



Buechner Institute for Governance

**Educator Effectiveness Project Evaluation
Phase One: Changing the Colorado
Department of Education**

Jessica Sowa, PhD
Robert Reichardt, PhD

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School of Public Affairs
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER

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This report was prepared for the Rose Community Foundation in cooperation with the Colorado Department of Education and Colorado Legacy Foundation. This is the first of two reports evaluating Rose Community Foundation's 2010 investment in the Educator Effectiveness Project. The second report should be available during the first half of 2013.

Introduction

In March 2010, the Rose Community Foundation provided a package of grants totaling approximately \$1 million to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), The Colorado Legacy Foundation (CLF), and The New Teacher Project (TNTP) to support the Educator Effectiveness Project. The goal of the Educator Effectiveness Project (EEP) was to build capacity at the Colorado Department of Education in an effort to improve educator effectiveness throughout the state¹. The EEP is part of effort begun in 2007 by Commissioner Jones to shift CDE's role from solely compliance monitoring towards compliance monitoring *and* service of districts and schools.

These organizations (CDE, CLF, and TNTP) bring policy authority and technical capacity to the task of improving educator effectiveness. CDE is the state's K-12 education agency, governed by an elected State Board of Education (SBE) that selects the state's Commissioner of Education. The Colorado Legacy Foundation is an independent nonprofit organization working in partnership with CDE to accelerate improvements in student achievement. High academic achievement and outcomes for all students in Colorado's public K-12 schools are the ultimate goals for the work of both CDE and CLF. The New Teacher Project is a national nonprofit organization that works with schools, districts, and states to advance policies and practices that ensure effective teaching in every classroom.

During the beginning stages of the Educator Effectiveness Project, Senate Bill 191 (SB 191) became state law. This new law had significant impact on educator effectiveness efforts across Colorado. SB 191 overhauled the state's performance evaluation system and made significant changes to district human resources systems. It required the development of new performance standards and a methodology for incorporating student growth into the evaluation system. The tasks associated with implementing SB 191 became the core educator effectiveness work at the state level.

The evaluation as whole addresses the Educator Effectiveness Project (EEP), focusing on three questions:

1. What processes and activities were undertaken to change the culture, process, activities in CDE, and increase communication and collaboration at CDE regarding educator effectiveness?
2. Did activities and use of policy tools related to educator effectiveness at CDE change?
3. Did the changes at the state level help districts to better address educator effectiveness?

This evaluation focuses on the change work at CDE to make educator effectiveness one of the central strategic goals for the department. This change work included activities such as the creation of an office focused on educator effectiveness: an office built out of collaborative planning and operated based on principles of collaboration across CDE.² This change work also included strategies to build collaboration and communication across all departments within CDE for the achievement of educator effectiveness as a CDE strategic goal.

The evaluation has two phases. Phase one focuses on the change work done at CDE, drawing on data gathered through direct observation of CDE meetings and trainings, interviews with key CDE staff and

¹ In this report, the term "educator effectiveness" means actions to attract, prepare, and support great educators. By "educators" we mean teachers, principals and other school-based licensed personnel.

² While CLF and TNTP played important roles in the EEP, the main focus of this report is the changes that occurred within CDE as a result of the investment by the Rose Community Foundation in educator effectiveness work.

other stakeholders, and document analysis of materials associated with the educator effectiveness at CDE. This is the report from phase one of the evaluation. The second phase of the evaluation will examine changes at the district level and provide suggestions for future educator effectiveness work at the state level.

This report has several sections. First is a brief overview of findings. This is followed by an overview of the Colorado EEP. This overview summarizes the theory of action for the project and project timeline. The complete logic and process models are contained in Appendix A. The theory of action for the project connects project activities with project outcomes. The next sections describe changes at CDE that occurred as part of the Educator Effectiveness Project. Key among these outcomes is development of the strategic plan that led to Educator Effectiveness Unit and products of that unit. This analysis of the outcomes of these products includes discussion of the perceptions of the Educator Effectiveness Unit, the organizational culture at CDE, role of leadership at CDE in these changes, and partnerships that played an important role in these changes. The report concludes with lessons learned for other similar efforts.

Brief Summary of Findings

The EEP produced many positive changes at CDE in relation to educator effectiveness including the production of a variety of tools and products designed to assist districts with the implementation of the various education reform laws and improve their overall development of educators. Many of these tools are included in the resource bank, but CDE, with the assistance of its partners, has also provided training and technical assistance to help improve educator effectiveness. In addition, the creation of the Educator Effectiveness Unit within CDE is a major accomplishment of the project. Finally, as detailed in this report, the emphasis on and activities surrounding educator effectiveness has produced demonstrable changes in the culture of CDE, although more work still needs to be done.

The overall conclusion reached by this phase one evaluation is that the investment in the Colorado Department of Education has been beneficial and produced change. Respondents reported improvement in the operating culture of CDE and the majority of staff members interviewed and surveyed believe educator effectiveness to be a central priority for CDE. The major force in changing the culture at CDE around educator effectiveness has been a combination of formal collaboration, structural changes, and coordination of activities, policies, and practices.

While the investment of the Rose Community Foundation and the actions of partners such as the CLF had a significant impact on producing these changes, they were not alone in assisting this change. It is important to note that change was also supported by other initiatives within CDE and driven in part by changes in leadership and staff at CDE. Across CDE, work units and departments had begun to improve coordination, influenced by federal policy initiatives such as the Race to the Top and efforts to streamline federal and state requirements through the Unified Improvement Planning process. In addition, the ascendancy of educator effectiveness to the level of a strategic goal for CDE as a whole provided an additional level of legitimacy to the work instituted during the period of this investment in CDE. Therefore, separating out the independent effects of the EEP is difficult and these effects need to be understood within the larger context of changes at CDE as a whole. Even without isolating these effects, the conclusion can be reached that the actions associated with the Educator Effectiveness Project have produced positive changes in CDE. Key actions supporting this change are:

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- a. The careful design process of the Educator Effectiveness Unit (detailed in the logic model) that resulted in a vision and strategic plan for educator effectiveness work at CDE.
 - b. The collaborative working group that established goals and action priorities for the work of educator effectiveness CDE-wide and built legitimacy for the Educator Effectiveness Unit.
 - c. The hiring of the current staff in the Educator effectiveness Unit and their current work processes.
 - d. Building strong partnerships with private partners such as the CLF and the New Teachers Project (TNTP), partners who have supplied critical capacity to CDE that was integral to achieving the goals associated with educator effectiveness.

While changes have been made and CDE as a whole demonstrates positive attention toward educator effectiveness, there remain strategic challenges that must be addressed in the future to maintain this positive change. Maintenance of these changes requires careful attention to the nature of work on the front-line in CDE, the policy changes and implementation pressures present at the state level, and the relationship between top leadership at CDE with those involved in delivering services to districts to promote educator effectiveness. This report concludes with lessons that the Rose Community Foundation, other foundations, and state agencies can draw from this project that could be applied in other contexts or transferred for other actors to replicate.

Research Questions and Methodology

The evaluation of the EEP began with the development of an evaluation plan in the spring of 2011, what we have referred to as the development phase of the evaluation. This first step was to develop an understanding of the program. The understanding of the program led to the evaluation questions and two main phases of the evaluation: examining change in CDE and, then, examining the influence of CDE on educator effectiveness in the districts. The program functions were captured in a logic model and a process activities map contained in Appendix A.

The research questions addressed in this report are:

1. What processes and activities were undertaken to change the culture, process, activities in CDE, and increase communication and collaboration at CDE regarding educator effectiveness?
2. Did activities and use of policy tools related to educator effectiveness at CDE change?

These research questions were further developed with the following additional sub-questions³:

1. What activities are undertaken by the EEP to change the culture of CDE and align processes?
2. How did the private partners in the project (CLF and TNTP) interact with the public partners?
 - a. How were roles and responsibilities established and how did they evolve?
3. How could these actions be characterized (e.g. collaboration, communication, technology, policy changes)?
4. What other actions might be taken to further change CDE culture toward educator effectiveness?
5. What are staff attitudes towards educator effectiveness and what are their work improvements in educator effectiveness?
6. What educator effectiveness related changes occur within and across CDE units and with DHE?

³ Initial questions also addressed coordination with DHE. However, the focus on implementing SB 191 postponed efforts around coordination and these questions were dropped from the evaluation.

