



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

Colorado State Board of Education

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS  
BEFORE THE  
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMISSION  
DENVER, COLORADO  
November 11, 2015, Part 2

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT on November 11, 2015,  
the above-entitled meeting was conducted at the Colorado  
Department of Education, before the following Board  
Members:

Steven Durham (R), Chairman  
Angelika Schroeder (D), Vice Chairman  
Valentina (Val) Flores (D)  
Jane Goff (D)  
Pam Mazanec (R)  
Joyce Rankin (R)  
Debora Scheffel (R)



1                   CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Okay. Board, welcome back  
2 to order. And we'll proceed with public comment. We'll  
3 start with, it looks like, Nicole Landack (ph). Nicole,  
4 please, state your name and if you represent anybody.  
5 And you're -- by the way, we're limited to three minutes  
6 in this presentation.

7                   MS. LANDACK: Great. Thank you. Good  
8 morning. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak  
9 with you.

10                   My name is Nicole Landack and I'm a parent.  
11 I'm a parent of three children attending Denver public  
12 schools. I have an eighth grader, a fifth grader, and a  
13 kindergartner. I've, also spent seven years as a high  
14 school math teacher, teaching every course from Algebra I  
15 to AP Calculus in multiple states. I'm also a small  
16 business owner in the Stapleton area.

17                   I understand that tomorrow you'll be  
18 releasing the results of the PARCC assessment that  
19 students took last spring. I'm here today to underscore  
20 my support for the educational improvement efforts  
21 Colorado has taken on in the last several years and  
22 encourage you all to stay the course. As I'm sure you've  
23 heard, on countless occasions, PARCC is aligned to newer,  
24 higher academic standards, meant to prepare students for  
25 college and their career. I want to reaffirm that we



1 can't compare the new scores that are coming out to our  
2 old test results. They are different tests. It would be  
3 like comparing scores on the ACT to the -- to the SAT.  
4 We need to expect them to look very different.

5 I've also heard that PARCC is a high-stakes  
6 test and that students are feeling the pressure to do  
7 well. It's only natural for kids to want to impress  
8 their parents and teachers, but they should never feel  
9 like they would be punished for doing poorly. This is  
10 not a punitive test. It's simply one measure to their  
11 knowledge. By shining a light on how a student is doing,  
12 teachers are better equipped to offer support where it is  
13 needed.

14 As a teacher, I know to ensure students are  
15 on the right track in reaching the expectations we have  
16 set for them, they need a strong, aligned test. How do  
17 we know if they are mastering the content their teachers  
18 are presenting every day without an assessment that  
19 actually correlates to what students are learning in the  
20 classroom?

21 Two of my kids, Jonah (ph) and Sarah (ph),  
22 took the PARCC assessment last spring. Jonah is an  
23 eighth grader at DSST: Stapleton Middle School. And  
24 when he came home after the first few tests I asked him  
25 how it went. His response was, mom, it's not a big deal.



1 In a nutshell, both of my kids didn't come home  
2 distraught, nor anxious. Instead, they were excited they  
3 go to take a test on a tablet and that they learned the  
4 concepts that we -- that were tested.

5 I will say, like many of you, I'm also  
6 frustrated I haven't received scores yet. With that  
7 being said, I understand this was a transition year. I  
8 know when I do finally get my kids' scores, they may look  
9 lower, but I'm also confident that what they're learning  
10 in school is more rigorous and it is better preparing  
11 them for college.

12 From all of these perspectives, I strongly  
13 support the Colorado Academic Standards and the tests  
14 that are aligned. Change can be hard, but I urge you to  
15 look at the broader picture, because Colorado is doing  
16 great things for kids. Bumps in the road are bound to  
17 happen. We can't afford to look back now. Too many  
18 students' lives depend upon a solid educational system  
19 that sets them up for future success. PARCC is simply  
20 examining how well students are doing right now so that  
21 students can make adjustments and prepare them for the  
22 next step.

23 In closing and perhaps, more importantly,  
24 I'd like to say that as a parent I want the best for my  
25 kids, as all parents do. And I need them to be prepared



1 for success in life after high school. I want them to go  
2 to college, excel in their studies, find a job their  
3 passionate about and go on to live a happy and successful  
4 life. I truly feel confident in the education they're  
5 getting today under the new Colorado Academy Standards  
6 and these aligned tests. Thank you very much for your  
7 time.

