

**Colorado Youth Advisory Council (COYAC)
2014-2015 Policy Recommendations**



2014/2015 COYAC Youth Members

Last Name	First Name	Senate District	City	Zip Code
Vela	Alexander	2	Woodland Park	80863
Montgomery	Kolten	2 (at large position)	Fountain	80817
Vanatta	Demi	5	Poncha Springs	81242
Graham	Logan	6	Durango	81301
Fallon-Cyr	Raven	6 (at large position)	Durango	81301
Kostreva	Caleb	7	Clifton	81520
May	Joshua	7 (at large position)	Grand Junction	81507
Barad	Matthew	9	Colorado Springs	80919
Singh	Serene	10	Colorado Springs	80920
Christensen	DeAnna	11	Colorado Springs	80909
Weaver-Adeyemi	Hannah	14	Fort Collins	80525
Gonzalez	Itzel	15	Fort Collins	80526
Strasser	Pierce	16	Evergreen	80439
Kohnert	William	17	Lafayette	80026
Lynch	Hannah	17(at large position)	Longmont	80503
Gunther	Nick	18	Boulder	80305
Rodriguez	Juliana	22	Lakewood	80227
Chen	Jackson	23	Broomfield	80020
Hancock	Cole	26	Littleton	80120
Kallsen	Taylor	27	Centennial	80016
Heide	Alexiss	28	Denver	80249
Zheng	Christopher	29	Aurora	80016
Grier	Kelly	30	Parker	80134
Burnite	Kate	31	Denver	80237
Wollins	David	31(at large position)	Denver	80220
Glickstein	Adina	32	Denver	80218
Pryor	Raymond	33	Aurora	80013
Esparza	Julia	34	Denver	80204
Mathews	Anastasia	35	La Junta	81050

We are seeking youth representation from the following Senate Districts:
1(Burlington); **3** (Pueblo); **8** (Garfield, Moffat, Routt, Jackson, Rio Blanco, Grand, Summit Counties);
12 (Rural Colorado Springs, Fort Carson, Security-Widefield, Cimarron Hills, Cheyenne Mountain);
13 (Greeley), **19 & 20** (Jefferson County); **21, 24 & 25** (Adams County); and **30** (Douglas County).

To nominate someone to serve as a youth representative for these districts in COYAC,
please contact Maureen Wolsborn at info@coyac.org.



COYAC Introduction & Process

The Colorado Youth Advisory Council (COYAC) is an officially recognized advisory council created by the Colorado State Legislature, to bring the voice of youth to the Capitol. Since the 2008 legislation that launched COYAC, (Youth Advisory Act in House Bill 08-1157) the mission of the Council has been to examine, evaluate and discuss the issues, interests and needs affecting Colorado youth now and in the future and to formally advise and make recommendations to elected officials regarding those issues. The Council is made up of 40 young people, representing Colorado's 35 state senate districts, and five at-large seats. These students have an interest in learning more about public policy, state government and are passionate about making a difference in their community and their state.

Throughout their two-year commitment, Council members explore topics that are interesting and relevant to youth including education, employment and economic opportunity, access to state and local government services, the environment, behavioral and physical health, substance abuse, driver's license requirements, poverty, and increased youth participation in state and local government.

In addition to the youth Council members, there are four members of the Colorado General Assembly that serve as members of COYAC. The speaker and minority leader of the House of Representatives, and the president and minority leader of the Senate each appoint one member to COYAC. The four members of the Colorado State Legislature who currently advise the Council and participate in meetings and discussions with youth members include:

