

# **COYAC Day at the Capitol**

## **Annual Presentation to Legislators**



**Monday, April 15, 2019**

**8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

**Colorado State Capitol: Room 0112**

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## **COYAC Members 2018-2019**

<b>SD#</b>	<b>Councilmember</b>	<b>City/Town</b>	<b>High School</b>	<b>Grade</b>
1	Colton Arciniaga	Elizabeth	Elizabeth HS	11
2	Erik Nijkamp	Woodland Park	Woodland Park HS	12
3	Xavier Ada	Pueblo	East HS	11
4	Sreenivas Eadara	Parker	Legend HS	12
5	Riley Dudley	Eagle	Eagle Valley HS	11
6	Sage Wilber	Montrose	Montrose HS	10
6	Kian Edmondson	Durango	Animas HS	10
8	Tyler Miller	Parachute	Grand Valley HS	10
9	Edenna Chen	Colorado Springs	Rampart HS	12
11	Daniella Fairley	Colorado Springs	James Irwin Charter HS	10
12	Kimberly Rosas	Colorado Springs	Cheyenne Mountain HS	10
13	Anna Rutledge	Greeley	Greeley Central HS	12
14	James Zheng	Fort Collins	Fossil Ridge HS	12
15	Paige Miller	Loveland	Loveland Classical Schools	10
16	Vrishank Bikkumalla	Littleton	STEM School and Academy	11
17	Mana Setayesh	Lafayette	Peak to Peak Charter School	10
18	Nikaash Maheshwari	Boulder	Fairview HS	12
19	Spoorthy Reddy	Westminster	Fairview HS	12
20	Allie Mauldin	Littleton	Chatfield HS	10
21	Evelyn Solis	Commerce City	Adams City HS	12
22	Lucy Preston	Lakewood	Lakewood HS	11
23	Sasha Miller	Erie	Erie HS	10
24	Margot Swetich	Westminster	Northglenn HS	10
24	Ananda Birungi	Northglenn	Thornton HS	11
24	Faiza Shaik	Thornton	Legacy HS	11
25	Amanda Ruybal	Brighton	Brighton HS	12
26	Ryan Hearty	Denver	Mullen HS	11
26	Kade Kurowski	Littleton	Heritage HS	10
26	Anna Ying	Greenwood Village	Cherry Creek HS	10
27	Alex Yang	Englewood	Cherry Creek HS	10
28	Mitali Desai	Aurora	Cherokee Trail HS	10
29	Peniel Owusu-Ansah	Aurora	Grandview HS	11
30	Kyle Markel	Littleton	Mullen HS	10
31	Andrew Schwartz	Denver	George Washington HS	11
32	Emma Logan	Denver	Denver Montessori HS	11
33	Alana Saragosa	Denver	Denver Montessori HS	12
34	Winta Gonye	Denver	North HS	11
35	Drew Smith	Monte Vista	Sargent HS	11
Intern	Hannah Park	Fort Collins	Poudre HS	12

## **What is the Colorado Youth Advisory Council?**

The Colorado Youth Advisory Council (COYAC) is a vehicle created by the Colorado State Legislature to bring the voice of youth to the Capitol. Since passage of the 2008 legislation that launched COYAC (Youth Advisory Act in House Bill 08-1157), the mission of the Council has been to examine, evaluate and discuss the issues, interests, and needs affecting Colorado youth both in the present and in the future while formally advising and making recommendations to elected officials regarding those issues. The Council is made up of 40 young people, representing Colorado's 35 state senate districts, and five at-large seats. These students serve a two-year term and have an interest in learning more about public policy and state government. They are also passionate about making a difference in both their community and their state.

In addition to the 40 youth Council members, there are four members of the Colorado General Assembly that serve as members of COYAC. These legislators, appointed by House and Senate Leadership, also serve a two-year term. The 2018-2019 Legislative Appointees from the House are Representative Hugh McKean (R-Loveland) and Representative Bri Buentello (D-Pueblo). The Senate is represented by Senator Nancy Todd (D-Aurora) and Senator Don Coram (R-Montrose).