8 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Thank you. Jose Castillo  
9 (ph). Going once. Did I mispronounce the name that bad?

10 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Castillo.

11 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Castillo.

12 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Castillo. Castillo.

13 Going once, going twice. Okay. I apologize for my  
14 presentation -- for my -- it looks like Ms. Vasquez (ph).  
15 Did I miss that one?

16 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Do you think maybe  
17 they'll start -- they'll be in at --

18 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Yeah. We might come back  
19 to those. Let's see. Susan Steele (ph). Ms. Steele.

20 MS. STEELE: Good morning. Thank you very  
21 much. I am Susan Steele. I am the executive director of  
22 the Buell Foundation, a Colorado philanthropic  
23 organization for over 60 years. I'm here today in my  
24 role as a member of the Early Childhood Leadership  
25 Commission. I understand that you all received



1 electronically a copy of a letter where we outlined some  
2 of our very important concerns or considerations  
3 regarding the School Readiness Assessment. Before I was  
4 at the Buell Foundation, I was, for many years, in  
5 private accounting, and before that, also a middle school  
6 math teacher.

7           So you will not be surprised that my focus  
8 this morning is about accountability, measurement,  
9 baseline, the kinds of things that businesses will talk  
10 about. In our role at the commission, we think it's  
11 incredibly important for us to understand where our kids  
12 are when they get to school. We think that's important  
13 for the kids so that we understand where they may need  
14 more assistance. We think it's incredibly important for  
15 the parents, so that they can be supportive of these kids  
16 as they get more assistance and we think it's even more  
17 important for the teachers. We don't want them to have  
18 to waste their time on unnecessary areas.

19           So knowing where kids start school, knowing  
20 in the broad range of development where there might be  
21 areas for improvement or where there are areas of  
22 excellence are very, very important. We want to be able  
23 to spend the time moving them forward in all the ranges  
24 of the domains. And that would be, of course, in  
25 academic. That would be in social/emotional, which we



1 all know behaviors and executive function are so  
2 incredibly important. And they are started in these  
3 years.

4           Finally, we would like to just remember that  
5 this is about parents. Yesterday, I spoke to one of my  
6 staff members who just went through a parent-teacher  
7 conference using GOLD as the basis. She couldn't have  
8 been more excited about the attention to detail, the  
9 attention to specific areas, the opportunity to look what  
10 she could do as a parent and she and her husband could do  
11 to help support the teacher and to help support the  
12 child.

13           We think that the situation where waivers  
14 are continuing to be approved is a concern. We are  
15 looking for, as I said, a data-specific baseline. Those  
16 need to be comparable. They need to be comprehensive.  
17 The state law, I believe, suggests that they have to be  
18 both reliable and valid. And I think all of those things  
19 lead to a healthy dataset that we can use for improvement  
20 and for considerations.

21           There is a lot of heart with working with  
22 these young kids, but this is, also about the business of  
23 getting them ready to be successful in school and in  
24 life. And that's about data and hard choices and moving  
25 forward. Thank you very much.



1 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Thank you. Cindy Will  
2 (ph)?

3 MS. WILL: Good morning, President -- excuse  
4 me, Good Morning, President Durham, Commissioner and  
5 State Board Members. My name is Cindy Will. I last  
6 month introduced myself as a principal of a charter  
7 school in Colorado Springs. However, before my  
8 administrative work, I had the privilege of teaching boys  
9 and girls during their preschool, kindergarten and first  
10 grade years.

11 These early learner experiences in primary  
12 grades ignited my kid-loving passions. Now, they compel  
13 me to speak out about the disastrous impact of GOLD on  
14 teachers, administrators, and superintendents along the  
15 front range. When I spoke at the last State Board  
16 Meeting I urged that all that glitters is not gold. In  
17 fact, it might be fool's gold, not to be fooled any  
18 longer.

19 So the past few weeks I made the time to  
20 talk to a handful of educators about their experiences  
21 with GOLD. Some were leaders of school districts. Some  
22 were reps of the GOLD Assessment and another worked with  
23 CDE.

