

# Welcome Task Force Members & Guests

## A few notes prior to the meeting starting:

Task Force Members please have your camera on, audio muted, and relevant documents available at the beginning of the meeting.

- Welcome to the public who are watching the meeting via Live Streaming.
- If the public has any questions or comments regarding *transportation operations*, these can be sent via email to Susan Miller at [miller\\_s@cde.state.co.us](mailto:miller_s@cde.state.co.us)
- If the public has any questions or comments regarding *transportation funding*, these can be sent via email to Amy Carman at [carman\\_a@cde.state.co.us](mailto:carman_a@cde.state.co.us)

# SB 23-094 School Transportation Task Force



**September 25, 2023**

**Virtual Meeting**

# Who We Are

- Dillinger Research and Applied Data Inc (DillingerRAD) is a Connecticut-based woman and veteran led 501(c)3 nonprofit
- DillingerRAD partners with youth-centered organizations in both a facilitation and analysis capacity to address challenges and help achieve goals that foster student success.
- DillingerRAD has partnered with multiple state level agencies, work groups, and task forces in support of legislation directly impacting youth



Kate McDonald



Katie Tartaglia

# Overview of Today's Agenda

1. Agenda Item #1- ***Review of Open Meetings/Reports and Code of Ethics***
2. Agenda Item #2- ***Design Thinking and Consensus Decision Making***
3. Agenda Item #3- ***Review and Finalized Norms and Goals***
4. Agenda Item #4- ***Review Task Force Requirements***
5. Agenda Item #5- ***Review Task Force Approach***
6. Agenda Item #6- ***Level-Set Around Basic Information***



**COLORADO**

Department of Education

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# Training for State Boards and Commissions

School Transportation Task Force

September 2023

# Open Meetings



# Colorado Sunshine Law – Overview

- *“All meetings of two or more members of any state public body at which public business is discussed or at which any formal action may be taken are declared to be public meetings open to the public at all times.” Section 23-6-402, C.R.S.*
- Formation of public policy happens in the public, not in secret
- Ensures transparency in and public access to government



# Colorado Sunshine Law – Who and What is Covered?

- Applies to all boards, committees, commissions, authorities or other advisory, policy-making, rulemaking, or other formally constituted bodies and any public or private entity which has been delegated a governmental decision-making function
- Administrative meetings (such as meetings between staff) are NOT required to be open

## Three components under the law

1. Public notice
2. Open meeting
3. Meeting minutes and transparency

# Colorado Sunshine Law – Public Notice

- Notification posted in a public space so that everyone knows when and where a meeting is taking place
- Posted at least 24 hours in advance
- Given prior to all meetings
- Agenda information included when possible



# Colorado Sunshine Law – Open Meetings

- Meetings of two or more members of a public body where any public business is discussed or formal action taken must be open to the public
  - This can include in person, phone, or electronic meetings
- What is exempt?
  - Social gatherings if discussion of public business is not the purpose
  - Staff communicating logistical information to members
  - Executive sessions
    - Only occur under special circumstances and clearly documented



# Colorado Sunshine Law – Meeting Minutes and Transparency

- Public meetings must be documented, and the public must be able to access the minutes
- Meeting minutes should be posted on the board's website
- CDE staffer or board director, unless otherwise designated, is responsible for documenting all meetings



# Open Records



# Colorado Open Records Act (CORA)

- CORA (Section 24-72-201, et. seq., C.R.S.) allows citizens to gain access to public records
- Intended to ensure transparency in government affairs
- Public records are required to be available for inspection by members of the public upon request



# Colorado Open Records Act (CORA)

- “Public records” include any writing “made, maintained, or kept by” the state or any agency
  - Includes board or commission business emails, meeting minutes, official reports and documents
  - Some exceptions, including communications that are personal in nature
- Err on the side of considering all communications to be potentially releasable

# Code of Ethics Laws



# Code of Ethics – Standards of Conduct

- Public office = public trust
  - “The holding of public office or employment is a public trust, created by the confidence which the electorate reposes in the integrity of public officers. A public officer shall carry out his duties for the benefit of the people of the state.” (Section 24-18-103, C.R.S.)
- Avoid conflicts of interest
  - “A member of the board, commission, council, or committee shall not perform an official act which may have a direct economic benefit on a business or other undertaking in which such member has a direct or substantial financial interest.” (Section 24-18-108.5, C.R.S.)



