

The Guidebook

Colorado Charter School Institute



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
CSI STAFF	3
CSI SCHOOL EVENTS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	4
ACCOUNTABILITY	5
CSI'S ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS (CARS).....	5
ACCREDITATION CONTRACTS	6
ASSESSMENT	7
REQUIRED ASSESSMENTS.....	7
INTERIM ASSESSMENTS	9
BOARD GOVERNANCE	10
COMMUNICATIONS	11
DATA SUBMISSIONS	14
DATA SECURITY	14
EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS.....	15
PRESCHOOL	15
SCHOOL READINESS.....	15
READ ACT.....	15
EMERGENT MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS (EL).....	17
EQUITY SCREENER AND TIERS OF SUPPORT.....	18
FINANCE	19
FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS	19
FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY ACT REQUIREMENTS.....	19
BUDGET DEVELOPMENT	20
GRANTS.....	20
CSI EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FUND	20
RESOURCES	20
GIFTED EDUCATION	22
LEGAL & POLICY	23
ORGANIZATIONAL SUBMISSIONS AND AUDITS	23
SCHOOL PROGRAM AND CONTRACT MODIFICATION	23

COMPLIANCE MONITORING	24
CSI GRIEVANCE PROCESS	24
MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT	25
MENTAL HEALTH.....	26
NURSING & HEALTH.....	28
POSTSECONDARY & WORKFORCE READINESS (PSWR)	30
INDIVIDUAL CAREER AND ACADEMIC PLANS (ICAP).....	30
CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT	30
ACCELERATING STUDENTS THROUGH CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT (ASCENT).....	31
CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE).....	31
CAREER DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM (CDIP).....	32
GRADUATION GUIDELINES	32
SCHOOL FOOD AUTHORITY	34
SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	35
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE.....	35
MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS).....	35
SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE (SAC)	35
UNIFIED IMPROVEMENT PLAN	35
SECTION 504.....	36
SPECIAL EDUCATION	37

INTRODUCTION

The CSI Guidebook is designed to support CSI School Leaders and school staff by serving as a quick reference that outlines the work of the various departments at CSI, key requirements, timelines, and where to go for additional information. This guidebook will be updated annually to provide schools with the most current and up to date information each fall as they begin their school year.

While this guide captures the work at a high-level, it is not comprehensive. School staff are encouraged to access [CSI's online calendar](#) and newsletters to ensure they are up to date with deadlines, initiatives, and requirements.

CSI STAFF

We encourage school staff to utilize the expertise of the entire CSI team when specific questions or support needs arise. Visit the [Our Team webpage](#) to view CSI team members and contact information.

CSI SCHOOL EVENTS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CSI staff hosts trainings and gatherings throughout the school year.

For School Leaders

Key gatherings for school leaders include:

- [CSI School Gatherings](#) (formerly known as Regional Meetings) are hosted several times a year
- [All School Leaders Meeting](#) is hosted in February or March immediately preceding the Colorado League of Charter Schools annual conference
- [New Leader Orientation](#) & [Year 1 Cohort](#) kick off in July with a 1.5 day hybrid orientation followed by bimonthly virtual meetings that highlight hot topics and provide opportunities for leaders to discuss problems of practice
- [Administrator & Principal Induction](#) is a state-approved program that provides leaders the opportunity to advance their CDE initial license to a professional license
- [Unified Improvement Planning Workshops](#)
- [Continuous Improvement Collaborative](#) is a year-long fellowship opportunity for CSI school teams to focus on identifying and addressing gaps within their school communities

[View the 2022-23 School Leader PD Calendar here.](#)

For School Staff

For a comprehensive list of trainings, please access the department's resource page and the [CSI Online Calendar](#).

For School Board Members

- [Orientation modules](#) for new school board members
- Training and networking opportunities are made available throughout the year for board members of CSI schools. More information about Governance Trainings can be accessed here: <https://resources.csi.state.co.us/csi-school-board-training/>

Additional information will be sent out in CSI monthly newsletters and as standalone registration emails prior to each meeting. We encourage schools to check the CSI website calendar for the most up-to-date information.

ACCOUNTABILITY

CSI'S ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS (CARS)

CSI Contact: Chief of Authorization and Accountability and Performance and Accountability Analyst

OVERVIEW OF THE CSI ANNUAL REVIEW OF SCHOOLS (CARS)

The CSI Annual Review of Schools (CARS) is the system used to annually evaluate and accredit schools based on Academic, Financial, and Organizational Performance Frameworks.

The [CARS Handbook](#) provides additional information about the CSI Annual Review of Schools. CSI created this [one pager](#) to provide a summary of the CSI accountability system.

CSI PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORKS

The [CSI Performance Framework](#) provides the basis for the CSI Annual Review of Schools (CARS). The Performance Framework explicitly defines the measures by which CSI holds schools accountable with regards to academic, financial, and organizational performance.

CARS REPORT

The CARS Report is developed for each CSI school, with a preliminary draft sent out in fall and a final version sent out in winter. The CARS Report summarizes the school's cumulative performance data and compliance information in alignment with the Performance Frameworks. The CARS Report provides schools with in-depth analysis and explanation surrounding performance to help schools identify truly significant trends. These qualitative and quantitative analyses will provide guidance and direction for the school throughout its life span.

The [Annotated CARS Report](#) provides an in-depth walkthrough of the data included in the CARS report. To learn more about financial performance metrics, CSI created this [one pager](#) describing the cut points for each measure.

CARS DASHBOARD

The [CARS Dashboard](#) is an interactive data dashboard provided publicly on the CSI website that serves as a way to filter and create customized displays of achievement and growth data from the CARS report. It aims to serve as a way for the public to interact with this data and provide additional insight to CSI school academic data.

SUPPORTS & INTERVENTIONS BY PERFORMANCE

The tiered supports and interventions are determined by performance across a subset of measures in a given area—like finance, academic performance, performance of special education students, etc.—with the focus on providing schools additional opportunities, technical assistance, and access to resources to improve performance in the noted areas.

All schools within the CSI portfolio have access to the standard supports provided by CSI. These supports include resource documents, trainings, and access to additional resources. Schools that are lower performing across one or more areas have access to, and are many times required to, receive additional supports or interventions. CSI created this [one pager](#) describing the supports and interventions available for schools.

ACCREDITATION CONTRACTS

CSI Contact: Chief of Authorization and Accountability

State law requires each CSI School to enter into an accreditation contract with CSI, which is separate from the charter contract. In accordance with the [CSI Accreditation Policy](#), each accreditation contract has a term of one year and is automatically renewed each year so long as the School remains in the accreditation category of Distinction or Performance, except that each school shall re-execute the accreditation contract upon renewal and upon receiving an accreditation rating of Improvement, Priority Improvement or Turnaround. The Institute and School may renegotiate the accreditation contract at any time during the term of the accreditation contract, based upon appropriate and reasonable changes in circumstances upon which the original terms and conditions of the accreditation contract were based and in order to focus on the individual circumstances of the school.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) related to the school accreditation contract is available on the CSI Resource Site.

