



COLORADO

State Board of Education

201 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203-1799

House and Senate Education Committees
Colorado State Capitol
200 E. Colfax Ave
Denver, CO 80203

July 15, 2015

Dear Honorable Members of the House and Senate Education Committees:

This letter and the attached summary are submitted pursuant to 22-2-106(1) (b.5) Colorado Revised Statutes, which states:

“(1) It is the duty of the state board: To review and evaluate annually the job performance of the commissioner of education using procedures and criteria determined by the state board. The procedures and criteria shall include, at a minimum, consideration of the comments and opinions of school district superintendents and school board members regarding the commissioner’s job performance. The state board shall report the results of its evaluation to the education committees of the house of representatives and senate, or any successor committees.”

22-2-110(5) Colorado Revised Statutes further states:

“(5) The state board shall annually review and evaluate the job performance of the commissioner, as provided in section 22-2-106(b.5), and report the results of its evaluation to the public and the education committees of the house of representatives and senate, or any successor committees.”

In June 2015, Commissioner Hammond completed his fourth year of service to Colorado as Commissioner of the Colorado Department of Education. Though Commissioner Hammond had announced his retirement effective July 1, 2015, out of respect for all of his tireless work, the state board pursued the confidential survey to superintendents and local school board members for his yearly evaluation. The state board is unanimous in its conclusions regarding Commissioner Hammond’s performance over the past year.

Under his leadership, the Department worked effectively and efficiently on targeted initiatives such as expanded learning opportunities, data privacy, educator effectiveness, new assessments, accountability and support,

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implementing the READ Act, increasing the Department's outreach to rural districts, and meeting the needs of Turnaround and Priority Improvement Districts. Additionally, the Commissioner has worked collaboratively with legislators, state and community leaders, educational organizations and non-profit entities towards implementing education reforms in Colorado so as to improve every child's access to quality educational opportunities.

Pursuant to statute, the state board sought confidential input from Colorado's superintendents and local school board members on the commissioner's performance over the past year. Respondents were asked to choose between "strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree" and were provided an opportunity for additional comments regarding each question or any other comment the recipient wished to submit. The 121 responses received were largely favorable. Below is a list of all questions and the percentages of the responses, as well as some notable comments.

- 1. Commissioner Hammond understands the diverse needs of rural, urban, and suburban school districts and, he, along with his staff, have supported rural, urban, and suburban school districts in their efforts to focus on measurable outcomes for students and to graduate all students prepared for postsecondary and workforce success. 80% strongly agree or agree.**

"Commissioner Hammond has effectively heard, understood and addressed the needs of diverse stakeholders while at the same time holding high standards for all districts ensuring that all students have access to a quality education. He is aware that different contexts require a multitude of solutions."

"The outreach and support provided by Commissioner Hammond and his CDE staff has been exceptional for our small, rural district."

"Mr. Hammond has been active in seeking out information from districts in all areas of the state, and is impressively aware of the matters in each."

"Commissioner Hammond has made CDE a much more helpful, responsive organization. There is a tremendous amount of outreach to us, and when I call, I get called back--something that used to never happen."

"He has reached out in a variety of ways to all districts. His Superintendent advisory meetings, Rural Council, appearances at conferences of CASB and CASE, and attendance at regional meetings are examples. His door is always open."

- 2. Commissioner Hammond is an effective spokesperson for strategic education initiatives in the State: he listens well and works to strengthen the collaborative relationships among education stakeholders in Colorado. 81.82% strongly agree or agree.**

"Commissioner Hammond is humble and effective".



“Fantastic communication strategies to get broad stakeholder input on diverse areas, from assessment to graduation guidelines.”

“Commissioner Hammond offers a reasoned viewpoint that takes into account what is best for our students in all parts of the state and in all districts.”

“Commissioner Hammond is approachable, knowledgeable and supportive and has worked to improve education through enhanced collaboration. With funding cuts to districts and organizations, it's been difficult to initiate opportunities for all of us to meet to work together and share ideas. The Commissioner has supported efforts to enhance collaboration.”

- 3. Commissioner Hammond demonstrates leadership in his continued support for school choice, his understanding and support for innovation and reform initiatives, and the use of data to inform best practices.** 76.03% strongly agree or agree.

“As a supporter of innovation, reform and change I can say that the department has implemented more innovative reforms under Commissioner Hammond's leadership than any other commissioner that I have experienced. I have been in education in Colorado for 20 years. He is not afraid to take risks and implement change on behalf of students. He expects district leaders to step up and do the right thing for students even if it is a departure from the way we have always done things.”

“Absolutely on all counts - choice, innovation and reform, and data-informed decision making.”

“Mr. Hammond has been especially good at using data and evidence in improving schools.”

- 4. Commissioner Hammond understands state and local school finance and funding, including the current challenges, realities, and trends in school funding.** 82.64 % strongly agree or agree.

“His understanding of the impact of the negative factor has been strong and helpful in guiding districts through these difficult financial times.”

“This is definitely a strength which in turn supports all of us.”

“I have seen the Commissioner speak many times to address school funding, including addressing successive views on funding as it evolves, and giving outlooks on funding. It is clear that funding matters constitutes a priority at CDE, as it should.”

