2024 Legislative Recap

# Assessments

**Remote Testing & Online Education Programs (**[**SB24-070**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-070)**)**

Requires CDE to develop, review, and update state assessment administration and security policies for home-based, virtual administration of computer-based state assessments for students enrolled full time in online schools or online programs for implementation in the 2025-26 school year.

**Potential Implications:** Remote testing could improve testing participation for online/virtual students. To ensure appropriate and secure administration, schools should review CDE’s updated policies when available.

# Bullying and Discrimination

**Student Weight-Based Bullying Prevention (**[**HB24-1285**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1285)**)**

Adds to the statutorily identified bullying behaviors subject to discipline policies and reporting requirements–a pattern of bullying based on a student's weight, height, or body size.

**Potential Implications:** Schools may need to update their school bullying policy.

**Best Practices to Prevent Discrimination in Schools (**[**SB24-162**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-162)**)**

Requires CDE to develop best practices for local education providers to effectively respond to reports of harassment or discrimination. Specifies that CDE make the training program materials available to public schools at no cost. Postpones the deadline for harassment and discrimination training for employees from July 1, 2024 to the 2025-26 school year (beginning by December 31, 2025).

**Potential Implications:** Schools will have access to free training materials by mid 2025. Employees have additional time to complete harassment and discrimination training.

**Include Hair Length in CROWN Act (**[**HB24-1451**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1451)**)**

Adds hair length that is commonly or historically associated with race to the list of traits associated with one's race, for purposes of the CROWN Act. The CROWN Act of 2020 specified that, for purposes of anti-discrimination laws, discrimination on the basis of one's race includes discrimination on the basis of traits commonly or historically associated with race, such as hair texture, hair type, and protective hairstyles.

**Potential Implications:** May require schools to update dress code policies that include hair length.

**Non-Legal Name Changes (**[**HB24-1039**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1039)**)**

Requires schools to address a student by the student’s chosen name–which differs from their legal name, to reflect the student’s gender identity–during school functions. Specifies that knowingly or intentionally using a name other than a student’s chosen name is discriminatory, and students experiencing this discrimination have a right to file a report with the school under the school’s harassment and discrimination policy or Title IX policy. Requires schools to implement a written policy on how a school will honor a request for using a student’s chosen name and permits schools to adopt a policy for including a student’s chosen name on school records. This law may not be waived by charters.

**Potential Implications:** Schools must update their policies to align with the bill. Policies must comply with FERPA. Additionally, student data and information systems may require an update to include a new field for students’ chosen name. CSI has produced sample policies for use by schools. CSI’s sample Nondiscrimination Policy and sample Name Changes Policy can be retrieved on the [Nondiscrimination/Equal Opportunity Resource Page](https://resources.csi.state.co.us/anti-discrimination/).

**School Graduation Attire (**[**HB24-1323**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1323)**)**

Allows students to wear objects of cultural or religious significance as an adornment at a graduation ceremony. Prohibits schools from restricting what a student may wear under the student's required graduation attire as long as the adornment complies with the school's dress code policy, which must respect gender expression, gender identity, religion and culture. However, the bill allows schools to prohibit a student from wearing or displaying an adornment that is likely to cause substantial disruption of, or material interference with, a graduation ceremony, but the prohibition must be the least restrictive means necessary. This law may not be waived by charters.

**Potential Implications:** CSI has provided guidance and a sample policy for use by schools on the [Graduation Attire Resource Page](https://resources.csi.state.co.us/graduation-attire/).

# Data and Technology

**Education-Based Workforce Readiness (**[**HB24-1364**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1364)**)**

Authorizes CDE to commission a financial study on postsecondary and workforce readiness programs. A report from the study is due December 1, 2024, including recommendations for implementation in the 2025-26 state budget year.

Requires a statewide longitudinal data system–built by the Office of Information Technology (IT) or its contractor–and creates a governing board to support the Office of IT with the development and implementation of the data system.

**Potential Implications:** Beginning in the 2025-26 budget year, CDE may request education and workforce readiness data from schools for the statewide longitudinal data system.

**Grace Period Noncompliance Digital Accessibility (**[**HB24-1454**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1454)**)**

Provides a one-year extension (to July 1, 2025) for public entities to comply with digital accessibility standards. Entities must demonstrate good faith efforts toward compliance or toward resolution of any complaint of noncompliance, post quarterly reports on progress, and create a process for redress for inaccessible digital products.

