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The governor and other key players on Colorado's budget

The Colorado General Assembly doesn't officially convene until Jan. 11, but the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) is back at work preparing for the session.

The JBC will be led by **Sen. Kent Lambert**, R-Colorado Springs, as the committee chair. **Rep. Millie Hamner**, D-Dillon, was elected to serve as the vice chair. JBC membership will once again be evenly divided among Republicans and Democrats, based on the House having a Democratic majority and the Senate being under Republican control. **Rep. Bob Rankin**, R-Carbondale, and **Rep. Dave Young**, D-Greeley, will return to the JBC and will be joined by **Senator-Elect Dominick Moreno**, D-Commerce City, and **Sen. Kevin Lundberg**, R-Berthoud.

The JBC will face a funding deficit of approximately \$500 million as it tries to craft a budget for the 2017-18 fiscal year. Colorado Gov. **John Hickenlooper** (D) presented his proposed budget to JBC members during their first meeting on Nov. 14. The governor's proposal calls for an increase in the Negative Factor, cuts to transportation and a cap on the Hospital Provider Fee. As Colorado grapples with funding issues that have persisted for almost a decade, the Governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting (OSPB) "swept" several little-known cash funds into the General Fund to help balance Hickenlooper's budget request. [To view the governor's budget proposal, click here.](#)

The JBC will use the time leading up to the start of the legislative session holding hearings with various departments of state government. The next economic forecast will be released in late December and will provide additional information for the JBC to ponder. Over the course of the session, the JBC will craft a budget to be submitted to the entire General Assembly that is known as the Long Bill. Typically, the Long Bill and School Finance Act are addressed late in the 120-day session. The Colorado General Assembly must adjourn by Wednesday, May 10.

THE FINAL SCORE

Winners and losers: The final score at the capitol

Americans love to keep score. Doesn't matter if it is a post-holiday family game of Yahtzee or a little league soccer game, everyone wants to know the score. With that in mind, voters in Colorado decided that the Colorado House will retain a Democrat majority – 37 seats for the Dems and 28 seats for the Republicans. In

the Senate, it was a much closer outcome, but the Republicans beat the Democrats to the tape and will have an 18-to-17 majority. Both chambers held leadership elections:

Colorado House of Representatives

Speaker of the House	Rep. Crisanta Duran D, House District 5 (Denver)
Majority Leader	Rep. K.C. Becker D, House District 13 (Boulder)
Assistant Majority Leader	Rep. Alec Garnett D, House District 2 (Denver)
Majority Caucus Chair	Rep. Daneya Esgar D, House District 46 (Pueblo)
Assistant Majority Caucus Chair	Rep. Jennifer Arndt D, House District 53 (Fort Collins)
Majority Whip	Rep. Brittany Petterson D, House District 28 (Lakewood)
Majority Deputy Whip	Rep. Javon Melton D, House District 41 (Aurora)
Minority Leader	Rep. Patrick Neville R, House District 45 (Castle Rock)
Assistant Minority Leader	Rep. Cole Wist R, House District 37 (Centennial)
Minority Caucus Chair	Rep. Lori Saine R, House District 63 (Firestone)
Minority Whip	Rep. Perry Buck R, House District 49 (Windsor)

Colorado Senate

President of the Senate	Sen. Kevin Grantham R, Senate District 2 (Canon City)
President Pro-Tem	Sen. Jerry Sonnenberg R, Senate District 1 (Sterling)
Majority Leader	Sen. Chris Holbert R, Senate District 30 (Parker)
Assistant Majority Leader	Sen. Ray Scott R, Senate District 7 (Grand Junction)

Majority Caucus Chair	Sen. Vicki Marble R, Senate District 23 (Fort Collins)
Senate Majority Whip	Sen. John Cooke R, Senate District 13 (Greeley)
Minority Leader	Sen. Alicia Guzman D, Senate District 34 (Denver)
Assistant Minority Leader	Sen. Leroy Garcia D, Senate District 3 (Pueblo)
Minority Whip	Sen. Michael Merrifield D, Senate District 11 (Colorado Springs)
Minority Caucus Chair	Sen. Lois Court D, Senate District 31 (Denver)

Thirty-three new legislators will be sworn into office in early January. These are folks either brand new to the General Assembly or moving from one chamber to the other. With so many new faces, it will be hard to predict what bills will be coming in 2017. It is a safe bet the General Assembly will take up education bills related to assessments and school funding, but it is anybody's guess what those bills will contain. The CASB advocacy team will be providing updates and information as the session progresses. Make sure to "like" the CASB Facebook page ([facebook.com/ColoSchoolBoards](https://www.facebook.com/ColoSchoolBoards)) and follow us on Twitter at [@casbconnect](https://twitter.com/casbconnect) and [@casbmattcook](https://twitter.com/casbmattcook) for the latest information.