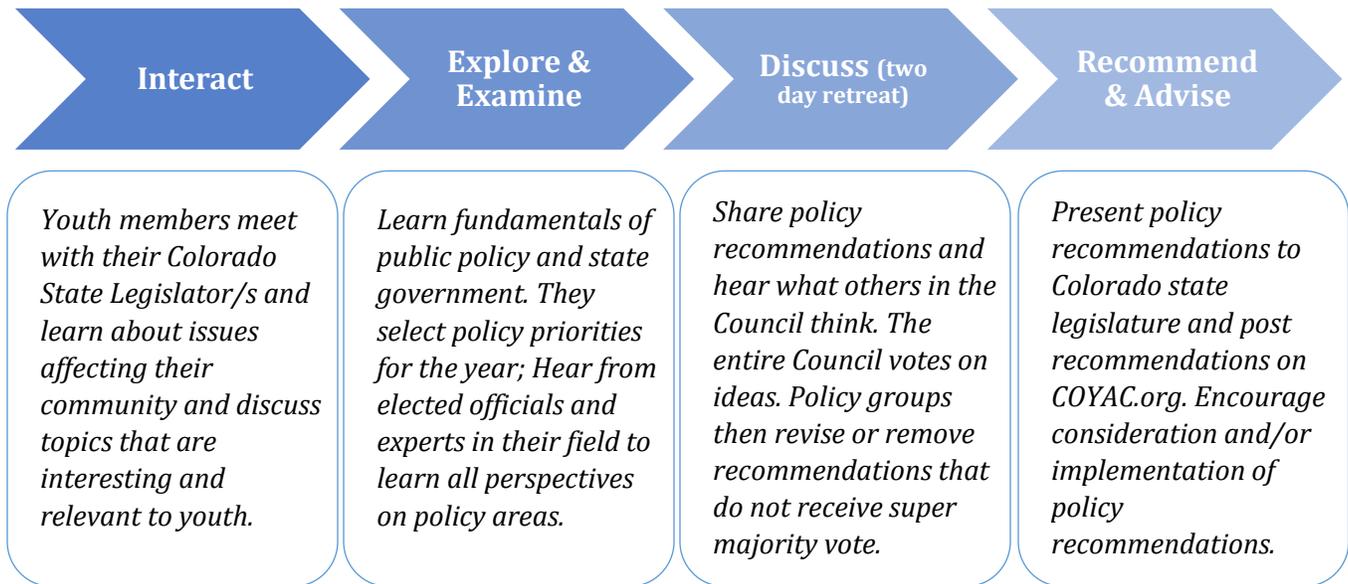
- Brittany Pettersen, Colorado State Representative for District 28
- Tim Dore, Colorado State Representative for District 64
- Andy Kerr, Colorado State Senator for District 22
- Ellen Roberts, Colorado State Senator for District 6

The Colorado Youth Advisory Council is open to all Colorado youth between the ages 14 and 19 who are attending a Colorado junior high, middle or high school, including online schools; nonpublic, home-based educational programs; or general equivalency degree programs. All eligible applications are reviewed by the COYAC recruitment and membership committee and then sent out to the entire Council for approval or denial. Current 2014-2015 members live in Aurora, Boulder, Broomfield, Centennial, Clifton, Colorado Springs, Denver, Durango, Evergreen, Fort Collins, Grand Junction, La Junta, Lafayette, Lakewood, Littleton, Longmont, Parker, Poncha Springs, and Woodland Park.



COYAC is intended to be a youth-led Council. The Council elects a Youth Co-Chair, Youth Vice-Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer who serve with a Legislative Co-Chair and Legislative Vice-Chair to lead the Council. Engaged Public (EP) supports the youth within the framework outlined by the enabling legislation, which provides guidance for leadership and structure. EP also develops a work plan, and provides the content for annual reports and the COYAC website.

Engaged Public began facilitating COYAC in late 2013 and created the following process:



The Council is tasked with coming up with policy areas to focus on each year. The process for selecting these policy areas began with each youth member meeting with their state legislator to get a better understanding of their policy priorities and community needs. After a large group discussion with the entire Council, key themes and trends emerged in what the legislative focus is this year. From those themes, youth members discussed which were most important and relevant to youth in Colorado. This year, Council members selected the following four policy areas

1. K12 Standardized Testing
2. Behavioral Health
3. Public Safety
4. Water

Each policy group met with a subject matter expert (SME) who provided contextual information about each policy area:

- K12 Standardized Testing: Luke Ragland, Colorado Succeeds, and State Standards and Assessment Task Force Member
- Behavioral Health: Chris Habgood, Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health
- Public Safety: Christine Harms, Colorado School Safety Resource Center and two youth members from their youth council YES2
- Water: Kristin Maharg, Colorado Foundation for Water Education; and Brian Werner, Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District



2014/2015 COYAC Donors & Supporters

COYAC would not be possible without the generosity of the following donors:

- El Pomar Foundation
- Quiznos



K12 Standardized Testing

Policy Group Members

Matthew Barad, Colorado Springs
Jackson Chen, Broomfield
Adina Glickstein, Denver
Raymond Pryor, Denver

Pierce Strasser, Evergreen
Demi Vanatta, Poncha Springs
Alexander Vela, Woodland Park

Why We Chose K12 Standardized Testing as a Policy Priority

Standardized testing has been a major issue affecting both our constituents and ourselves. We aim to ensure that The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) testing is efficiently instituted and collects accurate data resulting from meaningful student engagement. We want PARCC testing to be a service to both the state and the students who take it.