**Potential implications:** CSI schools have until mid July to comply with digital accessibility standards. [Learn more here.](https://resources.csi.state.co.us/accessibility/)

# Early Childhood

**Outdoor Nature-Based Preschool Programs (**[**SB24-078**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-078)**)**

Includes outdoor nature-based preschool programs as a type of licensed child care center in CDEC for licensing-related matters. Defines “outdoor nature-based preschool program” as a full- or partial-day outdoor nature-based program for children who are 3-8 years old that operates at least 50 percent of the program’s operating hours outdoors in a department-approved outdoor natural space. Requires CDEC to develop rules for centers operating as outdoor programs by the end of 2025 and to provide training to licensing staff who oversee outdoor program site inspections and to outdoor program operators and staff.

**Potential Implications:** Schools may consider opening licensed outdoor nature-based programs.

**Improved Access to the Child Care Assistance Program (**[**HB24-1223**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1223)**)**

Overhauls the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP) to simplify the application process, align income qualifications with the universal preschool program requirements, and make changes to provider reimbursements and parent fees, among other things.

**Potential Implications:** CSI will communicate any relevant required changes to impacted schools.

**Preschool Programs Cash Fund (**[**HB24-1387**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1387)**)**

Clarifies that CDEC may use the remaining money annually appropriated from the preschool programs cash fund to provide additional preschool services for children who are in low-income families or who meet at least one qualifying factor and for the Universal Preschool Program. To obtain funds in the reserve, CDEC may submit a request for a supplemental appropriation to the joint budget committee.

**Potential Implications:** May increase funding available to CSI preschools serving families with a qualifying factor.

# Educator Workforce

**Professional Development for Science Teachers (**[**HB24-1446**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1446)**)**

Requires CDE to develop and offer a free, optional professional development program to enhance pedagogy around research-based state science standards. The program will include in-person and virtual PD opportunities on interventions for students who are below grade level or struggling in science, children with disabilities, gifted students, and students who are English language learners. The program will offer ongoing professional development credit toward licensure renewal.

**Potential Implications:** This PD program will be available by the 2025-26 SY. Participating licensed teachers may earn credit toward licensure renewal.

**Evaluation Protections & Educators (**[**SB24-132**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-132)**)**

Ensures that an evaluation report and all public records used in preparing the report are confidential for all teachers, principals, administrators, special service providers, and education support professionals.

**Potential Implications:** Expands protections for all school instructional and support staff.

**Professional Endorsement Special Education Teaching (**[**HB24-1087**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1087)**)**

Creates an alternative pathway for educators to earn an endorsement for special education. Permits a person with a professional teaching license to continue in their current position while completing the pathway.

**Potential Implications:** May help to address staffing shortages in special education. Designated agencies running an alternative preparation program for special education must ensure that the program aligns with State Board of Education rules related to the amount and type of special education experience required for the endorsement. Designated agencies may also need to modify procedures to allow currently employed teachers to participate.

**Appropriation Authority Educator Licensure Cash Fund (**[**HB24-1391**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1391)**)**

Extends the continuous appropriation authority of the educator licensure cash fund from 2023-24 to FY 2029-30, at which point CDE must make a recommendation to the legislature as to whether the authority should continue.

**Potential Implications:** No changes to educator licensure process; potential changes following FY 2029-30.

**Public Employees' Retirement Association Employment**

**after Retirement for Rural Schools (**[**SB24-099**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-099)**)**

Adds superintendents and principals to the list of service retirees hired by a rural LEA or CSI school located within a rural LEA who may be employed without a reduction in PERA benefits. Clarifies that the exemption for a rural LEA or CSI school within a rural LEA also includes a small rural LEA which has a funded pupil count for the prior budget year of less than 1,000 pupils.

**Potential Implications:** May help to address administrator staffing shortages in rural communities. Employer contributions to PERA may increase depending on the number of retirees hired.

**Educator Safety Task Force (**[**HB24-1320**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1320)**)**

Creates the Educator Safety Task Force in the Department of Public Safety to review, investigate and make recommendations related to the safety and well-being of school staff. Includes as voting members on the task force a charter school teacher and a charter school administrator/leader. The task force will make recommendations by June 30, 2025.

# Finance

**New Public School Finance Formula (**[**HB24-1448**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1448)**)**

Creates a new, student-centered school finance (or total program) formula. The new formula is used to determine each LEA's and institute charter school's annual total program amount to fund public education. Phases in implementation of the new formula, with full implementation beginning in the 2030-31 state fiscal year.

Among other things, the act also: 1) increases the factors (additional funding) for at-risk and ELL students and adds a new factor for special education students, 2) provides $65.5 million in charter school facilities funding, and 3) creates the mill levy override match working group to make recommendations on how to improve equitable funding distribution and greater access for eligible districts and CSI schools in FY 2024-25.