# Code of Ethics – Conflicts of Interest

- When conducting business, members are expected to refrain from:
  - Taking actions that serve their personal interests rather than public interests
  - Taking official actions as board members that have a direct financial benefit to them personally or to a program for which they work or serve
- Prohibits votes, not all participation
- Applies to potential conflicts, not just actual conflicts
- Financial interest includes investment, employment

# Code of Ethics – Conflicts of Interest, cont.

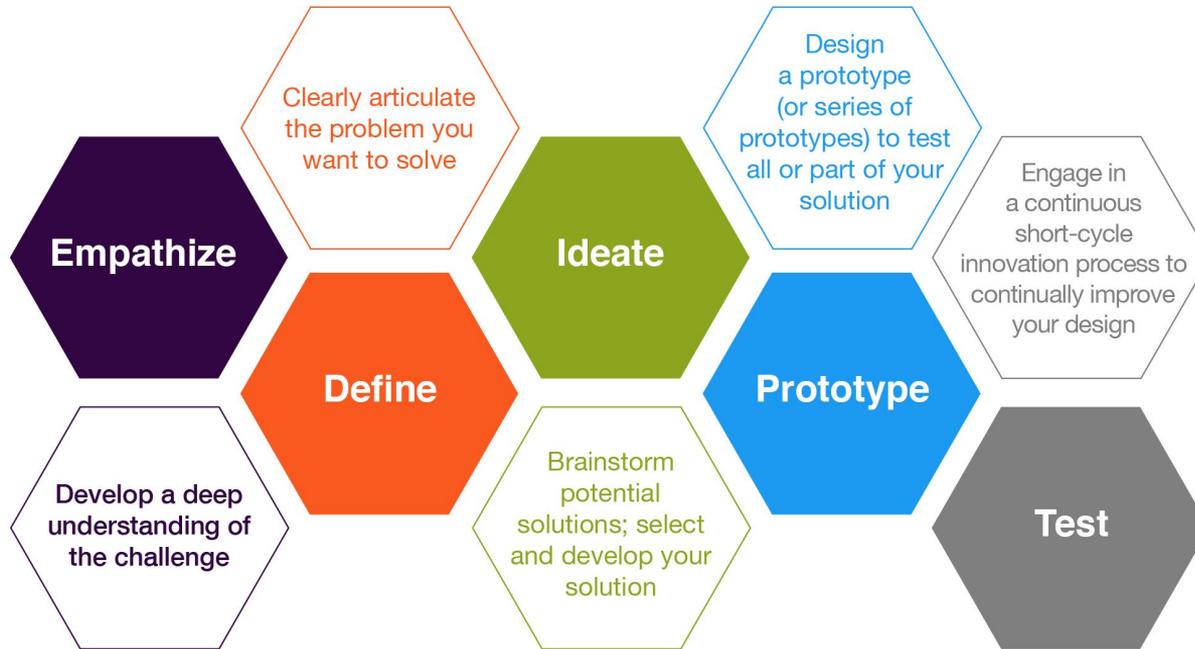
- Prohibits outside employment or compensation “incompatible with the proper discharge of” public duties
  - No gifts, honoraria, or fees/payment that may lead to preferential treatment, impede on independence or impartiality
- Disclose any conflicts of interest at earliest stage possible
  - Refrain from voting, participating in discussions, or attempting to influence other board/commission members