ASSESSMENT

CSI Contact: Assessment Coordinator

CSI's role in overseeing state-required assessments includes the following:

- Communicate information about upcoming assessments to School Assessment Coordinators (SACs) and School Technology Coordinators (STCs)
 - This includes testing logistics, administration, training, technical assistance, student testing accommodations, and test security
- Act as the liaison with the Colorado Department of Education
- Relay district testing materials to schools and vendors

ASSESSMENT ROLES

School Assessment Coordinator (SAC)

Each school site is required to designate a school staff member to oversee required assessments. This person must attend required CSI trainings, train all school staff on administration requirements, ensure proper test administration and test security, receive and return all test materials, and report any irregularities to the CSI District Assessment Coordinator in the appropriate manner.

School Technology Coordinator (STC)

Each school site is required to designate a School Technology Coordinator (STC). The STC obtains information from the CSI District Technology Coordinator, distributed from CDE/Pearson, and disseminates information to appropriate staff. Schools should adhere to the technology requirements found on the [CDE Technology Readiness](#) website.

District Assessment Coordinator (DAC)

CSI's DAC is responsible for overseeing each of the state-required assessments, including the trainings of SACs in administration, security, and logistics related to each assessment. The DAC is the school's point of contact for assessment-related questions.

District Technology Coordinator (DTC)

CSI's DTC serves as a resource for school technology coordinators as they prepare their online testing environments. The DTC disseminates information from CSI, CDE, and Pearson to the STCs.

REQUIRED ASSESSMENTS

WIDA Screener

The WIDA Screener is a tool used to identify students who may qualify for English Language Development programming. Learn more [here](#).

WIDA ACCESS for ELLs

WIDA ACCESS for ELLs is an English language proficiency assessment given annually to Kindergarten through 12th graders who have been identified as English Language Learners (ELLs). Learn more [here](#).

Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS)

CMAS assesses students in the following areas:

- Science
- Social Studies
- English Language Arts
- Math

Learn more [here](#).

PSAT 9 and PSAT 10

The PSAT assesses student progress toward mastery of state standards and their progress towards college readiness. The test must be administered to all 9th and 10th grade students.

Learn more [here](#).

SAT

The SAT will assess high school students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. The test must be administered to all 11th grade students. Learn more [here](#).

READ Act Assessment

The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (Colorado READ Act) focuses on students identified as having a significant reading deficiency (SRD). Schools are required to administer a [state-approved interim assessment](#) to all K-3 students three times per year. Learn more [here](#).

School Readiness Assessment

The School Readiness Assessment works to monitor each child's progress across multiple domains to help teachers and parents provided needed support to ensure the child's success in school. Schools are required to administer a [state-approved school readiness assessment](#) to students in publicly funded kindergarten programs. Learn more [here](#).

ASSESSMENT TIMELINE

Below is the general testing timeline for the state-required assessments. Specific dates will be published on the [CDE](#) and [CSI](#) websites when identified for the upcoming school year. Please note that not all assessments take place in the spring and some assessments are administered multiple times a year and may be administered in an online environment. For a quick reference on the federal and state statutes that require these assessments, [click here](#).

ASSESSMENT	GRADE/ SUBJECT	TESTING WINDOW	SBD WINDOW
Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS)	Grades 3-8 Math and ELA	Official Window: April 10- April 28, 2023	May 2023
	Grades 5, 8 and 11 Science	Early High School Science Window and Extended Math/ELA/CSLA Window:	
	Grades 4, 7, and 11 Social Studies (Grades 4 and 7 once every three	TBD*	

	years; schools will be notified if their school is due to test)		
WIDA Screener	Grades K-12 (students identified as having a language other than English spoken at home)	Within 30 days of enrollment, within 2 weeks for students enrolling after October 1st	N/A
READ Act Assessment	All K-3 students using an approved interim assessment (list here)	3 windows each year; Fall, Winter, and Spring. See READ Act section for more information.	READ Collection due May 2023
Access for ELLs [®]	Grades K – 12 Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening	January 9- February 10, 2023	March 2023
PSAT 8/9 & 10	Grades 9 and 10	Primary test window: April 12- April 14, 2023 Make-up test window: April 25- April 27, 2023	May 2023
SAT	Grade 11	Primary test date: April 12, 2023 Make-up test date: April 25, 2023	May 2023
School Readiness Assessment	Kindergarten	Within first 60 days of enrollment	School Readiness File due October 2022

ASSESSMENT DATA

Schools can access state assessment results in one of two ways, depending on the state assessment.

- **Syncplicity:** All documents containing student information (Personally Identifiable Information, or PII) must be exchanged via Syncplicity. This includes assessment results and data collections. School leaders and assessment coordinators will be provided with a Syncplicity account.
- **Directly from vendor:** some test vendors make student results available directly to schools via their online portals. CSI will notify schools if and when assessment results are available via online assessment vendor platforms.

INTERIM ASSESSMENTS

Schools administer interim assessments annually at various intervals. These assessments are useful tools to track student progress throughout the year and provide information about school performance. CSI requests that schools submit the type of interim assessments they plan to administer for the coming school year to generate a portfolio-wide inventory of assessment vendors. More information about interim assessments can be found [here](#).

CSI provides interim analysis reports that offer a broader picture of school performance. Contact CSI's Performance and Accountability Analyst to request a report.

BOARD GOVERNANCE

CSI Contact: Director of Governance

Resource: [CSI School Board Governance Library](#)

CSI places significant emphasis on the value of strong and effective school governing boards. As such, the Legal & Policy Team also strives to be a source of support for members of CSI school boards, not just school leaders and staff.

Throughout the year, the Legal & Policy team will collaborate with others throughout CSI to bring useful training, networking, and learning opportunities for CSI school boards. Supports for school board members include:

- [New Board Member Orientation Training](#)
- [Quarterly board training opportunities](#)
- [Board Meeting Resources and Meeting Reviews](#)
- Customized Board Coaching
- Board-to-board networking events
- Monthly board emails
- Board-focused resources in the [CSI School Board Governance Library](#).

To make sure that the board support provided by CSI is focused on the areas most important to CSI school board members, we also conduct an annual needs assessment survey. We use the results of the survey to guide our board support offerings for the coming year.

Board members should feel free to contact LegalandPolicy_CSI@csi.state.co.us with any questions about the supports described above or any requests for additional support from CSI on board governance matters.

