Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Listening Tour

Buena Vista, CO – May 18, 2016

Standards, Assessments, and Accountability

Discussion Question #1: How should we measure student progress toward meeting the standards?

• Feedback Forms:

- Purposeful assessment a brief, purposeful assessment to measure schools for accountability purposes, leave the rest to schools. Or – create a way to use the assessments we use already.
- o Teacher individualized evaluation. Student interviews and opinions evaluated.
- Main emphasis on classroom assessment.
- In a concise, expedient and balanced way that provided students with a variety of ways to demonstrate their learning – think qualitative and quantitative

- Knew standards were coming; starting local assessments for all standards; master data on students across Buena Vista on all different standards. Can address all the standards.
- Professional learning, staff retention.
- Local assessments based on state standards like corroboration. CMAS is a snapshot; local are taken like a portfolio; see the whole picture. Snapshot assessment not authentic.
- Worked in Aurora in large district much different than small district; kids face greater challenges; mobility, ESL, compared to Buena Vista. Small town environment is different. Some measures could be student or climate surveys, behavioral data, but truth is the inner city students up against other factors.
- What is the purpose of the assessment; we test students against standards every day in school. Why do state assessments have to be so long; they already have assessments they use locally.
- Why do we assess the way we do? Is it accountability for students, schools, or teachers, or a combination? Conversation with Brittany Peterson about the reason state chose PARCC; it was the most cost effective. But if you look at ESSA, it is emphasizing personalized learning. Do we have to have a statewide assessment or are there other options. That is a question I would like to post. How are we going to assess personalized learning?
- Purpose since 1993 is to compare us to other countries. Need the feds or state to trust that our teaching professionals know what they are doing.
- Concerned about local assessments; does it allow them to move around the state because evaluation differences.
- Research shows that teacher engagement is critical. Teachers need to have time with students. How does this get implemented and not take away from instructional time but add to it. We need more time of engagement.
- Talking to Maloney and gave CSAP in February and he asked for it back two days later to
 do item analysis to find the weak spots. Need the results back within the school year so
 that you can do something with it.



- There should be more diversified tests for different disabilities. Tests are too generic.
 Maybe there is an assessment form that a teacher can say they are capable of this but not capable of that.
- Decision making should be left to the teachers and paras. Trust their wisdom; they work with students every day. NCLB took things out of their hands; will build back trust and make profession more desirable.
- o 50% of teacher evaluations are based on scores. Is the assessment really giving us what we truly desire and is it aligned with what true educators are.
- How are we going to assess the different types of personalized learning? What options
 are going to be available? If a student is going into industrial arts; those are great skill
 sets but they are required to take the state assessment. Is that equitable?
- What is the purpose of our state assessments? Is there an opportunity to look at them
 and change what they are doing? What is our purpose and why are we doing it?
 Brittany Peterson said PARCC was chosen because it was least expensive. Need more
 formative assessment.
- o If you are going to test, you need to utilize results as soon as possible.
- o Grad rates, portfolios, a more balanced approach with a qualitative body of evidence.
- Should be a balance; as a mom for a HS student who did not want to take the assessments---more thoughtful processes and succinct testing methods—so they don't have to answer all the questions---rather only use the questions that need to be answered; we need to measure progress over time but at what point is it too much---the information that is being used to evaluate their teachers may not be as reliable as it should be; when you are using a test to measure student gains then using it to measure a different area then you are using a test for a variety of purposes.
- o Middle and HS students don't what can we do to make it more relevant?
- We need to use the test to see what they have learned only not on things we haven't had the opportunity to learn/see or know how to do; it can be used in schools to standardize curriculum locally or regionally but I don't like that idea either; we need both quantitative and qualitative data or a body of evidence which would allow for qualitative evaluation of growth of students over time.
- We believe testing is out of control; all they are doing is testing, teaching to it, prepping for it, or evaluating the results.
- There is a real movement to include qualitative measures for students—but we need more guidance for the state—but CO is a local control state so CDE cannot do this; group is trying to create a dashboard evaluation for students, people are trying to do other things.
- We live in an era of accountability we need to find responsible, respectful assessment approaches.

Discussion Question #2: What measures of school quality or student success should be included in the school accountability system?

• Feedback Forms:

 Social/emotional learning? Professional learning and how we put it into practice. Is it transferring to students? Professional Development for administrators.



