

Senate Education Committee Information and Procedures

Overview

The Senate Education Committee considers matters concerning: K-12 public schools, including public school accountability and school finance; and higher education, including administration and governance, tuition, and financial assistance. In addition, the committee has legislative oversight responsibility for the departments of Education and Higher Education.

Legislative Staff

The following legislative staff are assigned to research issues and draft bills that may appear before the Senate Education Committee.

- *Legislative Council Staff*

- Rachel Kurtz-Phelan, Senate Education Committee, rachel.kurtz-phelan@state.co.us, 303-866-3028

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- *Legislative Legal Services*

- Brita Darling, Senior Attorney, brita.darling@state.co.us, 303-866-2241

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- *Joint Budget Committee*

- Amanda Bickel, Chief Analyst, amanda.bickel@state.co.us, 303-866-4960

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Meeting Times and Locations

The Senate Education Committee meets Wednesdays upon adjournment in Senate Committee Room 356 and Thursdays at 1:30 p.m. Occasionally, the committee meets in a different room to accommodate larger crowds or the needs of other committees. Changes to the committee's regular schedule are announced on the Senate floor prior to adjournment. Schedule changes will also be posted on Twitter by the committee staff. If you wish to receive Twitter updates, go to <http://twitter.com/coeducationcomm> and follow the committee.

Joint Meetings with the House Education Committee

The SMART Government Act requires the House and Senate Education committees to hold annual hearings with the Department of Education and the Department of Higher Education. At the hearings, the departments must present their annual performance plan, regulatory agenda, and requested budget. The hearings must be held between November 1, 2014 and January 7, 2015. The Senate Education Committee will meet jointly with the House Education Committee to conduct these hearings.

During the legislative session, joint meetings of the House and Senate Education committees will be held on Wednesdays, upon adjournment of both chambers, as needed.

Stakeholders

The following entities are stakeholders that regularly appear before the General Assembly regarding education issues:

- *Department of Education.* The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is the administrative arm of the Colorado State Board of Education. CDE serves Colorado's 178 local school districts, providing them with leadership, consultation, and administrative services on a statewide and regional basis.
- *Department of Higher Education.* The Department of Higher Education (DHE) implements the policies adopted by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE). It collects data and helps to implement statewide policies at Colorado's 31 public colleges and universities.
- *Colorado Commission on Higher Education.* The appointed governing body overseeing the state's public colleges and universities, consisting of ten commissioners appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The commission, or CCHE, is responsible for statewide strategic planning.
- *State Board of Education.* Charged with general supervision of the state's public schools, one state board member is elected from each of Colorado's seven congressional districts. In compliance with state law, the board promulgates administrative rules for the operation of Colorado's schools and school districts.
- *Commissioner of Education.* The Commissioner of Education is appointed by the state board as the administrative head of the Department of Education (CDE). The commissioner advises the state board; ensures board policies, rules, and regulations are executed; and prepares the department's budget.
- *Charter School Institute.* The Charter School Institute (CSI) is the state's only non-district charter school authorizer. Charter schools must be authorized either by the school district in which they are located or by the CSI.
- *College and university presidents.* Each public institution of higher education in Colorado is led by a president. Presidents, or their designees, set local policies at their institutions and consult with DHE, CCHE, and the General Assembly on statewide policies.
- *School boards.* Each of Colorado's 178 school districts is run by an elected board. These boards are responsible for hiring district superintendents, making curriculum decisions, and negotiating contracts with public school employees.
- *Education organizations.* There are a number of education organizations in the state that advocate on behalf of students, teachers, parents, school boards, and school districts. These organizations include, but are not limited to, the following:

Colorado Children's Campaign advocates for policies and programs that improve child health, early childhood experiences, and K-12 education.

Colorado Education Association represents its members, 40,000 K-12 teachers and education support professionals, higher education faculty and support professionals, students preparing to become teachers, and retired educators.

Early Childhood Education Association of Colorado provides support and guidance in the management and administration of child care centers.

Colorado Association of School Executives represents its members, school leaders from across the state, and works to advance the interests of Colorado school leaders and public education.

Colorado Association of School Boards represents elected boards of education and advocates on their behalf.

Colorado BOCES Association represents the 20 Boards of Cooperative Educational Services that exist throughout the state.

Colorado Succeeds is a nonprofit coalition of business leaders committed to improving the state's education system for workforce development and economic growth.

A+ Denver is a nonprofit organization working on school reform.

