



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

# **Accountability for Alternative Education Campuses**

## **Policy Guidance**

**Colorado Department of Education**  
**Updated: August 11, 2020**

# Table of Contents

[Overview](#)

[Calendar of AEC Accountability Processes](#)

[Application and Renewal for Designation as an Alternative Education Campus](#)

[Selection of Measures Data Collection](#)

[Alternative Education Campus School Performance Framework](#)

## Appendices

[Appendix A: Links for AEC Data Collections](#)

[Appendix B: Defining Over-Age and Under-Credit](#)

# Overview

## ***Purpose of this Guidance***

This guidance document describes the process by which a public school may apply to be designated as an Alternative Education Campus and the methods by which the Department will evaluate the performance of Alternative Education Campuses. This guidance document is updated as policies regarding Alternative Education Campuses evolve.

## ***Accountability History***

Below is a brief history of Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) in Colorado:

- **2002:** C.R.S. 22-7-604.5 was constituted establishing the current definition of Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) that we largely still use today in Colorado. Originally, this law was written to exclude AECs from the School Accountability Reports (SARs), which were first created in the 2000-01 school year.
- **2008:** The Colorado Coalition of Alternative Education Campuses (CCAEC) was asked by the Associate Commissioner to provide a proposal for what an alternative framework could look like. The CCAEC surveyed AECs and held multiple stakeholder meetings to develop the proposal. This provided the basic framework for what is used today. The following year, after more research and focus groups were conducted to standardize the AEC SPF, resulting in what is currently in place.
- **2009:** SB 09-163, the Colorado Education Accountability Act, provided foundation for an aligned accountability system. Through this Act it was determined that AECs, as well as all other specialized public schools, were no longer exempt from state accountability.
- **2011:** Alternative Education Campuses received their first School Performance Framework with the four performance indicators: Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, Student Engagement, and Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness. All AECs received an Improvement Plan for that year unless otherwise recommended by their district/authorizer.
- **2011:** AECs were allowed to select optional measures to include in the AEC School Performance Framework.
- **2015:** HB15-1350 created the AEC accountability work group to review existing measures and propose new accountability measures for AECs.
- **2015:** Due to the change in administration of state assessments, accountability for AECs was paused and 2015 school performance frameworks were not released
- **2016:** Based on the AEC work group recommendations, HB16-1429, alters the percentage of high-risk students in an AEC from 95% to 90% high-risk and modifies several high-risk indicators for qualification as an AEC.
- **2020:** In response to the evolving conditions under COVID-19, the department is pausing the state and federal accountability systems in the 2020-21 school year, therefore the 2020 AEC school performance frameworks will not be released. More information regarding accountability for the 2020-21 school year may be found here: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/20-21pause>

## AEC Designation

### NOTE ON CHANGE FOR 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

*In response to the evolving conditions under COVID-19, the department is pausing the state and federal accountability systems in the 2020-21 school year. CDE accountability systems were paused during the 2019-20 school year due to the suspension of mandatory state testing in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. The AEC Renewal Application data collection was also suspended at this time. Given the suspension of the data collection, CDE is carrying forward the AEC status of a school which received a designation as an AEC in 2018-19 and re-applied for this status in 2019-20. More information regarding the accountability pause can be found here: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/accountability/20-21pause>*

Districts may apply to CDE for a school in their district to be designated as an Alternative Education Campus (AEC), which allows them to be accredited using the Alternative Education Campus School Performance Framework. The designation process requires that the school meet the criteria as outlined in C.R.S. 22-7-604.5. Schools may receive AEC status for one year, and each August the State Board of Education votes to approve new and renewal requests for alternative education campuses. This process is detailed later in this guidance document.

Note:

### **AEC School Performance Framework (SPF)**

The Colorado Alternative Education Campus School Performance Framework (AEC SPF) evaluates schools who are approved by the State Board of Education to become an AEC on Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness, and Student Engagement. Within these performance indicators, AECs are accountable for many of the same measures and metrics that traditional schools are, but the cut-points have been adjusted to be more appropriate for AEC student populations. AEC SPFs also include some different measures, like completion rate, for all schools. In addition, the AEC SPF allows for districts to submit supplemental optional measures for inclusion, if approved by the Department. New measures must be submitted to CDE for negotiation by May. Supplemental optional measures must be submitted to CDE for consideration through Data Pipeline no later than June 30th. Finally, districts may also choose to submit their own district-wide school performance framework for AECs, permitted it meets the minimum state requirements and is approved by the Department. For specific information about the cut points and norms for all state required measures used on the 2019 AEC SPF, please refer to the [2019 Annotated AEC SPF \(PDF\)](#). For specific information about cut points and norms for all optional measures included in the 2018 AEC SPF, please refer to [Optional Measure Cut Point Lookup document](#). The Calculation Guidance for Alternative Education Campuses will be updated with cut points and norms for the state required measures for the 2019 AEC SPF when that information is available.

Note: Due to the accountability pause in 2019-20, 2020 school and district performance frameworks will not be released. Due to the absence of accountability frameworks, the 2019-20 optional measures data collection was suspended. More information regarding the accountability pause can be found here:

## Comparison of indicators by SPF type:

AEC SPF	Traditional SPF
Academic Achievement	Academic Achievement*
Academic Growth	Academic Growth*
Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness	Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness
Student Engagement	^

\*Includes disaggregated groups measures on the Traditional SPF, but not on the AEC SPF.

^ Indicator is on the AEC SPF but not on the Traditional SPF

## Accountability Implications

Like traditional schools, AECs receive a plan type assignment of a Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, or Turnaround. The improvement planning expectations and accountability consequences are also the same for AECs as they are for traditional schools. Under SB 09-163, the “Colorado Education Accountability Act”, if a public school is required to implement a priority improvement plan or turnaround plan for 5 consecutive school years, the state board must recommend that the public school's school district or the institute take one of several actions specified in statute with regard to the public school.

## Calendar of AEC Accountability Processes

School Year	Month Year	District/Authorizer Action	CDE Action
2020-2021	January 2021	Schools applying for the first time AEC Designation notify CDE of intent to apply for AEC Designation	
	March 2021		AEC Renewal/Application Data Pipeline collection opens to Districts/Authorizers at beginning of month.
	April 2021	District/Authorizer applies for <a href="#">AEC Status or AEC Renewal</a> for schools for 2021-2022 school year based on prior year’s data through Data Pipeline.	AEC Renewal/Application Data Pipeline collection opens to Districts/Authorizers at closes at end of month.
	May 2021		Actual Measures Data Pipeline collection opens for Districts/Authorizers at beginning of month.
	June 2021	AECs wishing to submit optional measures for consideration for inclusion on the 2021 AEC SPF must do so through the Actual Measures Data Pipeline collection by the end of month.	
	August 2021		AEC status is approved by State Board of Education and <a href="#">announced to schools</a> .