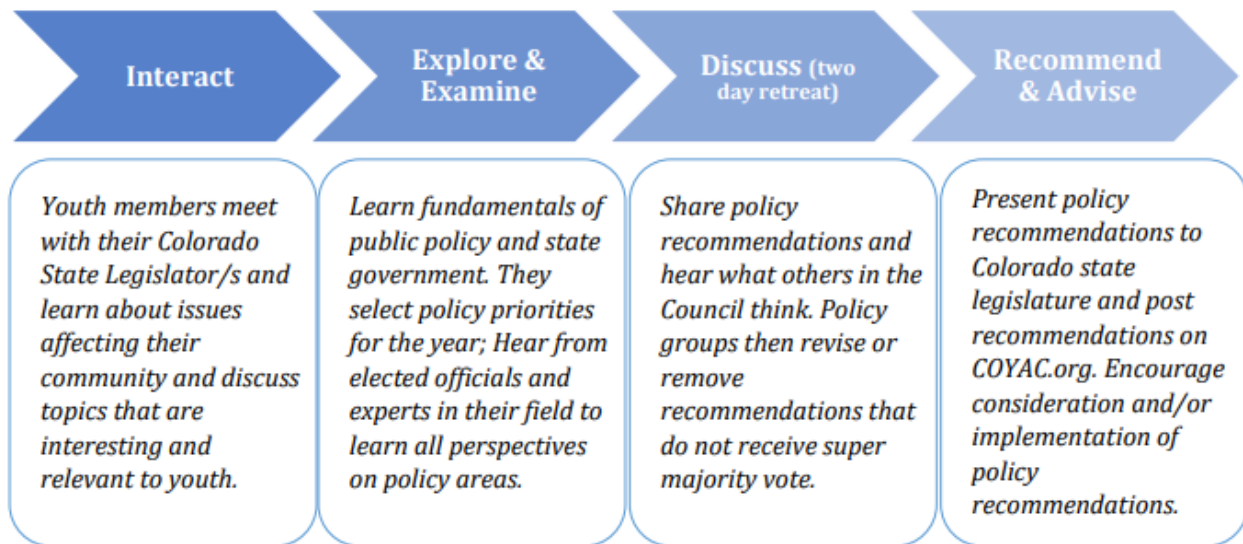


Membership in the Colorado Youth Advisory Council is open to all Colorado youth between the ages of 14 and 19 who are attending a Colorado junior high, middle or high school, including online schools; nonpublic, home-based educational programs; or general equivalency degree programs. All eligible applications are reviewed by the COYAC Recruitment and Membership Committee and then sent out to the entire Council for approval or denial.

At its heart, COYAC is a youth-led and youth-run organization. At the first meeting, councilmembers elect a four-member Executive Committee from amongst their peers. These four individuals provide leadership throughout the year and are responsible for planning meetings, Engaged Public (EP) supports the youth within the framework outlined by the enabling legislation and, together with the Legislative Appointees, provides guidance for the student leaders and facilitates the program. EP also develops an annual work plan, writes the annual reports and maintains the COYAC website ([www.coyac.org](http://www.coyac.org)).

In 2018, COYAC launched a new initiative to expand youth civic engagement opportunities and increase the number of youth voices represented by the Council – a statewide Senate District Youth Advisory Council (SDYAC) network. The goal is to identify 10 youth in each of the 35 senate districts who will commit to gather feedback from their peers and help inform COYAC's policy development process. This will create a network of 350 additional Colorado youth who are civically engaged!

Engaged Public began facilitating COYAC in late 2013 and created the following process for the group:



The Council is tasked with coming up with policy areas to focus on each year. The process for selecting these policy areas began with each youth member meeting with their state legislator to get a better understanding of the legislator's policy priorities and community needs. The students also talk and survey students in their own communities. The students then identify the key themes and trends that emerge from both the legislators and their own peers. This year, Council members chose to continue to explore issues that were selected in 2017-2018 and learned about the Colorado State Budget.

