

Resolution

In order to ensure resources for quality K-12 education in our state, CASB calls upon the Colorado General Assembly to honor the intent and language of Amendment 23 by making its highest priority to immediately eliminate the negative factor in K-12 education funding and restore funds lost due to its use to date. We call upon the legislature to embrace their commitment to education in Colorado and restore these lost funds within the next 5 years.

Rationale

The purpose of Amendment 23 was to help Colorado's funding for public schools catch up to the national average. In 2000, the voters approved Amendment 23, a constitutional change requiring K-12 funding to increase by inflation plus 1% from 2001 through 2011 and thereafter by inflation. Amendment 23 also earmarked .33% of Colorado's income tax for deposit into the "State Education Fund," but required the legislature to increase General Fund spending on K-12 by at least 5% each year before it could dip into the State Education Fund to meet the inflation requirement. Despite that protection, the legislature used the State Education Fund to balance the budget when state revenues dropped in the early part of the last decade.

In 2009, the legislature reinterpreted Amendment 23 to apply only to base per pupil funding, but not to the factors (variables) such as size, cost of living and number of at-risk students in a district. Also, the legislature established a new negative factor deemed "budget stabilization" to make across-the-board cuts to education spending. With the negative factor as a constant, all districts suffer. To date, the negative factor has reduced school finance spending by more than \$1 billion or 15.49% below Amendment 23's requirements.

Even as they continue to reduce funding, the legislature has passed multiple significant reform efforts, including but not limited to the Preschool to Postsecondary Education Alignment Act (CAP4K) (Senate Bill 08-212), the Education Accountability Act of 2009 (Senate Bill 09-163), the Educator Effectiveness Law (Senate Bill 10-191) and the Colorado READ Act (House Bill 12-1238). These laws impose additional obligations on school districts and reduced funding directly impacts local school districts' ability to implement the existing education reforms. Now, as state revenues are increasing, the legislature must make it a priority to eliminate the negative factor and return to the intent of Amendment 23.