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- a. How have increased coordination and focus on educator effectiveness been incorporated into work structure and processes within CDE?
7. What educator effectiveness resources or tools were developed or modified for use by districts and how are they intended to be used?

The next section describes the research methodology used to answer these questions.

Project Methodology

In order to understand how CDE currently operates and how that operation has been influenced by investment in and attention to educator effectiveness, the project team employed a mixed methodology research design to address the main research question.

The project team conducted direct observation of CDE meetings and training activities, conducting approximately 20 hours of direct observation. These observations were captured through ethnographic field-notes and included the review of documents associated with these meetings and trainings. The project team conducted 20 interviews with CDE staff and other stakeholders associated with the educator effectiveness work at CDE (each lasting between forty-five minutes to one hour), including:

- a. Staff members in the Educator Effectiveness Unit,
- b. Staff members in other CDE departments, including those who regularly attended the Educator Effectiveness Leadership Team Meetings,
- c. Staff members at the Colorado Legacy Foundation (CLF), and
- d. Staff members at the New Teachers Project (TNTP).

Two surveys were administered. A brief survey was administered to CDE staff members who attended two informational trainings on the work of the Educator Effectiveness Unit. 57 responses were received from this survey. Finally, a detailed web-based survey was administered to staff members at CDE, with the assistance of EE Project Director (now Associate Commissioner of Achievement and Strategy) Jill Hawley⁴. This survey addressed the operation of and interaction with the Educator Effectiveness Unit, the culture of CDE, collaboration within CDE, and some brief demographic information. 83 respondents completed this survey (86 respondents took the survey), with the majority of the respondents having worked at CDE for one to five years.

The following tables provide descriptive information on the work experience and distribution across offices or divisions of the respondents to the detailed web-based survey.

⁴ At the beginning of the EEP, in 2010, Jill Hawley was employed by TNTP as the Project Director for the Educator Effectiveness Project. Subsequently she was hired by CDE as Chief of Staff for the Commissioner and became Associate Commissioner of Achievement and Strategy. In that role, she provides oversight to CDE's Educator Effectiveness Unit. This can be seen as an example of how this project brought new talent into CDE.

Table 1: Length of Time Working at the Colorado Department of Education

	Response	Percentage*
Less than 1 Year	20	24%
1-5 Years	38	4%
6-10 Years	16	19%
Over 10 Years	9	11%
Total	83	100%

*May not sum to 100 due to rounding

Table 2: Distribution of Responses across CDE Offices/Divisions

Office/Division	Response	Percentage*
Achievement and Strategy	32	37%
Commissioner, Operations	11	13%
Accountability and Performance	23	27%
Innovation and Choice	10	12%
Other	10	12%
Total	86	100%

*May not sum to 100 due to rounding

It is important to note that the findings presented in this report represent a cross-sectional assessment of the changes to and the current operations of CDE. For a large public organization, CDE is an organization staffed with many engaged and dynamic workers who are in the process of redefining the direction and agenda of education in Colorado. Therefore, it is possible that further changes have occurred since the collection of this data. Before presenting the findings, a brief overview of the Educator Effectiveness Project (EEP) and the work associated with this project at CDE is presented.

Educator Effectiveness Project Overview

The EEP is based upon an approximately \$1 million grant from the Rose Community Foundation to support educator effectiveness work at the state level. As stated, the grant went to three organizations: the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), Colorado Legacy Foundation (CLF), and The New Teacher Project (TNTP). Other core public actors in this work are the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) and the State Council for Educator Effectiveness (resources from the grant were used to support the Council). These partners play important roles in the state’s educator effectiveness system. CDHE is the state’s coordinating board for higher education. CDHE plays a role, along with CDE, in approving educator preparation programs within Colorado’s higher education institutions. The State Council for Educator Effectiveness plays an important role in developing and implementing the new performance evaluation systems as required by SB 191.

The EEP was intended to support those goals by increasing educators’ effectiveness statewide. Initial grant activities included:

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- creation of a vision and strategic plan for the state’s educator effectiveness work;
 - the formation and on-going collaborative work of an Educator Effectiveness Working Group with representatives from CDE and CDHE (now considered the Educator Effectiveness Leadership Team);
 - an inventory of state policies related to educator effectiveness;
 - analysis of CDE data related to educator effectiveness;
 - providing support to the State Council for Educator Effectiveness; and,
 - development of a resource bank for use by districts and schools implementing SB 191.

At the same time, CDE created and filled three new positions to work on educator effectiveness issues with a focus on implementing SB 191 (since expanded to the current staff of twelve at the time of this writing). This project is nested within a larger universe of education reform activities that include the on-going implementation of SB 191, other efforts to improve educator quality, budget challenges, and other reforms (*e.g.* new standards, new accountability systems and supporting turnaround schools). As one portion of this larger effort, this evaluation is focused on the impact of the Rose Community Foundation’s support to a state agency and how that work may impact districts.

Project Timeline

Before moving into the results of the first phase of this evaluation, for the purpose providing context to the results shown below, we are including a timeline that captures some of the key events associated with the development and early implementation of the EEP as well as this evaluation. The timeline focuses on public occurrences and it includes events at CDE (such as the change in Commissioners) that impacted the development of the EEP.

Events early in the timeline are focused on the development of the EEP. Key steps in the development include the grant request to Rose Community Foundation in March 2010 to fund the project and the October 2010 inventory of statutes, regulations and policies concerning EE. This inventory was part of the original activities listed in the grant application.

In June 2011, CLF was able to leverage the EEP work (and other activities) to expand foundation funding for educator effectiveness efforts through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Integration grant.

- September 2007: Dwight Jones shares his vision for the CLF in CDE’s strategic plan called *Forward Thinking*.
- March 2010: CDE and CLF ask Rose Community Foundation to support the development of the EEP.
- May 2010: SB 191 becomes law.
- July 2010: The New Teacher Project (TNTP) hires EE Project Director (Jill Hawley).
- August 2010: CDE Announces launch of EEP and the EE Unit.
- October 2010: CLF asks University of Colorado Denver, School of Public Affairs (SPA) to design an evaluation of the EE project.
- October 2010: CDE completes inventory of statutes, regulations and policies concerning EE.

- November 2010: Robert Hammond appointed Interim Commissioner, to take position when Dwight Jones departs in December 2011.
- December 2010: Position announcements made for EE Unit Executive Director and Consultants.
- May 2011: State Board of Education Approves Strategic Direction for Educator Effectiveness Unit.
- May 2011: Robert Hammond appointed Commissioner.
- June 2011: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation award a \$9.7 million grant to CLF to support the integration of educator effectiveness and new standards implementation.
- August 2011: Rose Community Foundation Contracts with SPA for this evaluation.
- August 2011: Katy Anthes hired as Executive Director of EE Unit.
- Fall 2011 through spring 2012: Pilot the Principal Evaluation in Pilot Districts.
- November 2011: General SB 191 Rules approved by SBE.
- November 2011: Launch of the Educator Effectiveness Resource Bank.
- December 2011: First Version of Principal and Teacher Evaluation Tools completed (each updated several times as of August 2012).
- December 2011: CDE Strategic Direction with Great Teachers and Leaders as statewide goal.
- July 2012: CLF in partnership with CDE announces piloting and working with BloomBoard to provide free web-based platform to manage evaluation system and its associated data to SB 191 pilots.
- September 2012: CDE publishes a User' Guide: Colorado's Model Evaluation System for Teachers.

The developmental phase of the EEP continued through August 2011 when Katy Anthes was hired as the unit's third Executive Director⁵. The hiring of Dr. Anthes in 2011 stabilized the leadership for the Unit. Since her hire, the Unit's activities have focused almost exclusively on the implementation of SB 191. Activities during Dr. Anthes' tenure include launching the SB 191 pilot, resource bank, and creation of the draft evaluation system and tools. In January, the importance of EE to CDE was formalized when EE became one of the four statewide goals for CDE.

Having established the activities and milestones associated with the Educator Effectiveness Project and with the implementation of the reforms associated with educator effectiveness, we now turn to the results of the first phase of the evaluation of the EEP.

