

Enacted 2004 Education Legislation

HB 1362

*Charter Institute
(Representative Carroll/Senator Groff)*

This bill allows state approval of charter schools to ensure their consideration if they are in a school district that treats them unfairly. A charter school is a public school with site-based management and some independence from the district. The bill also:

- Creates the State Charter School Institute in the Colorado Department of Education to authorize and operate "Institute Charter Schools", particularly those intended to serve at-risk students.
- Requires the Institute to share best practices and measure charter school performance.
- Allows school districts to request exclusive authority over proposed charter schools in their district with State Board of Education approval, based on the district providing "fair and equitable treatment" to charters, such as having no charter school moratorium.
- Requires State Board of Education approval of exclusive charter authority if a district has fewer than 3,000 students.

A separate law (HB 1141) prohibits districts from having charter school moratoriums and enrollment caps (with exceptions).

HB 1397

*School Finance Act
(Representative King/Senator Anderson)*

This bill:

- Increases minimum per pupil funding to \$5,627.
- Requires children, by October 1, 2005 and future years, to be age 5 to enroll in Kindergarten and age 3 and 4 to enroll in the Colorado Preschool Program.
- Adds compliance with State Board of Education orders to a district's accreditation indicators.
- Reduces "at-risk" funding.

SB 189

*College Opportunity Fund
(Senator Anderson/Representative King)*

This bill provides funding to each in-state resident for college, while exempting these funds from the state's revenue limits so the state can raise and spend more money for college. It also:

- Establishes the College Opportunity Fund, which provides a stipend to in-state resident students at \$2,400 for students attending a public institution and \$1,200 for Pell-eligible students attending specified private institutions.
- Requires that participating institutions meet certain conditions.
- Establishes aggressive program marketing to students beginning in the 8th grade.

SB 83

*SAR Exemption
(Senator Sandoval/Representative Spence)*

The School Accountability Report (SAR) is a "report card" that the state issues for every school and distributes to parents. This bill:

- Exempts schools that serve mainly "high-risk" students (as defined) from receiving academic ratings on the SAR and from forcing a state takeover.
- Allows for the elimination of the academic performance rating on the SAR for schools that have at least 95 percent "high-risk" students.
- Specifies alternative academic progress and behavior improvement benchmarks for these schools.

SB 103

*School Vending Machines
(Senator Sandoval/Representative Cloer)*

- Encourages school districts to have 50% of their vending machine products meet acceptable nutritional criteria by 2006-07 and defines this criteria.
- States that CDE provide guidance and assistance to school districts on healthful alternatives and nutritional diets.

Jared Polis Foundation Partners to Create High Schools that Provide New Opportunities for Colorado's Immigrant Population

Many Colorado citizens cannot communicate in English. In Adams, Arapahoe, and Denver counties, 13.9 percent of the total population is foreign born, and 67.6 percent of this total foreign-born population reports that they speak English less than "very well."*

Hoping to address this need, the Jared Polis Foundation has partnered to create The New America School - a Colorado public charter high school designed to offer English language acquisition, plus a high school diploma, for 16 to 21 year old immigrant students. Two different sites are opening this school year, one at the Pinnacle Center near Commerce City and one at the Community College of Aurora at Lowry.

Immigrant populations benefit by learning English, having an opportunity to gain a high school diploma, and being

provided with a basic education that can enable them to enter the community college system or to advance at work.

Colorado benefits from this type of education offering by allowing more of its residents to move up the economic ladder - becoming self-sufficient, higher wage earners.

The New America School will provide a rigorous academic program in the morning and evening, combined with English immersion, and integrates best practices found in many models in use today.

For more information contact Gina Nocera, Education Program Director, gina@jaredpolisfoundation.org or 303.442.1130

**Statistics taken from the 2000 U.S. Census, Profile of Selected Social Statistics "Language Spoken at Home" categories.*

Innovations In Education

Harmony Project Remington Elementary, Denver, CO

This program pairs local artists with teachers who collaborate on district standards, plan for lessons, and ultimately incorporate arts, music, dance, architecture and acting into the daily curriculum at Remington Elementary. Each program lasts six weeks and concludes by inviting parents to experience the students' knowledge through demonstrations. At a mostly Hispanic school where 96% of the students are on the free and reduced lunch program, Harmony Project helped increase CSAP scores roughly 28% in its third graders last year.