COMMUNICATIONS

CSI Contact: Communications Manager (Communications_CSI@csi.state.co.us)

The purpose of the CSI Communications team is to increase awareness for and understanding of CSI. The team manages the organization’s online newsletters, publications, press releases, social media, and CSI websites. Visit the [Our Team page](#) for the most up-to-date team members.

School Supports

CSI works alongside and in partnership with its schools to support their communication needs. Primary supports are highlighted below:

Training: CSI coordinates with education partners and experts to host trainings to address various communications and marketing needs identified by CSI schools throughout the year.

Resources & Toolkits: CSI develops various resources and toolkits, including communications templates, which can be found on the [Communications page](#) of the School Leadership Library.

Public Relations: CSI writes and promotes stories for organization-wide and school-specific news such as school performance results, updates to CSI’s portfolio of schools (including new schools, renewed schools, and expanding schools), and various awards. CSI welcomes collaboration with schools on promoting school events and achievements.

Stakeholder Visits: CSI staff can support schools in coordinating and scheduling stakeholder visits and school tours throughout the year.

Contact us at Communications_CSI@csi.state.co.us to learn more about how the CSI Communications Department can support your school in these and other communications efforts.

Communications Resources

Here is a list of communication resources from CSI that are available to all CSI schools and used to communicate important news, updates, and events. All school leaders should be familiar with these resources and share them with school staff as appropriate.

CSI Resource	Description	CSI Contact	URL
CSI Main Website	CSI’s main website includes general information about CSI and its portfolio of schools, information for parents of children attending CSI schools, resources for charter applicants seeking authorization by CSI, and	Communications Manager	www.csi.state.co.us

	resources related to charter school authorization.		
CSI Resource Site	CSI's Resource Site includes resources for CSI schools to access, organized by department and topic, and searchable. Most CSI departmental resources for school staff can be accessed here.	Each CSI Department	resources.csi.state.co.us/
Website Calendar	This calendar contains all important dates (deadlines, trainings, etc.) for each CSI department and can be sorted by department or date.	Each CSI Department	www.csi.state.co.us/calendar
Monthly Newsletter	This monthly newsletter includes upcoming events, trainings, submissions deadlines, department-specific information	Communications Manager	www.csi.state.co.us/news
Grants & Funding Updates	These as-needed updates include information on upcoming grant deadlines and how to apply	Grants Fiscal & Accounting Manager	
School Board Emails	These emails include content specific to school board members	Director of Governance	
School Highlights Newsletter	This quarterly newsletter includes positive stories from CSI schools	Communications Manager	www.csi.state.co.us/news
CSI Facebook	CSI publishes and shares news	Communications Manager	facebook.com/CSIColorado
CSI Twitter	CSI publishes and shares news	Communications Manager	twitter.com/CSIColorado

In addition to CSI resources, schools have access to additional charter school communications and resources from the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado League of Charter Schools.

Charter Resources	Description	URL
CDE's The Scoop	CDE's The Scoop provides weekly newsletters containing news and announcements from all the units at CDE.	Send an e-mail to: CDE.Communications.Office@cde.state.co.us with "Sign Me Up For The Scoop" in the subject line.
CDE's Charter School Listserv	CDE's Charter School listserv provides news and updates from CDE that pertain specifically to charter schools.	http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdecharter/joinlistserv.asp

Colorado League of Charter Schools	The League offers a variety of newsletters for its members	https://coloradoleague.org/page/Newsletters
Commissioner's Communications	Communications from the Commissioner of Education	View past communications here: https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdecomm

WEBSITE BADGE

In response to questions about how to communicate with school communities about authorization by CSI and what CSI is, the Communications Team has created a website badge. Schools can consider adding this badge to their website that links to the CSI website (www.csi.state.co.us), as well as “About CSI” language.



ABOUT CSI

The [Colorado Charter School Institute](http://www.csi.state.co.us) is a statewide charter school authorizer committed to fostering a portfolio of high-quality public school options that best meet the needs of all students, particularly those closing the opportunity gap. As a charter authorizer, CSI focuses on the outputs – that is, the quantitative evaluation of academic, organizational, and financial school performance – providing schools the flexibility to focus on and make decisions about inputs like instructional strategies, educational programming, internal assessment system, facility selection, and staffing. The focus on outcomes rather than processes allows CSI to be neutral on educational model and maintain a [diverse portfolio of school models](#) across the state.

DATA SUBMISSIONS

CSI Contact: Data Submissions Team (Submissions_CSI@csi.state.co.us)

The purpose of the Data Submissions team is to work with and support the CSI portfolio of schools to ensure timely and accurate data is submitted for state and federal data collections. Visit the [Our Team page](#) for the most up-to-date team members.

The Role of the CSI Data Submissions Team

The CSI Data Submissions Team serves as the liaison between CSI schools and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) for each data collection and provides training, technical assistance, and access to resources for CSI School Data Submissions Contacts.



For more information on the data submissions process, the role of a school's data submissions contact, main data collections, and student registration or employee paperwork guidance, please access the CSI Data Submissions Handbook: <https://resources.csi.state.co.us/general-submissions/>

For more information on the collection deadlines for the upcoming year, please access the CSI Data Submissions Calendar: <https://resources.csi.state.co.us/data-submissions-calendar/>

DATA SECURITY

CSI Contact: Data Manager

Schools should refrain from emailing personally identifiable information (PII). This includes name, SSN, address, birthdate, and gender. Email is not a secure channel and a person's privacy, and data security could be compromised. Email cannot be used to transfer files containing personally identifiable information of educators or students. More information on data security can be found on the [CSI Legal and Policy Library webpage](#).

Secure File Share

CSI's Data Submissions Team uses Google Drive to securely exchange sensitive information (including files with student level information) with schools. Access will be limited to school staff designated by each school.

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

CSI Contact: Early Learning & School Programs Coordinator

CSI supports school leaders and school staff in implementing effective and compliant Early Learning Programs (PreK-3rd grade) by providing professional development and consultation around key requirements of state law for Preschool, School Readiness, and the READ Act.

For deadlines, support, and initiatives, please see the [Early Learning Programs Calendar](#), [Early Learning Programs Guidebook](#), and [Early Learning Programs section of the CSI Resource Site](#).

PRESCHOOL

CSI supports preschools operating under the CSI charter school contract. Schools should access the [Colorado Department of Early Childhood](#) and their Local Coordinating Organization (LCO) to ensure a clear understanding of their responsibilities under the law. The Colorado Department of Education oversees Preschool Special Education. For guidance, refer to [Preschool Special Education Guidance](#). CSI schools offer a variety of preschool models for more information, refer to [Private v. Public preschool](#).

