

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

Meeting Summary | September 26, 2023

Published Agenda

1	Welcome and Adopt Task Force Norms	10:05-10:35am
2	Review and Consider: Accountability and Accreditation Terms and Definitions	10:35-11:05 am
3	Working Agreement: What is a Quality School?	11:05 am-12:05pm
4	Lunch	12:05-12:35 pm
5	Overview of Colorado's K-12 Accountability System	12:35-2:05 pm
6	Debrief the Evaluation of Colorado's K-12 Education Accountability System	2:05-3:35 pm
7	Closing Remarks and Next Steps	3:35-4:00 pm

Note: Throughout the meeting, facilitators made real-time adjustments in conversation and facilitation, resulting in variations from the original agenda for some topics and time ranges.

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>	Virtual
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>	Unable to attend
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>	In-person
Erin Kane	<i>Superintendent</i>	In-person

Dr. Anne Keke	<i>Local School Board Member</i>	In-person
Ryan Marks	<i>District Administrator (Accountability)</i>	In-person
Nicholas Martinez	<i>Statewide Parents/Families Organization</i>	Virtual
Tony May	<i>Local School Board Member (Rural)</i>	Virtual
Dr. Robert Mitchell	<i>Teacher (Rural)</i>	In-person
James Parr	<i>District Administrator (Rural Accountability)</i>	In-person
Catie Santos de la Rosa	<i>Teacher (Elementary)</i>	In-person
Mark Sass	<i>Statewide Teachers Organization</i>	In-person
Dan Schaller	<i>Charter School Organization</i>	In-person
Jen Walmer	<i>Statewide Education Policy Organization</i>	In-person
Lisa Yates	<i>Superintendent (Rural Participant in Local Accountability System Grant)</i>	In-person

CDE Staff: Marie Huchton, Lisa Medler and April Thompson

Education First Facilitators: Kelly Jasiura, Aline Matias, William Porter

Welcome and Taskforce Norms

The Task Force chair and vice chair welcomed participants, noting the meeting agenda for the day builds on topics discussed at the Task Force’s first meeting. They also reminded attendees there was not a public comment portion on the meeting agenda, as the meeting’s primary focus is on establishing foundational knowledge about Colorado’s accountability and accreditation systems, with no intentions to vote on policy recommendations.

Next, the chair and vice chair reviewed the meeting objectives:

- Finalize group norms, common definitions and common understanding of what is a “quality school” – to guide the task force’s deliberations moving forward
- Establish full group understanding of history, purpose, and goals of Colorado’s K-12 Accountability System
- Discuss recent legislative-commissioned evaluation of the accountability system and elevate relevant implications for the Task Force’s work and goals

Given the nature of discussions at this particular meeting, the chair and vice chair proposed a rough “voting” system for assessing the group’s agreement on any particular issue or decision during the course of the meeting: a thumbs up, thumbs down or thumbs sideways. At the same time, they noted that at future meetings the Task Force may need a different approach. While ideally the Task Force will achieve consensus on any future recommendations, if consensus cannot be reached the chair and vice chair may decide to take formal votes.

The chair and vice chair also reminded Task Force members about the online workbook created to help record members' reflections and thoughts during the meeting, particularly for those who may prefer sharing their views in this manner.

Next, Education First facilitators noted that, to better manage conversations, Task Force members who wish to share thoughts to the whole group should raise the flag they've been given or use a virtual Zoom hand. The facilitators expressed their willingness to hear from everyone but indicated a preference for inviting input from members who had not previously shared thoughts with the full group. They also encouraged Task Force members to continue noting their questions and comments in the group's online workbook.

Education First then presented the Task Force with a revised set of meeting and discussion norms, which incorporated feedback from the previous meeting. The revised norms:

- Assume positive intent from others' thoughts and input;
- Agree to disagree;
- Maintain flexibility and allow for opinions to change;
- Share the speaking and listening space with fellow members in an equitable and respectful manner;
- Respect the candidness of others as a gift; and
- Expect non-closure.

Task Force members did not request any additions or edits to these proposed norms at the time. Education First noted that this is a living list and it can be amended in the future as needed.

Accountability and Accreditation Terms and Definitions

Education First shared [proposed accountability and accreditation definitions](#) for the Task Force to reference. The terms to define were drawn from H.B. 1241 and suggestions from the Task Force during its August 24 meeting. Definitions were sourced from existing Colorado Department of Education documents used with the field or from State Board policies; definitions for terms that did not have an existing definition were drafted after consulting various sources, as noted.

Members deliberated on whether these definitions were intended to reflect the current state of terms within the accountability system or if they should align with the Task Force's vision for what the accountability system should achieve. The group decided that the terms should be defined based on how they are currently used.

