

**COLORADO ACCOUNTABILITY, ACCREDITATION, STUDENT PERFORMANCE
AND RESOURCE INEQUITY TASK FORCE**
(created by H.B. 23-1241)

Meeting Summary | August 24, 2023

Published Agenda

1	Welcome, Lunch and Task Force Member Introductions	12:00-12:45pm
2	Words from the Task Force Chair and Vice Chair	12:45-1:30pm
3	Aligning on Purpose: Building a Mutual Understanding of HB 23-1241	1:30-2:40pm
4	Break	2:40-2:55pm
5	Envisioning the Future: An Initial Conversation on Quality Schools	2:55-3:45pm
6	Closing Remarks	3:45-4:00pm

Note: Given necessary real-time adjustments in conversation and facilitation throughout the meeting, some agenda topics and time ranges varied from the agenda, as noted in this meeting agenda.

Task Force Members in Attendance

NAME	REPRESENTING	VENUE
Dr. Wendy Birhanzel (chair)	<i>Superintendent</i>	in-person
Rebecca McClellan (vice chair)	<i>State Board of Education</i>	in-person
Tomi Amos	<i>Charter Network Leader</i>	in-person
Dr. Rob Anderson	<i>Superintendent (Urban)</i>	in-person
Amie Baca-Oehlert	<i>Statewide Teachers Organization</i>	in-person
Pam Bisceglia	<i>Statewide Organization Specializing in Equity and Inclusion</i>	in-person
Dr. Brenda Dickhoner	<i>Charter School Institute (Governing Board Member)</i>	in-person
Kathleen Duran	<i>Expert in English Language Acquisition and Bilingual Ed</i>	in-person
Lindsey Gish	<i>Teacher (Middle School)</i>	in-person
Alison Griffin	<i>Workforce Development and Education Organization</i>	in-person
Dr. Don Haddad	<i>Superintendent</i>	in-person
Dr. Rhonda Haniford	<i>Colorado Department of Education</i>	in-person
Tamara Hiler	<i>Governor's Office Representative</i>	in-person
Ted Johnson	<i>District Administrator (Rural Accountability)</i>	virtual
Erin Kane	<i>Superintendent</i>	in-person
Dr. Anne Keke	<i>Local School Board Member</i>	virtual
Ryan Marks	<i>District Administrator (Accountability)</i>	in-person
Nicholas Martinez	<i>Statewide Parents/Families Organization</i>	in-person
Tony May	<i>Local School Board Member (Rural)</i>	virtual
Dr. Robert Mitchell	<i>Teacher (Rural)</i>	virtual
James Parr	<i>District Administrator (Rural Accountability)</i>	virtual
Catie Santos de la Rosa	<i>Teacher (Elementary)</i>	in-person
Mark Sass	<i>Statewide Teachers Organization</i>	in-person

NAME	REPRESENTING	VENUE
Dan Schaller	Charter School Organization	in-person
Jen Walmer	Statewide Education Policy Organization	in-person
Lisa Yates	Superintendent (Rural Participant in Local Accountability System Grant)	in-person

Guests: Susana Cordova

Facilitators: Kelly Jasiura, Aline Matias, William Porter

Introductions

The Task Force chair and vice chair introduced themselves and welcomed in-person and virtual participants. They asked Task Force members to share with the other Task Force members: Name, organization, role and reflection to the prompt *Why did you agree to serve on the Task Force?*

Welcome, Facilitation Support & Meeting Objectives

The Task Force chair and vice chair introduced members to the facilitators from Education First. As part of [H.B. 23-1241](#), the Colorado Department of Education was provided funding to contract with a facilitator to help “guide the work of the task force.” [Education First](#) is a national strategy and policy organization that works alongside policymakers, practitioners, funders and advocates to design and accelerate policies and plans for improving student learning. *(Three Education First team members—Kelly Jasiura, Aline Matias and William Porter—will be working with the Task Force over its tenure; because all three played different roles throughout the meeting supporting the Task Force, these notes refer to “Education First facilitator” generically rather than by the individual facilitator at the time.)*

The Education First facilitators introduced themselves and explained their role is to manage Task Force deliberations in ways that encourage participation and help the members come to agreement on any recommendations. Education First also will work with the chair and vice chair to set meeting agendas and objectives, plan the overall “arc” of the Task Force’s meetings over the coming year, and prepare summaries after every Task Force meeting (which also will be made available to the public). In addition, the facilitators will support Task Force members in preparing their March 2024 interim report and November 2024 final report to the Legislature.

The Education First facilitators noted the hybrid in-person and virtual nature of the meeting create challenges in ensuring participation from all members. One strategy used at the Task Force’s first meeting was a common online “workbook” with tabs to collect questions and ideas from members on different topics; the facilitators encouraged feedback and further ideas for how to encourage maximum participation during the Task Force’s future meetings.