**Potential Implications:** For the 2024-25 through the 2028-29 state fiscal year, additional charter school capital construction funding will be available. May require an update to CSI’s Special Education Memorandum of Understanding to address the allocation of special education pupil finding received by the CSI School.

**Public School Finance (**[**SB24-188**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-188)**)**

Provides for a 7.3% increase in PPR in 2024-25, setting the new statewide base per pupil funding amount of $8,496.38 for the 2024-25 budget year.

**Potential Implications:** Increased per pupil funding amount for all schools.

**Institute Charter Schools & Bond Indebtedness (**[**HB24-1154**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1154)**)**

Clarifies that a school district may include CSI school needs–capital construction or land and facilities–in requests for bond indebtedness on district ballots for CSI schools located within that district.

**Potential Implications:** CSI schools seeking voter approval of bonds must enter into a written agreement with the district’s board prior to the election; contents of the agreement are specified in law. CSI schools seeking capital funding must submit a capital construction plan to the district’s board; contents of the plan are specified in law.

**Mill Levy Equalization (**[**HB24-1394**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1394)**)**

Allows for full mill levy equalization at CSI schools for the 2024-25 school year.

**Potential Implications:** This bill allows the state to fully fund mill levy equalization so that all CSI schools receive per pupil funding equal to that of schools in their geographic district.

**Public School Capital Construction Assistance Fund Transfer Date (**[**HB24-1395**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1395)**)**

Delays a $20 million transfer from the marijuana tax cash fund to the public school capital construction assistance fund from June 1, 2024, to June 1, 2026. Reduces the appropriation to CDE from the public school capital construction assistance fund for the 2024-25 state fiscal year by $20 million.

**Potential Implications:** This fund includes the charter school facilities assistance account; therefore, available funding for charter school facilities may be reduced until FY 2026-27.

**School Funding 2023-24 for New Arrival Students (**[**HB24-1389**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1389)**)**

Provides one-time funding ($24 million) to help offset the cost for schools that had an increase in the number of newly arrived English learners since the 2023-24 Student October Count.

**Distribution of State Share of District Total Program (**[**SB24-017**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-017)**)**

Modifies the distribution schedule for the state share of program funding, unless a school district opts to continue the current schedule of 12 roughly equal payments. Moving forward, a school district or CSI school will receive smaller distributions of state share in March, May, and June (because property tax revenue is presumably received these months), while larger distributions of the state share are assumed to be made in all other months.

**Potential Implications:** Starting in the 2024-25 budget year, CSI schools should make plans for uneven state distributions of program funding each month.

# Health and Safety

**Automated External Defibrillators in Public School (**[**SB24-227**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-227)**)**

Provides that schools can no longer refuse a donated automated external defibrillator (AED) if the school does not want to accept responsibility for AED training, installation, or maintenance. However, schools may decide who will be trained, the frequency of training, and when the AED training will take place.

**Potential Implications:** Currently, schools are encouraged but not required to place functional AEDs in buildings for use during emergencies.If an AED is donated, schools must now accept the AED, which requires schools to also take responsibility for the installation, maintenance, and training in relation to the AED.

**Oral Health Screening in Schools Pilot Program (**[**SB24-142**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-142)**)**

Creates the oral health screening pilot program to award at least 5 grants for the implementation of oral health screening to public school students in grades K-3.

**Potential Implications:** CSI schools may express interest to CDE in participating in an oral health screening grant program. Health screenings will occur at the school, and schools must provide written notice to families.

**Behavioral Health First Aid Training Program (**[**SB24-007**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-007)**)**

Creates the behavioral health first aid training program in DPHE. The program will, among other things, train educators and school staff on how to respond to an adult, teen, or youth who is experiencing mental health or substance use challenges and in crisis intervention strategies and best practice. Subject to available appropriations, the training program is available at no cost.

**Potential Implications:** Schools may wish to apply to participate in the program. The program will prioritize applicants’ geographic diversity, existing resources and infrastructure, and plan to implement the training program and associated curriculum.

**Free Menstrual Products to Students (**[**HB24-1164**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1164)**)**

Requires schools to provide free menstrual products. Provides for a phase-in process, such that schools must provide menstrual products in all applicable (female-designated or gender-neutral) bathrooms by June 30, 2028. Provides an exception for schools located within a small rural district and for schools experiencing vandalism as a result of compliance. Specifies how schools serving students in K-6 may comply. Expands eligibility for the menstrual hygiene products accessibility grant program to include schools located in rural and small rural districts.

**Potential Implications:** Schools may need to acquire, install, and maintain dispensing machines and/or appropriate disposal receptacles for menstrual hygiene products. Costs will vary based on the number of restrooms, buildings, and students. Grant recipients will have additional reporting requirements.