# Questions



# Design Thinking



# Consensus Decision Making

1. **Recommendation is stated.** A facilitator indicates that a 'proposal' / 'matter' is before the group for a decision and the proposal is clearly stated.
2. **Clarifying Questions.** Questions for clarification are called for and responded to by appropriate parties.
3. **Unresolved Concerns.** Next, concerns are called for. (Eg. "Are there any unresolved concerns about accepting the 'proposal' as stated/written?") If there are, they are responded to. All members engage in discussion to amend, refine or restructure the 'proposal' as needed. The group respects the length of time needed to build consensus during a period of unresolved concerns. When concerns are resolved, by virtue of a consensus-built 'proposal', the process re-cycles to step 1. If no concerns arise, proceed directly to step 4.
4. **Restate consensus decision and record.** The facilitator states "there being no (further) unresolved concerns, then "x" /proposal has approval and a decision has been made".

# Guidelines for Interaction, Deliberation and Collaboration

- Respect others
- Cameras on whenever possible
- High engagement from all members
- High level of trust with each other
- Assume positive intent
- Collaborate as a team to benefit our students
- Encourage open dialogue
- Respectful dialogue
- Enable every member to have a voice
- Consider other member's experience and knowledge
- Consider other member's viewpoints
- Avoid assumptions
- Avoid personal or professional motives
- Provide and review topics in advance
- Establish clear agendas and desired outcomes for each meeting
- Develop clear goals and objectives
- Keep the work task and outcome oriented
- Keep the interests of the task force and the needs of the students at the forefront of the work.
- Keep students at the center of the conversation

Key Norm Areas:  
*Decision Making Norm*  
*Equality of Process*  
*Conflict Resolution*

# Goals for Measuring Success



## For Students:

*(regardless of geographic area, SES, mobility, race, or ethnicity)*

- Equitable Access
- Safe Transportation
- Reliable Transportation
- Reasonable Transportation
- More Options

## For Drivers:

- Create career pathways
- Strengthen Career Pathways
- Increase Training
- Increase Personnel

## For Fleet and Funding:

- Increase Reliability
- Expand Options
- Increase Opportunities
- Increase reimbursement amounts
- Decrease reimbursement time
- Streamline reimbursement process

# Break #1



# Task Force Purpose

THE PURPOSE OF THE COLORADO SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION MODERNIZATION TASK FORCE IS TO *STUDY THE ISSUES FACING SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS* AND USE THE STUDY'S FINDINGS TO *DEVELOP AND RECOMMEND POLICIES, LAWS, AND RULES TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION ACROSS THE STATE IN ORDER TO BETTER MEET STUDENT NEEDS AND ALLEVIATE BURDENS ON SCHOOL DISTRICTS.*

# Required Data to Consider

1. **Student Eligibility**, including factors used by school districts and charter schools to determine eligibility for transportation and whether the factors used create barriers for students to attend their school district-assigned neighborhood public school, public school of choice, or career pathways program
2. **Student Utilization**, including how many eligible students utilize school transportation, whether routes are at capacity, and methodologies used by school districts and charter schools to identify utilization patterns and adjust operations accordingly
3. **Driver Staffing Levels**, including staffing required to cover routes, driver pay rates, hours of operation, vacancies, and whether and how school districts and charter schools contract with public transportation providers or alternative transportation providers to satisfy school transportation needs
4. **Fleet Diversification**, including the types of buses or vehicles used to satisfy school transportation needs and costs associated with each type of bus and vehicle used and including for each type of bus and vehicle used, electrification options, fuel costs, maintenance costs, purchase prices, resale values, and salvage values
5. **Service Gaps**, including identifying discrepancies between eligible students and utilization, and causes of those discrepancies.

