

*Colorado Legislative Council Staff Fiscal Note***NO FISCAL IMPACT**

Drafting Number: LLS 14-0638	Date: January 10, 2014
Prime Sponsor(s): Rep. Pettersen	Bill Status: House Education
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SHORT TITLE: CHANGES TO RESOLVE EDUCATION RULE CONFLICTS**Summary of Legislation**

This bill makes two changes to the education statutes. First, the bill clarifies that for the purposes of state accreditation, an online program housed in a public school is not considered an online school. An online school has an assigned school code and operates with its own administrator, a separate budget, and a complete instructional program. Online schools are held responsible to state and federal accountability processes; accountability for students in online programs is attributed back to a designated school that houses the program.

Second, the bill permits the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to automatically renew an accreditation contract when a school district or the state Charter School Institute (CSI) is accredited with an improvement plan. Current law only permits the CDE to automatically renew an accreditation contract when a district or the CSI is accredited in one of the top 2 categories: accredited, or accredited with distinction. This bill permits an automatic renewal when a district or the CSI remains in the category of accredited with improvement plan or higher.

Assessment

This bill makes clarifications to current law and aligns statute with rules adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE). The bill will not change the revenue or expenditures of the CDE, the CSI, or local school districts and is assessed as having no fiscal impact.

First, the bill updates a definition in the Education Accountability Act to distinguish between online schools and online programs, and to clarify that online programs are not public schools. This clarification does not require any change to current practice.

Second, the bill allows CDE to automatically renew accreditation contracts for the top three categories of accreditation. SBE rules and current practice already allow CDE to automatically renew these contracts. The Office of Legislative Legal Services (OLLS) noticed the discrepancy during annual rule review, and this bill aligns statute with current rules and practice.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect upon signature of the Governor, or upon becoming law without his signature.

State and Local Government Contacts

Education

School Districts