

Statement from Dolores High School Principal Matt Walker:

House Bill 26-1078 definitely opens some interesting doors for our rural high schools. Giving students more direct access to 4 year college courses could really bridge the gap for those headed to a university, and a little healthy competition between institutions usually ends up benefiting the kids. However, we need to be realistic about the impact on a small district.

Managing partnerships with multiple colleges is potentially an administrative nightmare. Our staff is already spread thin, usually wearing three or four hats. Adding additional Universities those staff members will have to juggle different registration systems, conflicting academic calendars, and messy transcript reporting. Without extra funding or dedicated staff, we are looking at a tinderbox for missed deadlines and frustrated students.

Many parents continue to expect to have access to their students' college academic information and access to the instructors via the high school and that does not always connect with the way the colleges interpret FERPA.

We also cannot ignore the impact on our existing partners like Pueblo Community College. PCC does a lot more than just offer classes; they invest in our teachers' credentials and provide the ability to stipend on campus concurrent enrollment teachers that keep our programs running. If we pull students away from community colleges, we risk destabilizing the very institutions that sustain our local workforce.

For our school and community, this is not only about choice, but about protecting the local educational network that actually keeps our community afloat. It has the potential to benefit kids but the throw it out there and let them figure it out mentality, will create inequities that will most likely harm students disproportionately in our area.