Universal Preschool (access to 10 hours of public preschool per week for the year prior to starting kindergarten) begins August 2023. If your school is interested in starting a preschool, CSI is offering a planning cohort during the 2022-2023 school year. For more information, contact WillynWebb@csi.state.co.us

SCHOOL READINESS

CSI schools are required to assess each Kindergarten student for school readiness to inform the development of an Individual School Readiness Plan which will provide a responsive learning environment for the child. All Kindergarten students must be assessed in six domains within the first 60 calendar days of school. Schools may choose one of the four CDE approved [assessment tools](#) or seek a waiver (for the assessment platform). Regardless of the assessment platform chosen, a school must conduct assessment and report aggregate data through the School Readiness Data Submission. For more information, see the CSI Resource Site School Readiness.

READ ACT

The Colorado READ Act focuses on literacy development for kindergarteners through 3rd grade students with a goal of all students reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade. Schools are required to test all students in grades K-3 on phonemic awareness; phonics; vocabulary development; and reading fluency, which includes mastery of oral skills and reading comprehension using a [state-approved reading assessment](#).

The READ Act requires the creation and implementation of an individual intervention plan, called a READ plan, for students identified with a significant reading deficiency (SRD). Schools

receive supplemental funding to be used for targeted interventions for students with an SRD – [allowable uses](#).

Schools must ensure that teachers in grades K-3, and special education teachers and reading intervention teachers serving grades K-3 have completed a state-approved 45 hours evidence-based reading program. Annually, schools are required to verify teacher that teacher training requirements have been met. Schools that do not have 100% completion will not be eligible for READ Act funding.

CSI supports schools in understanding and implementing READ Act requirements. To learn more about assessment timelines, READ Plans, budgeting, reporting requirements and teacher training requirements, visit the [READ Act resource page](#).

EMERGENT MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS (EL)

CSI Contact: School Programs & Equity Initiatives Manager

Colorado's English Language Proficiency Act (ELPA) requires all public schools to identify and serve emergent multilingual learners (ELs). To ensure compliance with ELPA and federal requirements, CSI schools are required to maintain a [EL Program Plan](#) that describes how schools will implement the following requirements:

- use one common assessment to identify English learners (WIDA Screener)
- accurately report the number of ELs during October Count and End of Year
- use one common assessment to measure English language development (ACCESS)
- provide evidence-based ELD program for all eligible K-12 English learners to enable ELs to develop and acquire English proficiency while maintaining grade-level performance in academic content areas

Schools should reference the [EL Resource website](#) when developing and update the EL Program Plan. [EL Resource website](#) and the [CDE Guidebook](#) when developing and updating the EL Program Plan.

School Staffing

Each school must identify a staff member as the EL Coordinator who will serve as a primary point of contact for English Language Development programming. CSI encourages schools to hire personnel who have experience working with multilingual learners or who hold a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education (CLDE) endorsement to serve in this role.

EQUITY SCREENER AND TIERS OF SUPPORT

CSI Contact: School Programs & Equity Initiatives Manager

The [CSI Equity Screener](#) is designed to:

1. assess the quality of access, instructional supports, and outcomes for special populations (i.e., students with disabilities qualifying for an IEP (SWD), Emergent Multilingual Students (ELL), students who qualify for Section 504s (504s), gifted students (GT), students of color, students who are homeless, and students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch); and
2. assist CSI in providing focused support to schools to help with specific performance goals for these students.

CSI shares interactive data dashboards with all schools to support them in identifying potential equity gaps. CSI and the school team collaborate to set goals and priorities for the school to align with other school-wide initiatives or priorities. Tiered support is provided to all schools to aid in addressing equity and access for all.

For more information on the process and timeline, please access the [Equity Screener Resource Site](#).

FINANCE

CSI Contact: Finance Team (Finance@csi.state.co.us)
<https://resources.csi.state.co.us/financial-services-library/>

The CSI Finance Department’s key roles include managing CSI’s internal financial operations and to provide financial oversight, monitoring and support to the CSI portfolio of schools. Visit the [Our Team page](#) for the most up-to-date team members.

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

CSI schools are responsible for:

- Complying with applicable provisions of the annual Financial Accreditation Report (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdefinance/Accreditation>)
- Submitting required financial reports (see reporting timeline)
- Submitting requests for funds to receive grant reimbursements
- Complying with the Financial Transparency Act (C.R.S. 22-44-304)
- Ensuring required [financial policies and procedures](#) are in place
- Maintaining 3% TABOR reserve
- Maintaining required SPED reserve
- Regularly reporting financial information to the school’s board
 - Adopted, Amended and Supplemental Budgets
 - Year-to-date financial reports (at least quarterly)
 - Annual audit
- Retaining all financial records for 7 years (federal and state regulations)

FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY ACT REQUIREMENTS

CSI Contact: Controller

All CSI schools are required to post the specified reports on their Financial Transparency Page within 60 days, in a downloadable format, for free public access, until the end of the current budget year. For more information, access the Financial Transparency Template:

<https://resources.csi.state.co.us/financial-transparency-template/>

QUARTERLY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

CSI Contact: Chief of Finance & Operations

You will need to provide your Board of Director’s and the CSI Finance Team with your school’s quarterly financial statements at the end of each quarter. The fiscal quarters and reporting deadlines are as follows:

	Duration	Reporting Deadline
Quarter 1	July-September	October
Quarter 2	October-December	January
Quarter 3	January-March	April
Quarter 4	April-June	July

Sample quarterly report packets can be found on CSI’s resource site [here](#).

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

CSI Contact: Chief of Finance & Operations or Controller

Prior to receiving public funds, schools must adopt a budget in order to expend these funds and post the information to their financial transparency website within required timeframes. For more details, access: <https://resources.csi.state.co.us/budget-process/>

GRANTS

CSI Contact: Grants Fiscal & Accounting Manager
<https://resources.csi.state.co.us/grant-resources/>

For a list of non-competitive charter school funding, access:
<https://resources.csi.state.co.us/non-competitive-csi-funding/>

To access funding, schools participate in the Request for Funds process. For more information about this process, please access: <https://resources.csi.state.co.us/rff-form-template/>

CSI EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FUND

CSI Contact: Chief of Finance & Operations

The Assistance Fund was created by the General Assembly to assist CSI Schools with capital construction and reasonable emergency financing in the form of interest free loans or grants. CSI schools may apply for funds in one of the following categories:

- a. Matching Moneys for the BEST Program
- b. Financing Repayment of Moneys under CECFA or Other Loan
- c. Other Capital Construction Costs
- d. Reasonable Emergency

Applications for non-emergency loans are accepted in February of each year. Applications for emergency loans may be submitted at any time. [Click here](#) for more information regarding the application process.

RESOURCES

Employers Council Membership

All CSI schools have access to CSI's [Employers Council membership](#) to support schools in managing critical Human Resources and Employment Law issues. Please reach out to Allegra Wenger add 2-3 people from your school to the membership. Once the membership is processed, members can call the council at (303) 839-5177 with HR questions.