- Dropout rate/GPAs of students, poll students' satisfaction and teacher's opinions regarding individual students.
- Portfolios, student participation in extra-curricular, student attitude (creativity, discipline, etc.).
- Office referral rate, student and teacher perception survey data that evaluates school culture and climate, % of students engaged in extra-curricular groups, student/teacher ratio.

- o Awards, schools getting grants or awards, national recognition opportunities;
- How do you recognize accomplishments outside academics? Community gardens, lifelong learning initiatives; how do we capture.
- Are school quality and student success mutually exclusive? These might be two different measurements.
- Could it be graduation % as graduation rates?
- Confusion around the "or" in the question.
- Can it be a portfolio system, as these two things go together? Is the current system of assessments a real picture of what students can do? How is a student's passion being captured; how can these be shown?
- o For an elementary school what/how can you measure transferability of skills;
- Like the idea of school quality as defined by school culture; How can we look at what schools do from a professional development lens; is this system of professional learning supporting teachers?
- How are the students using social emotional learning? How are the parents learning about what the students are seeing in the classroom?
- I believe this is about school culture and climate...can the TELL survey be expanded and used for this purpose;
- How can the "whole child" framework help to look at the social emotional development of children?
- Professional learning for administrators---what is provided for school leaders? What can they receive to help with school culture?
- How are school admin empowering their teachers? What opportunities are being provided?
- We think that there is a possibility that the measure chosen would be attendance---and this can be "gamed" so is it really meaningful?
- Do we have to choose quality or student success? This is confusing; we already have student success; but not school quality; perhaps personal learning; how we involve parents.
- Looking at "whole child" tenets; this can be consistent throughout a student's career.
 We must create a community that supports the student;
- This indicator would help districts get credit for the work they do; right now you have to "suck" to get money; can the state continue to allow districts to make decisions that would allow this type of work to continue.
- If this is to hold schools accountable can it be simplified to release funds for other activities.



- Districts already have indicators that measure student success why not concentrate on other measures not currently captured.
- o How do we measure accomplishments outside of academics?
- How do you capture the good things happening in schools that promote life-long learning?
- Can benchmarks be used to measure other areas?
- What about office referral rates, expulsion rates, teacher to student ratios and level of education of teachers?
- The problem with using graduation rates is that you can "dumb down" these rates so that your school makes it, you don't just want to graduate kids just to pass this; diplomas should mean something.
- Center school district—their scores are not all that great but their growth rate is really good; have a lot of minority, mostly Hispanic students; but the grad rate doesn't tell the whole story; how do you capture what is happening outside the classroom; that is important for well-rounded kids.
- Possibly using a student portfolio that would include other things such as projects; some students don't test well;
- o There are other things like art and music.
- Not everyone fits into one thing.
- Grad rates, office referrals, portfolios, for those who do not test well; use a balanced approach quantitative and qualitative, body of evidence.

Discussion Question #3: How should the state consider the 95% assessment participation requirement?

• Feedback Forms:

- Explain purpose of assessments. Use formative assessments instead. What can impact teaching and learning the most? Toss statewide assessments – let local districts define how they measure success and achievement.
- Should not be used as threat to withhold funds, etc.
- Could we consider spreading testing out over months in small segments instead of weeks?
- o Carefully.

- o Need to get SBE on board. Can't say one thing and have the SBE go against it.
- Maybe you can test them to see where they are. Parents who opted out kids now want a standardized test.
- Believe in free choice.
- o Not an issue until last year when BOE said schools would not be dinged.
- In rural areas, people don't care about federal or state funding; want to know if their school is doing ok. Don't care about federal or state rules.
- Doesn't benefit high participation. Great schools in Colorado website bases a lot of rating on assessment scores; when they see assessment scores that locals look at.
 When score goes down it lowers their rating. The only thing about going below 95% is less opportunity to compare to local assessments.
- Distrust of government.



