

## Education Principles

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- Maintain and strengthen local control to empower decision making at the lowest possible level of government
- Strengthen political accountability
- Make legislative and congressional districts more competitive
- Maintain the balance of power between branches of government
- Encourage elected officials to take the long view, not just do what is politically expedient
- Assert majority rule
- Minimize the influence of money and special interests
- Value grassroots democracy and encourage community involvement
- Reduce partisan gridlock and polarization
- Protect the right of voters to select their own representatives without constraints like term limits

- Support sensible and progressive spending proposals for pre K-12 and higher education in FY08 budget
- Oppose any efforts to lower AIMS testing standards but support efforts to provide tutoring and remedial program
- Increase access to baccalaureate degrees, both within and outside major metropolitan areas
- Support increased funding for teachers' salaries and encourage progressive performance salary increase methods to attract and retain talented teachers
- Maximize Arizona's opportunities in the biosciences and biotechnology
- Promote collaboration between Arizona universities and community colleges and institutions of higher education in other states and countries
- Promote technical and targeted job skill training at the secondary school level
- Enhance global studies programs at all instructional levels and provide increased opportunities for students and faculty to study and/or teach abroad
- Create alliances between the education and business communities, and increase opportunities for student internships, externships, and hands-on training
- Support changing state and federal immigration laws to allow immigrant students to qualify as residents for purposes of in-state tuition, private loans, ability to work while in school or other state education benefits
- Institute a Joint Technological Educational District (JTED) in every Arizona county

## STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

### I. LOCAL CONTROL

The Legislative Forum supports legislation which enables local districts to develop the best method for delivering public education. We believe governance issues dealing with the delivery of public education are best addressed and decided by the local board of education. These boards are elected to serve the educational interests of the public schools of their community.

The state constitution specifically delineates local and state responsibilities for delivering public education. We believe the local school board should have jurisdiction over how district funds are spent. We recognize the need for cooperation between local school districts and the state.

## **II. QUALITY STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS**

We support high and achievable state content standards and assessments for all Colorado students. State content standards for P-12 must be aligned with college readiness standards and postsecondary pathway options, and must meet the skill and competency requirements for 21<sup>st</sup> century success.

We support a meaningful statewide assessment system which is aligned with the longitudinal content standards and responsive to students and their need for guidance in postsecondary pathways. We support subject area, grade level and longitudinal assessments for the purpose of providing evidence of an individual student's academic success over time and diagnosing students needing interventions and remediation.

## **III. ACCOUNTABILITY**

We believe the state's role should be to build and support the capacity of districts in meeting the needs of students. The regulatory role of the state should be focused on setting baseline parameters for performance. The state accountability system should support, reinforce, and inform the goals of the state's P-20 education system.

## **IV. OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH**

We support the policies and goals of mandatory expulsion which are for the protection of the students and staff of all schools, as well as for the students who require disciplinary action. Such services may incur additional costs. Additional state funding should be provided to meet the special needs of these students.

We further support state funded programs that will address the needs of students who are at risk of dropping out of school.

## **V. COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE**

We support no weakening of the current Colorado Law which became effective in 2007-08 that requires "Every child who has attained the age of 7 years and is under the age of 17 years and for 6-year-olds once enrolled in school shall attend public school..." for a specified number of hours or days. Exceptions are in the law for children who are ill, attend private or home schooling programs, or are disabled. We support a change in the accountability for home school students consistent with current standards based assessments such that home-schooled students must be at least partially proficient on CSAP. Students who are temporarily ill or disabled and incapable of being tested should be exempt from state assessment requirements.

We believe that there should be appropriate programming for at-risk students rather than exempting them from compulsory attendance.

## **VI. EARLY CHILDHOOD**

We believe in universal access to early childhood education, for all students, including full-day kindergarten for all students. Early childhood education has positive effects on the long-term success of students through increased competence and positive attitudes toward self and school. Longitudinal studies show that students who have participated in well-run early childhood programs are less often retained at any grade, are less often placed in special education, and, as teens, are less likely to drop out and more likely to graduate.

## **VII. APPROPRIATE ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL RECORDS**

We believe student information should be collected and transmitted efficiently, accurately and cost effectively to support school district accountability and to comply with state and federal laws.