For more information please contact CSI's Human Resources Manager.

Financial Transparency Act

All schools must comply with the [Financial Transparency Act](#). CSI monitors compliance throughout the year.

For more information please contact CSI's Controller.

[Per pupil revenue payment information for all years](#)

Find current-year and historical [per pupil revenue](#) information.

For more information please contact CSI's Chief of Finance & Operations or Controller.

[Alternate At-Risk Funding Calculation](#)

Many CSI schools are subject to the [Alternative At-Risk Funding Calculation](#). This calculation adjusts a school's per pupil revenue according to the school's relative at-risk population.

For more information please contact CSI's Chief of Finance & Operations or Controller.

[Financial Policies and Procedures Handbook](#)

The [Financial Policies and Procedures Handbook](#) adopted by the State Board of Education shall be used by every school district in this state in the development of the budget for the district, in the keeping of financial records of the district, and in the periodic presentation of financial information to the Board of Education of the district. C.R.S. 22-44-204(3).

For more information please contact CSI's Chief of Finance & Operations or Controller.

[Chart of Accounts](#)

All Colorado charter schools and school districts must use the CDE [Chart of Accounts](#) to account for financial activity.

For more information please contact CSI's Chief of Finance & Operations or Controller.

[Financial Accreditation](#)

Schools are required to complete and submit an annual Assurances for Financial Accreditation. This required form includes financial statutes that all schools must comply with. Completed [forms](#) are due to CSI by October 15th each year.

For more information please contact CSI's Controller.

GIFTED EDUCATION

CSI Contact: Director of School Programs & Professional Learning

CSI operates as the Administrative Unit (AU) with authority for oversight and legal compliance for the delivery of Gifted Education services to students. Colorado Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA) requires all public schools to identify and serve children between the ages of four and twenty-one whose abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. CSI schools are required to have procedures to identify and serve gifted students in the following areas:

- General or specific intellectual ability
- Specific academic aptitude (reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and world languages)
- Creative or productive thinking
- Leadership abilities
- Visual arts, performing arts, music, dance or psychomotor abilities

To ensure compliance with ECEA requirements, CSI schools are required to maintain a [Gifted Education Program Plan](#). Schools should reference the [Gifted Education Resource website](#) when developing and updating the Gifted Education Program Plan.

Gifted Education Coordinator

CSI employs a staff member who hold a CDE Gifted Specialist endorsement to provide support to school personnel responsible for gifted programming. The Coordinator conducts an annual ALP audit and reports out to CSI's Director of School Programs who will determine whether a school is in compliance and will assist in the development of an action plan to address concerns.

School Staffing

Each school must identify a staff member as the Gifted Lead who will serve as a primary point of contact for gifted programming. CSI encourages schools to hire personnel who have experience working with gifted students or who hold a gifted education endorsement to serve in this role. Gifted Leads should be provided some time each week to work on administration of the program without student responsibilities.

Early Access Enrollment Requirement (Elementary Schools only)

CSI has adopted provisions for Early Access; therefore, according to statute, all elementary schools in the AU must develop procedures for offering early access. For more information about this requirement visit the [Early Access Resource webpage](#).

Grade Level Acceleration (Grade Skipping)

Schools may choose to adopt a formal board policy for grade level acceleration or may follow written procedures that align to the [CSI Grade Acceleration guidance document](#).

LEGAL & POLICY

CSI Contact: LegalandPolicy_CSI@csi.state.co.us

Resource: [Legal & Policy Library](#)

The Legal & Policy team provides general legal and policy support to CSI schools and staff, monitors and supports CSI school compliance, and manages the charter contract process. The department also develops and revises CSI policies, as needed. Visit the [Our Team page](#) for the most up-to-date team members.

Legal and Policy Guidance

The primary function of the Legal & Policy Team is to support CSI Schools in knowing their legal obligations and ensuring legal and regulatory compliance. The go-to source for legal and policy information from CSI will be the [Legal & Policy Library](#).

While we can't provide legal advice, if there is ever a general legal or policy question that isn't answered in the library or you don't know where to look, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. The best approach is to use our team inbox at LegalandPolicy_CSI@csi.state.co.us.

Training

In addition to the guidance documents and general support, the Legal & Policy Team will host or participate in multiple trainings for CSI schools throughout the year. Please keep an eye on the CSI Resource Site, CSI newsletters, and other communications to receive updates from the Legal & Policy Team about upcoming training opportunities.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUBMISSIONS AND AUDITS

Resource: [CSI Organizational Submissions and Audits page](#)

CSI reviews key policies and procedures for each school through the annual [Organizational Submissions and Audits](#) process. The submissions and audits may change from year to year depending upon changes in law, rule, or policy or to place emphasis on more critical compliance areas. Details of the Organizational Submissions schedule can be found at the link above. In general, we strive to limit the quantity of submissions to those items that need to be reviewed annually and items on which there have been changes in law, CDE policy, or CSI policy guidance.

SCHOOL PROGRAM AND CONTRACT MODIFICATION

Resource: [CSI Program and Charter Modification Page and Form](#)

Opportunities for schools to grow and change do not always align with the contract renewal timeline. To ensure Institute schools can make changes when desired, CSI has developed a School Program and Contract Modification Process. This process provides schools with a format to notify CSI of important changes outside of the renewal process and, when required, submit proposed changes for CSI review and approval. Please use the [Program and Charter Modification Form](#) to submit or propose an update, skipping any sections that are not applicable.

Please note that some changes may require completion of an application, available for download in advance.

COMPLIANCE MONITORING

Resource: [CSI School Compliance Policy](#)

The Legal & Policy Department monitors compliance to ensure that CSI schools remain aligned with applicable laws, regulations, contractual obligations, and other requirements. CSI is empowered by statute to revoke or deny renewal of a school's charter on the basis of certain legal compliance issues. CSI will provide information regarding each school's compliance as part of the CSI Annual Review of Schools and as part of the charter renewal process.

The CSI Board has adopted the [CSI School Compliance Policy](#) to serve as a guide for addressing and remedying situations of noncompliance before getting to non-renewal or revocation of a charter contract. The School Compliance Policy outlines how CSI will address situations of noncompliance.

When CSI has reason to believe that an Institute school is out of compliance with any applicable law, rule, policy, or contract provision, CSI will issue a non-compliance notice to the school stating any remedial actions deemed necessary and any applicable deadline for the remediation. The type of notice will vary based on the severity of the non-compliance and whether the notice is an escalation of a pattern of non-compliance or a prior issue that has not yet been remedied.

Questions regarding the compliance monitoring process or any compliance issue can be sent to LegalandPolicy_CSI@csi.state.co.us.