# Required Recommendations for Final Report

1. ***Simplified reimbursement process*** for school districts
2. ***Sustainable funding mechanisms*** to meet school transportation needs
3. ***Transportation innovation fund*** to support creation of new/innovative transportation solutions
4. ***Facilitating partnerships*** among organizations to meet transportation needs in cost effective way
5. ***Pathways and talent pipelines*** for transportation providers and logistics careers
6. ***Competitive salaries and benefits*** to recruit and retain drivers
7. ***Legislation or rules that improve transportation*** (including recommendations that will not exacerbate the marginalization of communities through separation while protecting public funds with clear accountability and transparency)

# Project Plan

## Task Force Meeting Schedule

Sept '23



*Student/Parent survey will be distributed and district level eligibility/utilization data will be gathered and analyzed*

**Pre-reads and additional supporting documents will be sent out ahead of each Task Force Meeting**

Subcommittees may be formed and meet outside of regular Task Force Meetings

Additional activities may be required of Task Force members between regular Task Force Meetings

\*Work Group must Endorse Report

# Barriers

*22 of the 27 Task Force Members Completed the Survey*

Identified Barrier	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Driver Shortages	20	91%
Transportation Funding Levels	15	68%
Service/Route Gaps	12	55%
Driver Retention	10	45%
Transportation Funding Process	10	45%
Geography	9	41%

*Additional barriers that had fewer respondents: District Type, Student Eligibility, Student Utilization, Socioeconomic Status, Fleet Size, Fleet Maintenance, Process to License New Drivers, District Priorities, Legal Barriers, Statutory Barriers*

# Break #2



# Background Information- Student Population

SY 2021-2022



There are **~882,500** students attending public schools in Colorado. However, only **~316,800** students are scheduled to be transported

Number of students transported

- Average ~1,700
- High ~35,500 (Denver)
- Low 0
- Median ~250



## 1927 Schools in Colorado

- 1116 elementary
- 289 middle school
- 522 high schools

## Other Schools

- 264 Charters (*126,947 students*)
- 97 Innovation Schools (*43,811 students*)
- 38 Online Schools (*26,637 students*)

# Background Information- Student Population

SY 2022-2023



## Of 179 Districts

- 108 are small rural  
*(less than 1,000 students)*
- 46 are rural  
*(less than 6,500 students)*

These 154 districts comprise 86% of the districts but just 17.8% of total student population (157,854 combined)

## Total PK-12 count- 883,264

Total FRL count- 354,966

40.2% minority statewide

Average 44.6%

Median 44.8%

Max- 87.6% (Sheridan 2)

