



SUMMARY REPORT

of Interim Committee Activities

November 2023

Representative Hugh McKean Colorado Youth Advisory Council Review Committee

Committee Members: Representative Stephanie Vigil, Chair, Senator Janet Marchman, Vice-chair
Senators Faith Winter and Janet Rich
Representative Ron Weinberg

Committee Charge

The Representative Hugh McKean Colorado Youth Advisory Council Review Committee was created in House Bill 19-1024 to review the work of the Colorado Youth Advisory Council (COYAC) and to recommend legislation regarding issues affecting Colorado youth.

Pursuant to Section 2-2-1302, C.R.S., COYAC is charged with examining, evaluation, and discussing the issues, interests, and needs affecting Colorado youth. The issues may include, but need not be limited to:

- education and skill development;
- employment and economic opportunities and educational opportunities, including increased accessibility to opportunities for youth in rural communities;
- access to state and local government services;
- the environment;
- behavioral and physical health, including suicide prevention;
- safe environments for youth, including preventing bullying;
- substance abuse;
- poverty; and
- increased youth participation in state and local government.

COYAC consists of 35 members representing each state senate district, one member representing the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, one member representing the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, and three nonvoting at-large members. The three at-large members must be selected to help ensure diversity on the council, with an express concern for adequate rural representation. Members must be between 14 and 19 years old and be enrolled in and attending school in Colorado. They serve two-year terms. COYAC meets three to four times per year and received organizational support from a vendor, Bighorn Leadership Program, under contract with the General Assembly. Four legislative members of COYAC are appointed by House and Senate leadership to two-year terms.

Each school year, COYAC makes policy recommendations to the General Assembly through the review committee.



Calendar of Events

August 9, 2023

- Efforts to increase the number of licensed psychologists for youth
- Violence prevention, intervention, and response in Colorado schools
- Asian-American history: diversity and representation in education
- Resource assistance in public schools
- Non-legal name changes in schools for youth ages 12-17
- Youth gender-affirming care, ensuring widespread provider training and knowledge

August 17, 2023

- Discussion of proposals for bill drafting

October 25, 2023

- Review and vote on bill drafts and proposed amendments

Recommended Legislation

As a result of committee discussion and deliberation, the committee recommends the following bills for consideration in the 2024 legislative session.

Bill A – Non-Legal Name Changes

The bill requires public schools to address a student by their preferred name in school and in school-related publications, without requiring that the student obtain a court-ordered name or gender change. Failure to address a student by their preferred name is discriminatory. The bill also establishes the nine-member Non-Legal Name Changes in Schools Task Force in the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). The task force is charged with examining existing school policies regarding non-legal name changes and providing policy implementation recommendations to school districts. The task force must submit a report to CDE that details recommended guidelines by January 1, 2025, and schools must implement the report's policy recommendations by July 1, 2025.



Recommended Legislation (Cont'd)

Bill B – School Mental Health Professional Loan Repayment Program

The bill creates the Licensed School Mental Health Professional Loan Repayment Program in the Department of Higher Education. The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) must adopt program policies, review applications for loan repayment, and report annually on the program. If there are more applicants than available funding, CCHE must prioritize applicants in schools or districts with few mental health professionals. Applicants must be licensed and have a masters or doctoral degree in a program qualifying the applicant to be a mental health professional. Recipients are eligible for up to \$10,000 in loan repayment over three years.

Bill C – Availability Youth Gender-Affirming Care Training

The bill requires the Department of Public Health and Environment, or a third party contractor, to conduct a study on the status of gender-affirming health care providers in Colorado, especially those in rural areas. The study must determine, at minimum, the number of gender-affirming health care providers and facilities in each region, the resources available to them, the number of patients seeking gender-affirming health care services and the types of services sought, the prevalence of non-prescribed treatments, and the availability of insurance coverage for treatments. The study must engage and seek input from providers with experience providing gender-affirming care and mental health care; members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or non-binary community; and various state agencies and programs. The department must report findings and recommendations of the study by December 31, 2026.