



COLORADO
Department of Education

Blended Learning Initiative (BLI) Update Meeting

December 2022

Welcome and Agenda

- CDE Introductions
- Today's Objectives
 - Summary of the two-year Blended Learning Initiative (BLI) going into 2023
 - BLI Stakeholder Engagement activities facilitated by Keystone Policy Center throughout the fall of 2022
 - CDE Schools of Choice Unit and School Finance Unit's policy thinking in preparation for the spring of 2023

9:00-9:10 - Arrival and Sign-in

9:10-9:15 - Meeting Norms and Goals

9:15-9:30 - Blended Learning Initiative (BLI) Recap

9:30-10:15 - BLI Stakeholder Engagement Report - Keystone

10:15-10:30 - Break

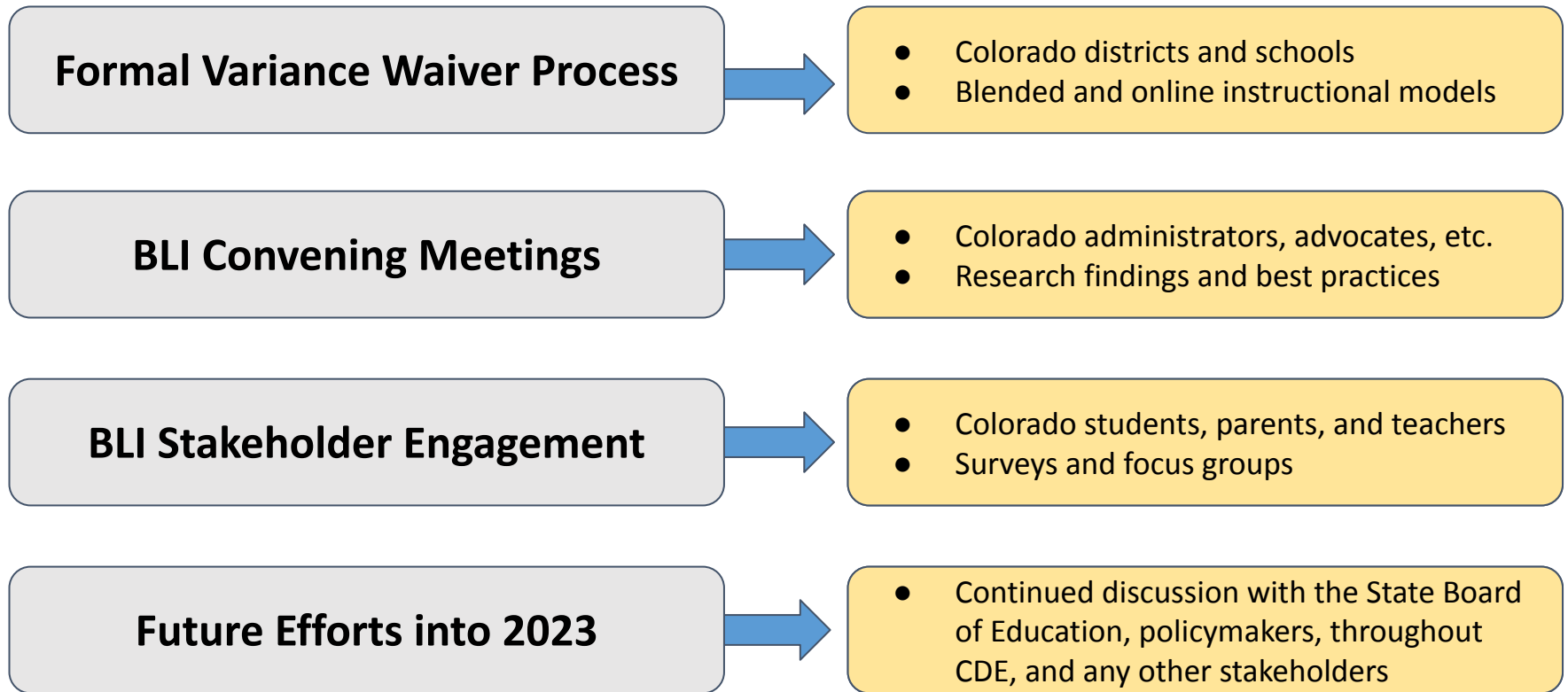
10:30-12:00 - Policy Thinking and BLI Next Steps - CDE



Recap of the BLI

BLI Outreach Activities

2021-2023 CDE outreach to understand field perceptions:



Formal Variance Waiver Process



Blended Learning and Supplemental Online Course Variance Waiver

For the second year in a row, the Colorado Department of Education will be providing districts and schools the opportunity to request a variance waiver to the posted guidance regarding Blended Learning Courses and Supplemental Online Courses as outlined in the [2021 Student October Count Audit Resource Guide](#). These sections of the Guide will remain the same for the 2022-2023 school year within the [2022 Student October Count Audit Resource Guide](#).

