

Colorado Youth Advisory Council Annual Report

2008

A report to the Colorado Legislature from the Colorado Youth Advisory Council
outlining our progress since our creation in the 2008 legislative session.

Table of Contents

The Colorado Youth Advisory Council Is Established	3
Goals and Rationale for Creation of the Colorado Youth Advisory Council	3
Who Is On The Colorado Youth Advisory Council?	3
Key Successes	4
Inaugural Meeting	5
Second Meeting.....	6
Conclusion	6
Appendix A: Colorado Youth Advisory Council Officer and Members 2008-2009.....	8
Officers.....	8
Youth Members	8
Legislator Members	10
Appendix B: Sponsors	11
Founding Supporter.....	11
Lead Youth Sponsors.....	11
Youth Sponsor	11
Supporters	11
Appendix C: Meeting Minutes – First Meeting	12
Appendix D: Meeting Minutes – Second Meeting	14
Appendix E: HB 08-1157: COYAC Enabling Legislation.....	19
Appendix F: HB 09-1099.....	27
Appendix G: COYAC 2008 Budget and Expenditures.....	34

The Colorado Youth Advisory Council Is Established

The Colorado Youth Advisory Council (COYAC) was established on May 29, 2008 “to examine, evaluate, and discuss the issues, interests, and needs facing Colorado Youth...and to formally advise and make recommendations to elected officials regarding those issues” (HB 08-1157). COYAC is a vehicle, created by the Colorado State Legislature, to give young people an opportunity to offer first-hand information to our legislators about issues affecting Colorado's teens.

Goals and Rationale for Creation of the Colorado Youth Advisory Council

Representative Ellen Roberts (R, HD 59) sponsored HB 08-1157. “There’s no better way to acquaint youth with the importance of finding their voice in representative democracy than to give them that opportunity firsthand,” according to Representative Roberts. “Forming a legislative youth council is one way to provide that opportunity and will also help legislators make better decisions on policies affecting our youth.” Her commitment to authentic youth voice extended to the bill drafting process. In the fall of 2007, she convened a group of high school students from Cortez and Durango for a weekend to provide input and determine what a statewide youth council for Colorado should look like. From the beginning, young people were instrumental in shaping the Council. In addition, youth from Centennial’s Youth Advisory Council came to the Capitol in March of 2008 to testify on the proposed legislation. The bill was passed by the legislature and signed by Governor Ritter on May 29, 2008.

Who Is On The Colorado Youth Advisory Council?

The Colorado Youth Advisory Council consists of forty-four members. The main body of the council is made up of youth aged 14-19. There are forty youth council members; one representing each of the thirty-five state senate districts, and five at-large members. Youth council members must “be enrolled

in and attending a Colorado junior high, middle, or high school, including an on-line based school; participating in a nonpublic, home based educational program; or have obtained a high school or general equivalency diploma” (HB 08-1157). The other four members are non-voting legislators: one Democrat and one Republican from both the House and Senate; appointed by their leadership.

Key Successes

COYAC has met several key goals in its short, 8-month existence.

- Our first meeting was held on October 31-November 1, 2008. Thirty-three of the forty members were able to attend, and spent two days building relationships, determining how they would like to organize the Council, and discussing potential policy issues they would like to address.
- Following the first meeting, Council members continued to work throughout the fall to create a membership application for future Council vacancies. The application was approved by the full Council by the January 1 deadline contained in HB 08-1157, and the Council continued working at our second meeting to determine a strategy for publicizing vacancies, disseminating the application, and evaluating and approving future applicants.
- The Council has raised nearly \$60,000, comprised almost entirely of private donations, to support its work.
- The Council elected a slate of officers at its second meeting. In addition to the Co-chair and Vice Chair required by legislation, they established Secretary and Treasurer positions.
- The Council has active committees focused on three policy areas: Education, Environment, and Social Health. They are studying issues including standardized testing, ensuring that Colorado youth continue to have a voice in government, encouraging school districts to implement recycling programs, and environmental education requirements.

- At our January meeting, COYAC members attended a meeting with Colorado Department of Education officials to learn more about environmental education standards. Another group attended a hearing on HB 09-1099, a bill to make minor clarifying changes to the COYAC enabling legislation.
- The Council has established working committees to fulfill requirements for outreach to other youth councils and youth leadership groups throughout the state, and creation of a COYAC website.