		Optional measures are approved by CDE and incorporated into 2021 AEC SPF calculations.
September 2021		Preliminary release of 2021 AEC SPF plan types to Districts/Authorizers.
October 2021	Districts/Authorizers submit October Count data to CDE (this is used to pre-populate sections of AEC Renewal/Application Data Pipeline collection for the 2022-2023 designation collection).	
December 2021		Final release of 2021 AEC SPF plan types to schools and districts; <a href="#">this information is publicly available</a> .

Note: These are draft timelines; if an accountability pause year is announced for 2020-2021, this document will be updated. In addition to these timelines, AEC schools should also be aware of [UIP timelines](#).

## The Application and Renewal for Designation as an Alternative Education Campus Form: Understanding AEC Designation

Month/ Year	Newly opened AEC (Application)	Existing AEC (Renewal of Status)
<b>August 2020</b>	District/Authorizer and/or AEC School collects information about entering students' high-risk status and keeps that information secure per district/authorizer policies.	District/Authorizer and/or AEC School collects information about entering students' high-risk status and keeps that information secure per district/authorizer policies.
<b>September 2020</b>		
<b>October 2020</b>		
<b>November 2020</b>		
<b>December 2020</b>		
<b>January 2021</b>	District/Authorizer notifies CDE of intent to apply for AEC designation by January 15 <sup>th</sup> ( <a href="mailto:sanders_b@cde.state.co.us">sanders_b@cde.state.co.us</a> ).	
<b>February 2021</b>	CDE pre-populates Data Pipeline with applicant school information.	CDE pre-populates Data Pipeline with renewal school information.
<b>April 2021</b>	Districts/Authorizers complete AEC designation application through Data Pipeline.	Districts/Authorizers complete AEC designation renewal application through Data Pipeline.
<b>May 2021</b>		

<b>June 2021</b>	CDE audits AEC applications. District/Authorizer may receive site visit given it is a new application. CDE makes recommendation to State Board.	CDE audits AEC applications.
<b>July 2021</b>		District/Authorizer may receive site visit if CDE has additional questions. CDE makes recommendation to State Board.
<b>August 2021</b>	State Board votes on AEC designations for 2021-2022.	State Board votes on AEC designations for 2021-2022.
<b>September 2021</b>	Final 2021 AEC SPF plan types are released.	Final 2021 AEC SPF plan types are released.

Schools must apply to be considered an Alternative Education Campus (AEC). The application/renewal process is in place in order for schools to demonstrate that they meet the criteria established in C.R.S. 22-7-604.5 and 1 CCR 301-57 which defines an Alternative Education Campus. Schools that meet these criteria are evaluated on the AEC School Performance Framework (SPF) instead of the Traditional SPF.

## ***Designation Timeline***

Per the table above, schools in their first year of operation go through a similar process that currently existing and established AEC schools do. Schools cannot open with AEC status already in place because AEC status is derived from the population of students served by the school. Thus, the school has to be open and serving students before the school can be designated as an AEC. It is best practice for districts that are interested in opening up a new AEC to apply for AEC designation during the first year of operation. The annual timeline for this process is to notify CDE of interest in becoming an AEC by January 15<sup>th</sup> of each year and completing the AEC application as a “new designation”. Districts that wish to receive an AEC SPF in the first year of designation for the school they would like to become an AEC may declare this through Pipeline. Similarly, if a district would not like to receive an AEC SPF in the first year of designation for the school they would like to become an AEC, this must also be declared through Pipeline. Please contact B Sanders via [Sanders\\_B@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Sanders_B@cde.state.co.us) if a district has questions about the AEC designation process.

The designation process, which is a mandated annual renewal process for every AEC in the state per C.R.S. 22-7-604.5, essentially requires us to look backwards at the student body’s characteristics to determine how to evaluate that school’s performance in the coming year. If the school meets certain criteria, as established in state law, then the school is eligible to be evaluated on the AEC SPF.

## ***Designation Requirements***

In order to be considered an Alternative Education Campus, a school must meet all of the following requirements as outlined in C.R.S. 22-7-604.5:

- Is an autonomous public school
- Has an administrator who is not under the supervision of an administrator at another school
- Has a separate budget from any other public school
- Has nontraditional methods of instructional delivery
- Has a public process to ensure accountability

- Serves one of the following student populations *at the time of the most recent October Count administration*:
  - All students have severe limitations which preclude appropriate administration of state assessments pursuant to §22-7-409, C.R.S.;
  - All students attend the school only on a part-time basis and come from other public schools where the part-time students are counted in the enrollment of the other public school; or
  - More than 90% of students have either an Individualized Education Program (IEP) pursuant to §22-20-108, C.R.S. and/or meet the definition of a “high-risk” student as illustrated below
- Has a specialized mission to serve special needs or at-risk population

The state of Colorado defines “high-risk” students as those who:

- Dropout – student has dropped out of school.
- Habitually Truant – student has at least four excused or unexcused absences from public school in any one month or at least ten excused or unexcused absences from public school in any one year (note the definition of “habitually truant” in C.R.S. 22-7-604.5 differs slightly from C.R.S. 22-33-107(l) as there are no age restrictions and includes excused absences)
- Child Abuse or Neglect – student has a documented history of child abuse or neglect, and/or involvement in the foster care system, and/or has been an adjudicated ward of the court.
- Parental Loss – Student has parents or guardians in prison or on parole or probation and/or has experienced the loss of a parent or sibling.
- Mental/Behavioral Health Issue – Student has a documented history of a mental or behavioral health issue and/or has experienced significant trauma.
- Gang Involvement – Student has documented history of personal street gang involvement or has immediate family members with documented histories of street gang involvement.
- Drugs or Alcohol – Student has a documented history of personal drugs or alcohol use or has parents or guardians with documented dependencies on drugs or alcohol.
- Domestic Violence – Student has a documented history of domestic violence in the immediate family.
- Pregnant or Parenting – Student is under the age of twenty and is a parent or pregnant woman.
- Repeat Suspensions – Student has a documented history of repeated school suspensions.
- Over Age & Under Credit – Student is over traditional school age for their grade level and lack adequate credit hours for their grade level (See Appendix C).
- Homeless Student—Student is homeless as defined by §22-1-102.5 (2), C.R.S.
- Migrant Student—Student is migrant as defined by §22-23-103 (2), C.R.S.
- Juvenile Delinquent—Student is committed to the department of human services or in detention awaiting disposition of charges



