

Colorado School Finance Project
school finance research since 1995

Charter Schools & Traditional Public Schools

Wind Crest, Highlands Ranch

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Colorado School Finance Project

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Colorado School Finance Project

- School finance research since 1995.
- Mission: **Compile, collect and distribute research-based, non-partisan information and data on topics related to school finance for state and local policy makers.**
 - School districts – Superintendents, Boards of Education, CFO, COO
 - State Legislators
 - Colorado Department of Education

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Acronyms

CS = Charter School
TPS = Traditional Public School

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Charter School (CS) - History

- National movement – part of public school system
 - Serve struggling student populations
 - Create theme schools: Core Knowledge, Expeditionary
 - Opt out of some state education regulations
 - “Choice” for parents and students

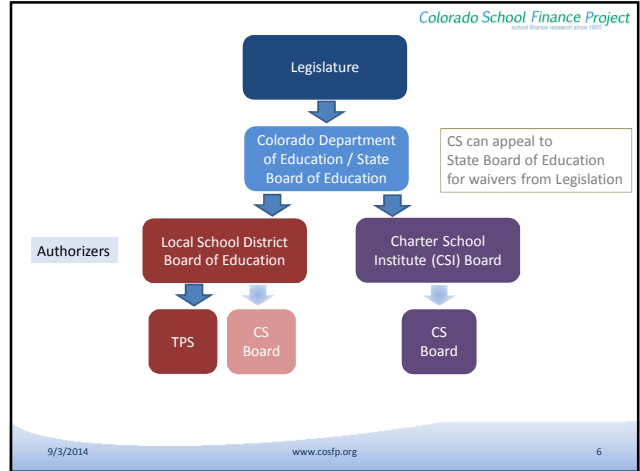
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Choice in Colorado

- TPS: Open enrollment – attend any school in state (if space). Not Home School: No transportation
- CS
 - Lottery (if full)
 - No transportation
 - More restrictive policies: dress code, behavior, grade retention, expulsions, volunteer expectation
 - 1993: 2 CS
 - 2013-14: about 216; 50 districts & CSI (30 CS)

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Similarities

- Educate Colorado’s public school students
- Public Schools – elected Boards – no tuition
- Colorado State Standards – State Board of Education
- Administer CSAP, TCAP, state level tests
- Serve similar racial/ethnic minorities – 43%
- Federal, State and Local share dollars
- Public Employee Retirement – PERA (no social security)
- May or may not have association/union agreement (similar to medium - small districts in CO).

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CS Differences

- Any group of parents, teachers, etc. form CS
 - Apply to and receive “Authorization”
- Elected Charter Board – each CS
- Parents provide transportation
- 2012 Colorado CS teacher salary gap of \$-15,210 with TPS.
- Member of National or State Charter group
 - DSST, KIPP, Strive, Edison, etc.
- National Foundation Support (\$) for CS
 - Walmart Foundation, Broad Foundation

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CS Differences

- Request at State Board: Not follow some Colorado Revised Statutes
- Require Authorization
 - Individual contract for each CS (each different)
 - Formal application process
 - Enrollment, budget, curriculum
 - School District OR Charter School Institute
- \$13.5M Charter School Capital Construction Funding
- May not accept students mid-year.
- HS may not accept student after 9th grade.
- Higher mobility

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State and Local Funding

- State and Local Share Funding – per pupil district funding. District – Central Admin support of CS
- CS can contract with district for services (technology, safety, special needs students)
- CS don't have overhead: transportation, HR (larger districts), Financial, Reporting to state and federal agencies.
- Most CS are K-5 or K-8.
- MS and HS more expensive, more programs, electives, sports, arts, etc.

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District Charters

- Each CS: Negotiated contract – District Board of Education:
 - Renewal Process
 - Each CS has its own contract with the Authorizer
- May or may not include local override dollars:
 - Mill Levy Override dollars (general operating \$)
 - Bond dollars (Buildings – capital expense)

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In General

- TPS typically serve needier students: (district is Local Education Agency)
 - Poverty
CS: 32.4% TPS: 41.7%
 - Students learning English (191 languages in CO)
 - Special education students (higher needs at TPS)
CS: 6.9% TPS: 9.2%

Higher needs typically require more time and services; Increases costs and can impact test scores.

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General Summary

- Choice for parents and their children
- No clear cut “winner” or “best choice”
- Pros and cons to both CS and TPS


No education “magic bullet”
No financial “magic bullet”

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Questions & Concerns

- Today
- Later – contact me



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CDE: CS Information

- Colorado Department of Education: Charter Schools <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart>
- The State of Charter Schools, April 2013 (2011-12 data) <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart>

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