

CHANGES IN COLORADO SCHOOL FUNDING 1988-89 TO 2000-01

CSFP Study

The Colorado School Finance Project (CSFP) has again asked Augenblick & Myers, nationally recognized school finance experts to conduct a study of Colorado public school funding. The study is based on real numbers--not projections-- and examines both state revenues and local property tax support for schools.

The Colorado School Finance Project, which includes representatives of the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB), the Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE), the Colorado Education Association (CEA) and the Colorado Board Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) Association, has continued to update data as figures become available. This study compares 2000-01 data with that of 1988-89.

Highlights of the CSFP School Finance Study

- The financial information in this report is prior to new dollars approved by the voters in Amendment 23. Amendment 23 was designed to eliminate the state “gap” as shown in this report of \$379, in 10 years. This brings education back to 1988 funding levels.
- Enrollment levels continue to grow, although at a slower pace. The state serves 157,500 more students than it did 12 years ago. Assuming a 1 to 18 staff ratio this implies 8,750 more professional staff, 175 new schools (assuming 900 students per school).

- Enrollment of students with special education needs continues at 11 percent of all students, which is below the national average of 12 percent. Over the last 12 years the number has risen by 55 percent or 27,600.

- Enrollment of students with special needs exceeds the rate of growth for students without special needs. The number of students without special needs increased by 21.4 percent in the past 12 years.
- Enrollment of students from economically disadvantaged families, as reflected in the free lunch program, is about 21 percent of all students. In the last decade the number has risen by 48 percent or 46,700 students. Many states include free and reduced lunch in this analysis. Concern for students for reduced price meals appears to be growing.
- There is a lower portion of personal income devoted to public schools in 2000-01, 2.58 percent compared to 1988-89, 3.89 percent. If the proportion of personal income had remained the same, about 1.84 billion more revenue would have been available.

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