

Topic	Average Rank	Further Questions or Discussions
Adequacy Study Parameters (Please note parameters need to be finalized by Oct 1st)	2.5	<p>I need more information. Understanding the parameters and process for the study is the area I am least familiar with and hope that we can have as much time as possible to reflect and research what we want incorporated (ie not learn about and make recommendations within the same week)</p> <p>What work in prior interim or task forces has been done around costs of providing a thorough and uniform system of free public schools? What have other states done that have conducted adequacy studies? For example, Kansas has been successful in conducting both adequacy and equity studies and then implementing them. Can we look at what other states have done? What are the state requirements we need to address in helping with an RTT? Why is it contemplated that we need different studies? How would the parameters be different? The adequacy study is for one system. Will the adequacy study just look at adequacy or both adequacy and equity? Will there be any study of the base and how it was calculated (back in 1994)? Will the study look at the impact of past years of underfunding, i.e. the impact of many years of the BS factor? How will we define adequacy: inputs or outputs or some combination of the two?</p> <p>Colorado School Finance Project prepared a brief called "Changing Colorado's School Finance Formula." Among other things, it includes a section on coding out (adequacy) studies that may be a good resource for the task force. It describes 4 methodologies and also recommends that the two studies that are created by this bill also are reconciled so people can understand the different methodologies that exist for adequacy studies. I would like the task force to consider the importance of reconciling the two studies that are commissioned so differences are understood. Finally, I'd like to see the task force review the bill introduced in 2018 by Dave Young as his bill was the result of adequacy work done by a group of superintendents and supported by 176 school districts. To my knowledge, this is as close as Colorado got to considering adequacy in the school finance act and it would be helpful to review that work.</p> <p>-Has the state conducted adequacy studies in the past? If so, what were those parameters, findings, and did the Legislature act on them? Why or why not? What do we hope to glean from these new studies that we maybe didn't get from any previous ones? Should we set different parameters than previous studies? -Why are there two studies being conducted? Is it just two different vendors that may use different methodologies or are we setting different parameters for each study?</p> <p>Why aren't we waiting for these studies to make a recommendations on any funding formula changes?</p> <p>How much would it cost to perform a study that would identify/determine (1) a base per pupil funding level necessary for students without special needs to meet Colorado state standards; (2) the per pupil weights for students with special needs (e.g., poverty, Special Ed, ELL, GT) to be applied to the base funding level so that they can meet state standards; (3) and the appropriate district weights that will address the differences in a district's cost (e.g., economies of scale, remoteness, housing and personnel costs, concentration of poverty, etc.) using at least two of the generally recognized methodologies that states around the country use (e.g., Professional Judgment and Successful Schools). If the \$200,000 currently appropriated for the studies is insufficient to commission a study of that quality and substance, what are our options, so that we don't invest too little money in a corner-cutting, assumption (rather than actual data) based study that does not provide actionable data.</p>
Prioritizing Student Needs in the Formula (At-Risk, ELL Factor, SPED Categorical)	2.6	<p>This is extremely important. Highly impacted schools need additional funds, but district should be prevented from setting FTE requirements. Also, how is each indicator determined? Example, Special Ed, FRL, SOC, etc.</p> <p>The presentation didn't include categorical funding. Will we be looking at categorical funding? If not, how will we be able to respond to this issue? The legislature has commissioned several studies on the underfunding of special education, going as far back as at least 2000. How was the amount for special education tier 1 & 2 funding levels set? Will we have access to those studies?</p> <p>Explain how categorical vs. factor funding work w/ at-risk, ELLELPA, SpEd, GT, vocational funding. Provide examples of existing funding for just these factors and categoricals for a sample of districts. It's hard to know how to prioritize student need without the adequacy work, circumstances that are out of a district's control like size or remoteness or cost of living are also part of meeting student need. I'm concerned about "prioritizing" student need without acknowledging and including these elements in the conversation.</p> <p>-I would appreciate a meeting or meetings dedicated to this specific charge as it seems to be connected to all of the other charges for the task force. What does the current research say about prioritizing student need in funding formulas? Pre-reads on the importance of emphasizing At-Risk, ELL, and Special Education in funding formulas will be important. Will we have access to resources like that?</p> <p>How much does it cost to educate a student that comes from poverty (at risk)? Why is more money put into cost of living than at risk?</p> <p>How much does it cost to educate a student that comes from poverty (at risk)? Why is more money put into cost of living than at risk?</p> <p>What are the appropriate weights (additions) for different populations, and how should they be accommodated in the SFA? What about students with numerous needs (e.g., special ed AND gifted AND acquiring English)?</p> <p>Implementation of new at risk factor</p>
