

Fact Sheet: Flexibility for Rural Schools and Districts on Unified Improvement Planning and READ Act (HB 14-1204)

Overview

In 2014, the Colorado legislature provided added flexibility for small, rural schools and districts. Eligible schools and districts with a plan type of Performance or Distinction may adopt and publicly post their Unified Improvement Plan (UIP) biennially (every other year). CDE is offering this flexibility on a rolling basis, beginning in the 2014-15 school year. The bill also clarified some features of the READ Act.

Frequently Asked Questions

How is a small, rural district defined for this flexibility?

The definition of small, rural districts eligibility for the flexibility is specified in C.R.S. 22-11-303 (4) (b) which considers the geographic location, number of students enrolled (i.e., less than 1200 students) and distance from large, urban areas. For a full listing of eligible districts, go to the CDE website at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/uip/uip_trainingandsupport_resources

What happens if our district or school slips into an Improvement rating or lower?

According to the bill, the school or district must maintain a plan type of Performance or Distinction to retain the flexibility. Therefore, a school or district that slips to a lower rating (i.e., Improvement, Priority Improvement, Turnaround) must submit the UIP for public posting that same school year. The timeline for each plan type can be viewed in the table below.

UIP Posting Timeline for Small, Rural Schools and Districts

Finalized Plan Type	Annual Submission	Submission Dates
Performance or Distinction	Biennial (every other year)	April 15 (public posting) every other year
Improvement	Annual	April 15 (public posting) every year
Priority Improvement or Turnaround	Biannual (twice a year)	January 15 (CDE review) and April 15 (public posting) every year

Since consistent School and District Performance Frameworks will be available in fall 2014 and formal 2015 School or District Performance Frameworks will not be created, can we post our 2-year UIPs in 2014-15 and skip posting an updated plan in 2015-16?

Yes, districts decide when to exercise this flexibility. CDE will accept updated plans for posting at any time. In anticipation of the state assessment transition, it may be more meaningful for some districts to update their plans in 2014-15 when more state level data is available. Keep in mind that the school or district must maintain a Performance rating over this entire time period.

As a small district, we take advantage of the flexibility to submit a combined plan (one UIP for the district and all of our schools). Does this biennial (every other year) submission change our ability to use a combined plan?

Small, rural districts may still submit a combined plan. However, the entity with the lowest rating will determine the timeline. For example, a district with a Performance rating with all schools at Performance may submit a combined plan every other year. If one of the schools drops to an Improvement plan type, then the combined plan must be submitted annually. The district may opt to create a separate plan for the school with an Improvement plan type (submitted annually) and retain the biennial flexibility for the district and remaining schools.

What are the two provisions of HB 14-1204 in regards to implementation of the READ Act?

First, the bill provides an expanded use of per-pupil intervention funds from the READ Act. The bill allows small, rural districts to purchase the services of a literacy specialist from a BOCES to provide professional development in literacy or other supports for implementation of the READ Act. The bill also allows a BOCES to apply for the Early Literacy Grant program on behalf of member districts.

Where can I learn more?

- Email: UIPhelp@cde.state.co.us
- Visit the CDE Unified Improvement Planning webpage: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/uip>
- Contact the CDE Early Literacy staff: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/contactus>