Inaugural Meeting

On October 31, 2008 and November 1, 2008 the Colorado Youth Advisory Council convened for its inaugural meeting. Council members had an excellent opportunity to experience first-hand the challenges of working harmoniously to achieve a stated goal. The meeting was held at the Penrose House in Colorado Springs, an exquisite facility provided to the Council by the El Pomar Foundation as part of a generous grant. The meeting began at 10:00 am with a welcome from Senate Minority Leader Andy McElhany, Senator Chris Romer, and Senator Nancy Spence. After getting acquainted, the Council delved into HB 08-1157. Representative Ellen Roberts explained the history and background of the bill establishing COYAC. The youth council members of COYAC then analyzed and discussed the bill in depth. The Council ended the first day by drawing up a code of behavioral conduct dubbed the “COYAC Code”.

On November 1, 2008 the Council began the day by endeavoring to define how the Council should be organized. The goal was to decide how COYAC would be governed, what issues the Council would focus on, which aspects of HB 08-1157 needed clarification, and what rules would regulate the

Council. Council members made significant progress toward these decisions, and also disagreed on some key points. For example, a decision on determining which of the current members would serve one-year vs. two-year terms was tabled until our second meeting.

Already, youth council members are addressing the inherent challenges of compromise and communication that are part of governing, and creating a process for compromise and cooperation. The council's most effective interactions took place in ad hoc committees that broke off and discussed a variety of issues such as CSAP testing, College Prep opportunities, recycling in schools, and substance abuse.

Second Meeting

COYAC's second meeting was held on January 26, 2009, and was the group's first opportunity to interact with the Legislature. We were introduced on the House Floor, and our Durango member, Claire Carver, led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance. Youth members also spent some time with two of our legislative members, Senator Josh Penry and Representative Roberts. In the afternoon, several members attended the House Education committee hearing on HB 09-1099.

Following our morning at the Capitol, we moved to the Colorado Municipal League, which graciously agreed to host us for the second part of the day. Most of the group's second meeting was devoted to finalizing operational policies and procedures. The group elected a slate of officers, and approved a procedure for moving policy proposals through committees and to the full group for approval. They clarified the scope and responsibility of their committees. Finally, they chose their next meeting date: April 6, 2009.

Conclusion

The Colorado Youth Advisory Council is off to a strong start. They started by focusing on building the

organizational foundations to ensure engagement from all members, and a thoughtful and inclusive deliberative process focused on reaching consensus. From this foundation, they are poised to start engaging more fully in the policy challenges facing Colorado youth, and have already begun taking steps in that direction.

Appendix A: Colorado Youth Advisory Council Officer and Members 2008-2009

Officers

Youth Co-chair: **Elliot Reaven**

Legislator Co-chair: **Representative Ellen Roberts**

Youth Vice Chair: **Stuart Jenkins**

Secretary: **Evan Burnett**

Treasurer: **Maggie Thomas**

Youth Members

Ashley Achee
Cherry Hills Village
Senate District 26

Parker Alton
Colorado Springs
Senate District 12

Nathan Anthony
Colorado Springs
Senate District 10

Daniel Arsenault
Highlands Ranch
Senate District 30

Annsley Brophy
Eckley
Senate District 1

Megan Brophy
Wray
Senate District 22

Evan Burnett
Loveland
Senate District 15

Dax Bushway
Colorado Springs
Senate District 9

Claire Carver
Durango
Senate District 6

Caitlin Corenblith
Lakewood
Senate District 21

Max Dovala
Superior
At-large member

Brittany Fritz
Las Animas
Senate District 2

Anthony Gallozzi
Aurora
Senate District 27

Levi Garcia
Denver
Senate District 31

Lanna Giauque
Windsor
At-large member

Stuart Jenkins, Jr.
Carbondale
Senate District 8

Belise Kabahizi
Denver
Senate District 32

Cade Karlberg
Eaton
Senate District 13

Maggie Kopel
Boulder
Senate District 18

Tim Longfield
Hotchkiss
Senate District 5

Megan Marshall
Aurora
Senate District 28

Anna McEndree
Grand Junction
Senate District 7

Sendy Peregrino
Pueblo
At-large member

Dillon Phillips
Broomfield
SD 23

Larkin Poynton
Longmont
Senate District 17

Elliot Reaven
Denver
Senate District 35

Erica Romberg
Evergreen
Senate District 16

Aeryn Romero
Colorado Springs
Senate District 11

Simone Roquia
Pueblo
Senate District 3

Peter Scher
Golden
Senate District 20

Amanda Silverthorn
Commerce City
Senate District 25

Kayla Tarrant
Aurora
Senate District 29

Alante Thalley
Aurora
At-large member

Maggie Thomas
Arvada
Senate District 19

Mercina Tilleman-Dick
Denver
Senate District 34

Hannah Tochtrop
Northglenn
Senate District 24

Faythe Utsey
Denver
Senate District 33

Reh Vanatta
Poncha Springs
At-large member

Hannah Wiens
Sedalia
Senate District 4

Caroline Wockner
Fort Collins
Senate District 14

Legislator Members

Representative Andy Kerr (D)

