File: ADE

Innovation in Education

The Board commits to focus its attention and energy on the quality of education provided in the school district. The Board also believes in and supports student learning through a menu of educational options that meet the needs of all students. These two priorities set the context for the Board's comprehensive plan to improve student achievement for all district students.

One way the Board may improve student achievement and also provide a broader range of educational options is by encouraging its schools to seek designation as an "innovation school" or "innovation school zone." In accordance with state law, the Board may delegate to its schools a high degree of autonomy in implementing curriculum, making personnel decisions, organizing the school day, determining the most effective use of resources, and generally organizing the delivery of high-quality educational services. That autonomy is reflected in the Board's designation of a school as an "innovation school." A group of schools within the district that share common interests, such as geographical location or educational focus, or that sequentially serve classes of students as they progress through elementary or secondary education, may jointly submit a plan to the Board to create an "innovation school zone."

Pursuant to the Board's constitutional authority to control instruction in its schools, as well as the Board's duty to determine the educational programs to be carried on in its schools, the decision to approve or deny a request to become an innovation school or innovation school zone lies exclusively with the Board. The Board shall continue to govern all approved innovation schools or schools in an innovation school zone in accordance with the Board's constitutional and statutory role.

The Board may initiate and collaborate with one or more district schools to create an innovation school or innovation school zone. When initiating an innovation school or innovation school zone, the Board shall ensure that each public school that would be affected has an opportunity to participate in the creation of the plan. The Board may also approve or create an innovation school zone that includes all of the district's schools.

To seek designation as an innovation school or innovation school zone, the applicant shall follow the procedures prescribed in the regulation accompanying this policy. These procedures require the applicant to provide, among other information, evidence that a majority of the administrators and teachers employed at each school consent to designation as an innovation school or school zone, as well as evidence that a majority of the school accountability committee at each affected school consent to designation as an innovation

school or school zone. The applicant must also provide a statement of the level of support for designation as an innovation school or school zone, including input from school employees other than teachers and administrators; students and parents of students enrolled in the school(s); and the community surrounding the school(s).

Focus areas

The Board encourages the development of an innovation school or innovation school zone that will:

- serve the needs of students at risk of educational failure, as evidenced by student performance on state assessments and other evidence used by the district.
- improve student achievement.
- provide an educational program with student performance standards and curriculum that meets or exceeds state and district content standards.
- provide diverse approaches to learning and education to best meet its student population.
- better allocate resources for the benefit of students served.

Limitations

The Board shall not approve an application for an innovation school or school zone that will:

- exclusively serve high-performing students, as evidenced by student performance on state assessments and other evidence used by the district.
- provide an educational program with student performance standards and curriculum that fails to meet or exceed state and district content standards.
- fail to meet the needs of the students served.

An innovation school or innovation school zone shall start at the beginning of the school year following the date the application is approved, unless another starting time is agreed upon by the Board and the applicant school(s). The period for which a new innovation school or innovation school zone may be approved is two academic year(s). In accordance with state law, the Board shall review any approved innovation school or innovation school zone's performance at least every three years. Renewal of an innovation school or innovation school zone shall be for specified periods of time.

Once the Board approves an application to become an innovation school or innovation school zone, the Board may seek designation as a district of innovation from the State Board of Education. This step may be necessary to obtain the waivers of state law or

regulation identified in the plan or to waive selected provisions of a collective bargaining agreement as provided in state law.

Adopted: September 23, 2013

LEGAL REFS.: Colo. Const. Art. IX, Sect. 15 (*board has control of instruction within the district)*

C.R.S. 22-11-101 *et seq. (Education Accountability Act of 2009)*

C.R.S. 22-32-109 (1)(f)(I) (*board may delegate duty to employ personnel to innovation school*)

C.R.S. 22-32-109 (1)(t) (*board duty to determine educational program and prescribe textbooks)*

C.R.S. 22-32-110 (1)(h) (*board may delegate authority to terminate personnel to innovation school)*

C.R.S. 22-32.5-101 *et seq. (Innovation Schools Act of 2008)*

CROSS REF.: AEE*, Waiver of State Law and Regulation

Huerfano School District Re-1, Walsenburg, Colorado