



2016 Legislative Priorities

1. School Finance

Support development of a comprehensive, equitable, and predictable approach to financing Colorado's public schools.

- a. Create a system of funding that allocates resources to schools in a manner that more accurately reflects where students are enrolled over the course of the school year, instead of the current system of a single count date.
- b. Prioritize school finance resources to:
 1. Ensure that all students have access to resources to meet Colorado Academic Standards.
 2. Support schools and districts in their efforts to improve outcomes for students with persistently low performance.
 3. Support both in-school classroom learning and blended, distance, and online learning options.
 4. Promote administrative efficiencies among all districts.
- c. Reward teachers and schools whose students out-perform in growth and reduce achievement gaps.
- d. Oppose state policies which create unfunded mandates on schools, districts, and the Department of Education.
- e. Recognizing that the Permanent Fund was established with a goal of providing for Colorado students, now and in the future, work to enhance and improve the fund and to oppose any legislation that will further deplete it.

2. Great Teachers and Leaders

Support policies which ensure all Colorado students have great teachers and leaders.

- a. Support policies which help schools and districts identify, attract and recruit promising individuals to the education profession.
- b. Support policies which identify, recognize, and reward highly effective educators.
- c. Create an aligned system of educator licensure, induction, professional development, and evaluation.
- d. Support policies to hold educator preparation programs accountable for the effectiveness of their graduates.
- e. Leverage quality education beyond the classroom through online options and partnerships.

3. Statewide System of Accountability and Support

- a. Provide targeted support and authority to enable a range of pathways to turn around the state's lowest performing schools and districts.
- b. Identify and reward schools and districts that are successfully decreasing achievement gaps and provide targeted interventions to those struggling with persistent and large gaps.
- c. Promote and support policies that positively impact the closing of student achievement gaps in Colorado.

4. Standards and Assessments

- a. Support policies which focus on student mastery of the Colorado Academic Standards through multiple pathways that move beyond seat time and Carnegie units.
- b. Fully fund the development and implementation of a comprehensive system of statewide assessments including funding for technology needed to administer tests.
- c. Support assessment policies that reduce the scope of statewide assessments; provide relevant and timely data to educators and a meaningful experience for students; value student performance growth over time and use valid measures; have a limited impact on instructional time; and consider sampling where assessment purposes pertain to state interests.
- d. Support assessment policies that include local choices from an approved menu of options with a focus on performance tasks and allow for cross-district collaboration on scoring, validity, comparability. Any local choices should align closely with Colorado's graduation guidelines and provide transparency.

5. Increased Flexibility

- a. Provide regulatory relief to districts and schools by maintaining existing flexibility while supporting legislation which eliminates redundant or obsolete requirements and provides more flexibility to schools and school districts and the Colorado Department of Education to deliver high quality education services.
- b. Provide flexibility in the way small school districts of fewer than 1,000 students meet reporting requirements and implementation requirements in order to minimize the burden on small district school staff.

6. Innovation and Choice

Support policies which:

- a. Assure that every student has educational choices to best meet his/her individual learning needs.
- b. Increase opportunities for Colorado students to experience effective blended learning models and expanded learning opportunities.
- c. Allow for the restructuring of the school day and/or school year to close achievement gaps and maximize learning time for all students.

7. Early Childhood Education

Support state policies that increase opportunities for children to voluntarily participate in programs which will increase their ability to be ready to learn in Kindergarten.

8. Data Collection and Access

- a. Work to ensure the maximum protection possible for individual student data in terms of collection, storage and transmission. Play a lead role in passing legislation to create legally enforceable requirements on vendors.

9. State Board Authority

Support the Colorado State Board of Education's constitutional responsibility for the general supervision of the public schools through collaboration with the legislative and executive branches and with non-profit organizations and the private sector. In furtherance of its constitutional responsibility, support the authority of the state board through recognition of its rulemaking authority rather than through prescriptive statute.