Colorado, corner to corner

By JulieMarie A. Shepherd Macklin
CASB Board President

This fall, I had the opportunity to travel across Colorado with CASB staff members and join local school board members at many of the CASB Regional Meetings. The tradition of the CASB Board president attending Regional Meetings is one I am proud to have been a part of and found it to be one of the high points of my service as your board president this past year. I'd like to share a few of my reflections with you.



One of the highlights of this fall's Regional Meetings was the rollout of the Mission: Possible budget simulation tool. As Joe and Ken facilitated conversations around this tool at each Regional Meeting, it was fascinating to listen in as each group of board members, each local community, wrestled with the numbers, trying to determine what, where and how deep to make cuts that would restore K-12 funding and still allow for a balanced budget. In some cases, there seemed to be more of an appetite to tackle the crisis by raising revenue; the tool offers a variety of mechanisms to do this, from raising sales taxes to increasing "sin" taxes. I applaud local board members for jumping into these conversations and engaging in open, honest dialogue. This is not simply a discussion about numbers and percentages, but a deeper conversation about values and priorities. While the solutions proposed over dinner conversations represented hypothetical situations, the numbers were real and, more importantly, the

seemingly impossible situation we all face is very real. In the coming legislative session and in the coming months and years, we all will have to engage in this conversation with our elected officials and our local communities. The fiscal situation will not be remedied on its own, nor will the fix come overnight. If you have not already had a chance to check out the Mission: Possible tool, I would encourage you to do so – it is a great resource that helps explain and visually represent the current funding situation in Colorado. I found it useful for my own edification and have shared it with friends and community members.

The state's fiscal situation is dire and public education will continue to feel the pressure and have to deal with the fallout. However, as I visited with different school board leaders across the state, I was encouraged and inspired. I was reminded that even in these unprecedented fiscal times, school board members remain dedicated, above all else, to student success. Even as the funds continue to dwindle and the mandates continue to grow, board members find innovative ways to work with their districts and communities to maximize support for students.

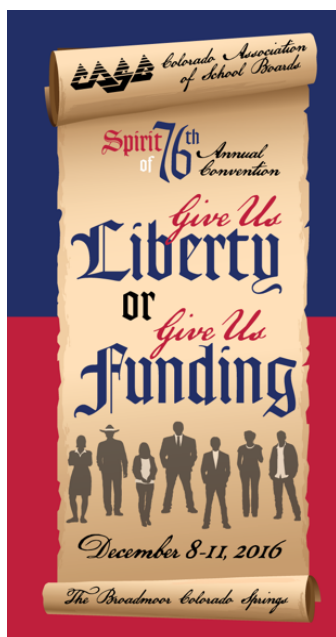
In visiting with local board members at the Regional Meetings and visiting some schools as we traveled between meetings, I enjoyed hearing and seeing firsthand how boards are leading and innovating. During the Region 6 meeting, we had a great discussion about advocacy. A local district shared its sample elevator pitch and noted how each board member was able to talk about the district and was prepared to share highlights, needs and policy priorities with any community member or fellow elected

official. This got me thinking, and as I drove home from that meeting, I was sketching out in my head my elevator pitch! In Region 11, a local board member shared how the high school stats class, under the guidance of a dedicated teacher, was conducting the much-needed district capacity assessment and would be presenting it to the board in the spring. With declining enrollment and shrinking budgets, this district has found a way to provide a meaningful, hands-on learning experience for students, and it managed to keep professional services in-house! This capacity study will be used as part of the planning conversations for a district bond. On the way to the Region 9 meeting, we had the chance to stop by the Creede School District. Creede is a great example of the power of community partnerships: It has a beautiful new, state-of-the-art building that was made possible with community support for a bond (with a BEST matching grant).



To everyone I had the chance to visit with, thank you for making me feel welcome in your community. I appreciate the time you took to attend your Regional Meeting – it is a testament to the dedication you have for your board work and service. I will treasure the conversations, school visits and new friendships – all of which contribute to and enrich my understanding of K-12 schools. I hope to draw on these experiences and continue to be an advocate for all of our students and districts across Colorado.

JulieMarie is an accomplished photographer and took the accompanying photos on her travels.



Happy New Year!

School Board Advocate will not be published in December since we hope to see all CASB members at the [76th Annual Convention](#). School Board Advocate will resume in January with twice-monthly editions throughout the 2017 Legislative session.

On behalf of the entire CASB staff, please allow us to be the first to wish you a Happy New Year! Best wishes for a healthy and prosperous 2017.

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