CSI GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Resource: [CSI Grievance Policy and Sample School Grievance Policy](#)

Each CSI school is required to develop and implement a conflict resolution or grievance policy in accordance with the [CSI Grievance Policy](#). The conflict resolution process must implement a tiered approach of escalation or appeal. Generally, this tiered approach proceeds as follows:



MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT

CSI Contact: School Programs & Equity Initiatives Manager

CSI assists schools in navigating the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act which requires schools to remove educational barriers facing children and youth experiencing homelessness (lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence). Students who qualify for services under McKinney Vento have the right to immediate enrollment in a school even if they are lacking paperwork normally required. In addition, ***the student has the right to receive transportation to the school even if your school does not offer transportation to your students. The school is responsible for making transportation accommodations for the student.*** Each school receives an allocation on a per pupil basis for students identified under the McKinney Vento Act. There is emergency funding set aside for schools that might require additional resources outside of the per pupil allocation.

School Staffing

Each CSI school is required to designate a McKinney-Vento/Homeless Liaison. The main responsibilities of this staff member are to ensure all students who qualify are identified, provided resources, and properly reported using the [enrollment questionnaire](#). In addition, this staff member should have the skill set to navigate sensitive conversations in a professional and compassionate manner. For additional resources, please see the [McKinney-Vento Resource Site](#).

MENTAL HEALTH

CSI Contact: Mental Health Program Specialist

By May of the 2022-2023 school year, each CSI school will be required to submit a Mental Health Program Plan that details their legal, ethical and best practice responses to comprehensive school mental health programming. CSI's Mental Health Coordinator will provide monthly training to School Leaders (or their designee) and School Mental Health Professionals. For training dates, visit the [CSI Calendar](#).

The Mental Health Program Plan will address the following tasks that are legally required to be carried out or responded to within schools. Many of these tasks can only be carried out by CDE licensed specialized service providers (School Psychologist, School Counselor, School Social Worker).

Required Tasks

Bullying Policy, C.R.S. 22-30.5-116 (1) requires each charter school to adopt and implement a bullying prevention and education policy. Colorado school districts are required by law to adopt a specific policy concerning bullying prevention and education (C.R.S. 22-32-109.1(2)(a)(I)(K)). Each school district must ensure that its policy, at a minimum, incorporates approaches, policies, and practices outlined in the Colorado Bullying Prevention and Education Model Policy.

Child Find Evaluation, when conducting its Child Find evaluation responsibilities in the areas of mental, behavioral and/or emotional health or cognition, intelligence and/or neuropsychological abilities, only specially trained mental health staff may conduct these evaluations in accordance with test use mandates and professional ethical liabilities. [Special Education Core Procedures Manual](#)

IEP Minutes, Mental Health Service minutes must be provided by a licensed SSP provider in accordance with

Mandatory Reporting, A mandatory reporter is defined as a professional who is obligated by law to report known or suspected incidents of child abuse and/or neglect. Mandatory reporters are part of the safety net that protects children and youth and have the ability to provide lifesaving help to child victims in our community. Any person specified in C.R.S. 19-3-304 is by law a mandatory reporter in Colorado.

Respond to Crises, Both the [Claire Davis Act](#) and the [Colorado Safe Schools Act](#) dictate that a school must respond with "reasonable care" to school safety crises. This may live in Emergency Operating Plans (EOPs), crisis response protocols, or more specific threat and/or suicide procedural guidance. In addition, C.R.S. 22-1-134 requires student identification cards to include the phone number, website address and text talk number for Colorado Crisis Services. If a school does not have school identification cards, crisis response materials must be displayed at schools and provided to parents once a year.

[Suicide & Threat Assessment](#), Both the [Claire Davis Act](#) and the [Colorado Safe Schools Act](#) dictate that a school must respond with “reasonable care” to school safety crises. Schools should document response protocols in their Emergency Operating Plans (EOPs), crisis response protocols, or more specific threat and/or suicide procedural guidance.

In addition, [CSI Safe Schools Policy](#) requires training programs for staff and students in crisis prevention and management; training programs for staff and students in how to recognize and respond to behavior or other information that may indicate impending violence or other safety problems; training and support for students that aims to relieve the fear, embarrassment, and peer pressure associated with reporting behavior that may indicate impending violence or other safety problems; and procedures for safe, confidential reporting of security and safety concerns at each school building.

[Referral System](#), The CSI Safe Schools Policy requires procedures for safe, confidential reporting of security and safety concerns at each school building

For additional information, visit CSI’s guidance on [Suicide and Threat Assessment](#)

School Staffing

The hiring of school mental health professionals is not explicitly required by state law; however, many of the above mentioned requirements may only be carried out or may ethically best be carried out by a CDE licensed school mental health professional who understands confidentiality requirements and has extensive training in mental, emotional and behavioral health.

School mental health professionals are considered licensed special service providers (SSP) and must hold the CDE SSP License with appropriate endorsement for their scope of practice. The Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) license is not sufficient. Individuals who hold an active DORA or out-of-state license should apply to CDE for the SSP license. Alternative pathways to SSP licensure do exist and are highly individualized by type of educational background, classes taken and previous licensure. For more information, visit the [Special Education Human Resource Handbook](#).

NURSING & HEALTH

CSI Contact: Postsecondary & School Programs Coordinator

OVERVIEW

CSI schools are required to develop a plan for providing [essential health services](#) as required [by state and federal legislation and policy](#). Some key activities of a school's nursing and health program include, but are not limited to:

- Collaborate with school leadership team on the development, submission, and implementation of CSI's [School Nursing and Health Program Plan](#)
- Provide for the administration of medication and nursing procedures
- Ensure safe delegation and training to unlicensed assistive personnel
- Identify students with health needs requiring modifications or accommodations in the school setting or during school sponsored events and activities
- Obtain and interpret student health information and data, as deemed necessary, for child find/special education assessments and 504 accommodation plans
- Develop and implement individualized care/action plans for Asthma, food allergy, and students with health care needs
- Participate as the health expert on the response to intervention (RTI), special education and 504 multidisciplinary teams by mitigating health related obstacles to learning
- Participate in comprehensive health education programs and school health policy development
- Promote, monitor, and report immunizations
- Implement health screening programs and facilitate referral and follow-up care
- Communicate health and wellness issues to school and community
- Collaborate with local public health officials to address matters concerning infectious and communicable diseases.
- Ensure student health information is protected in accordance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Staffing

School nurses are required to possess the following credentials:

- Bachelor's degree or higher in nursing from an accredited ins of higher education
- A license to practice professional Nursing in Colorado
- Successful completion of field experiences and a supervise practicum
- A [Colorado Department of Education Special Services Provider License](#) with a School Nurse Endorsement or Temporary Educator Eligibility License

A school is permitted to employ a "School Nurse" that does not hold a CDE Special Services Provider License with a CDE School Nurse Endorsement however, the school must have an individual w/ this Endorsement available to review Student Health Plans if the "School Nurse" does not possess this Endorsement.

