



Contact



Calendar



Facebook



Twitter



Staff



Partners



Publications



Videos



Awards

[Return to Headlines](#)

School Board Advocate: March 9, 2018

Volume 29, Number 5



In this issue:

- Superintendents Tackle Funding Adequacy and Equity
- Closer to the End than the Beginning
- Take the Hill

Superintendents Tackle Funding Adequacy and Equity



A new school finance formula proposed by Colorado superintendents seeks to increase funding for all students while providing more resources for at-risk and other special groups in need of added support to succeed.

The plan, supported by 171 of the state's 178 superintendents, is the most recent bid to update Colorado's 1994 school finance formula, written long before academic standards and accountability, the growth of special needs populations, today's expectations for student achievement and the state budget challenges of the last decade.

The superintendents call their plan modernized and student-centered because it gives greater weight to the costs of educating students based on their needs and challenges.

The plan's goals include:

- Ensuring all districts receive additional funding in a fair and equitable manner to support current academic standards and accountability systems.
- Creating a student-centered formula using weights for special education, ELL and gifted and talented students, as well as those in poverty.
- Ensuring that every district receives funding at or above current levels without the budget stabilization factor.
- Continuing to recognize cost differences among districts related to size, location and cost of operation.
- Setting higher base funding to begin moving total per-student support in Colorado closer to the national average.

The plan has been incorporated into House Bill 18-1232, sponsored by Representative Dave Young, D-Greeley, and two senators, Republican Don Coram of Montrose and Democrat Andy Kerr of Lakewood. The bill was introduced earlier this month, at the same time the superintendents formally unveiled their plan, and was in development for more than a year.

But, the bill does not stand on its own. Even if it passes, it won't go into effect unless voters pass a proposed tax increase to fund the new distribution formula.

Education advocacy groups, like Great Education Colorado, are circulating petitions for what's currently designated as Initiative 93. The measure would increase individual and corporate income tax rates to generate an additional \$1.6 billion a year in revenue for schools and pay for the new funding plan.

Currently, Colorado's funding formula guarantees every district a base amount of per-pupil funding, which is then increased based on "factors" such as cost of living, district size and numbers of at-risk students.

Separately, districts receive additional funding for special education students, English language learners and gifted and talented students.

In addition to increasing overall funding, the key element of the superintendents' plan is to bring the cost of educating special populations into the formula, meaning districts will receive funding that more closely matches the cost of educating those students.

For example, one large suburban district currently receives about 18.5 percent of funding based on cost of living and 4.2 percent based on the number of at-risk students. Under the superintendents' plan, only 5 percent of that district's funding would be based on cost of living but 7.7 percent would be based on what the plan designates as a "poverty" factor. (Cost of living would be capped at 5 percent of total factors.)

Funding would continue to be customized to individual districts and different factors would have different weights depending on the district. For instance, the size factor would continue to be a major driver of funding for small rural districts.

Other technical elements of the superintendents' plan include:

- The poverty factor includes students eligible for both free and reduced-price lunch. The current at-risk factor is based on free lunch students.
- Categorical funding will be reserved for the highest cost special education students and for non-English proficient students.
- Preschool students are added to enrollment counts.
- Separate funding for online and ASCENT students is maintained.

There have been two previous efforts to increase school funding in the last decade and both have failed.

In 2013, the legislature passed Senate Bill 13-213, which established a new school funding formula somewhat similar to the superintendents' plan, in that it would have shifted more resources to at-risk students and other special populations. However, Amendment 66, the \$950 million income tax increase needed to fund that proposed formula, was resoundingly defeated by voters in November of that year.

Two years prior, Proposition 103 proposed a \$550 million tax increase to fund K-12 schools but was defeated by voters. That proposal didn't include a new distribution formula.

The 2017 legislative session created a Legislative Interim Committee on School Finance with a two-year mandate to study K-12 funding and develop proposals. The committee spent the summer and fall of 2017 gathering information but did not produce proposals.

Some lawmakers, particularly Republicans, indicated a preference for letting the interim committee resume its work later this year and forgo passing HB18-1232 this session. This bill could face problems in the Republican-controlled Senate if it passes the House.

Some lawmakers also are skeptical of the new plan, given the defeat of Amendment 66 and Proposition 103.

[Click here](#) for additional details on the Colorado Superintendent funding formula.

Closer to the End than the Beginning



As the Colorado General Assembly reaches the halfway point of the 120-day session, there remains much work to do. The elected one hundred still have yet to address the state budget or school finance. It will be vitally important for CASB members to make themselves heard on these two critical issues.

We invite you to join your CASB Advocacy team on Friday, March 23 at 8:00 am for our monthly legislative update. The best part is that you don't even need to leave home! [Click here](#) to access the meeting via the Zoom app.

Take the Hill



A great big thank you to all of the school board members who attended the CASB 2018 Winter Legislative Conference. Make sure to check out our [Facebook page](#) for pictures from the conference.

CASB-member Days at the Capitol kicked off this week with one of the two days set aside for students. Students from Cripple Creek, Haxtun, La Junta, Westminster and St. Vrain had the opportunity to meet with legislators and view the House and Senate proceedings. If you have not signed up to attend one of the Days at the Capitol, [click here](#). This is your chance to experience the legislative process firsthand and help to strengthen the voice of your school board.

If you are unable to attend the CASB Days at the Capitol on the day your region is scheduled, you are welcome to join any of the CASB Days at the Capitol events. Locally elected school board members are the best advocates for their students and communities and we look forward to

hosting you at a future CASB Day at the Capitol.

CASB Advocacy Tools

[CASB Bill Tracker](#) – Track the latest education news from the Capitol.

CASB Call to Action – Help CASB ensure our members' voices are heard. To subscribe, text 52886, then type CASB.

[CASB Legislative Conference Calls](#) - Use the web link to join the meeting. The next meeting will be Friday, March 23, 2018, at 8:00 am. Meetings are held the 4th Friday of each month during the legislative session.



[CASB Days at the Capitol](#) – Join CASB, fellow board members and students at the Capitol! Our Days at the Capitol events run March through April and give school board members—from rural districts tucked away in the mountains and plains, to large districts neighboring the state capitol—a chance to experience the legislative process firsthand and help strengthen the voice of school boards. We had an overwhelming response for student attendance and student registration is now closed.

Address **Colorado Association of School Boards**
2253 S. Oneida St., Ste. 300
Denver, CO 80224

Phone
303-832-1000 or 800-530-8430

Fax
303-832-1086

Advancing excellence in public education through effective leadership by locally elected boards of education.

[Site Map](#)

[Terms of Use](#) [Questions or Feedback?](#) [Blackboard Web Community Manager Privacy Policy \(Updated\)](#)

Copyright © 2002-2019 Blackboard, Inc. All rights reserved.