

The charge for the Task Force is to “improve the quality of education for all students in Colorado who use online learning as part or all of their access to learning.” The Task Force sees an opportunity to establish an accountability and support system that promotes access to learning experiences that support the learning styles and needs of all students in public schools.

The following problems can be addressed immediately during the 2014 General Assembly session to serve that purpose.

Problem Statements

- **Definition**

- The current interpretation of “primarily through the use of internet” in the statutory definition – CRS 22-30.7-102 (9) & (9.5) – does not allow for continual changes in the modality of student learning; where a student’s learning takes place; time and methods of instruction that demonstrate attendance; or diverse educational pathways.
 - As both in-building and online schools adapt to meet student needs through different delivery models such as face-to-face, full-time online, part-time online, blended, and others, the current definition unnecessarily limits the ability of authorizers (schools) to implement these delivery models and to receive funding for those models.

- **Authorizer Quality and Capacity**

- CDE focuses on certifying multi-district online schools, instead of addressing quality at the authorizer level.
 - CRS 22-30.7-103(2)(a) &(3)(b)
- Colorado Department of Education lacks well-defined, promulgated, and published standards for quality online authorizers.
 - A lack of oversight of multi-district authorizers enables some schools to switch to authorizers who may not have the capacity to support online schools.

- **Student Data**

- Student academic records for all of Colorado’s K-12 students, specifically transcripts and assessment scores, are not accessible in a timely fashion for the receiving instructional team to establish an appropriate instructional plan prior to start of school.
 - Currently 30 days. CRS 22-30.7-105(4)(b)(i) & (ii)
 - Concern is that even the 30 days required by statute is not being followed

- **Student Count and Funding**

- Multi-district online schools are held to a different standard than brick-and-mortar schools when counting their students for the October count day. 1 CCR 301-71-8
 - Recognizing that Colorado is considering a switch to an Average Daily Membership regime, online authorizers and schools need to take an active role in rulemaking and/or implementation to ensure equity and consistency.
- Students lack equitable access to a comprehensive range of quality courses because the per pupil revenue (PPR) can only be split in half among different local education agencies, which discourages cross-district partnerships and limits student flexibility that could help advance student learning.
 - The current funding and accountability measures do not foster these types of partnerships.

When issuing their charge, the legislators also stated that “there are a number of policy issues that could be addressed by the commission. We believe that the commission members, with their accumulated expertise in K-12 online education, need to set the agenda.” The following problems also need to be addressed as part of an ongoing effort to enhance flexibility and expand student access to quality online learning opportunities.

As such, the following issues are not recommended for legislative action in the 2014 General Assembly session because they require more study and conversation among stakeholders.

- **Drop-In Centers**
 - There is a communication problem between school districts, online school authorizers, and online schools relating to the establishment of drop-in centers.
 - The potential benefits and concerns of drop-in centers as well as the ramification of a drop-in center place in small districts needs to be explored.

- **Accountability**
 - The current accountability system is an unrealistic and incomplete indicator of student and school performance.
 - Accountability, especially as indicated on the School Performance Framework, is not valued equally by all those who have a part of the framework. Buy-in and impacts linked to accountability measures are limited for students yet have high stakes for virtual and traditional schools and teachers.