

# Summary of Legislation

## 2024



### K-12 Education

During the 2024 legislative session, the General Assembly considered a variety of measures related to kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) education in Colorado. Specifically, the legislature adopted bills related to health, safety, and wellbeing; supports for students, teachers, and other staff; licensing; degree attainment; school funding; and administration and governance.

#### Health, Safety, and Wellbeing

The General Assembly passed several measures pertaining to the physical and mental health, safety, and overall wellbeing of students in Colorado.

#### Physical Health

[House Bill 24-1164](#) requires local education providers to provide free menstrual products to students and expands the availability of the menstrual hygiene grant program to rural and small rural school districts, while [Senate Bill 24-034](#) expands a grant program that assists with the establishment, expansion, and ongoing operations of school-based health centers and school-linked health care service models, including telehealth services and mobile health units. [Senate Bill 24-227](#) requires schools to accept donated Automated External Defibrillators (AED) and clarifies that schools will decide who on staff will be trained and the timing and frequency of AED trainings.

### Mental Health and Wellbeing

In 2023, the General Assembly passed [Senate Bill 23-296](#), which required the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to develop training for school staff regarding harassment and discrimination policies. [Senate Bill 24-162](#) modifies these requirements by requiring CDE to contract with an organization to develop best practices for notifying students and parents about school harassment and discrimination policies and procedures, processing reports, and implementing trauma-informed responses. In addition, the organization must develop a harassment and discrimination training program curriculum for free use by schools. [House Bill 24-1285](#) adds bullying based on weight, height, or body size to prohibited bullying behaviors, while [House Bill 24-1039](#) requires a public school to address a student by the student's chosen name during school functions. The bill states that intentionally using a name other than a student's chosen name is discriminatory and requires each school district to implement a policy on how a school will honor a request for using a student's chosen name. Finally, [House Bill 24-1136](#) requires CDE to create a resource bank of materials and curricula related to the mental and physical health impacts of social media use by youth, internet safety, and cybersecurity. The bill also adds mental health impacts of social media to existing guidelines related to local comprehensive health and student wellness

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programs, and requires that social media platforms display a pop-up warning to users under 18 who are on the platform for certain lengths of time.

### Student Safety

Under current law, certain school staff have legal immunity if they administer an opiate antagonist to a student experiencing an opiate overdose. [House Bill 24-1003](#) extends these protections to school bus drivers as well as other school employees and students on a bus if they've received appropriate training. The bill also requires schools to allow students to possess opiate antagonists, and allows districts and schools to maintain a supply of certain additive detection tests.

[Senate Bill 24-113](#) establishes new requirements for nonprofit, for-profit, and local government youth sports organizations. These include developing a prohibited conduct policy for coaches, parents, spectators, and athletes, and requiring all coaches to complete a criminal history record check by a private entity.

### Support for Teachers and Staff

The General Assembly passed several bills aimed at supporting teachers and other school staff. [House Bill 24-1320](#) creates a task force in the Department of Public Safety to study issues relating to safety of public school staff. [Senate Bill 24-132](#) extends the confidentiality of evaluation reports and related records to all teachers, principals, administrators, special service providers, and education support professionals; [House Bill 24-1376](#) expands the Teacher Mentor Grant Program to include novice teachers;

and [House Bill 24-1446](#) requires CDE to contract with an institution of higher education to develop and offer a free, optional professional development programs to improve teaching around academic standards in science.

### Support for Students

In addition to passing bills supporting teachers and other staff, the General Assembly considered bills supporting students in a variety of ways. [House Bill 24-1216](#) creates a bill of rights for justice-engaged students related to their education, including having the right to:

- alternative solutions for general education;
- prompt enrollment with a local education provider;
- appropriate credit for coursework completed while being justice-engaged;
- a graduation plan;
- privacy;
- education while committed; and
- participation in gifted and talented and college readiness programs.

Other bills include [House Bill 24-1331](#), which creates the Out-of-School Time Grant Program to award grants to nonprofit organizations that provide enrichment activities outside of school hours to students in primary and secondary schools.