**Increase Access to School-Based Health Care (**[**SB24-034**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-034)**)**

Expands the definition of a school-based health center to authorize school-based health center grants for school-linked health-care services, which may be delivered through telehealth, mobile services, and referrals for health-care services at a clinic near school grounds.

**Potential Implications:** Schools may choose to apply for a school-based health center grant to support school-linked health care service models. This may expand the healthcare provider options for schools, especially those located in rural areas.

**Opiate Antagonists and Detection Products in Schools (**[**HB24-1003**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1003)**)**

Extends the current protections for school staff administering opiate antagonists to bus drivers and other staff aboard a bus, provided they have the appropriate training. Permits opiate antagonists to be stocked on buses. Allows school boards to maintain a supply of opiate antagonists on school buses.

Permits school staff to provide an opiate antagonist to anyone, including students, as long as the student has appropriate training.

Schools must not prohibit students from possessing opiate antagonists or non-laboratory additive/synthetic opiate detection tests. Students are not liable to civil action if they use these antagonists lawfully.

Adds “non-laboratory additive detection tests”—which detect the presence of additional harmful components from an opioid, such as fentanyl–to the tests schools may keep a supply of and adopt a policy about.

**Potential Implications:** Schools may need to update policies and staff training related to storage and administration of opiate antagonists and non-laboratory additive/synthetic opiate detection tests. Additionally, schools may need to update policies to prohibit disciplining students for possessing or administering opiate antagonists or non-laboratory additive/synthetic opiate detection tests and to require school-sponsored training, as applicable. CSI’s [Medication Administration Policy](https://go.boarddocs.com/co/csi/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=CV5L2K530380) has been updated to align with HB 24-1003.

**Healthier Social Media Use by Youth (**[**HB24-1136**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1136)**)**

Among other things, requires CDE to maintain a resource bank of evidence-based, research-based, scholarly articles and promising program materials and curricula pertaining to the mental and physical health impacts of social media use by youth, internet safety, and cybersecurity.

**Potential Implications:** Starting July 2025, schools may access free resources to promote healthier youth social media use.

# High School

**Changes for Concurrent Enrollment Students (**[**HB24-1305**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1305)**)**

Expands the allowable P-TECH disciplines to include industries beyond the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields. Clarifies that P-TECH, concurrent enrollment, development ASCENT, and TREP credits do not count against a student’s allowable College Opportunity Fund credit limit.

**Potential Implications:** CSI schools offering a P-TECH pathway may wish to expand their industry offerings, which may increase the number of students enrolling in this pathway. This bill also expands tuition assistance for extended (5th and 6th year) high school students in a concurrent enrollment program, so schools may need to update resources and advising for these students.

**Seal of Climate Literacy Diploma Endorsement (**[**SB24-014**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-014)**)**

Authorizes an LEP to grant a high school diploma endorsement in climate literacy and provides the requirements of the endorsement. Provides data collection requirements for LEPs.

**Potential Implications:** Additional staff time may be required for participating schools, including to annually inform parents of endorsement requirements. School staff may need to develop a list of acceptable courses to qualify for the endorsement, review and approve student projects, and compile required data.

**Ninth-Grade Success Grant & Performance Reporting (**[**HB24-1282**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1282)**)**

Continues the program, which awards grants to LEPs to provide targeted support for 9th graders. Provides $2 million/year from FY 2024-25 through FY 2027-28. Specifies data collection for a final report compiled by CDE.

**Potential Implications:** CSI schools participating in the grant program will be required to report information regarding ninth-grade performance, including the following information: the number and percentage of 1st time 9th grade students who at the end of the school year have not earned at least 4 core credits for have failed 1 or more core credits, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, ELL status, and whether the student has an IEP.

**Cap Schools in Early High School Graduation Pilot (**[**HB24-1392**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1392)**)**

Limits future participation in the Fourth-Year Innovation Pilot Program, which provides funding to LEPs for qualifying low-income students who graduate early from a participating high school, to only those LEPs participating as of the 2023-24 school year.

**Potential Implications:** Unless already participating, schools may no longer opt to participate in this pilot program.

**Accelerating Concurrent Enrollment Program Modifications (**[**HB24-1393**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1393)**)**

Establishes caps on participation and per pupil rates for the Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment (ASCENT) program, which allows participating students to enroll in postsecondary courses in a fifth year of high school, paid for by the LEP.

Requires participating students to complete a state or federal application for financial aid (CASFA/FAFSA).

Allows the State Board of Education to establish selection criteria that an LEP may choose to use to designate participating students.