24 And the results are in. One, there is a lot  
25 of great confusion. Two, GOLD continues to require our



1 school leaders to work under a very -- labor under a very  
2 great burden. How so? Well, some districts use a survey  
3 test format while others use a full assessment portfolio.  
4 Some districts document with pictures and videos and get  
5 parental permission first. Other districts make  
6 documentation optional.

7 One superintendent invested in iPads for all  
8 district kindergarten teachers, hoping to streamline the  
9 data collection and the uploading requirements only to  
10 discover in horror that even with newly purchased iPads,  
11 it took two hours per child per administration, a total  
12 loss of eight hours per child over the course of the year  
13 would have been required. With frustration, the district  
14 quit. They aren't using any readiness assessment. They  
15 don't have waivers. They're not testing. It was  
16 disastrous.

17 Last month I reported our school's GOLD  
18 Pilot required one-and-a-half hours per child. Now I  
19 have new gratitude that we saved a half an hour compared  
20 to -- per child compared to the other district.  
21 Questions? Is this invasion of personal and confidential  
22 information worth it? What's the better predictor of  
23 readiness for first grade? All this social, emotional  
24 data being collected or a strong foundation in reading,  
25 math and writing?



1                   At our Title I school, every kindergartener  
2 finishes the year reading, with strong addition and  
3 subtraction skills, terrific cursive writing, amazing  
4 World and American Geography skills, great early American  
5 History knowledge, and daily lessons in the fine arts,  
6 music and PE. Robert Fulghum had it right, all I really  
7 need to know, I learned in kindergarten.

8                   Board Members, I know you to be people of  
9 good will. And I appeal to you for the kids' sake, ready  
10 or not, GOLD has got to go. Thank you.

11                   CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Thank you, Ms. Will.  
12 Elizabeth Berg (ph).

13                   MS. BERG: Members of the State Board of  
14 Education, we talk a lot about GOLD these days. In my  
15 training, I learned that our gold coin in education is  
16 not PPR, not high tech or small classes, but time. Time  
17 to teach with urgency, and purpose and focus. To  
18 squander our gold coin of time is to betray our students  
19 and the trust we have with their families.

20                   At my school, I'm a principal. We have  
21 proven true to this charge. We have 62 percent minority,  
22 45 percent free and reduced. We embrace achievement.  
23 And there is no achievement gap. Our school performance  
24 framework lists that we are in the 99th percentile of  
25 schools in Colorado in writing, 97th in reading, 98th in



1 math.

2 Please, Board, do not take away our time by  
3 burying productive schools, like mine, in any unnecessary  
4 data-gathering exercises that are, frankly, superfluous  
5 but very expensive in regards to time.

6 This is the training packet I received,  
7 given to me by TS GOLD and CDE staff. The need to  
8 thoroughly write -- or to write thoroughly objective,  
9 descriptive paragraphs was pounded into us. Or we could  
10 take pictures and videos to support a numeric score  
11 selected. Children's facial expressions needed to be  
12 described, not interpreted. Objectivity was paramount.  
13 Makes an angry face was too subjective. Eyebrows and  
14 mouths could be described objectively. Children's  
15 grammar must be accurately rendered, I knowed my name.  
16 Is this really valid data?

17 TS GOLD item 2B is typical. It "assesses  
18 whether a child establishes and sustains positive  
19 relationships by responding to emotional cues. Numerical  
20 scores of two, four, six, eight have indicators and then  
21 the teacher has exemplar paragraphs that guide her in  
22 scoring a child that she write."

23 "For a low score of two, the teacher would  
24 need to write something like, moves to adult while  
25 watching another child have a tantrum or cries when hears



1 an adult hear use an angry tone of voice." Who was using  
2 that angry tone, I ask?

3 "For a score of six a teacher could write,  
4 matches a picture of a happy face with a child getting a  
5 present or a sad face with a picture of a child dropping  
6 the banana she was eating." Honestly.

7 "For a score of eight," the high score,  
8 crème de la crème. "The bleary eye, exhausted  
9 kindergarten teacher could appropriately write, shows  
10 Mayor a picture of a dinosaur but doesn't show it to Lucy  
11 because he remembers she's afraid of dinosaurs.  
12 Supposedly the teacher can read Jimmy's mind to know why  
13 he doesn't show Lucy dinosaurs." So much for  
14 objectivity. I could not make something like this up.