The Educator Effectiveness Unit at the Colorado Department of Education

In answering the main research questions, one of the primary outcomes of the investment in CDE for educator effectiveness has been the creation of the Educator Effectiveness Unit. The Educator Effectiveness Unit has a current staff of twelve employees (as of the time of this writing) and is responsible for directing the work of CDE on the implementation of the major education reforms in Colorado, along with communicating about and coordinating educator effectiveness work across CDE. In observing the operation of the Unit, interviewing its staff and others with whom the Unit interacts, and surveying CDE staff on the work of the Unit, it is clear that this investment has produced significant

⁵ Nina Lopez served as interim to start the Educator Effectiveness Unit. and Tom Elliot was the first Executive Director hired to direct the office.

benefits for CDE. There are positive lessons to be drawn from this work, but also some cautions on how to maintain the changes that have occurred in light of some strategic threats.

The Educator Effectiveness Unit has a broad mandate—with its focus on ensuring that every student in Colorado has access to an effective teacher and school leader. While the mandate of the office includes almost every aspect of effectiveness—recruitment, preparation, support, and accountability—the impending deadline for the implementation of SB 191 has led to much of the current work of the unit being focused on the accountability process for educator effectiveness through the development of the teacher and principal assessment process and the student growth measures. The Unit has been leading the implementation of SB 191, including but not limited to coordinating the work of other units within CDE, developing the assessment procedures for school leaders and teachers, partnering with the assessment unit on the work of the content collaboratives, and preparing and training school districts and CDE staff on the use of the performance assessments⁶. When this report was written, the EE Unit had held over 30 trainings across the state in conjunction with districts and BOCES; training over 2,500 educators including principals, teachers, superintendents and other district staff.

There is recognition in the Unit that the timeframe associated with the implementation of SB 191 has led to a temporary narrowing of the focus of the Unit. As of now, a good amount of the work of the Unit is focused on evaluation and subsequently development of educators rather than their preparation. However, the operation of the Unit is geared toward promoting integration across CDE—this integration is going to be a long-term process, with the development of new systems for educator accountability, preparation, and support that draw on cross-unit expertise.⁷ The ultimate work of the Unit should result in cross-functional or cross-unit teams that assist districts on all the aspects of teacher recruitment, development, support, and evaluation. While the emphasis right now is on evaluation, the leaders in the Unit focus on keeping the discussion about educator effectiveness circling back to the many goals of CDE in relation to effectiveness, even while they are deep in the process of implementing SB 191.

Within CDE, the Unit has undertaken several main sets of activities to a) promote the vision of educator effectiveness b) foster knowledge about the reforms being implemented and the role that different departments will play in this implementation c) promote collaboration across units for successful implementation of SB 191 and other education reforms, and d) promote collaboration across units for the eventual institutionalization of educator effectiveness as a central operational and strategic tenet of CDE.

Educator Effectiveness Products and Resources

The Unit has developed a wide variety of products, tools, and resources. For example, the Unit has developed an Educator Effectiveness newsletter, which is distributed to a wide variety of stakeholders inside and outside of CDE. This newsletter provides information on the progress of the Unit with its work, updates on major activities, dates, and deadlines, and provides links to new materials associated with educator effectiveness. In addition, the Unit has conducted numerous trainings and information sessions on the Unit and the work associated with SB 191.

⁶ Colorado Content Collaboratives are P-12 educators from around the state working together to identify and create high-quality assessments, which are aligned to the new Colorado Academic Standards and may be used in the implementation of SB 191.

⁷ This integration is nested within the other initiative referenced in the introduction. The money from the Gates Foundation and the Vision 2020 should eventually align with the work of the Unit to promote the full-scale integration of educator effectiveness assessment and support for districts.

The diverse and wide-ranging portfolio of products from educator effectiveness work at CDE can be organized into five groups. The smallest group of products is those that are not focused on implementation of SB 191. This group includes the inventory of state policies and a June 2011 District Human Capital Health Assessment (which is part of the Resource Bank). The second group of products is the regulations. This includes the general rules for the implementation of SB 191 approved by the SBE in November 2011 and rules concerning appeals approved by the SBE in April 2012.

The third group of products helps with the implementation of SB 191 including rubrics for implementing SB 191 and evaluation user's guides. The first draft versions of the Principal/Assistant Principal and Teacher evaluation were issued in September 2011. These have been updated multiple times. They have also been automated: first to Excel spreadsheets and now in partnership with the BloomBoard website. The EE Unit first identified BloomBoard as a no-cost web-based evaluation tool provider and then worked with BloomBoard to pilot and customize their tools to fit the Colorado Rubrics for districts piloting the State Model System. There are also multiple information and communication tools in the Resource bank including:

- FAQs
- Fact sheets
- E-Newsletters
- Communications toolkits
- Videos
- Other Resources including
 - State Council for Educator Effectiveness
 - Other Partners
 - Examples of Evaluation Systems in Other States or Districts
 - Evaluation Related Research

Many of these resources are focused on directly communicating to educators about SB 191 or helping school and district leaders communicate to teachers and other educators about SB 191.

The fourth set of products from the EEP is the trainings and other events related to 191. There have been countless presentations and events around the implementation of SB 191, particularly the pilots. There have also been several larger events often held in conjunction with other offices within CDE or the CLF. These include the

- June-August 2011: CDE Summer Symposium (three events)
- June 2011: Integration Summit
- March 2012: Educator Effectiveness Summit
- June 2012: CDE Summer Symposium (three events)
- June 2012: Integration Summit

The Symposium consisted of three events held throughout the state. During these events representatives of the main offices within CDE assisted schools and districts as they worked to implement the state's reform agenda of new state assessments, educator effectiveness, and accountability. The Integration Summits were sponsored by CLF under the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Integration grants. The Educator Effectiveness Summit was held for all districts in the state, and was hosted by the three main associations within the state representing educators and school boards: Colorado Association of School

Boards (CASB), Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE), and the Colorado Education Association (CEA), in collaboration with CDE. CLF sponsored the Event.

The final product (during this timeframe) of the Educator Effectiveness Unit was the implementation of the SB 191 Pilot. The SB 191 Pilot has two components: the Principal/Assistant Principal pilot that started in the fall of 2011 and the teacher pilot that started in fall 2012. There are several different categories of districts participating in the Pilot. There are 15 Pilot districts that include the state's largest district (Jefferson County) and some of its smallest districts such as Mountain Valley (121 students in 2011). There are also 12 Pilot/Integration districts that are participating in the Gates Integration grant. The majority of the Pilot/Integration districts are smaller rural districts belonging to the San Juan Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) in the south-western part of the state.

Educator Effectiveness Activities to Change the CDE Culture

In addition to these concrete products, one of the most important and successful activities undertaken by the Unit involves the structure put in place to facilitate cross-unit collaboration. The Unit does a good amount of its work in a collaborative working group, the Educator Effectiveness Leadership team, which was established to help define the agenda for this unit and to produce the materials and actions associated with the new reforms for educator effectiveness.

Leadership

The Educator Effectiveness Leadership Team was built out of the original collaborative working group that formed the agenda for educator effectiveness within CDE and the ultimate design of the Unit. In order to build educator effectiveness into CDE as a cross-cutting concept (versus a top-down mandate)⁸, there was early recognition that collaboration was going to be a critical component to accomplish the goals of this project. The initial stages of the Educator Effectiveness project utilized a collaborative leadership working group structure, including members from the major units within CDE, such as Title II, Licensure, and Exceptional Student Services, as well as representatives from CDE partners such as the CLF, the TNTTP, and the CDHE. This collaborative working group established norms for working together. These norms provided a critical foundation for the work being undertaken today by the Educator Effectiveness Unit and the various members of CDE and partner organizations who regularly attend the leadership team meetings. They include keeping the goal of educator effectiveness central to the discussions, making clear the framework or viewpoint being used to explore or analyze ideas, and designing these meetings to be action oriented, with defined agendas, documents, and tasks to work through at the meetings, and items for reflection and action in between the meetings.

The Educator Effectiveness Leadership Team meeting structure is very effective in several aspects. First, the meetings are scheduled only when there is actual work to accomplish or critical updates that must be shared in person. Through our interviews with CDE staff members, there is a perception that CDE has a meeting culture—where various staff members spend so much of their time in cross-unit meetings that they often struggle with time to accomplish their actual work. Therefore, attention to the work

⁸ While Educator Effectiveness became one of the strategic goals of CDE as a whole and has provided the Unit a platform on which to build their activities, during the developmental phase of this project there was a recognition that getting work units across CDE to understand how educator effectiveness is central to their work and making it a priority for their work was as important as the top down support of this goal.

constraints of the members that attend this leadership team meeting and only scheduling the meetings around work has created an atmosphere that emphasizes action and signals that the convening of the meeting itself is accompanied by working items and is worth attending.⁹

Collaboration

Second, the participation at the meeting is very active and open. Each member of the leadership team appears willing to enter the discussion, offering critiques and suggestions for the action items under consideration. This openness is also demonstrated in how people participate. As the members attending these meetings are all from different units or areas of specialization (e.g. standards, licensure, exceptional student services), when critiquing items under discussion, the participants all make their frameworks or worldviews apparent when offering their critiques. For example, in a discussion over the definition of other licensed personnel, this term produced different meanings across CDE; when members attending the meeting offered suggestions for how to clarify this definition or the meaning of it, they would make explicit from where that suggestion was arising—what was the perspective influencing this suggestion or critique.

