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Legislative Roadmap for 2020 School Finance Act



Week of May 4
JBC crafts budget

Week of May 18
Long Bill and SFA
heard in the House

Week of May 25
Long Bill and SFA
heard in the Senate

Early June
Governor signs



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What You Can Do to Advocate for Funding

Ways to Contact Legislators

Legislature's website



Letters



Emails



Social media



Phone calls



Town halls



Face-to-face meeting



Ways to Participate

Learn the process



View livestream of hearing or floor session



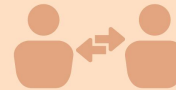
Attend committee hearing/floor session



Committee testimony



Contact your legislator



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Toolkit for Meeting with your Elected Officials

- **Background** on why this issue is important and timely;
- **Talking points** and a fact sheet you can provide to legislators and staff;
- **Sample messages** for contacting your legislators on this issue; and
- A link to the **Meeting Report** so the CASB Advocacy team can follow-up as needed



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Colorado schools are essential to a thriving Colorado.

- **Stabilize and sustain our local communities**
 - Employ essential personnel
 - Serve as emergency feeding centers
 - Offer childcare
 - Bridge the digital divide
 - Provide vital services to the most vulnerable
- **Act as an economic driver for our economy**
 - School districts are often a region's largest employer
 - Return on investment in education has a multiplier effect
- **Educate more than 900,000 Colorado youth**
- **Prepare Colorado's workforce**
- **Serve as the cornerstone of our democracy**



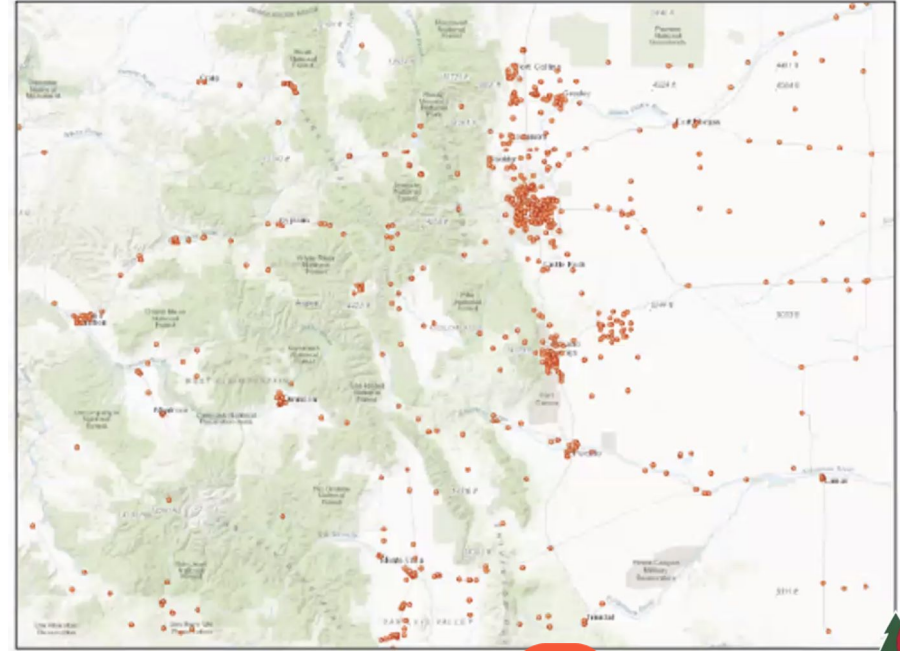
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Colorado schools are doing more today than ever.

Schools are central to a community's health and provide a safety net, in partnership with other local organizations, providing food, housing, mental health supports, and more.

When schools are not supported, the fiber of society starts unraveling.



Emergency Feeding Centers
during COVID-19



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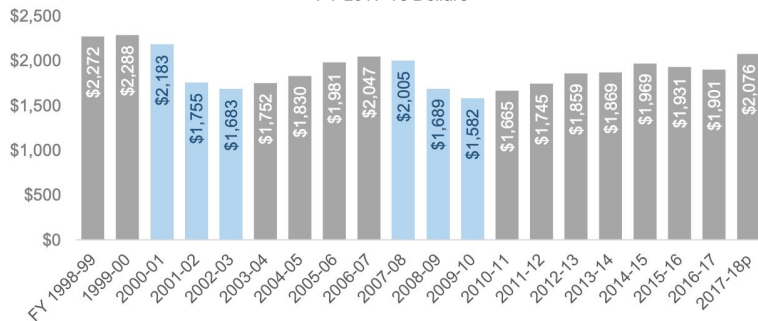


Colorado schools are facing devastating budget cuts without fully recovering from prior cuts.

