



PRESS RELEASE
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Colorado Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Releases Report on the Racial Impact of Public School Attendance Zones

The Colorado Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has released its report, *[Examining the Racial Impact of Public School Attendance Zones in Colorado](#)*. The report is based on a series of 4 web hearings and an in-person hearing conducted between February to May of 2023. The Committee gathered testimony, written statements, and other resources addressing this topic.

The Committee identified four key findings:

1. Colorado students do not have equal educational opportunity, due in part to the limitations of attendance zones.
2. Attendance zones contribute to racialized perceptions of quality.
3. School districts often use attendance zones to create neighborhood schools and increase racial diversity.
4. Individualized school choice is a useful but incomplete solution to the disparate impacts created by attendance zones.

The report offers 15 recommendations for corrective action, directed to stakeholders including the Colorado General Assembly, Colorado School Districts, the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Colorado School Transportation Modernization Task Force, Colorado Department of Education, civil rights bar, school choice advocates, and community-based organizations. Among these recommendations include:

1. To facilitate compliance with the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA), Colorado should adopt transparent enrollment systems with information relevant to parents.
2. School districts should rely on §204(c) of the EEOA when drawing catchment areas and setting student-assignment policies.
3. School districts should revise their catchment areas and assignment policies regularly, at least every four years.
4. Employ attendance zones only as part of a controlled-choice system that incorporates the terms of the EEOA and respects the civil rights of students if implementing neighborhood-school policies.

Chair Alvina Earnhart stated, “Access to quality education and school choice are fundamental rights that should be protected and made available to all individuals regardless of race. The Committee is pleased to have the opportunity to examine the racial

impact of public school attendance zones in Colorado and provide policy recommendations to the Colorado General Assembly, Colorado School Districts, the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Colorado School Transportation Modernization Task Force, Colorado Department of Education, civil rights bar, school choice advocates, and community-based organizations. We thank the panelists for their contributions and hard work to bring attention to this important topic.”

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is the only independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement. Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. For information about the Commission, please visit www.usccr.gov and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).