

Charge to the School Finance Task Force

WHEREAS, Senate Joint Resolution 05-047 establishes a ten-member legislative interim committee to study the financing of public schools in Colorado; and

WHEREAS, said resolution charges the committee with studying the funding for students in public schools statewide, analyzing the needs of public school facilities throughout the state, and determining funding factors and formulas that should be adopted to ensure that all students in public schools in the state are receiving a thorough and uniform education in a safe and effective learning environment; and

WHEREAS, said resolution authorizes the appointment of a 16-member school finance task force to assist the interim committee in its work:

The committee hereby charges the school finance task force with studying and reporting to the committee on the following factors and issues:

- ◆ critical components of a school finance act that provide an equitable method of distributing adequate revenue to school districts, including a pupil count date and methodology that recognize staffing requirements for the school year and budgetary realities for declining and increasing enrollment school districts, statewide base funding, and adjustments to base funding that recognize cost differentials and differences in student populations among districts that affect the cost of providing educational services;
- ◆ the division of responsibility between the state and local district taxpayers for funding schools;
- ◆ the ability of school districts to collect property taxes with voter approval to enhance school district funding, whether such additional funding contributes to or detracts from an equitable and adequate financing system, methods to ameliorate any inequities that might be caused by the use of property taxes to enhance funding, and whether such additional funding should be limited, especially in light of the task force's recommendations for a school finance formula;
- ◆ statutory provisions for "earmarking": allocations for instructional materials and capital reserve and risk management funds, at-risk moneys, and preschool moneys;
- ◆ a mechanism for funding charter schools that will address the needs of both school districts and charter schools;
- ◆ a mechanism for funding supplemental on-line education courses that enrich the program offerings of school districts and that provide an alternative method for delivering services to special populations of students;
- ◆ categorical funding; and
- ◆ any other school finance issue of concern to the task force.

The committee further requests that the following considerations be included in the task force's work and reports to the committee:

- ◆ an analysis of the components of Colorado's current school finance system, including categoricals, to determine whether the components of the current system need to be addressed;
- ◆ options for modifications to Colorado's school finance system;
- ◆ the potential or need for a comprehensive rewriting of Colorado's school finance law; and
- ◆ specific recommendations for legislation or for ballot proposals.

The committee requests that the task force submit its recommendations to the committee by September 27, 2005.