

COLORADO'S PRE-K THROUGH 3RD GRADE ALIGNMENT LANDSCAPE

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How Does Colorado Fare on New America Indicators Compared to Other Western States?

The Early & Elementary Education Policy Team at New America conducted a 50 state scan of the Birth-3rd grade education policy landscape through the lens of literacy. This overview highlights state policies in Colorado and whether they are in step with New America's policy indicators to help ensure children are on track to read at grade level by the end of third grade.

Pre-Kindergarten¹:

29th

[Colorado]

46th

[Utah]

13th

[Nebraska]

33rd

[New Mexico]

- Colorado has a state-funded pre-K program that serves approximately 22% of 4-year-olds and 8% of 3-year-olds. ✓
- Pre-K teachers in state-funded programs are required to have specialization in early childhood education. ✓
- Pre-K teachers in state-funded programs are not required to have a bachelor's degree. ✗
- Assistant teachers in state-funded programs are not required to have an associate's degree. ✗
- Pre-K is not offered full-time [6 hours per day, 5 days per week] for all students. The majority of programs operate part-day sessions. ✗

Full-Day Kindergarten:

45th

26th

26th

12th

- State statute does not require districts to offer a full-day kindergarten program. ✗
- Colorado allows districts to charge parents tuition for full-day kindergarten. ✗
- When a kindergarten program is full-day, length of day is not equivalent to 1st grade. ✗
- The state does not require class ratio to be 18 children to 1 adult in kindergarten. ✗

Kindergarteners Attending Full-Day Programs in 2015-2016

76%

[Colorado]²

11.5%

[Utah]³

99%

[Nebraska]⁴

100%

[New Mexico]⁵

- Between 2013 and 2015, Colorado expanded access to its full-day kindergarten programs by 17 percentage points. ✓

Dual Language Learners (DLLs):

27th

15th

15th

15th

- Pre-K programs are not required to screen for dual language learners. ✗
- Colorado's early learning standards specifically mention DLLs.⁶ ✓

Equitable Funding:

22nd

20th

15th

22nd

- Colorado funds at least one pre-K program through the school funding formula. ✓
- While the school finance formula attempts to adjust for children living in poverty, ultimately it is distributed in a flat way providing its high-poverty districts with funding equivalent to its low-poverty districts.⁷ ✗

¹ http://nieer.org/sites/nieer/files/Colorado_2014_0.pdf

² Colorado Department of Education, "2015-2016 Pupil Membership by School and Grade," <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval/2015-16-pupilmembership-byschoolgrade-pdf>

³ Randy Raphael, email with Shayna Cook, May 12, 2016: "Of 48,201 students enrolled in kindergarten on October 1, 5,532 (11.5%) were in full-day and another 1,164 (2.4%) were in extended day (not full, but not the conventional half day either)."

⁴ Max Reiner, email with Shayna Cook, May 18, 2016: "Here is our breakdown for the kindergartners in the 15-16 public school Fall membership, Full day: 23,342; Half day: 32. We routinely have almost no half day programs."

⁵ New Mexico Public Education Department, "Total Statewide Enrollment 2015-2016," <http://ped.state.nm.us/IT/schoolFactSheets.html>; For details on the grade abbreviations "KF" and "KN," see State of New Mexico, Legislative Education Study Committee: Public School Data Reference Guide (Santa Fe: 2015), 3-5, <https://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/lesc/lescdocs/2015%20Public%20School%20Data%20Reference%20Guide.pdf>. KF stands for full-day kindergarten and KN stands for half-day kindergarten.

⁶ <http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/Early%20Learning%20Guidelines.pdf>

⁷ http://www.schoolfundingfairness.org/National_Report_Card_2015.pdf