Districts and schools should reference the [Blended Learning and Supplemental Online Course Variance Waiver Process](#) and training resources below regarding the formal variance waiver process that takes place from October through December:

- 2022-2023 Waiver Process Training - May 24, 2022
 - [5/24/22 PPT](#)
 - [5/24/22 Recording](#)
- 2021-2022 Waiver Process Training - December 3, 2021
 - [12/3/21 PPT](#)
 - [12/3/21 Recording](#)

[School Auditing Office Pupil Count Webpage](#)

[2022 Student October Count Audit Resource Guide](#)

BLI Convening Meetings



BLI Convening Meetings for 2021-2022

In collaboration with CDE School Finance and Operations Unit, the Office of Online and Blended Learning within the CDE Schools of Choice Unit facilitated initial stakeholder engagement with education leaders and other Colorado education stakeholders. The meeting materials for these BLI Convenings including the agendas and presentations are below.

Convening 1: November 30, 2021

- [11/30/21 Agenda](#)
- [11/30/21 CDE PPT](#)
- [11/30/21 REL PPT](#)

Convening 3: February 25, 2022

- [2/25/22 Agenda](#)
- [2/25/22 CDE PPT](#)
- [2/25/22 ECS PPT](#)

Convening 5: April 22, 2022

- [4/22/22 Agenda](#)
- [4/22/22 CDE PPT](#)
- [4/22/22 Field PPTs](#)

Convening 2: January 28, 2022

- [1/28/22 Agenda](#)
- [1/28/22 CDE PPT](#)

Convening 4: March 24, 2022

- [3/24/22 Agenda](#)
- [3/24/22 CDE PPT](#)

Convening 6: May 16, 2022

- [5/16/22 Agenda](#)
- [5/16/22 CDE PPT](#)

BLI Stakeholder Engagement for 2022-2023

In partnership with the School Finance and Operations Unit and the Schools of Choice Unit, Keystone Policy Center conducted stakeholder engagement outreach activities to educators and families to share perspectives on online and blended learning in Colorado. The goal of this 2022-2023 listening tour was to gather understanding of different forms of instruction as well as insights into what works well, what are the challenges, and what are the opportunities in different forms of instructional delivery.

BLI Stakeholder Engagement Survey

- In August 2022-October 2022, the CDE Blended and Online Learning Summer 2022 Survey launched for Colorado educators, parents/guardians, and students to complete.

BLI Stakeholder Engagement Focus Groups

- In October 2022-November 2022, Keystone facilitated focus groups informed in part by the survey results with Colorado superintendents, educators, parents/guardians, and students as well as the Commissioner's Teacher Cabinet.

Any questions about this BLI Stakeholder Engagement can be directed to Berrick Abramson (babramson@keystone.org). Keystone Policy Center will share a summary of their BLI Stakeholder Engagement Report for CDE with the data and feedback gathered from these BLI Stakeholder Engagement activities during the December 16, 2022 BLI Reconvening Meeting; [12/16/22 Agenda](#).

December School Site Visit



Weather Status : Normal

Best of All Worlds

Academic rigor and rich experience without the tradition. At Village High School, students set their own speed with freedom over their learning and schedules. Part online, part on campus, part workplace, and all opportunity – The Village offers the best of all worlds.

[Apply](#)



Thank you Nathan, Lindsay, and the Village High School community!

(Two members from the State Board of Education and CDE representation from Schools of Choice, Federal Programs & Support, Assessment, Dropout Prevention & Student Re-engagement, and School Auditing attended.)