We support privacy and confidentiality of students' education records, as well as appropriate access. We recognize the federal protection law of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). We endorse the need for school districts to have policies governing to whom records may be released including: 1) accountability for student achievement; 2) information from students' education records with the prior written consent of parents; 3) categories of officials and parties to whom records may be released without parent consent; 4) teachers and school officials who work with the students and schools to which students apply for entrance; 5) information from students' records for state and local education officials to conduct audits or to review records in compliance with federal laws; 6) response to subpoenas or court orders.

State programs should be examined to determine what protections, if any, are needed in the collection, maintenance, and transmission of information and records; which programs may be served adequately by aggregate collection of data; which programs require personally identifying information for funding reimbursement purposes; and how to ensure accountability for student learning.

The state must ensure that the public knows what information is collected and why such information is necessary.

Electronic transmissions should be protected while, at the same time, modern technology should not be restricted by unfounded fears.

Both local school districts and state agencies are responsible for the training of their respective personnel and for the maintenance of their security systems.

## VIII. SCHOOL FINANCE

We believe that the Colorado Legislature should maintain the terms of Amendment 23, which establishes a stable funding base for public education, including the State Education Fund.

Further, we believe that the costs of the following should be considered in determining K-12 public education funding levels: efficiency of operation, accountability and mandates, and capital construction.

### Operating Budget

The legislature should provide funding which will:

- Establish that the first priority for K-12 public education is a level of funding at not less than the rate of growth measured by new enrollment, inflation as measured by the Denver-Boulder consumer price index, plus 1 percent pursuant to Amendment 23 for all school districts. We will support a method that creates a safety net for declining enrollment districts.
- Continue to advocate increases addressing inflation and growth in categorical line items in the Long Bill.
- Support funding for standards implementation.
- Fully fund all state and federally mandated services.
- Increase special education funding based on the number of students served and the severity of their specific disabilities.
- Continue school districts' eligibility as Medicaid providers for students who are Medicaid-eligible.
- Support state funding and responsibility for court-ordered, out-of-district, and other special facility placement of students.

- Retain the interest-free cash flow loan program.
- Support the maintenance of effort provided for in Amendment 23 and oppose expenditures that jeopardize the viability of the Education Fund.
- Support state funding for special schools and programs over and above the funding for districts in the School Finance Act.

### Tax Policy

- We support the comprehensive study of Colorado's tax policy with appropriate referral to citizens for recommended changes.
- We support the goal of identifying and providing an adequate and reliable funding source that provides sufficient revenues for public schools, including an amendment to the state's spending limitation as it applies to school finance.
- We believe state tax policy and school finance must go beyond consideration of growth and inflation in setting annual revenue and spending levels. Because of the TABOR amendment to the constitution, the public's expectations for the expansion of K-12 responsibilities cannot be met at the current level of funding.
- We believe that school districts must be a partner in the tax increment (e.g. urban renewal) financing approval process with other local government entities.
- We recommend a referred measure that would make property taxes due upon occupancy for all new construction

## **IX. USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS**

We believe in parents' right to choose the schooling program for their own children; however, we believe public funds for K-12 education should be used for strengthening the public school system available to all children.

We believe that education vouchers, tuition tax credits, or deductions for public and nonpublic preschool, elementary, and secondary school students would have a detrimental effect on our public school system.

We believe all schools and programs benefiting from public funds should be accountable to the citizens of Colorado. Private schools, by law, cannot be regulated by the state and, therefore, cannot be held accountable to taxpayers.

We believe all schools benefiting from public funds should be equally accessible to all students – rich and poor, rural and urban, special educational needs and regular educational needs, and those of diverse backgrounds.

We believe charter and option schools should offer programs which are not available in neighborhood schools and that their populations should be representative of the district's demographics on average.

## **X. COMPENSATION**

We believe that the Colorado General Assembly should encourage the development of compensation plans for teachers and other school personnel by providing financial incentives that support local districts in their recruitment and retention of qualified employees.

## **XI. TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

With increasing state and local interest in providing public school choices, school districts should be permitted to provide transportation to schools of choice by charging fees for the service. We recommended legislation to authorize school districts to charge bus service fees to students who voluntarily elect to attend a school other than their neighborhood school, and any fee should be waived for inability to pay based on current fee waiver statutes. This provision would not require a district to provide bus services.

