district even though they are finishing coursework elsewhere.

### Additional Considerations

Education providers have the freedom to use their professional judgement to do what makes sense for the individual student based on their ability to demonstrate academic competency and mastery. Additional tools that support these individualized supports include graduation guidelines and Individual Career and Academic Plans. Creating meaningful and competency-based plans create the opportunity to reduce the achievement gap for highly mobile students.

### For more information, Contact:

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