15 So CDE burdens teachers to write about  
16 objective anecdotes, dinosaurs, trikes, daily pets,  
17 pictures of gardens and to explain why a student could  
18 get an eight, whatever eight means. This kind of data  
19 collection is not what teachers, parents, Coloradans want  
20 for their children. It is not useful data, but useless  
21 and intrusive anecdotes.

22 State Board of Education, your gold coin is  
23 to protect the trust of families in Colorado by  
24 protecting schools from owner experience and protecting  
25 the rightful privacy of children and their parents. Let



1 the teachers use their time to plan and prepare good  
2 instructor so they can close the achievement gap. Thank  
3 you.

4 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Thank you. Let's see.  
5 Deborah Cole (ph).

6 MS. COLE: Mr. Chairman, Members of the  
7 Board, good morning. My name is Deborah Cole. In 2012,  
8 the National Conference of State Legislature said, "To  
9 prepare students for 21st century workforce, states are  
10 looking to create seamless systems of education that  
11 begins supporting students to be college and career ready  
12 from their first day of school. This requires alignment,  
13 coordination and communication between several education  
14 and workforce sectors. Colorado is one state moving the  
15 needle to strengthen their pipeline by getting these  
16 sectors to work together, aligning policy and programs to  
17 guide students to success."

18 Colorado students are being viewed above all  
19 as entrants into the workforce and it's -- and it is the  
20 job of private, public partnerships known as workforce  
21 intermediaries to make sure that these bits of human  
22 capital are directed to their proper function in a  
23 managed economy.

24 This past June, Governor Hickenlooper echoed  
25 the call for students to prepare for the workforce



1 starting in kindergarten when he signed an executive  
2 order creating a business experiential learning  
3 commission. This commission was tasked to implement a  
4 system that, "utilizes the data collected through the  
5 digital badging system and shares such information with  
6 the K-16 education system for use and developing an  
7 adjusted curriculum in real-time as the market demands  
8 shift."

9 The instruction of our children is to be  
10 made contingent on market demands. For the sake of  
11 argument, let us accept that our children exist for the  
12 benefit of the business community. How well are they  
13 being prepared for that role? A report titled Are They  
14 Really Ready To Work summarizes employers input regarding  
15 the preparation of their new hires. It states that  
16 employers consider high school graduate preparation  
17 adequate in IT application, diversity and  
18 teamwork/collaboration, but deficient in the basic skills  
19 of written English, math and reading comprehension. And  
20 employers, by the way, do not brush off these  
21 deficiencies the consider them "very important."

22 Apparently the three Rs still matter. It  
23 does not require higher order thinking skills, but simply  
24 common sense to conclude that it is time to power down  
25 the electronic keyboards and concentrate on cursive



1 writing, to teach reading with phonics, rather than  
2 contextual clues, to replace with common core's close  
3 reading with broad reading of history of first-rate  
4 literature, inquiry learning with standard math  
5 algorithms, gaming with instruction on how to write a  
6 proper narrative or persuasive essay and projects and  
7 research skills with grammar and spelling.

8           These are not only the skills that future  
9 employers report missing in the young people they hire,  
10 but are, also those that will equip our students for a  
11 future that they choose for themselves as free agents,  
12 not as cogs in a managed labor force. Skills that were  
13 18th, 19th and 20th century skills and that employers  
14 report are, also key though neglected 21st century  
15 skills. Thank you.

16           CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Thank you, Ms. Cole. Rich  
17 Jones?

18           MR. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chair and Members  
19 of the Board. My name is Rich Jones. I'm the Director  
20 of Policy and Research with the Bell Policy Center.  
21 We're a non-partisan, progressive, public policy research  
22 and advocacy organization. I appreciate the opportunity  
23 to provide public comment to you today regarding  
24 Colorado's high school equivalency program and the  
25 related rule-making and request for application process



1 that you will take up again at your December meeting.

2 First, I want to reinforce for you the  
3 importance of the program and the high school equivalency  
4 diploma to which it leads both for student educational  
5 attainment and state workforce development. Every year,  
6 thousands of Coloradoans, both youth and adults pursue a  
7 high school equivalency diploma as a key stepping stone  
8 to employment, post-secondary studies or to ensure that  
9 they can be full partners in their own children's  
10 educational success. For these individuals, passing a  
11 high school equivalency assessment and obtaining the  
12 diploma remains a critical step in achieving their  
13 personal, family and economic goals. For our state, it  
14 remains one of the foundational building blocks when  
15 developing a strong workforce and competitive economy.