PARCC testing has not been implemented on a broad scale, but pilot tests have unearthed several main issues. The first issue is a lack of meaningful student participation: students are not invested in the test. As a result, many students choose to opt out, and several of those who do take the PARCC don't take it seriously. Furthermore, the fact that PARCC tests are computerized has posed a problem, especially for rural school districts. Many schools and school districts simply do not have enough computers to efficiently facilitate testing; some accounts reveal that PARCC testing periods can take up to six weeks due to lack of available technology. As a result, PARCC has become a burden on these districts, and buying enough new computers to alleviate this burden would be economically unfeasible.

K12 Standardized Testing Policy Recommendations

1. Implement a "State Explore Test" and "State PLAN Test" in the style of the currently existing Colorado State ACT, and use these tests in lieu of PARCC, until the Common Core has been successfully instituted at the high school level.

There is still a great deal of conversation and debate surrounding the Common Core, especially at the high school level. Until the Common Core curriculum is fully integrated into Colorado high schools, we recommend the Legislature implement a state-provided Explore test and PLAN test (for freshmen and sophomores respectively.) This could help prepare students for the state ACT, as well as provide data on achievement and growth in a way more conducive to student investment than the PARCC test (or other assessments that are not useful to college admissions). This becomes especially apparent if you note that 98.3 percent of the 287 students surveyed through COYAC stated they are more concerned with their results on the ACT, AP tests, and the SAT than they are with their results on the PARCC. This demonstrates that relying on existing data will provide an assessment, which is at least as accurate, if not more accurate than the planned PARCC testing. Once the Common Core has successfully been integrated into high school curricula, PARCC testing can resume with greater accuracy, efficiency, and student investment.

This corresponds with a HB14-1202 recommendation, which suggests suspending the consequences and data collection of the PARCC test until the 2015-16 school year, given that students are not sufficiently caught up with the Common Core yet. This is harmful to students and gathers no data—becoming a bane to students and straining resources. We submit that postponing the PARCC test entirely until the 2015-2016 school year and using the Explore, Plan, and ACT tests to gather data instead will be more effective.



- 2. Support resource deficient schools by providing paper options for tests, in order to reduce testing time and financial strain.

Standardized testing is most disruptive to students in rural schools, where technology is often not accessible or affordable for the districts in which they reside. This can force schools to implement long testing periods (up to six weeks), disrupting classroom time, as well as creating unnecessary financial strain on schools that lack resources. For example, many rural school districts do not have wireless Internet, or very few computers available, which can result in everything from the entire towns’ Internet being unusable for the duration of testing, to extended amounts of time spent on testing. However, it should be noted that not only rural schools suffer from this issue, as the COYAC youth survey, which spanned several districts across Colorado, found that 62.5 percent of students rated their school’s computer access as a five out of ten or below. Additionally, most students would prefer paper-based testing, as 66 percent of students surveyed chose paper-based over computer-based testing. When combined with our first-hand experiences, like those from Air Academy High School in Colorado Springs whose students will be testing for a total of six weeks, this data demonstrates that schools are simply not prepared for computer based testing, no matter its advantages. This correlates with one of the HB-14-1202 education committee’s recommendations.

RESULTS FROM STATEWIDE YOUTH SURVEY

Please see Appendix A for More Statewide Youth Survey Information and Results

CHART 1: WOULD YOU RATHER TAKE A TEST ON PAPER OR ON A COMPUTER?

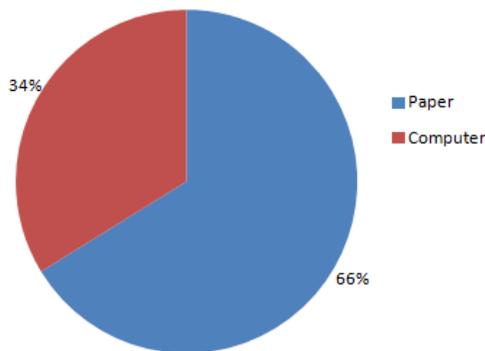
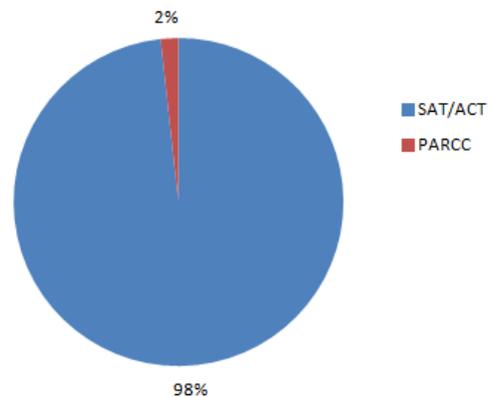


CHART 2: DO YOU CARE MORE ABOUT DOING WELL ON PARCC OR ACT/SAT?



