

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 acts to reduce funding 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 the 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 42nd, more than \$2500, 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 Norwood School District with an additional \$378,041.00 in the 2011-2012 school year, an additional \$483,801.00 in the 2012-2013 school year, an additional \$502,909 in the 2013-2014 school year. As a result the Norwood School District's students and staff have had to do without; updated technology, equipment and software, some staff training, time for developing curriculum, summer school programs, full day kindergarten with additional staff, a full time GT position, some extra-curricular activities, a music program, and vocational courses.

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 eliminate the negative factor and return to a sensible and constitutional system of school finance.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the **Norwood School Board** calls upon the Colorado Legislature to immediately eliminate the negative factor in K-12 education funding and restore within the next 5 years funds lost due to its use to date.