Cost of Living	3.1	<p>Does this require additional funding from the state so it doesn't impact school and district budgets? I am in full support, but I als think schools need additional funds but we need to cautious that funds aren't just applied to agreement forces salary schedules.</p> <p>How do other states factor in cost of living?</p> <p>Does the personnel factor make sense or does it automatically harm rural districts?</p> <p>More detailed information</p> <p>See questions above. I know this is one of the largest. If not the largest, factor. What is the history of why this is part of the formula? How is it calculated and how often? Why this factor and not personnel cost factor? What proposed legislation has there been around this factor and what were the results of these legislative efforts?</p> <p>Please provide a history of COL and why the factor is "frozen" and not responsive to the every-two-years legislative study on COL. Please provide comparisons of COL rankings from the last 10 (so, 20 years if it goes back that far) legislative council COL studies and how those rankings of districts compare to the COL factors districts have now. How long have current COL factors been the same for districts? How were they calculated and why do they not adjust?</p> <p>-My understanding is that Cost of Living is currently the main multiplicative factor in the funding formula. Are there other multiplicative factors that act similarly? How does Cost of Living affect other factors in the formula like At-Risk and ELL? Does it affect more than just base per pupil funding? -How is Cost of Living currently calculated in the formula? Is the calculation updated or current, or is it research or evidence-based?</p> <p>Can we get a non-partisan analysis of the intention of the cost of living factor, how it's used? How does the funding formula encourage good retention and recruitment for educators?</p> <p>Does the personnel factor make sense or does it automatically harm rural districts?</p> <p>Can we get research/data on Cost of Living for various parts of the state? Can we also get a variety of salary scales from rural and urban districts?</p> <p>What's the best way to measure the difference in COLs among different regions? How much should housing costs be considered? Personnel costs? What are the policy goals, and how are they best served?</p> <p>Simulations of scenarios where cost of living is reduced/eliminated, in conjunction with increasing student factor funding -- what is the impact by district</p> <p>Methods for rebasing this factor</p>
Eliminating Multiplicative Indexes	4	<p>I need to know the indexes and the purpose of each group? Is this opinion or do the indexes impact other groups.</p> <p>Why were these introduced in the first place?</p> <p>More detailed information</p> <p>See above: what is the context for this concern? What are the issues with these indexes? What background information can we get to better understand this and how can we get different runs to see the impact of decisions?</p> <p>What are examples of school finance formulas that include cost of living, personnel, and size that do not have them arranged in a multiplicative way? It would make sense to consider the math of multiplicative indexes after the adequacy study so we know better how they work relative to costs of providing education.</p> <p>-This is likely the most complicated and confusing part of the formula, and I believe it could require the most level-setting among the task force members. Clear breakdowns, explainers, and information from sources like Legislative Council will especially be important for pre-reads and task force discussion. Will we have access to resources like that? -Building off my overall comment about the charges needing to be considered collectively, I believe that this charge is closely associated with the Cost of Living Factor which is the main multiplicative index of the formula. Understanding how these charges go hand-in-hand will be important. -I would appreciate a meeting or meetings dedicated to this specific charge.</p> <p>What readings available to learn more about this?</p> <p>What SHOULD the order of operations in the SFA be in order to best ensure the goals of the formula are intended to meet? How have successful states addressed this?</p>
Securing Equalization in MILL Levy	4.4	<p>I need to understand more! Why is it narrowly described? Are we limiting ourselves when we just say charter? I need more information.</p> <p>How do other states handle this issue?</p> <p>What other funding do CSI schools receive outside the formula? Are the student populations in CSI schools similar to populations in traditional public schools, i.e. do they serve the same at risk, special education, ELL, or other special populations as district schools? Would the state also "secure equalization for mill levies in rural schools?"</p> <p>Please be careful to explain that this very specific charge is for the Charter School Institute schools, which does not include charter schools authorized by school districts. Explain how CSI schools are currently funded (which I think is not with the school finance formula). Clarify the language in the bill - what exactly is meant by equalization based on the district where the CSI (Charter School Institute) school is located? Where is funding for this equalization supposed to come from? I'm sure extensive work has been done on this issue by CSI itself, can it be condensed and shared with the task force? I see this topic as lowest priority and am confused as to its presence in our charge, maybe because I don't understand its relationship to the school finance formula. Couldn't separate legislation on this issue have been written? How does it relate to the school finance formula? Why would we ensure that kids left out of MLOs who attend a CSI school are tended but kids who live in districts that cannot have not/won't pass MLOs are not tended with any kind of equalization? MLOs are passed for school districts. CSI is funded separately so this whole issue is very confusing to me.</p> <p>-I would like a better understanding of what the real-world impacts are at the school and student levels are for the school and student levels are for CSI schools that do not have full access to this type of funding. -Are there any districts that currently share mill levy funding with CSI schools in their districts? Which are they and how much? What benefits do we see in those districts? Can we see a map comparing what CSI schools are receiving in funding compared to their district peers?</p> <p>If the legislature wanted to consider a broader conversation about mill levy equalization which included other schools besides charters, this conversation seems like it would be more important. (Think of the work that Brett Ridgeway has done with mill levy equalization.)</p> <p>Can we get some non-partisan, presentation of the history of how we got to where we are? How are charters held accountable to reporting funding sources beyond public funding and mill levy sharing (private grants, donations, etc)?</p> <p>If the legislature wanted to consider a broader conversation about mill levy equalization which included other schools besides charters, this conversation seems like it would be more important. (Think of the work that Brett Ridgeway has done with mill levy equalization.)</p> <p>What gaps exist with funding: traditional public versus district charter versus CSI charter? Info on various districts for this?</p> <p>Is there a role for state funding for these costs, in addition to/rather than local funding?</p>