Behavioral Health

Policy Group Members

Julia Esparza, Denver
Itzel Gonzalez, Fort Collins
Kelly Grier, Parker
Alexiss Heide, Denver

Taylor Kallsen, Centennial
Anastasia Mathews, La Junta
Serene Singh, Colorado Springs
Christopher Zheng, Aurora

Why We Chose Behavioral Health as a Policy Priority

As teens, we observe the challenges and consequences of depression and suicide firsthand. Colorado Youth Advisory Council Member Kelly Grier shared, “In public high schools, it is rare to find a student that has not heard about or known a fellow student that has resorted to suicide. For example, my school, Chaparral [located in Parker], has had two deaths this year, and a death by suicide every year that I have been in high school.” A death within a school completely changes the atmosphere of the community. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth age 10-19 in Colorado, but very few people know the warning signs. According to Healthy Kids Colorado Survey Key Findings in 2012, during the 2011–2012 school year, 26 percent of students surveyed in Denver Public Schools’ high schools reported feelings of depression; 14 percent seriously considered suicide; and 8 percent had attempted suicide in the past year. According to the Living Well Network, “People who identify their feelings and seek professional help are 87 percent less likely to commit suicide.” We wish to acknowledge the work the Colorado General Assembly has done to collaborate with mental health professionals to create a coordinated behavioral health crisis response system for communities throughout the state in the past two years, and we believe these recommendations coincide with the goals this assembly has set forth.

Behavioral Health Policy Recommendations

1. Create a statewide Mental Health online chat program that is run by mental health professionals and is implemented in schools.

Technology is the common mode of expression and communication for teens. The ability to confidently have a face-to-face conversation, especially in a strenuous time, has never been easy and with teens is only getting worse. Facebook recently unveiled new suicide prevention monitoring, indicating that the fight against mental illness can turn to the digital world. To combat the stigmas surrounding mental health issues and the increasing numbers of teens facing depression, self-inflicted injuries, bullying, or any life struggle, we propose a state wide Chat Room service—similar to National Suicide Prevention Hotline, which already has a chat system in place. The only problem with this is the fact that it is national; therefore, local and personal help is limited. The idea of a Colorado State chat system for teens brings the idea to a more local environment, which can apply personal help more immediately and in a familiar environment, while maintaining student anonymity and comfort. It provides students who are struggling with a safe and reliable outlet for their emotions to qualified professionals without the public embarrassment. According to Terry Richardson, founder of the Seattle school based support program, any resources available to teens directly from their counselors can lead to significant drops in suicide rates. This chat system has already been implemented in Arizona and San Mateo County. Although these systems extend beyond aiding just teens, the policy we are bringing forward will directly relate to high school students needing assistance from someone regarding mental health. We would also like to acknowledge that COYAC provided the Legislature with a similar recommendation last Council year. This recommendation reinforces the need for a mental health chat system for Colorado youth.



2. Mandate every school district make Youth Mental Health First Aid available to all present and future educators, so that we work towards certifying every teacher in Colorado.

Colorado HB 1248 expanded resources available to Mental Health First Aid to reach educators, and we would like to see all school districts take advantage of the available resources. The state should mandate every school district make these affordable, accessible, and easy classes available to all present and future educators, so that we work towards certifying every teacher in Colorado in Youth Mental Health First Aid. Colorado's suicide rates are higher in rural and mountain communities than in urban areas, so additional funding should be available to get these services where they are most needed – in underserved rural communities. We endorse the effective potential that teachers have in recognizing the warning signs surrounding mental health issues and being able to refer students to other resources. Most importantly, these teachers are then able to share their mental health first aid training with the greater school community as mentors for youth interested in being gatekeepers for their peers. Advocates for Mental Health First Aid say Colorado has certified 230 instructors so far, and will be able to train more with the dedicated funds. In the coming year, we ask that the state closely consider monitoring the implementation of these programs, consider mandating these trainings with teacher certification, and consider renewing grant funds for youth mental health first aid as the programs prove success.

3. Approve additional funding measures requested by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) to the Colorado Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program with targeted funding for mental health.