16 Because of the high school equivalency  
17 programs far reaching importance, it's essential that all  
18 those involved, the students, adult education, and test  
19 preparation providers, testing centers and the Department  
20 have a clear sense of how students gain access to and  
21 progress in the program, how it is administered, what  
22 options are available and what outcomes it leads to.  
23 Most importantly, the awarding of the high school  
24 equivalency diploma.

25 While we applaud your efforts to repeal



1       obsolete program rules, we are concerned the current  
2       state statute alone may not provide the full clarity and  
3       authority necessary to administer the program in a way  
4       that ensures student and program success. As a result,  
5       we urge you and the Department staff to carefully compare  
6       the rules you plan to repeal with relevant current  
7       statutes to ensure the vital program components and  
8       questions related to access, administration, testing,  
9       diploma granting are not lost or left unanswered if you  
10      need -- if you repeal the rule in its entirety.

11                 We understand that some individuals and  
12      organizations who are more directly engaged in program  
13      activities may be providing specifics to you through  
14      public comment process on the options -- or the portions  
15      their most concerned with safeguarding. We ask that you  
16      carefully consider their input as well as the staff's  
17      recommendation before making any final decisions.

18                 On another point related to the program and  
19      your rule-making activities, we, also want to briefly  
20      comment on the Department's request for application  
21      process for the potential high school equivalency  
22      assessment or assessments to be approved by you for use  
23      of Colorado leading to equivalency diploma.

24                 Given the actions of many states across the  
25      country to change or expand the assessment options



1 available to students, such an RFA process for Colorado  
2 is both timely and important. We believe that providing  
3 options to students is good education policy and is  
4 consistent with the multiple pathways approach to  
5 increasing student success.

6 Further, offering multiple options for high  
7 school equivalency assessments in Colorado would  
8 recognize and support the wide variety of learning  
9 styles, testing format, preferences, financial  
10 circumstances, life goals, and post-secondary and  
11 workforce aspirations that diverse students seeking a  
12 high school equivalency diploma bring with them and would  
13 strengthen the program for the benefit of all concerned.

14 Pending the outcome of the RFA process, we  
15 urge you to approve multiple high school equivalency  
16 assessments for use in Colorado to meet the broad needs  
17 of our students and our state. Thank you for the  
18 opportunity to present these comments to you today.

19 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Thank you, Mr. Jones.

20 MR. JONES: Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Let's see. Let's --  
22 Mr. Castillo is in the room now with -- yes.

23 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: He's going to do it in  
24 Spanish and then I'll translate in English.

25 MR. CASTILLO: In Spanish?



1 MR. CASTILLO THROUGH INTERPRETER: Good  
2 morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board of -- the  
3 Board of Education. Thank you for the opportunity to  
4 allow me to present myself today. My name is Jose  
5 Castillo and I am a parent with a son in fifth grade at  
6 Columbine Elementary School and a daughter in 12th grade  
7 at East High School. I'm a leader with Together  
8 Colorado. I have -- I have four years of volunteering as  
9 Columbine as a parent.

10 As a parent who is really involved in the --  
11 in the schools of my kids, I believe that all the  
12 students should be ready for the university. I believe  
13 that we are on the right direction, we're in the right  
14 path. My dream for my children are to graduate, but not  
15 just graduate high school, graduate the university. I  
16 believe that the Colorado Academic Standards will allow  
17 my children reach their dreams of graduating and getting  
18 a career after college. And I believe that the PARCC  
19 test, it will allow us to know that we're on the right  
20 path and that they're on the right path to get to their  
21 dreams.

22 In my opinion, the Colorado Academic  
23 Standards and the PARCC test will allow us to raise the  
24 bar and reach our goals and allow all students to have  
25 the opportunity to reach their dreams. Thank you for



1 your time today.

2 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Thank you.

