



Colorado State Board of Education

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS  
BEFORE THE  
COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMISSION  
DENVER, COLORADO  
March 11, 2015, Part 4

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

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



1                   MADAM CHAIR: The Board will come back in  
2 order. We are departing from the schedule for just a few  
3 moments in order to recognize three different people, or  
4 groups of people who are here, who have been waiting a  
5 long time, and we'd like to go out of order.

6                   And, first of all, we will have the  
7 recognition of Colorado's Outstanding Students and  
8 Educators.

9                   The next item on -- does somebody have a  
10 script to read on this one, or do I read it? Oh, Keith  
11 Owens (ph). There you are. Yes, thank you, Steve.

12                   The next item on the agenda is recognition  
13 of the 2014 National Student Poet's Program winner, and  
14 Commission Owen, we turn it over to you.

15                   MR. OWEN: Madam Chair, it's a pleasure  
16 today to honor Ms. Julia Falkner, the 2014 National  
17 Student Poet representing the West region. Ms. Falkner  
18 is from Monarch High School in Louisville, Colorado. The  
19 National Student Poet's program is the country's highest  
20 honor for young poets grades 9 through 11, presenting  
21 original work. Each year, five students are selected for  
22 one year of service as literary ambassadors, each  
23 representing a different geographic region of the  
24 country. By elevating and showcasing their work for a  
25 national audience, the program strives to inspire other



1 young people to achieve excellence in their own creative  
2 endeavors and promote the essential role of writing and  
3 the arts in academic and personal success.

4 The National Student Poets are selected from  
5 (indiscernible) through the Scholastic Art and Writing  
6 Awards. Each year, 35 semifinalists are selected based  
7 on creativity, dedication to craft, and promise. Their  
8 work is then submitted to the jury for the final  
9 selection of the five National Student Poets.

10 Ms. Falkner was selected from the West  
11 region as one of the five (indiscernible) winners. Each  
12 National Student Poet receives an academic award of  
13 \$5,000 and the acknowledgement of their accomplishment at  
14 the White House. To celebrate her success, Ms. Falker  
15 was invited to the White House where she was introduced  
16 by First Lady Michelle Obama at a poetry reading on  
17 September 18th, 2014.

18 Please help me recognize Ms. Julia Falkner  
19 from Monarch High School, as she comes forward to say a  
20 few words.

21 (Applause)

22 MS. FALKNER: Hello, Madam Chair, Members of  
23 the Board. Thank you for having me today.

24 MADAM CHAIR: Thank you very much.

25 MS. FALKNER: During my experience so far as



1 a National Student Poet, the trust and respect that I've  
2 received from people such as you has been completely  
3 humbling. For example, in the last six months I read my  
4 work at the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival, the  
5 Library of Congress, and at the White House for First  
6 Lady Michelle Obama. This has led to a somewhat  
7 unconventional senior year. The most important lessons  
8 I've learned have come from my fellow student poets,  
9 poetry teachers and mentors, and those who believed in me  
10 enough to make this opportunity possible.

11 Many poets I've met this year have  
12 introduced me to the concept of an initiation poem, the  
13 first poem someone hears that they really connect to.  
14 This poem initiates them into being not only a lover of  
15 poetry but a budding poet themselves. My fellow National  
16 Student Poet, Cameron Messinidies, claims that his  
17 initiation poem trained his ears and taught him how to  
18 create his own work. I agree completely.

19 So far, my relationship to the National  
20 Student Poet's Program has been incredibly similar to  
21 this concept. I like to think of this year as my  
22 initiation year. Just as our initiation poems trained  
23 our ears, the experiences I'm having this year are  
24 training me. I'm learning how I want to walk in this  
25 world.



1                   As I slowly but surely become an adult, my  
2                   ambassadorship has taught me how to speak and listen,  
3                   advocate for what is important to me, and express myself  
4                   in a language that I can understand and control.

5                   Now it's come to the point in my year of  
6                   service where I've shared the love I have for poetry with  
7                   others. This spring and summer I'll be leading a  
8                   workshop-based poetry service product with LGBT youth in  
9                   Colorado. I'll also be collaborating with other youth  
10                  poetry leaders as an ambassador to spread poetry  
11                  awareness and education amongst the youth population of  
12                  our entire country. I want to empower others to tell  
13                  their stories and to speak their mind.

14                  Maybe throughout these endeavors I'll be  
15                  able to connect the right poems with the right people and  
16                  initiate some new poets. Maybe I have an important  
17                  message to spread through different communities with art.

18                  Regardless of the outcome, I know that these  
19                  experiences with poetry and service are initiating me as  
20                  a person. I've gained so much enthusiasm and confidence  
21                  about sharing, involving, and immersing myself in what I  
22                  love. Poems have the ability to change lives, empower  
23                  us, and help us appreciate the beauty and poignance of  
24                  the world in which we live. I hope that before the year  
25                  ends I'll be able to help others experience this art that



1 I love so much.

2 Thank you again for having me, and have a  
3 wonderful afternoon.

4 MADAM CHAIR: Ms. Falkner.

5 (Applause)

6 MADAM CHAIR: On behalf of the State Board I  
7 would like to commend you and your exception work and as  
8 a student role model. And if you would join us up front  
9 -- who is --

10 MS. FLORES: May I ask a question?

11 MADAM CHAIR: -- with Angelika Schroeder,  
12 who is your -- we will take a picture.

13 Yes, ma'am.

14 MS. FLORES: Could she read a poem for us,  
15 one of her poems?

16 MADAM CHAIR: No.

17 MR. DURHAM: Did you have one?

18 MS. FLORES: Did you have one for us? Did  
19 you have a poem?

20 MS. FALKNER: I could probably read one off  
21 my phone if you'd like me to. I didn't have one  
22 prepared, but --

23 MADAM CHAIR: It's completely up to you. Do  
24 you want to take over?

25 MS. FLORES: No. I just thought you might



1 have a poem.