Many youth live in areas of the state that are medically underserved. These are kids and teenagers who live each day outside of a system of regular care. Members of our own council have had instances where schools went for days without a nurse or mental health professional in the building. Rural and/or low-income students who are in these situations often do not have access to mental health care due to cost/location. According to an August Colorado Health Access Survey, 1.5 million Coloradans are uninsured, underinsured, or don't know where to access healthcare. The Colorado Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program has recently been highlighted as a possible solution to this issue. Initially, the program was put in place to incentivize primary care professionals to treat underserved, low-income or rural communities with reimbursements for treatment that could not be paid for by the patient. Now, the program has expanded to include mental health professionals. By increasing funding measures to the program with targeted funding for mental health, more mental health doctors are protected when serving these communities and are incentivized to continue their care. Brooke Wagenseller, the loan repayment program retention specialist for the Fort Logan area, stated in an efficacy report: "Successful awardees [of loan repayment programs] truly communicated to us they want to stay in their chosen setting or at least in a medically underserved community."¹ We believe that many youth can benefit from an increase in funding as they would gain more access to not only primary care which is key to mental stability, but also mental health screenings and treatment, no longer living outside of the system.

¹ Barbare, S. (2013). Proud of Cure: To help solve provider shortage, program focuses on ways to keep good people. NEWSLink, 32(5), 4-5. Retrieved March 3, 2015, from https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/PCO_CHSC_Newslink.pdf



Public Safety: Includes School Safety & Human Trafficking

Policy Group Members

Deanna Christensen, Colorado Springs
Raven Fallon-Cyr, Durango
Caleb Kostreva, Clifton

Hannah Lynch, Longmont
Kolten Montgomery, Fountain
Hannah Weaver-Adeyemi, Fort Collins

School Safety Policy Recommendation

1. Establish a more comprehensive and all hazard drill program in cases of human disasters and natural disasters by expanding existing web information sessions and training programs for all teachers.

We appreciate Colorado State Senate Majority Leader Bill Cadman’s prioritization of school safety this legislative session—we are also concerned about this issue. We feel schools are not adequately prepared for emergency situations for many reasons. Approximately half the schools in Colorado regularly practice disaster drills². For those schools that do practice, the students lack the communication with teachers and administration that is needed to have effective drills for both human and natural disasters. Furthermore, after discussing these drills with students, as well as observing it in several different situations, students and teachers show their indifference to these drills because they don’t realize their value. Our goal is to create more understanding and communication for the school students and teachers throughout Colorado when it pertains to the written disaster crisis plans that all schools have and expanding existing web information and training programs for all teachers will do exactly that. Also, creating a comprehensive, all hazard program that includes various types of exercises would create a better understanding and sense of respect for all types of drills in every school.

Since there are already some free web based training programs for security and administration at schools, we suggest utilizing these current resources. The Colorado School Safety Resource Center offers various ones for disaster preparedness and management³, but none specifically for teachers. Also, many web based training programs are not as inclusive and detail oriented. Reasoning behind various drills, like lockdowns and tornados, are not usually explained to teachers, much less students, which needs to change. These training programs should imitate real world events, because not every drill or emergency will go smoothly and according to plan. This would be a major way to improve awareness throughout the student body as well as engage them in their own disaster drill planning. In addition, not only would the school benefit from learning more about the logic behind drills, but also what to do when a crisis occurs during the drills.

Why We Chose Human Trafficking as a Policy Priority

In the last few years, we have seen the direct impact human trafficking has on young adults. We read news articles of our peers disappearing into this atrocious industry. Also, since Colorado is central to the nation, has multiple major interstates running through it, has a major metropolitan city within it, and contains a demand for trafficking, Colorado is a lure for this crime to flourish. We hope to stop it.

In Denver, the commercial sex industry is estimated to have profits of \$60 million per year. The dangers of being a victim of human trafficking often lead to suicide or death by other means. Concerning labor

² "Statistics & Research." *Colorado School Safety Resource Center*. Department of Public Safety, June 2014. Web. 01 Mar. 2015.

³ "CSSRC Online Training." *Colorado School Safety Resource Center*. Department of Public Safety, July 2012. Web. 01 Mar. 2015.



trafficking, 42 percent of H-2A sheep herders had their identification and immigration documents confiscated by their employers upon their arrival in the United States, thus making it impossible for them to seek legal ramifications because they would be prosecuted for having an undocumented immigration status. The Colorado Department of Human Services reports, “Thirty percent of homeless youth will be actively recruited for the purposes of sexual exploitation and other forms of human trafficking within 48 hours of leaving home.” We as a committee would like to take note of Colorado’s immense progress in this area in the past few years. However, we see areas that need immediate attention. Specifically, the Colorado Youth Advisory Council is pursuing legislation improving two areas: immunity and assistance.