3 MR. CASTILLO: Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Let's see. Glenda Sinks  
5 (ph).

6 MS. SINKS: Hello. Thank you for this  
7 opportunity to hear us. And I'm -- I'm going to be  
8 brief, but I would like to encourage you to adopt the two  
9 other high school equivalency tests. And, mainly, my one  
10 -- my one point is it's about choices and closing the  
11 door on monopolies.

12 Not to give a history lesson to everyone,  
13 but of course today is Veterans Day. And did you know  
14 that the GED testing service started as a result of the  
15 World War II veterans coming back and they said how can  
16 we send them back to high school? Let's give them some  
17 options. And so, therefore, the GED test was created.  
18 And for the longest time that monopoly was fine.

19 But then, of course, in this changing world,  
20 the GED testing service combined with a for-profit  
21 company called Pearson VUE, and so then that really  
22 changed things. The scene changed completely. And so, I  
23 would like, again, to encourage you to open the door to  
24 the other two tests that are new on the block, because,  
25 again, we don't need that monopoly. We don't need to pad



1 the Pearson VUE coffers. It -- it has been a problem for  
2 our students.

3 I represent an adult education program at  
4 the Community College of Denver where we have, believe it  
5 or not, we have 60-year-olds, 50-year-olds, 40, 30, et  
6 cetera, and even some, of course, we're required to just  
7 serve the 17 and above. And so choices are very, very  
8 important. With choices I believe comes accessibility.

9 One of my colleagues at Front Range  
10 Community College says many of our students go up to  
11 Wyoming and take an alternative test to the GED test.  
12 And it's like, wow, so they've got some choices. Of  
13 course we, in the metro area don't want to send people to  
14 Wyoming, although I have had a student go there to take  
15 an alternative test.

16 So -- so again, in my opinion, it's all  
17 about choices. And as we adjust in this world, you know,  
18 it would change things a lot to add and have three tests.  
19 I've talked to the director of the testing center at  
20 Community College of Denver. And it's like -- it would  
21 be no problem. We always adjust to change. So, I really  
22 would like to encourage you to say yes to adopting the  
23 two other high school equivalency tests. In this day and  
24 age, it's all about choices and accessibility, not about  
25 monopolies. Thank you.



1                   CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Thank you. Shirley Penn  
2                   (ph).

3                   MS. PENN: Thank you so much for letting us  
4                   speak to you today. I, too, am an adult educator and am  
5                   here to speak to you about adult education. My  
6                   qualifications are I have recently retired from working  
7                   for 23 years as an adult educator and as a program  
8                   director. I've served ten years on the Colorado Adult  
9                   Education Association -- Professional Association and I'm  
10                  part of the High School Equivalency Taskforce.

11                  In all the years in education, I have never  
12                  seen so much change at -- and have it happen so quickly.  
13                  As the State Board of Education, you will be making  
14                  decisions that will determine the future opportunities  
15                  for over three -- 30 thousand Coloradoans who do not have  
16                  a high school diploma. Change can be either good or bad,  
17                  it all depends on how it's handled.

18                  The issue of the high school equivalency  
19                  diploma granting process is not just an issue for the  
20                  concerns of CDE. This is an issue for employers and the  
21                  Department of Labor, for the Department of Human  
22                  Services, higher education training institutions, non-  
23                  profits and other institutions throughout the state. We  
24                  are the pipeline that takes the undereducated adult to  
25                  the workforce.



1                   One issue that will be before you is the  
2                   selection of new tests to be approved by the State of  
3                   Colorado for issuing the Colorado High School Equivalency  
4                   Diploma. The old GED is gone. In its place is a new  
5                   GED. It's based on new standards, developed by a new  
6                   company, and with a totally changed format. We, also  
7                   have the choice of two new assessments, both developed by  
8                   organizations with a long history of developing  
9                   educational assessments.

10                   In 2013, all states utilized the GED to --  
11                   to issue their high school equivalency diploma. Starting  
12                   in 2014, 17 states moved away from the GED or elected to  
13                   offer multiple assessments. More states will be changing  
14                   in the near future. Why is this? Well, there are many  
15                   reasons, but the core issue is students are not passing  
16                   the old test. Programs report that in the -- after 18  
17                   months of utilizing the new test, 80 percent fewer  
18                   students are passing. Although it's normal for pass  
19                   rates to drop after a test change, in 2014, the drop was  
20                   so significant and the recovery has been almost minimal.