Update on Stakeholder Engagement Activities



CDE collaborated with Keystone Policy Center to facilitate the BLI Stakeholder Engagement Listening Tour. The following slides summarize the results of and feedback from these activities in the listening tour:

Survey (August 2022-October 2022)

- Available for statewide Colorado system leaders, educators, families, and students to complete from August 2022-October 2022

Focus groups (October 2022-November 2022)

- Invited statewide Colorado superintendents, system leaders, educators, families, and students to attend and participate in sessions offered from October 2022-November 2022
 - Two in-person sessions with superintendents at the Southern and Western Slope Superintendents Conferences
 - One member from the State Board of Education joined
 - Two virtual educator/teacher sessions
 - Two virtual family/student sessions
 - One in-person session with the Commissioner's Teacher Cabinet



Stakeholder Engagement Listening Tour

Definitions Used

- Blended Learning - A formal education program through which a student learns at least in part away from a physical school building or in part through digital content at a supervised physical location that is not the student's home.
- Online Learning - Learning that is provided by a full-time online school or program offered through a school district. Students may access online learning as part, or all, of their academic schedule. Also referred to as "primary online" throughout this survey. A list of Colorado online schools and programs can be found at: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/onlinelearning>



Stakeholder Engagement Listening Tour

Definitions Used Cont.

- Blended Learning Courses - "Blended learning courses" are courses taken by students enrolled in a brick-and-mortar school in which some of the instruction is regularly received in-person, on-site and some of the instruction is received regularly off-site, digitally.
- Supplemental Online Courses - "Supplemental online courses" are courses taken by students enrolled in a brick-and-mortar school in which all of the instruction is received off-site, digitally. In the survey, you may not see the term "supplemental online" used, but instead "primarily online". In those instances, assume that the situation described would be for a student enrolled in a brick-and-mortar school whose academic schedule is comprised mostly of supplemental online courses.



Survey (August 2022-October 2022)

- Over 300 response from system leaders, educators, families and students;
- Blended Learning Perspectives:
 - 52% said they believe Blended Learning is Very Positive for student learning and 30.6% said Somewhat Positive. Only 9% felt it was Somewhat or Very Negative. Only 9% felt it was Somewhat or Very Negative;
- Online Learning Perspectives:
 - On the same question about Online Learning, views declined to 24% Very Positive, 38% Somewhat Positive and 23% Somewhat or Very Negative;
- 84% of respondents said they would be Very (68.7%) or Somewhat (14.9%) Supportive of allowing schools to enroll students in more Blended and Online courses IF resources, training and support were available to educators. Only 10% were Somewhat or Very Opposed;



Survey (August 2022-October 2022) Cont.

- Open ended questions showed broad support for the expanded use of blended learning while noting concerns about decline of social-emotional development if in-person time is too limited;
- Mixed and at times contradictory responses to questions about impact on the teaching profession and job satisfaction. These answers informed structure and further probing during focus groups and meetings;
- Asked what courses should be eligible for funding under the per pupil structure, respondents said:
 - *Courses that a student can attend fully online with no direct teacher support* 54.70%
 - *Courses a student can take that are fully in-person with assignments, syllabus or materials available online* 87.18%
 - *Courses that a student can take that are fully in-person with online submission and grading of assignments* 82.91%
 - *Courses that a student can take for which the instruction from a teacher is partially in-person and partially online.* 94.02%



Focus groups (October 2022-November 2022)

- Overwhelming support for local autonomy to expand blended learning at discretion of local leaders, with strong confidence that their building leaders are monitoring outcomes;
- Near equal sentiment that while *their* LEP is providing close oversight, there are significant risks that some students in some schools in some school systems could be harmed or fall through cracks without proactive oversight and/or requirements from state;
- Funding Perspectives:
 - The type of instructional model should not be a limit on what “counts” or is funded and fundable. Multiple mentions that poor outcomes from in-person are funded yet potentially superior outcomes from blended or online face different funding challenge;



Focus groups (October 2022-November 2022) Cont.

- Near universal urging for additional training, support and resources for educators, families, guardians and students to understand, access and maximize various technologies;
- Broad recommendations to meaningfully engage educators to maintain or improve job satisfactions through appropriate supports, professional development and career opportunities;
- The majority view of these participants was that blended learning was a beneficial complement to at-home learning and online instruction;
- All participants felt that the online component was most effective for grades nine through 12 and all shared significant concern about the expansion of online delivery of instruction to students below seventh grade citing concerns with understanding how to navigate the technology platforms;



Focus groups (October 2022-November 2022) Cont.

- Technology (software) was a primary area of concern and frustration among the participants. Many said they had never received instruction during teacher preparation or as part of professional development courses in either the technical aspects of using these platforms or in the instructional styles, shifts and approaches necessary to effectively translate in-person instruction to online instruction;
- Participants also noted frustration with a number of the widely used platforms and the use of multiple platforms which in their opinion created additional burdens for educators struggling to learn them and complications for students using them;



Focus groups (October 2022-November 2022) Cont.