Min- 3.1%

Total Minority count- 430,751

49% minority statewide

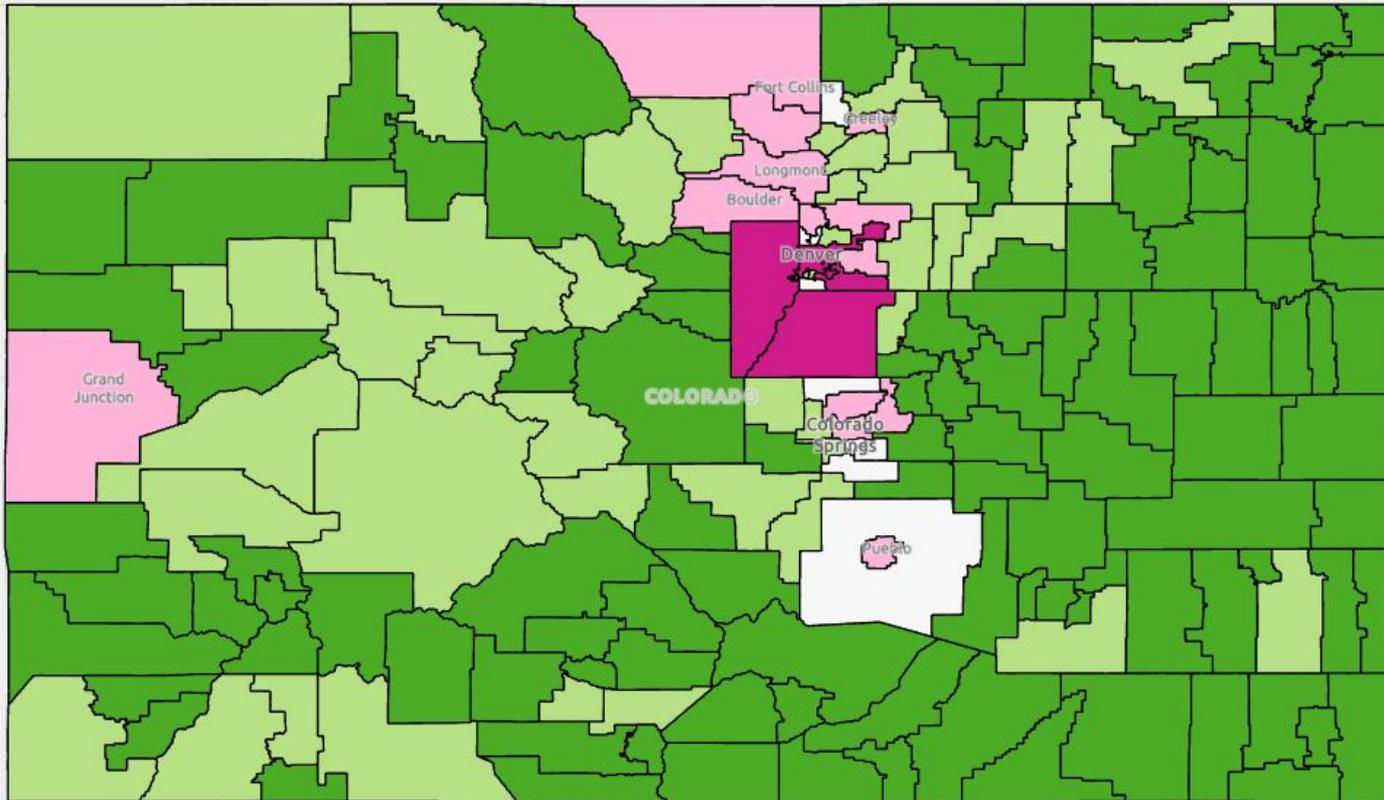
Average 37%

Median 31%

Max- 92% (Center 26 JT)

