

Important Issues In Higher Education

If current trends continue, Colorado's public colleges and universities will receive no public money by 2010. This dire prediction comes as the state has added new admission standards for students seeking to enter public four-year universities.

The first major issue facing higher education is funding. Much of the reason for the funding crisis is inclusion of college tuition in the state's revenue limits that are set by the constitutional amendment known as the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR). Legislators in 2004 are proposing a variety of bills that aim to address this financial concern.

The state has cut higher education by \$170 million in the past two years (\$206 million including the loss of financial aid), and the University of Colorado Office of Budget and Finance estimates that this trend will worsen with funding dropping from \$686 million in fiscal year 2002 to \$83 million by 2009. To address higher education's funding and access needs, state legislators are proposing several options, including:

- Referring measures to the ballot on TABOR and other issues in the state constitution.
- Shifting state funding to college vouchers so colleges could have an enterprise status, and be released from TABOR's revenue and spending limits. A bill granting such enterprise status to the University of Colorado passed the legislature overwhelmingly last year, but was vetoed by Governor Owens.
- Fixing the rate of tuition over four years to help families plan their college expenses.
- Providing college loan forgiveness to veteran teachers to teach in study specialties where there are teacher shortages - math, science, special education, and bilingual education.
- Offering in-state tuition rates to immigrants who meet high school completion and attendance requirements and promise to become a resident.

Schools and school districts around the state are looking at ways to comply

with a new policy from the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE), which sets certain high school course requirements for admission to public, four-year universities. Specifically, the class of 2008 must complete four years of English, three years of math, natural science, and social science, and two years of academic electives. For the class of 2010, requirements add a fourth year of math and two years of foreign language. The purpose of the changes is to increase the success of students in college. An alternative "opt-out" testing mechanism is also being developed.

A newspaper column last fall by education leaders Andy Hartman, Van Schoales, and Carrie Besnette laid out several ways that public schools can prepare their students for the CCHE changes, including:

- Counseling services to students - especially minority students and those from low-income families - that help students know what classes they need for college entry;
- Ensuring that required classes are available and of high quality in all schools across the state; and
- Focusing on small high schools to help students get enough attention for their academic needs.

Sources: *Rocky Mountain News*, By Andy Hartman, Van Schoales and Carrie A. Besnette, "Speakout: Facing reality in our high schools" 10/31/03, *Denver Post*, By Dave Curtin, "College Funding Leads Education Bills," 1/4/04, *Rocky Mountain News*, Peggy Lowe, "Dueling Tuition Bills," 1/20/04

Additional links: Several CCHE College Preparation initiatives are currently available to schools, students and parents. Find these links on our website at www.jaredpolisfoundation.org/jperlinks.shtml.



A New Coalition to Increase Civic Engagement

Colorado Civic Canopy

A new diverse, non-partisan network has formed to increase civic engagement across Colorado. The Colorado Civic Canopy promotes collaboration by individuals, organizations and institutions to better coordinate resources and strategies in schools and local communities. The Canopy aims to:

- *Examine issues* of civic engagement
- *Foster dialogue* among various groups
- *Identify strategies* to increase civic engagement
- *Develop common indicators* of success,
- *Coordinate efforts* among different groups

All are welcome to participate in this effort. For more information, email info@civiccanopy.org.

Six Promising Practices for Meeting the Civic Mission of Schools

Schools develop competent and responsible citizens when they:

1. Provide instruction in government, history, law, and democracy.
2. Incorporate current issues of interest to students into classroom discussions.
3. Help students apply what they learn through service-learning tied to curriculum and instruction.
4. Offer extracurricular activities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities.
5. Encourage student participation in school governance.
6. Encourage student participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures.