2 MADAM CHAIR: Go ahead, please.

3 MS. FALKNER: All right. Sorry. Just a  
4 second.

5 MS. FLORES: She's written many.

6 MS. FALKNER: Yeah. Thank you. All right.

7 The Philosophy of Hunger. One, household  
8 antifreeze must be kept high away from children and dogs  
9 simply because it tastes so sweet. Two, ordinary vinegar  
10 is acidic enough to dissolve an entire human skeleton.  
11 Three, after its death, the human body, in the following  
12 hours, loses six ounces of weight, described by many as  
13 the heaviness of the human soul.

14 MADAM CHAIR: Thank you.

15 MS. FLORES: Thank you.

16 (Applause)

17 MADAM CHAIR: Please join Ms. Schroeder and  
18 the Commissioner and we'll also take your picture here.

19 (Pause)

20 MADAM CHAIR: The next item on the agenda is  
21 recognition of the National School Counselor of the Year.  
22 It's my pleasure, for the State Board of Education, and  
23 Colorado Department of Education to recognize Mr. Cory  
24 Notestine. Where are you, Cory?

25 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: It's Notestine.



1 MADAM CHAIR: Okay. Is that right --  
2 Nestine (ph).

3 MR. NOTESTINE: Notestine.

4 MADAM CHAIR: Notestine? That sounds pretty  
5 good. Cory Notestine, Counselor at Alamosa High School.  
6 Mr. Notestine was named the 2015 National School  
7 Counselor of the Year. Commissioner?

8 MR. OWEN: I just have to tell a story  
9 before I tell (indiscernible). We knew nothing about  
10 this until Marcia had heard --

11 MADAM CHAIR: I found it.

12 MR. OWEN: -- yeah, she found the story and  
13 I happened to be down at your superintendent's meeting  
14 and talked to your superintendent, and I said, "Is this  
15 really true? We have a national winner here?" And he  
16 said, "Absolutely." And I said, "Well, we've got to have  
17 somebody recognize this. This is quite an honor." So  
18 it's nice to have discovered you through Marcia, and it's  
19 nice that you've made the trip up here today.

20 So with that I'll turn it over to Ms.  
21 Holmes.

22 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Madam Chair.

23 MADAM CHAIR: Yes.

24 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: So yes, a national  
25 award-winner in our midst here. The School Counselor of



1 the Year Award is presented yearly by the American School  
2 Counselor Association and it's intended to honor  
3 professionals who devote their careers to serving as  
4 advocates for students in expressing their academic,  
5 social, college, and career readiness development.

6 Mr. Notestine has been a school counselor  
7 since 2008. He was new to Alamosa High School in the  
8 2013-2014 school year, which made the level of impact  
9 he's made in such a short time in that school and in that  
10 district even more impressive. One parent discussed his  
11 achievement and was quoted as saying the following: "In  
12 one short year, Mr. Notestine has led to a complete  
13 cultural shift in the counseling department in Alamosa  
14 High School. My son commented on the changes that were  
15 evident in the programs provided by the counseling  
16 department under Mr. Notestine's leadership."

17 Heidi Morgan, a fellow counselor at Alamosa High School,  
18 describes Cory as having "a passion for students. He  
19 takes the time to relate to each of his students on a  
20 personal level. I have seen several students' lives  
21 changed because of him. He has a way of reaching  
22 students when no one else can."

23 The School Counselor of the Year winner and  
24 finalists were judged on creative school counseling  
25 program innovations, effective school counseling



1 programs, leadership skills, and contributions to student  
2 advancement. Cory, along with four School Counselor of  
3 the year finalists, were flown to Washington, D.C., in  
4 late January. The honorees had meetings with their  
5 members of Congress, attended a congressional briefing,  
6 and on January 30th, First Lady Michelle Obama and  
7 actress Connie Britton, who played a school counselor on  
8 the acclaimed TV show, *Friday Night Lights*, honored the  
9 Counselor of the Year, the finalists and semifinalists,  
10 in a first-ever White House ceremony, and presented Cory  
11 with the top award.

12 We are pleased that he was able to come all  
13 the way from Alamosa to join us today and he has a few  
14 comments for you all.

15 (Applause)

16 MR. NOTESTINE: Madam Chair, Board, thank  
17 you for having me. A funny comment about Connie Britton.  
18 I was talking to a student and they were like, "Oh, you  
19 met my all-time hero." I was like, "Yeah, I met Michelle  
20 Obama," and they're like, "No, Connie Britton. You met  
21 her, right?" And I was like, "Yeah. She's great too."  
22 I didn't know her but she's an amazing actress.

23 But I would like to say thank you for taking  
24 the time today to honor the profession and the important  
25 role school counselors play in the lives of children



1 across the state and nation. This award is more than an  
2 individual award aimed at honoring one person's  
3 achievement. This award highlights school-wide  
4 initiatives and guidance curriculum that is centered and  
5 tailored to remove barriers to student academic success.

6 Without educational stakeholders like  
7 yourselves, support school counselors would not be able  
8 to deliver developmentally appropriate, comprehensive  
9 programs that support children's academic, career, and  
10 personal social needs. In fact, school counselors are  
11 uniquely positioned to help students with their  
12 socioemotional needs. At a time when education seems  
13 solely focused on academic outcomes, school counselors  
14 are working to support children through some of the most  
15 difficult times in their lives.

