

# Colorado Education Policy Fellowship Program

**Tracie Rainey, Executive Director**  
Colorado School Finance Project

# Colorado School Finance Project (CSFP)

*Who are we?  
What do we do?*

- Non-profit, non-partisan
- Supported by school district contributions
- School finance analysis for local and state policy makers since 1995.

*Mission: To compile, collect and distribute research-based, non-partisan information and data on topics related to school finance for state and local policymakers.*



# TODAY'S GOALS

Give some history to  
add to perspective for  
the issues

Where are we today  
with reform, school  
finance and a standards  
based system

What are your  
questions and what  
would you like to  
discuss?



## Quick History

Colorado Statehood – Education Clause

Standards based system – what changed?

The ballot box and the courts



## Results

State board is elected, they hire state's education commissioner

178 districts currently – reduced over time

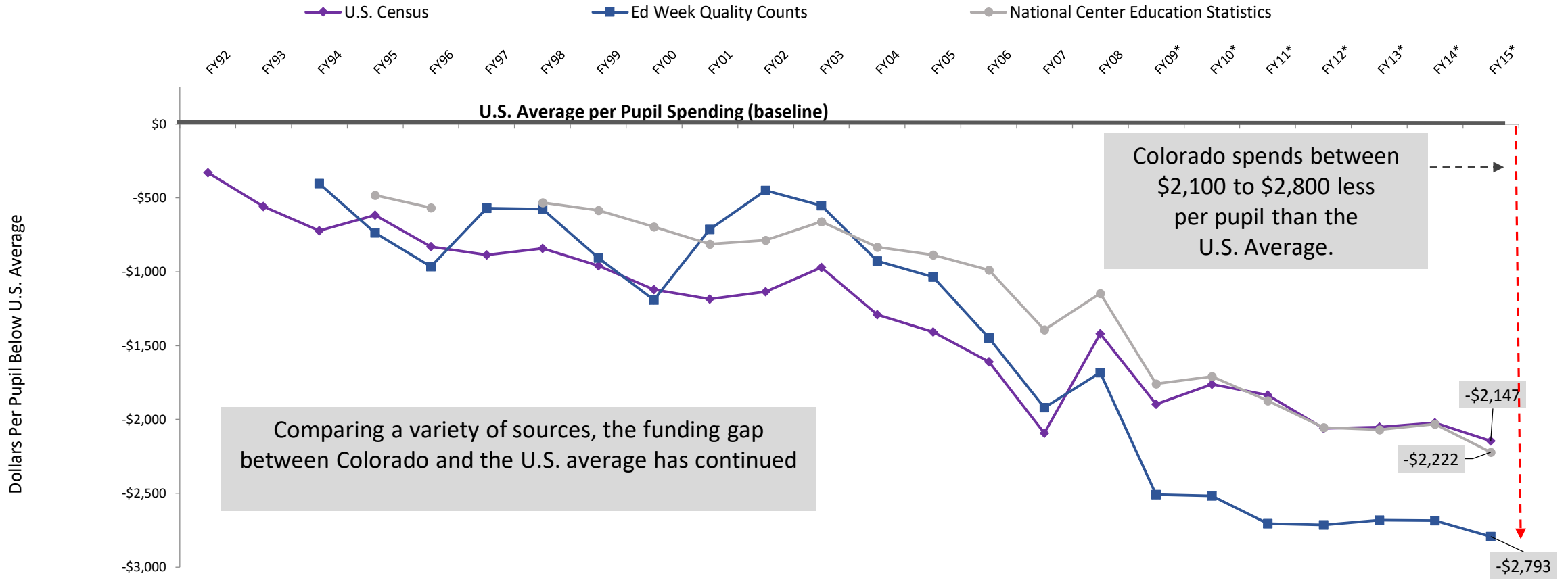
District size range from less than 50 to over 90,000 students

Large state with vast differences in demographics, wealth, and need

Results reflect  
the past 25  
years

- Gallagher 1982
- TABOR 1992
- School Finance Act 1994
- Amendment 23
- Mill Levy Stabilization 2008
- Residential Assessment Rate drop from 24 to 7.15