Education First also explained that, since this first Task Force meeting was designed to help introduce the members to each other and to begin developing a common understanding of their legislative charge (and no decisions were being made), the meeting did not include a designated section for public comment.

The facilitators then reviewed the meeting agenda and objectives:

1. Understand the goal of HB 23-1241 and the Task Force’s charge and responsibilities;

2. Begin to build working relationships with fellow Task Force members, the Task Force chair and vice chair and CDE staff;
3. Articulate what success looks like for the Task Force and reflect on individual roles contributing to that success.

The facilitators asked Task Force members to meet with nearby members to reflect and share responses to the prompt: *What strengths, assets or knowledge do you bring to the table?*

Next, Education First asked Task Force members to begin identifying norms to guide their work. Education First suggested these norms as possible starting points:

- Listening to understand;
- Respecting the candidness of others;
- Expecting non-closure;
- Leaning into a listening or speaking role when necessary.

The facilitators invited Task Force members to share comments or suggest additional norms, using either the online workbook or writing additional ideas on post-it notes. Briefly reviewing the suggestions, the facilitators noted there were several common suggestions for additional group norms. **As a next step, Education First promised to work with the chair and vice chair to refine and propose a new list of guiding norms for the Task Force to review again and adopt at its next meeting.**

HB 23-1241's Charge to the Task Force

The chair and vice chair reviewed the Task Force's charge and purpose, as outlined in HB 23-1241, and offered additional reflections as the group begins its work. Both noted the Task Force members bring diverse perspectives and experience across all levels of Colorado's education system. Mirroring members' diverse professional expertise, members were appointed by a variety of state leaders (including the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives; the President and Minority Leader of the Senate; the Governor; and the Department of Education).

[The legislation](#) specifies that Task Force members are required to meet at least 10 times, with at least four meetings occurring in 2023 and at least six meetings occurring in 2024. The Task Force must prepare an interim report to legislators by March 1, 2024, and a final report by November 15, 2024. The legislation also charges the Task Force with four areas it "shall consider" in conducting duties, and an additional eight areas it "may review" in considering any recommendations to make.

The chair and vice chair led Task Force members in a conversation about the specific requirements and charges to the group found in HB 1241, with the goal of ensuring all members understood this part of their charge. According to the statute, the Task Force is asked to study "academic opportunities, inequities, promising practices in schools, and improvements to the accountability and accreditation system;" in doing so, it "at a minimum shall consider:" these areas:

1. Academic opportunities or inequities that may impact academic achievement gaps;
2. Improvements to the accountability and accreditation system to expand and incentivize academic opportunities and address inequities;
3. Promising practices in schools and school districts; and

4. Recommendations for legislation or rules, as necessary.

Next, Task Force members began suggesting information or data they thought could be helpful in informing its deliberations and ensuring all members have a common understanding of Colorado’s school accountability and accreditation system. The facilitators noted this conversation about needed information would not be the only opportunity to identify additional data needs, but that this initial list of suggestions would be used to develop “homework” or pre-reading for members before their next meeting and/or inform the design of the next meeting’s agenda.

Some of background information various Task Force members suggested included:

- An overview of Colorado’s current accountability and accreditation system to establish a shared understanding of the system’s theory of action, history and evolution, and current framework.
- Definitions of terms used in the legislation and among Task Force members, to ensure a common understanding of meaning (terms needing clear definitions include “accountability,” “academic opportunities,” “inequities,” etc.).
- The *Legislative Evaluation of Colorado’s K-12 Education Accountability System*, commissioned by the Colorado Office of the State Auditor and published in November 2022.
- Model accountability systems or promising practices to address inequities and incentivize academic opportunities in other states that Colorado could learn from.
- Federal requirements for school accountability systems, as well as any opportunities available to provide Colorado with more flexibility from these requirements.
- Case studies of Colorado schools receiving high and low ratings on the School Performance Framework, to better understand successes and challenges around the state’s current accountability system.
- The most recent (2023) school performance data that shows current academic opportunities or inequities that impact academic achievement gaps, including for subgroup populations, and an understanding of how the accountability system and inequities intersect.
- Results of the School Transformation and Local Accountability Systems grant programs.
- Information brought by outside groups, after first being agreed upon by the whole Task Force.
- Information about the changes to Colorado’s educator evaluation system made by SB 22-70 and how educator performance evaluation data is also being used in the context of school accountability decisions.