- Are there ways to earn points for those types of things?
- Don't encourage parents to opt-out but respect their right to opt out. Tell the feds to stuff it on the 95%. Testing done to root out the bad teachers.
- O Why are parents opting out?
- Have experienced a 57% opt out rate---didn't allow us enough time to prepare; how can we really assess with so many opt outs; our brightest are the ones who are opting out;
- o Does the 95% measure all schools?
- o How can you measure something when it is allowed (especially math)?
- If parents are opting out---Salida asked that each parent making this choice to come in and speak to the principal.
- First question: why did the student opt out? What was the purpose for opting out? Do
 we know whether or not assessments help teachers? Teachers want assessment
 information right away so they can change practice if needed; the cost of assessment
 should not be the reason we choose an assessment; we have an opportunity to make
 better decisions.
- We get the assessments after the students leave the teacher.
- o Can we use formative assessments as a longitudinal assessment?
- o Summative assessment does not impact daily instruction.
- What is the ultimate value of the assessment? Does this truly capture teacher or student success?
- What would it take to get to 95%---should we go back and tie it to how this impacts future success; how does this have value for the student?
- How will it be used? Is it a question of we've done it for so long that this is how we do it;
- O What is the purpose of the assessment?
- O Why are we assessing the way we do? Is it about teachers or students?
- When we look at ESSA we are being asked to include personalized learning; so is it still
 necessary to have a whole state assessment? Are we taking more time assessing rather
 than teaching problem solving skills, personalize skills.
- If we can decide on what assessments we use at the local level then we cannot have a "statewide" system.
- Are we trying to meet things "bigger" than ourselves?
- So if we try to implement things statewide do things lose their meaning?
- So how can we find something comparable?
- However the legislature can begin to trust the professionals in the trenches to allow them to make decisions about assessment would be better.
- o It is unreasonable to expect 95% rate from HS students---what if they don't show up; or have a bad day; or don't care about the test?
- O What would happen if this rate was not reached?
- I don't believe that teachers or students should be penalized for those who opt out; it should be determined on those who take the tests.
- o Is there a requirement that testing take place during only one time a year? Can it be formative during the year and summative at the end of the year?
- Most schools are using the NWA, PARCC, or CMAS;
- O Why does there have to be an intense week of testing?



- We need to find out why we are doing what we are doing. What is the best option for our students not just what is less expensive; we need more formative testing; there are other ways to find the summative information.
- If we are going to take test then use the results of these tests for instruction right away.
 If any area is a problem such as decimals and fractions then why wait a whole year to use the results.

Discussion Question #4: Should school improvement funds be awarded as formula or competitive grants?

Feedback Forms:

- A hybrid of the two. Submit a "plan," but not a competitive grant. Plan would have to be approved.
- Hybrid of both.
- o Formula.
- There should be options for both a minimum \$ amount could be guaranteed using a formula, extra could be rewarded using competitive grants and requests for funds.

- Competitive based on a plan with community involvement. Show how you are going to use it.
- As long as competitive process is not too burdensome. Keep it competitive
- Right now you have to suck to get money.
- Best would be a hybrid of the 7% improvement; schools that need the money the most may not have a talented grant writer; those with good grant writers may not need the money as much. Still need to have a good plan, so should be some aspect where you write a proposal. You shouldn't just dump money into a problem.
- Could there be support for the person who has to write a plan, rather than just requiring them to have to write a grant?
- Formulaic helps sustain.
- You can tell when professional grant writer has written the proposals.
- o Example of when you had to write a plan, but the grant was not competitive.
- Likes a hybrid; what happens to districts that don't have access to much of Title I money; some people in community who could write grants.
- Not everybody has the resources to write the grants.
- Favors formula because people get left out like when we did race to the top. Shouldn't favor those who can come up with great proposals.
- Concern about competitive is that it can be political, depending on who is making the
 decisions; rural places often are left out of the picture.—leaning toward formula.
- Smaller districts don't have resources to write a competitive grant, or the student numbers that would make it as fair.
- There are good writers in the community currently who would do it for a smaller fee or because they have kids in the system.
- Could CDE provide grant writers for the rural districts?
- O Does it have to be one or the other?
- Doesn't seem fair to everyone.
- o Combination of both would be best; this is more equitable.