Human Trafficking Policy Recommendations

1. Expunge, not seal, criminal record of persons who are human trafficked.

Labor and sex trafficking victims are habitually forced and/or coerced to engage in criminal activity for the benefit of their traffickers. Furthermore, many individuals who are victims of labor trafficking have their H-2A immigration papers and identification confiscated by their traffickers, leading many individuals to be criminally prosecuted for illegally being in the U.S. if caught. However, trafficking victims’ criminal records can only be sealed, which restricts their ability to find legal employment and has other negative implications. Allowing criminal records to be expunged instead of sealed would provide trafficked individuals with legal protection from being criminalized for crimes when they are forced into it. If their records cannot be expunged, it places survivors in positions of vulnerability to re-victimization and re-trafficking. To be specific, we recommend that expungement be extended to adults (it already exists for minors) in cases of forced begging, drug peddling, theft, or an undocumented immigration status. This legislation would be modeled after SB15-030, which addresses the issue of immunity toward sex trafficking victims. Too often, trafficked individuals are treated as criminals, when in actuality they are forced into this labor and are convinced they have no other options.

2. Create a grant system in which five grants would be made available to organizations through a competitive application and review process for the purpose of providing assistance to trafficked individuals getting out of the system and staying out.

Granting immunity is only half the battle, as there must be recovery, and support in place for victims. A victims’ assistance law would provide the availability of services such as housing, meals, and recovery options addressing mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. The Colorado Project to Comprehensively Combat Human Trafficking identified 399 organizations from 2010-2013 as being involved in anti-trafficking or similar efforts. However, many of these organizations are not able to fully support victims due to a lack of funds. Restore Innocence, a non-profit against sex trafficking, reports that if all the victims in the U.S. were rescued, there would only be enough locations to house one percent of them. As a result of their poor treatment, many of these victims suffer from un-willful drug addiction, which has led to some victims committing suicide.

Funding from these grants would not give them services for harm reduction, but rather allow them to get out of the jurisdiction of their trafficker and have services such as room and board, counseling, and job training to give them life skills to re-enter society. Subject to the availability of appropriations, we recommend the state make grants to units of local government, Native American tribes, and non-governmental victims’ service organizations to develop, expand, or strengthen victim service programs for victims of human trafficking, whether U.S. citizens or foreign nationals; to ensure the prevention of human trafficking, and to ensure protection for victims.



Water

Policy Group Members

Kate Burnite, Denver
Logan Graham, Durango
Nicholas Gunther, Boulder
Cole Hancock, Littleton

William Kohnert, Lafayette
Joshua May, Grand Junction
David Wollins, Denver

Why We Chose Water as a Policy Priority

Water is essential to Colorado, Coloradans, and to Colorado's future. The amount of water in Colorado is finite, but with a growing population, we need to start to use our water resources with more efficiency. The youth of Colorado are directly affected by the results of any water plan created and implemented today, because it alters the future we will inherit. Although we don't currently pay water bills or deal directly with the effects of water use, in 15 years it will be our problem. The conservation of water today is remarkably important because we are in a drought, as are all of the other states that are reliant on Colorado water. The youth of Colorado care about this issue because it is both one of the most prevalent and accessible issues that their involvement can help mitigate. We believe that the youth of Colorado care about the Colorado Legislature supporting efficient ways to use water better, residentially, commercially, and agriculturally.

Colorado's long standing "first in time, first in right" water laws, as well as the fact that water is a privately owned commodity, makes the state government have little true control over how water is used. However, much like with solar power, the government can help reduce the restrictions and give tax incentives to help promote a system that will better the environment and the economic prosperity in Colorado for decades to come. Several other states in the West have already adopted such means of efficient water use, such as greywater systems, high efficiency appliances, rainwater collection systems, and xeriscaping.

Water Policy Recommendations

1. Consider small tax-write-offs for citizens who implement greywater reuse systems on their residential properties.

Colorado has recently taken steps forward in opening up the practice of greywater reuse. A greywater reuse system takes dish, bath, shower, and washing machine's excess water and then reuses it for other purposes, such as toilet water and field irrigation. Following the passage of HB 13-1044, Coloradans were allowed to be using greywater in their homes. Water conservation and smart greywater use is important to the future of Colorado; however, many citizens have yet to take advantage of greywater systems. We ask the General Assembly to consider small tax-write-offs for citizens who implement greywater reuse systems on their residential properties. Creating a residential greywater reuse system is fairly straightforward and affordable with most of the cost going towards purchasing a holding tank for the greywater. Much like solar, a tax write off when the purchase of the system would allow for greater interest in installing these efficient, water saving systems. A small tax-write-off would make greywater systems appealing, affordable, and achievable to all Colorado citizens allowing many more citizens to begin using greywater reuse systems and conserving water in our state.

2. Allow all residential properties, even those without a well or well permit, and even those which have a water supply available from a municipality or water district to collect rainwater.