Education First asked Task Force members—as an assignment after the meeting—to use their online workbook to make additional suggestions for information needs, as well as to “vote” on the suggestions that seemed most important or pressing as the Task Force’s work gets underway. Again, these suggestions will inform the agenda for the Task Force’s next meeting.

Aligning on a Common Vision: What is a Quality School?

To help members of the Task Force begin to develop a common understanding of the problem/s they are being asked to solve, the chair and vice chair asked members to first envision what a quality school looks like and how one would know or recognize it. Task Force members met in small groups of 4-5 people to start the discussion using this prompt: *I can recognize a quality school in my community when I see ____.*

This part of the meeting was designed to be generative and to elevate common assumptions, as well as different ideas, about what school quality is. After small group discussions, the full Task Force reconvened and small groups reported their ideas in turn. Education First facilitated a full-group discussion, noting some conceptions of quality schools that appeared on many of the small group lists, as well as questions the exercise prompted among members.

No effort was made (and there was not enough time) at this first meeting to narrow and finalize an agreed-on set of quality attributes, but suggestions made by Task Force members—both working in small groups and reflecting as a full group—generally fell into the major categories below:

- **The school produces strong academic outcomes** (which could be demonstrated by at least one year of student growth, the existence of academic rigor via courses and coursework, and/or having rigorous curriculum and instruction in place/used); equity is a goal in every classroom.
- **Students and families are engaged in student learning and school success** (which could be demonstrated through attendance, student discussion of content outside of the classroom, family participation in school events, parent trainings, parent/teacher collaboration, and/or culturally and linguistically accessible parent communications); a suggestion was made that not every family can be engaged due to work/family schedules so “parent feedback” may be a more appropriate phrase.
- **Students feel belonging, happiness and physical and psychological safety** (which could be demonstrated through the existence of trusted and caring relationships with adults, low disciplinary removals, a strong MTSS process, positive behavior practices, and/or student surveys).
- **Students have agency in their learning and are prepared for a variety of pathways and choices after high school**; related, students have opportunities to explore their passions and purpose, and they are ready to participate in democracy.
- **Teachers and teaching are highly effective** (which could be demonstrated through teacher retention rates, amount of teacher planning time, access to high-quality instructional materials and other resources needed to serve students well, culturally responsive teaching practices, and/or percentage of highly-qualified staff).
- **Strong “wrap-around” services support student success** (which could be demonstrated by the number of psychologists and nurses in a school, partnerships with community agencies, and/or staff engaged in mental health supports.)
- **Adequate resources are in place to improve school performance** (which could be demonstrated by the access to high-quality instructional materials, assessments and technology); some Task Force members noted that not all schools have the resources to do what they need to, but can still be a quality school.
- **The school has a strong focus/mission that reflects the community’s values, and data are used for school improvement.**

In the course of this discussion, some individual Task Force members shared their own particular concerns about what would be needed for more schools in Colorado to be “high-quality.” Some of these individual observations included: ensuring students who are English learners or have special needs are supported for success; ensuring accommodations on state assessments are appropriate; asking students for their input about what quality schools are; the importance of differentiation among schools—not all schools in all communities should look the same or have the same focus; the role of comparable data among similar schools in supporting improvement; a worry about the role of testing in accountability systems; and a recognition that access to resources (money, teacher workforce, community partners, volunteers, etc.) varies by community/region in Colorado. These

individual observations were not discussed or endorsed by the entire group; they were just noted in the course of the conversation.

As a next step, Education First offered to work with the chair and vice chair to further refine and organize the quality school attributes that seemed to have the most consensus, and to bring a refined list to the Task Force's next meeting.

Closing & Next Steps

CDE informed members on logistical processes for acquiring reimbursement of mileage and travel.

Task Force members discussed the need to establish the schedule for its next meeting/s as soon as possible; the chair and vice chair promised to finalize dates for the remaining 2023 meetings in the next few days and share with members.

Task Force members also returned to their earlier conversation about information and data they needed to inform deliberations. They agreed two immediate priorities included: (1) Information from the legislative Evaluation of [Colorado's K-12 Education Accountability System](#), and (2) a review/primer on the current design of the state's accountability system. Education First noted these items would be incorporated into some combination of pre-work/reading and the agenda for the next meeting.

Summary of next steps

- ⇒ Set and announce dates for remaining 2023 meetings
- ⇒ Prepare final list of Task Force norms for review/adoption at next meeting
- ⇒ Prepare refined list of quality school attributes, to be discussed again at next meeting
- ⇒ Share information with Task Force members about the overall design and workings of the current state accountability system and the Evaluation of Colorado's K-12 Education Accountability System

The chair and vice chair thanked members for their participation, and they thanked the CDE staff for all the work to organize and support this first meeting. The meeting was adjourned.

Meeting summary prepared by Education First