

Local Innovation in School Accountability

Exploring Interest from the Field



Over the last few years, there's been a great deal of interest from schools and districts across the country in exploring a variety of accountability indicators, measures, processes, and tools that focus on continuous improvement.

Colorado Education Initiative is partnering with Colorado schools and districts to reimagine education accountability.

Schools and districts are invited to participate in an exploration and networking project that will build upon existing accountability pilots, create opportunities for collaboration, and lay the groundwork for future accountability efforts.

In Colorado, for example, six rural districts in the Student-Centered Accountability Project (S-CAP) are using school review processes and tools to provide each other with timely, actionable feedback, based on the needs and interests of their communities. In addition, a consortium of alternative education campuses (AEC) have identified new indicators and measures aligned to their unique missions, while also piloting external evaluations of the desired student outcomes.

Simultaneously, policy makers in Colorado and nationally have introduced legislation that encourages and supports state and local innovations that provide a much richer and more meaningful picture of school and district quality than one based on a single measure of student achievement.

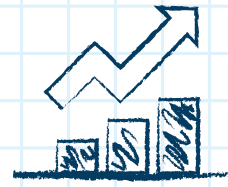
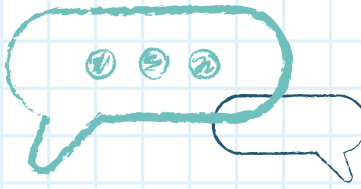
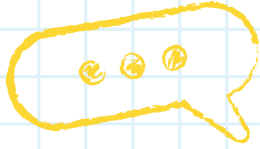
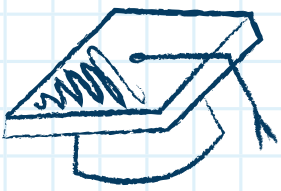
The Colorado Education Initiative (CEI) views these events similarly.

- **First**, as a sign that professionals across a wide range of schools and districts are hard at work developing measures and systems closely attuned to their students and communities;
- **Second**, that there is a real sense that public policy can, and even should, support accountability system innovation.

In response to this growing energy and interest, and recognizing that there is a gap between local innovation and state policy, CEI is seeking to gain a better sense of the innovation emerging from Colorado's schools and districts and how the state can support this work.

Our goal now is to learn about and document the various accountability-related projects and ideas at work across Colorado's public education community, and assess overall interest and readiness among schools and districts in the idea of accountability pilots. Readiness isn't simply about expressing frustration with the current state and/or looking for ways to opt out of the system. It's about a desire to make the accountability system in Colorado more useful in incentivizing and supporting continuous improvement that leads to better outcomes for all kids.

Between July and November 2018, CEI will assess interest and provide feedback and input on locally-driven innovative ideas. This exploration phase will culminate in a one-day event on November 28 for audiences ranging from educators to researchers to policy-makers, presenting and learning about the novel ideas and projects underway across the state, and serving as a symposium on how to further support accountability system innovation.



HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Look for more information on CEI's website at [COLORADOEDINITIATIVE.ORG](https://coloradoedinitiative.org) to learn how to demonstrate your interest and share your ideas, receive feedback and support, and participate in the convening. You can also contact Heather Chikoore, CEI's Policy and Equity Specialist, at hchikoore@coloradoedinitiative.org.

FAQ

Who is leading and supporting this project?

The inspiration for this project are local school and district leaders who are pioneering new approaches to accountability. CEI, an organization that has supported the S-CAP districts, and Momentum Strategy & Research, an organization that has supported the AEC consortium, are working together during this exploration phase.

Is the exploration phase focused on schools or districts?

Both – i.e. wherever innovation is happening. We're interested in learning about interest from individual districts, cohorts of districts, individual schools, and cohorts of schools.

Is there financial support available?

The only financial support will be a small stipend to support travel to the Denver-metro area in November for an event. More details on the event will be available in late September and will be posted on CEI's website.

Is this about changing Colorado's School Accountability Act?

While a long-term ambition is to inform updates to Colorado's School Accountability Act, this exploratory phase is limited to identifying schools and districts that are interested and ready to innovate within the current policy environment. Any future phase will depend on the readiness and needs of local schools and districts as well as interest from funders.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

A recorded webinar describing the exploration phase will be available on CEI's website in August. You can also email Heather Chikoore at CEI at hchikoore@coloradoedinitiative.org.

2018 TIMELINE

July–August

Learn more about this exploratory phase through a webinar or talking to staff at CEI and Momentum.

September

Submit a brief Letter of Interest to tell us about your idea and existing work.

October

Receive feedback and input about your idea from CEI, and connect with state and national resources and experts.

November 28

Attend a one-day convening to learn from existing Colorado accountability pilots, local and national accountability experts. Receive peer-driven feedback and advice about how to move your idea forward. Promising ideas and guiding principles will be shared with state policymakers and CDE officials.