16 With the increased national focus on mental  
17 health issues, school counselors stay on the front lines,  
18 providing counseling services and making referrals so  
19 children and families can get the help they deserve and  
20 so desperately need.

21 Several weeks ago, a research study out of  
22 Columbia University looked at the economic value of  
23 social and emotional learning. This study showed that  
24 the benefits of these interventions, curriculum, and  
25 skill development far outweigh the cost of



1 implementation. However, many of these intervention  
2 studies are delivered at the elementary level, where  
3 there are very few counselors to provide such guidance  
4 curriculum in the state of Colorado.

5           When we review the data of our own Counselor  
6 Corps Grant in the state of Colorado we see tremendous  
7 growth in schools that gain access to a school counselor  
8 for the first time or another counselor, to reduce the  
9 rate of the student-to-counselor ratio. These results  
10 indicate graduation rates increased by 5 percent, dropout  
11 rates decreased, and student enrollment in postsecondary  
12 institutions increased by 13 percent in one year  
13 following high school graduation. All of these  
14 indicators point to the value of school counselors in our  
15 state and the role they play in student achievement.

16           My ideas are not unique or new to the field  
17 of school counselor. However, what we've been able to  
18 accomplish in my school is due to our ability to create  
19 comprehensive programming that aligns with the ASCA  
20 national model. Our continued success lies within our  
21 ability to have a reasonable student-to-counselor ratio  
22 of approximately 1-to-250 students. Just as a point of  
23 reference, ours is roughly, in our state, 460-to-1.

24           If we hope to see continued growth as  
25 exhibited through the Counselor Corps Grant and in our



1 ability to prepare students for college and career  
2 readiness, as highlighted by the First Lady, Michelle  
3 Obama, we must see an increase in the number of school  
4 counselors, not only at the middle school and high school  
5 level but at the elementary school level as well.

6 Again, thank you for honoring me today and I  
7 hope you will continue to support school counselors like  
8 myself at the state level, because we are doing amazing  
9 things on behalf of students. So thank you very much for  
10 having me here today. I appreciate it.

11 (Applause)

12 MADAM CHAIR: Don't sit down. Would you  
13 please come up front and join me, your Board member, and  
14 the Commissioner in receiving your award.

15 MR. NOTESTINE: Thank you.

16 (Pause)

17 MADAM CHAIR: Okay. Very good. Where is  
18 your superintendent? I thought he'd be here.

19 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: He wasn't able to make  
20 it today.

21 MADAM CHAIR: Tell him I asked for him. I  
22 wondered where he was. He's such a outspoken fellow. He  
23 lets you know exactly what's going on.

24 The action item number 15.01, Request for  
25 Montrose County Re-1 to approve its Innovation



1 Application on Behalf of Centennial Middle School. And I  
2 assume one of you is the principal. That's you?

3 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yes, I am.

4 MADAM CHAIR: Very good. What, I'm looking  
5 for a motion here. Okay. Or is somebody giving -- this  
6 is all I've got here.

7 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Madam Chair, I'm happy  
8 to do introductions and then they have a short  
9 presentation before you all take (indiscernible).

10 MADAM CHAIR: You're on.

11 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Okay. So these two  
12 gentlemen certainly will introduce themselves. They are  
13 able stand-ins for their superintendent. We have here  
14 Joe Simo, who is Centennial Middle School principal, and  
15 Bob Lee, who is the district's director of alternative  
16 education. As you all know, the first time that a  
17 district comes forward with a School of Innovation they  
18 are putting an application to you all to become a  
19 District of Innovation, and because that is Montrose's  
20 first time, they're here with a brief presentation today,  
21 and then we'll ask for your vote with the staff  
22 recommendation of approval.

23 The application intends to convert one  
24 school in the district, Centennial Middle School, to a  
25 School of Innovation. That school currently receives



1 high growth but not high achievement, and the school and  
2 district have worked together to put forward a plan that  
3 they feel will advance the achievement of their students.  
4 They will discuss the plan in detail but you'll see an  
5 intention of making some changes to the school schedule,  
6 the school curriculum, and the use of blended learning  
7 technologies in order to achieve new goals for the  
8 school.

9 So with that I will turn things over to you.

10 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And I just might say,  
11 Madam Chair, the only -- we don't normally do this. Any  
12 time someone asks for such a request, the very first time  
13 we ask that they present to you just a very, very brief  
14 summary of what they're trying to do. And other than  
15 that, we normally don't do it. Thank you.

16 MR. SIMO: Thank you. Madam Chair, members  
17 of the State School Board of Education, we appreciate the  
18 opportunity to present today on behalf of Centennial  
19 Middle School and Montrose County School District Re-1J  
20 for approval of Centennial School of Innovation  
21 application.

22 Centennial Middle School is located in the  
23 Western Slope of Colorado. Currently we have 574  
24 students, educating sixth, seventh, and eighth grade.  
25 Fifty-six percent of our students are qualified for free



1 and reduced lunch, 28 percent are English language  
2 learners, and currently, on the school performance  
3 framework, we score performance.

4 In this process we decided that we needed to  
5 engage in a lot of collaboration with our local  
6 community, and we've created a School of Innovation  
7 taskforce that went out and recruited local business  
8 members, our PAC, parent involvement academic committee,  
9 students, staff, and community members throughout the  
10 Montrose area. With that we worked, for the last six  
11 months, meeting weekly to decide what School of  
12 Innovation plan we would go for and how we would want to  
13 move forward. With this, we're able to go around the  
14 state, going to schools that we felt had characteristics  
15 that we would want to include into our school to make our  
16 school even better for our students.