There is also a continuing focus on the discussion on how various action items would be perceived on the ground, with different members of the meeting voicing the possible perspective of those on the ground at the districts. Therefore, this meeting allows for the unit to work through many activities associated with the implementation of SB 191 in a way that builds consensus. The vetting of ideas through the lens of the different members of the leadership team meetings allows for these ideas to be a better fit for practice instead of representing one point of view within CDE. The collaborative and inclusive nature of the meetings ensures that the work of the Educator Effectiveness Unit truly encompasses the cross-unit intention of the Unit and produces materials that will actually work within the context of CDE.

Finally, while the working group that initially designed the Educator Effectiveness Unit was primarily composed of department heads and more senior staff members, the leadership team meetings as they currently operate include a wide variety of representatives from departments and different levels in the hierarchy of CDE and the partner organizations. These representatives attend the meetings as necessary (when the work connects to their unit or when they can contribute to the discussion). As the meetings now include both senior managers when necessary but also those involved in the more direct service work of CDE, this has contributed to improving the integration of the work of the Unit with other working units in CDE, as the discussions in this meeting have a greater probability of translating into action at the task environment level of other departments.

Human Capital

In addition to how the Educator Effectiveness Unit is doing its work, the human capital in place in the Unit is integral to the successes it has achieved up to date. The Executive Director of the Unit, Katy Anthes, through our observations in several settings, is well skilled in managing the many different components of the work of the Unit and continuing progress toward both the implementation of SB 191

⁹ This is not without some challenges. One respondent, while appreciating the action orientation of the meetings, did mention that they would like more notice as to the cancellation of meetings. One respondent also mentioned that they would prefer the meetings' agendas to be developed more in advance. However, the very dynamic nature of the work has prevented this in part. These critiques are worth considering as the meetings progress, but overall most respondents were very positive about these meetings.

and the overall agenda of Educator Effectiveness. In addition to the Executive Director, members of the office, such as the director and the staff members working with evaluation and support, possess particular skill sets that allow them to operate effectively in an area that is very much in evolution. One of the major benefits that the investment from the Educator Effectiveness Project produced was the time to understand both the right way to staff this unit and the particular requirements of working in a work unit with goals and activities that are very much a work in progress.

The staffing of the Educator Effectiveness Unit was an evolutionary process; the initial hire for the Executive Director’s position did not work, leading to an examination of what kinds of skills and competencies were necessary for success. One of the major benefits of the Educator Effectiveness Project that led to the creation of the Unit was building sufficient buy-in and support within CDE to go through this learning process—the members of the initial collaborative working groups were able to sustain momentum until the Executive Director position was successfully filled.

The staff members all described a working environment where staff must be comfortable with ambiguity and learning as they proceed through their work. They are working in an area with few answers and few “right” ways of doing things—staff must be comfortable jumping into projects and putting something out there that may be critiqued and completely reworked. The staffing of the Unit as of now has many individuals with a wide variety of experiences within education who have the confidence and experience to manage this ambiguity. However, as the unit continues and perhaps expands its staff structure, careful attention needs to be placed on making these competencies as clear as possible in the hiring of new employees.

CDE-Perceptions of the Effectiveness Unit and its Role

In order for the Educator Effectiveness Unit and its work to be part of producing long-term change in how CDE does its business, the Unit needs to establish ways to connect with other departments in CDE (outside of the leadership team meetings). The Educator Effectiveness Unit has done a significant amount of work to inform other departments within CDE about their work. At the training sessions delivered by the Educator Effectiveness Unit to CDE on SB 191 and the work of the Unit as a whole, we queried the attendees on their participation or interaction with the Educator Effectiveness Unit. The following table depicts the responses on the amount of contact with the Educator Effectiveness Unit as of late March 2012 (respondents were instructed to check all that apply, n=54):

Table 3: Contact with the Educator Effectiveness Unit (March 2012)

Type of Contact	Response	Percentage*
Received the Educator Effectiveness Newsletter	21	24%
Attended Educator Effectiveness Leadership Team Meeting	6	7%
Worked with the Educator Effectiveness Team	15	17%
Attended a training provided by the Educator Effectiveness team	31	35%
Work in the Educator Effectiveness area	4	5%
Answered questions about the Educator Effectiveness work	11	13%

*May not sum to 100 due to rounding

As part of the larger survey of CDE, the same questions were asked concerning contact with the Educator Effectiveness Unit. While the samples did not encompass the same staff members in each survey, the trends in the overall numbers do demonstrate an increase in contact across CDE in this four-month period. Increases are noted in the July responses in every area. Two notable areas of increase are on worked with the Educator Effectiveness Team and having answered questions on educator effectiveness.

Table 4: Contact with Educator Effectiveness Unit (July 2012)

Type of Contact	Response	Percentage*
Received the Educator Effectiveness Newsletter	60	27%
Attended Educator Effectiveness Leadership Team Meeting	22	10%
Worked with the Educator Effectiveness Team	47	21%
Attended a training provided by the Educator Effectiveness team	46	21%
Work in the Educator Effectiveness area	11	5%
Answered questions about the Educator Effectiveness work	35	16%

*May not sum to 100 due to rounding

Therefore, it is clear that the Unit itself has made significant progress communicating with different departments within CDE, either actively through meetings and trainings or passively through their newsletter.¹⁰ One finding that is of particular importance is the number of respondents who indicated working with the unit. Controlling for those who work directly in the Educator Effectiveness Unit, over half the respondents reported working with the Educator Effectiveness Team at some point. This shows that the Educator Effectiveness Unit is making progress on fostering cross-unit collaboration and connecting units with the educator effectiveness goals.

As a whole, the staff surveyed at CDE saw the importance of educator effectiveness as a goal for CDE, with 82 of 86 respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing (95% See Table 5). In terms of institutionalizing that goal through the creation of the Educator Effectiveness Unit, respondents were equally positive on the benefits of the Unit. Only 2 respondents out of 85 did not see the value of the unit; 80% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the creation of the Educator Effectiveness Unit has promoted positive changes at CDE.

¹⁰ It is important to note that these are internal measures to CDE. Through support from the Colorado Legacy Foundation, the Unit has also run several summits to work with districts and other key stakeholders, such as CEA and CASB. Therefore, the reach of the Unit, with the support of its partners, is wider than captured in Table 4.

Table 5: Staff Perceptions of Educator Effectiveness

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Educator effectiveness is an important goal for CDE	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)	22 (26%)	60 (70%)
The creation of an Educator Effectiveness Unit has promoted positive change at CDE	0 (0%)	2 (2%)	15 (18%)	31 (37%)	37 (44%)
Educator effectiveness directly impacts my work	0 (0%)	9 (11%)	11 (13%)	30 (36%)	34 (41%)
What educator effectiveness means to my work is unclear	28 (33%)	29 (35%)	13 (16%)	11 (13%)	3 (4%)
All staff at CDE need training on CDE’s educator effectiveness efforts	2 (2%)	9 (11%)	13 (16%)	41 (49%)	19 (23%)
The emphasis on educator effectiveness at CDE is a passing trend	21 (25%)	43 (51%)	17 (20%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)
CDE has sufficient capacity to impact educator effectiveness	8 (9%)	21 (25%)	23 (27%)	21 (25%)	11 (13%)
CDE should be considered a leader among states in educator effectiveness	0 (0%)	6 (7%)	20 (24%)	34 (42%)	22 (27%)

Therefore, the investment in CDE that led to the creation of the Educator Effectiveness Unit is an innovation that has produced benefits to this public organization. If other funders or other public agencies were seeking to create such a unit that promotes cross-department collaboration and change, the history, design process, and overall operation of the Educator Effectiveness Unit provides a valuable blueprint for replication.