- The best would be a hybrid; some districts would not have a skilled grant writer; so some schools miss out if it is competitive.
- You should have a plan on how you will spend the money to improve the school, however, if the grant writer isn't skilled then this might not win.
- Tying the UIP plan to the grant plan; there are some things that cannot be solved by writing grants.
- o Professional grant writers are expensive.
- Years ago CDE asked for a "plan" grant that would be submitted not a competitive grant, so this was not a competitive process so others wouldn't miss out.
- Concerned about competitive it's too easy for politics to be found here and rural schools to be left out.
- Concern about competitive is this can be political based on who is making the decision and rural schools get left out.
- o If it was a competitive then rural districts don't have the resources to apply nor do they have the student numbers to compete.
- It should be a combination of both; when you look at formula then we could receive some money, but then compete for higher amounts. How can we reach out to the community to find grant writers; look past just hiring someone, reach out to the community and create a more community approach?
- Opportunity to co-author grants.

Discussion Question #5: What supports and services can CDE provide that would be helpful to districts with schools on improvement?

• Feedback Forms:

ESSA, to me, is the "what" and "by how much" of student learning and education. I know there are other educational initiatives in Colorado (and the nation) that could provide the answer to the "how do we do it" of student learning. For example, the "multi-tiered system of supports" or MTSS framework can be used, should be used, to support schools and teachers engaged in the work.

• General Discussion Notes:

- Could CDE help provide grant writers for rural districts?
- CDE does provide grant writing training.
- BOCES are given money to help rurals write grants.

Discussion Question #6: What is an appropriate length of time before more intensive interventions should be required for "consistently underperforming" schools/subgroups?

• Feedback Forms:

 After 3 years of stagnant or low growth (using the growth model) for a majority of students.

• General Discussion Notes:

No responses given

Other comments about standards, assessments, and accountability:

Feedback Forms:



o Prioritizing of physical education, including use of federal funds. PE programs obviously benefit student health and well-being, as well as academic success.

• General Discussion Notes:

o No responses given



Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Listening Tour

Buena Vista, CO – May 18, 2016

Quality Instruction & Leadership and Supports for Student Success

Discussion Question #1: What supports should CDE provide to help teachers, schools, and districts provide effective instruction to students with specific learning needs?

• Feedback Forms:

- Support for effectively implementing personalized learning.
- o PD, consultants (these have diminished greatly)!

- o If you are holding teachers to the benchmarks and outcomes, shouldn't be looking at how they got there.
- Link between items 1 and 4; helping students figure out their strengths and helping teach them what they need to go into these jobs. Need to start thinking of kids as individuals, making sure they have standardized skills but are building on their strengths. Relationship between 1 and 4; going from standardized to more customized.
- Support students not informed about what to do, regarding SPED students or students having trouble. Professional development should be more geared annually for educators to be able to learn the newest and best proven methods. What can the teacher do without having to do it by the seat of their pants? Colleges don't teach enough about differentiation.
- Some college level students have never been in the classroom, even to the point of their last college course. Put them in the classroom first or second semester after declaring their major. How much time are we spending on the history of education; when teachers come in and are floundering; have to give them skills and strategies so they are geared to go.
- Maybe bring in the best people with good ideas working across the state. CEA has started an online teacher program focused on who is doing something really well and making what they are doing available to other teachers.
- COASCD has had teachers doing videos on what stellar teachers are doing in their classrooms. Need to distribute a leadership model within our state. We have good teachers and resources and teachers want to share, but don't get the opportunity to do it.
- If we want to improve instruction, to improve the classroom, you have to reach the
 academic middle which comes from one-parent homes or homes where college is not
 important. Must expand vocational curriculum; motivation drops off with those
 students. Keep saying that everybody needs to go to college.
- Would like current supports to increase, such as MTSS. We need to find more supports
 feels like these have decreased including access to CDE staff. For example currently
 have 9 EL district-wide and therefore we do not have the same amount of supports. We
 used to have more consultants available to provide PD.
- Would like regional development centers to return.
- Need a distributive leadership model for CO.



- We used to have a lot more support such as MTSS and PBIS; we miss these greatly; prof. development opportunities period.
- O What does CDE provide in supports?
- What programs are already in place and how can these be used to provide further supports; how can "sit and get" programs be changed to provide better PD for teachers.
- MTSS is a systemic way to help teachers; would highly encourage CDE to look internally and provide more quality PD; onsite coaching and ongoing PD.
- o Having a multi-need classroom requires additional PD and knowledge from teachers.
- o Different needs should be focused not just special education.
- Supporting students with special needs. Need professional development for teachers to help them differentiate for student needs.
- Identify and disseminate promising practices to provide access.
- Prepare teachers to teach to all the different abilities of children in each class. Help in classroom management.
- Better practical professional development. What special needs especially moderate needs in classroom – need techniques and sensitivity to diversity.
- The MTSS framework, real and relevant professional development that's more than sit and get or spray and pray methods.

