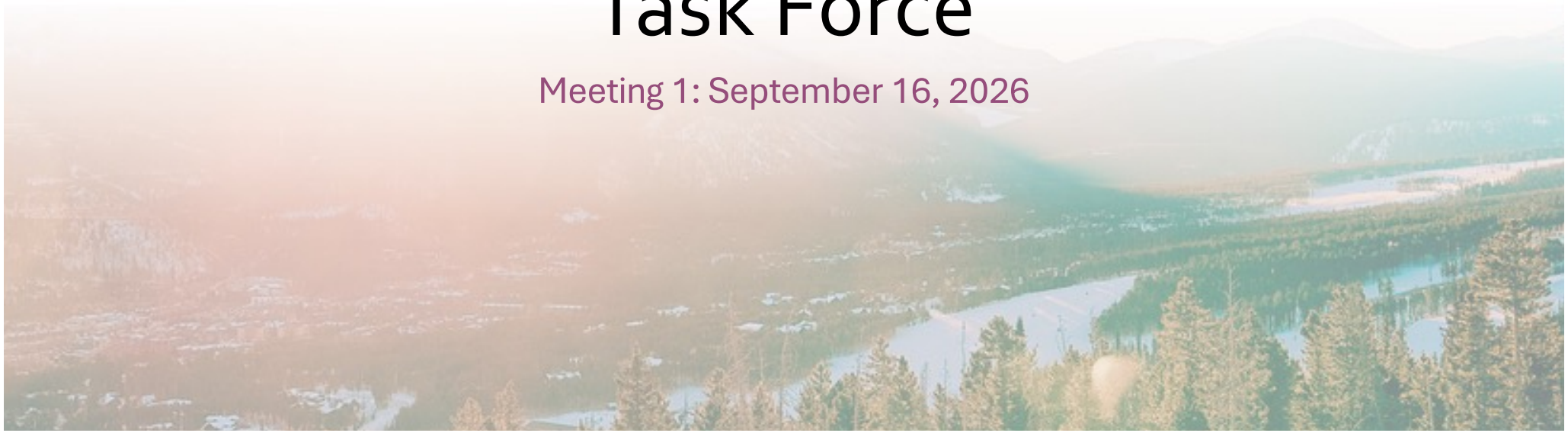
KEYSTONE
POLICY CENTER

Access To Opportunity Task Force

Meeting 1: September 16, 2026



Keystone Policy Center



Keystone Policy Center collaborates with diverse stakeholders to tackle pressing issues and find durable solutions since 1975 in agriculture, education, energy, natural resources, and tribal and indigenous issues.

KEYSTONE POLICY CENTER

Our Team



Charles Dukes
Director, Center for Education & Senior Policy Director



Maddie Book
Program Coordinator



Kati Van Sicklen
Assistant Project Manager



Matt Weyer, Ph.D.
Senior Project Director

Session Goals

- Establish a shared understanding of the legislative charge.
- Establish norms that support honest dialogue, disagreement, and finding areas of agreement.
- Develop shared language around educational opportunity and opportunity gaps.
- Begin identifying practices and conditions associated with student success.
- Identify the key questions and information needed to inform future meetings and recommendations.
- Understand what happens next and how today's work will inform Meeting #2.

Roles

Keystone Staff:

- Facilitate the conversation - Create space for productive dialogue, different perspectives, and thoughtful discussion.

- Support the Task Force's work- Help organize ideas, identify areas of agreement and tension, and keep the group moving toward its charge and recommendations.

Task Force members:

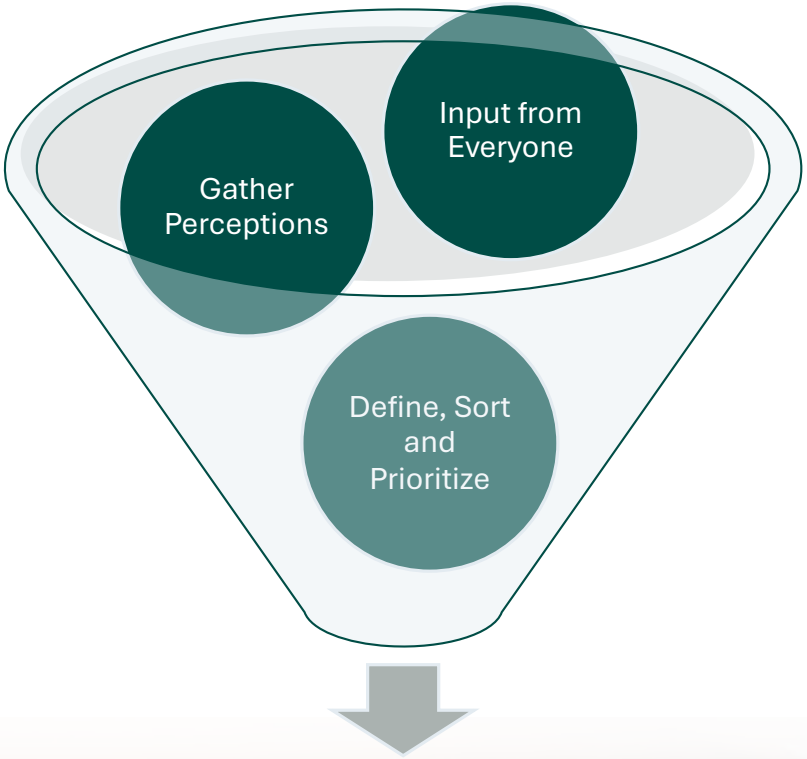
- Bring your perspective and stay curious - Share your experience and expertise, listen to different perspectives, and help build a shared understanding of educational opportunity across Colorado.

- Help shape the path forward - Identify what appears to be working, surface challenges and tensions, and identify the questions and evidence we need to explore before developing recommendations.

Agenda
(9:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m.)

- Welcome, Purpose and Overview of the Day
- Establishing Operating Norms
- Why Are We Here?
- The Road Ahead: Our 4-Month Journey
- Break
- Discussions Part 1:
  - What Do We Mean By Opportunity?
  - What Appears to Be Working?
- Lunch
- Discussions Part 2:
  - What Makes This Work Difficult?
  - What Do We Still Need to Learn?
  - Building Our Inquiry Agenda
- Reflections and Closing

Process Framework



Tools

- Individual Reflection
- Small Group Discussion
- Brainstorming
- Mentimeter

Plan for Next Meeting

Introductions

- Name
- Organization
- What's your "real job"?
- What is one thing that is top of mind for you this morning?

Establishing Working Agreement

Individual Reflection - 3 minutes

- What do you need from others in this room to participate openly in this process?
- What do others need from you for us to have productive conversations, especially when we disagree?

Each person write 1-2 responses on sticky notes

Establishing Working Agreements (2)

Table Discussion - 6 minutes
Share your responses and identify 2–3 agreements they believe are most important for the Task Force.

Additional challenge question:

Think ahead to a difficult conversation where members strongly disagree. What agreement would help us have that conversation productively?

Establishing Working Agreements (3)

Build the Task Force Agreements — 8 minutes

Each table to share one agreement at a time. We will capture and clusters similar ideas live then turn broad concepts into observable behaviors.

Establishing Working Agreements (4)

Test for Agreement — 3 minutes

- Is there anything here you cannot work within?
- Is anything missing that we will need when the conversations become difficult?"

Consensus? 

Legislative Background

- **SB26-170 established the Access to Opportunity Task Force** to examine how Colorado can expand students' access to effective public schools and educational opportunities.
- **The Task Force is charged with learning from what works** by identifying successful schools and practices, understanding the conditions that support success, examining barriers, and developing practical recommendations for expanding opportunity across Colorado.

Task Force

Task Force Composition

- 18 members representing a range of perspectives and experiences from across Colorado's education system.
- Includes school leaders, teachers and educators, parents, students/recent graduates, community and education organizations, and state government representatives.
- Includes perspectives from **different regions and educational contexts across Colorado**, with particular attention to experience addressing opportunity gaps.

Task Force Charge

- **Learn from what works** – Identify effective schools, practices, and conditions that support student opportunity.
- **Understand the barriers** – Examine what prevents successful approaches from reaching more Colorado students.
- **Develop practical recommendations** – Identify opportunities to expand access to effective public schools and practices across the state.