## ***Designation Data***

### **Pre-Populated Data**

CDE will pre-populate information in Data Pipeline at the student level for the October Count population of students at a given school using the most recent Student October, Student December, and Student End of Year data submissions. These are fields that come directly from the school's data submissions, and the data as submitted in those collections is used as verification for inclusion in a given high-risk category:

- District and school information
- Student's SASID
- Student's Date of Birth
- Student's Grade
- Student's Anticipated Year of Graduation (AYG)
- If the student is on an IEP
- If the student has been committed or detained
- If the student has previously dropped out
- If the student has been expelled
- If the student is a migrant
- If the student is homeless

If there was an error with your school's October or December Count submission, and there are issues with your pre-populated data, you may designate a given student as Other High Risk in your Data Pipeline submission and provide an additional data file with the corrected information to CDE via Syncplicity. If you believe a student is not marked in one of the pre-screened high-risk categories above, but should have been, please refer to the Documentation Requirements for High Risk Students document available here for the data sources that can be used to identify students by each category: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/datapipeline/per-aec>. Contact B Sanders ([sanders\\_b@cde.state.co.us](mailto:sanders_b@cde.state.co.us)) for more information.

### **School Provided Data**

Several of the "high-risk" designations are not supplied in the October or December Count student submission file are not able to be pre-populated by CDE. These fields can be designated by districts based on intake information and documentation gathered about students while students are enrolled at the Alternative Education Campus. Please refer to the Documentation Requirements for High Risk Students document available here for the data sources that can be used to identify students by each category: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/datapipeline/per-aec>. CDE has found that best practice is to develop a standard intake procedure that goes through AEC high-risk factors for all students entering the school and develops documentation on these students' high-risk factors. Such documentation may be helpful in tailoring engagement methods for these students and may also be useful when it comes time to complete the school's application/renewal template.

Those high-risk categories that only a district can identify are:

- Pregnant or Parenting

- Domestic Violence
- Drugs or Alcohol
- Gang Involvement
- Mental/Behavioral Health Issue
- Parental Loss
- Child Abuse or Neglect or in Foster Care
- Habitually Truant
- Justified Expulsion
- Over Age/Under-Credited

### ***Exception for AECs not meeting 90% High Risk***

In cases where a district would like to submit an AEC application for one or more of its schools and the application does not meet the criteria outlined in C.R.S. 22-7-604.5, particularly regarding the 90% high risk criteria, districts may submit the application to CDE by the deadline and the department will take into account one or more of the following considerations stated below when recommending the submission to the State Board of Education. CDE requests that districts contact the department prior to submitting the application(s) to discuss all relevant options.

If a district contacts CDE to pursue one of the options below, the process will be as follows:

- The district will complete the high-risk identification of their student data to the best of their ability and submit that data to the AEC Renewal/Application Data Pipeline collection by the collection deadline.
- CDE staff will investigate one of the options below on behalf of the district.
- If one of the options below brings the district up to 90% high risk identification, then CDE will inform the district and recommend approval of AEC designation status to the State Board of Education.
- If option 1 or 2 below does not bring the school up to 90% high risk identification, then CDE will inform the district, and suggest the district apply for AEC designation in the following year. In that year, retroactive AEC designation can be sought, as outlined below.

Please note that the small N size options are restricted to AECs which serve 30 students or less based on a given October Count dataset.

### **Option 1- Small N**

CDE cannot recommend AECs for approval to the state board if the AEC does not serve at least 90% IEP and/or high-risk students, or if the school is not 100% part-time enrolled students. AECs not meeting 90% IEP/high-risk criteria due to a small number of students enrolled in the school may be recommended with less than 90% IEP/high-risk. Small AECs can be granted a waiver if one student equals more than 5% of the student population. In this instance, AECs with less than 20 students may be

permitted to have one student non-IEP/high-risk even though this accounts for more than 5% of the total student population.

### **Option 2- Small N and 3 Year Average**

CDE cannot recommend AECs for approval to the state board if the AEC does not serve at least 90% IEP and/or high-risk students, or if the school is not 100% part-time enrolled students. AECs not meeting 90% IEP/high-risk criteria due to a small number of students enrolled in the school may be recommended with less than 90% IEP/high-risk. If small AECs still cannot meet 90% IEP/high-risk even after using Option 2, as stated above, small AECs would have the option of using three years of enrollment data. In this instance, AECs with less than 100 students over three years may be permitted to have less than 90% of the school's population IEP/high-risk as long as the three year average is 90% or higher.

### **Option 3: Retroactive Alternative Education Campus (AEC) Designation.**

Districts who have applied for a first-time AEC designation for one or more of their schools for the current school year may request retroactive AEC designation for the previous school year based on the data submitted via the AEC application submitted for the current school year, if the school is approved by the state board of education at the August state board meeting for the current school year. The district may submit a request on behalf of the school to receive AEC status for the previous school year and state the district would like the school to receive a final AEC school performance framework for the current school year.

It should be noted that in cases where a district is applying on behalf of a school for AEC designation after AEC designation has lapsed, and if the lapse in status is related to concerns with data quality and/or integrity, that such a school would not be eligible for retroactive status. In such a case, the school would need to reapply as an AEC, and they would not receive an AEC plan type until the next accountability cycle. For example, if a school's AEC designation lapsed in 2021 due in part or in whole to data concerns, then that school would be eligible to apply for AEC designation in 2022. If the school receives AEC designation in 2022, their official framework in 2022 would be a traditional SPF, and they would receive an AEC SPF in 2023.

# Optional Measures Data Pipeline Collections: Selecting Measures for Evaluating the Performance of Alternative Education Campuses

## *Selection of Measures Timeline*

The Selection of Measures process, which includes participation in the AEC Actual Measures and Data Pipeline Collection is currently the process whereby CDE accepts and incorporates local measure data into the Alternative Education Campus School Performance Frameworks (AEC SPFs) for both schools with an AEC designation already in place, and schools which are receiving an AEC designation for the first time,. Please note that the inclusion of local data or measures is no longer an option for districts to submit for the AEC SPF for the body of evidence condition through the Request to Reconsider process; therefore, submission of these local measures through the Selection of Measures process (the Actual Measures and Data Pipeline Collection) must occur before the frameworks are generated.

