

How is Colorado doing in improving school funding?

Colorado's School Finance Task Force recommendations:

In 2005, the state legislature's Interim Committee on School Finance appointed a School Finance Task Force made up of representatives from school districts, school boards, business, education research and parents to research and recommend school funding improvements:

Operations Funding Progress Report	Completed
Revise School Finance Act to address both equity and adequacy	No
Increase education spending significantly	No
Allocate \$800 million-\$1.5 billion annually to address adequacy	No
Fund unreimbursed costs of mandated categorical programs (e.g.: special ed)	*
Examine adjustments to base per pupil funding based on district characteristics ¹	No
Increase allowable voter override from 20% to 25%	No
Assess funding adequacy in relation to state and national goals every 3 years	N/A
Capital Funding² Progress Report	Completed
Update capital needs assessment for public schools	No
Provide immediate funding for health and safety risks at individual schools	*
Ensure adequate, thorough & uniform funding stream for statewide capital needs	No

How did Colorado school funding fare in 2006 legislative session?

IMPROVEMENT , per Amendment 23 and Referendum C	
Base Funding	Increased 2.1% plus 1%, for a total of 3.1% - minimum required
Cost of Living	Analysis completed and modifications made – not fully funded
Special Education	Adjustments made to funding – new tier system – grant process
IMPROVEMENT	
Preschool/Kindergarten	Added 2,000 additional slots
Special Education	Grant process established for high-cost students
Local School Districts	Tier approach to be introduced based on identification of severity
	No longer funding Colorado Department of Education – funding for declining enrollment of \$1 million to offset new charter schools
NO IMPROVEMENT	
At-Risk	No additional adjustments made nor changes in definition
Non-English Speaking	No additional adjustments made nor changes in years of funding

What was the State Education Fund used for?

• Summer school restoration for grades 4-8	\$1 million
• National Credential Fee assistance increase	\$17,000
• Facility summer school program restoration	\$500,000
• Charter schools construction aid	\$2.8 million

¹ Factors include size, at-risk population, cost of living, full-day Kindergarten, preschool, small attendance centers, public school choice, and so on.

² Giardino legal settlement requires yearly General Fund payments of \$20 million to address crumbling schools in many Colorado districts. Because the legislature altered the settlement with a trigger clause for certain economic conditions, there have been years where no payment was made or from unauthorized sources. In 2005-6, \$ 24 million was distributed for the new system; \$ 3.7 million additional money was approved for 2006-7.