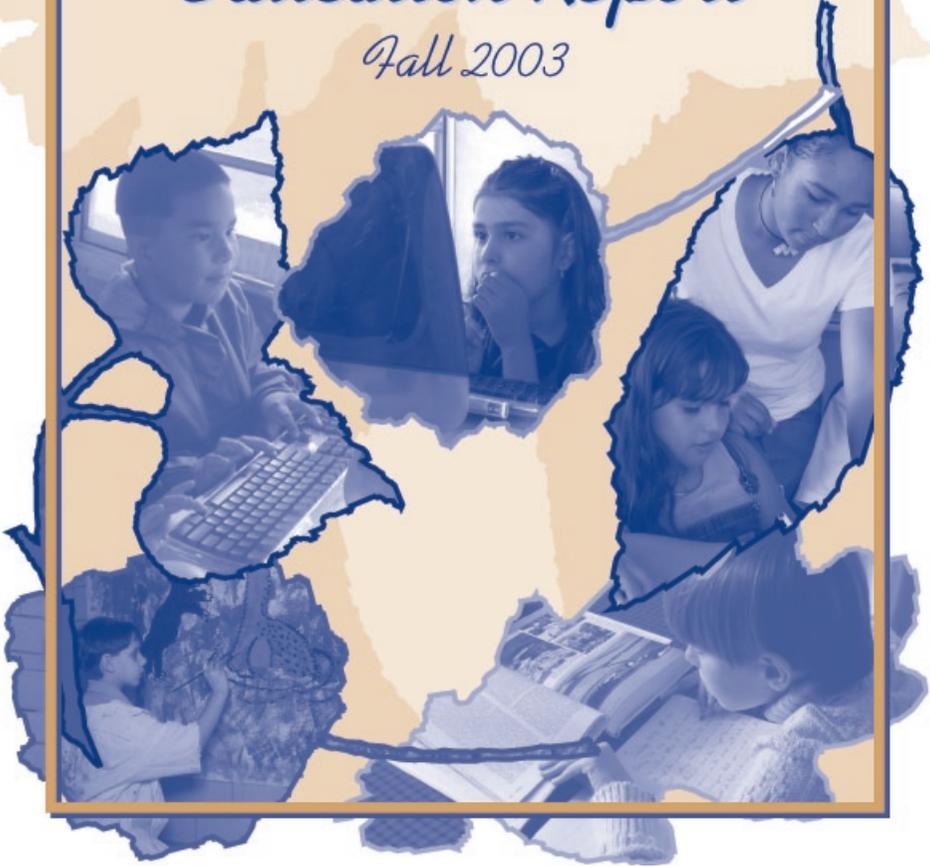


The Jared Polis Education Report

Fall 2003



Dear Coloradoans,

Welcome to the Fall/Winter Jared Polis Education Report! I hope you find the information in these pages useful. In addition to finding the link between resources and results, we also look at nutrition, new education laws, and continue to highlight innovations. Enjoy!

Jared Polis

Vice Chair - Colorado State Board of Education

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"It has always seemed strange to me that in our endless discussions about education so little stress is laid on the pleasure of becoming an educated person, the enormous interest it adds to life. To be able to be caught up into the world of thought – that is to be educated."

~ Edith Hamilton



Not Paid for by Tax Dollars





Legislative Summaries

In 2003, lawmakers cut budgets for a variety of educational services while enacting a pilot voucher program for students in certain low-performing districts. The reductions included teacher pay incentives, summer school grants, school breakfast match, aid to districts with increasing enrollment, school improvement bonuses, aid to Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), and the academic growth pilot.

Key bills enacted this year included:

HB 1160

*Opportunity Grant Pilot Program**
(Representative Spence/Senator Anderson)

This law (sometimes referred to as the voucher pilot) provides funding to eligible children to attend non-public schools, beginning next year. It requires school districts with many poorly performing schools to participate in the program. To be eligible, students must qualify for free or reduced lunch. Eligible children in grades 4-11 also must have scored "unsatisfactory" on one of the CSAPs or ACT. A parent of a child who wants to participate in the pilot must apply and enter into an opportunity contract with the district.

SB 248

School Finance
(Senator Anderson/Representative King)

The school finance act increased state base per pupil funding to \$4,570.31 for 2003-04 while limiting "at-risk pupils" to only students who receive free lunch. It also reduced the number of available state preschool slots to 9,050 children for FY '03-04 and FY '04-05 budget years and eliminated the full-day kindergarten pilot program in unsatisfactory schools. The law restricted state online education funding to students enrolled and actively participating in public schools during the previous year, but allowed the State Board of Education to create certain exemptions. The law provided \$5 million from the State Education Fund to provide matching grants for

eligible school districts and charter school construction projects.

