Meeting Logistics & Desired Outcome

Meeting: ESSA Committee of Practitioners

Date & Time: Thursday, September 19, 2024; 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Location: Daniels Fund, 101 Monroe Street, Denver, Colorado 80206

Meeting Leads: Laura Gorman (Elected Co-Chair), Alan Nall (Elected Co-Chair)

Rachel Temple(CDE Lead)

Objective: To allow the Colorado Department of Education the opportunity to provide updates to and elicit recommendations from the Colorado Committee of Practitioners regarding relevant and timely issues related to CDE’s responsibilities under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA).

Agreed Upon Norms:

* Be present and engage fully.
* Let everyone have a voice and be heard! Don’t talk over each other.
* When not talking, turn off mic on your computer/phone to minimize background noise.
* Begin and end meetings on time. Stick to times allotted for topics, to the extent possible, or develop next steps for moving the work forward if running out of time.
* Use time productively.
* Assume positive intent and ask for clarification when something lands wrong.
* Come prepared.
* The chair of the meeting should enforce the norms.
* A minimum of 6 members must plan to attend in-person to proceed with a hybrid meeting; if less than 6 members indicate that they will attend in-person, the meeting will be fully virtual.
* In the event of unsafe travel conditions due to weather, CDE staff will consult with the CoP co-chairs to determine whether to cancel the in-person option.