*Access to Higher Education  
Youth Substance Abuse*

*K-12 Education  
Mental Health Issues*





April 15, 2019

Esteemed Legislators:

Welcome to the 6th Annual COYAC Day at the Capitol! We are so excited to talk to you today about some of our work this year in the Colorado Youth Advisory Council and are grateful to our Legislative Appointees and staff facilitators at Engaged Public for making this day possible. Whether it's on the ground at home collecting youth feedback through our Senate District Youth Advisory Council (SDYAC) program or working together in Denver to interact with legislators and formulate policy recommendations, every councilmember exhibits a singular passion for policy and commitment to promoting youth civic engagement across Colorado.

Attached to this letter are outlines of three recommendations our policy committee has put together for possible future consideration and development by the COYAC Interim Committee set forth in HB 19-1024. You will also get a general overview of our organization and our new SDYAC initiative as well as hear from some of our members about their COYAC experience this year. We hope this day proves rewarding and informative to each of you, and please accept our best wishes for a productive remainder of the legislative session.

Thank you for your time,  
The COYAC Executive Committee

Colton Arciniaga  
SD 1 (Elizabeth)  
Elizabeth High School

Emma Logan  
SD 32 (Denver)  
Denver Montessori  
High School

Nikaash Maheshwari  
SD 18 (Boulder)  
Fairview High  
School

James Zheng  
SD 14 (Fort Collins)  
Fossil Ridge High  
School



## Today's Agenda

8:30 – 8:35	Opening Remarks Introductions: COYAC Members 2018-2019	<i>Nikaash Maheshwari (SD 18)</i> <i>Alex Yang (SD 27)</i>
8:35 – 8:45	State of the COYAC: A Year in Review	<i>Ananda Birungi (SD 24AL)</i> <i>Alana Saragosa (SD 33)</i> <i>Margot Swetich (SD 24)</i>
8:45 – 8:55	Senate District Youth Advisory Councils	<i>Daniella Fairley (SD 11)</i> <i>Sasha Miller (SD 23)</i> <i>Mana Setayesh (SD 17)</i>
8:55 – 9:00	What We've Learned About State Policy	<i>Vrishank Bikkumalla (SD 16)</i> <i>Sreeni Eadara (SD 4)</i>
9:00 – 9:30	2019 COYAC Policy Proposals	
	- Youth Budget	<i>Andrew Schwartz (SD 31)</i> <i>Emma Logan (SD 32)</i>
	- Youth Impact Statement	<i>Colton Arciniaga (SD 1)</i> <i>James Zheng (SD 14)</i>
	- Youth Advisory Committee Review	<i>Xavier Ada (SD 3)</i> <i>Faiza Shaik (SD 24)</i>
9:30 – 9:35	Wrap-up	<i>Amanda Ruybal (SD 25)</i>

# **2018-2019 COYAC Policy Recommendations**

## **1. Youth Budget**

**Overview:** A budget created and published by the Colorado Legislative Council for the General Assembly every other year. The purpose of a Youth Budget is to show how the state leverages state and federal funding for youth across the state. The Youth Budget would serve as a comprehensive guide to local programs and services for children and youth. It would be an unbiased tool to teach citizens, non-profits, and legislators about how Colorado spends money on young people.

### **Policy Objectives:**

- Inform and educate Coloradans as to how state funds are impacting children and youth
- Provide objective data for policymakers and advocates
- Serve as a teaching tool for students to learn about government, economics, and how government directly impacts them

### **Why is this of Interest to COYAC?**

- Illustrates the role of state government in the lives of young Coloradans
- Serves as a teaching tool for Civic/Government Classes
- Informs COYAC so that the council can develop better policy proposals for the legislature
- Provides objective, unbiased information that is not influenced by an advocacy group

### **Examples:**

- San Mateo County<sup>1</sup>
- Massachusetts<sup>2</sup>
- Utah<sup>3</sup>
- Connecticut<sup>4</sup>
- California<sup>5</sup>
- Federal Government<sup>6</sup>

### **Preliminary Questions/Issues to Consider:**

- What will be the scope of the budget? (Especially re: age, criteria, Federal v. General Fund, categorical breakdowns, etc.)
- How can we make the budget user-friendly and easy to read?