Min- 0%

# Background Information- Student Distribution



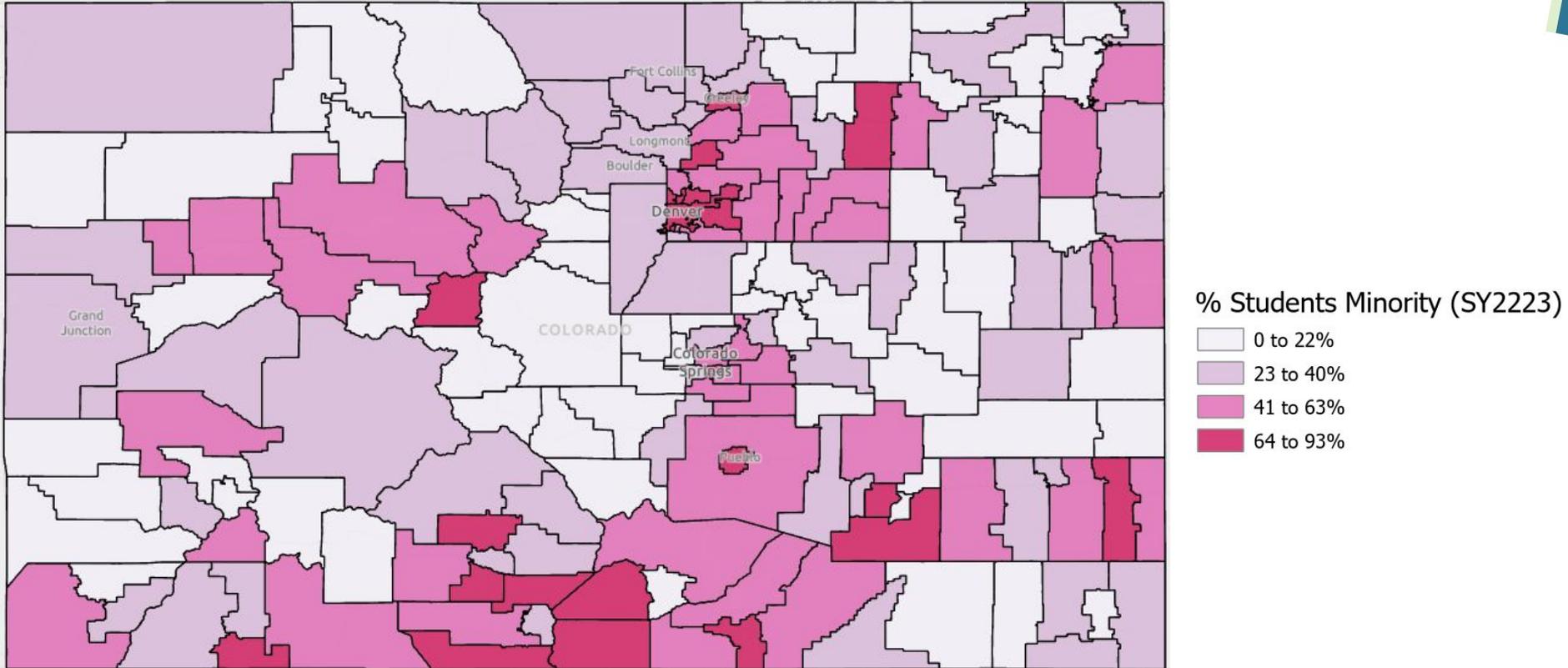
# of Students per District (SY2223)