Task Force Roadmap

#1: Build Shared Understanding
September 16

#2: Learn From Success
October 27

#3: Identify Barriers
November 10

#4: Build Recommendations
November 19

#5: Refine & Finalize
December 17

The Task Force's report must be submitted no later than five months after the first meeting.

Discussion

What would make this Task Force's work valuable to Colorado students, families, educators, and policymakers?

Break

What Do We Mean By Opportunity? (1)

Start with Experience, Not Policy - 5 minutes

- Individual Reflection:

  Think of a student or group of students you know who experienced meaningful educational opportunities.

  - What is happening around them that make the opportunity possible?

  Capture 2-3 things on individual sticky notes (one idea per note)

What Do We Mean By Opportunity? (2)

Diverse Table Perspectives - 15 minutes

- Table Discussions
  - What should every Colorado student have the opportunity to:
    - Know?
    - Experience?
    - Achieve?

What Do We Mean By Opportunity? (3)

Surface the Tensions - 15 minutes

- Table Discussions
  - One area where we had strong agreement.
  - One question where we had different perspectives or struggled to agree.

What Do We Mean By Opportunity? (4)

Full Group Discussion – 10 minutes

- What should be true for every student, regardless of where they live or attend school?
- Where do we see agreement—and where do we see tensions that we will need to better understand?

What Appears to Be Working? (1)

Reflect and Share – 5 minutes

Big Question:

- When **students** are experiencing meaningful educational opportunities, what are the conditions **around** them that makes that possible?

- Think of a place where you have seen students experiencing meaningful educational opportunities. What was happening that helped make it possible?

What Appears to Be Working? (2)

Partner and Table Discussions – 15 minutes

- What were schools and educators doing?
- What were families and communities doing?
- What systems, policies, resources, or structures supported the work?
- What practices or conditions seem to show up across multiple examples?

Each table identify top 3 practices or conditions that appear to support meaningful opportunity.

What Appears to Be Working? (3)

Whole Group Synthesis – 15 minutes

30-Minute Lunch

What Makes This Work Difficult? (1)

Technical Challenges

Problems where the solution is generally known and can be addressed through expertise, resources, policies, processes, or structures.

Examples: Policies, funding, staffing, data, organizational structure

Adaptive Challenges

Problems that require people or organizations to change behaviors, beliefs, relationships, priorities, or ways of working.

Examples: Beliefs, expectations, behaviors, relationships, trust, competing priorities

What Makes This Work Difficult? (2)

Table Discussions - 20 minutes

- **What gets in the way?**
  Why isn't this practice or condition consistently present?

- **What's technical?**
  What barriers might be addressed through changes to policies, resources, staffing, training, data, structures, or processes?

- **What's adaptive?**
  What barriers require changes in behaviors, beliefs, relationships, expectations, trust, or ways of working?

What Makes This Work Difficult? (3)

Share & Identify Patterns – 15 minutes

Each table briefly shares:

- The condition they examined
- One significant technical challenge
- One significant adaptive challenge
- One question the Task Force needs to investigate further

Break

What Do We Still Need to Learn? (1)

Generate Questions - 10 minutes

Returning to the tensions, conditions for success, and technical/adaptive challenges generated earlier in the day.

- What questions do we need answered before we can confidently make recommendations?

Each table develops its 3–5 most important questions not solutions (large post it notes, one question per note)

What Do We Still Need to Learn? (2)

What Would Help Us Answer it- 15 minutes

Four lenses to consider

- DATA – What quantitative information would help?
- VOICES – Who do we need to hear from?
- EXAMPLES – What schools, districts, programs, or communities should we examine?
- RESEARCH/EXPERTISE – What existing research or expertise could help?

Where Are We Going Next?

- What is one thing you are leaving today's meeting thinking differently about?
- What is one question you believe this Task Force must answer before we make recommendations?

Task Force Chair & Vice Chair

- *At or before the first task force meeting, the President of the Senate shall appoint the Task Force Chair and the Speaker of the House shall appoint the Task Force Vice-Chair. The Chair shall convene the task force meetings after the first meeting.*
- Senator Coleman has appointed Reilly Pharo Carter
- The Vice Chair has not yet been appointed by Representative McCluskie

Thank You!

Next Meeting: October 27th, 9:30 – 3:00