If the Unit is to have long-term impact on CDE, the organization as a whole needs to continue to change how it views educator effectiveness and see educator effectiveness as central to the work of the Department. In the survey to staff, respondents were queried on their understandings of educator effectiveness and the meaning of educator effectiveness to their work. Overall, respondents maintained that they had a good understanding of what CDE is trying to accomplish with the educator effectiveness work, with over 78% answering in the affirmative. The question—educator effectiveness directly impacts my work—was answered by 64 of 84 (76%) respondents with a strongly agree or agree. Only 9 of 84 respondents disagreed with this question. The question-what educator effectiveness means to my work is unclear—was answered by 57 of 84 respondents (68%) with strongly disagree or disagree. Only 14 of the 84 respondents agreed with this question, indicating that staff at CDE sees how educator effectiveness connects to their work across the multiple work units of the organization.

There was one area identified for possible improvement and where the respondents were not as universally confident that CDE can impact educator effectiveness. In response to the question over

whether CDE has sufficient capacity to impact educator effectiveness, 29 of 84 (35%) respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. In addition, 23 of 84 (27%) respondents responded that they were neutral on this statement, indicated that some staff may be taking a “wait and see” approach in relation to investment in educator effectiveness. While staff appear to have embraced educator effectiveness as a central practice, it is essential that there is sufficient investment of resources to sustain this change in practice over time.

When an agency makes major changes in direction, there can be a tendency for workers to be cautious about these kinds of changes to ensure that they are going to be sustained. However, even though staff appears to be cautious about the investment in this area, they believe it to be important, with over 65% responding that CDE should be considered a leader in the states for educator effectiveness.

The positive impact of the work done through the investment in educator effectiveness, through the creation of and the work of the Unit and the increased dialogue across CDE can be seen in the survey findings. These findings lead to the conclusion that the investment in educator effectiveness has created an awareness of the importance of this concept for the work of CDE and that educator effectiveness has meaningfully connected to the work of many within CDE. Future work associated with encouraging educator effectiveness and promoting this concept as central to the work of CDE should focus on reinforcing this through the following actions:

1. Continued training on educator effectiveness across CDE. Even in the short period between the survey administered at the training sessions in March and the CDE-wide survey in late July, there has been a demonstrable difference in terms of people’s understandings of the role of educator effectiveness at CDE. Communication and clarification of the work of the Educator Effectiveness Unit and what educator effectiveness means to each unit and department within CDE is important for the continued success of the EEP and educator effectiveness efforts as a whole. The more that each unit within CDE can consider how educator effectiveness connects with their work, how they can contribute to the goal of improving educator effectiveness, the more that CDE will truly internalize this as a strategic goal that crosses unit boundaries to drive the organization as a whole.
2. Continued meetings between members of the Educator Effectiveness Unit and individual departments. Training and knowledge dissemination needs to be supported with regular interactions associated with the actual business of units within CDE to continue the coordination and collaboration that has begun changing the culture at CDE. Regular meetings between the Educator Effectiveness Unit and other departments or units within CDE will increase work coordination and will deepen collaboration over time. These meetings can be used to facilitate alignment; it is important to ensure that CDE keep working on and improving collaboration over time to make sure that changes that have occurred to this date remain institutionalized and that collaboration becomes a standard operating procedure at CDE.

Possible Strategic Threats to the Educator Effectiveness Unit and its Work

While the changes to CDE have been positive and there is a strong chance that these changes can be maintained over time, it is critical to also examine the strategic threats to the Educator Effectiveness initiatives at CDE. The Educator Effectiveness Unit faces multiple strategic threats to its long-term

survival and ability to impact CDE and practices in the field, with these threats including sustainability in terms of funding and staff and threats associated with the demonstration of performance over time.

Funding is the clearest threat to the Unit. The Unit has been staffed through a combination of grant funding (including the Rose Community Foundation grant related to this evaluation), federal grant funds, emergency state funds, and regular state appropriations. Given the state's fiscal crisis and regular re-evaluations of foundation funding priorities, neither of these funding sources is completely secure. In the interviews, respondents both with the Educator Effectiveness Unit and in other departments recognized that the level and sustainability of future funding will be a major issue.

A key issue to maintaining funds is the perception that the Unit is effective. The very close tie between the Unit and the implementation of SB 191 is a threat to perceptions of the Unit's effectiveness given the law's tight timelines and the technical challenges associated with statewide implementation of a new performance evaluation tool. The technical challenges are numerous and include developing new methodologies for connecting student growth to teachers and developing new statewide information systems. If implementation of SB 191 is not successful, it could negatively impact perceptions of Unit effectiveness. If there becomes a negative impression, it could lead to less influence within CDE and among school districts as well as reduced funding. Therefore it is critical that those who have been affected by the Educator Effectiveness Unit are enlisted to carry the message of educator effectiveness to key stakeholders to ensure the survival of the unit separate from the implementation of SB 191.

Finally, CDE can be a challenging environment. During our interviews, several people noted that they felt overworked and/or had not received raises within the past several years. Across CDE, many of the employees work very long hours, above and beyond their job descriptions. As stated earlier, part of the major success of the Educator Effectiveness Unit and the connection of the Unit to other departments within CDE has been the valuable human capital in the office. The staff of the Educator Effectiveness Unit and other staff involved with the leadership team are dedicated individuals who truly want to make a change to education in Colorado and who work long hours in pursuit of this change. The devotion to duty that many of these individuals demonstrate is hard to sustain if the working environment is not given sufficient attention. This challenging workplace may hinder the Educator Effectiveness Unit's ability to maintain a high caliber staff over time. Respondents indicated that CDE is beginning to develop more comprehensive performance evaluation processes and overall improving the human resource management practice. If this development continues, a focus on the care and retention of the current human capital at CDE should be made a priority.

The Organizational Culture at the Colorado Department of Education

The Colorado Department of Education is a large government agency, employing over 400 employees and operating in all areas of education in Colorado, from teacher licensure and exceptional student services to online education. Large government agencies often adopt traditional bureaucratic structures, with clearly defined jurisdiction among highly specialized units, a hierarchy of authority, and written rules and procedures that govern the operation of these units, sometimes to the detriment of actual performance and outcomes. While not expecting to produce complete change, one of the goals of the Educator Effectiveness Project was to impact the culture of CDE: to inculcate a new value for CDE that should cross jurisdictional boundaries, change the operating focus on CDE in relation to its clients, school districts, and

create a culture that emphasizes collaboration across work units to handle the central challenge of creating effective educators in Colorado.

In the interviews with CDE staff and other stakeholders about the changes at CDE, there was recognition that the culture of CDE has been changing, although not all that change can be attributed to the Educator Effectiveness Project. The Educator Effectiveness Project is part of a larger set of initiatives that have begun over the past several years at CDE, initiatives that are designed to begin addressing some of the cultural challenges that existed and impacted the work of CDE. Many respondents described CDE traditionally as being an organization that operated in silos, one respondent referred to it as “parallel play”. These silos were in part a function of the nature of funding for education services. Departments that receive restricted federal funding or have particular regulations or laws associated with their programming inevitably faced certain challenges working across departments. Nonetheless, the Educator Effectiveness Project, along with the work associated with Unified Improvement Planning and other integration-based initiatives have begun adjusting those silos so that they are beginning to break down and more collaboration is occurring.

While the interviews with CDE staff and other stakeholders did indicate that the culture of CDE has improved in the recent past, the survey responses demonstrated the awareness that culture change in a large bureaucratic organization such as CDE is a long-term process. See Table 6 below on the responses to the survey items concerning collaboration. When queried about whether the organizational culture at CDE had improved over the past year, 38 respondents (46%) either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. Only 13 respondents (16%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. However, 31 respondents (38%) were neutral in their response to this question. This neutrality may reflect the same perspective of those interviewed—that while the culture of CDE has improved, more work needs to be done to continue this change.