### *Returning Schools with an AEC Designation*

In addition to the AEC Application and Renewal Form, if a district/authorizer wishes their AEC school(s) to be eligible for AEC accountability, then districts/authorizers may also submit supplemental optional measures data through Data Pipeline or opt out of the actual measures pipeline collection by June 30 of each year. Information about the optional measures collection can be found here: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/datapipeline/per-aec>

Links for the Actual Measures Data Pipeline collection are provided in Appendix A. Newly opened AECs, where the district/authorizer has submitted an AEC designation application but has not yet received an official AEC status designation by the state board of education, are allowed to submit optional measures data through this pipeline collection during the same year they submit their first application for AEC designation.

By August, CDE will review and approve or deny the selected supplemental optional measures, metrics and cut-points.

### *Schools Receiving an AEC Designation for the First Time*

Districts who are pursuing AEC designation for one or more of their schools for the first time will submit the AEC Designation application at the same time as their schools which already have an AEC Designation.

Districts pursuing AEC designation for one or more of their schools for the first time, and are granted AEC designation for the next school year by the state board of education each August. The new AEC will receive an AEC SPF for the first time that fall, unless the district choses otherwise through Pipeline during this collection.

## ***Selection of Measures Requirements***

Optional measures can be submitted for consideration to CDE through the actual measures data pipeline collection. The following are required elements of the actual measures data pipeline collection submission:

- optional supplemental measures and supporting aggregated data that the district wishes to include on their schools' AEC SPF reports,
- signatures of the school principal, district superintendent or authorizer chair, and the local board president, as evidence of agreement by the school and the district/authorizer as to the school's selected AEC measures, metrics, and cut-points and verification of the accuracy of the data submitted.

Districts/authorizers are responsible for working with their AEC schools to review and select appropriate supplemental measures, and for reporting accurate and complete results to CDE. Where the selected measure requires a school or its district or authorizer to gather data that is not otherwise routinely submitted to the Department, the school and its authorizer are responsible for the cost of gathering such data. They must gather such data in a reliable fashion and must describe in their submission the methods used to generate the data. This data is also subject to CDE monitoring.

The Department's intention is to initiate and foster a process of research, development, and continuous improvement. Thus, the Department encourages the ongoing effort to develop rigorous measures that are well-calculated to capture the success of Alternative Education Campuses in fulfilling their missions.

# The Alternative Education Campus School Performance Framework: Evaluating the Performance of Alternative Education Campuses

## ***Evaluation Process***

Each August, the Department will produce a traditional Colorado School Performance Framework (SPF) report for every school in the state. School Performance Framework reports will be preliminarily issued to districts and the Institute for all schools, including all Alternative Education Campuses (AECs). For schools that completed the AEC Designation collection by May of each year and approved as AECs by the State Board in August of each year, the Department also will generate a preliminary AEC School Performance Framework report each September. For those districts which submitted supplemental optional measure data through Data Pipeline, that data will be included on the AEC SPF for those schools if that data is accepted by CDE.

In November, the Department makes a final recommendation to the State Board regarding district accreditation ratings and, in December, the State Board approves school plan type assignments. The preliminary reports notify districts and the Institute of the type of plan type—Performance, Improvement, Priority Improvement, or Turnaround—each public school, including all Alternative Education Campuses, shall be required to develop. Priority Improvement and Turnaround school unified improvement plans must be submitted to the Department in January. All plans must be submitted in April for publication on [SchoolView.org](https://www.schoolview.org).

## ***Guiding Principles for AEC Accountability***

The purpose of the AEC School Performance Framework is to account for the special population which AECs serve, including:

- To differentiate among more and less effective AECs (On the 2019 SPFs, 93% AECs would have earned a rating of Turnaround or Priority Improvement on the traditional SPF).
- To represent the performance of 12<sup>th</sup> grade AEC students currently not represented by most traditional state academic achievement and growth measures as most AECs serve more students in the upper high school grades than lower grades.
- To provide an AEC-relevant student-level benchmarks for common statewide measures. These measures are normed against only AECs statewide.
- To provide a common understanding of quality among AECs for a given indicator on the AEC using the indicator level ratings.
- To provide an overall rating for an AEC which is meaningful and reflective of the actual quality of that AEC.

Characteristics of an optional measure for inclusion in a school's AEC SPF framework are as follows:

- Measure is representative of the entire AEC population (required for Achievement and Growth and encouraged for Student Engagement and Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness). This can include all enrolled students, or all students at a particular grade level. An optional measure should not represent a sub-set of students, i.e. students that share a particular trait (like regular

attendance) or are taking a specific course, teacher, etc., unless a specific and robust rationale is provided and accepted by CDE.

- Measure is aligned with the mission of the AEC, and indicates whether the AEC is successfully serving its target population and fulfilling its mission-statement goals.
- Measure provides valid and reliable test forms and student scores:
  - For vendor-created assessments or surveys:
    - Adequate documentation is available showing the assessment aligns with the Colorado Academic Standards.
    - The measure meets technical (scoring, scaling, and growth) requirements for validity and reliability.
  - For locally created assessments or surveys:
    - Documentation regarding test design/item writing processes showing alignment with the Colorado Academic Standards and research-based test development method.
    - Information on scoring rubrics, student score distributions, performance descriptors and cut-scores and trends over time are also necessary.
- Measure represents an accurate and meaningful definition of student performance or outcomes that can be confidently mapped to a common AEC-appropriate expectation of student success.
- Measure provides consistent student and school-level performance inferences across districts. AECs using the same measure must use the same expectations of student and/or school performance as all other Colorado AECs.
- Measure is instructionally or programmatically relevant, especially in the case of measures requiring additional assessment time or teacher resources.
- CDE provides guidance and/or documentation to help districts choose among optional measures and ensure consistent and accurate calculations and submissions of data.

## ***Alternative Education Campus School Performance Framework Requirements***

The Colorado Alternative Education Campus School Performance Framework (AEC SPF) includes four performance indicators: Academic Achievement, Academic Growth, Student Engagement, and Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness.

Each of the performance indicators are weighted and include measures, metrics and cut-points that are required by the Department where sufficient data exist at the school. The cut-points translate into ratings of either *does not meet*, *approaching*, *meets*, or *exceeds* minimum state expectations. The cut-points for the AEC SPF derive from the baselined normative performance of AECs which can be found in the Calculation Guidance for Alternative Education Campuses. For measures with state-required metrics and cut-points, the Department will provide the results for each AEC and their AEC percentile performance.

The table below summarizes the weights, state-required measures, metrics, and cut-points. All data is based on three years of data where available.