Representative Ellen Roberts (R)

Senator Josh Penry (R)

Senator Chris Romer (D)

Appendix B: Sponsors

COYAC is extremely grateful to the sponsors who have supported our work to date. We would especially like to thank the El Pomar Foundation, which stepped forward to support the vision of youth involvement in government with a grant covering half of our estimated first annual budget. Their commitment to youth engagement is valued and appreciated.

Founding Supporter



Lead Youth Sponsors

BP America

The Children's Hospital

La Plata Electric Association

Youth Sponsor

Sangre De Cristo Electric Association

Supporters

Aponte and Busam

Rocky Mountain Health Plans

League of Women Voters

Appendix C: Meeting Minutes – First Meeting

Colorado Youth Advisory Council October 31-November 1, 2008 Colorado Springs - Penrose House

October 31, 2008

Welcome: Senators Andy McElhaney, Chris Romer and Nancy Spence started the meeting by welcoming members to Colorado Springs and to the first COYAC meeting.

Introduce Yourself: COYAC members spent some time getting to know one another and learning a little bit about each other.

Overview of HB 1157 and Legislature's Charge to the Council: Representative Ellen Roberts, sponsor of HB 1157, shared the history and background of the bill that created COYAC. Council members then broke into small groups to identify the key provisions of the bill and what the legislative parameters are for COYAC.

COYAC Mission and Vision: Council members spent some time brainstorming and setting their own goals for COYAC. They identified key areas of emphasis and interest and formed committees: Speaking Out, Community Outreach and Communication; Environment; Social Health; Education; and Be the Change. Committee members spent some time developing goals and work plans for each focus area, and updated the full group on their progress.

Partnerships between Non-profit Organizations and Government: Peter Maiurro from the El Pomar Foundation gave a presentation on nonprofit organizations; their history, role and significance. Bill Fulton of the Civic Canopy spent a few minutes explaining the role of the Civic Canopy and explained it's partnership with COYAC.

Communication and Collaboration: COYAC members spent some time discussing and deciding on group norms for effective communication and goals for how we will work together. The group decided on the following guidelines (the "COYAC Code"):

- Data → Feelings → Judgment → Plan
- Stay on topic and don't say more than you need (no verbal diarrhea)
- Commit, take responsibility, be accountable
- Debate, don't argue; and listen to each other
- Stick to your values, but be open-minded to different perspectives
- Be respectful, credible, selfless representatives for Colorado youth
- Avoid exclusive relationships and seek to include all

COYAC members signed off on the Code and adjourned for the evening.

November 1, 2008

COYAC members started Saturday with a discussion and debrief of what they felt went well the day before and what still needs to be accomplished. They revisited and expanded on the COYAC Code.

Policy Overview: COYAC members broke into groups to delve into some of the policy issues they identified the previous day and start brainstorming how they would like to address them.

Business Meeting: Following the policy discussion and report-out, COYAC conducted a business meeting to address some of the nuts and bolts of getting the Council established and running effectively. They made the following decisions:

- Leadership structure: In addition to the youth Co-chair and Vice Chair established in the bill, COYAC voted to create the positions of Secretary and Treasurer.
 - **Action Item: Descriptions of each position need to be written. COYAC needs to approve the descriptions at the next meeting.**
- Committee Structure: COYAC voted to create the following committees: Finance, Communication, and Membership.
 - **Action Item: Need clear descriptions of the scope and responsibility of each committee, and volunteers to serve on committees, except for membership, which has volunteers.**
- Voting and meeting structure: COYAC agreed to follow parliamentary procedure to run meetings and voting.
- COYAC approved the Council expenditures to date and requested more detailed budget information.
- COYAC elected Representative Ellen Roberts as the Legislator Co-Chair.
- COYAC began a discussion of which current members would serve one-year vs. two-year terms. Members tabled the discussion and a final decision for a later meeting.
- The following members volunteered to serve on the Membership committee and were approved by the Council: Max Dovala, Tim Longfield, Megan Marshall, Erica Romberg, Caroline Wockner, Parker Alton, Ashley Achee and Lanna Giauque.
 - **Action Item: The membership committee is charged with creating an application for future COYAC members by January 1, 2009.**
- COYAC chose it's next meeting date: January 26, 2009, in Denver.
 - **Action Item: Determine key agenda items for next meeting.**

The first COYAC meeting adjourned on Saturday, November 1, 2008 at 2:00 PM.

