



COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Dwight D. Jones
Commissioner of Education

Robert K. Hammond
Deputy Commissioner

Diana Sirko, Ph.D.
Deputy Commissioner

Expanded Learning Opportunities Commission

Purpose and Overview:

Commissioner of Education Dwight Jones appointed the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Commission in May, 2010. The commission was given the charge of examining the state-level policies needed to most effectively use the school day and to foster collaboration and partnerships among teachers, schools and community partners that go beyond core subjects to fully engage and enrich all students. The goals of the Commission are strongly linked to the overall education goals of the state of Colorado: increase academic growth for struggling students, close the achievement gap, increase student attendance and decrease the dropout rate.

ELO Working Definition:

Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELOs) seek to transform the educational experience to fully engage students in their learning, their passions and their interests. ELOs foster collaboration and partnerships among teachers, schools and community partners to effectively use the school day so that it is unrestricted by walls (blended and online learning), clocks (flexible school days), calendars (expanded school week and year) or tradition.

Overall Goal of the ELO Commission:

The Commission will outline a vision of student-centered learning that transcends the school day and location and encourages education systems to use time, partners and technology in new ways to achieve greater long-term outcomes for students.

ELO Commission Deliverable:

To fulfill its vision, the ELO Commission will deliver a report to policymakers that reviews statewide policy to ensure they support expanded learning opportunities that result in increased academic growth, closing of the achievement gaps, decreased dropout rates and increased student postsecondary and workforce readiness.

Commission Action Steps:

The ELO Commission will begin its work by examining current research and effective strategies on expanded learning opportunities across the country. The commission will also conduct a "listening tour" in Colorado focused on gathering input from community partners across the state on policy opportunities and challenges. The ELO Commission's findings will form the

basis of recommendations for integrating new and expanded learning opportunities into education reform efforts in effective, measurable, and sustainable ways.

Elements of the Commission's recommendations might include:

- Examining and analyzing Colorado statutes and practices pertaining to length of school day, school year that prohibit effective ELO implementation
- Examining and analyzing Colorado statutes on blended and online learning
- Highlight best practices on flexible day and utilization of community partners in providing additional learning experiences
- Incorporating ELO program guidelines that are research-based and adaptable to a wide variety of programs and determining ways to measure ELO performance and demonstrate results tied to state goals and program mission

ELO Commission members:

Greg Anderson, Dean, Morgridge College of Education
University of Denver

Linda Barker, Director, Teaching and Learning
Colorado Education Association

Elaine Gantz Berman (Chair), Member
Colorado Board of Education, District 1

Shirley Farnsworth, Director of Extended Learning
Denver Public Schools

Helayne Jones, Executive Director
Colorado Legacy Foundation

Alyssa Lasseter, Director, Tony Grampsas Youth Services
Department of Public Health and Environment

Hon. Tom Massey
State Representative (R), District 60

Linda Preston, Board Member
Colorado Alliance for Quality School-Age Programs

Hon. Gail Schwartz
State Senator (D), District 5

Diana Sirko, Deputy Commissioner

Colorado Department of Education

Hon. Judy Solano
State Representative (D), District 31

Hon. Nancy Spence
State Senator (R), District 27

Jennifer Stedron, Executive Director
Early Childhood Leadership Commission