Table 6: Collaboration at CDE

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The emphasis on educator effectiveness has led to increased collaboration across offices	0 (0%)	7 (8%)	24 (28%)	31 (36%)	23 (27%)
Collaboration is important to doing my work at CDE	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (2%)	21 (24%)	63 (73%)
The amount of collaboration at CDE has increased over the past year	1 (1%)	3 (4%)	17 (20%)	33 (39%)	30 (36%)
There is sufficient recognition of the time I need to collaborate in CDE	3 (4%)	23 (28%)	20 (24%)	25 (30%)	12 (14%)
My supervisor acknowledges the time I spend collaborating	1 (1%)	3 (4%)	24 (29%)	26 (31%)	29 (35%)
My position description reflects the time I spend collaborating within CDE	4 (5%)	20 (24%)	16 (19%)	34 (40%)	10 (10%)

Respondents were queried as to how collaboration is occurring within CDE and how this has affected their work. In order to make educator effectiveness a priority that cuts across numerous departments within CDE, there is a recognition that the culture of CDE has to foster collaboration. CDE traditionally has involved numerous working groups to accomplish its work; however, several respondents in this evaluation characterized CDE as having a “meeting-based” culture and requiring its employees to attend far too many meetings. Therefore, the challenge for CDE is developing a collaborative culture that facilitates inter-unit working relationships while also not placing onerous requirements on staff in terms of meeting schedules.

Building an organizational culture than emphasizes collaboration is not without costs. While the survey responses are not overall negative, more work needs to be done within CDE recognizing the transaction costs associated with collaboration. For example, a respondent described a tension between collaboration and performing tasks directly associated with an individual unit’s mission. The pressure to perform those tasks can overwhelm the need for collaboration. For staff members whose work involves significant cross-unit work, this requirement should be official in their position descriptions and evaluated in their annual performance evaluations. For example, a respondent reported attending over 20 meetings a month to help integrate the work of his unit. Collaboration cannot be a hidden cost of accomplishing the goals of CDE—the more that collaboration is formalized into the standard operating procedures and standard position designs, the more it will be modeled across departments.

The Role of Leadership at the Colorado Department of Education

When considering how to change the culture of an organization over time, the role of leadership must be considered and was raised by many of the respondents in this study. Several of our interviewees commented on the importance of the Commissioner of Education to creating change within CDE. The interviewees made two interrelated points:

- The EE efforts within CDE are part of the CDE leadership vision for the organization
- The tools that are central to the theory of action for this reform—collaboration and alignment of vision—are dependent on leadership supporting the use of these tools

CDE is led by an elected SBE. The SBE appoints the Commissioner of Education, who is the Chief Executive of CDE. Over the past 15 years, CDE has had three Commissioners of Education: William Maloney served from 1997 to 2007, Dwight Jones served from 2007 to 2010, and Robert Hammond has been Commissioner since 2010.

The groundwork for this project came from Commissioner Jones. His strategic plan (called Forward Thinking) was issued in 2007 and contained the seeds of the educator effectiveness efforts. First, it linked the SBE’s goal to “Improve educator quality, recruitment, retention and placement” to actions taken by CDE, particularly through improved professional development. A second component of this strategic plan that impacted the EE work was the development of the Colorado Legacy Foundation (CLF). The CLF played a key role in the development of the EE efforts including helping to secure financial resources (the Rose Community Foundation Grant being evaluated here as well as an Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Integration Grant), providing staffing to the Educator Effectiveness Unit, including the interim Executive Directors, and continuing to provide support to the EE efforts.

Third, interviewees also discussed how Commissioner Jones and Forward Thinking called for CDE to change from a compliance monitoring organization to a compliance monitoring *and* service organization. Interviewees described this as fundamentally changing the nature of the relationship between CDE and school districts. The Department took on a new role of supporting change- and sought to be viewed as a resource for school districts, rather than just the agency regulating their behavior and operations. The second stage of this evaluation will explore this change in more detail from the perspective of the districts.

Finally, the plan envisioned change and alignment to the organization through collaborative activities. These collaborative activities include “collegial consulting”, “regular contact with individuals in similar positions” and “regular networking meetings”. This focus on collaboration was a significant change from Commissioner Maloney. One interviewee characterized feeling “very isolated” under Maloney and identified the organization as having “a lot of silos” and another described decision-making during that period as “chutes and ladders”. Since collaboration is central to the theory of change for the EE effort, this type of effort could not have started or been maintained without leadership support.

Interviewees reported that this focus on collaboration continued under Commissioner Hammond. Equally important, Commissioner Hammond’s strategic plan (issued in December of 2011) put educator effectiveness as one of CDE’s four overarching goals. Thus his leadership served to sustain and enhance the educator effectiveness efforts.

The educator effectiveness efforts to change CDE fit within the efforts by agency leadership to change the organization. In addition, this alignment both supported the growth of these efforts and in turn supported CDE Commissioner’s organization change agenda. Therefore, seeding change in the form of a cross-cutting unit such as the Educator Effectiveness Unit must also be supported by top-level leadership. While research on organizational change continuously emphasizes the need for support of top level leadership, examining the change at CDE supports this by demonstrating how the top level leadership provided additional emphasis on the goals of the Unit and provided the legitimacy and support for this change to begin to take root and grow at CDE.

Key Partnerships for Educator Effectiveness

In addition to support from the Commissioner’s office, the educator effectiveness work and change at CDE could not have been successful without the support of key external partners. The work of educator effectiveness requires that CDE reach outside of its immediate organizational boundaries and draw on the talent and expertise of other organizations and actors involved in the education policy field. While there are numerous actors with which CDE routinely interacts (including but not limited to Colorado Education Association, Colorado Association of School Executive, and Colorado Association of School Boards), there are certain actors with which this working relationship could be characterized more as a working partnership that are integral to the success of the educator effectiveness work. The three main partners are the Colorado Department of Higher Education, the New Teachers Project, and the Colorado Legacy Foundation.

These partners play different roles. The Colorado Legacy Foundation and The New Teacher Project have been a key source of capacity to CDE and the Educator Effectiveness Unit in particular. Given CDE’s thin resources, this capacity was crucial to the launch of the educator effectiveness efforts. The Colorado

Legacy Foundation provided the initial Executive Director for the Educator Effectiveness Unit and provided salary support to others working on the project within CDE. The New Teacher Project provided the project director that guided the process for developing the office. Finally, the Colorado Department of Higher Education is a key partner based on CDE and CDHE's shared oversight role for teacher preparation.

Colorado Department of Higher Education

The Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) is a key partner for CDE in the overall movement toward improved educator effectiveness. As CDHE shares jurisdiction over teacher preparation with CDE, CDHE has been involved in the initial discussions that led to the creation of the Educator Effectiveness unit and continues to be a part of the Educator Effectiveness leadership team. However, at this time, the primacy of SB 191 and teacher evaluation has led to educator preparation being less of a priority among the educator effectiveness unit. Therefore, while CDHE is still involved with the work of educator effectiveness and considered a valued member of the team, the real work of this partnership is still forthcoming.

This future work will include identifying and responding to challenges or weaknesses in our current teacher preparation system. Key to effectively responding to these challenges will be utilizing the core strengths and capacities of both CDE and CDHE. For example, a possible challenge for teacher preparation programs is knowledge and understanding of the new expectations for teachers and the new content standards. Responding to this challenge could include bringing the knowledge of CDE staff into the higher education context that is more familiar to CDHE staff.

While CDE and CDHE have an established working relationship, it is important to recognize some of the fundamental political challenges that are associated with this relationship. Each of these institutions has different sources of authority and thus may have different reform agendas. The CDE is governed by an elected board. The CDHE has a more direct connection with the governor's office. Its board (the Colorado Commission on Higher Education) is appointed by the governor and the current CDHE Executive Director is the Lieutenant Governor. While the current relationships between these two institutions are good, the potential for divergent agendas between the governor's office and state board of education means that collaboration requires extra attention to political issues.

As the educator effectiveness work continues, it is important to maintain this working relationship with CDHE and ensure that the lessons learned through the implementation of SB 191, lessons focused on collaborative working relationships, constructive communication from different perspectives, and continuous feedback with change implementation, are connected back to teacher preparation. For true policy and practice learning and change to occur, each component of the educator effectiveness model, from preparation, induction, evaluation, and development, need the attention of CDE. As the time frame of SB 191 is dictating a focus on one segment of this process, it is integral that the other pieces are not lost in this focus.

The New Teachers Project

The New Teachers Project, a national nonprofit organization devoted to reducing inequities in education, has been a major partner in the establishment of the educator effectiveness agenda in CDE. TNTP was one

of the original recipients of funds from the Rose Community Foundation grant and has played a role as a technical service provider.