Rainwater collection systems collect rainwater off the roofs of residential buildings, typically through collecting the water in house's gutter systems. This water can then be used in a building's greywater



systems, or, more often, used to do landscaping throughout the property. The water is almost always put back into the cycle, as once it has been captured it is then spread throughout the property and gets back into the river basins and aquifers. The current legislation involving rainwater collection, SB09-080, allows the limited rooftop collection of rainwater for landowners if:

- a) The property is a residential property.
- b) The landowner uses a well or is legally entitled to a well permitted for domestic purposes.
- c) There is no water supply available from a municipality or water district.
- d) The rainwater is collected only from the roof.
- e) The water is only used by those that are identified on the well permit.

Allowing residential property owners to collect rainwater with conscious, water-saving landscaping can further reduce their water impact by harvesting rainwater and lower their water bill considerably. The main concern against opening up rainwater harvesting to all residential property lies in Colorado's water laws, which give water permits to the oldest claims. Allowing rainwater harvesting to be open to all residential properties, some argue, would take water away from longstanding water claims. However, a 2007 study conducted by the Colorado Water Conservation Board and Douglas County determined that only three percent of rain actually reached a stream or the ground. This indicates that the removal of water from the system through rainwater collection has minimal, if any, impact to the water supply in streams and rivers, especially because it is only rainwater that can be collected from the small square footage of a rooftop. In addition, there were nine public meetings around the state regarding the water plan, and at all nine of these meetings, there was explicit interest expressed in deregulating rainwater harvesting.

3. Current landowners should get information from the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA), Division of Real Estate about the benefits of xeriscaping, both with water conservation and with long-term economic viability.

All homeowners in Colorado will receive information from the Division of Real Estate initially, and subsequently, when citizens buy real estate, they will receive additional information regarding the benefits of xeriscaping. Xeriscaping is a landscaping and gardening method that reduces and eliminates the need for supplemental water from irrigation, by utilizing plants that consume practically no water, and using a "desert landscape" aesthetic. The benefits of xeriscaping are that it uses up to two thirds less water than regular landscapes. There are currently five Colorado districts that offer tax rebates and promote xeriscaping: Aurora, Colorado Springs, Louisville, Boulder and Denver. Although it would be ideal that the state offers similar tax incentives and rebates for xeriscaping, we recognize that it is not always possible to offer these incentives, so we instead propose the mandated dissemination of information.

4. All bills concerning Colorado's water use have a "future" note which estimates, as accurately and thoroughly as possible, the projected outcome the proposed bill will have on the state's water five, twenty-five, and fifty years in the future.

Much in the same way all bills are required to have a fiscal note, this will ensure lawmakers thoroughly consider the future impact when voting on water bills, which is a future the youth of Colorado will inherit. As youth in Colorado we want to know that Legislature is consciously making decisions on Colorado's water with the long-term future, not just the near term future, in mind.



The Colorado Youth Advisory Council understands that water policy is a very complex and controversial topic. However, we also understand how important water is to all of the people, businesses, and wild lands that Colorado has to offer. Colorado's population is expected to almost double by 2050 while the amount of water that we receive is finite. The youth of Colorado, whether they know it or not, care about Colorado's water future. These recommendations are not an all-encompassing solution to this looming issue, nonetheless these recommendations can start our state down a good path to a future where safe and abundant water exists for our generations and those still yet to come.



APPENDIX A

The K12 Standardized Testing Policy Group created an online survey in an effort to gauge Colorado youth opinion of the new PARCC testing, state mandated standardized testing in general, and technological capability at their schools, and in doing so, tailored our recommendations to fit our constituency.

The survey was distributed online and sent out via email, social media such as Facebook, and advertised on the COYAC website.

The questions asked included:

1. Do you feel like PARCC, TCAP, or CSAP are important to your education?
2. Do you feel like PARCC, TCAP, or CSAP benefit you personally?
3. Do you care more about doing well on the PARCC or the ACT/SAT?
4. How would you rate the availability of computers in your school (from 1-10 with 1 being a severe lack of computers and 10 being enough computers for every student).
5. Would you rather take the test on paper or computer?

Over the course of a month, 291 high school age youth across Colorado completed the survey. Four responses were removed from the results due to data invalidity including students from other states, or those attending college.

The respondents were in geographically diverse parts of the state, as shown in Figure 1. The majority of the responses came from Denver Public Schools, Boulder Valley School District, Woodland Park School District, Academy District 20, and St. Vrain Valley School District.

