

RESOLUTION ON ELIMINATING THE NEGATIVE FACTOR  
Resolution 2014-26

WHEREAS, to ensure that every student in Colorado has the same educational opportunities regardless of where the student lives, Colorado's school finance formula since 1994 has included both a base amount of per pupil funding and an additional amount based on "factors" to account for unique local conditions and equalize total per pupil funding across school districts.

WHEREAS, the factors funded through Colorado's school finance formula address significant variables, including district size, personnel costs, cost of living, and number of at-risk students in a district.

WHEREAS, starting in fiscal year 2010–11, the legislature created a new "negative factor" to make across-the-board cuts to education spending. The negative factor acts to reduce funding the factors, thereby destroying the equalizing mechanism of the school finance formula and disproportionately impacting the districts and communities with the highest needs.

WHEREAS, when the Colorado voters passed Amendment 23 in 2000, the constitutional provision was designed to help Colorado's public school funding catch up to the national average and to keep it at that level. In contravention of this expressed will of the people, the legislature's invention of the negative factor leaves Colorado 42<sup>nd</sup>, more than \$2,500 below the national average, in per pupil funding.

WHEREAS, in the 2013-14 fiscal year alone, the negative factor extracted more than \$1 billion from the state's support for public education.

WHEREAS, the negative factor in school finance has required the Colorado Springs School District 11 Board of Education to do the following:

- Close or repurpose 14 schools
- Freeze pay (with the exception of nominal payments four years in a row)
- Cut pay with furlough days for three consecutive years
- Increase class size twice
- Cut administration by 15-20 percent
- Reduce other positions across the district
- Reduce benefits through plan design changes
- Cut instructional programs like summer school, tutoring, and at-risk programs
- Defer maintenance on schools, facilities, vehicles, and grounds
- Defer capital replacement on schools, facilities, buses, support vehicles, and technology

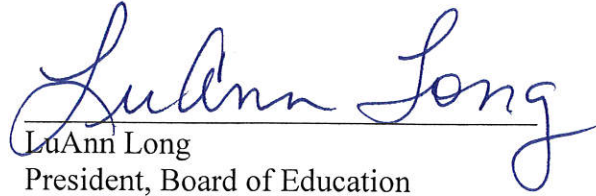
WHEREAS, even as the legislature continues to reduce school funding, the legislature has passed multiple significant reform efforts, including but not limited to the Preschool to Postsecondary Education Alignment Act (CAP4K) (Senate Bill 08-212), the Education Accountability Act of 2009 (Senate Bill 09-163), the Educator Effectiveness Law (Senate Bill 10-191), and the Colorado READ Act (House Bill 12-1238), without adequate revenue support. These laws impose additional unfunded obligations on school districts already burdened by reduced funding to implement the existing education reforms.

WHEREAS, state revenues are increasing and the legislature has discussed paying off the state payday holiday and replenishing cash funds, the legislature must make it a priority to eliminate the negative factor and return to a sensible and constitutional system of school finance.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Colorado Springs School District 11 Board of Education calls upon the Colorado legislature to eliminate the negative factor in K-12 education funding and restore, within the next five years, funds lost due to its use to date.

Dated this 26th day of February, 2014.

Colorado Springs School District 11

  
LuAnn Long  
President, Board of Education

  
Elaine Naleski, Vice President

  
Jim Mason, Secretary

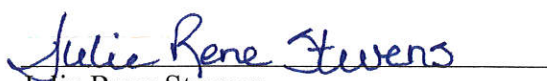
  
Nora Brown, Treasurer

  
Linda Mojer, Director

  
Bob Null, Director

  
Janet Tanner, Director

Attested by:

  
Julie Rene Stevens  
Secretary to the Board of Education