



COLORADO
Department of Education
Commissioner of Education

201 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203-1799

Sept. 26, 2022

Dear Superintendents and BOCES Directors,

It was great to see many of you at the CASE conference up in Beaver Creek last week. I thought the session on future scenario planning was really interesting - and good to think about! I would love to have him do a presentation to the State Board of Education. I'm going to think about that 😊.

I also had some really good conversations with my Rural Council before the CASE meeting started. One thing that came up was continued frustration that CDE staff are in a hybrid work environment - some days working from home, some from the office and some days out in the field. The Rural Council members suggested I reach out to you all to explain the reasoning and the decision behind it. Here is some relevant context and facts that influenced my decision to move to a hybrid work environment:

- CDE currently occupies parts of five buildings in the Denver area because all 585 staff cannot fit into our main building at 201 E. Colfax. These buildings are expensive and have little to no parking for staff.
- It is my firm belief that we have maintained our work and in many cases increased productivity without everyday commutes, expensive parking, and long travel time between meetings, etc.
- The Governor has also started two big initiatives that impact us. One is an [executive order](#) requiring state agencies to: 1) increase flexible work arrangements and encourage work from home for state employees, and 2) decrease the physical footprint of state offices by at least 30% by condensing and decreasing the number of leases. The way we can respond to those orders is to move to a hybrid work environment and create “office hoteling” space at 201 E. Colfax. This enables us to release our leases in the other buildings. We have already given up one building and thus are saving taxpayer money.
- As you know, many organizations across the world have shifted to remote or hybrid workplaces. CDE is no different - implementing hybrid and remote work environments, with guardrails, is a great way to promote retention and entice high quality candidates to our organization. I know some of you are frustrated because schools are back in-person while we are not in-person all the time, but the reality is that the nature of CDE's work is different. Also, we often do not pay as much as our neighboring competitors in salary, so we are looking for other ways to recruit and retain our employees. The hybrid work arrangement is seen as a benefit to many employees, so despite salary differences we are able to recruit and retain talented staff.
- Additionally, the hybrid model has provided CDE with a greater opportunity to hire staff from across the state. Several of our new staff members reside in remote areas of the state. For years



our colleagues in the field have urged us to hire people outside the metro area. A hybrid work model allows us to do that. This provides CDE with valuable perspectives from rural districts and makes us more responsive to the needs of the field.

- I have asked CDE employees to prioritize being in schools, attending meetings or visiting you, as you wish. I feel that is the most important use of in-person time. We are also revamping our Colfax building to create spaces that are more conducive to hosting meetings, collaborating with each other and districts, and facilitating the many task forces we staff.

I humbly request that you share this information with your colleagues who are frustrated so they know the reasoning behind it. I know not everyone will agree, but it was important for me to share the “why.” And, If you are not seeing the service you need, please let me or your field services representatives know, and I will rectify the situation quickly.

Thank you for all that you do (I know it is a lot!),

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katy Anthes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Katy Anthes, Ph.D.
Commissioner