The group then voted on each definition, using a thumbs up to indicate their general agreement with the existing definition or a thumbs down to indicate a need for revision. Based on this rough voting approach, the group decided the following definitions needed additional work: *academic inequities*, *accountability (federal and state)*, *continuous improvement (or school improvement)*, *student growth (or academic growth)*, and *small school factor (or small N-count)*. As a next step, the facilitators asked Task Force members to add any suggestions for improving these definitions to the online workbook by the end of the week; Education First will revise definitions with members' input and present updated versions for further consideration during the next meeting.

Characteristics of a Quality School

To guide the Task Force's future recommendations to improve the state's accountability and accreditation system, the chair and vice chair have encouraged the Task Force to reach agreement on attributes of a quality school; aligning on characteristics of a quality school can serve as a "north star" to orient the Task Force's consideration of the the four "shall" statements as outlined in the statute reflecting legislative direction.

The facilitators presented a synthesized version of quality school characteristics, based on small group and full group discussions at the prior meeting:

- Produces strong and equitable academic outcomes for all types of learners.
- Engages families in contributing to students' and school success.
- Creates an environment/culture where students feel belonging, happiness and physical and psychological safety.
- Prepares students for a variety of pathways and choices after high school and for civic participation, and gives students agency in their learning.
- Develops teachers and teaching to be highly effective.
- Addresses barriers to student learning by providing "wrap-around" services and creating community partnerships.
- Prioritizes evidence-based instructional materials, tools and resources and uses data for school improvement.
- Establishes a strong focus/mission that reflects the community's values.

As a full group, Task Force members discussed possible additional characteristics of quality schools. Some members expressed they were uncomfortable with the discussion, because they don't see the goals of Colorado's accountability system necessarily as reporting on or contributing to all these attributes. Still, there was consensus about adding "adequate and equitable funding to meet students' needs and community needs" to the list. To further address concerns and discuss how wording or framing could be improved, Task Force members organized into four smaller groups. These groups considered: (1) strong and equitable academic outcomes/growth/ achievement; (2) recruitment and retention of high-quality teachers; (3) co-curricular/ wrap-around services; or (4) and school funding equity. Afterwards, participants in small groups reported their ideas and Education First offered to further refine the characteristics based on this feedback.

Overview of Colorado's K-12 Accountability System

Lisa Medler, executive director of Accountability and Continuous Improvement at the Colorado Department of Education, [presented](#) on Colorado's K-12 Accountability System, including its history, theory of action and major components. She was joined by Marie Huchton, supervisor of the Accountability Analytics team at the department. The presentation focused on the performance framework and decisions used by CDE to evaluate student performance and identify Colorado's lowest and highest performing schools. Among many topics she covered, Medler explained the performance indicators used in the framework, how Colorado's growth model works, how CDE handles data for small schools and subgroups, public reporting associated with the accountability system, improvement planning, public engagement practices, supports and interventions provided for identified schools, school accreditation processes, and various awards for school and district performance.

Medler and Huchton answered Task Force members' questions throughout the presentation. For more technical questions or requests for additional analysis, CDE staff noted areas requiring additional research. CDE will provide additional information at future Task Force meetings.

Evaluation of Colorado's K-12 Education Accountability System

During the last portion of the meeting, Task Force members were asked to share their reflections and conclusions from reviewing the recent [legislatively-commission evaluation of Colorado's accountability system](#). Colorado engaged the research organization HumRRO to perform this evaluation, and its findings were released in November 2022. In describing the goals for this portion of the meeting, the chair and vice chair encouraged members to focus on how questions and conclusions identified by HumRRO could potentially inform Task Force deliberations.

To structure members' feedback on the evaluation, Education First invited Task Force members to first add reflections on a Google Jamboard document and to then review the responses from others. The four prompts members were asked to offer feedback about included:

- After reading the audit, what did you learn about the accountability system?
- What needs further explaining?
- What strengths of Colorado's accountability system were highlighted in the audit?
- What opportunities to strengthen the accountability system did the audit present?

Task Force members engaged in a full-group conversation about some of the commonalities and differences seen in responses on the Jamboard. Education First will summarize major themes.

Closing Remarks and Next Steps

The chair and vice chair thanked members for their participation, and they thanked the CDE staff for their work to develop a presentation on Colorado's accountability system. Members were reminded by the chair and vice chair of the upcoming task force meeting on October 17, 2023. Some Task Force members proposed alternative locations and arrangements for future meetings.

Summary of next steps

- BY OCTOBER 6: Task Force members should provide any additional feedback to the accountability/ accreditation definitions not agreed on during the meeting, to aid in redrafting; Education First will update the list of definitions accordingly and present during the next meeting
- FOR NEXT MEETING (AND BEYOND): CDE staff will address the additional information and analysis requested about Colorado's current accountability and accreditation system at future Task Force meetings; members may be asked to help CDE staff prioritize which topics to address first.
- Education First will summarize comments made as part of the Jamboard exercise collecting ideas about the HumRRO evaluation of Colorado's accountability system.
- Education First will circulate a post-meeting survey to capture members' insights on key topics for future discussion

The meeting was adjourned.

Meeting summary prepared by Education First