In discussing the pros or potential opportunities for students as well as the potential risks, several themes emerged that included:

Opportunities and pros:

- Exposure to the mixed forms of interaction can help prepare students for future experiences including higher education, job interviews and the future workforce;
- Expanded use of blended and online learning could increase the courses offered to students where opportunities may be limited, particularly in smaller school systems;
- Multiple forms of instructional delivery can create greater likelihood that more students experience an education that meets their unique needs or learning styles;
- Blended and online learning can establish greater flexibility in student and family schedules.



Focus groups (October 2022-November 2022) Cont.

In discussing the pros or potential opportunities for students as well as the potential risks, several themes emerged that included:

Risks and concerns:

- Instruction with less in-class time could allow struggling students to fall further behind or could be used to mask truancy or other issues;
- For some students (particularly younger students), there could be negative consequences in social emotional development with less peer or teacher contact;
- Inequities could be increased without adequate access to technology including high-speed internet, devices and technical training for families and guardians;
- Potential that some system leaders could use the option as a budget saving strategy and that some students who don't thrive in out of classroom instruction could be forced into it;
- Without adequate and timely oversight including appropriate accountability systems, attainment and opportunity gaps could be exacerbated.

Break



Policy Thinking and Next Steps



Online and Blended

- Online Schools Act
 - Multi-district online school
 - Single district online school and programs
 - Quality standards for online schools and programs
- State Board Rule
 - Rules for the Administration, Certification and Oversight of Colorado Online Programs
 - School Finance Rules (*next slide*)
- Statewide Supplemental Online and Blended Learning Program
 - Recognition and definition of blended and supplemental online
 - Affordable supplemental online education courses and blended learning support
 - “Each high school student in the state may take at least one supplemental online course per year.”



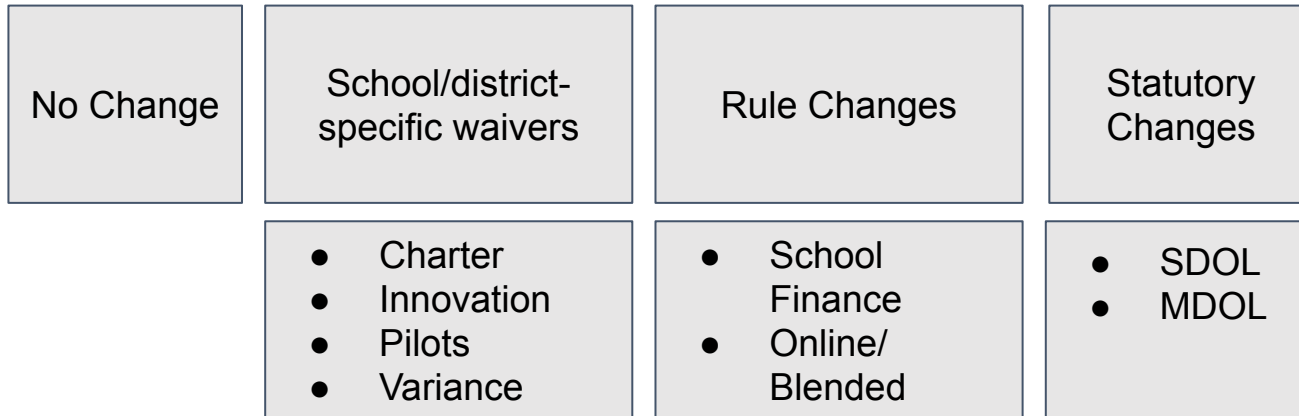
School Finance

- Funded based on scheduled instructional hours and student membership (enrollment/attendance)
- Local boards define educational process
- Funding requirements
 - Students must be enrolled and meet attendance requirements
 - Students must meet instructional hours for full-time or part-time
- Calls out specific treatment for independent study
- Identifies when passing periods may count, and that lunch does not count
- Allows for work-study or work-based learning experiences
- Allows for post-secondary courses (Extended HS and Early College)

