

2025 Colorado State Board of Education Legislative Priorities

The Colorado State Board of Education is committed to working with the Governor, the Colorado Legislature, school districts and other stakeholders to ensure equity and opportunity for every student, every step of the way.

By working together to keep all Colorado students as the focus, we believe in our collective ability to establish a vision and a plan to achieve a world-class education system where all students graduate ready for college and/or careers, and are prepared to be productive citizens of Colorado. As guided by the Department of Education's strategic plan, the State Board of Education will evaluate positions on legislation based on how well the legislation allows implementation of the following key areas from the strategic plan:

- Increasing Student Engagement
- Accelerating Student Outcomes
- Strengthening the Educator Workforce
- Advancing Operational Excellence

Additionally, the State Board of Education encourages the General Assembly to prioritize a number of factors when considering potential legislation:

- Prioritize coherence across and within systems and thoroughly evaluate the opportunity cost of implementing the potential legislation on the Department of Education's, districts' and educators' capacity, ensuring it does not overburden districts or compromise their ability to increase student engagement, accelerate student outcomes, strengthen the educator workforce, and enhance operational excellence.
- Provide careful review and consideration of data-informed and evidence-based practices to maximize the impact of the investment of state resources and policies on students.
- Minimize unfunded mandates placed on schools so that school funding can be preserved for educational expenses that support student learning and performance.
- Ensure the department receives reasonable funding to fulfill its statutory duties.

Finally, the State Board outlines the following policy considerations...

STUDENT SUCCESS - We support policy that...

- Provides support for Colorado students to accelerate pandemic recovery and increase student academic performance, attendance and mental health.
- Encompasses the continuity of sequenced, coherent, and high-quality education from kindergarten to career or higher education.
- Ensures all students have access to the quality instruction needed to meet the Colorado Academic Standards and drive student-directed learning experiences towards essential skills.
- Provides opportunities for children to participate in programs which increase their readiness to learn in kindergarten, while ensuring that the Colorado Department of Education is able to fulfill its legal obligations under state and federal laws for children with Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

- Provides opportunities for kindergarteners to participate in programs which increase their reading readiness for first grade.
- Expands students' access to quality, evidence-based reading instruction and continuing development of literacy skills through numerous pathways, including, but not limited to, early identification of students with significant reading deficiencies.
- Expands students' access to quality, evidence-informed, data-driven supports in math and science.
- Supports districts' ability to expand workforce readiness and multiple post-secondary pathways while in high school.
- Prioritizes closing achievement gaps and advancing all students' academic growth and achievement as appropriate for each local context.
- Provide resources and supports to districts for training and tools to create safe and inclusive learning environments.
- Supports cross-agency partnerships, collaborations and investments in mental health resources and supports for students and educators.
- Acknowledges that one of the most significant factors in student performance is a high-quality educator by prioritizing educator recruitment and retention to ensure a well-prepared and stable teaching workforce.
- Strives for an accountability system that is transparent and uniform, measures student growth, prioritizes district support, and meets federal requirements.
- Integrates AI into the classroom responsibly and transparently, empowering educators to elevate academic rigor, support diverse student needs, and prepare students for the future while maintaining safeguards to protect privacy, mitigate bias, and promote ethical use of technology.

DATA COLLECTION & TRANSPARENCY - We support policy that...

- Minimizes and streamlines the administrative burden of data collection requirements on districts while balancing the need for robust data to inform educational decision making.
- Provides protection for individual student data in terms of collection, storage and transmission.
- Invests in secure and efficient data collection and reporting systems.
- Provides clear and reasonable direction regarding the implementation of the Colorado Open Meetings Law and the Colorado Open Records Act that preserves transparency and the public's access to information.

CHOICE AND ENGAGEMENT - We support policy that...

- Provides every student with high quality educational choices and varied learning experiences to best meet the student's individual learning needs.
- Ensures parents have access to information about education programs, their child's academic achievement, and the opportunities to participate in related discussions and decisions on behalf of their child.
- Supports districts in their efforts to build robust family, community, and industry partnerships to ensure all students develop lifelong learning skills.

FLEXIBILITY - We support policy that...

- Provides flexibility to schools and districts that deliver high-quality, evidence-based services with improved student outcomes.



- Preserves flexibility for the Colorado Department of Education - rather than policy enacted through prescriptive statute - to deliver high-quality education services while maintaining accountability to Colorado taxpayers.
- Provides flexibility in the way school districts meet reporting and implementation requirements in order to maximize student outcomes and minimize the burden on district staff.
- Keeps Colorado students' best interests in mind while anticipating and responding to new federal and state law.

GRANTS - We support policy that...

- Deploys the use of grants in an intentional, coherent and strategic fashion.
- Aligns grant awards and distributions to one of three frameworks as established by the State Board of Education:
 - Competitive grants - should be limited in their creation and should specifically be tied to testing innovative practices or demonstrating a proof of concept that could viably be replicated.
 - Targeted Distribution - should leverage existing data and indicators, allowing the department to utilize a formula-like distribution based on student-need, with a focus on capacity building activities.
 - Universal/core services - should be based on either a per-pupil distribution or a mechanism to leverage economies of scale that allows all local education providers to accomplish ongoing requirements or to meet ongoing needs and is distributed through a streamlined mechanism rather than a grant application.

SCHOOL FINANCE - We support policy that...

- Leads to the development of an equitable and comprehensive Colorado school finance system that meets the Constitutional obligation of providing a thorough and uniform educational system of free public schools throughout the state.
- Clearly communicates with, and engages the public around school finance.
- Takes into account state and local contribution capacity to ensure all students have equitable educational opportunities.
- Enhances and improves the Permanent Fund, and protects it from further depletion.
- Supports the Colorado the Department of Education's ongoing effort to streamline and enhance grants processes to better meet students' needs.
- Ensures grant programs include clear and measurable metrics of success and funding for a thorough evaluation and review.
- Removes burdensome census block reporting requirements for at-risk funding, and instead expands existing methods for identification.

STATE BOARD AUTHORITY

The Colorado State Board of Education is responsible for the general supervision of public schools through collaboration with the legislative and executive branch, along with non-profit organizations and the private sector. This includes authorizing educator preparation programs, setting the criteria for educator licensure, and ensuring special education services for early childhood students.

In furtherance of its constitutional responsibility, the State Board of Education supports policy that recognizes its rulemaking and policy making authority, including, but not limited to academic standards,



instructional time requirements, educator preparation programs and communicating priorities for the Colorado Department of Education and its staff.