School Nursing and Health CSI Board Policies

The following CSI [Board Policies](#) can inform the development of a school's Nursing and Health program:

- School Immunization Information
- Internet Safety
- Parental Involvement in Education
- Safe Schools Plans
- School Safety – Bullying Prevention; Crisis Management; Teaching about Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco
- Students with Food Allergies

Reporting Health Data

- [Immunizations](#) (required) – Colorado law requires all students attending Colorado schools and licensed childcare centers to be vaccinated against certain diseases, unless an exemption is filed. Schools report the vaccination data of students each year directly to the Colorado Department of Public Health (CDPHE)
- [Asthma, Allergy and Anaphylaxis](#) (required)- CSI Schools to report incidences of severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis), use of epinephrine, and the delegation/training of staff to maintain and administer stock epinephrine. Schools report directly to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) using one of two online forms.

Schools must provide notice to the parent or legal guardian of each student enrolled of the school's food allergy and anaphylaxis policy. As part of this notice, schools must provide parents with the standard allergy and anaphylaxis form. The purpose of the form is to allow parents of students with known food allergies to provide the school with information about the student's diagnosis and history of food allergies.

- [School Health Data Collection](#) (voluntary) - CDE Health and Wellness Unit collects data on the number and type of health care providers working in public schools and the health conditions that were managed during the school year. Schools report aggregate data directly to CDE.

Resources

- CSI [School Nursing and Health](#)
- CDE [School Nursing and Health](#)

POSTSECONDARY & WORKFORCE READINESS (PSWR)

CSI Contact: Postsecondary & School Programs Coordinator

The world of work and postsecondary learning for today's students looks vastly different than for those who graduated just a generation ago. Postsecondary education is no longer defined, for many, as a linear path towards a bachelor's degree; upon graduation from high school students today are presented with multiple pathways to a meaningful career that can include industry credentials, apprenticeships, and college certificates and degrees.

The State of Colorado, through actions such as enhanced graduation requirements, expanded concurrent enrollment opportunities, and financial incentives for schools to promote student connections to industry, has sought to enhance the alignment between secondary and postsecondary opportunities for students. CSI schools have opportunities to prepare students for Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PSWR) through statutory obligations and optional programs.

INDIVIDUAL CAREER AND ACADEMIC PLANS (ICAP)

High Schools (required); Middle Schools (recommended)

Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP) are the vehicle through which Colorado students explore education and career opportunities beyond high school, reflect on their understanding of these opportunities, and plan for their postsecondary next steps. ICAP is also a tool that reflects how a student's Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness is achieved, accomplished, and understood. Completion of an ICAP is required for high school students to meet Colorado's [Graduation Guidelines](#).

An ICAP should be designed to assist each student and his or her parent or legal guardian in exploring the postsecondary career and educational opportunities available to the student, aligning course work and curriculum, applying to postsecondary education institutions, securing financial aid and ultimately entering the workforce.

Resources

- CSI [ICAP](#)
- CDE [ICAP](#)

CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT

High Schools (required)

Concurrent Enrollment is defined as the simultaneous enrollment of a qualified student in a local education provider and in one or more postsecondary courses, including academic or career and technical education courses, which may include course work related to apprenticeship programs or internship programs, at an institution of higher education.

Concurrent Enrollment opportunities must be offered at no tuition cost to qualified students in grades 9-12. For the purposes of Concurrent Enrollment the schools authorized by CSI are considered the local education provider (LEP) and enter directly into cooperative agreements with one or more institutes of higher learning (IHL).

Schools must regularly update their data management systems to ensure they accurately reflect the students participating in Concurrent Enrollment.

Resources

- CSI [Concurrent Enrollment](#)
- CDE [Concurrent Enrollment](#)
- CSI [Data Submissions End Of Year Reporting](#)

ACCELERATING STUDENTS THROUGH CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT (ASCENT)

High Schools (voluntary)

ASCENT is a fifth-year high school program that allows students to participate in concurrent enrollment the year after 12th grade. Qualified students who have completed at least 9 credit hours of postsecondary coursework prior to completion of their 12th grade year may be eligible for the ASCENT Program. Any eligible student may participate in the ASCENT program if they meet eligibility requirements. CDE anticipates local education providers (LEPs) will utilize the Student October Count file as the mechanism to submit funding for ASCENT student

Schools must regularly update their data management systems to ensure they accurately reflect the students participating in ASCENT.

Resources

- CSI [ASCENT](#)
- CDE [ASCENT](#)
- CSI [Data Submission October Count](#)

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE)

High Schools (voluntary); Middle Schools (voluntary)

Career & Technical Education (CTE) leverages workforce and education systems so that each learner has quality experiences learning about and through work, which can lead to lifelong career success. CTE ensures a thriving Colorado economy by providing relevant and rigorous education that is connected, responsive and real.

Career and Technical education is an umbrella term that encompasses middle and secondary-level courses and programs that provide students with technical, academic, and employability skills for success in the workplace and further education. CTE programs approved through the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) are eligible for federal funding through the Perkins Grant and state funding through the Colorado Technical Act (CTA).

Resources

- CSI [CTE](#)
- Colorado Community College System (CCCS) [CTE](#)

CAREER DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM (CDIP)

High Schools (voluntary)

The Career Development Incentive Program (CDIP) provides financial incentives for school districts and charter schools that encourage high school students, grades 9-12, to complete:

- Tier 1: qualified industry credential programs
- Tier 2: internships, residencies, construction pre-apprenticeship or construction apprenticeship programs
- Tier 3: qualified Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

Participating schools *could* receive up to \$1,000 for each completed credential.

Resources

- CSI [CDIP](#)
- CDE [CDIP](#)
- CSI [CDIP Submissions Guidance](#)

GRADUATION GUIDELINES

High Schools (required)

Colorado's Graduation Guidelines are a road map to help students and their families plan for success after high school. To graduate from high school in Colorado students must complete the following state-level, minimum graduation requirements:

- Demonstration of college or career readiness in English and Math based on at least one measure from the [Menu of Options of College and Career Ready Demonstrations](#)
- Completion of an Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP)
- Completion of a Civics (aka American Government) course.

Schools will identify additional graduation requirements (credits totals, course requirements, service learning, etc) above and beyond CDE's Graduation Guidelines requirements to constitute their school's graduation policy.