Appendix D: Meeting Minutes – Second Meeting

Colorado Youth Advisory Council January 26, 2009

Colorado State Capitol & Colorado Municipal League

Introductions

Council members spent a few minutes getting reacquainted and re-introduced.

Welcome and Review

COYAC started the day by reviewing the COYAC Code.

Stephanie gave an overview of the proposed Annual Report. The group approved including ages and photos on the list of members to be included in the report. Representative Roberts requested that copies of the enacting legislation and this year's COYAC bill be included.

COYAC also had an opportunity to hear from two of our legislator members, Senator Penry and Representative Roberts. Senator Penry explained that he was excited to work with the Council, and emphasized how he was able to get involved in the political process through experiences he had as a youth. Representative Roberts emphasized the importance of hearing from youth when the legislature is faced with tough decisions such as this year's budget cuts. She and Senator Penry also provided some background on the state budget – its importance as a key policy document, and explained that the legislature only has authority over 24% of the budget. The remainder is mandated by the state Constitution and federal requirements.

Finally, Beale Tejada from El Pomar spent a few minutes discussing concepts of leadership with the Council.

Introduction of COYAC on House Floor

COYAC gathered in the gallery of the House of Representatives to observe Floor activity. COYAC member Claire Carver led the House in the Pledge of Allegiance, and Representative Roberts acknowledged the Council.

After observing Floor activity, COYAC members gathered on the Grand Staircase in the Capitol for an official group picture. They were joined by legislative members Representative Roberts and Representative Andy Kerr.

Following the picture, the group walked to the Colorado Municipal League, which hosted us in their meeting room for the rest of the day. Upon arrival, we were greeted by Lisa White, Marketing and Communications Specialist for CML. She welcomed the group and gave an overview of the Municipal League, focusing on recent efforts to engage young people in municipal affairs.

Discussion on COYAC Governing Procedures

Following Lisa's welcome, Elliot Reaven provided a brief overview of key aspects of parliamentary procedure. Drew O'Connor of The Civic Canopy led a discussion focused on finalizing COYAC governance decisions.

Lunch

During lunch, Sam Mamet, Executive Director of the Colorado Municipal League, welcomed COYAC to CML and shared lessons he has learned from his years working with state legislatures. Key points included:

- Know your issue
- Share your passion
- Respect other viewpoints
- Remember that your opposition today will likely be your ally tomorrow
- Have fun, know when to crack a joke - sometimes you need to lighten the mood

Procedural Committees

Following lunch, COYAC procedural committees met.

- The Membership Committee worked on determining a timeline for distributing and receiving applications and discussed strategies for deciding one-year vs. two year terms.
- The Communication committee attended a media training session led by Meagan Dorsch from NCSL.
- The Policy and Procedures Committee continued the work started in the earlier discussion on governance and crafted a proposed procedure for bringing policy issues into COYAC, vetting them through policy committees, and bringing them to the full Council for action.
- The Finance Committee members focused on fundraising strategies for COYAC and began brainstorming their own connections and how to involve COYAC members in fundraising efforts.

Policy Committees

After the Procedural Committees, members re-organized into their policy committees.

- The Education committee is exploring alternatives to the CSAP and researching connections between teacher pay/performance and standardized testing.
- Members of the Environment Committee attended a meeting with Barry Cartwright of the Colorado Department of Education and with Senators Lois Tochtrop and Suzanne Williams to learn about current environmental education standards.
- The Social Health committee hasn't yet determined a key focus for the 2009 session. They would like to contact other youth organizations about their concerns, and LYACs in other states to ask how they determine policy priorities.
- Be the Change Committee members brainstormed strategies for outreach to other Colorado youth and created a list of organizations that they are connected with.

In addition to the committee members, four COYAC members accompanied Bill and Stephanie to observe the House Education Committee hearing on HB 1099 (the COYAC "fix-it" bill). The bill was passed unanimously out of House Education without amendments.

Business Meeting

Stephanie opened the business meeting with officer elections. The Council agreed that officers could be elected with a plurality, rather than a majority, vote. Each officer candidate gave a 3-5 minute speech. Following the speeches, Stephanie and Bill distributed and then counted ballots. The results are:

Youth Co-chair: Elliot Reaven

Youth Vice Chair: Stuart Jenkins

Secretary: Evan Burnett

Treasurer: Maggie Thomas

As Co-chair, Elliot facilitated the remainder of the meeting. Following elections, the Council heard committee updates.