17 With that, we decided the reason of applying  
18 for School of Innovation was the flexibility, and the  
19 flexibility, to implement a curriculum, design  
20 professional development, and execute instructional  
21 models and assessments to align with our core mission and  
22 meet the needs of our students. An analogy is kind of  
23 Centennial wants to become a PT boat, compared to an  
24 aircraft carrier, which is a school district. When it's  
25 time for us to be reactive and make changes based off of



1 things we see in our school, we're able to stop and turn  
2 quickly versus that aircraft carrier taking a long time  
3 to make adjustment to the course. And we felt that the  
4 flexibility would allow our school to improve our student  
5 achievement and provide a better education for our  
6 students.

7 Some of the innovations that we're looking  
8 on are going to be based off of three foundational values  
9 that we have. The first is quality teaching, the second  
10 is a rigorous curriculum, and a third is a character-  
11 based education. The quality teaching, currently  
12 Centennial only receives about 2 1/2 days of professional  
13 development and most of those days are at the beginning  
14 of the school year. And so as the school year starts we  
15 don't have any opportunity to access our data and make  
16 adjustments and have time to improve our craft and  
17 improve our teachers, because that's one of the most  
18 important things we feel will improve academic  
19 achievement in our district and our building.

20 The next is collaboration for that quality  
21 teaching. Our teachers teach in isolation and do not  
22 have time to collaborate, to look at and access the data,  
23 and to drive our instruction from that data.

24 The next is rigorous curriculum. We felt,  
25 through our visits throughout the state, that the blended



1 learning model, which incorporates 21st century  
2 technology and your traditional teaching, would be the  
3 best approach. Unfortunately, we're not able to go after  
4 one-to-one device capacity but with blended learning we  
5 can use the technology we do have and more of centers,  
6 almost like guided reading where you have two or three  
7 students working on technology, a group of students  
8 working with the teacher, and a group of students working  
9 independently, and that technology would allow us to help  
10 assess the students where they're at and to be able to  
11 adjust, midstream, if students are struggling.

12                   The other component with the blended  
13 learning is we like the way we can differentiate for our  
14 students. Currently, when you have a class of 28 to 30  
15 students, you have students from third-grade reading  
16 level all the way up to 12th grade, and being able to use  
17 online curriculum, in partnership with our traditional  
18 teaching methods, will allow us to meet those students at  
19 their level.

20                   The next is character-based education, and  
21 earlier you heard from our National Counselor-recognized,  
22 that we believe that with character education we need to  
23 teach our students how to be active and positive role  
24 models and community members, and it just doesn't happen.  
25 We have to spend time and work with our students. And at



1 a middle-school level, we feel that having a curriculum  
2 that is focused on improving our students, teaching them  
3 social in a moral kind of curriculum and responsibilities  
4 is an important component for us.

5 With that, we are very excited and really  
6 appreciate your time and your consideration for our  
7 School of Innovation application. Thank you.

8 MADAM CHAIR: Any questions, comments? I  
9 look forward to a report next year, to see how this has  
10 worked for you. Deb.

11 MS. SCHEFFEL: Thank you for the  
12 presentation. Can you just summarize the goal of the  
13 Innovation application? Obviously I've read it, but in  
14 what sense is it innovative and what do you get out of  
15 the application? Is there money attached to it? Maybe  
16 others know the answer to these questions.

17 MR. SIMO: We do not have any money attached  
18 to it. With our district, as we've been losing  
19 enrollment for a lot of our districts, you know, across  
20 the state and especially on the Western Slope, the one  
21 goal was to work in the means that our current school and  
22 district has. And so we've created a plan that would  
23 allow us to incorporate the technology and use some of  
24 the resources our district has without costing any  
25 additional money, besides maybe some traditional



1 fundraising that we do historically every spring.

2 I think the big thing that it allows us to  
3 do is we get to make decisions at the building level  
4 versus the district level, and I think our district is  
5 doing an amazing job but sometimes it may not benefit our  
6 students at Centennial. And by getting this waiver we're  
7 allowed to create our own curriculum, use our own  
8 assessments, and be able to kind of be that quick  
9 response at the building level instead of kind of waiting  
10 for that aircraft carrier to make that big turn.

11 MS. FLORES: Madam Chair?

12 MS. SCHEFFEL: So may I just clarify?

13 MADAM CHAIR: Yes, ma'am. Oh, go ahead,  
14 Deb. Finish.

15 MS. SCHEFFEL: So you're saying that, in a  
16 way, this application allows you to function in some ways  
17 like a charter because it's more local controlled.

18 MR. SIMO: Correct.

19 MS. SCHEFFEL: Okay. Thank you.

20 MS. FLORES: So what is -- how many students  
21 do you have and what's your teacher-to-student ratio?

22 MR. SIMO: We have 574 students and right  
23 now we're running between 27-to-1, so 27 students to 1.  
24 And depending on the courses, some courses have a few  
25 more and some have a little less, depending on the needs



1 of those students.

2 MS. FLORES: And it's so important -- and  
3 there's a question here -- it's so important to have  
4 teachers that come together. You know, you said you only  
5 have two days at the beginning. Is there any time in the  
6 interim that possibly administrators could take over, so  
7 that teachers could get together and discuss the data?  
8 Because I can't imagine that this time wouldn't be found  
9 where teachers can come together. How many teachers do  
10 you have?

11 MR. SIMO: Currently we're right around 40  
12 staff members, so licensed teachers in our building, and  
13 with this innovation plan, if approved, we'd be able to  
14 add close to five more professional development days  
15 throughout the year for our teachers. And so that's one  
16 of the major areas for us, was being able to add that.