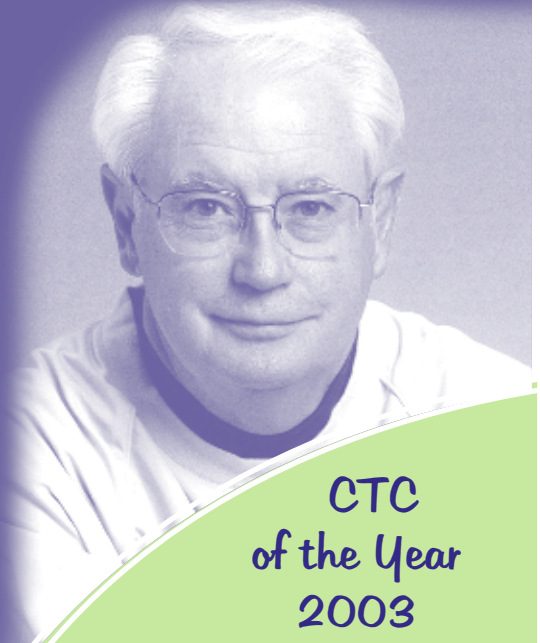
Source: Civic Mission of Schools Report, CIRCLE and Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2003, p. 6; www.civicmissionofschools.org

2004 Teacher of the Year

Congratulations Henry McIntosh

Henry McIntosh was named the state's top teacher by the Colorado Department of Education in December 2003. McIntosh is a language arts teacher at John Mall High School in Walsenburg. He created an advanced-placement English program for students and a Student Senate. He helps the students believe in themselves and learn how to excel. While meeting with Jared Polis, he said one of his goals, as Teacher of the Year, is to raise the profile of the position as a spokesperson for teachers.

Henry McIntosh,
Teacher of the Year



CTC of the Year 2003

Project YES

(Youth Envisioning Social change)

Through the Community Computer Connection "C3" associated program, the Jared Polis Foundation honors our Colorado Community Technology Centers (CTC) each year. Lafayette based Project YES provides opportunities for diverse youth to engage in digital photography, digital art, web design, and graphic arts creation. Project YES was awarded Outstanding CTC of the Year for the amazing work they do in the community. Please visit them online at www.project-yes.org

Good Students Make Good Citizens

Meeting the Complete Mission of Colorado Schools: What will it take?

Public schools help students gain academic knowledge and work skills, and prepare them to maintain the health of our democracy. While Colorado schools focus on academics - as measured by reading, writing, and math test scores - concerns mount about their civic mission. In other words, providing students with the knowledge and skills to be the caretakers of our rights, responsibilities, institutions, and procedures associated with citizenship in our democratic republic.

Colorado schools can help students succeed academically and become good citizens so they can become our future leaders. But, the strategies needed - new community supports and partnerships - may be different than those used to raise test scores.

Research confirms that active learning strategies that connect civic concepts with community issues, civic institutions, and political processes offer the greatest civic learning success. Age-appropriate K-12 civic learning experiences and the understanding of civic rituals are important elements. Together, these strategies produce more informed, thoughtful, and engaged

citizens committed to civic participation like staying informed on current events, respecting civic institutions, voting, serving in leadership roles, and running for elected office.

To do this well, Colorado schools need support from the public and local communities. Local community groups can form partnerships with schools to connect student learning to local government affairs, political leaders and community members. When students work through real issues, solve community problems, and apply their academic knowledge of civic concepts toward issues that matter to all, they become young leaders. For example, students from Skyview Elementary School talked to a nutrition policy group last spring about their research and policy suggestions for healthier school snacks. Young leaders can partner with today's leaders, who can act as mentors and provide valuable lifelong lessons that benefit our society.



About The Jared Polis Foundation

The Jared Polis Foundation grew out of Jared Polis' vision to promote statewide support for educators, students, and communities. Our vision has grown to inspire educators, involve parents and communities, and motivate students to succeed in today's rapidly changing world. We establish and operate innovative teaching and technology resource programs throughout the state. Below is a description of some of our programs.

The Education Station is a mobile technology bus that offers hands-on age-appropriate technology education programs to children.

The Jared Polis Foundation works closely with the Community Computer Connection "C3". The C3 team refurbishes computers that are donated from corporations, organizations, and individuals and places them into qualified nonprofits and schools throughout Colorado. We

accept and distribute working Pentium II or faster computers and other working components and peripherals such as monitors, printers, keyboards, mice, etc.

The School Choice program helps establish new learning opportunities for different kinds of learners. The Jared Polis Foundation has helped found or support schools that focus on language, leadership and academics. Current opportunities include collaborations with public school districts, community centers and nonprofit organizations.



