Colorado Facility Schools Board Meeting
October 8, 2026
Venue: Shiloh House Family Resource Pavilion
9700 E. Easter Lane, Centennial, CO 80112

In attendance:
Board Members Present: Steven Ramirez, Megan Coggins, Rebecca Carpenter (via Zoom and in person), Mylynda Herrick, Sonjia Hunt, and Margo Valaika.

Board Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Judy Stirman, Wendy Dunaway, Robin Singer, Ann Symalla, Lisa Bohn Smith, and Tara Butler (via Zoom and in person).

Attended via Zoom: Allie Miller, Celina Ulibarri, Carrie Foster, Annie Haskins, and Margarita Colindres

Staff Absent: Lori Kochevar

Meeting Commencement:
Chair Ramirez called the meeting to order and asked all present in the room and online to introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes for September 10, 2026:
Chair Ramirez entertained a motion to accept the Board minutes.
Board member Valaika made a motion to approve the September 10, 2026 minutes, and Board member Hunt seconded. The Board unanimously approved the minutes.

Approval of October 8, 2026, Agenda:
The agenda was approved noting that timing would be flexible due to the amount of public comment for the Rulemaking Hearing.

Public Comment:
Chair Ramirez read the public comment rules. Members of the public who were signed up to address the Board included:

- Roberta Ayala, Former Facility School Educator - letter read by Board member Valaika
- Idalis French, ACES Speech-Language Pathologist
- Michaele Pansza, ACES Principal

Rulemaking Hearing for Rules for the Administration of Facility Schools Act, 1 CCR 304-1:

- Assistant Attorney General Jason Langberg presented an overview of the draft rules and updates on changes since the last Board meeting.
    - Definitions within the rules were either added, updated, or deleted to provide more clarity.
    - Attorney Langberg highlighted changes for authorization and reauthorization of Specialized Day Schools (SDS) and the rationale for the changes.
    - Current and new rules were reviewed for application approvals and reviews, mandatory notifications, maintenance of approved status, and monitoring.
    - A complaint system was added and a complaint process was explained.
    - Rules for instructional hours and contact days were added.
    - Restraint and seclusion rules were clarified to comply with licensing agencies and state statutes.
- In summary, Attorney Langberg suggested that the proposed rule changes provided more clarity and accountability.

Attorney Langberg then discussed the public comments that were received and reviewed potential changes with Board discussion on each item. Chair Ramirez entertained a discussion about action being taken to approve the rules as discussed or wait for a clarified written copy of the rules, including the last minute items discussed. The Board's consensus was to postpone the vote on accepting the proposed rule changes until the November meeting. Attorney Langberg was tasked with writing up the changes and sending them to Board members for a final review prior to the November meeting.

Board Governance:

Virginia Winter reminded the Board that their three-year strategic plan beginning in 2024 is coming to an end and they will need to re-engage in creating a new strategic plan.

- A SWOT Analysis allows the Board to collect data on their individual and collective strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in order to identify goals and priorities moving forward.
- The strategic plan, propelled by our mission and values, allows Board members to step into greater levels of leadership, while maximizing their power as a collective unit to have a greater impact for students in facility schools.

Accreditation:

Wendy Dunaway thanked the Board for reviewing all the accreditation documents and recognized that it was a lot of work in a short time period for all facility schools to complete the accreditation documents. Dunaway reiterated that the documentation was meant to provide a systematic look at facility schools based on accreditation criteria

aligned to four elements: academics, school climate, leadership and talent, and operations. Based on the information received, Chair Ramirez entertained a motion for approval of a recommendation of accreditation for all 36 facility schools. Board members Coggins and Carpenter expressed concerns about accrediting a school that has had allegations and investigations. After further discussion about the accreditation standards and application of them, as well as processes for concerns, Board member Herrick motioned to approve all facility schools for accreditation, with Board member Hunt seconding the motion. Judy Stirman completed a roll call vote of the Board with 5 members voting affirmatively and one abstaining. Motion passed.

Facility Schools Funding 101:
Dunaway educated the Board on the history of facility school funding, noting that it used to be calculated as a daily rate per student, but with students transitioning in and out of schools, it became difficult to budget and cover operating costs with a constant fluctuation of funds. Through the Senate Bill Work Group, Dillinger Research and Development was hired to present a different model of funding that would offer more consistency. They came up with a baseline funding model created with a hypothetical school of 8-16 students, with staff salaries comparable to CDE staffing, and a classroom materials cost. It was recognized that it was unfair to put that financial burden fully on the state. Special education students get tuition costs; so, for every special education student, there is an offset to take the burden off of the state and put it onto AUs. Now it is calculated using a yearly average, with data collected for attendance and the percentage of special education students. Tuition costs are now split into three categories based on the levels of needs of the students served in the schools. Inflation also is applied to the baseline funding based on the CPI rate. The number of schools the Board approves can impact funding for all. Chair Ramirez suggested that it would be a valuable discussion item for future meetings to understand the impact of approving small schools, or the number of new facilities approved.

Kaleidoscope:
This year, Kaleidoscope will be held on October 29th and 30th. Board members will be recognizing nominations and presenting Kaleidoscopes and Shining Stars around 9:20am each day. Board members Carpenter, Coggins, Valaika, and Hunt offered to read recognitions, while Board members Herrick and Ramirez offered to hand out awards.

Board Corner Update
Board member Valaika will connect with Serenity for November, and Board member Carpenter will connect with MSV for December.

Reflections: Elements of Strategic Plan or Responsibilities of the Board
The Board touched on several items from the Responsibility Matrix relating to accreditation and rule making. Goal one from the Strategic Plan stood out as Board members engaged in active leadership with deeper dialogue on accreditation and

rulemaking. Goals two and three would also be touched upon later in the month with opportunities for media presence at the Kaleidoscope Conference.

Office of Facility School Staff Updates
Leadership:
Dunaway will share the Senate Bill 23-219 Work Group's final report to the Board and Directors.

Monitoring:
Singer shared that monitoring visits are going well.

Project Education:
Haskins shared that the team is currently working on state assessments and identifying students for ACCESS testing for ML students.

Data Management and Systems Support:
Ulibarri shared they are working on sharing data from September attendance and October count, in addition to lots of work with Infinite Campus.

Technical Assistance Center:
Miller shared that she has trained 221 rural participants since July, and three districts are participating in HUB coaching this year. She's also continuing to problem solve with individual district needs.

Academic Systems:
Butler is working on training for academic systems, including one-on-one i-Ready training. She's also busy preparing for Kaleidoscope.

Multilingual Coordinator:
Colindres shared that she has been working on Project ML and collaborating with district folks.

Chair Ramirez adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting Date:
November 12, 2026, at Shiloh House Family Resource Pavilion (9700 E. Easter Lane, Centennial, CO 80112).