17 MS. FLORES: Very good. Thank you.

18 MADAM CHAIR: Thank you. Any other  
19 questions, comments? Jane.

20 MS. GOFF: Thank you. Thank you very much.  
21 Nice to see you. I missed your name and your role. I'm  
22 sorry.

23 MR. LEE: My name is Bob Lee. I'm the  
24 director of alternative education in Montrose County  
25 School District.



1 MS. GOFF: Okay. So you're with the  
2 district.

3 MR. LEE: Yes.

4 MS. GOFF: I appreciate it. I would ask  
5 either of you, because I think you would know, what was  
6 your local board's most enthusiastic -- what were they  
7 most looking forward to when you presented your plan? I  
8 know you all worked together on this, but how did the  
9 community -- what was their most favorite thing about it?

10 MR. SIMO: I think our school board was very  
11 excited about the possibility of the blended learning and  
12 incorporation more technology into the classroom, which  
13 has been a focus for them for the last, I'd say, three to  
14 four years. The idea with the blended learning is we're  
15 able to access the technology we currently have in the  
16 district, and it doesn't have to be a one-to-one device  
17 rollout, that we've heard a lot about lately, in the last  
18 few years.

19 I think our community likes the idea of the  
20 ability to differentiate. You know, if we have students  
21 who are reading at the 11th or 12th grade reading level,  
22 sometimes they have to get that seat time, and with this  
23 application we'd be able to move them at their level and  
24 provide the curriculum and instruction that they need.  
25 So I think that's been probably the community's big



1 excitement behind this, but for our school board we did  
2 get 100 percent of the school board members to vote for  
3 it, and 90 percent of our staff voted for our application  
4 and plan.

5 MS. GOFF: That would have been my next  
6 question, without it right in front of me, the percent of  
7 approval on all of those required community groups. So  
8 that's terrific.

9 MR. SIMO: And for the few who didn't, they  
10 talked to me later and said, "Just too unknown yet. We  
11 don't know exactly what it's going to be" for how it will  
12 affect their program. They're excited about it but they  
13 just had too many questions, they said. And so that was  
14 pretty exciting because I would say almost 100 percent of  
15 the staff are excited about this process that we're going  
16 forward with.

17 MS. GOFF: Is there a master agreement in  
18 place, a collective bargaining agreement? Is that a  
19 unit? Is that a regional situation?

20 MR. SIMO: Yes.

21 MS. GOFF: Montrose has -- you have your own  
22 separate agreement, right?

23 MR. SIMO: Yeah. We have our UVEA and they  
24 have a master contract with our school district, and we  
25 did ask for some waivers in that application from the



1 master contract besides the district waivers that we  
2 requested also.

3 MS. GOFF: Well, good luck. I wish you  
4 well.

5 MR. SIMO: Thank you.

6 MADAM CHAIR: Angelika?

7 MS. SCHROEDER: Congratulations. I'd like  
8 to move that we approve the Montrose County Re-1's  
9 request to approve its Innovation application on behalf  
10 of Centennial Middle School.

11 MADAM CHAIR: Is there a second?

12 MS. FLORES: Second.

13 MADAM CHAIR: Val?

14 MS. FLORES: Second.

15 MADAM CHAIR: Any dissent?

16 So the motion stands approved as read.

17 Congratulations and thank you for coming.

18 MR. SIMO: Thank you very much. We really  
19 appreciate it.

20 MR. HAMMOND: Madam Chair.

21 MADAM CHAIR: Yes.

22 MR. HAMMOND: Because we have a timed item -  
23 - this doesn't pertain to you.

24 MADAM CHAIR: You can go.

25 MR. HAMMOND: Thank you very much. We have



1 a timed item as it relates to the -- I lost my place --  
2 Item 19.01 on the transportation rules. Since we went a  
3 little bit out of order it would be my recommendation,  
4 since this is a timed item, we take this. Then we go  
5 back to the Executive Session and the other items we vote  
6 on under educator licensing.

7 MADAM CHAIR: That suits me.

8 MR. HAMMOND: If that would meet with your  
9 approval.

10 MADAM CHAIR: Does anybody have any  
11 objection?

12 Then let's move ahead to 19.01.

13 Gee, you drive the cars too, huh?

14 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Madam Chair, we've  
15 talked about this before. We've said this is kind of an  
16 issue that started with the rurals. I'm sure there's  
17 some comments otherwise. But we've done a lot of in-  
18 depth research on this and we propose the rulemaking  
19 hearing today. And so we really wanted to just talk to  
20 you briefly about this, answer any questions, and then  
21 we'll go forward.

22 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yes. Thank you.

23 MADAM CHAIR: The Colorado State Board of  
24 Education will now conduct a public rulemaking hearing  
25 for rules concerning Colorado Minimum Standards Governing



1 School Transportation Vehicles 1 CCR 301-25. The State  
2 Board approved the Notice of Rulemaking at its January  
3 7th, 2015, Board meeting. A hearing to promulgate these  
4 rules was made known through publication of a public  
5 notice on January 25th, 2015, through the Colorado  
6 Register and by State Board notice on March 4th, 2015.  
7 The State Board is authorized to promulgate these rules  
8 pursuant to Title 22, Article 51, Section 108, and Title  
9 42, Article 4, Section 1904, C.R.S.

10 All right. The Commissioner has already  
11 provided an overview. Go ahead.

12 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Thank you, Madam Chair.  
13 Yes, the notice was conducted in January, where we spent  
14 some time going over the proposed rules. And as a  
15 reminder, when we had started going through this, this  
16 has been a multiyear process to revise these rules. And  
17 we got to the point where we needed to strike them all,  
18 because there were so many changes that it was getting so  
19 confusing for everyone that we struck them all and  
20 basically rewrote them to align very closely with the  
21 federal minimum standards, with some variations that the  
22 transportation people still felt that they needed to be  
23 in rule.

