2027 Colorado State Board of Education Legislative Priorities and Policy Objectives

COLORADO
Department of Education

This document includes the specific areas of legislative focus for 2027 and references on-going priority areas. It is intended to provide staff, stakeholders and the legislature with a high-level overview of the board's approach to education policy issues in Colorado.

The Colorado State Board of Education works with the legislature, school districts, the governor, and other partners 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. The State Board of Education will, in part, evaluate positions on legislation based on alignment with the board's mission, "to provide all of Colorado's children equal access to quality, thorough, uniform, well-rounded educational opportunities in a safe and civil learning environment" and how well the legislation supports implementation of the following key areas from the Department of Education's strategic plan:

- Increasing student engagement
- Accelerating student outcomes
- Strengthening the educator workforce
- Advancing operational excellence

The State Board of Education encourages the General Assembly to prioritize the following when considering potential legislation:

1. **Focus school funding where it matters most — on classrooms.** Avoid adding new unfunded mandates so that resources can go directly toward teaching and learning.
2. **Keep systems aligned and manageable.** Before adopting new laws or initiatives, carefully consider their impact on schools, educators, and the Department of Education to ensure they support — not strain — efforts to engage students, improve outcomes, strengthen the educator workforce, and operate effectively.
3. **Use what works.** Ground decisions in data and proven/promising practices to make the best use of state resources and deliver the greatest impact for students.
4. **Fund responsibilities fairly.** Provide the Department with the resources it needs to carry out its statutory duties effectively.

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For reference, the following pages outline the State Board's continued priority areas from 2026, which serve as a foundation for developing its 2027 legislative priorities. The document also identifies additional and proactive policy areas, *italicized in bold*, for the Board to consider as it refines its priorities for the 2027 legislative session.

2027 PRIORITY AREAS

STUDENT SUCCESS:

- Accelerating the speed of school improvement efforts
- Support continued implementation and funding of the READ Act, with the SBE consulted on any proposed changes, informed by budget conditions and evidence of effectiveness
- ***Allow the SBE flexibility to prioritize Educator Recruitment and Retention (ERR) funding for the most pressing needs, through board rule***

CHOICE AND ENGAGEMENT:

- Providing every student with high-quality educational choices and varied learning experiences to best meet the student's individual learning needs.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

- *Supporting department capacity to ensure transparency and accountability*
- ***Advocating to delay implementing the new framework changes, while the new PWR data is analyzed and stakeholders are engaged***

GRANTS:

- Applying the CDE grant framework (see pg. 4) to ongoing and new grants and evaluate them based on impact to students and schools

SCHOOL FINANCE AND BUDGET:

- Advocating for adequate and equitable funding for public education including for schools, districts and programs
- Statewide needs should be addressed by the funding formula
- Opposing reliance on gifts, grants, donations or other uncertain funding mechanisms to implement new legislation

BOARD AUTHORITY:

- Ensuring statewide decisions around graduation guidelines (not course requirements) are made by the board, not the legislature
- Preserving and enhancing tools for the SBE to enforce the school accountability and improvement framework, including requirements for state academic standards
- ***Allow the SBE to re-approve MDOLs, in addition to the current authority of designating these schools***.

STUDENT SUCCESS

We support policy that accelerates the speed of school improvement efforts.

1. Supports Student Recovery and Well-Being
- Helps students accelerate academic progress, attendance, and mental health recovery after the pandemic.
- Partners across agencies to expand mental health supports for students and educators.
- Provides districts with resources and training to create safe, inclusive learning environments.

2. Builds Strong Foundations in Early Learning
- Expands programs that prepare children for kindergarten and ensure supports for students with IEPs.
- Strengthen early literacy by expanding access to evidence-based reading instruction and ongoing support beyond third grade.

3. Elevates Teaching and Learning
- Ensures all students have access to high-quality instruction aligned to Colorado Academic Standards.
- Expands evidence-based supports in math and science.
- Closes opportunity gaps and drive academic growth for every student.

4. Prepares Students for College, Career, and Life
- Supports districts in expanding workforce readiness programs and multiple postsecondary pathways.
- Promotes a seamless, high-quality education from kindergarten through career or higher education.

5. Strengthens and Supports Educators
- Prioritizes educator recruitment, preparation, and retention to build a strong, stable teaching workforce.

6. Modernizes and Innovates Responsibly
- Ensures the accountability system is fair, transparent, and focused on growth and district support.
- Integrates AI responsibly to enhance learning, protect privacy, and prepare students for the future.

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.
- Gives school districts flexibility in how they meet reporting and implementation requirements so they can focus time and resources on improving student outcomes.

CHOICE & 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.

Engages Families and Communities

- Ensures parents have clear access to information about education programs, their child's progress, and opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their learning.
- Supports districts in building strong partnerships with families, communities, and industry to help all students develop lifelong skills for success.

GRANTS

We support policy that:

- **Deploys the use of grants and CDE's processes in an intentional, coherent and strategic fashion to better meet students' needs; and**
- **Ensures grant programs include clear and measurable metrics of success and funding for thorough evaluation and review.**

Aligns funding with three clear frameworks established by the State Board of Education:

- **Competitive Grants** – Used sparingly and focused on testing innovative ideas or demonstrating new practices that can be scaled or replicated statewide.
- **Targeted Distribution** – Uses data and need-based indicators to direct resources where they are most needed, focusing on building local capacity and long-term impact.
- **Universal/Core Services** – Provides equitable access for all schools and districts through per-pupil funding or shared systems that streamline support and reduce administrative burden. Grant programs are not a sustainable replacement for funding core services.

FLEXIBILITY

We support policy that 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.

Promotes Flexibility and Responsiveness

- Keeps students' best interests at the center while anticipating and adapting to changes in state and federal law.

SCHOOL FINANCE

We support policy that advocates for schools' and districts' funding, including for operations and facilities, in a budget constrained environment.

Strengthens and Protects School Funding

- Builds a fair and comprehensive school finance system that fulfills Colorado's constitutional promise of a thorough and uniform public education for every student.
- Communicates clearly and engages the public in understanding how schools are funded and how dollars support learning.
- Supports Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) funding, acknowledging that schools have differing financial abilities to meet safety and security needs .

State Board of Education Authority

To promulgate and adopt policies, rules, and regulations concerning general supervision of the public schools, the department, and the educational programs maintained and operated by all state governmental agencies for persons who have not completed the twelfth-grade level of education.

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 (including adopting and enforcing standards), instructional time requirements, graduation guidelines, educator preparation programs and communicating priorities for the Colorado Department of Education and its staff. The State Board prioritizes partnership with the legislature and building a common understanding of these responsibilities to allow the board to support districts and students across the state in its unique role.

Contact the State Board of Education at state.board@cde.state.co.us.

Use the QR code to learn about CDE's 2025-2028 Strategic Plan: Start Strong, Stay Engaged, Leave Ready!