



Quality Community Group Luncheon K-12 Challenges

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K-12 Challenges

- The Role of Public Education in our Community
 - High Performing, College-Bound Kids
 - Low Performing, At-Risk Kids
 - Kids in the Middle
 - K-12 & Social Services
 - Student Achievement or “Well Rounded”



K-12 Challenges

- Social Issues Assumed by K-12
 - Before & After School Daycare
 - Social Work
 - School Psychology
 - Nursing & Medications
 - Family and Domestic Abuse
 - Drug & Health Education
 - Now it's "Obesity"



K-12 Challenges

- Education Reform
 - Reform is Here!
 - No Child Left Behind, Colo Basic Literacy, CSAP and State Accreditation
 - Focus on the Basics – CSAP & SAR's
 - Academic Watch & Charter School Conversion
 - Competition and School Choice



K-12 Challenges

- Student Achievement
 - Improvements in Low-Socio Economic Schools
 - Bell Curve of State SAR Rankings
 - Graduation Rates



K-12 Challenges

- School Capital Needs & Growth
 - The gamut of needs from older districts and schools to newer districts & growth
 - Capital Funding Mechanism Restraints
 - AV Growth
 - Passing Bond Referenda
 - Caught in the Developer Wars
 - Migration of Students
 - Escalating Capital Constructions Costs



K-12 Challenges

- Amendment 23, TABOR & K-12 Funding
 - Amendment 23 as an insurance policy
 - Amendment 23 and fixing the “Gap”
 - TABOR restricting entrepreneurial revenues
 - TABOR Spending restricted to Inflation?
 - School Finance vs Reform & Mandates
 - New School Finance Act on the Horizon



K-12 Challenges

- Politics and Distractions
 - D-11 BOE and Pay for View Survivor
 - Who's next? Harrison, Falcon, Jeffco?
 - 65% Spending Initiative
 - Legislation, legislation, & more legislation
 - Charters & Vouchers
 - Anti-Tax Advocates



K-12 Challenges

- School Finance Update
 - SFA of 1994
 - Total Program (Students X \$PPR)
 - Property Tax, SOT & State Equalization
 - Largely based on “Operating” Needs
 - SFA of 2005
 - Interim School Finance Committee
 - Based of Adequacy and Standards-Based Ed
 - Where will the State get the money?



K-12 Challenges (South)

- Fountain Fort Carson D-8
 - Growth of new students
 - Ability of State to Fund Public Education

- Widefield D-3
 - Growth
 - Lowest Level of Funding (Floor District)



K-12 Challenges (North)

- Academy D-20
 - Residential Development with less AV
 - School Finance Funding

- Lewis Palmer D-38
 - Growth of Students in a small district
 - Transition from Little District to Big



K-12 Challenges (West)

- Manitou D-14
 - Adequate Funding for Salaries & Benefits
 - Adequate Funding for Capital Maintenance

- Woodland Park RE-1
 - Growth



K-12 Challenges (East)

- Falcon D-49
 - Explosive Growth
 - Lack of assessed valuation


- Ellicott/Hanover, Etc
 - Growth is coming
 - Facilities and small district



K-12 Challenges (Central)

- D-11
 - Political Environment Distractions
 - Deteriorating Facilities
 - Declining Enrollment
 - "Flat" Student Achievement

- Harrison D-2
 - Very Similar situation without the awareness



K-12 Challenges

- Conclusions
- Questions & Answers

Issue Brief

Student Achievement

What some people say:

Public education in Colorado isn't working.

Public schools are failing.

Some believe that districts serving most of Colorado's children are failing under the requirements of the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) and that our students are not doing well compared to other states. This is certainly not true in Colorado. According to national measures, including the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*, and in comparison to other states, Colorado schools are generally doing quite well.

Facts:

1. Colorado school districts performed very well in meeting the requirements of NCLB:

- 63% of the districts in Colorado met 100% of their targets in 2004, a small increase over last year.
- 85% met over 95% of their targets.
- 90% met over 90% of their targets.
- The number of required targets ranged from 4 to 142, depending on the size and diversity of the district.
- The students who did not make Adequate Yearly Progress were largely students with disabilities and English language learners.

Source: Colorado Department of Education

2. Colorado had the greatest increase among all states in the percent of students taking Advanced Placement courses over the past three years.

Source: College Board (Advanced Placement Report to the Nation, 2005)

3. Colorado students do very well on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) compared to students in other states:

- Colorado ranks 5th on the 4th grade reading portion of the NAEP and 17th in 4th grade math.
- Colorado 8th graders rank 12th in reading and 10th in math on the NAEP.
- Colorado ranks 2nd nationally in parent engagement, overall school climate, and school safety.