24 So there's been significant outreach across  
25 the state regarding these rules, and once the public



1 hearing -- once the notice occurred, we did receive a few  
2 comments, and I'll have Jennifer briefly explain them.

3 MADAM CHAIR: Okay.

4 MS. OKES: Thank you, Madam Chair. So yes,  
5 we did receive seven comments during the formal  
6 rulemaking process, and we are recommending proceeding  
7 and incorporating six of the seven comments that we  
8 received. Generally they were very -- and you do have a  
9 document -- it's the landscape version -- that each of  
10 the comments, and I think they are very good technical  
11 clarifications. In a few cases it was putting back some  
12 of the language that was struck. We streamlined them a  
13 lot. We reduced them by almost a third in this rewrite.  
14 And so there were a few things that the people thought  
15 that we should incorporate back in and we agreed with  
16 that.

17 The one proposed change that we do not think  
18 -- we're not recommending, is in relation to the motor  
19 coach issue, and as you may recall that was the more  
20 controversial issue that we've discussed. And the  
21 recommended change, through the comments, was to just  
22 allow that to be done by a district. Our proposal had  
23 been that it should be done through a local board of  
24 education resolution, and we still think that there's  
25 some merit to that, just so that there's public dialogue



1 and discussion of those since it's a safety issue. So  
2 that would be our recommendation.

3 MADAM CHAIR: Yes.

4 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And, Madam Chair, just  
5 as a reminder about the charter bus issue, under our  
6 previous rules the purpose of used charter buses was not  
7 allowed. There were some districts that had been  
8 grandfathered in from -- you know, they had them and then  
9 the rules went in place and they could still keep them.  
10 When we were going through the drafting process there  
11 were districts who wanted to replace those older buses  
12 but under the current rules they were not allowed to. So  
13 in order to compromise, so in order to come to a  
14 compromise, the drafted rules, as presented, would  
15 require that the boards of education adopt a resolution  
16 so that that is -- that they make that decision, a public  
17 decision, in order to go ahead and purchase those used  
18 charter school buses.

19 The comments were that there may not be a  
20 need for that resolution. However, as staff we are still  
21 recommending that that resolution be tasked so that the  
22 boards of education and staff make that concerned  
23 decision about the purchase of those buses, since there  
24 are some safety issues that probably need to be  
25 discussed.



1 MADAM CHAIR: Okay.

2 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And that's the one  
3 comment that we're not recommending to change into the  
4 rules.

5 MADAM CHAIR: But we're ready to go ahead  
6 and have testimony. We have four people signed up to  
7 testify. Under the State Board rules you have three  
8 minutes per speaker. And Ms. Markel is the timekeeper.  
9 If you see her wave her little sign it's time to sit  
10 down.

11 Our first testifier will be Duran -- Durbin.  
12 Is it Jay or Jeff? I couldn't read it.

13 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Jeff.

14 MADAM CHAIR: Jeff Durbin. Yes. Thank you.

15 MR. DURBIN: Good afternoon, Madam Chair,  
16 State Board members as well as Mr. Commissioner, Dr.  
17 Hammond.

18 I guess I really appreciate you taking the  
19 time to listen to my concerns today. As a superintendent  
20 and 25 years in education, I appreciate you giving us  
21 school districts some flexibility. I find it a little  
22 ironic today that I'm addressing you to ask for help to  
23 replace a coach used bus, that we bought used, that  
24 actually is a 1985 bus, and that's the year I graduated,  
25 and I know I'm a little old and I don't work near as good



1 as that bus.

2 But my point of this story is, for safety  
3 issues I would really like the purpose of addressing  
4 replacing our coach bus. It has over 2 million miles on  
5 it. I put a lot of money into that bus to keep it going  
6 and I truly believe that in the year that have gone by,  
7 25 years, that safety issues regarding the coach buses, I  
8 would hope by now there's a lot more thought and process  
9 put behind the design of those buses.

10 The reason that I'm asking that we be able  
11 to purchase and replace this bus is I live in a rural  
12 community. I had this very conversation with my school  
13 board. We have a bus that we send out on activity trips,  
14 which we load our entire volleyball team, our football  
15 team, and that takes one bus. We're able to travel --  
16 and when we travel we're not talking a 30-minute drive.  
17 We're talking sometimes up to 3 1/2 hours one way to get  
18 to a destination that we have to go and participate at an  
19 activity.

20 This also has a bathroom on it, so our kids  
21 are able to take care of their needs. But the biggest  
22 part of it is being in a rural school we don't have the  
23 flexibility of finding a lot of drivers. I advertised  
24 recently to find a bus driver for three months. I had  
25 zero applicants. We are also one of the few school



1 districts that offer, out in rural America, full-time  
2 health insurance for our employee bus drivers. You would  
3 think that would entice somebody to want to drive a  
4 school bus or a coach bus for us. Zero applicants.

5           Some people have asked me, "Well, why don't  
6 you just take two buses?" Well, the reason is you talk  
7 about cost, you talk about reduction in budgets, that you  
8 all are aware of. We don't have the money to go out and  
9 find two bus drivers, let alone one, and spend the extra  
10 cost of putting a volleyball team on one bus, the  
11 football team on the other. So it gives us some  
12 flexibility to meet the needs of the district and be able  
13 to address the needs of our students.

14           Also, I guess I want to address the issue  
15 about local control. I had the very issue with regards  
16 to my school board. I said we, as a board, you, as the  
17 school board, ought to have the right to decide what's  
18 best for your community. If you so choose, as a school  
19 board, to purchase a used coach bus to meet the needs of  
20 your students, you ought to have that right to do that.  
21 You should not be told, by the Colorado Department of Ed  
22 that you cannot do that.