## **XII. CHARTER SCHOOLS**

We continue to strongly urge the legislature to define the specific successes and failures of existing Colorado charter schools. This can best be done by careful study of results from schools established under law before considering further changes in the law. Therefore, we support efforts by the legislature to gather and analyze such data.

We believe local elected boards of education for Colorado's public schools should be the chartering authority for charter schools. Local elected boards are closest to the public served by these choice schools and, under state law, are responsible for them. The state should continue to allocate funding to the local district where the charter schools' students are located.

## **XIII. TECHNOLOGY FUNDING**

We believe students should become skilled in utilizing the technology available today and understanding the concepts behind these current tools so as to be able to adapt to future advances in various technological fields. These skills will be necessary for our children to enable them to live and work successfully as adults. Colorado needs to invest in the necessary technology in the public schools to ensure the success of our students. We recommend the state provide an additional per pupil funding stream for technology for all Colorado's K-12 schools. Please refer to school finance statement.

## **XIV. REORGANIZATION OF DISTRICTS**

Jefferson County is a large and diverse district. When the people voted for consolidation of Jefferson County schools in 1950, the decision made possible a strong educational program countywide, more adequate building facilities and a lower tax rate. These advantages arise from economics of scale, cooperation among schools and concentration of human resources. Jeffco is better able to meet the needs of students at a lower cost. We attract specific learning groups such as special needs students due to the ability to offer special programs. We emphasize inter-governmental cooperation to create even greater opportunity and economies of scale.

Jeffco has the ability to offer resources to other districts in the state and is often viewed as an expert in many areas. Jeffco is an educational leader in developing innovative programs and educational opportunities for the students of Jeffco and Colorado.

Due to the size of Jeffco, the district is able to apply for and receive many large educational grants to use their expertise while improving education performance.

## **XV. HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND NUTRITION**

We believe that education in fitness and nutrition should be available, so students can develop the knowledge and skills needed for lifelong physical activity and healthy eating.

## **XVI. SCHOOL TRUST LANDS**

Colorado's Enabling Act and Constitution created the School Land Trust to operate as an intergenerational trust to support the "common" (public) schools. Without changes, Colorado will fail to maximize these assets for the benefit of Colorado public school students. Every year that passes, we lose the opportunity to compound the interest that will provide a stable revenue stream to fund our schools. We believe that reforms need to occur in the expenditure of the revenue, the investment of the Permanent Fund, the management of the lands, and the communication to the public of the importance of these lands.

**Business Coalition to Advance Reform of the Education System (BizCARES)**  
*Core Principles*

**PREAMBLE**

Colorado's business community is united in pursuit of immediate and continuous improvements to the state's education system. We support an ambitious, aggressive and comprehensive reform agenda to dramatically increase the college and workforce readiness of all students, and we believe now is the time for bold and decisive action.

**GOALS**

1. All students exit public secondary education in Colorado prepared for successful post-secondary education and workplace experiences and for full participation in their communities and the world.
2. The current and future workforce needs of Colorado's economy are anticipated and served by the public education system.
3. Colorado's education system and processes are efficient, effective, responsive, innovative, and high-performing.

**CORE PRINCIPLES**

**1. Relentless Focus on Student Achievement**

Colorado will make all decisions about the education system by placing the highest priority on the best outcomes for students.

**2. Great Teachers and Leaders**

Colorado will employ data driven human capital management policies and practices that ensure the recruitment, retention, development and differentiated compensation for highly effective teachers and leaders in every school.

**3. High Performing Schools**

Colorado will continually build and improve its portfolio of high performing public schools with a system of effective incentives and interventions that will ensure that all students have access to a high quality education. Every Colorado student should have access to at least one high quality school of choice that meets international standards.

**4. Effective Systems**

Colorado will implement evidence-based data management systems, linked to internationally benchmarked standards and assessments, to drive the allocation of resources and ensure accountability for results.

**5. Continuous Improvement**

Colorado's public education system will be thoroughly integrated from early childhood through post secondary and will incorporate meaningful assessments and feedback to improve student achievement in a system that provides oversight and autonomy based on performance.

On behalf of Prodeffive 15, we are pleased to join the Business Coalition to Advance Reform of the Education System (BizCARES) and proudly endorse and support the goals and core principles.

Catherine J. Shull  
Representative's Signature

10-29-09  
Date