## Trends in Per Pupil Spending - Comparing Colorado to U.S. Average FY 1991-92 to FY 2015-16



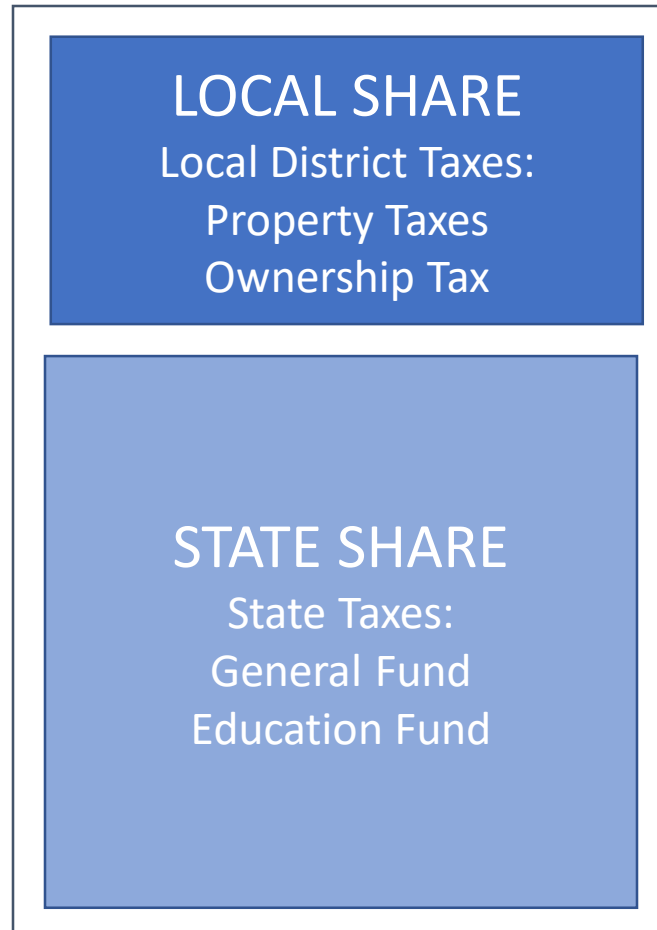
Audited data from U.S. Census, Quality Counts, NCES  
Chart: Colorado School Finance Project

\* Budget Stabilization Factor (mechanism to reduce PK-12 funding) incorporated in School Finance Act