Revising the size factor	4.5	This is the lowest priority and it's not a fair measurement. Unfortunately the requirements from bargaining agreements, really make classes bigger than the ones that are posted of 1:20. It is easy to divide the number of students by the number of teachers, but it should be the number of students and the # of courses the teacher covers or the supports provided at the teachers.	Would like to look at this from the sparsity perspective and what districts are "small" but not in a rural/sparsity area?	See questions to multiplicative indexes: what is the context for this concern? Is it that we shouldn't have a size factor? Or is it too much or too little? Should it be applied at a different part of the formula?	Explain remoteness factors that already exist, perhaps census measures, or for example the Far and Remote (FAR) methodology from USDA used for healthcare. Review work already done in CO for this purpose that has a remoteness measure that factors in travel time, not "as the crow flies" distances (which mean virtually nothing in the mountains). The size factor is about accounting for lack of economy of scale - how else can economy of scale be accounted for?	-My understanding is that Size is just based off student enrollment numbers. Is that correct? How is Size currently calculated in the formula? Are there other considerations for the creation of economies of scale that can come from other characteristics than just student enrollment? When was the last time the policy for Size was updated - is there a map of how Size benefits or harms districts throughout the state? -Have other states used a Size Factor that is more holistic and not just derived from enrollment numbers? Do other states consider things like proximity to other districts, geographic difficulties, sparsity, remoteness, etc? -BOCES were created to address and incentivize economies of scale for student services like Special Education. Are there lessons learned or takeaways that can be used from BOCES to look at efficiencies for funding?	Economies of scale. What percent of a small district's budget is spent on facilities, food service, transportation, etc.? Do large districts have similar percentages or do economies of scale make a difference?	Economies of scale. What percent of a small district's budget is spent on facilities, food service, transportation, etc.? Do large districts have similar percentages or do economies of scale make a difference?	Reparameterization to offset rebased COLA. Also enhanced sparsity consideration.	How do we ensure that economies of scale, remoteness, recruitment and housing challenges are appropriately reflected in the SFA - so that rural schools have adequate, sustainable, and permanent funding (instead of the annual "one-liner" dollars). How have each of those components changed (since the 1994 act) in light of new standards, technology needs, changing populations, etc. and what are the appropriate weights for those components?	
--------------------------	-----	--	---	--	---	---	---	---	--	--	--

Time permitting, what additional questions would you like to discuss?