Agenda Items and Next Steps

| **Headline**  **Time**  **Presenters** | **Agenda Item** | **Summary/Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Committee Business: Welcome, Meeting Overview, Approve Minutes**  10:00-10:15 (15)  *Rachel T.,*  *Co-chairs: Laura, Alan* | * Welcome, meeting logistics, introductions * CoP members will vote on the approval of the minutes from the previous meeting and review the agenda for the meeting | Meeting Minutes Approved |
| **Centering and Purpose of CoP**  10:15-10:45 (30)  *Rachel T.,*  *Co-chairs: Laura, Alan*  Informational | * Purpose of CoP * Review Norms * Bylaws | Presentation Highlights:   * Because CoP is a representative group with members representing certain regions of the state or critical stakeholder groups, it is important that members gather feedback from other stakeholders within the region or group   CoP Feedback:  Norms:   * Recommendation to revisit the minimum number of attendees for an in-person meeting. Preference that members attend in person, if possible. * Share Doodle Poll with members to gauge availability/interest in hosting meetings. In the poll, inquire if the individual would be willing to host a meeting for up to 15 people and if there are hotels nearby. * Does CDE reimburse for lodging?   + Yes * People come from diverse locations, prefer flexibility to attend in-person or virtual. * Request that CDE release the agenda 2 weeks in advance of the meeting for members to review and decide if it would be beneficial to attend in-person. * Rural members/East Central BOCES is available to host in-person meetings. * Schedule more robust discussions midday to late in day. * Identify 2 priority meetings to attend in-person. * Spread meeting locations out across regions * If a member suggests a topic they could host a meeting at their location. * Receptive to going to different locations.   Stakeholder Engagement:   * Request that CDE provide documents and feedback polls/forms with members for district partners to review and give feedback. If a major topic requires stakeholder feedback, share info a month/2 weeks in advance to get feedback. * If there is a shorter turnaround, surveys may be a better way to send info from stakeholders. |
| **FPSU Updates & Listening Session**  10:45-11:30 (45)  *Nazie*  Informational  Feedback Requested | * Hot Topics on your mind * How is ESSA implementation going for you?   + What is going well?   + What is challenging? * What questions do you have for our team at this time?   Guiding Question: What topics would be of most relevance for CoP to cover in 2024-2025? | Presentation Highlights:   * ED’S Monitoring of CDE - Consolidated ESEA & ESSER Monitoring * ESSA Identifications, Profiles, & Informational Profiles * CS Plan Reviews, CS-Y3+ Supports * EASI (~$12 million for Cohort 8) * ESSA State Plan   + Public comment period ~ October   + Have districts and partners review and give feedback * ESSER Closeout, final reports, and evaluation   + At least one more round of data collection; possibly 2 * ESSER liquidation extensions & Sustainability of Investments! * Ed Flex Waiver - renewal?   CoP Feedback   * Request for CDE to provide a list of waivers that were requested 10 years ago, but were not pursued in the last rendition, 5 years ago.   Listening Session:   * Technology accessibility laws and requirements that went into effect July 1 are a hot topic. The BOCES is overwhelmed and trying to figure out how to manage it. * New UIP template design and changes made, especially language changes. Request for CDE to align language in UIP and narrative (i.e. term “milestones”) and provide a crosswalk at Office Hours of changes, including how questions on the narrative intersect with what is called “milestones” in the UIP. We use UIP as a needs assessment; now wondering if the tie is getting looser (e.g. can you tie action steps in UIP to use of Title I funds?). * Lacking policies at the district level to support UGG whistleblower requirements.   + Recommendation to contact CASBY. * Due to Medicaid figures, we had 10 new Title schools open which have been ESSA Identified. In 2 years when it is no longer a Title I school, will their CS status end?   + No, it is a 3-year designation. * Request for explanation of how free and reduced lunch is determined.   + Resources are available at [https://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/national-school-lunch-program#program\_resources](https://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/national-school-lunch-program%23program_resources) * Is there someplace to find the formula that is being used to determine school FRL% rate if we aren’t using parent/guardian applications. * IDEA Preschool grant process is somewhat inefficient as the LEA must continually go online to see if things are approved and enter corrections. Additionally, budget updates are not put in the system or approved, and response time is lacking (i.e. request a phone call and never get one - ongoing email exchange).   + We will bring feedback/question back to colleagues that manage IDEA. * Will IDEA be transitioned to GAINS? |
| **Immigrant Set-Aside Percentages Discussion**  11:30-11:45 (15)  *Rachel T.*  Discussion  Feedback Requested | * Initial discussion regarding current Title III, Immigrant Set-Aside percentage: 5% * Seeking feedback, will revisit topic in November   Guiding Question: Should we consider changing the 5% due to the increased number of newcomers? | Presentation Highlights:   * Colorado's Title III allocation is based on the number of Multilingual/English learners (MLs/ELs) reported through the American Community Survey and U.S. Census data. Before determining local allocations, CDE reserves 5% of its Title III allocation for the Title III Immigrant Set-Aside (ISA) grant. CDE determines local allocations based on the number and average number of immigrant students reported through the annual Student October Count in three school years prior to the current school year. * CDE is seeking input on if we consider changing the 5% due to the increased number of newcomers (Immigrant children and youth)? We are allowed to go up to 15%. * In preparation for a discussion at the November meeting, Members are asked to add feedback on the [note catcher](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dVW8AmeYnAIeRq6-nx_f2HBA6FcZO969nHd71YXYLaQ/edit) (make a copy) and share relevant data points with CDE.   CoP Feedback:   * When do you determine preliminary?   + When we get State allocations. * How many districts are currently seeking immigrant set aside? * Helpful to know TIII vs immigrant set aside. * If we were to raise the rate, TIII would go down but immigrant set aside would go up. * Districts highly impacted can use Title III to support newcomers. Don’t want to take away resources that we are already short on for the population. |
