

COLORADO K-12 STATEWIDE TESTING & ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM IMPACTS AUDIT

Colorado [House Bill 21-1294](#)

PURPOSE -- Colorado adopted its current statewide system of standards and assessments in 2008 and the current statewide education accountability system in 2009 to comply with federal statewide testing requirements. Despite efforts to modify the system, the state's mandates continue to go far beyond testing requirements in federal law.

Many parents, educators, and school board members describe Colorado's current system as a "blunt instrument that doesn't accurately reflect the work being done in schools." Some also argue it stigmatizes schools with large numbers of low-income students and is not connected to teaching, learning, and continuous improvement. As a result, the current system has not significantly improved student achievement as measured by test scores, or closed gaps between students of color, low-income students, and white students.

SUMMARY -- This [act](#) directs the state auditor to conduct a performance audit of the statewide system of standards, assessments, and accountability. The act specifies that the performance audit must address but not be limited to: the effectiveness of the accountability system in measuring the performance of public schools and school districts in delivering a statewide system of thorough and uniform public education for all groups of students; the extent to which the accountability system accurately identifies success and drives effective support for improvement; unintended barriers that impact performance of students; and whether interventions are effective in supporting and improving outcomes for different subgroups of children.

The final report of the performance audit must be submitted to the commissioner of education, the state board of education, and the education committees of the general assembly.

LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE/CITATION -- The full text of this law is available [here](https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2021a_1294_signed.pdf):
https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/2021a_1294_signed.pdf:

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS – The impact of bias embedded in tests was originally part of the audit but was stripped from the final version due to lobbying by testing supporters and the testing industry.

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