

*Stakeholder Input Report for*

***Colorado River***

***BOCES***

***Parachute, Colorado***

*submitted by*

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### **Executive Summary**

In November 2024, consultant Dr. Christy Sinner conducted meetings with district stakeholders representing three different groups associated with the Colorado River BOCES that were identified by the board of education. The consultant received input from ten (10) individuals. Input was gathered during one on one conversations regarding the selection of a new executive director for the Colorado River BOCES. Outlined on the first two page is an Executive Summary of the major themes expressed by the participants at these discussions. Following the Executive Summary is a compilation of the input received from the individuals response to the five questions asked of each individual.

## **Executive Summary:**

### ***Tell about the good things/strengths/points of pride about the BOCES.***

The Colorado River BOCES provides many support programs to the five member school districts. The programming support varies within each district. The CTE programs, alternative licensing, online classes, and special education support were often commended and provide opportunities for students. These programs help the member districts by providing additional services beyond what the school districts can provide. The Yampah Mountain High School is a vital and valued component of the BOCES and needs to stay as an option for students in the valley. The executive director is supportive and has built a staff that has integrity and follows through on their assignments with little supervision needed. Numerous grants are written and received to support programming offered through the BOCES.

### ***Tell about the needs, challenges, concerns, or what needs to be tweaked?***

Financial structure, district needs/alignment, and grant funding were areas consistently brought forward. The financial structure and sharing of budgets and billing doesn't match what districts use nor does it align with Colorado Department of Education structure. The invoices sent to districts are not clear on what they are being charged for and late getting to the districts finance offices. There is a lack of known fees and how billing takes place. Some CTE programs feel more pushed on the districts from BOCES instead of it being a district need that BOCES supports and implements. With the large amount of initiatives, the BOCES is spreading the resources thin when several areas of need were identified that aren't part of the support received by school district. BOCES writes and receives many grants but the grants aren't always focused on district needs and seem to align more with businesses and available funding. A focus on working with districts to align their needs with BOCES support was brought forward. Special education is a critical component of the BOCES and needs to have a higher focus.

### ***Relationships between BOE and Executive Director ~ Dynamics of the BOE?***

Just as in a school district, the board of education has a critical role within the BOCES. While there is mutual respect between the board of education and the executive director, the roles and responsibilities are not always clear to the individual board members. The board of education has had many changes in membership and there is also a lack of consistency in attendance at board meetings. Building stronger relationships might help foster the commitment along with continued, ongoing, and frequent communication.

### ***What are the issues the incoming executive director should be aware of as he/she comes into the position?***

The new executive director needs to involve area superintendents more, spend time in the

districts, and focus on district needs. Special education needs to be at the forefront of the work in the BOCES and work to build capacity and sustainability within the program. BOCES provides many programs but all need to be evaluated to assess the alignment to district needs, budget considerations, and value added to districts/students. A financial structure needs to be put in place with known fees, an outline of billing, and a reporting structure that is transparent to the districts. Knowing and/or learning the regions politics, diversity, socio economic status, and housing needs are important. Leadership at the school districts and the board of education members have been continually changing making it a challenge for consistency.

***What are the characteristics the new executive director should have to be successful?***

Strong leadership skills with the ability to listen, communicate, collaborate, and focus on district needs were noted characteristics. Being able to facilitate and bring teams together for the best interest of students within the BOCES is desired. The new executive director needs to have experience and knowledge in special education with a passion in CTE. The ability to build trust and foster relationships is wanted.

### **Stakeholder Group Responses**

**Tell me about the good things/strengths/points of pride about the BOCES.**

- Alternative licensing
- Executive director has stepped in to be mentor as needed
- Executive director available to chat and support a district as need
- Strength in sped support
- Grant funding (but doesn't align with district needs but covers a lot of the budget)
- Doing a lot of good work
- CTE background/foundation as part of function life skills
- Programs that are current (AI, cyber security)
- Yampah school is needed and valued
- Staff knows their roles and responsibilities and do them with little supervision
- Executive director has trust in his employees
- Great relationships have been built within sped districts
- Good communication among admin team
- CTE and online program beneficial and needed
- Staff is approachable
- Flexible at offering programs to meet district needs
- Travel to the districts to meet
- The value of education is known
- Excellent opportunities for students
- Solid landing spot for services
- Strong caring people
- Passion of the staff