| **EASI School Closure Guidance Document**  11:45-12:05 (20)  *Laura Meushaw, Lindsay Cox*  Feedback Requested | * Review and provide feedback on the proposed guidance for the handling of active EASI grant funds and the EASI grant application in the event of school closure or consolidation   Guiding Question: What adjustments should the EASI team consider as it relates to the handling of grant funds with school closures or school consolidations? | Presentation Highlights:   * School closure or school consolidation is increasing with trends in declining student enrollment and other factors * EASI has experienced this with a couple of schools over the last three years * Need for clear guidance that can be shared with districts to understand how grant applications and active funds are handled in the event of a school closure * Factors influencing EASI and school closure decisions:   + School eligibility based on funding source. Type of funding source needs to align to ESSA or state identification from the time of application.   + Allowable use of funds for each funding source; funds may only be awarded and maintained by an open school.   + EASI Route and service. Multi-year award structure; need to align funds to the intent of the grant/EASI service. * Members are asked to review the [EASI Grant School Closure Guidance](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1d47SdPaiRZlDJ1hMVlWLK-WgEe2cX3G0/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=105879745059601197154&rtpof=true&sd=true), specifically table 2, and provide feedback on what adjustments should the EASI team consider as it relates to the handling of grants funds with school closure or school consolidations? * What are other services that could be made allowable under this grant?   CoP Feedback:   * Document makes sense. We had schools that closed during diagnostic review and had an EASI grant, and it was a disaster. Guidance will be helpful for Fed programs and directors when thinking about planning to move forward, including if they should apply for federal funds or not. * Even if not eligible, it's helpful to know what it might mean if a new school was eligible. * No one wants to hear “closed”, consider using “consolidation” instead. * The new support of EASI, cohort 8, school transition: may be confusing as we don't use that word. You won’t get a lot from stakeholder engagement as we have already made the decision to close. * If it's a multi-year grant (not just 18 months) the route needs to be longer. Recommendation to change route to be more impactful for receiving schools than closing schools. Families are bitter at that point. Depending on the quantity of applications, recommendation to extend the pathway for receiving schools. * Don’t need more funds to do family engagement * Title I dollars don't follow kids for 2 years. If a Title I school is closed, there is a limbo year where you must serve more kids with no additional funds. Creates equity issues when strictly allotting to schools based on per pupil counts. There is a gap in instructional student resources. * Resource concerns with supplemental services. For instance, will my child get free after school care, clubs, before school drop off time, etc? |
| **12:05 - 12:35**  **LUNCH** | | |
| **ConsApp - GAINS Feedback**  12:35-1:45 (70)  *Laura Meushaw*  Feedback Requested | * Starting the conversation around what worked for the Consolidated Application and what are some challenges that need to be addressed.   Guiding Question: What aspects of the Consolidated Application process, technical assistance and system should remain constant, change, or be considered for the next cycle? | Presentation Highlights:   * Members are asked to provide [feedback](https://docs.google.com/document/d/11XWSALajaLqX4LqqJrLwAFKT9CJfaGOVLfUSLIimvKg/edit?userstoinvite=negley_t@cde.state.co.us&sharingaction=manageaccess&role=writer) on what aspects of the Consolidated Application process, supports, and technical assistance should remain constant, change, or be considered for the next cycle?   CoP Feedback:   * Before we went to submit, it was a nightmare of work with various warnings and errors. Recommendation that CDE create a dummy account with allocations to test functionality and identify errors that districts will experience. * CDE’s feedback was more addressable and specific than it's ever been. * Draw down concerns. We have $3.2 of last year’s expenses and 75 errors that could prevent us from drawing down funds. With the deadline of the 30th, our RC will only have 5 days to address revisions. Panicked about 23-24 funds not moving forward. We are paused in the feedback phase until we finish the draw down. * The PAR item key search was time consuming. There is not a way to type in the item key, nor numeric order within the section. Consider an easier way to search for item keys by location. The description didn't always state the location. * Process of submitting and revisions went smoothly. * Kudos to spreadsheets, game changer - being able to download saved a lot of time and worked well. Provide clear guidance on uploading and downloading sheet. * Challenging to know what connected to what in app. For instance, with revisions, if we changed something, we had to go back and change the narrative discussion. If you deleted something, you had to go back and delete it in other places. * Title IV is tough - it is small and in some ways hypothetical   + Burdensome, time consuming portion to then go and do it again in budget. * Not sure how to fix TIV or what the requirements are. The section was more difficult than other titles. * Request for formal interpretation of carryover for Title IV - burden of artificially allocating the carryover. * There were fixes being done behind the scenes by CDE, but districts didn’t always know what was being fixed on the backend so they were still trying to fix it on their end until the message went away. However, this wasn’t clear whether the error went away due to CDE or district. Request for CDE to communicate these issues and fixes to all districts * Re. Charter and Title I schools around family engagement Schools, Charters get own family engagement funds. Before, we would complete one large revision sometime in March. Now, based on last week’s OHs, revisions are required every month prior to submitting RFFs. Bringing this to CDE as a notice that revisions will be submitted and response/approval would be preferred within ten days to ensure RFFs can be submitted timely every month. Looks like expenses will be more precise in GAINS, both with amounts and budget codes used. This is a concern. But if the amounts roll up and the 10% overage rule isn’t broken at the larger budget code bucket, revisions may not be needed. Makes this more manageable but revisions will still be needed. * Confusion around GLs and what's required for competitive grants. This may be clearer for titles, but the process to request funds has been slow. * Carryover will make things interesting because we cannot submit revisions until carryover is done and each school completes the budget item that currently sits as placeholder. * The load of the carryover coming at the same time as we’re trying to complete revisions for original submissions for current FY (carryover typically comes at a later time) is concerning. The first drawdown would be in October but cannot do that. The first drawdown will now be in November which is different from normal. Lessens cash flow. Not sure if this will happen every year. Would need clarification before next year. * LEAs put in a number and CDE puts in a number that is an estimate, but can the district email Stephen to get the correct carryover in the system? * Marcie: When requesting funds