The Great Recession in 2008 put such a dent in the state budget that it took 11 years for general fund revenues to recover to pre-recession levels, when adjusted for inflation and population.

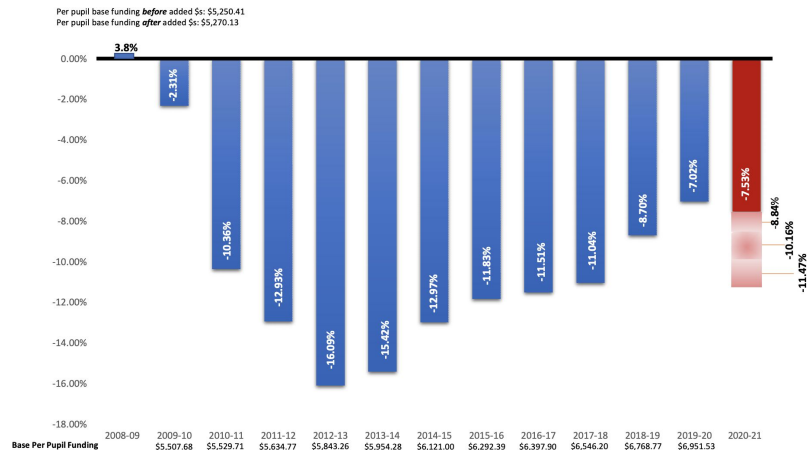
State share of education funding (measured by Budget Stabilization Factor) never recovered and is starting at a much weaker position to weather additional cuts.

Figure 2
Inflation-Adjusted Per Capita General Fund Revenue
FY 2017-18 Dollars



Source: Colorado State Controller's Office with Legislative Council Staff calculations, using data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (Denver-Aurora-Lakewood CPI-U inflation), and U.S. Census Bureau.
p = Preliminary. Note: Light blue bars indicate a period of recession.

Budget Stabilization Factor as a Percent: Looking at Potential Consequences in 2020-21



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Additional cuts to schools will hurt kids.

- **Mental health issues and teen suicide rates are growing** — Colorado ranks as the sixth worst state for teen suicides
- **Colorado teacher pay is least competitive in the nation**
- **Achievement & opportunity gaps are growing and among the largest in the U.S.**
- **An unacceptable digital divide exists**
 - Approximately 53,000 students need wifi-enabled devices
 - Approximately 65,860 children need Internet access at home
- **60% of districts have transitioned to one or more schools on a four-day week**



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Colorado schools require more revenue — not less — to reopen schools.

- Staggered schedules, health screenings, smaller groups at schools with some kids who are more prepared to work from home
- Catch up learning opportunities for students who show evidence of large academic slide.
- Need to be flexible with both in-school and at-home learning plans, including digital device access, in case of second wave of COVID-19
- PPE and supplies: non-latex gloves, non-touch thermometers, masks, gowns and eye protection
- Mental health supports
- Teacher supports and professional development
- Increase cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing costs
- Care for students with chronic conditions
- Replenish use of one-time funds to address COVID-19 unplanned costs
- Purchasing more devices
- Additional insurance on devices
- Higher transportation costs if running staggered schedules

Past solutions to statewide budget shortfalls have led to growing inequities across the state.

- **Districts backfilling the loss in state share by holding local mill levy override elections is not an equitable solution.**
 - The revenue that can be raised by local school districts through mill levy override elections ranges from \$5,600 per mill to \$20.7 million per mill.
- **Creating grant programs for schools is not an equitable solution.**



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Advocacy Plan Objectives

- **Educate legislators** about the impact of past and future cuts in state share funding to our schools
- **Advocate** for our students, schools, and community
- **Track your legislators' level of commitment** to support our schools and to find a statewide solution for school funding



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Take Action

- **Your task:** Contact your Senator(s) and Representative(s) to provide them localized examples of the value of funding of our schools.
- **Your ask:** “Our schools need sustainable and adequate funding in order to continue the essential services our communities need.”



What You Can Do To Advocate

School board members advocate for local schools by working with their legislators and it is important that members take time to know their legislators and gain the ability to share the challenges and the successes their teachers and students face on a daily basis. As fellow elected officials, board members bring expertise and knowledge about education in their community to their legislators. There is no better time than now to reach out and advocate for our schools as the 2020-21 school year budget is being set.

1) STEP UP!

