

Foundation Against Intolerance & Racism



FOUNDATION
AGAINST
INTOLERANCE
& RACISM

October 21, 2024



Welcome and Introduction



Lauren Boll

State Coordinator

lauren.boll@fairforall.org



Tiffany Howell

State Coordinator

tiffany.howell@fairforall.org

Objectives



Provide an overview of FAIR Colorado



Grow knowledge of public education in Colorado



Understand the application of FAIR principles in the role of State Board of Education



Overview of updated Social Studies Standards

What Can You Do?

Our Mission



The Foundation Against Intolerance & Racism (FAIR) is a **nonpartisan** organization dedicated to advancing civil rights and liberties, and **promoting a common culture based on fairness, understanding and humanity.**

What We Stand For



- We defend **civil liberties** and rights guaranteed to each individual, including freedom of speech and expression, equal protection under the law, and the right to personal privacy.
- We **advocate for individuals** who are threatened or persecuted for speech, or who are held to a different set of rules for language or conduct based on their skin color, ancestry, or other immutable characteristics.
- We support respectful disagreement. We believe **bad ideas are best confronted with good ideas** – and never with dehumanization, deplatforming or blacklisting.
- We believe that **objective truth** exists, that it is discoverable, and that scientific research must be untainted by any political agenda.
- We are **pro-human**, and promote compassionate interactions rooted in dignity and our common humanity.

Overview of the Issues



In this cultural moment, conflicting views of American history and society are polarizing our country

- Illiberal and regressive ideologies have captured many of our cultural, media, medical, and educational institutions
- The common feature that unites these ideologies is the view that all people are defined primarily by immutable characteristics such as skin color or ancestry, and that we are valuable as representatives of an identity group, rather than as unique human beings
- Proponents of these regressive ideologies advocate for policies that would take us backward - toward discrimination and division - instead of forward, toward a more fair, optimistic and just future

Chapter Goals



- **Empower:** Organize members and host events. Build community. Activate FAIR Resources
- **Inform:** Research laws and policies, educate FAIR members and the local community. Volunteer for school committees. Interview political candidates and share their answers.
- **Advocate:** Meet with policy makers, support legislation, and local policies. Write letters, articles and position statements. Participate in newspaper interviews, podcasts, tv interviews. Attend school board meetings.

FAIR Colorado

Who Is FAIR Colorado?

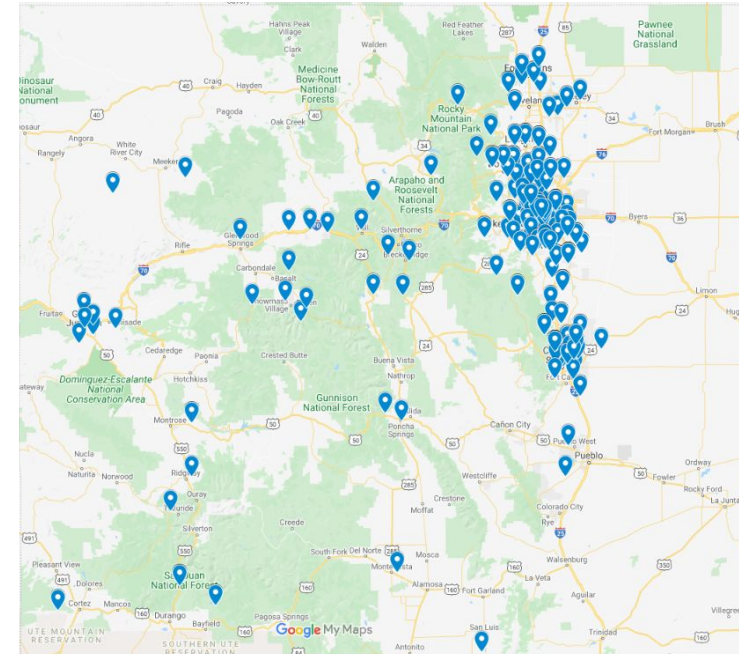
- State Coordinators Laureen Boll and Tiffany Howell
- ~ 900 registered members
- Douglas County and El Paso/Teller County chapters
- Education and Medicine Networks
- [FAIR CO Website](#)

What's On the Horizon:

- Track upcoming legislation bills that inject illiberalism into our institutions
- Future webinars addressing identity politics and gender ideology in schools
- In-person event addressing ideological capture of medicine
- Share examples of pro-human activities via Substack (coming soon!!)

