



## 2022 School Funding Ballot Measure *Message Training Series*

Join [Great Education Colorado](#) and members of the [Great Schools, Thriving Communities coalition](#) as we prepare to kick off our path to the ballot for our 2022 school funding ballot measure! We will share our vision to more adequately and equitably fund our K12 system, and opportunities we have in 2022 to make this a reality without raising taxes. Sign up and share this opportunity with friends, family, and other advocates!

### TRAINING DATES AND REGISTRATION:

- [Tuesday, 2/22 | 6-7pm MST](#)
- [Thursday, 2/24 | noon-1pm MST](#)
- [Thursday, 2/24 | 6-7pm MST](#)
- [Tuesday, 3/1 | 6-7pm MST](#)
- [Thursday, 3/3 | noon-1pm MST](#)
- [Thursday, 3/3 | 6-7pm MST](#)

***Virtual on Zoom!***

***Register now using the link for your preferred date and time.***

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### “PRIORITIZE EDUCATION” - 2022 BALLOT CONCEPT

**Issue:** Underfunding of schools has been a chronic problem for decades in Colorado, never more visibly than during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and resulting educator shortage. Colorado schools are currently funded at a level \$600 per pupil behind inflation since the Great Recession in 2008. Colorado teachers have [the least competitive wages in the nation](#) with additional [critical staffing shortages](#) of paraprofessionals, food service workers, bus drivers, and other staff who ensure our students have safe and healthy schools. Additionally, for the first time in its 117 year history, Children’s Hospital Colorado [declared a youth mental health state of emergency](#).

**Opportunity:** According to the [latest Legislative Council economic forecast](#), Colorado’s strong economic recovery is producing rapid growth in revenues (under current tax rates), amounting to an estimated \$5.5 billion above what the constitutional “TABOR” formula will allow the state to retain and spend over the next three years.

**Barrier to Overcome:** Without action, TABOR will require the state to rebate nearly \$6 billion over the next three years, even as Colorado continues to balance the state budget by cutting P-12 funding via the “Budget Stabilization (B.S. or “Borrowing from Students”) Factor” -- i.e., the amount (now \$571 million) it would take to catch up to 2008 inflation-adjusted funding levels. In addition, while federal COVID recovery (“ESSER”) dollars are currently masking the impact of the BS Factor, those funds must be spent by 2024, when schools will fall off a funding cliff if we don’t act.

**Solution:** A ballot measure to expand an existing fiscal mechanism to “debruce” approximately \$800 million of TABOR surplus and dedicate those dollars to P-12 education. ***There would be no increase in tax rates.***

**Ballot Concept:** Divert an additional ⅓ of 1% of taxable income already collected under existing law to the State Education Fund (SEF) and remove it permanently from the TABOR surplus calculation. The SEF is currently funded annually using this mechanism.

- A diversion of .33% would be about **\$824 million**, meaning that \$1 billion in TABOR “surplus” would still be rebated.
- Adding this as a significant and ongoing funding stream for P-12 education will help reduce pressure on the General Fund for other state funding priorities, such as higher ed, transportation, health care and housing.
- The ballot title would NOT be required to start with “SHALL TAXES BE INCREASED BY,” because there would be no increase in taxes.
- The measure is being explored and developed through an inclusive policy making process that has already engaged potential Colorado and national funders, business leaders, and a diversity of education and social justice organizations on all sides of many polarized education issues.
- The measure is statutory – not constitutional – and so is not subject to the heightened “Raise the Bar” requirements: it needs only 50%+1 votes at the ballot to pass; if the measure is initiated, signatures do not need to be gathered in each Senate District; and to be referred by the legislature, only a simple majority in each house would be required.
- Local voters will be informed about how the dollars will be spent in their own district, in effect creating 178 local narratives.

**If you have any questions, would like to support this concept as a partner, or are interested in joining the *Great Schools, Thriving Communities* coalition as a member institution, please reach out to any of the following points of contact:**

- Cody Ostenson ([cody@greateducation.org](mailto:cody@greateducation.org))
- Ben Robinson ([ben@greateducation.org](mailto:ben@greateducation.org))

