

Senate Bill 215 Summary

22-30.7-102 Definitions

The definitions included in Senate Bill 215 are crucial to On-line Programs. The definitions, such as “Learning Center” and “Mentor,” clarify significant elements of On-line Programs.

22-30.7-103 Division of on-line learning

Senate Bill 215 creates an On-line Division within the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). The purpose of the On-line Division is to support On-line Programs with standards and resources in order to ensure quality On-line Programs. The duties of the On-line Division include:

- Creation of Quality Standards for Annual Reports
- Evaluate Applications of Authorizers of Multi-District Programs
- Establish a review process for Authorizers of Multi-District Programs
- Recommend to the State Board of Education (SBE) a standardized Memorandum of Understanding for use by On-line Programs and School Districts
- Establish reporting requirements for On-line Programs
- Evaluate reports submitted by On-line Programs
- Publish Annual Reports concerning On-line Programs
- Compile Annual Reports and prepare a summary of On-line Programs annually
- Establish a process for tracking complaints concerning On-line Programs
- Provide technical assistance to On-line Programs
- Collect Resources to support quality On-line Programs

22-30.7-104 On-line learning advisory board

Senate Bill 215 creates an On-line Learning Advisory Board. The purpose of the Advisory Board is to make recommendations to the SBE and On-line Division concerning On-line Programs. The recommendations include:

- A standardized process for documenting the number of students enrolled in an On-line Program on Count Day
- A method for summarizing of the student population of each On-line Program
- Measures for determining the value added to student learning by On-line Programs

22-30.7-105 Program criteria – quality standards

Senate Bill 215 gives guidelines and directs the SBE to establish through rule quality standards for On-line Programs. The guidelines for quality standards incorporate all of the categories of quality standards that both the Trujillo Commission and the SBE Task Force recommended. The guidelines for quality standards include:

- An On-line Program's governance, vision, and organization
- Standards-based curricula and data-driven instructional practices
- Technological capacity and support
- Internet safety
- Sound financial practices and resources
- Student academic performance and improvement
- Monitoring and assessing student academic performance and improvement

- Course completion measurements
- Attendance tracking procedures
- Data analysis, management, and reporting
- Guidance counseling
- Engagement of parents and communities in on-line programs
- Provisions for students with special needs, including gifted and talented students and English language learners

22-30.7-106 Certification of multi-district programs – criteria

Senate Bill 215 prescribes criteria for the On-line Division and the SBE to use when certifying and evaluating Multi-District Programs. The goal of the criteria is to ensure that a program has the adequate resources and capacity to administer a Multi-District Program as well as, the degree to which a Multi-District Program is meeting the quality standards. The minimum criteria upon which On-line Programs are evaluated includes:

- The Multi-District Program's vision, mission, and goals
- The Multi-District Program's organizational structure and governance, including governing board and school policies and procedures
- Equitable access for all students
- Curriculum and instruction
- Student academic credit policies
- Student achievement and attendance policies
- Technology and software applications
- Student records policies and procedures
- Student admission and placement policies and procedures
- Student services, including counseling and tutorial support
- Staff, student, and parent handbooks
- Employment and contractor policies and procedures
- Annual budgeting practices
- Facility plans, including any contemplated physical sites
- Risk management
- Data development, analysis, and reporting
- Communication policies and procedures with school districts of residence.

22-30.7-107 Funding

Senate Bill 215 requires that the On-line Division will have 3.5 FTE and be funded by moneys recovered from school districts as a result of student count audits.

- For the 2007/08 school year, all online students - whether enrolled in Single-District or Multi-District Programs - will be funded at the state minimum and must meet eligibility requirements including previous school year attendance at Colorado public school.
- Beginning with the 2008/09 school year, online students – whether enrolled in Single-District or Multi-District Programs – will not face enrollment eligibility requirements.
 - Online students enrolled in a Single-District Program will be funded at the same level as students enrolled in brick and mortar schools.
 - Online students enrolled in a Multi-District Program will receive “online funding” (section 22-54-104 (4.5)).

22-30.7-108 Extracurricular and interscholastic activities

Senate Bill 215 provides that students participating in On-line Programs, unless having been expelled from their previous public school, may participate in extracurricular and interscholastic activities at another public school.

22-30.7-109 On-line programs – reports

Senate Bill 215 requires that the SBE establish through rules an annual reporting process for On-line Programs. The On-line Programs will report to the On-line Division according to the quality standards (section 22-30.7-105). It allows for an intermediate step and corrective action by the On-line Program to comply with quality standards prior to the On-line Division reporting a problem to the State Board of Education. Reporting requirements include:

- An indication of the degree to which the On-line Program has satisfied the quality standards
- The ratio of adults to students at the On-line Program
- The number of teachers employed by the On-line Program who satisfy the requirements for a teacher according to NCLB
- The annual budget for the On-line Program.

22-30.7-110 Reviews of multi-district programs

Senate Bill 215 requires that two years after an On-line Program's initial certification, and every three years thereafter, it shall be reviewed by the On-line Division according to the process and criteria established for certification (section 22-30.7-106). It allows for an intermediate step and corrective action by the On-line Program and Authorizer to comply with certification criteria prior to the On-line Division reporting a problem to the State Board of Education.

22-30.7-111 Learning centers – memoranda of understanding

Senate Bill 215 defines a clear objective MOU process.

- The On-line Program is required to notify each school district in which the on-line program intends to establish a Learning Center. The notification will contain a proposed MOU, with a three year term, that will include the following standards: location, grade levels, projected enrollment, program descriptions, building and safety permits, staffing, compliance statements, contact information, etc.
- The School District may waive its right to an MOU and the Learning Center may open.
- The school district may deny an MOU, the specific grounds for denial are outlined as:
 - 1) the On-line Program does not provide the reasonable documentation that it meets the standards;
 - 2) the School District determines that the On-line Program is contrary to the best interests of the pupils, parents, community or school district.
- School District denial of an MOU may be appealed by the On-line Program to the State Board.
- “Grandfathering”: An On-line Program that is currently using any Learning Center within a School District may continue to operate Learning Centers within such School District until August 1, 2008, without entering into an MOU provided, that they provide notification to each School District, which shall include certain information relating to location, grade levels, projected enrollment, program descriptions, building and safety permits, staffing, compliance statements and contact information.