



Colorado Coalition of Cyberschool Families

Colorado Department of Education
Office of Blended and Online Learning
Bill Kottenstette and Renee Martinez
201 East Colfax Ave, Room 210
Denver, CO 80203

October 15, 2020

Dear Bill and Renee,

On behalf of the Colorado Coalition of Cyberschool Families (CCCF), thank you organizing the online stakeholder meeting on Sept. 3 to discuss the draft of the successor school guidance criteria. Our families appreciate CCCF being part of the conversation.

As the former president of the National Coalition for Public School Options, president of the Colorado Coalition of Cyberschool Families, and an education reform advocate for 20 years, I am proud of CCCF's efforts to promote and protect online learning in the state.

As we look forward to discussing successor schools, I have some concerns I am expressing today. If the CDE uses the current definition of a successor school, successor schools across the state will be responsible for the accountability history of its predecessor, which is unfair. Let me explain further. Take a predecessor school that may be under performance watch, under the successor school guidelines, the successor school will also be on performance watch, which is unfair to the successor school leadership. Another example is the successor school, which would be forced to reapply for certification before opening its doors if the predecessor school was closed by the State Board. This limits Colorado families as their child or children will be held to the standards of a previous school. Successor schools have new leadership and new accountability measures, an in turn should be provided with a clean slate when it opens. This allows the school's leadership to focus on the students and teachers, allowing families to have confidence in the school and leadership.

In addition, a newly authorized multi-district online school may still be considered a successor school when applying for certification with the department of education. If CDE uses the current guidelines when evaluating if a multi-district school will be considered "newly authorized" or a successor school, many schools could be determined a successor school as the guidelines are unclear. When CDE states the newly authorized multi-district online school will be considered a successor school if they have substantially the same governance, does this mean the new school needs to have one, two, three or ten employees replaced? The lines are blurry between a newly authorized multi-district online school and a successor school and this could impact many of CCCF's families if a majority of the new schools become

successor schools. The focus needs to be on the success of our students instead of the predecessor's school successes or challenges.

Let's continue working together to clarify the guidelines and navigate the best learning approach for all students, including online students and families. After all, our goal is to continue promoting the best education options for our Colorado students. CCCF and I are excited and prepared to work together to create the most beneficial learning experience for students.

Thank you for taking the time to read our response, please contact me to discuss our feedback prior to the Oct. 22 stakeholder meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tillie A. Elvrum". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and a long, sweeping underline.

Tillie Elvrum, president of Colorado Coalition of Cyberschool Families
tillie@publicschooloptions.org