In our interview with respondents, TNTP was characterized as a thought partner with CDE, providing expertise in educator effectiveness reform and innovative practices. In the initial stages of the establishment of the educator effectiveness working group and the design of the eventual unit, TNTP helped guide the discussion around best practices in educator effectiveness and worked with many of the parties involved in both the passage of the major education reform bills and with those in CDE charged with the implementation of these laws. A key contribution from TNTP to the educator work was their ability to recruit and hire new and important talent to CDE. Jill Hawley was hired by TNTP as the Project Director and has subsequently served as the Commissioner's Chief of Staff and is now Associate Commissioner.

In some of our interviews TNTP was characterized as having a point of view or agenda for reform at CDE. Given TNTP's experience and history working in the area of educator effectiveness, it is reasonable for this experience would translate to a point of view on how CDE should work to improve educator effectiveness. The key challenge with having a point of view in this collaborative environment is being explicit about this point of view. Being explicit about this point of view builds trust as people collaborate.

The Colorado Legacy Foundation

The Colorado Legacy Foundation worked with CDE to develop the EEP working with CDE to create a vision for the project. Once the project began, in comparison to TNTP, the CLF support to the Educator Effectiveness efforts were not based on its expertise in educator effectiveness. Instead, CLF was described as strategically augmenting and providing resources and capacity to meet the needs of a developing office.

CLF has been able to raise resources from foundations that may hesitate to directly fund state agencies. The CLF provides these foundations with a level of accountability that agencies cannot provide. CLF used revenue from the Rose Community Foundation grant and other funding sources to staff various components of the early development of the Educator Effectiveness Unit. For example, a CLF employee served as the initial Executive Director of the Educator Effectiveness unit.

The CLF has been able to leverage resources from the Rose Community Foundation and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Integration grant to support education and outreach efforts related to the implementation of SB 191 and integration of educator effectiveness and standards implementation. These grant funds were used to support conferences and events as well as to provide training when government resources are not available for travel, food and lodging. These events allowed school district leaders to work and learn together as they developed new implementation tools. This accelerated the learning necessary for SB 191 implementation.

Conclusion: Future Actions for Culture Change and Educator Effectiveness at CDE

Overall, it can be argued that the investment in CDE to produce change around educator effectiveness has been successful to date. The work is not finished—creating deep cultural change in a bureaucratic organization requires continued attention to the change process and monitoring of cultural processes to

ensure that the change continues to take root and becomes institutionalized. While CDE has become more collaborative, it is possible that changes to the policy environment could affect this collaboration over time. In addition, trying to change how people approach a field of practice takes time and can involve significant trial and error. The implementation of SB 191 will inevitably include a learning curve associated with student growth measures, evaluation of educator effectiveness, and the associated professional development to improve effectiveness. Sustaining the enthusiasm around educator effectiveness in light of challenges will require careful attention of all the stakeholders involved in the educator effectiveness movement. Moving forward, we present some lessons from the Educator Effectiveness Project that could be used by funders to foster change in other states.

Applications to Similar Efforts

The EEP is an innovative public-private partnership that utilized resources from a local foundation to support innovation and change at a state agency. As an innovative project it holds several lessons for those working to improve government agencies from within agencies and outside those agencies.

For those outside agencies several lessons are apparent. First, this work can be successful. Second, there is value in extensive, collaborative planning processes. It is important to develop a true collaborative working group with time invested in building shared norms that drive the work together. One of the major lessons is to create a timeline for development that allows for true collaboration to occur. The initial design of the project allowed for leaders across CDE to come together with regular interactions, with these interactions structured to promote communication, sense-making on common goals, and the development of shared meanings and shared goals for educator effectiveness moving forward in the department. This also gave them time to develop a coherent message to bring forward when working with other departments and units within CDE.

Often, collaboration is mandated within public agencies and across public agencies with other sectors and stakeholders; if this mandate is not translated into a meaningful and authentic process for those involved, the collaboration usually will not produce the desired effect and can be easily circumvented. The kind of collaboration seen with this project requires the development of shared language and patience as the members of the group take the time to get to know each other's perspectives and develop value with each member's contributions. Therefore, allowing time to build momentum with meetings such as those seen with the Educator Effectiveness Working Group (and later Leadership Team), taking care to establish a collaborative working culture, and developing an agenda that is action oriented are all replicable steps that could be used in other similar public agencies and in other state departments of education.

A final lesson for those working for change from outside is the importance of agency leadership. Two successive agency leaders supported this change effort. These leaders sought resources for the work, first from outside funders and then from state appropriations. They authorized staff participation in a time-consuming collaborative process. Finally, the project's goals were elevated to become part of the agencies' strategic goals. Without their support the impact of this project would have been greatly reduced.

For those working with government agencies, several lessons are apparent. First is the power of outside agents to provide the crucial catalysts, resources and capacity to support change. CDE's partnership with the CLF was the foundation for the EEP. The CLF played a role in developing the vision for the project

and was able to access foundation resources that are less available to agencies, which provided the capacity to launch the project. TNTP provided technical capacity that was lacking or could not be expressed within the agency. Finally for those working within agencies, having a clear-eyed view of the challenges impacting agency effectiveness is important. This project would not have occurred, or focused on collaborative change without an understanding within the agency that change needed to occur.

For all stakeholders, the recruiting and placing of quality staff for the project was central to the project's success. The people working on the project, both as part of the outside partners (TNTP and CLF) as well as those hired within the Educator Effectiveness Unit, brought talent, technical expertise, and the ability to navigate change and ambiguity. The staff was attracted to this work for multiple reasons including their belief in the importance of educator effectiveness as well as Colorado's exciting education reform environment. This environment includes the partnerships described above and a large reform agenda that includes educator effectiveness but also new content standards, accountability systems and alignment of the education system from pre-school through higher education.

Lessons can be drawn about the nature of the staffing process and the qualities or competencies required in creating a similar staffing structure in other public agencies. The EEP has a) a broad mandate b) an ambitious working agenda, and c) a charge to foster coordination and collaboration across a large public agency requires staff that possesses strong communication skills, strong facilitation skills, and the ability to handle work situations that are in constant evolution. The ability to manage ambiguity cannot be overstated; creating a unit designed to reshape how a public agency does its business requires staff that can evolve in their work roles and communicate this evolution over time to keep the agenda of the unit and department as a whole moving forward toward the accomplishment of the central goal.

Second, clearly defined and structured relationships between organizations improve collaboration. The change process creates significant ambiguity for all participants. Adding ambiguity in role, perspective for staff from different organizations can slow the change processes. Clearly articulated agreements, such as memorandums of understanding, help reduce ambiguity and build trust needed for the work to go forward. These agreements should be changed or modified as the situation warrants. However, they should clearly describe organizational roles and expectations during the change process.

The Educator Effectiveness Project Moving Forward

In terms of the lessons learned for the success of the Educator Effectiveness moving forward, it is important to regard what will be considered success. The long-term success of the Educator Effectiveness Unit and the overall educator effectiveness agenda is interwoven with the outcomes of the implementation of SB 191. There are many challenges associated with SB 191—the development of the student growth measures, the challenges or successes experienced with implementation of evaluation at the district level, and how the information generated from SB 191 is translated into action at CDE.

CDE is still developing the process for analyzing the data generated from the implementation of high quality evaluation systems and SB 191. At the same time, districts are developing systems and processes for using this evaluation data to inform professional development, rewards and sanction for teachers, and exiting of teachers from districts. How this implementation process occurs over time may directly impact the long-term success of the Educator Effectiveness Unit, as its work is viewed as synonymous by many

with SB 191. Therefore, for the Unit to be a permanent part of the operation of CDE, steps for institutionalizing the Unit apart from SB 191 should be taken.

While recognizing the difficulty of doing this alongside the implementation of SB 191, the Educator Effectiveness Unit could begin additional work on the educator effectiveness levers identified in the logic model to broaden its operational scope. This would also provide deeper support for the Unit in light of the possibility of challenges with the implementation of SB 191. Possible levers could be increasing attention to teacher licensure and induction process. TNTP completed a report and set of recommendations on teacher licensure in August 2012. Induction is currently receiving attention as a legislative priority of the State Board and is working with The New Teacher Center to strengthen the state's educator induction policies and programs. Utilizing the skills and capacity of CDHE, along with involving other partners, could allow the Unit to begin working on this other area of educator effectiveness. In addition, when the results from the first set of evaluations begin to arrive, considering how to build the professional development activities, along with integration with the Title II unit, may be an important next step.