SB 254

Closing the Achievement Gap
(Senator Evans/Representative Spence)

Establishes the Closing the Achievement Gap program to assist schools. Creates a commission to study educational planning, best practices, professional development, parental involvement and program strategies.

HB 1368

*Pledge of Allegiance**
(Representative Crane/Senator Lamborn)

Requires teachers and students to recite the pledge of allegiance each day, in each public school classroom. Exemptions are granted for religious reasons, for non U.S. citizens, or if a parent or guardian files a written objection.

SB 36

Civics Requirement
(Senator Andrews/Representative Lee)

Students entering their first year of public high school this fall will be required to take a U.S. and Colorado civics course in order to graduate.

SB 158

Sale of Property
(Senator Tupa/Representative Pommer)

Authorizes the state treasurer to buy and lease back real property owned by a school district if the school district declares a fiscal shortfall emergency. The funds will be deposited into the school district's general fund and the state will lease the real property back to the school district pursuant to a lease-purchase agreement.

For more information, www.jaredpolisfoundation.org/jperlinks.shtml

**Law is under court challenge.*





School Choice Includes Charters

As with 40 states, Colorado allows for the establishment of charter schools, which are public schools semi-independently run by parents, teachers and/or community members within a school district under a charter contract. School districts run most schools, but charter schools have their own boards.

Colorado law specifies that charter schools can help meet unique learning needs by offering innovative, flexible educational experiences. About 95 charter schools operate in Colorado with educational philosophies ranging from Montessori to Core Knowledge, sometimes targeting populations such as academically-challenged or high-performing students.

Although school districts can receive up to five percent of the charter school's state funds, some districts resist approv-

ing charter schools because they feel that they may face negative financial impacts.

When a local school board declines approval of a charter school, the charter applicants may appeal to the State Board of Education. In deciding whether to support the district or the charter, the state board considers whether the local board's decision was contrary to the best interests of the pupils, district or community.

The Jared Polis Foundation is proposing a new charter school, the American School, which would serve primarily English language programs for young adults.

For more information contact 303-333-3580 or e-mail Jared Polis at jared@jaredpolis.com or his policy director Scott Groginsky at scott@jaredpolis.com or visit www.jaredpolisfoundation.org/jperlinks.shtml



Innovations In Education

Full Service Schools

Full-service schools offer health and social services to students and their families in addition to academic studies. By providing medical and dental services, nutrition classes, parent programs, and social services, they can help children overcome both academic and non-academic barriers to learning. Also known as community center schools, full-service schools provide essential services that many families could not otherwise obtain because they lack transportation, information, money, or time.

Colorado Small Schools Initiative (CSSI)

The Colorado Small Schools Initiative, directed by the Colorado Children's Campaign, addresses chronic underachievement of students attending very large high schools. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, in collaboration with several Colorado foundations, supports CSSI in creating small, autonomous high schools that focus on academic rigor, personalization, and post-secondary

options. CSSI focuses on four projects: transforming large high schools to small high schools; new small autonomous high schools; high technology high schools; and a high performing small high school network.

Teacher of the Year Profile: Lorynda Archibeque-Sampson

Congratulations to Colorado Teacher of the Year, Lorynda Archibeque-Sampson! Ms. Archibeque-Sampson began teaching in Colorado schools nearly 20 years ago and currently teaches third grade at Eagle Crest Elementary in Longmont. She will serve as a master teacher representative across the state and represent Colorado at the National Teacher of the Year. "It's an awesome responsibility," Archibeque-Sampson said after receiving the prestigious honor. "My job now is to be an ambassador for all teachers and students."

