



A Blueprint for Education

**Colorado School Board Members
Plan and Partner for the Future**

Appendix D



In early February 2008, CASB surveyed its member school districts on their progress in gathering community input to build a local “Blueprint for education,” as required by HB 1118. Nearly one-third of school districts responded, informing CASB on how they are gathering community input.

CASB applauds these districts for carrying out efforts involving their communities in discussions about what students should know and be able to do when they leave high school. CASB encourages you to continue these conversations throughout your communities to stimulate continuous discussion about community values and to strengthen your communities’ connection to the district.

If you haven’t yet begun your community meetings, visit CASB’s Web site at www.casb.org, to download the HB 1118 Toolkit. The toolkit will provide you with a description of HB 1118 and detailed tips and instructions on how to implement this community engagement process in your school district.

Below are examples of ways Colorado school districts engaged their communities to stimulate discussion and ultimately create a blueprint for education.

Center Consolidated Schools (Approx. 600 students)

Center held about 15 Board of Education Round Table Meetings as part of a “revisioning” process. Four meetings included the board of education, community and staff. Others were led by administrators. They kicked off these meetings with the PowerPoint presentation by Howie DiBlasi (Durango Schools) called “Did You Know,” prompting members to think about future challenges students face. They then gathered input from participants regarding how they felt about the future and what steps the district and community needed to take to ensure their children know what they need to prepare them for this future.

Park R-3—Estes Park (Approx. 1,200 students)

Park R-3 is developing a new vision and mission statement. They’ll begin this process by meeting with administrators, teachers, students and the community over the next few months. Their high school advisory committee is creating an open-ended survey to get community members’ opinions on graduation requirements. Survey results will guide initial conversations with district stakeholders. District staff will then publish the survey on the Park R-3 Web site and with local media channels.

“Your community needs to feel they are partners with you in education. You need to be willing to listen to their concerns and be able to work towards solutions to district issues together. While you may hear things you’d rather not - you need the support of your community and that only comes when they feel they’ve been heard and have the opportunity to understand the Board’s perspective.” ~ Adams 50 board member

Steamboat Springs Re-2 (Approx. 2,000 students)

Steamboat Springs Re-2 created a PowerPoint about 21st-century skills to inspire community members to think about important skills that should be taught in school. They plan to show the PowerPoint to local civic groups and gather comments from each group regarding what they think students will need to know and do to succeed in the future. They will then ask if individuals are interested in meeting further to discuss the topic in more depth.

Delta County Schools (Approx. 5,500 students)

Delta’s community meetings were two-tiered. First, staff at local school buildings held monthly meetings with parents and community members. Second, the district held quarterly meetings with representatives from each of the schools within the district and two at-large members. The superintendent, school board members, teachers, administrators and support staff participated in these meetings. Through group discussion,

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district representatives introduced a particular topic of community interest for small groups to discuss. These discussion topics included: facility updates, student achievement, school safety, school climate/culture, board policies, and student/school surveys. They expect the discussions to result in a more thorough understanding of the community's feelings about what students need to be successful adults.

Pueblo No. 70 (Approx. 8,800 students)

Pueblo No. 70 scheduled three community meetings for the winter and spring to gather information related to state standards. They will be held in high schools in three distinct communities within District 70. The school district extended an open invitation, with a detailed agenda, to the communities via newsletters, local press and flyers.

Poudre R-1 (Approx. 23,600 students)

The Poudre school board developed its district mission policy based on several months of public engagement with more than 200 people. Following up on the mission policy they created, the board is conducting expert panel sessions with 12-15 members of the public around areas of civic engagement, creativity, thinking skills, career preparation and academics. These sessions will provide board members with information to develop ends policies in these areas. Additionally, the district is holding meetings with primary employers through a partnership with the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce. These meetings provide an opportunity to outline essential workforce skills employers are seeking.

Words of Wisdom and Encouragement from School Districts

In the CASB survey of school districts' HB 1118 efforts, some school district officials offered "gems" of wisdom for those districts that have not yet started engaging their community. Here are some of their comments:

- *"It is never easy to undertake such a big project. If you go at it with a plan in mind, you will be successful and have some very insightful conversations about education."*
Park R-3 (Estes Park)—Region 4
- *"Use these meetings to open dialogue between the school and the community, but don't allow it to become a platform for demanding curriculum changes."*
Archuleta-Hinsdale 50 JT (Pagosa Springs)—Region 9
- *"Thoughtfulness, passion and commitment to excellence best describe the process. And everyone involved came away feeling they were valued stakeholders in planning their community's educational program."*
Meeker Re-1—Region 7
- *"Center the conversation on the question that asks what students need for future success. This helps to focus and guide the conversation."*
Fremont RE-1 (Canon City)—Region 6
- *"Our process is extremely useful. It provides a positive forum for board members and the representatives from the local schools to interact and exchange ideas relating to students and the school process. It is one of the most positive things we do each year."*
Delta County 50J—Region 8
- *"Be brave! It is scary to face a group that is not together often, but they want to contribute and want the district to succeed. So be patient and listen."*
Holyoke School District Re-1J—Region 1

"Make sure you include students in the conversation. Find new ways to encourage people to come talk to you."
~ Jane Barnes, 2008 CASB President

- *“Use existing structures and committees as one system for gaining input into graduation requirements. Include students, colleges and employers.”*
Cherry Creek Schools—Region 5
- *“Be open to new ideas and a different way of thinking.”*
Otis Public Schools—Region 1
- *“Without a framework for discussion, the input may become unmanageable.”*
Roaring Fork Re-1 (Glenwood Springs)— Region 7
- *“Use any means necessary to get people to come. We used e-mail, parent groups, phone calls and personal invitations to produce interest and generate discussion topics. Dedicate time and energy to the process.”*
Clear Creek Re-1 (Idaho Springs)—Region 5