In addition, CDE has begun to develop more systematic annual performance evaluations and strengthening its internal human resource management practices. In building a performance management culture, attention must be placed on assessing and evaluating the role that collaborative activities play in the accomplishment of individual and organizational goals. Adjusting position descriptions within CDE to recognize and reward effective cross-unit collaboration will support the ongoing efforts to reduce the silos across different areas of focus within CDE.

While CDE has made changes to its internal processes and is building a collaborative culture, a culture focused on serving its clients in addition to regulating them, the challenge will be how these changes are experienced by the districts. The second phase of this evaluation focuses on whether and how districts are experiencing the changes made at the state level around educator effectiveness. The results of this research should be available in the first quarter of 2013 along with a summary report combining the results of both phases of the evaluation.

Appendix A: EEP Logic Model and Process Map

The EEP logic model and process map were developed during the development phase of the evaluation to help identify central components of the project to be evaluated (late 2010 and early 2011). The logic model describes the “theory” or “logic” behind the program, i.e., describing how program actions are intended to achieve program outcomes and goals. The activities map provides more detail on activities within CDE as part of the project.

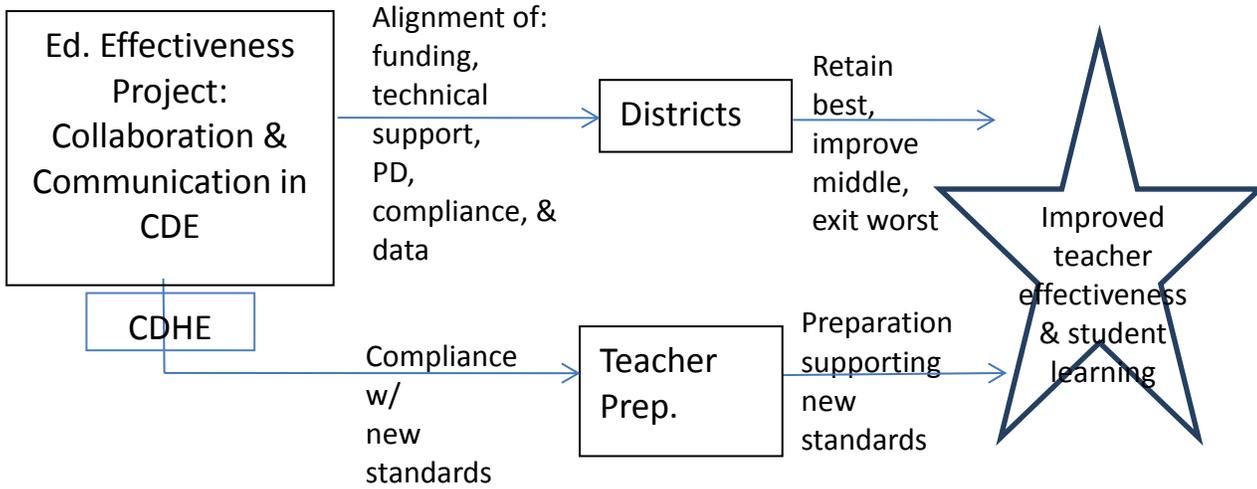
In late 2010, a team from SPA began the process of developing an understanding of the project with a review of internal documents developed by EEP staff and others. A series of interviews were conducted with a variety of stakeholders on the impetus for the program, contextual issues that influenced project creation and planned actions, activities, and intended outcomes. Several logic models and maps were developed and shared with the Educator Effectiveness Working Group. The final model and map were revised after review by the Working Group to accentuate the key steps concerning communication and collaboration within CDE and between CDE and CDHE.

The Program Logic Model (Figure 1) highlights the connections between primary EEP activities throughout CDE and its intended ultimate outcomes: improving educator effectiveness and student learning (as of early 2011). Specifically, collaboration and communication, both within CDE and between CDE and CDHE, are intended to align activities and policy tools that were not necessarily coordinated to focus on educator effectiveness. As shown in Figure 1, these state activities and tools include funding from the state to the districts (often through federal grants such as Title II), technical support (such as tools for implementing SB 191), professional development, oversight for compliance with regulation and laws (that will include the requirements of SB 191), and the manner and types of data provided by CDE to districts. By leveraging these tools, the EEP intends to support school districts as they work to increase the effectiveness of their educator workforce through retention of their best educators, improvement in the outcomes from those at mid-levels of performance, and exiting of those who cannot meet criteria for effectiveness.

A second facet of the project that has not yet been fully implemented concerns work to improve the effectiveness of new educators versus those currently placed in districts. CDE and CDHE will collaborate to develop new standards for institutions that prepare educators. These new standards will focus more sharply on the identified elements of educator effectiveness and, as a result, graduates of such programs will become more effective educators than those graduating under the current standards. Given the flurry of activities around SB 191, this facet of the logic model has not been fully implemented and is not the subject of this evaluation.

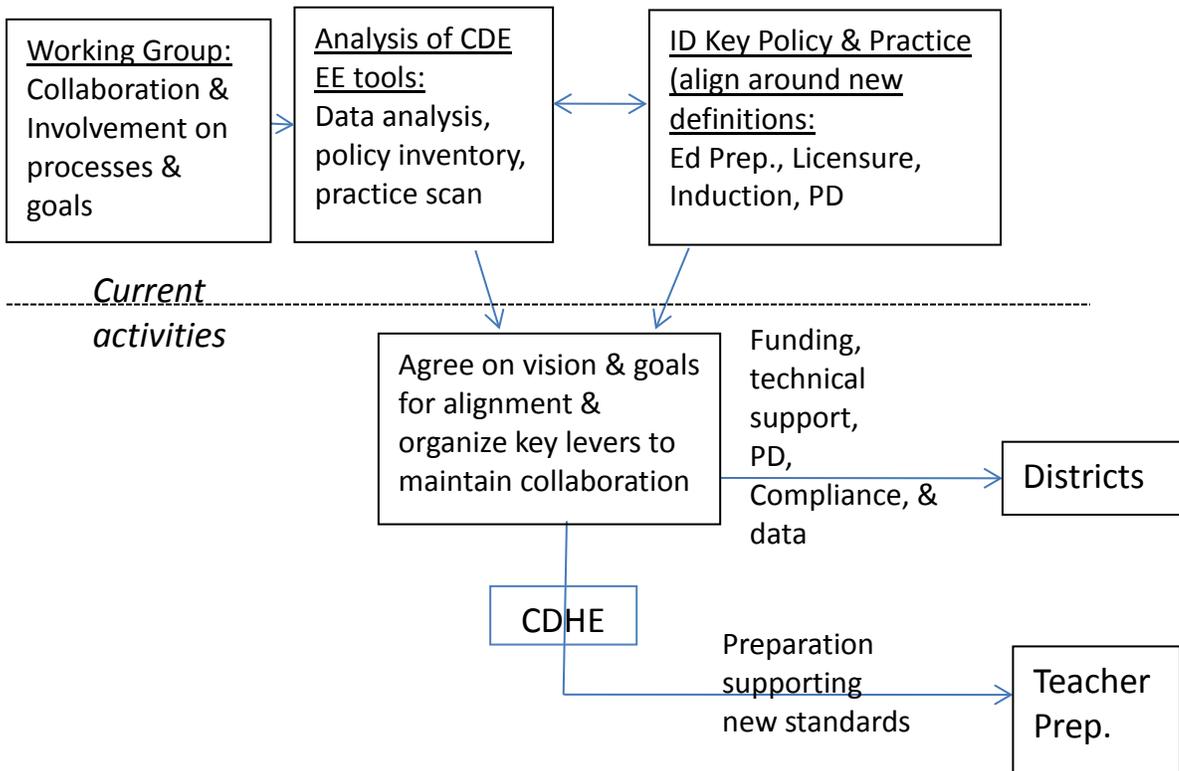
All of these activities are intended to lead to the final goals (represented by the star) improving educator effectiveness across the state and, as a result, increasing student learning.

Figure 1: Project Logic Model



A more detailed description of activities to outcomes is contained in the Activities Map (Figure 2). This Map was used in developing this first phase of the evaluation. The Activities Map ends with the same targets (districts and CDHE) and tools for achieving change, but the first boxes show more detail on the EEP actions.

Figure 2: Educator Effectiveness Process Map



The key value of the map is showing how the activities within CDE are intended to create change. Agreement among the participants on a vision for educator effectiveness, their goals, and the need for alignment is a central step in the process of improving educator effectiveness. Maintaining collaboration is a central tool to bringing about change.

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