- 5. Commissioner Hammond has demonstrated a commitment to the successful implementation of education initiatives including standards, assessments, accountability and support, and educator effectiveness; and, he understands the capacity of the field to implement these initiatives as well as the capacity of the department staff to provide support to the field.** 78.33% strongly agree or agree.

“Again, Mr. Hammond has worked tirelessly to not only lead the change, but also ensure that districts are able to implement the change. He maintains a results-oriented focus that is uncommon and also necessary if we are to succeed in our efforts to improve education and ensure equitable access for all students.”



“These areas have received major emphasis in Mr. Hammond's administration, and he has worked hard to integrate these areas with funding realities.”

“Robert Hammond and his team inside CDE have provided such incredible support in the field. His trusted leadership will be greatly missed!”

- 6. Commissioner Hammond has worked collaboratively and effectively with other education leaders including the Lt. Governor, members of the House and Senate Education Committees, members of the Joint Budget Committee, and the U.S. Department of Education staff. 73.01% strongly agree or agree.**

“These areas have received major emphasis in Mr. Hammond's administration, and he has worked hard to integrate these areas with funding realities.”

“Commissioner Hammond has attended our BOCES superintendents meetings and is always there to listen, give support and generally help.”

“He has worked hard to explain to these individuals and groups the challenges school districts face while advocating for approaches that will improve the ability of local schools to better educate kids.”

- 7. Commissioner Hammond has demonstrated leadership in his participation on local, state, and national boards, panels, and other forums and in meeting with local district leaders where he has appeared in his official capacity. 81.67% strongly agree or agree.**

“R. Hammond visited us in S.E. Co. in a way that was effective and heartfelt in his message to us that he was trying to provide the best leadership possible, despite the political pressures of his life.”

“He was visible and participated regularly. He tried to attend Superintendent group meetings around the state at least yearly.”

“Robert is a wonderful leader who always encourages collaboration to find solutions for the field. Even with the lack of funding by the state, he has continued to help us by listening and working with us.”

“He is a terrific spokesperson for education and will be missed.”

“Robert always makes the time to talk to leaders individually and collectively. He is not afraid to enter into areas that have conflict and work to bring resolution and commitment from all. We follow Robert's lead because he has the gift of insight, commitment, honesty, and always follows through.”

- 8. Commissioner Hammond is an effective administrator and has hired competent staff and manages the Department of Education's resources for support to the field, ensure regulatory compliance, and to achieve measurable student outcomes. 75% strongly agree or agree.**

“R. Hammond's perspective of service has infiltrated throughout CDE in a way that shows a desire to provide guidance to all of the school districts. I am grateful for this.”



“Over my 15 year career in education in Colorado, CDE has become far more responsive and service oriented in large part due to Commissioner Hammond's leadership as Commissioner and from his work at CDE before he acquired this position.”

“I have been very impressed with the Commissioners staff. They are very knowledgeable and committed to helping districts. They give excellent presentations to inform boards and administrators. I have seen them give superb and valuable testimony to state legislative committees, making important points based on evidence.”

“As one who has worked with the CDE staff over more than 30 years, I can say this is the strongest and most able staff the Dept. has ever had, by a wide margin.”

9. Commissioner Hammond and his staff have worked to improve the relationship between CDE and school districts and CDE's service and support for districts has improved. 76.47% strongly agree or agree.

“This is something we have heard repeatedly in the field; Commissioner Hammond's focus on and efforts to increase the function of CDE as an organization designed to help districts. The districts recognize the change for the better of the course of his tenure, and they deeply appreciate it. This is one of Commissioner Hammond's many positive legacies.”

“This has always been a priority that he has advanced.”

“Yes, I think this was a priority for the Commissioner and his staff.”

10. Commissioner Hammond has demonstrated personal and professional integrity, is committed to department transparency and accountability, and has a passion for educating all students. 82.36% strongly agree or agree.

“Commissioner Hammond demonstrates true integrity and a commitment to equitable access to education for all students. He models the high expectations that we should all set for ourselves in ensuring that all students should have a fair opportunity to be successful in school and life.”

“Our students are in a better place because of Commissioner Hammond's dedication and expertise to public education. He will be missed!”

“This statement in particular, describes Commissioner Hammond very accurately.”

“After nearly 40 years in Colorado public education and public policy work, I give Robert an A+. He represents stellar leadership and is result-oriented with a very strong service mentality.”

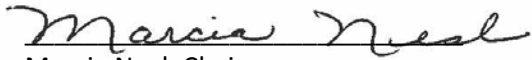
“I don't know that I have ever met a professional with greater integrity than Commissioner Hammond.”

“I highly respect Mr. Hammond. He has integrity and performed well in a very tough and often thankless job. I appreciate him and his work.”



Based on these responses as well as first-hand knowledge of the commissioner's work, the board unanimously agrees the commissioner has done an outstanding job this past year. The state board supported the commissioner's initiatives and strategies. The state board is grateful for the work the commissioner has provided to the students of Colorado during his four years of leadership as Commissioner of Education. He will be greatly missed in the education community.

Very Truly Yours,



Marcia Neal, Chairman
3rd Congressional District
On Behalf of the State Board of Education