Find out more about our programs at www.jaredpolisfoundation.org

Funding And Performance

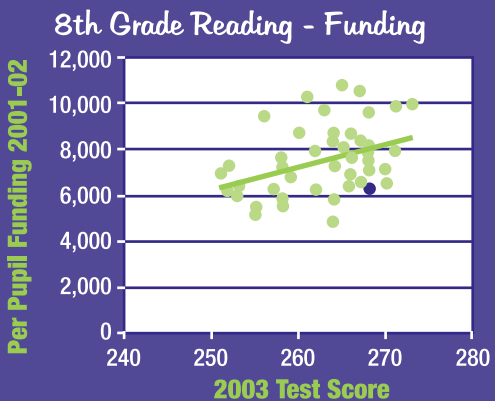
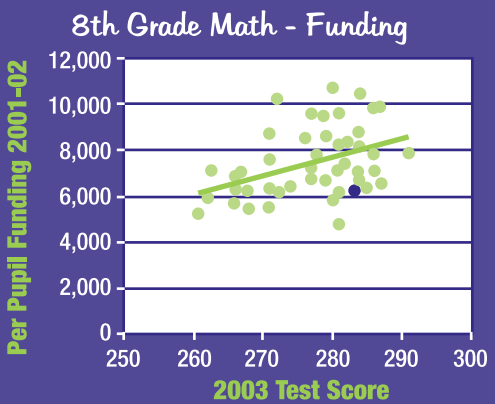
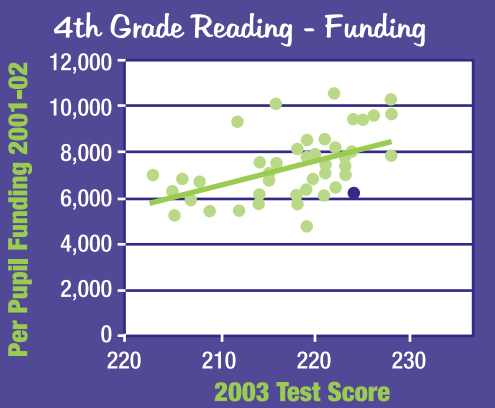
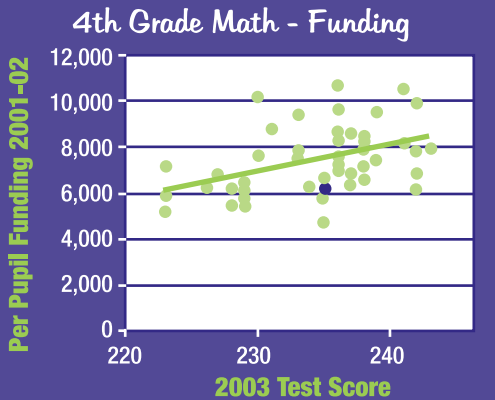
Our last edition compared the 2002 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) standardized test results with state education funding levels. In 2003, all states participated in the NAEP reading and math tests for 4th and 8th grades. Trends from the 2003 results again show better scores among states with higher per pupil funding (see graphs), revealing that state funding is an important factor in students' learning.

Not all states followed this pattern. Colorado, in fact, scored above the national average on reading and 8th grade math, and at about the national average for 4th grade math, even though the state ranks 39th in funding. Hispanic students scored higher than the national averages for 4th and 8th grade math, and black students scored at about the national average for math, but below the national average for 4th grade reading.

NAEP is not the only measurement of student proficiency. Colorado's assessment, the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP), tests students in reading, writing, math, and science for a variety of grade levels. The 2003 CSAP found student improvements in nearly all grades for reading and writing. Changes in student scores in math and science have been uneven.

Also, performance gaps continue between female and male students, as well as white and nonwhite students, despite improved scores among black and Hispanic students. The racial "achievement gap" is also seen in the state's graduation rates.

Funding is only one important contributor to student achievement. Colorado lawmakers, education leaders, and citizens are examining possible changes in constitutional measures that could affect money for education. As we address these decisions, we will continue to talk about the state dollars to support students' academic needs.



Colorado is represented by a purple dot on all graphs.



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*Promoting Education,
Technology & Community
in Colorado*

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INSIDE

New Information on
the link between funding
and performance!

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