

## RESOLUTION ON ERASING THE NEGATIVE FACTOR

WHEREAS, to ensure that every student in Colorado has the same educational opportunities regardless of where the student lives, Colorado's school finance formula since 1994 has included both a base amount of per pupil funding and an additional amount based on "factors" to account for unique local conditions and equalize total per pupil funding across school districts.

WHEREAS, the factors funded through Colorado's school finance formula address significant variables, including district size, personnel costs, cost of living and number of at-risk students in a district.

WHEREAS, starting in fiscal year 2010-11, the legislature added a new "negative factor" to make across-the-board cuts to education spending. The negative factor applies the same percentage cut across districts, resulting in a higher funding loss to districts that rely most heavily on the factors, thereby destroying the equalizing mechanism of the school finance formula and disproportionately impacting the districts and communities with the highest needs.

WHEREAS, when Colorado voters passed Amendment 23 in 2000, the constitutional provision was designed to help Colorado's public school funding catch up to the national average and to keep it at that level. In contravention of this expressed will of the people, the legislature's invention of the negative factor leaves Colorado 42<sup>nd</sup>, more than \$2,500, below the national average in per pupil funding.

WHEREAS, in the 2013-14 fiscal year alone, the negative factor extracted more than \$1 billion from the state's support for public education.

WHEREAS, without the negative factor, the School Finance Act formula would have provided the Telluride School District R-1 with an additional \$ 950,047 in the 2011-2012 school year, an additional \$1,261,375 in the 2012-2013 school year, and an additional \$1,392,270 in the 2013-2014 school year. As a result, the Telluride School Board has had to:

- \*increase class size;
- \*reduce the number of electives available to HS students;
- \*decrease the contribution to the capital fund, therefore deferring maintenance on all but life-safety issues;
- \*increase the replacement cycle for technology equipment by 1-3 years;
- \*freeze teachers' salaries for two years and teachers have had to take furlough days in previous years;
- \*reduce professional development offerings
- \*pass a mil levy increase, but still operating on a deficit model.

WHEREAS, even as the legislature continues to reduce school funding, the legislature has passed multiple significant reform efforts, including but not limited to the Preschool

to Postsecondary Education Alignment Act (CAP4K) (Senate Bill 08-212), the Education Accountability Act of 2009 (Senate Bill 09-163), the Educator Effectiveness Law (Senate Bill 10-191), and the Colorado READ Act (House Bill 12-1238), without adequate revenue support.

These laws impose additional unfunded obligations on school districts already burdened by reduced funding to implement the existing education reforms.

WHEREAS, state revenues are increasing and the legislature has discussed paying off the state payday holiday and replenishing cash funds, the legislature must make it a priority to return to a sensible and constitutional system of school finance.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Telluride School Board calls upon the Colorado Legislature to immediately eliminate the negative factor in K-12 education funding.

Dated this 18th day of March, 2014.

BY:

  
Paul Reich, Board of Education President