Performance Indicator	State-Required Measures and Metrics*		State-Required Cut-Points*
	All EMH levels combined		
<b>Academic Achievement</b>	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CMAS statewide assessment) mean scale score – English Language Arts, Math</li> <li>• CMAS Science (statewide assessment) mean scale score</li> <li>• PSAT mean scale score – Evidence Based Reading and Writing, Math</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Does not meet AEC norms:</i> Below the 40<sup>th</sup> percentile</li> <li>• <i>Approaching AEC norms:</i> At/above 40<sup>th</sup> percentile</li> <li>• <i>Meets AEC norms:</i> At/above 60<sup>th</sup> percentile</li> <li>• <i>Exceeds AEC norms:</i> At/above 90<sup>th</sup> percentile</li> </ul>
<b>Academic Growth</b>	35%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CMAS (statewide assessment) median growth percentiles in English Language Arts and Math</li> <li>• PSAT to SAT growth median growth percentiles in Evidence Based Reading and Writing, Math</li> </ul>	
<b>Student Engagement</b>	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance rate</li> <li>• Truancy rate</li> </ul>	
<b>Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness</b>	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best-of Completion rate (all students)</li> <li>• Dropout rate</li> <li>• Colorado SAT mean scale score in Evidence Based Reading and Writing, Math</li> </ul>	

Additionally, districts or the authorizer may request that the Department include optional measures approved by CDE for each of the performance indicators on its AEC SPF reports. At a minimum, the supplemental optional measures must:

- fall under one of performance indicators that are in the Colorado AEC SPF;
- meet the criteria outlined below under each of the performance indicators.

The Department reserves the right to remove or change measures, required or optional, as needed to assure the integrity and quality of school evaluations.



# Submission Requirements for Measures

## NOTE ON CHANGE FOR 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

Due to the accountability pause in 2019-2020, no 2020 school or district performance frameworks will be produced. Since no accountability frameworks will be released, the 2019-2020 optional measures data collection was suspended. As a result, this section has been put on hold for the 2021 Selection of Measures process for the 2020-2021 school year due to the lack of data available. Districts/authorizers have been notified that this policy will resume in 2022.

### Background

In the 2012-13 school year, CDE, along with external stakeholders, reviewed the data and indicators included in the Alternative Education Campus School Performance Frameworks (AEC SPFs). This review found that the AEC SPFs do not always represent a complete picture of school performance for the four performance indicators: Student Academic Achievement, Student Longitudinal Academic Growth, Student Engagement, and Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness. Several AECs did not have state measures in these areas and the district chose not to submit supplemental measures. As a result, the understanding of their performance was quite limited.

CDE implemented a policy change for 2013-14 which encouraged districts to submit supplemental measures for their AECs in each indicator if statewide assessments are not available and sufficient data is potentially available (i.e. the student count is greater than 16 students for Academic Achievement, Student Engagement, and Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness, or the student count is greater than 20 students for Academic Growth). If the district did not choose to submit optional measures for any applicable indicators, the AEC was lowered one school plan type on the final school performance framework. This policy change was suspended when state accountability resumed in 2016 due to the lack of three years of longitudinal state-level achievement and growth assessment data as a result of the accountability hold in 2015.

### Changes in Submission Requirements

As of the 2018-19 school year there will be three years of longitudinal data available. This policy will be re-instated in a modified form. CDE reviewed the data and indicators included in the AEC SPFs for the 2017-18 school year and, although the number of AECs that do not have state measures in performance indicators has declined from 2012-13, there are still a number of AECs missing academic achievement and growth indicators.

Performance Indicator	Indicators missing for the 2012 School Year Frameworks	Indicators missing for the 2019 School Year Frameworks
-----------------------	--	--

Academic Achievement	14 of 78 (17.9%)	3 of 91 (3.3%)
Academic Growth	25 of 78 (32.1%)	2 of 89* (2.3%)
Student Engagement	5 of 78 (6.4%)	0 of 91 (0.0%)
Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness	4 of 78 (5.1%)	0 of 91 (0.0%)
<p><i>*Schools serving only part-time students are exempted from reporting growth data since that data is reported through the school at which a given student is primarily enrolled.</i></p>		

This policy will be implemented for the 2021-2022 school year. Specific focus is paid to the academic achievement and academic growth indicators, which are the most likely to be missing state measures. On the 2022 AEC SPF, any AEC with an indicator with no measures (optional or required) will be lowered one school plan type on the final school performance framework. Therefore, CDE encourages districts to submit optional measure data in academic achievement and academic growth on behalf of schools to prevent plan types from being lowered one rating.

The only exceptions allowed for this policy are:

1. N Count: If sufficient local data is not available due to the small size of the school and, even when tabulating three years of local assessment data, the student count is not at least 16 students for Academic Achievement, Student Engagement, and Postsecondary & Workforce Readiness, or the student count at least 20 students for Academic Growth. *NOTE: this exemption is intended to give schools enough time to build out assessment suites that can be used for Achievement and/or Growth. Therefore, a school cannot receive this exemption more than three consecutive times.*
2. Part-time institutions: Schools designated as Alternative Education Campuses under C.R.S. 22-7-604.5(1)(a)(VI)(C) "Serving students who attend on a part-time basis and who come from other public schools where the part-time students are counted in the enrollment of the other public school..." and 100% of the students at the institution are enrolled part-time.

In preparation for planning for the 2021-2022 school year, districts were notified if one or more of their AECs did not meet this requirement for the 2020-2021 school year. Technical assistance is available to districts and their AECs concerning what additional data may be submitted, how to analyze the information and how to use it for both the frameworks and the improvement planning process.

More detailed information about the policy change can be found here:  
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/Accountability/StateAccountabilityAECs.asp>.

The sections below provide guidance specific to each performance indicator. For detailed guidance, refer to the [Calculation Guidance for Alternative Education Campus Measures](#).

## Academic Achievement

Student Achievement on a standardized assessment will be measured on the statewide assessments, if sufficient data are available. CDE encourages districts to submit supplemental measures for their AECs in each indicator area if statewide assessments are not available and sufficient data is available (i.e. the student count is greater than 16 students). Additionally, AECs with state assessment data may request to include additional alternative standardized assessment data, if it meets the above criteria.

Assessments other than the statewide assessments must be aligned with the academic standards adopted by the local school board or Institute pursuant to § 22-7-1013, C.R.S. (CAP4K). Optional supplemental measures may include reliable and valid interim assessments, meaning those interim assessments that are nationally- or state-normed and are capable of measuring progress on the standards adopted by the local school board or Institute pursuant to § 22-7-1013, C.R.S. (CAP4K) (e.g., Northwest Evaluation Association’s Measures of Academic Progress, “NWEA MAP”, SCANTRON, Galileo, the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT), TABE, Renaissance Learning’s STAR assessments, Accuplacer Diagnostic, or Acuity).