Discussion Question #2: In addition to holding a license, should teachers be required to demonstrate competency in the subject area in which they teach?

• Feedback Forms:

- Maybe instead of holding a license.
- Yes!
- Yes, in secondary.
- No they shouldn't but teachers need refreshers and updates on what is working better now than when they began.
- Yes, but licensure should be revisited (K-6?). Consider working with IHE's t further define this concept.

- Now that nobody is documented as being ineffective; does it mean we are using an invalid instrument. Great that HQ is out of the way. How do we work with teachers not demonstrating effectiveness? If you are a high performing school you get an added benefit, we could think about the tool.
- o Evaluation is enough; should not place more burden on teachers.
- By holding a license and being evaluated, they already have demonstrated competency.
- 4+1 years to be a teacher. Resources from online academies and online graduate teaching programs. Interest in going to a clinical model to help teachers know that it is what they want to do, get exposed to evidence based practices, so that they know what they are doing when they are done with their programs.
- Need to provide teachers opportunities to "grow into" future leaders.
- Loss of highly qualified may not be great. Teachers should be professionally ready. We
 need to ensure that there needs to be some sort of content mastery. Need to decide on
 disciplinary policies; provides an opportunity to rethink pedagogy.



- So teacher prep programs should be part of the discussion; how are we getting teachers ready to be in the classroom?
- What about alternative licensure programs especially for rural districts? There should be a discussion with CDE around this matter.
- o Really liked highly qualified and feel it was a good thing.
- Highly qualified was kept for para-professionals this is a good thing.
- o So what does professional development look like for both para's and licensed teachers?
- No; if you hold us to benchmarks and student outcomes so why do we need monitoring process and how we got there.
- Yes, especially in secondary grades.
- What type of accountability should teacher prep programs bear regarding this question; are the universities doing a good job preparing teachers to teach?
- o Institutions of higher education to provide qualitative data to prove they are preparing teachers. Also, there are credit limits for the number of courses an under-grad can take; classroom management is not always a focus. Secondary education is trickier because you have many hours to master your content area and then add on the licensing requirements; perhaps a different model is needed a BA in an area then an extra year to learn how to become a teacher.
- Competency should not be that hard to acquire, we have knowledgeable people in a content area that cannot teach.
- Alternative licensure programs, what are we doing to help teachers be prepared to be in classrooms?
- Teacher salaries are not the only factor.
- Idea of 4 plus 1 year of learning to be a teacher; or moving more towards a clinical model where education majors get exposed to classroom management, differentiation.
- What role do induction programs have mostly teachers sitting around a table doing a book study. Why are we not using a gradual release of support for adults as well?
- o Many teachers do not know how to do "classroom management".

Discussion Question #3: How should CDE modify current EL Identification, Re-designation, and Exit guidance to meet the ESSA state plan requirements? What additional criteria should be considered?

- Feedback Forms:
 - No responses given
- General Discussion Notes:
 - No responses given

Discussion Question #4: What does well-rounded and healthy students mean to you?

• Feedback Forms:

- Healthy access to adequate mental and physical health supports. Well-rounded students would know their strengths and interests and be prepared to build on those in life.
- The arts, vocational education, electives for life skills, community service in addition to academics and athletics – problem solvers and lifelong learners, risk takers, good work
- o Students who are encouraged to demonstrate their strengths, whatever they are.



- Successful in school and post-secondary education or career.
- o As long as students demonstrate their strengths they are well.

