

Glossary of Acronyms & Definitions

Colorado Authorizer Bootcamp

Supporting District-Led Authorizers to Promote Quality and Access

ACRONYMS

Below are common acronyms used throughout the Bootcamp sessions and related materials. The following section further defines some of these terms.

- **ACCESS** — the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners (ELL) test
- **CACSA** — the Colorado Association of Charter School Authorizers
- **CARES Act** — the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act
- **CDE** — the Colorado Department of Education
- **CMO** — a charter management organization
- **CSO** — a charter support organization
- **CSP** — the Federal Charter School Programs
- **ED** — the U.S. Department of Education
- **ELL** — English language learner
- **ELA** — English Language Arts
- **EMO** — an education management organization
- **ESSA** — the Every Student Succeeds Act
- **ESOL** — English for Speakers of Other Languages
- **ESSER Funds** — Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief
- **FAPE** — a Free and Appropriate Public Education
- **FTE** — full-time equivalent (referring to student enrollment)
- **IDEA** — the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- **IEP** — an Individualized Education Plan
- **LEA** — a local education agency
- **LRE** — the Least Restrictive Environment
- **NACSA** — the National Association of Charter School Authorizers
- **RFA** — a request for applications
- **RFP** — a request for proposals



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- **SBE** — the State Board of Education
- **SFA** — a School Food Authority
- **SPF** — the School Performance Framework
- **UIP** — a Unified Improvement Plan

DEFINITIONS

- **“At-risk pupil”** — defined in the Colorado Charter Schools Act as a pupil who, because of physical, emotional, socioeconomic, or cultural factors, is less likely to succeed in a conventional environment.
- **Automatic Waiver** — the waiver of a state statute or state board rule that is included in the list of automatic waivers adopted by the rule of the state board and is available to each charter school automatically, without submission of a statement that specifies the manner in which the school intends to comply.
- **Capital Outlay Funding** — funds annually allocated to eligible charter schools.
- **Charter Schools Act** — Colorado’s charter school law passed in 1993.
- **Charter school authorizer staff (authorizer staff)** — individuals employed by the authorizer and are charged with:
 - monitoring charter schools’ performance,
 - working with school staff and governing boards in executing the renewal process,
 - preparing renewal findings and recommendations for local school boards of education as they review renewal applications, and
 - negotiating with a school’s governing boards on charter renewal contracts.
- **Charter school governing board (governing board)** — the board members that oversee charter schools’ day-to-day activities, including the education program, operations, and financial activities.
- **Colorado Charter School Institute (CSI)** — a state entity that authorizes charter schools.
- **Colorado Department of Education (CDE)** — the state education agency.
- **Charter school leadership (school leadership)** — a charter school principal and/or other school leaders who work with the school’s governing board and authorizer staff to facilitate the renewal process (i.e., initial renewal discussions and scheduling, providing the requisite body of evidence submissions, preparing for site visits, and scheduling staff interviews).
- **Charter school renewal decision appeal** — an action taken by a charter school/governing board to refute an authorizer’s renewal decision and/or the length of the renewal contract term.
- **District Accountability Committees (DACs)** — statutorily created stakeholder groups with responsibilities that include reviewing the initial charter applications at least 15 days before the local boards’ vote on the application.ⁱ For the purposes of reviewing initial applications, DACs must consist of

- One person with a demonstrated knowledge of charter schools, regardless of whether that person resides within the school district; and
- One parent or legal guardian of a child enrolled in a charter school in the school district with the exception that if there are no charter schools in the school district, the local board of education shall appoint a parent or legal guardian or a child enrolled in the school district.ⁱⁱ
- **English language learners (English Learners or ELs)** — a student who “has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language to deny him or her the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms in which the language of instruction is in English.”ⁱⁱⁱ
- **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)** — federal law passed in December 2015 that governs the country’s K–12 public education policy and replaced its predecessor, the No Child Left Behind Act.
- **Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** — the special education and related services needed to meet a students’ needs as identified by the individualized education program team.^{iv}
- **Governing Board** — A charter school’s governing body.
- **Individualized Education Plan (IEP)** — the “written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised.” A student’s IEP must include their annual goals — including academic and functional goals; special education and related services; and supplementary aids students need to access the general education curriculum; and accommodations and modifications as needed.^v
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** — a federal law that makes available a “free appropriate public education” to all eligible children with disabilities and ensures the provision of special education and related services to those students.^{vi}
- **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** — a federal mandate requiring that — to the maximum extent possible — students with disabilities are educated with their non-disabled peers.^{vii}
- **Local boards of education (district board)** — district boards review charter schools’ initial application and renewal materials and the recommendations provided by authorizer staff when determining whether to approve or deny as well as renew, revoke, or nonrenew a school’s charter contract.
- **Moratorium** — a school district’s official policy of refusing to authorize charter schools and an ongoing pattern or practice of refusing to accept or review charter school applications.
- **School Performance Framework (SPF)** — Colorado’s framework that is used to assess and rate schools’ performance on various metrics including students’ academic achievement and growth on state assessments and postsecondary and workforce measures including graduation rates, drop-out rates, and college entrance exams.

School ratings fall into four categories: performance, improvement, priority improvement, or turnaround, and are used by CDE and the SBE to determine how to support struggling schools. ^{viii}

- **State Board of Education (State Board or SBE)** — the governing body of CDE that provides educational leadership for the state. The SBE reviews renewal decisions if submitted by the school. ^{ix}
- **Unified Improvement Plan (UIP)** — introduced by CDE in 2009 to streamline the improvement planning components of the state and federal accountability requirements into a single plan.^x Pursuant to the Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ Act),^{xi} UIPs must also include information about districts’ reading assessments, curriculum and instructional programs, and reading intervention services. ^{xii}

ⁱ C.R.S. § 22-30.5-107(1.5)

ⁱⁱ C.R.S. § 22-11-301(1)

ⁱⁱⁱ C.R.S § 22-24-103(5)

^{iv} 34 CFR § 300.17.

^v 20 U.S.C. Code § 1401(14) CRF § § 300.22,300.320 to 300.324

^{vi} Congress reauthorized the IDEA in 2004 and most recently amended the IDEA through Public Law 114-95, the Every Student Succeeds Act, in December 2015.

^{vii} 34 CFR § 300.114.

^{viii} <https://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/performanceframeworks>

^{ix} C.R.S. § 22-30.5-108

^x Aurora Public Schools, Unified Improvement Plan, <https://aps2020.aurorak12.org/unified-improvement-plan>

^{xi} The READ Act was passed in 2021 and “focuses on early literacy and development for all students and especially for students at risk to not read at grade level by the end of third grade [Under the Act] students are tested for reading skills, and those who are not reading at grade level are given individual READ plans.”

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/communications/readact-overviewfactsheet>

^{xii} READ Act Update, Senate Bill 19-199, <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readactupdatesb19199>