



# Justice-Engaged Students in Education

HB 24-1216

## Introduction

During the 2024 legislative session, the General Assembly passed and the Governor signed [HB 24-1216](#): Supports for Youth in Juvenile Justice System. This document provides a summary of the legislation.

*The bill defines a justice-engaged student as a student who is involved in the criminal justice system in any capacity, including, but not limited to, adjudication, probation, ticketing, detention, diversion, commitment, or community supervision.*

## Justice-Engaged Student's Bill of Rights

C.R.S. 22-108-103: HB 24-1216 establishes the following bill of rights for justice engaged students.

With respect to education, a justice-engaged student has the right to:

- Provision of alternative solutions to a general education, including, but not limited to, appropriate available alternate education programs.
- Prompt enrollment or re-enrollment no later than 10 business days after the first request to the local education provider, so long as the student is eligible for enrollment, as determined by the local education provider.
- Appropriate credit for coursework completed while justice-engaged, and for that coursework to be applied toward graduation or school continuation.
- A plan for graduation, developed with the justice-engaged student, the student's family, caregiver or advocate and clarify requirements to allow the student to complete the high school graduation requirements at the earliest possible date.  
A clearly defined and documented plan for graduation upon re-entry, re-enrollment, or continuation with a local education provider.
- Privacy, including privacy when related to diversion, probation or questioning about a crime at a local education provider and not in view of the student's peers.
- Protection by the federal "Individuals with Disabilities Act", section 504 of the federal "Rehabilitation Act of 1973", applicable foster care regulations, and the federal "McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act".
- Create evidence of and be evaluated for giftedness.
- Participation in school activities or career readiness pathways in accordance with rules promulgated by the State Board.

## Key Dates

### July 2024 – December 2024:

- CDE to convene an interagency working group regarding data on justice-engaged youth.

### July 2025 – June 2026:

- CDE develops and makes available guidance and processes for districts to support justice engaged students.

### September 1, 2026:

- CDE must contract with an organization to run a statewide justice-engaged student hotline.



## Interagency Working Group

HB 24-1216 establishes a working group comprised of members from the Department of Education, the Department of Human Services, the Division of Youth Services, and the Judicial Department. The interagency working group must review and make recommendations on the following categories:

- Criteria and mechanism for identifying the number of justice-engaged students;
- Indicators of and contributing factors to academic attainment;
- Data-sharing agreements, regulatory and statutory changes, and additional funding or system enhancement required for implementation; and
- Any other recommendations relevant to better understanding the outcomes for justice-engaged youth.

As a part of its process, the working group must consult with local education providers to determine what data is needed to support these recommendations.

## Educational Support for Justice-Engaged Students

With engagement from stakeholders, CDE is required to create public guidance that aligns with the justice-engaged student's bill of rights including:

- Guidance in state attendance laws;
- Cases pertaining to education as a protected property interest;
- Re-entry best practices; and
- The credit transfer process and requirements of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Each local education provider must complete the following:

- Prominently publish an explanation of services and resources available for justice-engaged students on their website.
- Designate one person to serve as point-of-contact for justice-engaged students and their families or caregivers. A CDE staff member may support small and rural districts. The point person must:
  - Read and understand the guidance developed and provided by CDE.
  - Be knowledgeable about alternative education options and wraparound services.
  - Respond to families within three days of inquiry.
  - Actively engage with students and their families to explore alternative solutions prior to denial of admission. If denying admission, referrals shall be made to the statewide hotline.
  - Work with a team of professionals to ensure a pathway to graduation consistent with the legislation.

## Statewide Hotline and State Board of Education Rules

CDE must complete the following:

- Contract with an entity to create a statewide hotline for justice-engaged students, families and caregivers, justice system personnel, and education personnel. The entity must track the types of calls received and submit an annual written report regarding the calls received and support provided.
- Support the process for the State Board of Education to promulgate rules to establish a process and to ensure that youth in custody have access to quality educational programs and receive credits for any work completed upon the youth's return to the traditional educational environment.



## Other Statutory Changes

The following additional provisions were included in the bill:

- C.R.S. 22-108-106: The State Board must establish a process and ensure that youth in custody have access to quality educational programs and receive credits for any work completed upon the youth's return to the traditional educational environment.
- C.R.S. 22-108-107: CDE must provide guidance to local education providers on how to allow justice-engaged students to participate in school activities.
- [C.R.S. 19-2.5-303](#): In the Duty of Officer section, the bill adds a provision encouraging the court to take into account the student's education progress toward graduation.
- [C.R.S. 19-2.5-306](#): The bill adds additional considerations to the judicial process to support justice-engaged students in remaining at school.

**If you have questions regarding the implementation of this bill, please contact us using the information below.**

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