

Colorado

DIGITAL LEARNING STATE SNAPSHOT

16,215 students enrolled in one of **56 full-time online schools** or programs in SY 2013–14. Supplemental courses are available through Colorado Online Learning and district programs.

Many district schools and charter schools are incorporating blended learning.

Availability of online learning options

SUPPLEMENTAL			FULLY ONLINE		
K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)	K-5 (ES)	6-8 (MS)	9-12 (HS)
NONE	NONE	SOME	ALL	ALL	ALL

Availability of info:

- Great
- Good**
- Fair
- Poor
- Minimal

Does this state have...

	Y	N
Student choice for publicly funded fully online schools?	●	
Student choice for publicly funded supplemental online courses?		●
SVS or another publicly funded option for private / homeschool students?		●
Prior public school attendance requirement for online schools?		●
Online caps by class, school, district, or statewide?		●
PD requirement for online teachers?		●
State approval process for online providers?	●	
State approval process for online courses?		●
Online learning requirement for students?		●
End-of-course exams?	●	
Separate state reporting of online course enrollments?	●	

• 26 multi-district schools and single-district programs and schools available.

• For multi-district programs only.

• In 5 subjects.

• Enrollments annually; comprehensive report every 5 years.

Colorado has numerous fully online programs operating across multiple districts, district-level programs that are fully online and/or supplemental, fully blended schools, and a small state virtual school.

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) reported 16,215 students enrolled in fully online programs in SY 2013–14, a decrease of 3% from the previous year.¹⁶⁰ There are 56 online schools and programs recognized by the Office of Online and Blended Learning as of June 2014: five multi-district charter schools; 21 multi-district schools; 10 single-district schools; 16 single-district programs authorized to serve fully online students; three single-district supplemental programs serving students within their districts;¹⁶¹ and Colorado Online Learning (COL) is the state virtual school. COL reported 914 course enrollments in SY 2013–14, a 9% decrease from the previous year, following a 36% decrease in SY 2011–12.¹⁶²

In January 2014, a task force convened with the intention of improving “the quality of education for all students in Colorado who use online learning as part or all of their access to learning.”¹⁶³ The commission released its final report in March 2014, and its recommendations resulted in the passage of HB1382 (2014),¹⁶⁴ which accomplishes the following:

- Updates the definitions of “on-line program” and “on-line school” to allow those programs to have more flexibility in how they serve students.
- States that the records of students who transfer schools will transfer in 14 days (decreased from 30).

¹⁶⁰ Colorado Department of Education, *Summary Report for Online Programs*, June 2014; retrieved June 16, 2014; http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/2014%20Online%20Summary%20Report_Final.pdf

¹⁶¹ Online programs; retrieved June 15, 2014; <http://www.cde.state.co.us/onlinelearning/schools.htm>

¹⁶² Enrollment numbers obtained through personal communication with Colorado Online Learning; June 25, 2014.

¹⁶³ Colorado K–12 Online Education Task Force; <http://dkfoundation.org/our-work/k-12-online-education-task-force-0>. The final report, released in March 2014, can be downloaded from <http://dkfoundation.org/our-work/k-12-online-education-task-force-0>.

¹⁶⁴ HB1382 (2014); retrieved June 17, 2014; http://www.statebillinfo.com/bills/bills/14/1382_enr.pdf

- Requires online schools to document student attendance and participation, and clarifies the activities that may be included in those calculations.
- Notes the task force recommendation that CDE no longer directly certify multi-district online schools, but rather certify the authorizers of these schools and eliminate its own school-level certification process. To do so, the bill creates a task force charged with identifying high-quality standards for authorizers of online programs; it will make recommendations to the state board and legislature. The task force also will oversee the development of pilot programs to begin in SY 2015–16 to test innovative initiatives in online education.

In June 2014, the state board of education (SBE) approved a two-year pilot designed to allow Title I funds to follow students to online schools.¹⁶⁵ Hope Online Academy Elementary School was selected as the first pilot school for a variety of reasons, though primarily because it is a multi-district online school with multiple locations where students can receive meals and Title I services. Hope’s authorizer, Douglas County Schools, will receive an additional \$547,072 in federal Title I money in SY 2014–15 (and likely a similar amount in 2015–16) to provide services for poor students. This is a shift from the previous funding method, which set a base funding amount for all multi-district online schools and did not allow for any additional categorical program funding.

HB11-1277 (2011)¹⁶⁶ significantly reduced previous reporting requirements from annual to every five years; the first report since this change was released in June 2014 and details enrollment information, student achievement and growth scores, school financial information, and accountability issues. Online enrollments in years when the five-year report is not completed are designated as any student that takes at least one online course, so data in those years cannot separate fully online students or course-level enrollments. The law also removed the time period for which certification of online schools is granted; they remain certified indefinitely until CDE has reason to believe the program is not in substantial compliance with one or more of the statutory or regulatory requirements.

HB1037 (2007)¹⁶⁷ provided \$480,000 annually to fund a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to contract with a provider to offer online courses across the state for no more than \$200 per student per semester. This is a primary source of funding for Colorado Online Learning, the state virtual school. SB13-139 (2013)¹⁶⁸ changed the RFP process previously outlined in HB1037 in an effort to expand access to supplemental online courses statewide. The contract that previously was awarded to the Mountain BOCES through HB1037 will be awarded to a “designated BOCES” in consultation with the statewide association of BOCES. That BOCES will create a proposal process by February 2015 to select one or more providers to deliver online courses and professional development, and to share best practices in digital learning.

HB12-1124 (2012) directed CDE to study the integration of digital learning into public education;¹⁶⁹ it recommended allowing “students to choose individual online courses and have the pro rata portion of per pupil revenue (PPR) follow the student to the provider of the online course,” “driving a truly individualized education system through waivers and credit flexibility,” and an expansion of broadband access.¹⁷⁰ As a result, SB13-139 recommended that “each high school student in Colorado must be provided the opportunity to take at least one supplemental on-line course per year.” While it did not specify how that goal was to be accomplished nor provide funding, it required authorized supplemental providers (school districts, charter schools, and BOCES) to submit an annual report beginning June 1, 2015 that includes student performance data.

Details about other laws affecting online programs and students are available at www.kpk12.com/states/.

¹⁶⁵ Colorado State Board of Education June 11, 2014 meeting archive, part 5; retrieved June 17, 2014; <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeboard/sbe20140611>. The pilot discussion begins around minute 30.

¹⁶⁶ HB11-1277 (2011), sections 23-28 address online learning; retrieved June 24, 2014; http://www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2011a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/A58089DC75F0EAB18725780800800FD9?open&file=1277_enr.pdf

¹⁶⁷ HB1037 (2007); retrieved June 24, 2014; http://www.leg.state.co.us/CLICS/CLICS2010A/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/584ABEF08DBB8FB4872576A80026B247?Open&file=1037_enr.pdf

¹⁶⁸ SB13-139 (2013); retrieved June 24, 2014; [http://www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2013a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont2/1882ECEBE469781187257AEE00572CEF/\\$FILE/139_01.pdf](http://www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2013a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont2/1882ECEBE469781187257AEE00572CEF/$FILE/139_01.pdf)

¹⁶⁹ HB12-1124 (2012); retrieved June 24, 2014; <http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/onlinelearning/download/hb12-1124.pdf>

¹⁷⁰ *Digital Learning in Colorado: Opportunities and Recommendations*, January 2013; retrieved June 24, 2014; <http://www.coloradokids.org/issues/k12education/digitalllearning.html>