FIGURE 1: Map of the Districts Who Voted in Survey

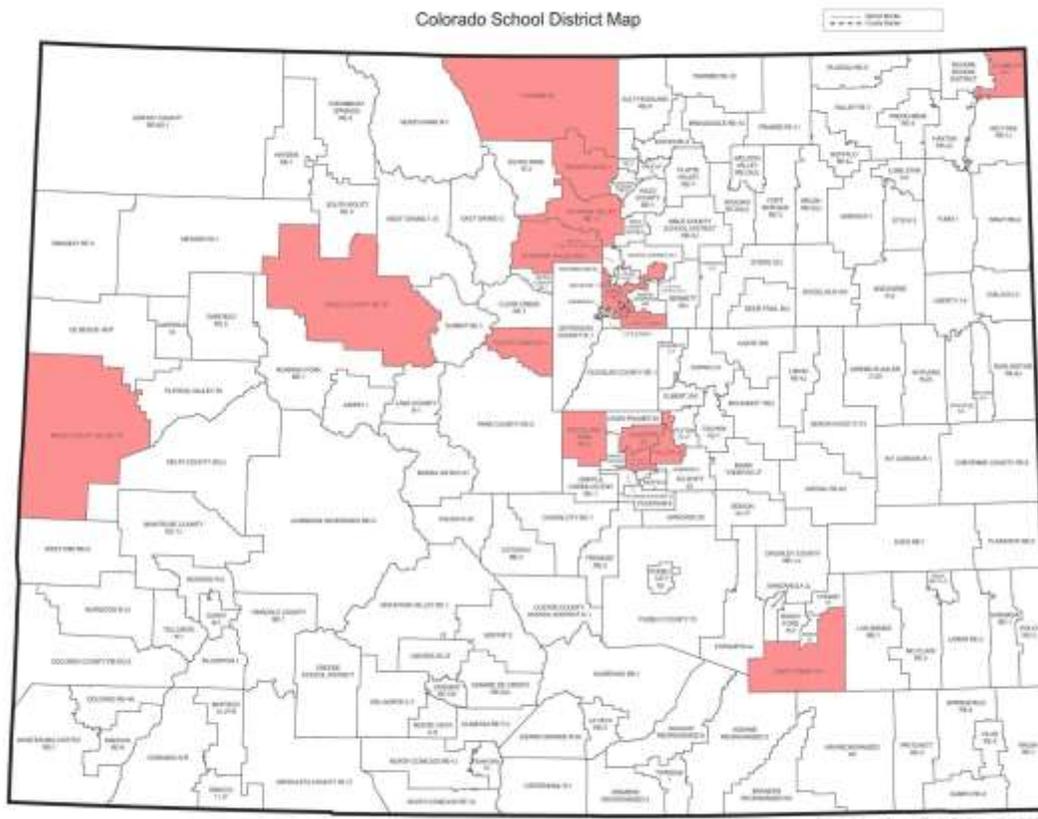


CHART 3: DO YOU FEEL LIKE PARCC, TCAP, OR CSAP ARE IMPORTANT TO YOUR EDUCATION?

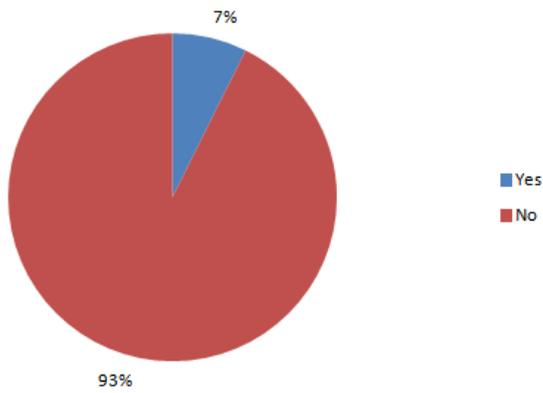


CHART 4: DO YOU FEEL LIKE PARCC, TCAP, OR CSAP BENEFITTED YOU PERSONALLY?

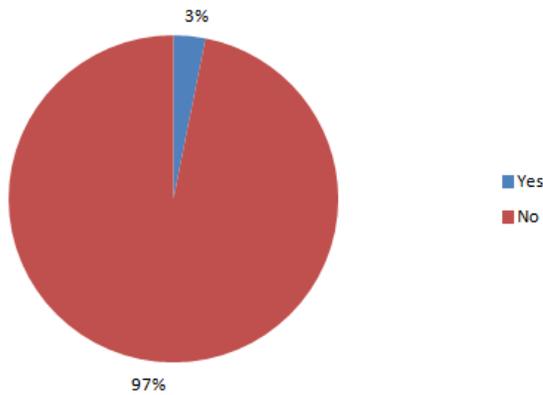


CHART 5: HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE AVAILABILITY OF COMPUTERS IN YOUR SCHOOL?

