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**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

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# Blended Learning Initiative (BLI) Convening

March 24, 2022

# Agenda

## 9:00am-1:00pm

- Welcome and Norms
- Convening #3 Themes
- Policy Continuation
- **Lunch Break 11:00am-11:30am**
- Current Pathways
- Closing and Next Steps

# Welcome and Norms



# Welcome and Introductions



- CDE Introductions
- Today's Objectives
  - Participants will continue the discussion of policy change in Colorado from the February Convening #3 meeting.
  - Participants will elaborate on specific policy focus areas to guide future rulemaking considerations.
  - Participants will discuss the current flexibilities available for schools, programs, courses, and instructional models at the state and local levels.

# Norms and Reminders



The following norms encourage productive and collaborative conversation. All attendees are asked to follow and embody them and give facilitators room to ensure they define our time together.

- **Good Faith:** Act with the intent to promote collaboration and productive conversation.
- **Openness:** Be honest in sharing your perspectives; be open to other points of view.
- **Listening:** Listen to each speaker; no interruptions; refrain from use of technologies.
- **Focus:** Maintain focus on the goals, purpose and meeting objectives; agenda.
- **Participation:** Participate actively, speak briefly, and agree succinctly.
- **Respect:** Refrain from behavior that denigrates others or is disruptive to the group work.
- **Preparedness & Commitment:** Attend each session; get up to speed if you miss.

# Convening #3 Themes



# Convenings Recap

## November

- Initiative background and goals
- Norming on key terms and working definitions
- Identification of promising and emerging practices
  - Flexible learning opportunities
  - Post-pandemic opportunities
- Presentation from REL Central “*Understanding Research on Blended Learning Programs*”

## January

- Review of Convening #1 Themes
- Report from field - Success in instructional models
- Analysis from review of variance waiver submissions
- Stakeholder discussion on synchronous and asynchronous instruction

## February

- Review of Convening #2 Themes
- Review of existing Colorado senate bills, acts, statutes, and rules
- Stakeholder discussions on ideal policy vision and policy reform examples in other states
- Presentation from Education Commission of the States (ECS)



## Purpose

**Focus on Learning**

**Mastery/  
Success**

Policy Themes from  
February's  
Convening #3 Notes

**State  
Considerations**

**Local  
Considerations**



# Policy Continuation





## Purpose

*“What objective are we aiming for?” “Rethink what works”  
“Adapting to times” “Reconsider the broader objectives for learning”*

### Field Feedback

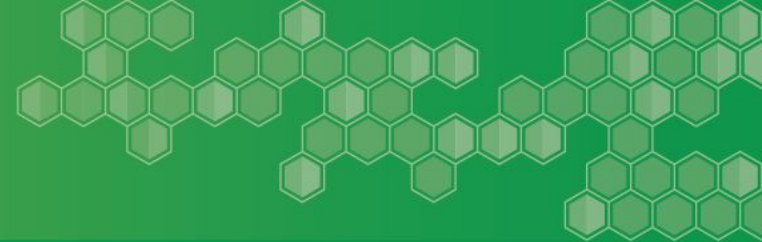
- What families want
- Embrace change/innovation
- Think long-term
- Shared vision across the state and in communities
- Address stereotypes, perceptions, mindsets
- Recognize, encourage, validate all models
- Stuck in an industrial model way of thinking

### Rethinking Points

- Innovation of programs
- Replacing “nontraditional” terminology

### Questions

- *Should policies be “either/or” - for example, either brick and mortar or online? If “no” then what else?*
- *Should we be expanding access to off-site learning or should we be trying to “bring students back”?*
- *How much flexibility should brick-and-mortar students have for learning off-site through digital means?*
- *Should policies expand opportunities for virtual homeschool enrichment?*



## Focus on Learning

*“Shift focus to meeting student needs vs. procedural requirements” “Learn from innovative learning models based on student need” “Instructional time should be able to happen in many ways”*

### Field Feedback

- Models based on student needs
- Access and location of learning
- Flexible schedules
- Engagement
- Seat-time requirements
- Synchronous rule
- Increase in homeschool population
- Model shift to homeschool
- Model shift to post-secondary options
- Credit Recovery programs

### Rethinking Points

- Redefine instructional time
- Span opportunities that count as instruction
- Redefine teacher supervision
- Broaden instruction to student-lead learning
- Funding for students meeting goals
- Accountability for work at home
- Mechanism to measure engagement

### Questions

- *Do current policies provide sufficient options to respond to student needs?*
- *If in-person requirements don't fit the model, is use of an online school/program a sufficient alternative?*
- *What should be considered teacher directed learning activities?*
- *What about approaches that rely on other adults teaching but are not the classroom teachers?*



## Mastery/Success

*“Our students thrive in a self-paced environment.” “We use a competency-based model.”  
“Why do we make it hard to support those who track based on outcomes?”*

### Field Feedback

- Evidence of learning
- Evidence of success
- Demonstrations of competency

### Rethinking Points

- Competency-based
- Mastery-based
- Learner-validated

### Questions

- *Should non-credit bearing courses count for instructional time? If so, to what extent?*
- *What policy structures are needed to support programs using competency or mastery-based learning systems?*