- Small Rural <1000
- Rural 1,001 to 6,500
- Outlying Town 6,501 to 15,000
- Urban/Suburban 15,001 to 40,000
- Denver Metro 40,001 to 88,000

# Background Information- Student Distribution

Rural Designations	Range	# Districts	# Students	Proportion of Students
Small Rural	< 1000	108	37,765	4.28%
Rural	1,001 to 6,500	45	120,089	13.60%
Outlying Town	6,501 to 15,000	9	84,466	9.56%
Urban/Suburban	15,001 to 40,000	13	337,111	38.17%
Denver Metro	40,001 to 88,000	4	280,762	31.79%
na		7	23,071	2.61%
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>186</b>	<b>883,264</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

# Background Information- Minority Distribution

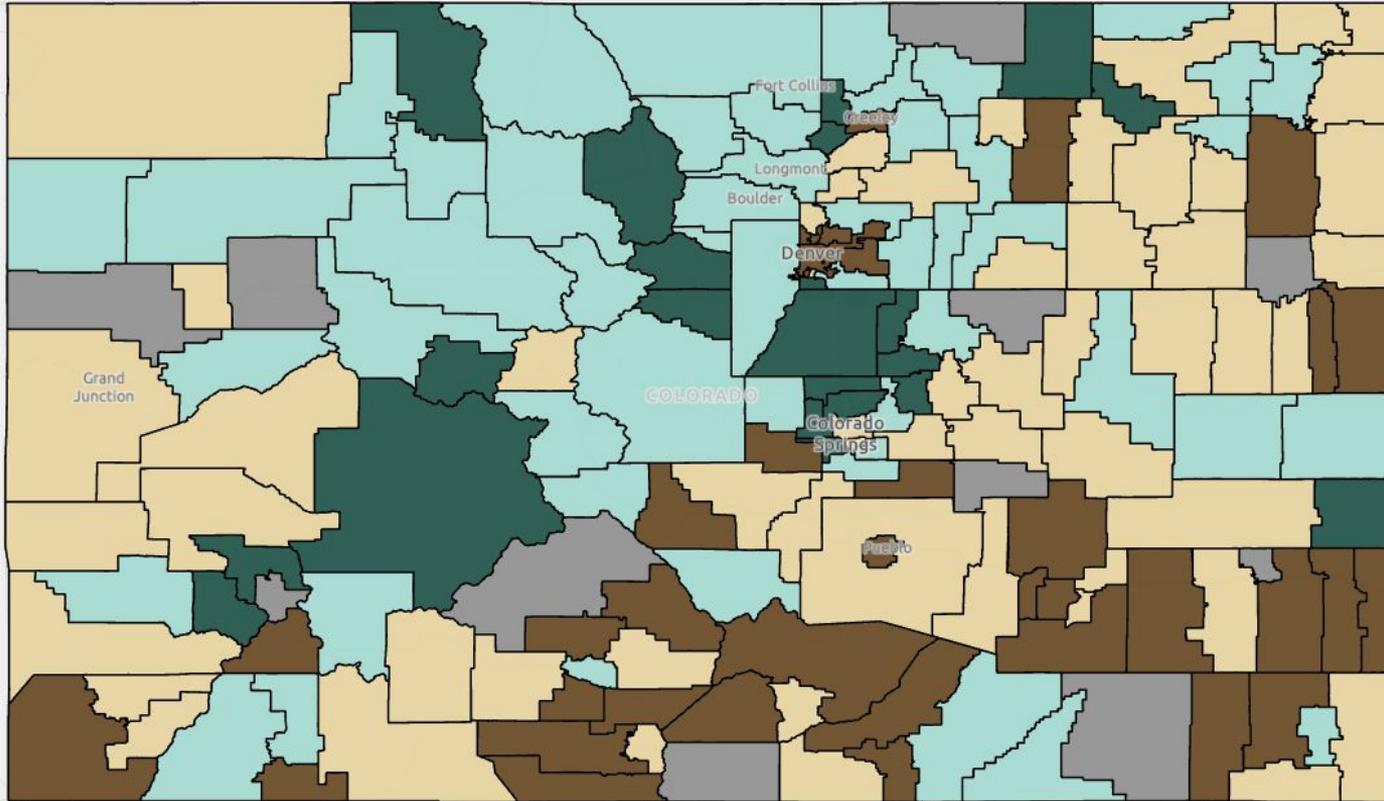


# Background Information- Minority Distribution

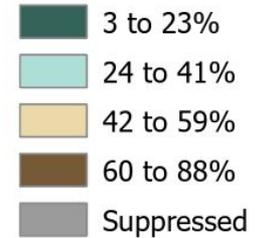
Rural Designations	Range	# Districts	# Students Minority	# Students Total	% Students Minority
Small Rural	< 1000	108	13,293	37,765	35.20%
Rural	1,001 to 6,500	45	54,604	120,089	45.47%
Outlying Town	6,501 to 15,000	9	44,224	84,466	52.36%
Urban/Suburban	15,001 to 40,000	13	169,520	337,111	50.29%
Denver Metro	40,001 to 88,000	4	138,581	280,762	49.36%
na		7	10,529	23,071	45.64%
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>186</b>	<b>430,751</b>	<b>883,264</b>	<b>48.77%</b>

*\*% Students Minority  
= proportion of  
students who live in  
each geographic  
designation who are a  
minority*

# Background Information- FRL Distribution



% Students Receiving FRL (SY2223)

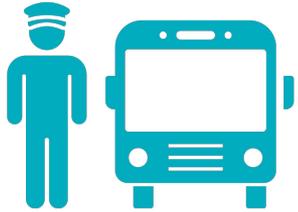


# Background Information- FRL Distribution

Rural Designations	Range	# Districts	# Students FRL	# Students Total	% Students FRL
Small Rural	< 1000	108	17,038	37,765	45.12%
Rural	1,001 to 6,500	45	48,221	120,089	40.15%
Outlying Town	6,501 to 15,000	9	33,346	84,466	39.48%
Urban/Suburban	15,001 to 40,000	13	144,106	337,111	42.75%
Denver Metro	40,001 to 88,000	4	102,599	280,762	36.54%
na		7	7,254	23,071	31.44%
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>186</b>	<b>352,564</b>	<b>883,264</b>	<b>39.92%</b>

*\*% Students FRL = proportion of students who live in each geographic designation who are receiving FRL*

# Background Information- Drivers



Current job postings on the CDE website for bus drivers had starting pay ranges of ~\$19-\$24 per hour. (salaries are often lower than those offered by the area's public transit)

If an individual was hired at \$24 per hour and had a 35 hour contract for the school year (~180 days or 36 weeks), that would work out to a yearly salary of **\$30,240**.