Policy and Procedures Committee

The Policy & Procedure Committee started with their proposal for determining COYAC policy positions:

COYAC Procedures for advocating legislative policy

Committees

- All proposals come to COYAC through the Policy Committees
- Committees are responsible for conducting the research and vetting issues
- Committees will strive to make decisions through consensus (first to 5 system)
- Committees, and the individuals within them, are responsible for reaching out to peers to get feedback on their proposals
- In between COYAC full meetings, committees will send drafts around to the entire committee for advance consideration of any proposal and to elicit feedback
- The Committee will bring a proposal to the full COYAC in the form of a motion in the appropriate form
- Individuals may bring a proposal forward, but all proposals must go through a committee before being presented to COYAC. If a proposal does not clearly fit into existing policy committees, the Chair will assign it to the committee he/she deems most appropriate.

COYAC Full Board

- COYAC meetings will be guided by parliamentary procedures (described below)
- COYAC will make decisions based on a supermajority vote
- Only after a policy initiative or proposal has followed the full committee and full board COYAC process can that proposal be considered to be "from the Colorado Youth Advisory Council"

Parliamentary Procedure

- At the full COYAC, all proposals start with a motion
- 2/3 (27 members) shall be a quorum
- Every motion needs a second to move forward
- After every motion, there will be a call for discussion
 - If we are not able to move the deliberation forward through discussion, the chair may call for moderated caucus or a pro/con session or questions on the intent
 - We may each also employ consensus safeguards - blocking, reservations, stand-aside
- Call for acclamation
- Supermajority vote (2/3 majority)

A motion was made and seconded to approve the outlined policy process. The motion passed!

Membership Committee

Erica provided an update on the Membership Committee's work.

- One-year and two-year terms: The committee is suggesting that in addition to seniors, any members who have missed both meetings so far be relegated to one-year terms. They also discussed asking the youngest members of the Council to volunteer for one-year terms, with the understanding that they are eligible to re-apply for a subsequent two-year term.

Action Item: The Council asked the Committee to finalize their report into a formal proposal for the full Council to consider.

- Membership application: The committee is suggesting that applications go out January 1 with a deadline of June 1. This should give adequate time for approving new members prior to a potential summer COYAC meeting. The Membership would review applications, conduct interviews, and recommend a slate of new members to the full Council for approval.

Communications Committee

The Communications committee briefly reported on their media training. In addition to providing tips in talking to reporters, Meagan Dorsch of NCSL suggested numerous ways for the Council to utilize modern technology for outreach, such as blogs, podcasts, and so on.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee gave a report on contributions COYAC has received to date.

Environment Committee

Megan described the committee's meeting with Barry Cartwright. She also asked for approval from the Council to continue moving ahead on proposed Resolutions. The committee is considering two resolutions; one focused on environmental education, and one to encourage recycling in schools.

- Education: The committee is pursuing a Resolution to support the Department of Education in requesting that schools focus on environmental education every year during Earth Week. Megan explained that numerous lessons and curricula materials exist online, and that this would not cost schools money. She also noted that the lessons are geared toward different grade levels.
- Recycling: The committee is also working on a Resolution to encourage recycling standards in each school, request schools to recycle paper, plastic and aluminum, and requesting student involvement through various extracurricular clubs and activities.

After discussion, the Council determined that the Committee's work to date falls under the guidelines of formulating policy, and that final Resolutions need to be brought back before the full Council for approval once they are formulated.

The remaining policy committees provided updates on their activities as described earlier in the minutes, but did not have proposals for the full Council to consider.

Annual Report

Following committee reports, it was moved and seconded to approve the Annual Report as presented by Stephanie earlier in the day.

Working Between Meetings

The Council discussed strategies for staying in contact and getting work done in between meetings. We agreed that an online discussion board is the most effective way to communicate and work. For now, we will continue to use the board Anthony set up. Elliot asked Evan to research other possibilities, such as the Civic Network and Google Groups. Members also asked Stephanie to set up conference calls for committee work as needed.

Next meeting date

The Council decided to meet again on April 6, 2009.

The Business Meeting was adjourned.

Debrief

Stephanie requested feedback from the group on the meeting. Feedback included:

- Nice to have officers elected. It feels more organized.
- There is a lot of enthusiasm – now that we have figured out structure, we can really move forward.
- The morning was disorganized.
- More members need to use the discussion board for it to be effective. So far, only a small handful of members have participated.

Action Item: Members requested that Stephanie re-send via email the link to the discussion board.

COYAC's second meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.