Qualistar is a nonprofit organization offering quality ratings information on early childhood education centers to parents. It advocates on behalf of the centers, and on issues of affordability and quality in child care and early childhood education.

Glossary of Frequently Used Terms

Accountability: A system that assigns responsibility for student performance to teachers, schools, and/or districts. In Colorado, state law outlines the system of accountability with the goal of maximizing academic achievement and tracking each student's progress toward postsecondary and workforce readiness.

Amendment 23: An amendment to the Colorado Constitution that was passed in 2000. The amendment increases spending on K-12 education by at least inflation plus 1 percent each year for ten years and then at least inflation in subsequent years.

Assessments: Tests given to students to measure their progress toward academic goals. The statewide system of assessments used in Colorado is the Colorado Measures of Academic Success, or CMAS. The math and English language arts portions of the CMAS assessments were created under the auspices of the PARCC consortium (see entry below). The science and social studies portions of the CMAS were created by contractors specifically for CDE and are used only in Colorado. Under current law, districts may use students' scores to determine up to 50 percent of a teacher's effectiveness rating for the 2014-15 school year.

At-risk: A term used to describe students whose economic, physical, emotional, or academic needs go unmet or serve as barriers to talent recognition or development, thus putting them in danger of underachieving or dropping out.

Average daily membership (ADM): Enrollment counts taken at schools on specific days throughout the school year. It does not rely on attendance on a specific day to determine a district's enrollment count, but rather on average enrollment throughout the school year.

Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES): BOCES are multi-district

organizations created to extend the services that school districts are able to provide more efficiently. Types of services provided by BOCES include special education, vocational education, gifted education, staff development, and curriculum development, among others. Colorado is home to 20 BOCES, which are governed by boards of directors and have advisory councils made up of district superintendents or their designees.

Charter school: Publicly funded independent schools founded by parents, teachers, or community members. In Colorado, every charter school must be authorized either by the school district in which it is located or by the Charter School Institute (CSI). Though funded with public dollars and authorized by districts or the CSI, charter schools are not bound by the rules of operation that apply to neighborhood public schools, such as enrollment, employment, and determination of the school calendar, among others.

Common Core State Standards: A set of common academic standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy (ELA) proposed in 2010 that outline what a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade. The standards were originally a project of the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. They place emphasis on helping students obtain skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college and careers.

Community college: A nonresident junior college. The Colorado Community College System (CCCS) comprises the state's largest system of higher education, with 13 colleges serving more than 163,000 students annually. The CCCS is governed by a nine-member State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education (SBCCOE). The board has responsibility for both secondary and postsecondary career and technical education and community college governance. Members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. In limited circumstances, community colleges in Colorado can offer four-year applied science degrees.

Concurrent or dual enrollment: Most often refers to high school students taking college courses, often for college credit. Dual enrollment is viewed as providing high school students benefits such as greater access to a wider range of rigorous academic and technical courses, savings in time and money on a college degree, promoting efficiency of learning, and enhancing admission to and retention in college.

Curriculum: While sometimes including the knowledge and skills students are supposed to develop, curriculum most often refers to the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students; and the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course.

English language learner: Any student whose native language is not English.

Free or reduced-price lunch program: Federal program supplemented with state funds that provides low-income students with free or reduced-price school lunches. In many statistical reports, a student's eligibility status is used as a measure of poverty.

Growth model: A statistical model using scores on standardized assessments to calculate each student's progress on state assessments throughout his or her academic career, and a tool for displaying student, school, and district results to educators and to the public.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): An IEP is a document that delineates special education services for special-needs students. The IEP includes any modifications that are required in the regular classroom and any additional special programs or services.

Local Education Agency (LEA): As defined in the Elementary and Secondary Education

Act (ESEA), a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a state for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.

PARCC: The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers is a consortium of 12 states and the District of Columbia, including Colorado, working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments in English and math.

Personally identifiable information (PII): Any data that could potentially identify a specific individual or distinguish one person from another and can be used for identifying individuals. PII can be sensitive or non-sensitive.

Public School Finance Act: Each year, this bill establishes the formula to determine state funding for each school district and the Charter School Institute. This bill includes per pupil funding and charter school capital construction funds.

Remedial education: Refers to the basic skills courses given to first-year students at colleges or universities who are deemed not ready for college-level work. Remedial classes help prepare students for credit-bearing courses.

Sources:

- *Colorado Department of Education*
- *Colorado Department of Higher Education*
- *Colorado BOCES Association*
- *US Department of Education*
- *Colorado Community College System*