Forbes estimated the average cost of living in Colorado to be **~\$46,000** per year.



- After COVID many older drivers across the state left due to health concerns.
- Split-Shift schedule turns some potential applicants away.
- Federal health requirements to obtain a commercial driver's license (CDL) are stringent.

Common Sense Institute, Roadblocks in Getting Kids to School  
[https://commonsenseinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CSL\\_RoadblockstoSchools\\_REPORT\\_JAN23.pdf](https://commonsenseinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CSL_RoadblockstoSchools_REPORT_JAN23.pdf)

# Background Information- Fleet and Funding

SY 2021-2022



## Mileage:

- Total traveled ~46,133,300
- Average ~249,400
- High ~3,621,300 (Jefferson)
- Low 0
- Median ~92,800



## State Guidelines

Up to the district but general guidelines are

Elementary School= 1 miles

Middle School = 2 miles

High School = 2.5 miles

## Expenditures:

- Total expenses ~290,293,000
- Average ~1,569,200
- High ~29,506,700 (Denver)
- Low 0
- Median ~198,800

## Entitlement

- Total entitlement- 61,980,700
- Average ~514,900
- High ~8,728,700 (Jefferson)
- Low 0
- Median ~86,000

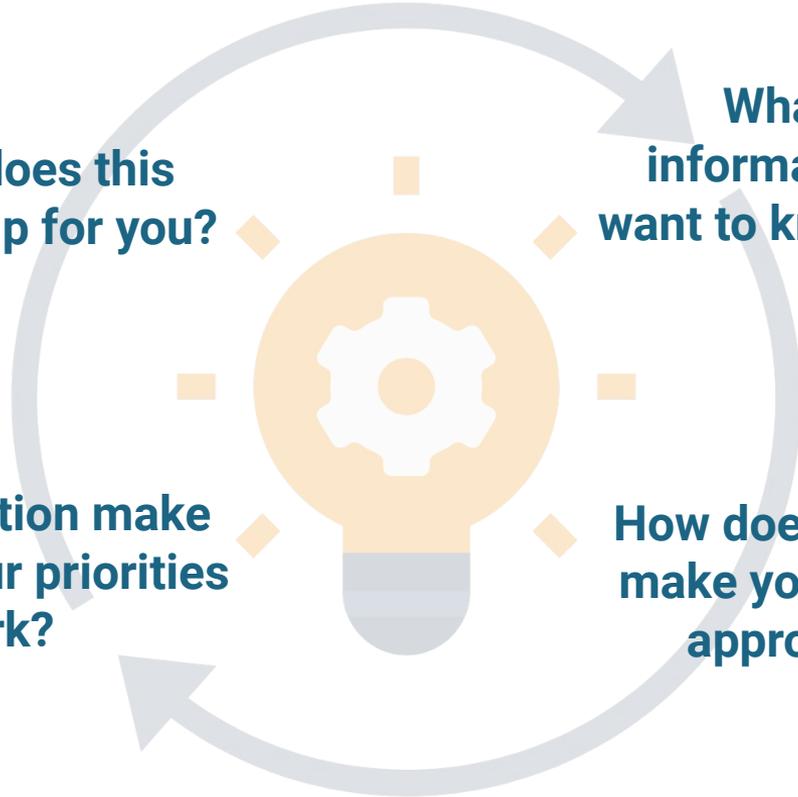
# Ideate

**What questions does this information bring up for you?**

**What does this information make you want to know more about?**

**Does this information make you reconsider your priorities for the work?**

**How does this information make you think we should approach the work?**



## Task Force Meeting #2: Student Eligibility and Utilization

- Input on Data Collection
- Input on Relevant Content and Resources
- Accountability for Meeting Prep

# Thank You!!

**Our next meeting is December 11, 2023, 10AM - 1PM**