[Advocacy Sign Up](#)

2) RESEARCH

[Find your District's Key Legislators](#)

[Review Advocacy Presentation](#)

3) PREPARE

[Planning Template](#)

[Interactive District Website Tool to See Effects of Future Cut Scenarios on Your Budget \(CSFP resource\)](#)

4) REPORT OUT

[Meeting Report](#)



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Your ask: Provide adequate and sustainable funding in order to provide the essential services our communities need.

- **Maximize the revenue that goes into Total Program Funding**
 - Pays for teachers and support staff (85%+ of district budgets)
 - Pays for additional supports for students
- **Minimize those systems that create burdens on districts** — grant programs, testing, accountability, etc.
- **Commit to finding a long-term structural solution to our inadequate tax system**
 - Support [Initiative #271 — Fair Tax Colorado](#); or
 - Identify another structural fix to ensure the health of our state budget



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INITIATIVE #271

INITIATIVE #271 WILL:

Repeal the constitutional requirement that all income be taxed at one rate.

Create a tiered tax structure helping to equalize the portion of their income they pay in state taxes.

Establish a 25-member Fair Tax Commission.

96%

of Colorado Taxpayers have taxable income less than \$250k

2.5%

of Colorado Taxpayers have taxable income between \$250k and \$500k

0.75%

of Colorado Taxpayers have taxable income between \$500k and \$1m

All taxpayers pay a lower rate of 4.58% on first \$250k of taxable income

Subsequent \$250k will be taxed at 7.00%

Next \$250k in taxable income is taxed at 7.75%

Income of \$250,000

Income of \$500,000

Income of \$1,000,000



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How is this measure different than Amendment 73?

	Amendment 73	Initiative #271
Change tax structure	Yes	Yes
Change to flat income tax	Yes	Yes
Change to Gallagher (property tax rates)	Yes	No
Change to corporate income tax	Yes	No
Projected revenue	\$1.6 billion	\$2 billion (impact statement was created prior to COVID-19 impacts)
Revenue earmarked	Yes, education only	Raises money for both education and other state priorities (education receives 50%)
Vote threshold required to pass	55% + 1	50% + 1



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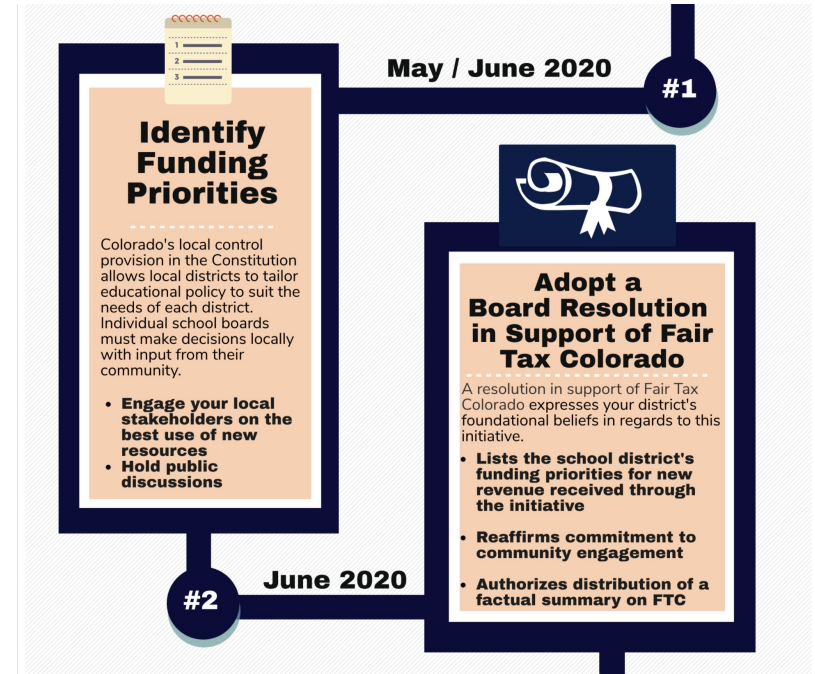


Ways to support #271

- Identify funding priorities through the budgeting process
- Adopt a resolution in support of Fair Tax Colorado (Initiative #271)
 - Identify priorities
 - Reaffirm commitment to community engagement
 - Authorize distribution of a factual summary



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Take Action

- Visit the [CASB Action page](#) and sign up to take action today.
 - **1) STEP UP!** — tell us what you can do
 - **2) RESEARCH** — find your legislators and review the key talking points
 - **3) PREPARE** — fill out the template with your local story
 - **4) REPORT OUT** — let us know how your contacts went
- **Your ask:** “Our schools need sustainable and adequate funding in order to continue the essential services our communities need.”



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