23           I want to personally thank the Department  
24 and the people that worked on this issue with me,  
25 especially Jennifer, in regards to addressing this very



1 important issue for us, that you give us the flexibility  
2 to meet the needs of our school district and allow us to  
3 be able to purchase a new, upgraded, used coach bus to  
4 replace the one that has many, many miles on it.

5 MADAM CHAIR: Thank you, Mr. Durbin.

6 MR. DURBIN: All right. Thank you, and  
7 thank you for your time.

8 MR. DURHAM: Madam Chairman, can I ask a  
9 question? Do you -- so the rules, as they are currently  
10 constituted, will allow you to make this purchase. Is  
11 that correct?

12 MR. DURBIN: The new rules that are being  
13 proposed will give us the flexibility to go out and  
14 purchase a used coach bus. Yes, sir.

15 MR. DURHAM: Thank you.

16 MADAM CHAIR: Thank you.

17 Mr. Pearson -- or, not mister. I'm sorry.  
18 Denise Pearson. I just expect bus people to be male. Go  
19 ahead, please.

20 MS. PEARSON: Madam Chairperson, members of  
21 the State Board, Commissioner Hammond, thank you very  
22 much for this opportunity. My name is Denise Pearson and  
23 I'm superintendent of Kiowa Schools, located in Albert  
24 County.

25 I'd like to thank the Transportation



1 Advisory Committee and CDE for their work on these rules.  
2 It has got to be arduous. And I'd especially like to  
3 thank them for changing the rules for the purchase of a  
4 coach bus. This is really important to our district.  
5 Here's why.

6 I don't know if you can see this but this is  
7 a map of Colorado and this is Kiowa -- whoops, this is  
8 upside down.

9 MADAM CHAIR: I didn't think that was in  
10 Western Colorado.

11 MS. PEARSON: And here's Rangely, almost in  
12 Utah. And, yes, we've played Rangely in football. It's  
13 327 miles across the Continental Divide. It's an  
14 overnight trip, with a bus driver, with the team, with  
15 the coaches, with all of the equipment, and, of course,  
16 their luggage, because they have a couple of overnight  
17 stays. If we didn't have the coach, with all of the  
18 extra storage, we would have had to take two buses,  
19 which, as Jeff mentioned, is an extra expense, but also  
20 for us we have trouble getting bus drivers at all, and  
21 ours are part-time.

22 And Kiowa and Rangely are not isolated. We  
23 go to Hoehne, Caliche, Granada, Custer County, Fowler,  
24 just to name a few. Our summer football camp is in  
25 Chadron, Nebraska. And let's not forget our band. That



1 is a lot of equipment, and we can get everybody in one  
2 bus if we can take a coach.

3 I know there are safety concerns with a  
4 coach, and I respect the people who have that opinion,  
5 and I am hopeful that they can exercise local control to  
6 make that decision. Our board would really like to have  
7 that opportunity as well.

8 You know, they wouldn't take this decision  
9 lightly, and in our school we know all 287 kids. We know  
10 their parents and we know a lot of their grandparents.  
11 Our staff has taught their parents, have gone to school  
12 with their parents or their grandparents. So we operate  
13 our school based on relationships. And when they make  
14 big decisions like this, they really weigh the pros and  
15 cons, and the accountability is not just faces but it's  
16 families that we are accountable to.

17 Your support for this rule change will allow  
18 our school board, elected by our citizens, to do the job  
19 that they've asked them to do. Thank you for your time.

20 MADAM CHAIR: Thank you, ma'am.

21 Tom Satterly.

22 MR. SATTERLY: Madam Chair and members of  
23 the State Board of Education, and Commissioner Hammond, I  
24 just want to say thank you for the opportunity to speak  
25 on behalf of the proposed rule changes, to the



1 transportation, over-the-road coach buses.

2 My name is Tom Satterly and I come from  
3 Burlington RE-6J. I didn't bring a map, but if you were  
4 to jump on I-70 and head east, before you hit the sign  
5 that says, "Leaving Colorful Colorado," you would see  
6 Burlington.

7 I want to speak for our students and our  
8 student athletes. We do travel quite a little bit. We  
9 average anywhere from two to three hours one way. We  
10 will travel, on average, between 45, 48 football players  
11 and their equipment. Our nearest conference game -- this  
12 is a game that we don't choose; we're in the conference --  
13 -- is just over an hour straight north, to Wray. Our  
14 furthest conference game is Wiggins, Colorado, if you  
15 know where Wiggins is. I had to look it up too. Go back  
16 to Limon, straight north, hang a left, go past Fort  
17 Morgan. It's a little over three hours for our student  
18 athletes.

19 But not only do our student athletes travel  
20 this far, my FBLA -- we have a tremendous FBLA program --  
21 our district is Sterling, which is just under three hours  
22 from Burlington, and we will travel anywhere from 25 to  
23 38 students to that activity. We also have FFA that  
24 travels, but we also have a band, and we will travel 35  
25 to 40 students in band, and as Denise had mentioned, the



1 equipment with the band can become a nightmare.

2                   Fortunately, I own two over-the-road motor  
3 coach buses. It helps tremendously when football goes  
4 one direction, volleyball goes another direction,  
5 softball goes a direction. I know that's more than two.  
6 Somebody ends up riding that snub-nosed yellow activity  
7 bus. It's not the football team, not because I used to  
8 coach football, but because of the equipment, all right.  
9 I want to throw that out there.

