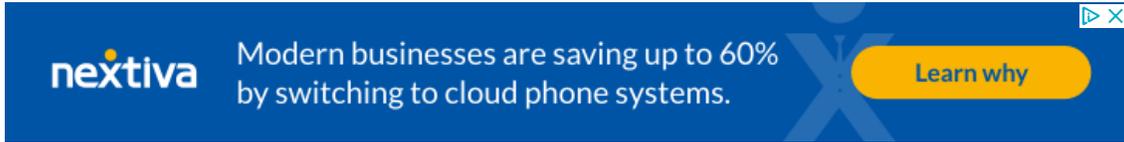


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Coloradoan endorsement: Approve Amendment 73 with a watchful eye on local school spending

Kevin Duggan, Fort Collins Coloradoan Published 6:00 a.m. MT Oct. 14, 2018 | Updated 9:42 a.m. MT Oct. 15, 2018



This is the view of the Coloradoan editorial board, written this week by columnist Kevin Duggan. Coloradoan news reporters are not involved in the editorial board process.

A note to readers: An informed community is vital to our democracy. And we want you to make informed decisions as you head to the polls this year. All election-related content is free for everyone to view through the week of Election Day. To support the local journalists who produced this work and will continue covering Northern Colorado in depth, subscribe today through a limited-time offer (<https://noconow.co/SubscribeNow>).

The many statewide issues on the November ballot reflect widespread frustration with the Colorado General Assembly.



(Photo: Kelly Ragan/The Coloradoan)

Opinion: Amendment 73 would improve Colorado school funding
The Legislature's inability to adequately fund public education and transportation, at least in the eyes of many state residents, spurred the drives that placed measures on the ballot aimed at addressing those shortcomings.

Case in point: Amendment 73.

If approved by voters, the amendment to the state constitution would direct \$1.6 billion each year toward preschool through grade-12 public education. The measure would increase per-pupil funding and increase spending in several areas, including special education, English language proficiency, preschool, and gifted and talented programs.

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Funding for the measure would come through a graduated income tax increase on households earning more than \$150,000 in taxable income per year.

The amendment would also raise the state's corporate income tax while reducing the property tax assessment rate levied by school districts.

The Coloradoan editorial board believes education funding in Colorado needs to be fixed. Our teachers are underpaid, and many school districts cannot afford to provide more than four days a week of education.

The existing funding system, such as it is, is directed by a hodgepodge of legislative actions and constitutional amendments. This is the latest attempt to bring guaranteed funding to the mix.

We support Amendment 73 in the hopes that it will provide a workable framework for meeting the needs of students and communities. But we do so guardedly.

The board is not unanimous in supporting the amendment. We all like kids and we all like teachers, but some members believe this measure is not likely to make a difference in terms of academic achievement.

Throwing more money at a problem doesn't necessarily fix the problem. In this case, we hope having more money will help get per-pupil spending and teachers' salaries more in line with national averages and make a difference for school districts, schools, teachers, students and their families.

Amendment 73 is complicated. It might not be the final answer to Colorado's education funding dilemma. But it's something, and a demonstration of the public's interest in settling the funding issue.

If it doesn't pass, teachers, students and parents will be marching on the statehouse once again demanding change.

We hope Amendment 73 is an investment in quality education. If voters pass this measure, the public should be prepared to carefully watch their local school boards and the state for years to ensure that investment is used appropriately.

This is the view of the Coloradoan editorial board, written this week by columnist Kevin Duggan. The board meets weekly to set the topic and direction of the Coloradoan's Sunday editorials. News reporters are not involved in the editorial board process.

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