I would like to understand the Mill Level Equalizer and better understand why other models are not considered, such as Innovation schools and zones. Innovation allows district flexibility but also should require districts to fund the purpose of zones through a mill levy. I want to make sure it equitable for all groups supporting students.

Looking at outcomes-based funding that could be incorporated into the formula

How districts can ensure competitive salaries for teachers to ensure all children have equal access to high-quality instruction.

I am unclear as to how the timing of these meetings was decided. How was it decided we would only meet remotely and for 3 hours. There is a lot of material to cover and this seems like insufficient time to adequately do the work we are assigned. How will all voices be heard? Will the final report reflect all view points or only those of the majority? Which materials will be distributed to the task force and how will that decision be made? If only one task force member asks, will that be sufficient to have the whole task force see what that member is asking for? Can we get a brief history of why these are the most important issues for the legislature? What were their concerns? What legislative history is there to help guide us? Not only for this task force but for other efforts by the legislature to address these concerns (for example the multi year interim committees that recently met as well as prior years interim committees) Will there be any discussion about the impact TABOR has on school finance and thus these issues?

The opportunity to craft the best recommendations on the five elements in the bill, and then to say the recommendations should NOT be implemented until the adequacy studies are complete and the recommendations can be considered, and potentially adjusted, in light of what is learned in the adequacy studies. The adequacy studies should address the four (not including the mill levy equalization) elements in the bill directly - like we should call that out as part of the work done in the studies in the RFP.

I believe I understand the exercise of ranking these charges for purposes of project planning, but I am a little concerned that ranking these could lead us down a path of speaking to some and not others. The legislation seems to speak to 5 of the charges (not including the adequacy study) as items that must all be considered and addressed in the report in January 2024. I also read them as all being interwoven or dependent on each other and that they cannot just be taken as one offs. If we are separating these into individual conversations, how are we bringing them back together to meet the legislative intent of Senate Bill 2877

We need to discuss how our current revenue streams impact our (in)ability to address ideas for formula changes. We would need to see the actual formula impact of any changes before making decisions. We should prioritize the adequacy study and not make any real decisions about formula changes until we get the results of the adequacy studies. How does Colorado's formula compare to other states?

Rural funding - it has been a "one-time" funding assistance for multiple years. I feel it is important to find a permanent solution for this. (The extra rural funding was intended to make up for the negative impact of the budget stabilization factor. The BS factor is more detrimental to small rural districts.)

Issues around implementation of the new at risk factor

My main concern is about making recommendations without having actionable data that reflects actual costs for meeting the needs of diverse students in diverse districts. I don't know how to set priorities about the order of operations, the appropriate weights for district size and cost of living, and how to balance the needs of various student populations as they strive to meet Colorado state standards without having any data about the actual costs.

Potential Dates	# of Selections
Sep 12th 11am - 2pm	10
Sep 15th 11am - 2pm	6
Sep 26th 11am - 2pm	7
Sep 29th 11am - 2pm	9
Oct 17th 11am - 2pm	11
Oct 20th 11am - 2pm	5
Oct 31st 11am - 2pm	11
Nov 3rd 11am - 2pm	5
Nov 14th 11am - 2pm	9
Nov 17th 11am - 2pm	7
Dec 5th 11am - 2pm	9
Dec 8th 11am - 2pm	7
Dec 12th 11am - 2pm	11
Dec 15th 11am - 2pm	4
Jan 9th 11am - 2pm	7
Jan 12th 11am - 2pm	9