**Tell me what needs challenges/concerns or what needs to be tweaked?**

- CTE pushed to all districts not always beneficial or effective
- Yampah location isn't beneficial or useful for all districts
- Need to bring support for mental health training in for staff to help students
- Counseling support would be beneficial
- Title IX investigation/decision/appeal support needed
- Grant funding doesn't align with districts wants/needs - do survey for areas of interest
- Focus seems to be based on business owners and economic standpoint
- Focus planning with district administration ~ include superintendents and principals
- Finance reports and practice needs to align with CDE practices and common language needed
- Equitable funding for each district on Yampah
- Unknown funding model and district contributions
- Staff is itinerant and don't know full scope of BOCES work or each other
- Not a lot of checks and balances within the system
- Sped side needs built up
- Continue to build sped capacity - only brought in for some when its already tough
- Roles need to be defined
- Funding structure is unknown to districts
- Board participation is low, inconsistent, and members change frequently

- Charges are late and unknown what is being billed and why
- Meetings aren't new learning or district focused
- Focus on systemic value for student education is needed and not follow funding source
- Sped should be a priority and has the most implication
- CTE and other outside players, online program, etc divide power and resource some is due to grant but too much spent and not on district needs
- Nervous about change
- Need clear picture of what the year looks like
- Minutes/notes from meetings needed and shared out
- Improved communication out to district Superintendent's
- District don't fully understand what a BOCES does and it's critical role
- Grant writing without input and stated need
- A structure resident to change needs established

### **Relationships between BOE, districts, and Executive Director ~ Dynamics of the BOE?**

- Board wants more information and data behind decisions made
- More financial transparency is needed ~ lots of soft money and grants but funding goes away
- Whys of doing things needs explained more
- Have mutual respect for each other
- Districts are in need/want of different programming
- Concrete details and understanding before approving
- BOE is volunteer position with lots of demands and commitments
- More updates are needed regularly to BOE so they can share with their school boards
- Needs to be a stronger relationship
- Too many delays in retreat and strategic goal setting
- Frustration with lack of response in committing and communicating via email
- BOE has turned over frequently and many changes in superintendents in the past few years ~ stability is needed
- Communication needs to be improved all the way around
- Districts aren't aligned with what BOCES priorities ~ not listening to districts
- Continually improving
- Outreach would strengthen engagement and help foster relationships
- Roles and expectations of BOE members needs defined

### **What are the issues the incoming executive director should be aware of as he/she comes into the position?**

- Will staffing stay or go with current ED leaving
- Need to address what programs will remain and what will be changing
- Financial transparency is needed
- BOCES doesn't need hands in everything and should focus on sped, campus, and PD ~ opportunities for all instead of so many spinning wheels
- Funds spent on alignment of district needs isn't happening
- Finance
- Service providers salary to be competitive

- Remote is not a good option for service providers ~ need to build relationships
- Sped directors should be part of every family (school district) as called upon often
- Relationship needs cultivated with the BOE
- Develop closer relationships with superintendents and BOE members
- Minimum of 50% of time on location
- Understanding complexity of the valley - politics, diversity, socio economic status
- Strategic plan will provide direction needed ~ every district has CTE in theirs
- CTE hasn't cost the districts anything until this year and is political
- The tail seems to wag the dog
- Unknown direction ~ wanted it one way and did it then wanted another way
- Division of resources, time, funding and needs over what money is available
- Know grant opportunities
- Silos of conversations between superintendents but not openly ~ needs to be transparent
- More time in districts by ED to see what is happening and have open conversations
- Districts are different ~ social, economic status, rural, affects of drugs, alcohol, and dramatic situations and political differences
- Day treatment center is needed
- Understand district dynamics and issues: housing, interplay of municipalities
- Recruitment and retention of staff is a concern as well as meeting HQ requirements
- Leadership has been a revolving door at district level and the BOCES BOE
- Funding is ever changing and variable
- Teacher induction and licensure needs to continue
- Yampah charter school discussions happening
- Money and time needs to be focused on
- Help remove barriers and add value

**What are the characteristics the new executive director should have to be successful?**

- Experience
- Knowledge to help with processes
- Support with induction
- Be there and support when needed
- Person who can facilitate collegiality
- Bring districts together to work
- Mental health background knowledge
- Join together and support as one unit
- Sense of humor
- Decisive
- Approachable
- Inspire
- Motive
- Relationship builder
- Reset and redesign
- Build from the bottom up
- Strong communication skills
- Fresh perspective



- Have fundamental requirements of position
- Learning focus
- Able to listen
- Ability to weave things together
- Understand political impact
- Not be a micromanager
- Build trust quickly
- Understand staff strengths and play off those
- Can't make huge immediate changes
- Check in with staff and communicate but trust them to do their jobs
- Staff works autonomously
- Understand BOCES organization as a whole is a benefit
- Passion for CTE and sped
- Understand it is not a K-12 school focus
- Understand a strong foundation has been build and reinforce to keep it excelling
- Knowledge of special education ~ legal requirements, advocacy
- Open communication
- Responsive and transparent
- Shadowing will be beneficial for new ED
- Tenacious
- Patient
- Communication beyond email is needed
- Flexible
- Can do research for each group
- Continues building of relationships