The [Calculation Guidance for Alternative Education Campuses](#) lists the assessments for which the Department has provided approved metrics and cut-points for *exceeding*, *meeting*, *approaching*, and *not meeting* Alternative Education Campus norms. These include: CMAS, NWEA MAP, Scantron, Acuity, Galileo, WRAT, TABE, STAR, and Accuplacer Diagnostic.

If a measure does not have state defined metrics and cut-points, the Alternative Education Campus and its district/authorizer shall submit proposed metrics and cut-points and provide a research-based rationale for the selection of these metrics and cut-points. For further details concerning pre-approved metrics and cut-points for each of these assessments, please see Appendix D.

In order to be included on the AEC SPF, state required and optional measures in Academic Achievement must have an N size of at least 16 students; data can be aggregated over a 3 year time period.

## Academic Growth

Student longitudinal academic growth will be measured on the statewide assessments, if sufficient data are available. CDE encourages districts to submit supplemental measures for their AECs in each indicator area if statewide assessments are not available and sufficient data is available (i.e. the student count is greater than 20 students). Additionally, AECs with state growth data may request to include additional student longitudinal academic growth data, if it meets the above criteria and the student count is greater than 20 students over 3 years. The measures of student longitudinal academic growth must be consistent with the measures set forth in § 22-11-204 (2), C.R.S. Optional supplemental measures may include:

1. Norm-referenced growth on reliable and valid interim assessments, meaning those interim assessments that are nationally- or state-normed and are capable of measuring progress on the standards adopted by the local school board or Institute pursuant to § 22-7-1013, C.R.S. (CAP4K); or
2. Criterion-referenced growth on reliable and valid interim assessments, meaning those interim assessments that are nationally- or state-normed and are capable of measuring progress on the standards adopted by the local school board or Institute pursuant to § 22-7-1013, C.R.S. (CAP4K).

The [Calculation Guidance for Alternative Education Campuses](#) lists the assessments for which the Department has provided approved metrics and cut-points for Academic Growth for *exceeding*, *meeting*, *approaching*, and *not meeting* Alternative Education Campus norms. These include: CMAS PARCC, NWEA MAP, Scantron, Acuity, Galileo, WRAT, TABE, STAR, Accuplacer Diagnostic, and WIDA ACCESS.

If a measure does not have state defined metrics and cut-points, the Alternative Education Campus and its district/authorizer shall submit proposed metrics and cut-points and provide a research-based rationale for the selection of these metrics and cut-points. For further details concerning pre-approved metrics and cut-points for each of these assessments, please see Appendix D.

In order to be included on the AEC SPF, state required and optional measures in Academic Growth must have an N size of at least 20 students; data can be aggregated over a 3 year time period.

## Student Engagement

Student engagement will be measured by the school's attendance rate (average daily attendance) and truancy rate, if sufficient data are available, and may also be measured using other measures selected by the Alternative Education Campus and its district/authorizer and approved by the Department. Online schools must have a definition and calculation for attendance such that metrics for all attendance measures in the Safety and Discipline Indicator collection are reported. Attendance policies should be communicated in the parent/student handbook. Guidance on how to calculate attendance in an online setting can be found here:

[http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/onlinelearning/download/ol\\_attendance\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.cde.state.co.us/sites/default/files/documents/onlinelearning/download/ol_attendance_guidance.pdf).

Optional supplemental measures of student engagement may include:

1. Re-engagement rate, consistent with the re-engagement rate defined by the State Board in 1 CCR 301-84;
2. Returning student rate; and/or
3. Pre-and post-scores on reliable, research-based psychosocial instruments reflecting educationally significant psychological, behavioral or attitudinal change in enrolled students.

The [Calculation Guidance for Alternative Education Campuses](#) lists the measures for which the Department has provided approved metrics and cut-points for *exceeding*, *meeting*, *approaching*, and *not meeting* Alternative Education Campus student engagement norms. These include: student re-engagement rate, returning student rate, and positive socio-emotional adjustment rate.

If a measure does not have state defined metrics and cut-points, the Alternative Education Campus and its district/authorizer shall submit proposed metrics and cut-points and provide a research-based rationale for the selection of these metrics and cut-points. For further details concerning pre-approved metrics and cut-points for student engagement, please see Appendix D.

In order to be included on the AEC SPF, state required and optional measures in Student Engagement must have an N size of at least 16 students; data can be aggregated over a 3 year time period.

## Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness (PWR)

Postsecondary and workforce readiness will be measured in a manner that is consistent with § 22-7-1008, C.R.S. and § 22-11-204, C.R.S. on measures that are selected by the Alternative Education Campus and its district/authorizer and approved by the Department. Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness measures must include performance on the standardized, curriculum-based, achievement college entrance examination administered as a statewide assessment or the postsecondary and workforce readiness assessment described in § 22-7-1003 (16), C.R.S. (CAP4K), and transition success measures for non-degree granting institutions, if sufficient data are available. The measures also must include dropout rates and completion rates, as defined by the State Board in 1 CCR 301-1, if sufficient data are available. Note that districts/authorizers on behalf of their AECs must submit supplemental measures if statewide assessments are not available and sufficient data is available (i.e. the student count is greater than 16 students). Optional supplemental measures may include the following:

1. Student graduation rate, consistent with the graduation rate defined by the State Board in 1 CCR 301-1;
2. Transition success (required for non-degree granting AECs);
3. Post-completion success rate;
4. Rate of proof of admission, enlistment or employability;
5. Performance on workforce readiness assessment (e.g., Work Keys or Accuplacer Placement); and/or
6. Rate of course/credit completion.

The [Calculation Guidance for Alternative Education Campuses](#) lists the measures for which the Department has provided approved metrics and cut-points for *exceeding*, *meeting*, *approaching*, and *not meeting* Alternative Education Campus PWR norms. These include: graduation rate, successful transition rate, post-completion success rate, workforce readiness, and credit/course completion.

If a measure does not have state defined metrics and cut-points, the Alternative Education Campus and its district/authorizer shall submit proposed metrics and cut-points and provide a research-based rationale for the selection of these metrics and cut-points. For further details concerning pre-approved metrics and cut-points for postsecondary and workforce readiness, please see Appendix D.

In order to be included on the AEC SPF, state required and optional measures in Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness must have an N size of at least 16 students; data can be aggregated over a 3 year time period.