21                   I wish there was more time to discuss all  
22                   the issues involved. Those in the field are alarmed at  
23                   the sustained drop in graduates. We have carefully  
24                   studied the issues before us and talked to many  
25                   stakeholders. We, also have reached out in other -- to



1 other states to learn from their experience.

2 Our request is that you approve all three  
3 tests in the State of Colorado. All tests passed -- all  
4 tests passed onto you will meet the minimum standards set  
5 by the -- the RFA process issued by the Department of  
6 Education. The three tests are aligned to state  
7 standards, but each test has its strengths and  
8 weaknesses.

9 Participants in adult education programs are  
10 diverse. Their needs and goals are, also diverse. The  
11 one size fits all approach does not meet the needs of our  
12 students, our programs, our employers, or our state.  
13 Thank you very much.

14 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Thank you. Ms. Vasquez.

15 MS. VASQUEZ: Good morning, Mr. Chairman and  
16 Members of the State Board of Education. Thank you for  
17 the opportunity to present to you today. My name is  
18 Marisol (ph) Vasquez and I'm a parent of a third grader  
19 and a kindergartener parent in elementary.

20 As a leader with Together Colorado, I have  
21 been involved with Together Colorado and my kids go for  
22 the last three years. As an involved parent in my  
23 children's -- children's education, I believe in high  
24 school standards for all students and, also in schools.  
25 I believe all standards should be prepared for college



1 and career so they can have a good job.

2 My hope and dreams for my kids is for them  
3 to finish school, go to college, have a good career, and  
4 be successful. Even though my kids have special needs, I  
5 always put them -- I think they should be hold -- held to  
6 high expectations.

7 Also I've been involved in -- I, also was a  
8 GPA student and so when I was in school, I didn't -- my  
9 parents never knew about the standards. In the Colorado  
10 Academic Standards in PARCC test set the bar high to  
11 provide good measurements for all our kids. So thank you  
12 for the opportunity to present and have a great day.

13 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Thank you.

14 MS. VASQUEZ: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Let's see. George Walker  
16 (ph).

17 MR. WALKER: Good morning, Mr. Chair, and  
18 Members of the Board, and audience. I wasn't going to  
19 present this morning even though I did bring several  
20 documents for the Board. But after hearing Board Member  
21 -- First Congressional District Board Member, Dr. Flores'  
22 statements about let's have -- let's have more teaching  
23 and less tests, I decided to enter in the record and  
24 bring to your attention the series of programs that KRMA,  
25 Channel Six, started on October 16th. One of the



1 documents is called Standing in the Gap. And I'll quote  
2 for -- from it.

3 "Twenty years after the end of federally  
4 mandated bussing, Denver public schools are resegregated.  
5 Today, staggering educational achievement gaps exist  
6 between white students and those of color." Quite  
7 frankly, watching the program after watching last year's  
8 hearings on testing and this Board's effort, I was really  
9 astounded to see that public television is pushing  
10 testing, labeling students of color, as deficient and  
11 inferior. And I don't know if they're pushing for  
12 another federal mandate or not. I don't know if they're  
13 pushing for bussing or not, but they scheduled another  
14 document, attend a live screening event.

15 Every episode of Standing in the Gap will  
16 have a premiere screening prior to the broadcast date  
17 followed by community discussion. We welcome all members  
18 of the community come and take part in this dialogue.  
19 The first is tomorrow, November 12th at 9:00 p.m. on  
20 channel six.

21 Now we, in the first district, elected  
22 Dr. Flores. I haven't seen her as one of our leading  
23 Latino educators on this program. I'd like to hear what  
24 she says about this KRM -- or channel six series and I'd  
25 like for the whole Board Member, even though I know you



1 don't want to stick your nose any more than necessary in  
2 local matters. But Denver is the largest district. What  
3 happens here is important.

4 And on October 19th, I left a strong message  
5 KRMA inviting them to the meeting today and one of the  
6 authors of the report is in the room today and I'd  
7 appreciate if -- if he would explain why on earth we need  
8 a major effort to push more testing and more labeling of  
9 students of color. And, Dr. Flores, please get involved.  
10 Please demand equal time from channel six. Let's hear  
11 from one of the leaders that we elected from the Latino  
12 community, rather than everybody who -- to angles who  
13 seem to have a terrific axe to grind.