for other grants, LEAs must provide GL. Will this be the same for title funds in GAINS? Every school has a different GL and the district does not have consolidated accounting system (each school does its own). * From the LAM perspective in GAINS, one of the more difficult things is they have two fiscal people identified as fiscal rep and one AR. Suggestion to have a dropdown to determine which fiscal rep and AR the application should go to for the flow, especially going into drawdowns. Currently, both fiscal reps receive the notification. * Helpful to revisit what the roles are in GAINs - feel like there aren’t enough designations; therefore, everyone is the same designation. Prefer to select who the fiscal rep should be for that grant specifically. * Same with BOCES - every time a district submits anything for any grant, they receive the notification. * It would be helpful to clearly select role. As more grants are added to GAINS, this problem can intensify. It would be ideal to dictate who the applications/grant work goes to. * For future trainings, some understanding of the non-public piece on the function codes, especially in Title IV. Unclear how this translates to RFFs. Right now, we are picking the code for non-public, but it doesn’t say “4423”. On the accounting side, they can’t assign it to them. Confusing, so more clarification as to which function code to use, what they are, and how they translate to the RFFs. * In the past, function code and grant code were synonymous. Now, the grant code is synonymous with the page, so the function codes are there for organization. * Suggestion to have a separate note catcher for the drawdown process (i.e. separate from GAINS note catcher. * Although it feels like it's more work than expected, the new process is moving towards the right direction. Good roll out for the first year. * May need to investigate additional flexibilities to decrease additional time and attention required of district staff at the beginning. * May get stickier later in the year when district budgets shut down for budget revisions in their own budgeting system. While CDE is gearing up and focusing on next year’s ConsApp, districts are still working on revisions for current FY. May cause conflicts with districts going into GAINS to adjust budgets and CDE needing to approve these revisions ASAP. CDE will need to build in time in schedules every month to review revisions. * Not everyone needs to approve the grant for every revision cycle, especially for smaller changes/revisions. The program director shouldn’t be the one to approve and resubmit an application. The revision shouldn’t need to go through the entire process each time. Maybe only fiscal can review? * Looking forward to everything being in GAINS, because for smaller grants, the spreadsheets are all different and the submission processes are all different. The amount of time spent on those is excessive, so the fact that everything will eventually live in GAINs will save so much time especially with RFFs. * Recommendation to review specific sections during each meeting over the next year so CoP members can come prepared. * Discuss the narratives and what CDE is looking for. * Create a space or way to receive feedback from others outside of CoP since not everyone on CoP works with the ConsApp. * The high-level training that were provided prior to launching GAINS should continue every year, especially with turnover. Maybe not as many or maybe as small bites (the larger trainings were overwhelming) to rewatch and share with others. Prevents loss with information overload * Maybe a primary point of contact for GAINS would be helpful. * Continue GAINS Office Hours and provide trainings for all grants added to GAINS. * Love the system because it stops others from submitting things without the ARs or LAMs knowing about it. |
| **Monitoring Updates**  1:45-2:15 (30)  *Tammy*  Informational  Feedback Needed | * Transition of monitoring report process to GAINS   Guiding Question: Should we continue to provide a standalone written report in addition to the summary that will be provided in GAINS? | Presentation Highlights:   * Risk assessment previously shared in Syncplicity, however it can be uploaded into GAINS moving forward. * Current report structure:   + PDF versions of the report are currently sent by email to the authorized representative(s) and other monitoring contacts identified through the monitoring process.   + An initial draft is sent with an opportunity for LEAs to provide feedback.   + Once feedback is incorporated, a final PDF report is shared with the LEA through email. * GAINS report structure:   + The report is housed in GAINS.   + The initial report would be shared within GAINS.   + Feedback from the LEA would be collected through GAINS.   + Final report would be shared within GAINS.   + GAINS will track dates and feedback from both the LEA and the FPSU team.   + The report can be downloaded as a PDF and printed. * CDE is seeking input on if uploading the risk assessment into GAINS will meet needs of LEAs, how do LEAs use the monitoring report, and will the report in GAINS be sufficient to meet LEA needs?   CoP Feedback:  Risk Assessment:   * Who would be able to see the risk assessment in GAINS? Charter Schools are in there if they have grants. Don't particularly want people working on ReadAct to look at it. How locked down is it?   + Anyone in the address book would have access to the risk assessment in the document library. * Who has access to monitoring?   + Autho reps, fiscal reps, and monitoring contacts that the LEA designates. * Why wouldn’t it go into the specific grant that the monitoring is happening for as opposed to the document library? If monitoring ESEA, is there something in the ESEA section that it can go into? It would limit who is viewing ESEA; the right people have access to that specific grant. It should live within the grant that is being monitored/assessed. Set it up so there are approvers of it vs. routing to fiscal, auto rep, etc.   Report:   * We utilize the monitoring report to send feedback to partners to execute work and make updates. Putting the report in GAINS is fine as long as there is a way to export as a presentable, shareable PDF. * GAINS will likely not be sufficient for sharing the report; will likely need separate shareable presentable form as people who don't have access to GAINS will be involved in addressing results. * Anything in GAINS is better than having 3 separate documents (Syncplicity, google doc, etc.). * It has value and should primarily live in GAINS but want ability to take out of GAINS and share. * We are moving away from using Syncplicity as we don't know how to find things, especially if there are multiple years. Everything is called Douglas. * It makes sense to have in GAINS. |
| **Closing & Next Steps**  2:15-2:25 (10)  *Rachel T.* | * Upcoming meeting dates | We will proceed with the Oct 17 meeting. Next formal meeting is scheduled November 7.  CoP Feedback:   * ECBOCES willing to host the October meeting. * Consider potluck for October |

*Feel free to share your agenda topic submissions through the* [*submission request form*](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/80d4a142008c43ef9fd51be7e7e25346)*. Please let us know if you have any questions.*