

Testimony in Support of SB19-204, Public School Local Accountability Systems
Senate Education – April 11, 2019 – Leslie Colwell

- Good afternoon Madam Chair and members of the committee. My name is Leslie Colwell, and I lead the Colorado Children’s Campaign’s work on K-12 issues, including our work around accountability.
- We believe the systems by which we hold schools and districts accountable for success should reflect multiple measures of student learning and communicate growth of the whole child in a meaningful and localized way. I’m here to testify in support of Senate Bill 204 (as it will hopefully be amended) because we believe it will help facilitate innovation and continuous improvement in the education space. We also think the bill sends an important signal that the legislature supports this work.
- I want to say a big thank you to Senator Story and several organizations with whom we collaborated on the development of this bill, including the Rural Alliance and the Colorado Education Initiative. This bill meets two main goals that we all share: 1) create space and incentives to innovate in accountability, and 2) to establish an accountability “learning agenda” for the state, and apply lessons learned to the state system.
- I want to speak specifically to the promise of the Student-Centered Accountability Project or SCAP, a program that provides a model for what this bill seeks to accomplish. The SCAP group of half a dozen or so districts first convened in 2015 to create a more comprehensive student accountability system. In the last 4 years, these districts have invested considerable staff time and resources into developing tools and protocols for observations and feedback.
- I had the pleasure of attending a System Support Review hosted by La Veta School District in January of 2018, where staff members from all participating districts spent two days observing classrooms, hosting focus groups with community members, and reviewing data and documents to assess and provide feedback on district performance. I was impressed not just by the level of engagement of community stakeholders in the SSR process but also by the level of collaboration and commitment among the districts who are participating in SCAP. Seeing these educators in action gave me hope about the potential these pilots may hold for student success.
- As we consider how to advance an accountability system that provides schools and districts with a more actionable and comprehensive set of data that will more accurately evaluate the extent to which progress is being made by students, it may be necessary to pilot several ideas. SB-204 as amended offers that opportunity and we urge a yes vote on the bill. Thank you committee members for your time.