• General Discussion Notes:

- Extra things like community gardens, environmental education and styrofoam stoppers, are things that make kids well rounded. The extra activities got me fired up, speakers coming in, things that teachers can't do because of too many standards and assessments.
- o Hold their priorities above scoring on state assessments. Achievement is important but achievement is evidenced in so many other ways than assessment.
- Community service and lifelong learning.
- Teach students how to think and analyze critically—well-rounded. Have to find a way to do it, critical now for the republic and democracy.
- Healthy part determined by community needs community schools concept. Hire a community coordinator within the school to survey the community needs and how the school can become a center for health.
- How much of this is the schools responsibility and how much should this be a part of parent engagement?
- So what does access to technology mean for children within this question?
- Do we need to consider the "equity" piece of this question? How does camp adventure help students become more "well-rounded"?
- Are we looking at healthy only as physical or also a wider definition?
- Definition Having the opportunity to explore a lot of different areas and finding something that speaks to your passion.
- o Goes back to it has to be a community effort not just the schools.
- How do the "gap year" opportunities come into play within this definition of wellrounded?
- There have to be more opportunities than athletics.
- o So what happened to "industrial arts"? Does well-rounded mean basic skills or does it include home-making? Problem solving is a key factor within well-rounded.
- Want my children to have empathy, good work ethic, taking initiative, risk taking, forward thinkers and initiators, understand different cultures, communicate positively.
- This connects with number 1 as well; how can students be well-rounded without personalized learning capacities among teachers; how can you transition from standardized system to a more flexible personalized system.
- One of the things we are seeing now is that students who grew up in a more standardized system cannot be flexible and now this does not guarantee a good job without more "well-rounded" skills.
- It is students that are able to demonstrate their strengths; extra-curricular activities, individualized and based on strengths.
- Do more to prepare kids to enter a career track.
- o How do we help kids learn to read who are not higher education bound?

Discussion Question #5: Should CDE reserve 3% of Title I, Part A funds for direct student services grants?

• Feedback Forms:



- o No.
- No use our Title funds.
- In favor.
- An important component is that physical education should be prioritized in the state plan because it greatly influences the health and well-being of our students, and is connected to academic success. Federal \$ are a critical investment in PE programs.
- Unsure at this time depends on many factors may have to "try it and see" before knowing what serves students best.
- Yes, as long as it's used to advance student learning.

• General Discussion Notes:

- Districts decide how they are going to use Title IA money, why should state decide to skim off the top and tell them how to use it. Every Title I district where they are going to allocate the money don't need the state telling them what to do.
- Would involve more administration costs.
- Like the idea of high school money going toward CTE work; see kids coming out of college with environmental degrees that can't find jobs and students with technical skills get jobs more easily.
- No. Let them do what they already do; can't current systems include HS programs? Is this prohibited within Title I?
- Don't see an issue in allowing CDE to keep 3%.
- My question is how do you define "direct student services"?
- Can this be for schools to receive services they could not otherwise receive?
- Yes that would be OK. Would like to know more about the "direct student supports".
- o Can CDE write an RFP for this item? CDE can show us what you would do.
- o SEA can be a real asset, we just need to define what this means

Other comments about quality instruction & leadership and supports for student success:

- Feedback Forms:
 - No responses given
- General Discussion Notes:
 - 3% may not be a bad idea. Especially for schools that can't offer as much as a large school

ESSA Listening Tour – Event Feedback

How can we strengthen our process to involve parents, educators, and other stakeholders in developing our state plan for ESSA?

- I liked the presentations just prior to each of the discussion sessions so that stakeholders had an opportunity to review before talking.
- Send information packets to all School Boards and local Accountability Committees. Use
 complete titles the first time you discuss a program instead of acronyms in every sentence. Ask
 for their responses and input as Local Community bodies concerned with their children's
 education.
- Continue to offer multiple formats and timelines to give input.



What additional opportunities should we create for stakeholders to provide input?

- These are a great start. CDE staff really listened and captured the comments. I think you should send out the compilation of comments and ask for feedback to that. Keep updates posted on your website.
- It honestly felt like the presenters came with an agenda and were only fulfilling a requirement of the Federal Department of Education.

How do you plan to involve parents and other stakeholders in local ESSA planning decisions?

- We use our MTSS Leadership Team, District Accountability Committee, and Public Forums for these kinds of things.
- See above.
- Sharing your timeline; information updates.

What aspects of the ESSA Listening Tour session do you feel were particularly successful?

- The PowerPoint presentation was very helpful. Staff was knowledgeable.
- Small group discussions.
- Discussion.

What can CDE do to improve the ESSA Listening Tour?

• Too much information, too hurried a presentation. A lot of unnecessary background info. Should be more concise relating to the topics they wish people to give feedback on.