## State Considerations

*“This is a state issue” “This is a funding issue”*

*“Apply consistently statewide” “Problem is in state guidance/rule/statute”*

### Field Feedback

- Statewide impact
- Decisions for all
- Enrollment caps
- Temporary solution waivers

### Rethinking Points

- School finance
- Funding aligned with flexible learning
- Vetting process of instructional models
- Provision of models vs. courses
- Standardize equivalency
- Checks-and-balances with districts/schools

### Questions

- *What should the state be paying for and what should they not be paying for?*
- *What is the right balance for brick and mortar students taking classes off-site and through digital means?*
  - *Cap on number? Cap on amount of time off-site? Requirements for live time with teachers?*
- *Are accountability structures limiting ability to utilize models?*



## Local Considerations

*“This requires local approval” “Local policies would need to be changed”  
“There is not enough local capacity/buy-in”*

### Field Feedback

- Variety of options
- Staff/teacher resistance
- Lack of funding
- Limitations/inabilities
- Lack of flexibility

### Rethinking Points

- Hesitation for change until state determines
- Local board policy definition of educational process

### Questions

- *Could charter or innovation waivers create needed flexibilities? Are these feasible?*
- *Could local funding decisions create better conditions? Are there examples?*
- *What types of local capacity issues exist?*

# Discussion

## Policy Focus Questions

- Deeper dive into policy discussion per focus area
- Add to and discuss guiding Questions for all 5 areas:
  - purpose
  - focus on learning
  - mastery/success
  - state considerations
  - local considerations





Break



# Current Pathways

# Current Flexible Learning Opportunities

## Online School/Program

- MDOL (Multi District) and SDOL (Single District) Processes
  - [CDE Guidance](#)

## Blended/Supplemental Courses

- Blended Learning (BL) & Supplemental Online (SO) Courses
  - [CDE Guidance](#)

## Variance Waiver

- Formal Variance Waiver Process for Instructional Models
  - [CDE Guidance](#)

## Other Pathways

- Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Opportunities (ILOP, TREP, ASCENT, P-TECH, WBL)

## Variance Waiver

- Formal Variance Waiver Process for Instructional Models
  - [Guidance](#)

## Key Points

- 2-year process available for unique instructional models outside of guidance for either/both
  - number of allowable blended learning and/or supplemental online courses per semester
  - percentage of in-person and/or synchronous instruction per week

## Questions

- *Has your district/school explored this option? If so, has it been beneficial? If not, any barriers?*
- *How could your district/school operate without a variance waiver?*
- *Without the flexibilities offered by the waiver, what changes to existing guidance would you propose?*

# Blended & Supplemental Online Courses

## Blended/Supplemental

- Blended Learning & Supplemental Online Courses
  - [Guidance](#)

## Key Points

- Taken by students enrolled in traditional, brick-and-mortar schools in instruction is regularly received in person on-site, off-site, digitally
- “Blended learning” courses require both in-person and digitally-delivered instruction unless offered through a CDE-approved Online School/Program

## Questions

- *Has your district/school explored this option? If so, has it been beneficial? If not, any barriers?*
- *Did the guidance on amount of courses and/or instructional time lead you to the waiver request process?*

## Online School/Program Processes

- MDOL (Multi District) and SDOL (Single District)
  - [Guidance](#)

## Key Points

- Multi-district accept students from across the state of Colorado regardless of their home school district
- Single district serve students only from the authorizing district.
- Incorporates an accreditation process to adhere to educational standards and evaluate effectiveness

## Questions

- *Has your district/school explored these options? If so, have they been beneficial? If not, any barriers?*



## **ILOP** - [Innovative Learning Opportunities Pilot Program](#)

- Enables participating Local Education Providers (LEPs) to offer their 9th through 12th grade high school students a variety of learning experiences that usually occur outside of the classroom

## **TREP** - [Teacher Recruitment Education Preparation Program](#)

- Opportunity for qualified students in a teaching career pathway to concurrently enroll in postsecondary courses for the two years after the 12th grade year

## **ASCENT** - [Accelerating Students through Concurrent Enrollment](#)

- Opportunity to take courses and accumulate college credits with the tuition cost paid by school district for one year after the 12th grade year

## **P-TECH** - [Pathways in Technology Early College High School](#)

- Prepare students to graduate with a high school diploma, an industry-recognized associate degree, and pre-apprenticeship certificates beginning in the 9th grade year

## **WBL** - [Work-Based Learning](#)

- Internships, apprenticeships, workforce studies

# Statewide Options



<b>State</b>	<b>Local</b>
<p><a href="#">Audit Resource Guide</a> outlines the documentation requirements to evidence funding requirements including enrollment, attendance and instructional hours</p>	<p>Local board policy with accompanying governance documentation (as applicable) should define educational process and attendance requirements</p>



# Closing and Next Steps



## April Convening

- Scheduled for April 22, 2022 from 9am-1pm MST (registration and agenda to come)

## May Convening

- Date/time to come
- Final meeting for the 2021-2022 SY

## 2022-2023 SY

- BLI continuation
- Second cohort of BLI Convenings