### “N” Weighting

Measures for the Academic Achievement and Academic Growth indicators are weighted by N size. For measures in these indicators, points eligible are assigned according to the number of students who participated in each measure. Measures where a greater number of students participated are worth comparatively more weight. The individual weight of each measure in these indicators is derived from: the total points eligible in the indicator (PE), the total number of students represented in all measures in the indicator (Total N), and the total number of students represented in the measure in question (Measure N):

Measure Points Eligible = (Measure N/Total N) x PE

Please note that due to rounding policies, points eligible at the measure level may not sum up perfectly to the total points eligible at the indicator and overall level as displayed on AEC SPF reports.

Measures for the Student Engagement and Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness indicators are not weighted by N size. These measures are apportioned equal weight within their indicators.

## Appendix A: AEC Data Collection Helpful Links

AEC Data Pipeline Collections website: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/datapipeline/per-aec>

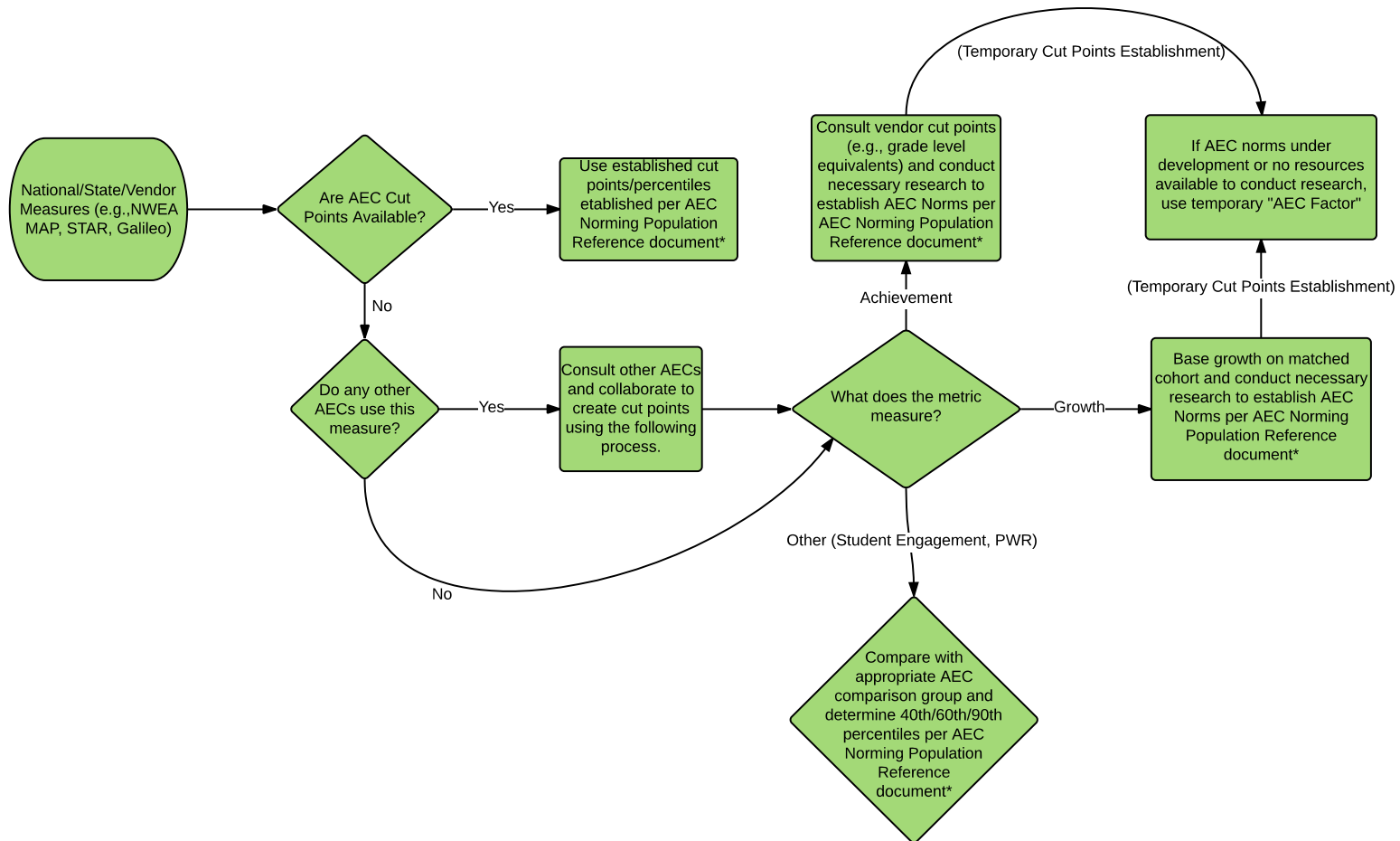
There are three Data Pipeline collections related to Alternative Education Campuses:

- AEC Renewal/Application collection for AEC Designation (March through April)
  - This collection is a student-level collection for districts to identify schools seeking AEC designation for the upcoming school year. AEC designation allows for these schools to be eligible for accreditation using the AEC SPF. This collection uses a pre-populated dataset based on the school's current October Count student base.
  - [File Layout and Definitions document for this collection](#)
  - [Webinar deck for this collection](#)
- AEC Planned Measures for the AEC School Performance Framework Collection (March through June)
  - This collection collects only measure names which districts are considering for submission for an AEC SPF cycle. Districts may also submit new measures for consideration in this collection. Doing so will begin investigation of those measures with CDE, and may make those measures selectable in the Actual Measure and Data collection.
  - [File Layout and Definitions document for this collection](#)
  - Webinar deck for this collection
- AEC Actual Measure and Data for the School Performance Framework Collection (May through June)
  - This collection collects aggregated optional measure data and measure names for consideration for inclusion in the upcoming AEC SPF. Submission of measures is not a guarantee of inclusion. New measures cannot be submitted in this collection.
  - [File Layout and Definitions document for this collection](#)
  - [Webinar deck for this collection](#)

Other resources for the AEC Data Pipeline Collections:

- [Overview webinar deck \(covers all three collections\)](#)
- [Collection Module 1 – Overview & Timelines](#)
- [Collection Module 2 – Access to Pipeline](#)
- [Collection Module 3 – Opting Out of Collections](#)
- [Collection Module 4 – Sign Off Sheets](#)
- [Collection Module 5 – Resources](#)
- [Collection Module 6 – Edit Records vs File Upload](#)
- [Collection Module 7 - Errors](#)

