

New Teacher Mentoring

The Colorado association of school boards supports making the new teacher mentoring grant program a permanent program to support new teachers. Yearly funding would be calculated by the last three years average of the districts hiring licensed staff and would be adjusted yearly.

Rationale

By making this commitment Colorado will improve its teacher retention and will be giving our students a better learning experience. Teacher recruitment and retention remains a challenge for school districts. This program has proven to be an effective way to support new teachers as they acclimate to a new career.

CORA Update

The Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) supports updating the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA). The purpose of this law is to ensure transparency and accountability of public entities. It is becoming more frequently used as a tool for promoting political agendas and generating discord. CASB supports any efforts to:

- Provide more time to comply with each request;
- Increase fees that public entities may legally charge to fully cover the costs associated with responding;
- Prioritize requests made by legitimate media outlets;
- Update the Act to ensure that all current forms of communications personally identifiable information are appropriately incorporated with proper privacy protections (i.e., student emails with student ID needs to stay redacted).

Rationale

We support transparency by public entities. With historic high numbers of requests of public entities, we believe that existing CORA provisions should be adjusted to account for the increased workload associated with compliance. Last school year, Poudre School District alone had 272 requests, while the average for the 5 school years prior to the 2021-2022 school year was 59.9. In the 2021-2022 school year, Poudre School District responded to 162 requests, 54 (32%) were from one individual. School districts are already working at full capacity to ensure students receive the services and supports they need to succeed. The additional workload created by the increasing volume of CORA requests is diverting resources and attention that should be devoted to our students.

Commented [Anne Barkis1]: Is this figure specific to Poudre? If so, we should begin the sentence with "Last year in the Poudre School District alone..." or something like that.

Update to State Hiring law

The Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) supports strengthening State law to the maximum amount possible to prohibit (or make it more difficult) for those convicted of offenses against children from being employed in positions in school districts where there will be working directly with pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade students. At a minimum, this would mean amending CRS 22-32-109.8 to contain the same provisions regarding employment considerations in light of convictions for non-licensed employees as CRS 22-60.5-103 does for licensed employees. More than that, state law should prohibit employment of those with misdemeanor convictions for child abuse or neglect and other offences against children. Further, a new provision in state law should be added to require employees, after they are hired to self-report all felony and misdemeanor charges to the district immediately.

Rationale:

The intent of these changes is to protect students from those that may do them harm based on convictions which may reasonably be seen to increase the risk to those students. Currently, state law is stronger in this regard around licensed employees than around non-licensed employees. There is no reason for that disparity. Going further and prohibiting employment in student-contact positions based on misdemeanors involving harm to children makes sense on its face and also in light of the fact that sometimes felony charges (which would result in inability to hire) are pled down to misdemeanors in our justice system. We and our parents want our children protected to the maximum extent possible.

CASB Resolution HB21-1110

Resolution:

The Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) supports the idea and intent of making all digital content more accessible. However, CASB has concerns about the cost, timing, and potential unintended impact HB21-1110 may have if enforced as is on July 1, 2024. Therefore, CASB asks the legislature to:

- Delay the enforcement of HB21-1110 from July 1, 2024, until at least 2 years after OIT final rules are set.
- Create and/or clarify the following:
 - A curing/remediation process
 - An ability to waive aspects of the rules, law, or technical standards in certain circumstances or for certain government entities (e.g., school districts)

Rationale Statement:

The idea and intent of making digital content more accessible is a noble and necessary one. However, the OIT has yet to set the rules that school districts and other municipalities must follow. Therefore, the current time frame for the implementation of HB21-1110 is too short.

Commented [Aspen, Autumn - SSC2]:

School districts have hundreds, if not thousands of different hardware and software applications, kiosks, and digital signs. Many of these school districts and hired vendors do not have the technical ability to meet these yet to be finalized rules in the time frame mandated, nor do school districts have the staff, time or resources to change them.

We anticipate that this bill will have unintended consequences and possibly divert time and energy away from the important work supporting all individuals and making digital content accessible regardless of ability. Unfortunately, with the given liability and monetary fine structure, the unintended consequences may be the reverse of what this bill intends. School Districts may start to remove information in digital form to reduce liability, reducing the ability for all people to access information in a timely manner.

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