**Potential Implications:** For schools participating in ASCENT, this bill reduces the per pupil rate for ASCENT students and limits future growth of enrollment in the program. [See more on the changes here.](https://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/ascent_changes)

**Career & Technical Education & Apprenticeships (**[**SB24-104**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-104)**)**

Requires CDLE, in coordination with the CTE Division of the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), to align the high school CTE system and the registered apprenticeship system for programs related to infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, education, or health care.

CDLE and CCCS will establish a state-level advisory board that will create state-approved CTE programs that align with registered apprenticeship programs. Additionally, they must expand the number of aligned programs in infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, education, health care, or occupations identified in the annual Talent Pipeline report.

**Potential Implications:** This bill could help streamline the registered apprenticeship process and create additional CTE opportunities.

# Opportunities for Schools

**Out-of-School Time Grant Program (**[**HB24-1331**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1331)**)**

Creates the Out-of-School Time grant program to provide grants to eligible nonprofit organizations to provide affordable academic and other enrichment for students during times when school is not in session. CDE will administer the grant program.

**Potential Implications:** Participating schools will be required to share data with the grantee nonprofit. [Learn more here.](https://www.cde.state.co.us/21stcclc/cononprofitsostgrant?mc_cid=19a34961e8&mc_eid=f1c74f92ef)

**Purple Star School Program (**[**HB24-1076**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1076)**)**

Creates the Purple Star School Program in CDE to designate schools that provide services and supports to military-connected students and their families.

**Potential Implications:** Schools with military connected students and families may wish to pursue a purple star designation. Qualifying schools must have dedicated staff acting as a liaison with military connected students and families and provide other supports and services, including counseling and mentorship. Additionally, schools must maintain accessible information for military families on enrollment, academic planning, and transition programs for students entering and leaving the school.

# Student Meals

**Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer Program (**[**SB23B-002**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb23b-002)**)**

Creates the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for children program (summer EBT) in CDHS, in partnership with CDE, to provide food benefits to students in low-income households for the summer months.

**Potential Implications:** Expands food benefits to low-income households over the summer months. CSI schools complete the S-EPT data collection in partnership with CSI’s Data Submissions Team. Additional information is available on CSI’s [Summer-Electronic Benefit Transfer Resource Page](https://resources.csi.state.co.us/data-submissions/sebt/).

**School Food Programs (**[**HB24-1390**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1390))

Among other things, this bill delays the implementation of the local food purchasing grant, the wage increase or stipend program for school meals food preparation and service employees, and the local school food purchasing technical assistance and education grant program until the 2025-26 budget year. However, it continues for one additional year the school food purchasing reimbursement and technical assistance grant programs.

Creates the Healthy School Meals for All program technical advisory group. The advisory group’s report is due Dec. 1, 2024.

**Potential Implications:** May reduce state reimbursements to schools participating in these programs, although costs may be offset for schools participating in the existing local food program that is continued under the bill.

# Student Populations - Students with Disabilities

**Clarify Individualized Education Program Information (**[**SB24-069**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-069)**)**

Requires CDE to create a publicly available training program, in plain and easy-to-understand language, regarding IEP laws and procedures, including parent and student rights by July 2026. Requires CDE to deliver the training in person and make it available to the public online.

**Potential Implications:** Training program will be publicly available by July 2026. Interested stakeholders, such as parents of students with IEPs, may have an opportunity to participate in creation of the training program.

**Addressing Abbreviated School Days (**[**HB24-1063**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1063)**)**

Makes changes to state law related to the use of abbreviated school days for students with disabilities. An abbreviated school day is defined as any school day in which a student with disabilities receives instruction for fewer hours than the majority of students in the same grade and school district.

**Potential Implications:** As the Administrative Unit for CSI schools,CSI must adopt CDE’s new abbreviated school day policy and create a plan to support children who are assigned an abbreviated schedule. Requires CSI and CSI schools to report information related to abbreviated schedules starting in July 2026. CDE will provide technical assistance and training around abbreviated school days.

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# Student Populations - Justice-Engaged Students

**Supports for Youth in Juvenile Justice System (**[**HB24-1216**](https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1216)**)**

Among other things, this bill establishes a bill of rights for a K-12 student who is involved in any capacity with the juvenile or criminal justice system (justice-engaged student) and establishes requirements for supporting these students. CDE must create a hotline to offer justice-engaged students referrals and support.

**Potential Implications:** Schools must publish services and resources available for justice-engaged students on their websites and must include contact information for the schools’ designated point of contact for justice-engaged students. The law outlines requirements for the designated point of contact, including understanding state-created guidance, and supporting the justice-engaged student and family in a variety of ways.