



Additional Grant Opportunities for Schools

The following pieces of legislation aim to provide schools with additional funding opportunities and grants, allowing them to pursue new avenues of support. These measures are designed to assist schools that are interested in securing additional resources and taking advantage of the opportunities provided. Through these legislative initiatives, schools are empowered to seek and access grants that can contribute to their growth and enhance educational experiences for students.

[HB23-1298 Earlier Funding For Middle School Lead Testing](#)

This legislation allows the Department of Public Health and Environment to begin providing reimbursements to middle schools for lead testing costs on June 1, 2023, instead of March 15, 2024.

School Impact

Under House Bill 22-1358, public schools educating children from preschool to eighth grade were mandated to conduct lead testing of their drinking water sources by May 31, 2023. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) offers reimbursements for eligible schools, child care centers, and family child care homes to cover the expenses associated with lead testing. These reimbursements are funded through the School and Child Care Clean Drinking Water Cash Fund. Starting from March 15, 2024, CDPHE is able to commence providing reimbursements to schools serving students from the sixth to eighth grades.

[SB23-221 Healthy School Meals For All Program Fund](#)

This legislation implements several measures related to revenue and expenditures for the Healthy School Meals for All Program, approved by voters in November 2022. It essentially creates a fiscal framework to implement the Healthy School Meals for All Program, approved by voters in November 2022.

It establishes the Healthy School Meals for All Program General Fund Exempt Account to hold revenue generated for the program through the income tax addition in Proposition FF. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) can utilize funds from the account to implement the program, covering expenses like meal and wage reimbursements, local food purchasing and technical assistance grants, and administrative costs up to 1.5% of the appropriations for other program components.

School Impact

It specifically allocates \$115.0 million for reimbursing school meal authorities, primarily school districts. These funds will be distributed to districts based on the number of meals served and the percentage of meals that qualify for state reimbursement.

[SB23-269 Colorado Preschool Program Provider Bonus Payments](#)

This legislation introduces the Colorado Universal Preschool Program Provider Participation Bonus Program under the Department of Early Childhood (CDEC). This program offers a one-time bonus payment to preschool providers who participate in the Colorado Universal Preschool program but haven't previously been part of the state-run preschool program. Providers may also receive an additional bonus if they maintain or increase their capacity to serve infants and toddlers between April 1, 2022, and April 1, 2024, or operate in areas with limited preschool availability. The bonus funds must be utilized for implementing the preschool program or expanding infant and toddler care.

School Impact

The legislation mandates that CDEC establish procedures for the program and, by September 1, 2023, determine the number and amount of bonus payments to be distributed. The payments must reach recipients by June 30, 2024, and CDEC is required to provide a report on the program's progress to the Joint Budget Committee by September 1, 2024.

Please note that the program is set to expire on July 1, 2025.

[HB23-1003 School Mental Health Assessment](#)

This legislation requires the Behavioral Health Administration to administer a mental health screening program available to public schools serving grades 6 through 12.

It directs the Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) to implement a mental health screening program. BHA is required to choose a qualified provider through a competitive process to conduct these screenings.

School Impact

For schools to participate, they must be public and cater to students in grades 6 through 12. Additionally, they must meet one of the following criteria: either lack a school-based health center, have fewer school psychologists than recommended, or have a high risk of student suicide.

Behavioral health services for students in this age range are also subject to Colorado laws giving minors twelve or older a qualified right of privacy and ability to consent to certain services. This summary mentions those requirements as they apply under the new act.

The selected provider must conduct screenings for all participating schools using a tool that is available in the student's native language and can be reproduced in an accessible format. Based on the screening results, the provider has specific responsibilities. They are required to notify the school and parents if a student needs immediate attention from a mental health professional. Suppose a student is found to have a mental health concern and requires services. In that case, the provider must notify the parents (with the student's consent if they are 12 or older) and provide information about available behavioral health resources. For students over the age of 12 in need of services, the provider must refer them directly to behavioral health services.

The legislation also directs BHA to develop a process for the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) to reimburse the program for services provided to students covered by Medicaid or the Children's Health Plan Plus (CHP+).