### **Potential Stakeholders:**

- Colorado Children's Campaign
- Colorado Association of School Boards
- Children's Hospital
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Local Governments

### **Potential Concerns to Address:**

- Increased governmental workload
- Develop criteria and categories for what items are included



## 2. Youth Impact Statement

**Overview:** This recommendation would allow any member of the General Assembly to ask for a COYAC Youth Impact Statement on a bill that they introduce that pertains to youth. COYAC could analyze the bill and offer a youth perspective on the its impact on young people throughout Colorado. COYAC would NOT take an official position but would provide feedback via a well-defined, deliberative process in which all councilmembers were informed on the various arguments surrounding the legislation.

### Policy Objectives:

- Maximize youth voice on significant policy issues that affect young people
- Foster open-mindedness, dialogue, and informed deliberation amongst youth
- Strengthen legislative connections with younger constituents

### Why is this of Interest to COYAC?

- Provides additional opportunity for legislators to interact with COYAC
- COYAC provides a platform about the realities of creating and developing public policy
- Offers another opportunity for youth to participate in the policymaking process in addition to testifying at the state capitol

### Preliminary Questions/Issues to Consider:

- Create a request form and request review process (what qualifies as “pertinent”?)
- Develop a structured, deliberative process
- Determine the necessary components of each statement
- Gather diverse perspectives/feedback from various youth across the state (i.e. urban/rural, public/private/charter schools)
- Method of delivery to committees/General Assembly
- How many bills per session could be referred to COYAC for an impact statement?
- Timeframe & associated structural changes to COYAC to meet such a timeframe

### Potential Concerns to Address:

- There is no precedent for a statewide, youth-oriented policy statement regarding pending legislation
- How can COYAC deliver the least biased report possible?
- Youth credibility – how can we make sure COYAC members are well-informed enough to compile such a statement?

### 3. Youth Advisory Committee Review

**Overview:** In 2013, the Colorado Department of Human Services was charged with the task of developing a “Statewide Youth Development Plan” (SYDP) (House Bill 13-1239<sup>7</sup>) with the goal of promoting a positive and healthy youth system within Colorado. Based on statutory requirements, the plan identified key issues affecting youth and proposed a strategic plan to target these issues (with an emphasis on beneficial community involvement). In response to these requirements, Human Services released the first SYDP in 2014<sup>8</sup>, which stated that the most effective youth development plan would emphasize “A Positive Youth Development” (PYD) approach\*. PYD focuses on building partnerships between youth and various services and programs for collaboration. The idea is that engaging youth in decision-making will build sustainable programs, and consequently, reduce risk behavior across the state.

Our proposed policy idea focuses on the Positive Youth Development (PYD)<sup>†</sup> approach. In 2014, the SDYP’s main goals included the statewide implementation of CO9to25<sup>9</sup>, an organization focused on addressing youth issues through the use of PYD, as a legislatively recognized Colorado Council on Youth Development. The council would be funded to oversee the implementation of the SYDP. Concerning youth advisory, CO9to25’s main goals included:

- Integrating PYD across state departments
  - Establishing PYD trainings to incorporate youth voice
- Reviewing youth services and engagement
  - Endorsement through PYD certification; all youth involvement and services are regulated and funded accordingly

The next SYDP was released in 2016. In 2016, the Plan’s committee merged with CO9to25 in the creation of the CO9to25 Council. However, the council never gained legislative recognition since the bill concerning the creation of the CO9to25 council (HB-15-1268<sup>10</sup>) was postponed indefinitely after passing the House. In spite of this, the CO9to25 council continued to operate to complete the goals dictated in the 2014 SYDP. Funding was appropriated to the CO Dept of Human Services. Key updates and revisions are as follows:

- This version of the Plan also contains the first explicit mention of a youth advisory capacity. It is branched into PYD as was inferable from previous plans
  - The Plan’s specific goal was to raise PYD trained organizations from under 50% to 80% (proportions determined by a survey conducted by the CO9to25 council)
- The two main goals of interest from the last SYDP are still contained in the plan with the CDPHE to pilot the first PYD training by 2017. The CDPHE was also to develop the evaluation, recruitment, and training systems for PYD
- This version also features a plan to release an app with the ability to connect youth to services and advisory councils