Still Recruiting:

- Leaders in new regions
- Volunteers with specialized expertise
- Enthusiastic members who want to promote pro-human values in Colorado

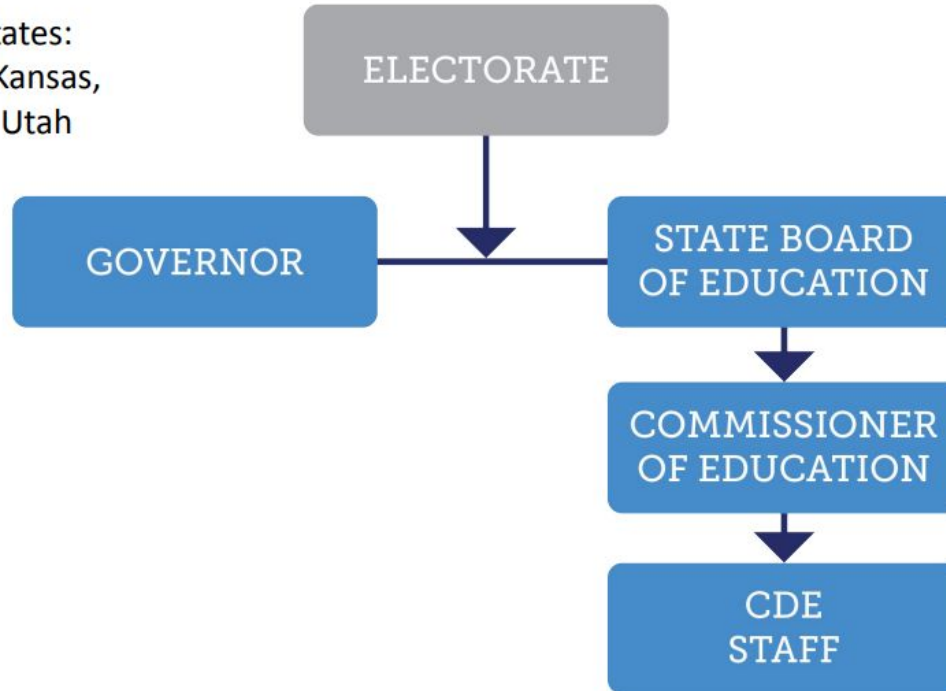


Public Education in CO

Colorado's Education Governance Model



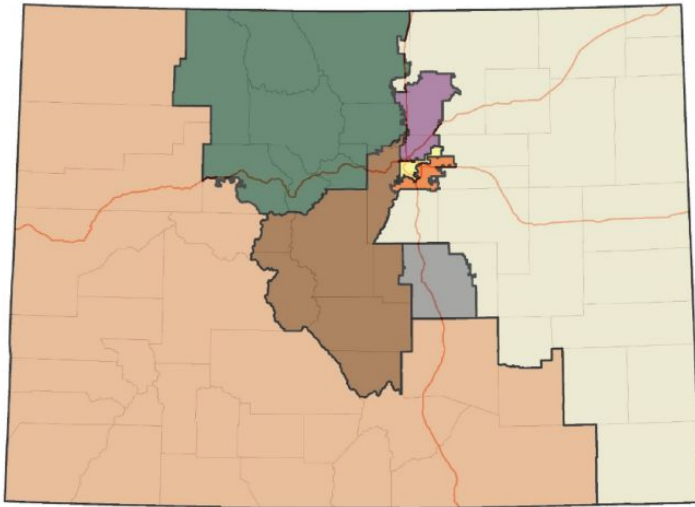
Model shared by 6 states:
Alabama, Colorado, Kansas,
Michigan, Nebraska, Utah



Colorado State Board of Education



Composed of 9* elected officials, each elected to 6-year terms. Eight members are elected to represent their congressional district and one member is elected at large.



