

*In response to the evolving conditions under COVID-19 and to enable schools and districts to focus on providing alternative learning opportunities for students during this time, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) suspended the state assessment during the 2019-2020 school year and paused the state and federal accountability systems.*

As a charter authorizer, CSI offers its schools the flexibility to choose the educational models and methods that best meet the unique needs of their students and communities and holds its schools accountable to clear expectations for academic, financial, and organizational performance. Despite the disruption in state academic testing during the 2019-20 school year, CSI is committed to upholding model authorizing practices. Therefore, **CSI will continue to let CSI schools know how they are doing, provide information to help schools develop and improve, provide the school the opportunity to regularly check its record, and provide public transparency.**

## CSI Annual Review of Schools (CARS)

**While state and federal accountability systems have been paused, the CSI accountability system (CSI Annual Review of Schools or CARS) will continue, albeit with a more limited scope.** Annual performance reporting, like CARS, is an essential authorizing practice for effective oversight, communication with charter schools, and public accountability and transparency.

CARS builds off of the academic expectations in the state's accountability system by adding additional academic indicators and includes measures of financial and organizational performance. CSI prioritizes academic performance in determining school ratings, and a subset of financial and organizational measures may cause the school rating to be lowered. While the suspension of state assessment during the 2019-2020 school year creates a gap in the academic evaluation of school performance for annual accountability, CSI will still be able to evaluate financial and organizational performance for the 2019-2020 school year.

The base accreditation ratings from 2019, which were determined by academic performance during the 2018-19 school year, will be maintained and will become the base accreditation rating for 2020.

Following the same process used every year, if a subset of measures on the Financial or Organizational Framework are not met during the 2019-2020 school year, the school accreditation rating may be lowered.

## Pre-Opening CSI Annual Review of Schools (PCARS)

The Pre-Opening CSI Review of Schools (PCARS) is a system to evaluate a school's performance in Year 0 (the year between application approval and school opening) and ultimately leads to the determination of a school's Year 1 accreditation rating. The PCARS evaluation system provides evaluative information about a school's performance prior to the availability of academic assessment data. PCARS evaluates a school's risk assessment as determined by the CSI Application Review Team, as well as a body of evidence from Year 0 including Organizational Performance, Financial Performance, and Readiness and Onboarding Task Performance.

The process for accrediting schools in their first year of operation (schools opening for the 2020-2021 school year) will not change. Since it provides evaluative information about a school's performance prior to the availability of academic assessment data, **PCARS is not impacted by the suspension of state testing and will continue as planned without modifications.**

## Authorization Impact

The CARS Report is the primary driver of high-stakes decision-making around charter renewal and development (e.g. expansion or replication). The CARS Report will include much of the body of evidence used to make authorization decisions; however, most authorization decisions will also include new or supplemental evidence around school performance that has not already been captured in the CARS Report or through other school submissions. CSI has already adjusted the charter renewal process for the 2020 renewal cycle. Additional information on the renewal modifications due to COVID-19 is available [here](#).

CSI maintains a commitment to balancing autonomy and accountability during these tremendous challenges. We believe these adjustments extend our commitment to transparency, evidence-based decision-making, and consistent expectations for schools.

### RESOURCES

[CARS Handbook](#)  
[CSI School Accountability](#)  
[Accountability One Pagers](#)