Currently, the plan has abandoned many of these goals. Within the 2019 SYDP, the CDHS has decided to focus more on direct stakeholder needs and has terminated funding for the CO9to25 council. Consequently, the CO9to25 Council is no longer active. As stated, many of the key recommendations concerning youth advisory have been removed, including:

- Recommendations regarding the integration of PYD and youth advisory across the state are strongly recommended but are now considered “independent from the plan.” However, the

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\* Note that PYD is not a program; it is an “approach” that strongly favors youth advisory amongst other things.

† The plan must be reported annually but is only updated biennially

Plan still calls for “*meaningful involvement*,” though there is no longer any concerted effort towards this involvement

- The database proposed in the past Plan stated to be “independent from the plan” as well. The Plan cites an app called “I’m Into,” but no evidence of its existence could be found

The term “meaningful” remains undefined.

#### **Policy Objectives:**

- Aim to ensure that youth involvement in state government is authentic and maximizes youth voice in policy-making
- Assess the role of youth of advisory committees with specific proposals as to implementation of youth advisory
- Explore why the recommendations were modified; learn from that experience and see if there is any way to reconsider those recommendations going forward

#### **Why is this of Interest to COYAC?**

- Every version of the plan has cited COYAC as having been involved with the plan or an example of what the plan would like to see implemented
- Through this policy the state would be reassured that funds for youth-oriented programs (such as the CO9to25 program) are being used properly and are maximized to its full potential
- With regulations and guidelines, students will be ensured that their overall actions do have an impact
- Councils with better set foundations can create more of an outlook to get more youth involved in these organizations to make an impact

#### **Issues to Consider:**

- Definitions for what entails youth government focused organizations in Colorado
- Faculty who will facilitate to ensure that the youth involvement is authentic
- The magnitude that this policy could reach across Colorado – although beneficial to all Coloradans, the scope of its impact would still have to be considered
- Regulations would have to be either evaluated for each specific organization or remain one set list of regulations

## **Appendix & References**

- <sup>1</sup> Assembled by the San Mateo County Manager, Youth Budgets for Fiscal Years 2011-2019 can be found at <https://cmo.smcgov.org/document/children-youth-and-family-budget>
- <sup>2</sup> Assembled by the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center (an NGO), the Children's Budget can be found at <http://children.massbudget.org/>
- <sup>3</sup> Assembled by Voices for Utah Children (an NGO), Children's Budget Reports can be found at <https://www.utahchildren.org/>
- <sup>4</sup> Assembled by Connecticut Voices for Children (an NGO), a comprehensive overview of the children's budget over time can be found at <http://www.ctvoices.org/issue-areas/budget-and-tax-fiscal-policy-center/tracking-childrens-budget/overall-childrens-budget>
- <sup>5</sup> Assembled by the University of San Diego's Children's Advocacy Institute, the California Children's Budget can be found at <https://www.sandiego.edu/cai/publications/childrens-budget.php>
- <sup>6</sup> Assembled by First Focus (an NGO), a report on the children's budget for the federal government can be found at [https://firstfocus.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/FirstFocus\\_CB2018.pdf](https://firstfocus.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/FirstFocus_CB2018.pdf)
- <sup>7</sup> The full bill can be found at [https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/olls/2013a\\_sl\\_307.pdf](https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/olls/2013a_sl_307.pdf)
- <sup>8</sup> The full text of the 2014 CO Statewide Youth Development Plan can be found at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B32vshZrERKsSEwxcWRJSndZOWs/view>
- <sup>9</sup> A comprehensive overview of Colorado 9to25 can be found at <http://www.amchp.org/programsandtopics/AdolescentHealth/Documents/CO%209to25%20and%20Youth%20Involvement%20Packet.pdf>
- <sup>10</sup> An overview of the bill by *The Denver Post* can be found at [http://extras.denverpost.com/app/bill-tracker/bills/2015a/hb\\_15-1268/](http://extras.denverpost.com/app/bill-tracker/bills/2015a/hb_15-1268/)