For more information, visit www.jaredpolisfoundation.org/jperlinks.shtml



Funding Makes A Difference

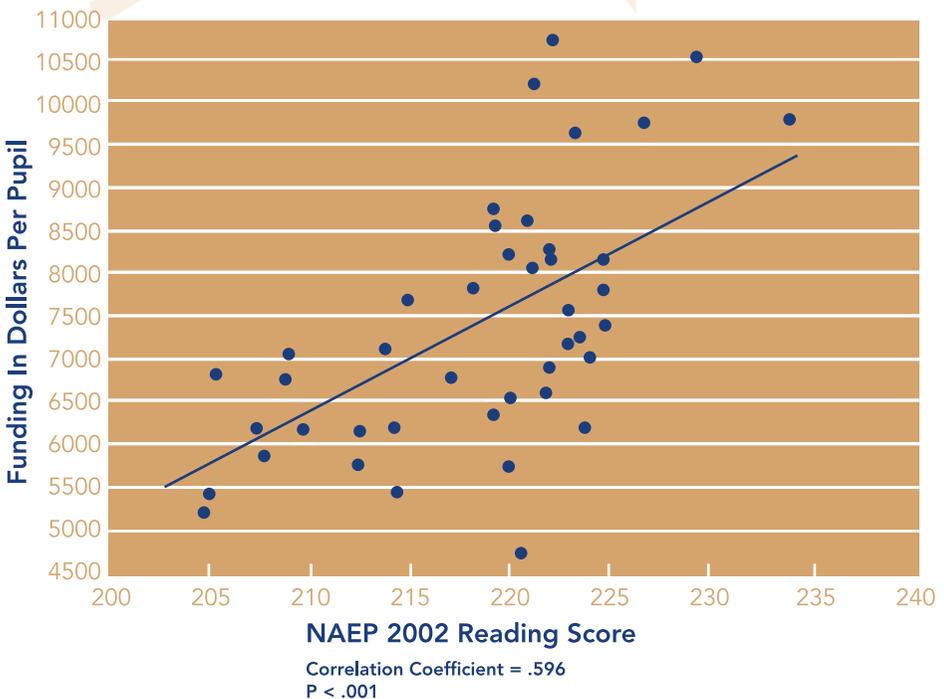
Many educators argue that more resources lead to better results: smaller class size and better paid teachers help create more successful learning environments. Others argue that the system wastes a lot of money and that additional resources seldom reach the classroom. Which side is right?

To help figure this out, we compared the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth grade reading scores to state funding per student in the 40 states where this test was given in 2002. As the attached chart shows, states with higher funding generally had better scores. The data is statistically valid, showing there is a link between the amount spent and results. However, it is also important to point out that some states spend a lot and still do poorly, while others spend less than average but do reasonably well. Thus we can conclude that while the amount of money a

state spends is important, it is not the only factor that determines the quality of public education.

Colorado data also indicates a relationship between funding and student performance. Since the 2000 passage of Amendment 23, which requires annual state funding increases for public education, CSAP scores across the state have steadily increased in reading and writing for most grades and in math scores in several grades. In addition, students in schools rated "unsatisfactory" have made significant gains in CSAP scores for reading, writing and math.

In conclusion, funding levels do play a part in improving public education. As more data becomes available, we will continue to examine how much funding and other factors affect student performance.



For more information,
visit www.jaredpolisfoundation.org/jperlinks.shtml



Healthy Students Learn Better

The number of obese children in America has more than doubled in the past two decades, tripling for teens, leading to increased risk of diabetes, stroke, heart disease, cancer, other diseases, and possibly learning and behavior problems. Researchers and public health experts are focusing on what students eat at school as a key contributing factor.

Although the federal government requires minimum nutritional standards for the National School Lunch Program, many students eat a lot of unhealthy food and beverages loaded with sugar, fat, calories, hydrogenated oils, and caffeine. As Congress reauthorizes the lunch program, nutrition experts are calling for better federal standards and enforcement, and many states and school districts are also taking action.

Federal regulations make school districts comply with lunch standards that include minimum percentages of certain healthy ingredients. Many students, however, also feast on what schools offer outside of the federal program, including soda, candy, and fast food. Such unhealthy items are available because they provide significant revenue for cash-strapped school districts.

In Colorado, a federally funded inter-agency project is working with state and local experts and policymakers to improve students' health through nutrition and physical activity. This project helps schools start local

health teams that include a focus on nutrition policies and curriculum in schools.

Several schools in Colorado have involved students in choosing healthier meals and snacks, including food preparation and menu decisions. States and school districts around the country have instituted many measures to improve school nutrition, such as eliminating vending machines, rejecting soda contracts, and requiring healthier food options.

It is sometimes a tough decision for districts to leave out the junk food when it provides additional revenue, but healthy students learn better!

For more information e-mail Jared Polis at jared@jaredpolis.com or contact his policy director Scott Groginsky at scott@jaredpolis.com or 303-333-3580. For more information about school nutrition in Colorado, visit www.jaredpolisfoundation.org/jperlinks.shtml.



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*Promoting Education,
Technology & Community
in Colorado*

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INSIDE

Information on the
link between funding
and results!