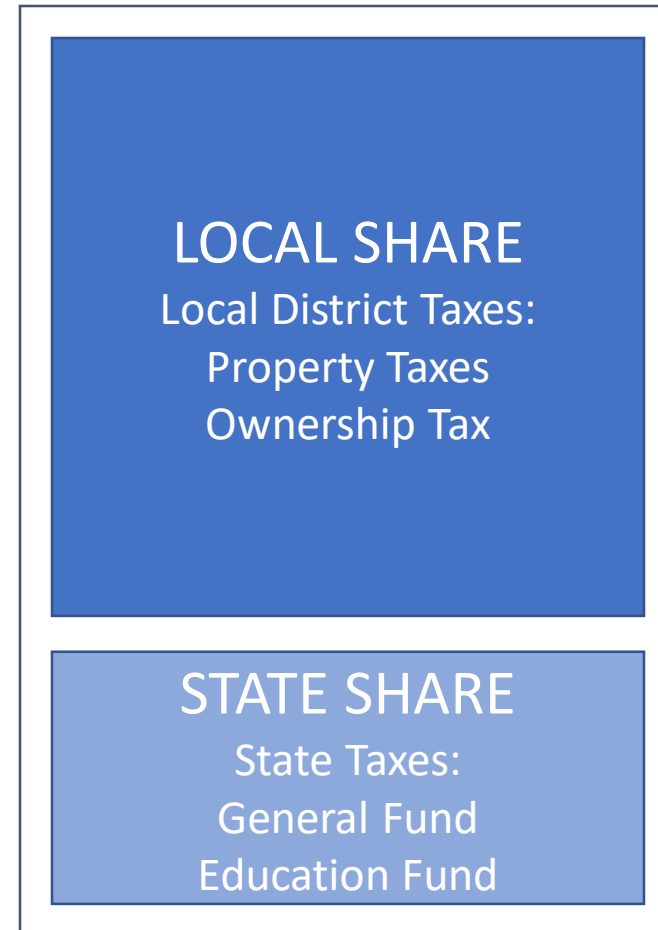
# Trends in Per Pupil Spending

# State & Local Share Varies (by design)

District A



District B





# Tax Payer impact

Actual Value of Home=  
\$200,000

Residential Assessment Rate=  
7.15%

Non-Residential Assessment  
Rate = 29%

Total Assessed Value= \$14,300

Assessed value x mill



**What has  
happened at  
our ballot  
box?**

Amendment 23

REF C

Prop 103

Amendment 66

Marijuana Tax

Amendment 73

Prop CC

**Snapshot of  
school  
finance  
litigation in  
Colorado**

Lujan – have large inequities,  
taxpayer and student

Girardino – BEST

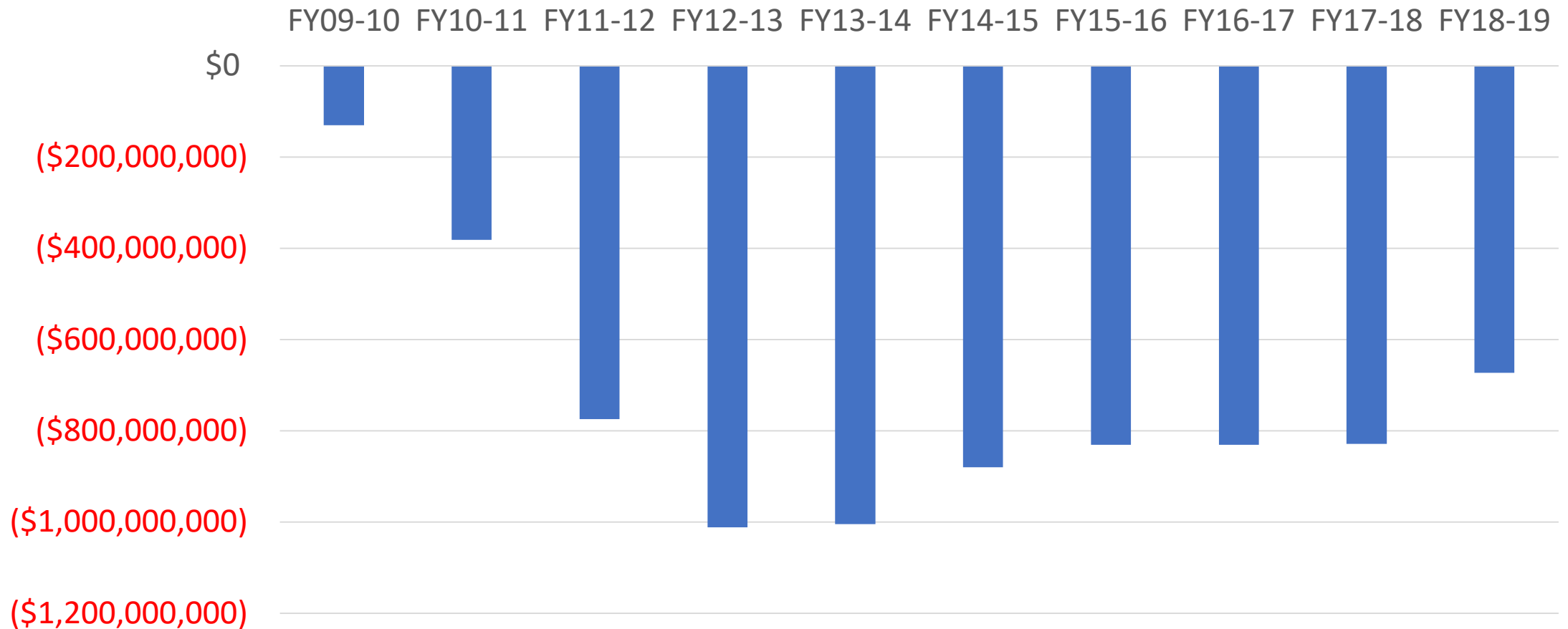
Lobato – Adequate school  
funding

Mesa County – addressed part  