10                   But unfortunately, this year, the older  
11 Cougar bus -- okay, and when I say the older Cougar bus,  
12 I actually graduated from Burlington High School. When I  
13 was a junior in 1986, we bought an MCI over-the-road,  
14 used Cougar bus, and, man, we thought we were in it. I  
15 was actually driving that bus home with the band after  
16 being on the Western Slope for a playoff football game  
17 and the bus started to have problems. With those  
18 problems we were able to get it fixed. Unfortunately,  
19 not completely fixed. It cratered again. When we looked  
20 at buying a new, or a used bus, we were told we couldn't.  
21 It cost me \$22,000 to replace a power plant and a  
22 transmission. If I couldn't have done that -- I know I'm  
23 out of time, sorry -- if I couldn't have done that I  
24 could not, this weekend, take boys basketball to State  
25 and the band.



1                   Sorry I took up so much time.

2                   MADAM CHAIR: That's okay. Thank you very  
3 much. Very enlightening. I enjoyed this.

4                   And our last is French, Scott French?

5                   MR. FRENCH: Good afternoon, Madam Chair,  
6 State Board of Education. My name is Scott French. I  
7 have been a director in Colorado for 28 years. Before  
8 that I was a contractor in a school bus business and  
9 charter bus business for 12 years in the state of  
10 Massachusetts. So I'm pretty familiar with school buses  
11 and charter buses.

12                   The reason why I'm here today is I think the  
13 state has done a tremendous job at trying to make school  
14 buses safe for transporting school children, and they  
15 have a rack-and-load on the roof, I'm sure you're aware  
16 of, in the minimum standards. And this criteria of the  
17 safety of school buses was implemented in 1974. To date,  
18 there is nothing on the safety of side impact and roof  
19 construction for charter buses. And the only reason why  
20 I'm presenting today is I like local board autonomy but I  
21 think we need to be thinking about the safety of kids.  
22 And if you get online -- and I did just recently -- to  
23 look at the accidents in a rollover or cross (ph) -- so  
24 we have witnessed, or had, in the state of Colorado, we  
25 saw the roofs and structure of the charter buses, and how



1 there's just no integrity there.

2           There was a bad accident in 1992, involving  
3 a district bus going down, I think it was in St. Vrain,  
4 in the river, in Lyons, Colorado. And there was,  
5 unfortunately, a child that got ejected from the school  
6 bus. I saw the school bus, and I was really surprised  
7 how it slide down the embankment, but the integrity of  
8 that bus was not compromised. Children did get ejected.  
9 I think there were three or four. So we had a ruling  
10 passed by CD that we'd either have a secondary brake  
11 system on the buses or kids in the front and back seats  
12 would not occupy those seats.

13           But the accidents that I saw, when I went to  
14 the Web and saw -- and this is not just in Colorado.  
15 This is in other places. There is tremendous structural  
16 integrity questions about the charter buses. And our  
17 President Obama signed, in 2004, the Moving Ahead for  
18 Progress in the 21st Century Act. It's called MAP-21.  
19 In that legislation it's calling for the National Highway  
20 Traffic Safety Administration to look into the  
21 crashworthiness of what I'm talking about, with charter  
22 buses. Okay.

23           So here we are thinking about going  
24 backwards, in my opinion, 40 years, and yes, we leave it  
25 to school districts for their decision. May I ask that



1 at least something be implemented or mentioned about  
2 people doing this, or having access to this information?  
3 That's all I'm asking.

4 MADAM CHAIR: Thank you.

5 MR. FRENCH: And I do have some information  
6 that I can give you. It's referring to the two things  
7 I'm talking about. If you care. I heard that you have a  
8 lot of research and have done a lot of information on  
9 this and maybe you're aware of it, but I do have two  
10 reports in here that I'd be happy to distribute at this  
11 time.

12 MADAM CHAIR: Thank you. Thank you very  
13 much. I've found this very interesting. You know, I  
14 don't think I've ever been in a State Board meeting where  
15 we've talked about school buses, and it just brings it  
16 home to you that everything is important. And as I  
17 understand it, these gentlemen are saying these new rules  
18 would allow them more local control, flexibility to be  
19 able to purchase the vehicles that they think necessary.

20 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: Yes, Madam Chair. The  
21 rules do allow for the purchase of the used charter  
22 buses, but the rules also do, to speak to Mr. French's  
23 point, in a way, the rules also would require the local  
24 boards of education to pass a resolution so that they  
25 take into account those safety-related issues and they



1 can have that discussion and be able to understand the  
2 research and things like that surrounding the decision  
3 that they're making for those students in their  
4 communities.

5 MADAM CHAIR: That's good, because I know  
6 school board members have so many things, and sometimes  
7 things just go by. But this has been very interesting,  
8 and one of those I kind of looked and went, oh, okay,  
9 it's transportation.

10 Any other comments from any of the Board  
11 members?

12 Do we -- are we taking action? I forgot to  
13 look.

14 MS. SCHROEDER: I'm ready. I move to  
15 approve the rules for the Colorado Minimum Standards  
16 Governing School Transportation Vehicles.

17 MADAM CHAIR: Second?

18 MR. DURHAM: Second.

19 MADAM CHAIR: Thank you. Any dissent?

20 If not, the motion stands as made, and thank  
21 you very much for your time, and thank you, gentlemen,  
22 for coming and providing this enlightening discussion.  
23 Thank you.

24 Now where are we going, Commissioner?

25 MR. HAMMOND: Back to Executive Session.



1 MADAM CHAIR: Back to Executive Session.

2 13.01 is it? Yeah. Okay.

3 Ms. Markel, would you read us into Executive  
4 Session, please?

5 MS. MARKEL: (Indiscernible).

6 UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: I move we go in Exec  
7 Session.

8 MS. FLORES: I second.

9 MADAM CHAIR: Okay. I lost my page but we  
10 are in Exec Session and the audience will be excused.

11 (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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