- Lisa Escarcega** (D), 1st Cong. District, Denver
- Angelika Schroeder** (D), 2nd Cong. District, Boulder *
- Joyce Rankin** (R), 3rd Cong. District, Carbondale *
- Debora Scheffel** (R), 4th Cong. District, Parker *
- Steve Durham** (R), 5th Cong. District, Colo. Springs
- Rebecca McClellan** (D), 6th Cong. District, Centennial
- Karla Esser** (D), 7th Cong. District, Arvada
- Rhonda Solis** (D), 8th Cong. District, Brighton *
- Kathy Plomer** (D), At-large Member

* up for election in 2024

State Board Statutory Authority



Title 22 of the Colorado Revised Statutes outlines the roles and responsibilities of the state board, including:

*Overseeing
Commissioner and
Department of
Education*

*Adopting state
standards, assessments
and graduation
guidelines*

*Evaluating and
monitoring school
performance (i.e.,
annual targets, district
accreditation, etc.)*

*Adopting rules for
education programs
and grants*

*Adopting educator
performance standards
and licensure
requirements*

*Hearing charter school
appeals*

*Approving grant
recipients and amounts*

*Granting waivers from
state education statutes*

Authority of State vs Local School Boards



As a “Local Control” state, there are several powers that lie outside of the State Board of Education’s purview. The authors of the state’s Constitution “made the choice to place control ‘as near the people as possible’ by creating a representative government in miniature to govern instruction.”

Local School Board Authority

- Curriculum
- Personnel
- Budget
- School calendars
- Classroom policy
- Charter school application and renewal
- Hires Superintendent

State School Board Authority

- Distribute state and federal funds
- Regulate educator licensing
- Approve grade-level standards
- Accredite public school districts
- Charter school appeals
- Hires Commissioner of Education

Attributes of a Pro-Human Board of Education



- Is skeptical of policies and programs that promote identity groups as superior to the individual (e.g., Culturally Responsive Education)
- Rejects the expectation that academic outcomes should be equivalent across groups (e.g., Equity)
- Respects the role that parents play in raising their children in accordance with their own personal beliefs, values and convictions
- Maintains a focus on academic excellence without the distraction of social justice activism

Concerns in Education



- Advocating for your child's academic needs
- Bullying – physical and online
- Staff shortages
- Controversial curriculum and instructional materials
- Physical safety – internal and external
- Declining academic performance
- Mental health and resourcing
- Disruptive classrooms
- Special education staff crisis, funding, backlog



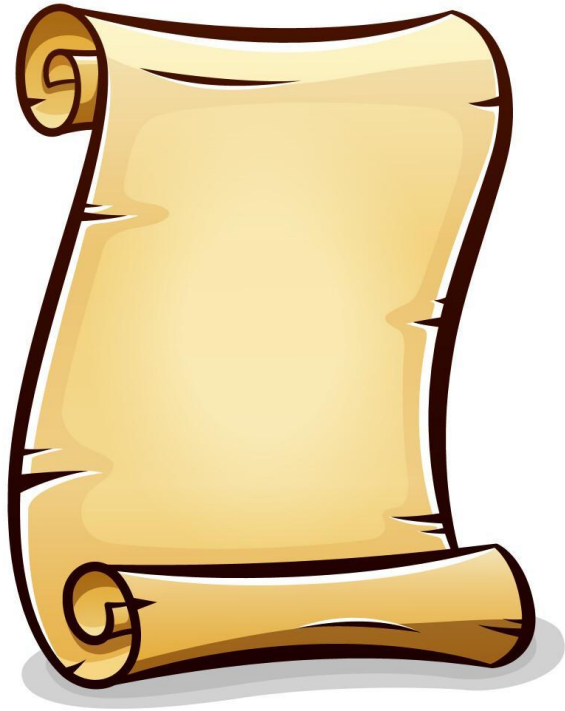
Updated Social Studies Standards

HB19-1192: Inclusion of American Minorities in Teaching Civil Government



- This [regulation](#) amended curriculum requirements for civics and history education
 - Expanded U.S. civics and history PK-12 education requirements for history and civil government studies to add the contributions of Asian Americans, LGBTQ individuals, religious minorities and the “intersectionality of significant social and cultural features within these communities.”
- The bill had a nefarious “safety clause” claiming “this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health and safety”, which prevented the public from being able to petition for a referendum vote on the bill before it became law
- Created a 16-member history, culture, social contributions, and civil government in education commission, which would make recommendations to the State Board of Education

Introduction of Revised Social Studies Standards



- The revisions to Colorado’s Social Studies Standards were released November 2021 and went through several weeks of public scrutiny
- Many people were shocked to see how the US was portrayed
 - Our country was founded on the premise of oppressing marginalized groups rather than on the idea of individuals seeking freedom and opportunity
 - Students learn to group people by their skin color or sexuality and generalize about each individual group member’s perspective on life based on stereotypes
- The proposed first-grade standards included discussions related to sexual orientation and gender identity

