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
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

Comparing a variety of sources, the funding gap between Colorado and the U.S. average has continued.

Colorado spends between $2,100 to $2,800 less per pupil than the U.S. Average.
State & Local Share Varies (by design)

District A

LOCAL SHARE
Local District Taxes:
- Property Taxes
- Ownership Tax

STATE SHARE
State Taxes:
- General Fund
- Education Fund

District B

LOCAL SHARE
Local District Taxes:
- Property Taxes
- Ownership Tax

STATE SHARE
State Taxes:
- General Fund
- Education Fund
Example of how mill levies impact varies:

- **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

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<th>100.00</th>
<th>150.00</th>
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Tax Payer impact for different assessed values.

1/22/2020
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

Giradino – 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

Sources: CDE and NEA
Adjusted for inflation to 2016-17
Discussions in 2020

- Legislative – Mill Levies – teacher pay – school finance
- Ballot – changes to funding and constitution
- Tabor Refunds – multiple ideas being discussed
vision2020co.org/input