For more information contact project director Hank Troy at 303.573.1717.

Center for the Humanities and Arts, CU, Boulder and Denver Center for the Performing Arts (DCPA) – Outreach Project

The project works with schools in Boulder and Denver and introduces students from diverse cultures to plays. The DCPA provides copies of the play and tickets, plus a backstage tour to a special student matinee. This year's play was the Merchant of Venice, and focused on Shakespeare's theater in his time and the question of diversity and stereotypes shown in the character of Shylock. Students receive awards for writing, stage and costume design, and more.

For more information contact Outreach Project director Jeanne Manning at 303-499-7838 or Jeanne270@cs.com.

Arts Education

Studies show that arts education leads to improved academic performance, attitudes towards school, and self-confidence. The arts include visual arts, dance, music, and theater. According to federal research, arts education reduces delinquent behavior and truancy, while promoting creative thinking. These results are leading to a new recognition of the importance of arts education, further demonstrated in a 2004 Harvard Business Review article indicating that corporate recruiters have begun visiting the top arts graduate schools in search of talent.

In Colorado, visual arts and music are two of the state's eleven model content standards that districts' curricula must meet or exceed. Some districts have also adopted voluntary theater and dance standards. Because Colorado public education policies and laws emphasize student test results, however, many school professionals are concerned that art is not accessed by the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP).



New college admission standards include drama, art and music as "academic electives" and this year the Education Commission of the State is focusing on arts education.

Arts education is important for many reasons, including fostering creativity, helping close the achievement gap

for underachieving students, and strengthening effective after-school programs. Educators who use arts - music, theater, and film - in their instruction of subjects such as literacy, math, science, social studies, see an overall improvement in students' learning.



As policymakers, education leaders, and the public continue to focus on academic achievement results, research suggests that better arts education leads to stronger student performance and ultimately, well rounded individuals.



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



Early Childhood Programs

A Critical Component to a Successful Education

Brain research conducted in the last two decades has proven that children's experiences from birth through age 5 play a key role in preparing them for success in school. High-quality child care and preschool programs boost positive academic, emotional, and social development, particularly among children from low-income families. Children who participate in these programs score higher on tests, are less likely to repeat a grade, and are more likely to complete high school. This research led to recommendations made by the Goals 2000 Panel for "school readiness." Colorado has taken these recommendations to heart by creating special early childhood programs that enhance school readiness in our state:

- **Colorado Preschool Program:** pays for 4-year-olds with several "risk factors" to attend preschool. However, limitations in the state budget have put a cap on the number of children who can take advantage of this program. Some of the "slots" are used for eligible children to attend full-day kindergarten rather than preschool.

- **Consolidated Child Care Pilot Program:** coordinates efforts of child care providers, education institutions that train early childhood teachers, and health, mental health, and human services agencies. These Pilots improve the quality of child care, increase the number of licensed child care sites, and create a better community environment for early care and education.
- **School Readiness Child Care Subsidization Program:** designed to improve the quality of child care in communities with a concentration of poor children and low-performing schools. It provides ratings on the quality of participating child care centers and homes, as well as funding to improve the learning environments, parent involvement, and the education level of the care providers.

These efforts help create an early childhood education system in Colorado. In many ways our state leads the nation in partnering to improve the early years of life, especially for the neediest children.

By Evie Hudak, State Board of Education,
2nd Congressional District
For more information visit
<http://www.jaredpolisfoundation.org/jperlinks>

We are Looking for a Guest Writer for our Spring 2005 Edition and We'd Like to Give Public School Students an Opportunity to Get Published!

If you are a public school student interested in what's happening in education issues, either in your own school or in Colorado, we're interested to hear about it! You, as our guest writer, will write an article about one issue involving education – and how it impacts you and your peers. All we need is for you to register online and write a short essay about why you'd be interested and what topic you'd like to write about and we will be picking our guest writer this Fall. Deadline for registration is November 1st, 2004.

Visit www.jaredpolisfoundation.org/JPERguestwriter



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