Responses to Proposed Standards

Round One



- FAIR submitted public comment in January 2022 in which the following concerns were identified:
 - Overarching focus on immutable characteristics over which children have no control
 - Emphasis on groups rather than individuals
 - Suggesting that members of groups inevitably think, feel, and experience in the same way
- The standards review committee considered the record-setting number of public comments and modified the new standards before presenting its final work to the State Board of Education in the Spring of 2022
 - Removed 27 references to “LGBTQ”, leaving only five references
 - Removed the mention of LGBTQ from below 4th grade, which is more in-line with a state law disallowing comprehensive human sexuality courses below fourth grade



Responses to Proposed Standards

Round Two



- Many progressive groups including parents, students, and teachers rallied in defense of what they called “the more inclusive and specific version of the standards.” They said students would benefit from seeing themselves in the curriculum and in American history
 - Youth who identified as LGBTQ testified that they would have understood themselves better and feared less for their futures if they had learned about gay or transgender people living full lives and contributing to their communities
- In November 2022, the Colorado State Board of Education majority rejected the review committee’s revisions. They restored most of the cut material with some formatting changes to reduce repetition. They also rejected parents’ demand that they should control when sexual orientation and gender identity are introduced to their young children. Additionally, the acronym “LGBTQ” was added into the civics standards beginning in preschool

How Social Studies Standards Are Being Rolled-Out



Using the state's teaching materials is optional; the subject matter and developing a resource bank was required by House Bill 19-1192

- Teachers now have access to [educational resources](#) that are meant to teach students about the history, culture, and social contributions of American minorities, based on the group to whom they belong
 - For example, Colorado's first and second graders can learn about the story behind Harvey Milk's gay pride flag, while third graders can learn about California's failed 1978 ban on lesbian and gay teachers, Milk's death, and his murderer's controversial sentencing

What Can You Do?



- Email state legislators and request that they rescind HB19-1192
 - Email the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and request that they remove the list of Voluntary Annotated Resources from their website
 - Encourage your local school board to not utilize the resources on the CDE website
-
- Vote for the state board of education candidate who will not prioritize identity groups over individuals *and* who will respect the role of parents



Questions?²³

Position Statement



FAIR promotes the constitutional right of parents/guardians to raise their children as they see fit, which includes decisions about their children's education. The right to direct the upbringing of one's child is recognized as a fundamental due process right under the Fourteenth Amendment. FAIR supports open communication and disclosure as not only fundamental to parents' and guardians' ability to make appropriate decisions regarding their children's education, but essential to building trust between schools and families.



Volunteer With Us!

FAIR is rapidly expanding but there is more work to be done!

If you haven't done so already, join FAIR by clicking "Join Us" at fairforall.org

Seeking Volunteers

- Aligned with FAIR's Mission and Principles
- Possess a desire to advance FAIR's aims
- Time commitment: determine your time commitment when volunteering
- Willingness to participate in FAIR trainings and meetings
- An understanding of local, state and national issues
- Prior advocacy experience not required
- Depending on role, a background check may be required
- Volunteer agreement must be signed for all volunteers
- Ability to function in a grassroots environment

Send an email to colorado@fairforall.org if you're interested in getting more involved!



Resources: Constructive Solutions

FAIR in Education Supporting education that advances fairness, understanding, and humanity.

FAIR Story A fact-based approach to teaching students about racism.

FAIR Literature Guides Emphasize pro-human values and support literacy development, designed for use with elementary-age students

Success@School Handbook A guide to navigating the current issues in K-12 education

FAIR Substack A platform of original content. **Submit articles, interviews, essays at** Submissions@fairforall.org

FAIR Newsletter and Weekly Round-up Bringing you news and updates from FAIR

FAIR Social Media Amplifying immediate and meaningful information: X, FB, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube. **Follow us on social media**

FAIR in Medicine Advocating to treat every patient as a unique individual. **Seeking members from the medical community**

FAIR in the Arts Championing freedom of expression, open-mindedness, and the ability to strive for excellence in all creative endeavors

FAIR Legal Network FAIR has a network of attorneys who will support FAIR's mission. **Seeking lawyers from across the country**

FAIR Transparency Submit reviews and incident reports on schools, municipalities and companies