

Jeffco Public Schools Board of Education

2013 Legislative Priorities

The Jeffco Board of Education supports the 2013 legislative priorities outlined below, which will help inform consideration of specific bills by the board throughout the session. The board asks that the legislature always consider local control, the duties and powers of school boards, and no unfunded mandates as it considers new K-12 legislation.

School Finance

The legislature should consider statutory changes to the School Finance Act that emphasize:

- **Innovation.** Provide resources to educate students in a 21st century learning environment as determined by school districts that prepares them for jobs of the future.
- **Full funding of statewide reform initiatives.** Avoid unfunded mandates. Fully fund current mandates such as new standards, assessments, and educator effectiveness for successful, wide-scale implementation.
- **Emphasis on district priorities for student success.** Allow school districts to manage financial resources as they deem appropriate to support educational priorities.
- **Parity.** Treat districts with similar attributes in a similar manner.
- **Predictability.** Provide predictable revenues for districts over the long-term.
- **Accessibility.** Ensure all schools benefiting from public funds provide access to programs and resources that meet every child's needs.
- **Simplicity.** Draft a School Finance Act that is understandable by all stakeholders.

The legislature also should begin to untangle conflicts in the state constitution between the Gallagher Amendment, TABOR, and Amendment 23. As a public school district, we respect Amendment 23 provisions and the maintenance of the solvency of the State Education Fund.

Effective, Talented Teachers and Principals

The legislature should consider proposals that maximize the ability of schools and districts to:

- Identify, recruit and retain effective teachers and principals.
- Put in place supports and rewards for highly effective teachers and principals.
- Hire teachers from state institutions of higher education that have effective, accountable educator preparation programs aligned with Colorado standards.

Innovation, Choice and Flexibility

The legislature should consider proposals that:

- Modernize the school calendar to increase effective learning time during the school day and/or school year to ensure students are college and workforce ready.
- Ensure students have multiple pathways to academic success that best meet their learning needs (blended learning, online learning, expanded learning, etc.).
- Eliminate obsolete or redundant state requirements that detract from time better focused on learning and instruction in schools.

Standards and Assessments

The legislature should consider proposals that help schools and districts:

- Focus on students' mastery of the Colorado Academic Standards through multiple approaches that move beyond seat time and Carnegie units.
- Build the capacity of districts to help students excel in the core disciplines of reading, writing, mathematics and science, in addition to standards in world language and social sciences, along with the fine and technical arts, music, physical education, health and wellness.
- Provide resources to teachers and principals in the effective implementation of standards and assessments.
- Fully fund new standards and assessment measures.
- Provide assessment results in a timely manner so teachers may more effectively use the data to drive instruction and improved achievement.

Accountability

The legislature should consider proposals that assist schools and districts:

- Hold all schools benefiting from public funds to the same accountability measures.
- Close the achievement gap.
- Provide assistance, support and/or intervention over a certain period of time to schools struggling to improve achievement.
- Direct state support and funds for P-12 public education through local school boards to maintain consistent, comprehensive and effective intervention services.

Early Childhood

The legislature should consider proposals that:

- Increase opportunities for children to participate in free high-quality, early childhood education and full day kindergarten to ensure they are well-prepared for future academic success.

Charter Schools

The legislature should consider proposals that:

- Continue to allocate funding to the district where the charter schools' students are located.
- Recognize locally elected school boards are the best chartering authority for charter schools as they are closest to the public served by these choice schools and, under state law, are responsible for them.

School Safety

The legislature should consider proposals that:

- Are developed only after consulting safety experts in law enforcement and in school districts.