of the lack of local tax base

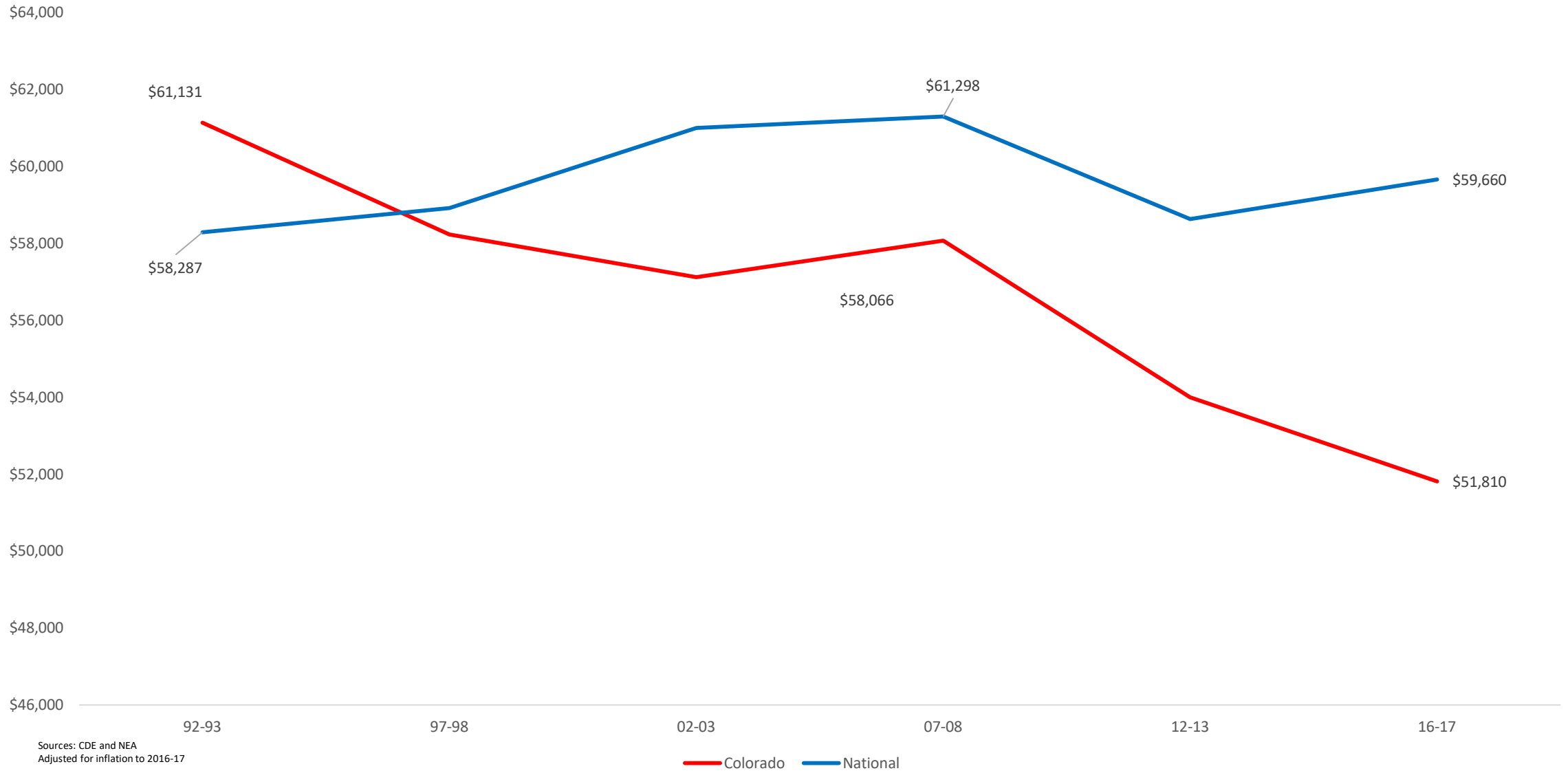
Dwyer – enabled the legislature  
to cut funding – budget  
stabilization factor

# Decade of Cuts to PK-12 Education Budget Stabilization Factor

Proportionately reduces total funding to each school district - ongoing



# Colorado's Average Teacher Salary





Discussions in  
2020

Legislative – Mill Levies – teacher pay – school finance

Ballot – changes to funding and constitution

Tabor Refunds – multiple ideas being dicussed



[vision2020co.org/input](http://vision2020co.org/input)



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## Stay connected:

- [www.cosfp.org](http://www.cosfp.org)
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