- We achieve this level of success despite ranking 40th in education spending per student and 45th in percent of taxable resources spent on education.

Source: Quality Counts, Education Week, Jan. 6, 2005

Challenge(s):

Closing the achievement gap between African-American and Hispanic students and Whites and Asian students remains a major challenge. The gap has closed substantially in reading (particularly in 4th grade since 1997). Schools and districts across the state are working hard both to close the gap and to increase achievement for all students.

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Issue Brief

Accountability

What some people say:

Public education is not accountable.

Public schools and districts in Colorado have never been more accountable. School districts continue to be accountable to their local communities through the locally elected school board. Three formal accountability systems in Colorado measure student progress: School Accountability Reports, State Accreditation, and No Child Left Behind (mandated by the federal government). In addition, school and district performance on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) is reported annually in the media as soon as the scores are available in early August.

Facts:

Colorado's School Accountability Reports (SARs) are published annually and distributed to parents across the state. The SAR provides two kinds of academic ratings (growth and achievement) based on CSAP. SARs also provide information about safety and discipline, staff education, experience and salaries, district financial status, and student/teacher ratios, among other things. <http://reportcard.cde.state.co.us/reportcard/CommandHandler.jsp>

- Districts accredit schools in Colorado and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) accredits districts through a process established by the State Board of Education. There is no state summary of districts or schools accreditation status, but information on individual school districts and schools is available from that school district's administration office. http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_accredit.htm
- The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) provision of the federal *No Child Left Behind* Act sets annual targets for student achievement for districts and schools overall and for nine subgroups (e.g. race, income, English language proficiency, and disability). If they have enough students in each subgroup to report results, districts can have more than 150 targets to meet each year and schools can have more than 50 targets. Schools and districts that miss one target receive the same failing rating as those that miss all of them and are subject to the same sanctions. <http://www.cde.state.co.us/ayp/index.asp>

Challenges(s):

The three accountability systems each have a different focus. While all three

systems use CSAP data to measure student performance, different criteria are applied in each system, producing conflicting, and often confusing, ratings about how well students and schools are performing. In addition, the system of accountability in Colorado needs to be evaluated to determine whether it meets its goals.

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Issue Brief

Taxpayer Bill of Rights

What some people say:

TABOR has been good for Colorado.

Voters added the Colorado Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR) to the Colorado constitution in November 1992. It applies to all levels of government, including school districts, and is both a revenue and a spending limitation. Under TABOR, the maximum that state government (and school district revenue) can grow is the rate of inflation plus population growth, or the 6% statutory limit, whichever is less. Revenue collected in excess of that amount (the “Tabor Surplus”) must be refunded to the taxpayers. A special provision allows PreK-12 school revenues from local property taxes to grow at a rate equal to the rate of inflation plus the increase in student population in each district.

All increases in taxes and new debt must have voter approval. TABOR also includes a spending limitation that creates a “ratchet effect.” When a state’s revenues decline, legislators cannot return to pre-recession levels of spending as the economy recovers. Instead, spending may only increase incrementally from the prior year’s level. This ratchet effect keeps government spending from keeping up with economic growth and limits the government’s ability to fund necessary infrastructure and services.

While TABOR has kept taxes low, and even resulted in tax refunds for Colorado residents, restrictions on revenue have created some dire consequences for public services including public schools.

Facts:

1. Colorado ranks 47th in K-12 education funding as a share of state income.

Source: National Education Association, Rankings and Estimates, May 2004, Table H-13

2. Colorado ranks 48th in K-12 spending per \$1,000 of personal income.

Source: Colorado Legislative Council Issue Brief 03-06, “How Colorado Compares in K-12 Education Funding” April, 2003

3. Colorado has eliminated all funds for full-day kindergarten in low-performing schools and cut funding for 2,000 pre-school slots for at-risk four-year-olds.

Source: John Ziegler, Colorado Joint Budget Committee-JBC-staff, Memorandum to Members of the JBC, “Summary of Actions Taken to Balance Prior Year Budgets”, Sept., 2004

4. The ratio of teacher salaries to average private-sector earnings is lower in Colorado than any other state. *Source: AFT Survey and US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics*

In addition:

1. Per capita personal income has fallen 3.7% after inflation, a sharper drop than in any other state.

Source: Center on Budget Policies and Priorities (CPBB), "Is Colorado's TABOR Creating Jobs", January, 2005

2. Colorado has been among the lowest states in job growth and, in fact, has lost 68,000 jobs in the last 44 months.

Source: Center on Budget Policies and Priorities (CPBB) "Is Colorado's TABOR Creating Jobs", January, 2005

3. Colorado has declined to 48th in the nation for state funds for higher education per \$1,000 of personal income. If this trend continues, K-12 graduates will see our colleges and universities with no state support for higher education by 2010, resulting in dramatically higher costs for students to attend an institution of higher education in Colorado.