[House Bill 24-1063](#) establishes policies for the use of an abbreviated school day, which is 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, while [Senate Bill 24-069](#) requires CDE to create a



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training program on federal and state laws related to individualized education programs. Finally, [House Bill 24-1282](#) continues the Ninth Grade Success Grant Program, which awards grants to local education providers to provide targeted support for ninth graders.

### Licensing

Currently, outdoor nature-based preschool programs, which are programs that serve children between three and eight years old and operate at least 50 percent of the time in a department-approved outdoor space, are not licensed in Colorado. [Senate Bill 24-078](#) adds these programs to the definition of child care center for licensing purposes. Additionally, current law requires seasonal outdoor adventure day camp programs (day camps) to meet the licensing requirements of child care centers. [Senate Bill 24-071](#) instead requires these day camps to fall under the regulatory framework for children's resident camps, by defining day camps as a type of children's resident camp that serves children five years and older and operates seasonally for at least six hours a day. Additionally, [House Bill 24-1009](#) requires that child care licensing resources be provided in multiple languages and establishes a new unit in the Department of Early Childhood to support these services. Finally, [House Bill 24-1096](#) enacts the School Psychologists Licensure Interstate Compact, which allows licensed school psychologists in a member state to more easily obtain a license from another member state. The compact takes effect when seven states have enacted the compact into law.



### Degree Attainment

The Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) Program allows students in approved programs to graduate from high school with an associate's degree or certificate in certain disciplines. Currently, credits earned through a P-TECH program count against a student's allowable College Opportunity Fund (COF) credit limit. [House Bill 24-1305](#) changes the law so that P-TECH credits do not count against the COF limit, and expands allowable disciplines to include industries beyond science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. [Senate Bill 24-014](#) authorizes local education providers to award a seal of climate literacy diploma endorsement to students who complete certain courses and an experiential learning project.

### School Funding

Under current law, CDE distributes the state share of school funding to school districts in 12, approximately equal, monthly payments. [Senate Bill 24-017](#) makes changes to the distribution structure so that when the state share is combined with the local distributions of property tax revenue, districts receive approximately the same amount each month. [House Bill 24-1448](#) creates a new school finance formula to determine total program funding for the state's 178 school districts, to be phased in over 6 years, beginning in FY 2025-26. Finally, [House Bill 24-1154](#) allows a school district board of education to ask voters to approve bond indebtedness for the capital construction, land, or facility needs of a

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charter school authorized by the state Charter School Institute.

### Administration & Governance

The General Assembly passed several bills pertaining to the administration and governance of public schools in Colorado. [House Bill 24-1323](#) allows students at public K-12 schools and institutions of higher education to wear items of cultural or religious significance during graduation ceremonies. The bill does not prevent a school or college from prohibiting attire that will be disruptive to the graduation ceremony.

Under current law, all Public Employees' Retirement Association (PERA) retirees may work up to 110 calendar days without experiencing a reduction in retirement benefits. Under the critical shortage retiree program, retired teachers, school bus drivers, cooks, school nurses, and paraprofessionals employed by rural school districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services may work after retirement for more than 110 days without a reduction in their retirement benefits. [Senate Bill 24-099](#) adds principals and superintendents to the list of critical shortage retirees.

Currently, students in online schools must travel to a testing location to participate in state assessments. Beginning with the 2025-26 school year, [Senate Bill 24-070](#) allows an online school or program to administer state assessments remotely to students.

[House Bill 24-1076](#) creates the Purple Star School Program to award a purple star designation to public schools that provide

services and supports to military connected students and their families.

Finally, [Senate Bill 24-216](#) requires boards of public libraries to establish policies for considering the removal of certain materials from library circulation upon a request from a patron. Libraries may not remove materials based on the demographic characteristics of the material's author or based on partisan disapproval of the material. The State Librarian under CDE will provide technical assistance to public libraries in complying with the provisions of the bill.