Policy Areas of Exploration



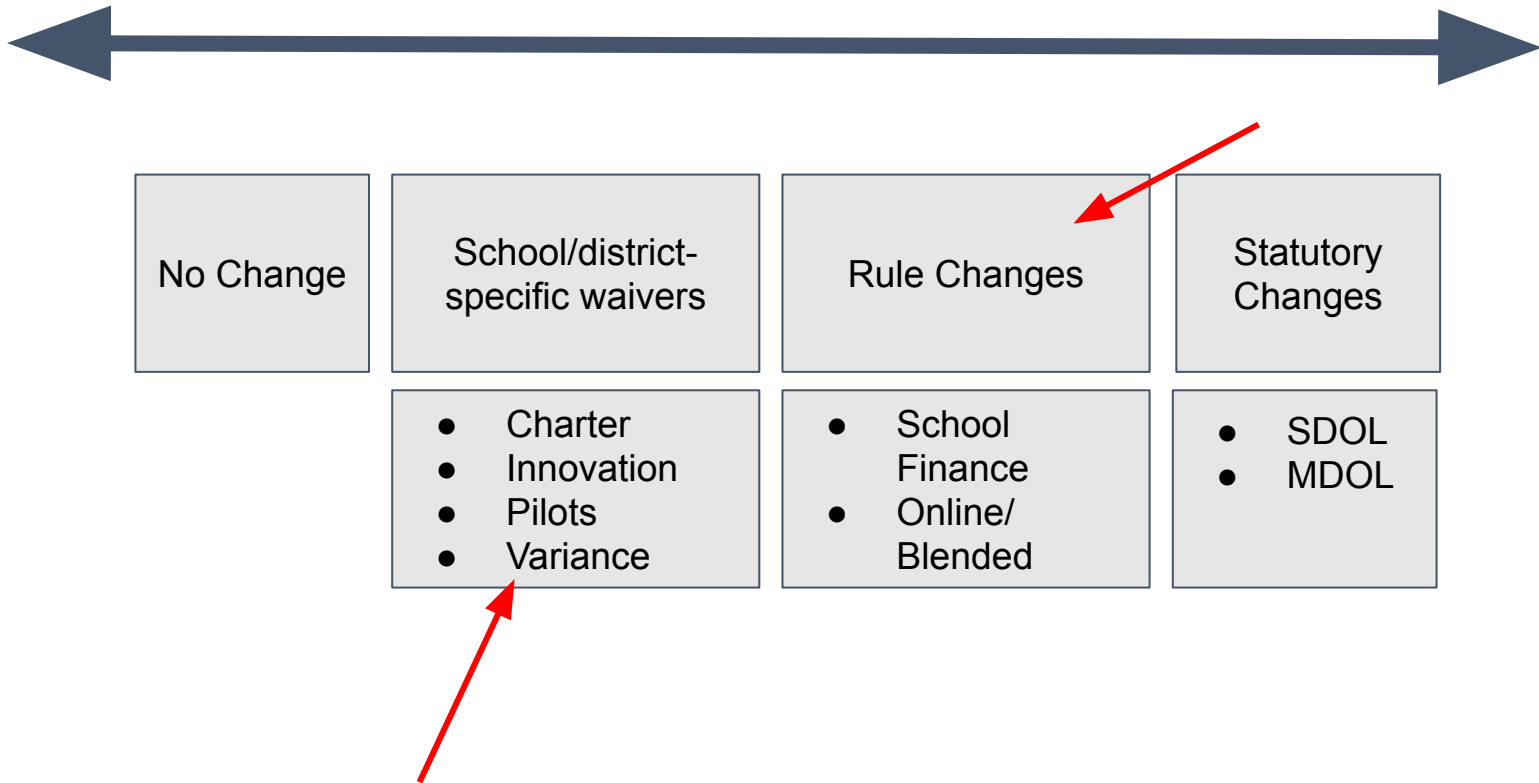
Policy Continuum



Policy Areas of Exploration



Policy Continuum



Closing and Next Steps

Upcoming in 2023

- State Board of Education
 - Newly constituted Board as of January 2023
 - We will request time on the agenda in February 2023 to present information about the BLI and stakeholder engagement activities and request flexibilities at the district and school levels.
 - If supported/requested, could bring forward proposed statutory State Board Rule edits in March/April 2023. Then, 2-3 months to vote on revisions by May/June 2023 window. If adopted, this would be for the 2023-2024 school year.
- Ongoing BLI activities
 - Two-year initiative into Spring 2023
 - [BLI website](#) for updates
 - Suggestion to review the most updated [Student October Count Audit Resource Guide](#) alongside specific district policy. Local district boards may be more restrictive than CDE's guidance.
 - [BLI Spring 2023 Planning Survey](#)
 - Questions about BLI Convening meetings, school site visits, questions/concerns
 - Email us at BLI@cde.state.co.us if needed