Source: Center for Budget Policies and Priorities (CPBB) calculations of data from the National Center for Education Statistics

Challenge(s):

Educating all students to higher levels of achievement requires more resources than are currently allotted to K-12 education. The costs of educating students with special needs (e.g. English language learners, special education students, and at-risk students) are rising faster than our funding levels. Colorado citizens continue to demand more services from government and education with ever-shrinking resources to pay for those services.

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Issue Brief

Taxation

What some people say:

My taxes are too high.

Nobody likes to get a tax bill. However, we all know that taxes are the mechanism by which we fund the infrastructure of our great state and nation. Taxes fund things like our roads, water and sewer systems, fire and police protection, and our public schools. How does Colorado stack up to other states in terms of taxing its residents?

In general taxes in Colorado, are actually among the *lowest* in the nation per \$1,000 of personal income. Taxes can vary from district to district and among counties and municipalities, depending on the level of sales tax of local cities and towns, special district levies (e.g. water and sewer districts, fire protection districts, etc.), and county tax levies.

Facts:

Here's a brief overview of the status of taxes per \$1,000 of personal income in Colorado:

1. Colorado ranks 50th in the nation in state and local taxes (combined) per capita.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis estimates, April, 2004

2. Colorado has the lowest state tax burden in the U.S.
3. State corporate income taxes rank 42nd in the U.S. per capita.
4. State sales taxes rank 44th in the U.S. per capita.
5. Liquor and tobacco taxes (a.k.a. "sin taxes") rank 50th in the nation per capita.
6. Local property taxes rank 30th in the U.S. per capita.

Source for #2-6: Colorado Legislative Council Issue Brief #05-01, Jan., 2005, "How Colorado Compares in State and Local Taxes"

Challenge(s):

Maintaining a low tax rate means that, relative to other states, Colorado has less ability to fund its infrastructure, including education. Less money means fewer

services can be provided. A long-term consequence of providing fewer services is that residents of our state may have a diminished quality of life.

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Issue Brief

School Choice

What some people say:

Public education is a monopoly.

Some people believe that public education offers a one-size-fits-all approach with very few choices for students. In fact, Colorado is a national leader in offering a wide array of options for how children are educated within the public school system. Some choices are provided by law and others by individual school district policy.

Facts:

Here's a brief summary of educational choice options in Colorado:

- 1. Charter schools** – The fall 2003 enrollment in the State of Colorado included 31,529 students in 96 charter schools. *Source: Colorado Department of Education*
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/download/ch03pm.pdf>
- 2. Choice within a district** – Colorado law allows children to attend any school in their home school district on a space available basis.
- 3. Choice between districts** – Colorado law allows children to attend school in any school district on a space available basis. Fall 2003 out-of-district enrollment was 35,752 students. *Source: Colorado Dept of Education*
- 4. Title I choice** – Federal *No Child Left Behind* legislation requires school districts to offer free transportation from low-performing schools in order to allow students to attend higher performing schools in the district.
- 5. Special education choice** – Federal law and state statutes allow school districts to place students with an Individual Education Plan into private facilities in order to accommodate the child's special needs. The cost of this program is paid by the student's home school district.
- 6. Post-secondary option** – The post-secondary enrollment options allow high school juniors and seniors to enroll in courses at Colorado institutions of higher education. When the courses count toward high school graduation, tuition is paid by the student's school district.
- 7. Magnet/option/alternative schools** – Some districts have special schools that feature a specific philosophy such as Montessori or Core Knowledge. Schools also may specialize in particular areas (e.g. the arts, vocational education, or technology).

Districts also may have alternative schools for at-risk youth or students who have dropped out of school.

8. Specialized programs – Special programs such as a gifted and talented program and the International Baccalaureate operate within a neighborhood school.

9. Online learning – Web-based courses on the Internet are a growing option for students. Choice range from supplemental courses to complete programs leading to a high school diploma.

Challenge(s):

Providing choice is more expensive than traditional schooling. Smaller and more specialized schools cost districts more money. It's less expensive to operate one larger school than several smaller schools (i.e. efficiency of scale). Also, districts are faced with managing fewer resources to educate the majority of students in regular education in order to serve a smaller number of students in specialized schools.

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