14 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Okay.

15 MR. WALKER: And they do label students of  
16 color. We don't have the funding and teachers of color  
17 to make changes --

18 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: All right. Mr. Walker, --

19 MR. WALKER: They're just doing more damage.

20 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Thank you.

21 MS. FLORES: And you asked me --

22 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Well, --

23 MS. FLORES: Should I respond? One word --

24 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: No. That's -- it's not  
25 appropriate at this time, but we will, certainly, make



1 time later on.

2 MR. WALKER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

3 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Yes. Rachelle McKim (ph).

4 MS. MCKIM: Good morning, I'm Rachelle  
5 McKim. I have three kids in Douglas County Schools.  
6 They were all at the charter school. Now, I just have  
7 the oldest as the charter school.

8 And what caught my eye and why I'm here is  
9 to comment on the legislative priorities, all of it  
10 focusing on the fiscal integrity. I had noticed -- I  
11 wanted to come and speak in support of the policy that  
12 you had written from the Attorney General's Office on the  
13 gifts and grants policy that will be coming up later on,  
14 and thank you, and applaud you for addressing this.

15 One thing that I wanted to mention that may  
16 be perhaps you could broaden the policy to apply toward  
17 is the charter schools under the financing guidelines.  
18 Section 22-30.5-112 says, "The governing body of a  
19 charter school is authorized to accept gifts, donations  
20 and grants of any kind made to the charter and to expend  
21 or use said gifts, donations or grants in accordance with  
22 the conditions prescribed by the donor."

23 And so although I believe the intention of  
24 the statute -- statute was to keep monies that were  
25 collected by charter schools at a charter school and not



1 to be taken in by the public schools, it's been  
2 absolutely abused at our school and widely interpreted so  
3 that there's a lot of gifts, grants and donations that  
4 are accepted by the school that are never used for the  
5 children, that never are benefiting the children. And  
6 because this is a state statute, that's why I'm here.  
7 I'm hoping that you can address this in the Charter  
8 School Act under the financing guidelines.

9           And then, the second -- the second financial  
10 policy that I'm also hoping that you might address in  
11 your legislative priorities is the homeschooling funding.  
12 Homeschool kids in -- so the problem that I have is on  
13 the CDE website. It says that the Department of  
14 Education does not endorse any homeschool resource, co-  
15 op, or support group, but lists them as informational  
16 services to homeschool families.

17           Our charter school doesn't have any  
18 homeschool programs on site, but they run three offsite  
19 homeschool programs at churches. So these children are  
20 funded at 50 percent FTE for only six hours of  
21 instruction. So I'm hoping to maybe change that formula  
22 so that 20 percent of instruction would receive 20  
23 percent of funding. There's a large profit, about 60  
24 percent of this funding that is -- it's profit. While  
25 the programs are still requiring the parents to provide



1 their own supplies.

2 And then, the other half of that story is  
3 it's -- because we have an abusive administrator at that  
4 school, I am absolutely pro charter, but we just have a  
5 weak governing board with an abusive dean. That's --  
6 that's what it comes down to. And so her coercive  
7 tactics to get more money and more revenue from this  
8 homeschool program was to discriminate against the kids  
9 that have left the school and become not -- that haven't  
10 used the programs.

11 So they're not allowed -- one of the kids  
12 was kicked out of the school dance because she's no  
13 longer in the program. So just because it's been used  
14 with an abusive tactic, I'm hoping you can address the  
15 funding formula. Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: Thank you. All right.  
17 That concludes public comment. And we'll proceed with  
18 item ten, the kindergarten study session on kindergarten  
19 and school readiness. Do we want a short break?  
20 Committee, are you -- short break?

21 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I need a short break.

22 CHAIRMAN DURHAM: How about we'll take five  
23 minutes and then we'll get started again?

24 (Meeting adjourned)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberly C. McCright, Certified Vendor and Notary, do hereby certify that the above-mentioned matter occurred as hereinbefore set out.

I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT the proceedings of such were reported by me or under my supervision, later reduced to typewritten form under my supervision and control and that the foregoing pages are a full, true and correct transcription of the original notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 25th day of January, 2019.

/s/ Kimberly C. McCright

Kimberly C. McCright

Certified Vendor and Notary Public

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