



Dear School Finance Interim Committee Member,

The Colorado School Finance Project (CSFP) offers our assistance to this interim committee. Hopefully, what we have provided gives some information regarding process, research, what other states are doing and results after implementing changes. This might be helpful when thinking about translating goals – or topic areas into a distribution mechanism and school finance act.

The revenue concerns that arose as part of the 2005 Interim Committee remain concerns of school districts. A main issue is ensuring that a method for generating new revenue is found versus just rearranging the current dollars. Discussing this as part of the 2009 task force is encouraged.

Also, the work of the 2005 Task Force and Interim Committee is the starting point given all the background and research that was provided. In addition to the work, urging you to utilize the same type of structure with one task force or sub group. There is concern that if the 2009 Task Force and Race to the Top are each broken up into 4 sub groups, all working generally during the same time frame that the quality of work and the varying opinions will be lost. It will make it very difficult for legislators and stakeholders to be involved and a consensus approach taken as ideas are forwarded.

Lastly, when thinking about areas for discussion, a desire to look at broad topics as each of Colorado's 800,000 students have a story. The stories reflect their communities, themselves and their educational needs and aspirations.

These stories need to be reflected and ultimately translated into a formula. So for example the issue of time – is not just a compliance issue but a realization that some students need less and need to have the opportunity to access post secondary options sooner (concurrent enrollment legislation). Some students need more time, longer days, years, summer school, Saturday school, etc. These programs vary by students and by districts.

“Special needs” students should be inclusive of at-risk, non-English speaking, Special Education, and Gifted and Talented. The identification and education needed are programmatic interventions and are relative to the discussion of time, achievement and teacher quality. By creating topic sub groups, the opportunity to benefit from rich discussion and the interactive relationship (time, achievement, teacher quality) between the varied special needs of a student is lost. A sub group discussion limits discussion to silos rather than student needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate – please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,
Tracie L. Rainey
Executive Director
Colorado School Finance Project

COLORADO SCHOOL FINANCE PROJECT