CSI schools should select demonstrations of college and career readiness from the Menu of Options of College and Career Ready Demonstrations that fit the needs of their student population and the culture and mission of the school. Schools may offer some or all the state menu options, may raise a cut score on an included assessment, and may add graduation requirements in other content areas. Graduation requirements, including the state-level, minimum graduation requirements, should be communicated to the school community through widely used communication channels, including through the student/family handbook.

Local Education Providers (LEPs) must report the measure by which each student has demonstrated Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR) according to the Menu of Options of College and Career Ready Demonstrations.

Resources

- CSI [Graduation Guidelines](#)
- CDE [Graduation Guidelines](#)
- CSI [Data Submission Guidance for Graduation Guidelines](#)

SCHOOL FOOD AUTHORITY

CSI Contact: School Nutrition Program Manager

The CSI School Food Authority's key role is to offer administrative and technical support for schools who participate in the [National School Breakfast Program](#), [National School Lunch Program](#), or other Federal Child Nutrition Programs. For more information and resources please visit our website at: <https://resources.csi.state.co.us/school-food-authority/>.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE

CSI Contact: Improvement and Implementation Specialist

The CSI Continuous Improvement Collaborative is a year-long fellowship opportunity for CSI school teams to focus on identifying and addressing gaps within their school communities. Participating teams will **deepen their knowledge** in continuous improvement tools and practices, **connect with a peer network** of school teams, **strengthen their team** structures, and **receive individualized coaching** and mentorship. For additional information, [click here](#).

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORT (MTSS)

CSI Contact: Improvement and Implementation Specialist

MTSS is a **prevention-based** framework of team-driven, data-based problem solving to **improve the outcomes of every student** through family, school, and community partnering, comprehensive screening and assessment, and a layered continuum of evidence-based practices applied at classroom and school level.

For additional information, see [CSI's MTSS Resource webpage](#).

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE (SAC)

CSI Contact: Improvement and Implementation Specialist

All schools are required by state law to form a School Accountability Committee (SAC) comprising school staff and administration, family members, and community representatives. The SAC is charged with supporting the schools improvement efforts and must meet at least quarterly.

For additional information, see [CSI's School Accountability Committee webpage](#).

UNIFIED IMPROVEMENT PLAN

CSI Contact: Improvement and Implementation Specialist

An annual Unified Improvement Planning requirement was introduced in 2009 to streamline improvement planning components of state and federal accountability requirements. Based on the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (SB212-08), the primary purpose of improvement planning is to align efforts to *“Ensure all students exit the K-12 education system ready for postsecondary education, and/or to be successful in the workforce, earning a living wage immediately upon graduation.”*

The intent is that schools create a single plan that truly reflects improvement planning activities, and which reduce the total number of plans and documentation required both by the state and by CSI.

For additional information, resources, and timelines, please see the [CSI Unified Improvement Planning webpage](#).

SECTION 504

CSI Contact: Special Education Coordinator

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is an unfunded Federal law that prohibits discrimination based on disability in any program or activity operated by recipients of federal funds. Students eligible for services under Section 504 have a mental or physical impairment that *substantially* limits major life activities. Students eligible to receive services or accommodations under Section 504 must have a Section 504 plan that documents the student's impairment, significant limitations on a major life activity, and the accommodations and individuals responsible for delivering services.

School Staffing

Each CSI school is required to have a Section 504 Coordinator. The school leader may designate any staff member to be the Section 504 Coordinator, except a special education teacher who is fully funded using special education dollars. The main responsibilities of a 504 Coordinator are – screening and identifying eligible students, processing relevant forms and paperwork, ensuring all accommodations and/or services are being provided, attending annual training, conducting parent meetings, reporting, and maintaining records. CSI has released a [Section 504 Manual](#) that schools can use for guidance.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Overview

CSI Contact: Director of Special Education

CSI operates as the Administrative Unit (AU) with authority for oversight and legal compliance for the delivery of Special Education services to students with disabilities. In the charter school contract and Special Education MOU with CSI, each school agrees to comply with the CSI's policies and procedures and the requirements of federal and state law concerning exceptional children including, but not limited to, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA or IDEIA) and the Colorado Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA) and related charter school laws pertaining to special education.

To ensure compliance with requirements to serve Special Education students, CSI schools are required to maintain a [Special Education Program Plan](#). Schools should reference the comprehensive [CORE Procedures Manual](#) when developing and updating the Special Education Program Plan.

Special Education Coordinators

A Special Education Coordinator is assigned to each school. Coordinators are CDE licensed special education providers or administrators who function as the Special Education Director Designee. Coordinators provide schools the following:

- **Consultation** to School Leaders and school special education staff to ensure understanding of state and federal laws, policies, procedures, compliance, programming, and resources
- **Oversight** by conducting an annual audit using tools such as the Equity Screener and IEP. Coordinators report out to CSI's Director of Special Education who will determine whether a school is in compliance and will assist in the development of an action plan to address concerns. Coordinators will provide follow-up support specific to schools' identified needs using the Tiers of Support process
- **Capacity building with the community** by creating opportunities for collaboration with local districts and other agencies
- **Mediation** upon request. Coordinators serve as Director Designee at necessary meetings, and refer resources as needed
- **Professional Development** through recorded trainings, virtual and in-person meetings and referrals to professional development offered by other agencies in areas related to supporting the needs of students with disabilities
- **Submissions support** for all data collections, including December Count, Assessment Accommodations, End of Year, and Discipline

Visit the [Our Team page](#) for the most up-to-date team members.

Special Education School Staffing

CSI schools are responsible for hiring their own CDE licensed special education teachers and specialized service providers with appropriate endorsements. Although charter schools may

obtain state and district waivers for the licensure of regular education personnel, this is not the case for special education teachers.

No later than the first day of the opening of school, all special education teachers and related service providers (school nurses, psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, social worker, etc.) must be hired, appropriately qualified with a CDE license, and available to serve the identified needs of the students. Schools must report details regarding each special education staff member using the [IDEA Instructor Form](#) no later than **August 5th**.

Schools that do not have special education staff employed or on record at the start of school, or have resignations that occur during the year, must notify the Charter School Institute Director of Special Education within 5 business days of the vacancy by submitting the [Vacant Personnel Action Form](#).

For detailed information about special education staff qualifications and recommended staff to student ratio recommendations, see the [Special Education Human Resource Handbook](#).

Admission of Students with Disabilities

Enrollment in CSI Schools is open to every student who resides within the state. Students with disabilities have the right to nondiscriminatory recruitment, application, and admissions practices. Under IDEA, a charter school may not unilaterally limit the services that must be provided to a particular student with a disability.

Schools may not ask a prospective student if he or she has a disability, and recruitment and enrollment documents must ensure that families know that the charter school serves students with disabilities. Schools must ensure that they are following [CSI Special Education Enrollment Procedures](#).

For more information about implementing special education programs, visit our [resource site](#).