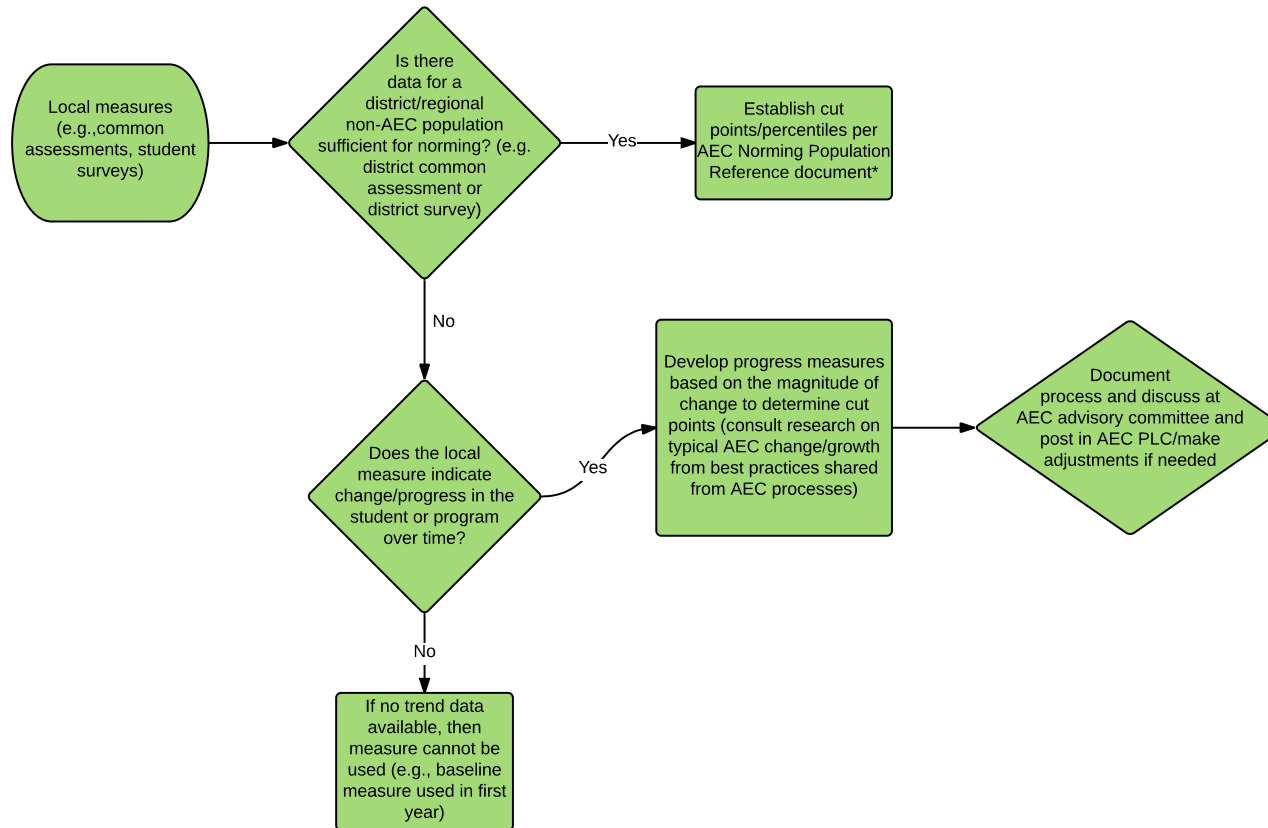
## AEC Cut Points Decision Tree: National/State/Vendor Measures



\* AEC Norming Population Reference document pending development in 2016



## AEC Cut Points Decision Tree: Achievement and Growth Local Measures



\* AEC Norming Population Reference document pending development in 2016

## **Appendix B. Defining Over-Age and Under-Credited (OAUC) for AECs**

### ***Background Information***

Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) have an option to select “over-age and under-credited” (OAUC) as a criteria for identifying a student as high-risk on their AEC application. In statute, this is defined as “[A student who] is over traditional school age for his or her grade level and lacks adequate credit hours for his or her grade level.” ((C.R.S. 22-7-604.5 (1.5) (n)). In past years, districts have defined this criterion in many different ways. It is important the state uses a standardized and consistent definition.

### ***CDE and External Stakeholder Discussion***

Internal cross-unit CDE conversations formally began in December 2013. CDE staff also asked for research and data from external stakeholders around operationalizing the definition of OAUC. On February 7, 2014, AEC Stakeholders were convened to discuss the options for operationalizing the definition of OAUC. CDE staff then reviewed feedback from the stakeholders and came together to finalize the criteria, as listed below.

### ***Operationalized Definition***

#### **For High School Students (can be identified)**

- Operationalize by credit accumulation based on anticipated year of graduation.
  - 1 or more years behind credits required for graduation, based on anticipated year of graduation, or students with an anticipated year of graduation of 2016 or older. (See table below).
  - This could be in overall credits or in core content credits, determined by the district.
- Once a student is identified by the school as OAUC, they are always identified in that school that way, even if they subsequently catch-up (as that’s our goal for them).
- As the state works on transitioning to graduation guidelines for students with an AYG of 2021, the AEC eligibility statutory language could be reviewed to determine if competency based measures should be included (including course failures and state assessment results).

#### **For Middle School Students (cannot be identified)**

- No additional criteria would be available to identify a middle school student as OAUC.
- Many other criteria exist to identify middle school students as high-risk.

### For Elementary School Students (cannot be identified)

- No criteria would be available to identify an elementary school student as OAUC.
- Many other criteria exist to identify elementary students as high-risk.
- Other Measures: In consultation with state legal experts, it was determined that state statute does not allow for an interpretation beyond credit hours. Course failures, state assessment results, and retention are not included in an interpretation of the statutory language.

### OAUC Anticipated Year of Graduation (AYG) and Credits Missing Table

The table below should be used as a reference for how to measure over-age and under-credit students in your district/school for reporting on the AEC Application.

<b>Anticipated Year of Graduation</b>	<b>All Credits</b> (based on credits accumulated at the end of 2017-18 school year)	<b>Core Credits</b> (based on credits accumulated at the end of 2017-18 school year)
<b>2016 or earlier</b>	Student has earned less than 100% of credits required to graduate	Student has earned less than 100% of core content credits required to graduate
<b>2017</b>	Student has earned less than 100% of credits required to graduate	Student has earned less than 100% of core content credits required to graduate
<b>2018</b>	Student has earned less than 75% of credits required to graduate	Student has earned less than 75% of core content credits required to graduate
<b>2019</b>	Student has earned less than 50% of credits required to graduate	Student has earned less than 50% of core content credits required to graduate
<b>2020</b>	Student has earned less than 25% of credits required to graduate	Student has earned less than 25% of core content credits required to graduate
<b>2021</b>	Student has not earned any credits required to graduate	Student has not earned any core content credits required to graduate
<b>2022</b>	N/A	N/A