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### **Colorado Education Association Applauds Governor Polis for Bold Budget Proposal, Prioritizing School Funding**

**DENVER, CO** – As the representative of nearly 40,000 of Colorado's education professionals, the Colorado Education Association is encouraged by Governor Jared Polis' FY2023-24 state budget proposal, which places a strong emphasis on much-needed funding for Colorado's public schools. The proposed full buy down of the Budget Stabilization factor underscores the Governor's attentiveness to educators' concerns and his unwavering commitment to strengthening our public education system, ensuring that every student has access to a high-quality education. Colorado is never, ever getting back together with the BS Factor.

The CEA is dedicated to advocating for a fully-funded education system. Despite Colorado's thriving economy ranking 3rd in the nation<sup>1</sup>, the state ranks 49th in average teacher starting salaries<sup>2</sup>, and 35th in per-pupil spending<sup>3</sup>. By the most generous estimate, Colorado's students have faced a funding gap of at least \$10 billion since the introduction of the Budget Stabilization factor in 2010 which translates to an entire generation of Colorado's students who have never received a fully funded education in Colorado's public schools.

To address the persistent issue of chronic disinvestment in Colorado's students and educators spanning decades, it is crucial to not only buy down the Budget Stabilization factor to zero but also to reconsider the Colorado tax code restrictions that have contributed to this education funding crisis. Our public schools are grappling with a multitude of interconnected and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/rankings/economy>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nea.org/resource-library/educator-pay-and-student-spending-how-does-your-state-rank>

<sup>3</sup> <https://wisevoter.com/state-rankings/per-pupil-spending-by-state/>

complex challenges, all of which would greatly benefit from a sustained and systemic funding remedy.

The nearly 40,000 members of Colorado Education Association have been relentless advocates for increased funding for our students to ensure the schools all of Colorado's students and educators deserve, sending nearly 4,000 postcards to the Governor this October with personal stories about the impact of having a fully funded public education system.

"We are ready to move into our Fully Funded Era," said Amie Baca-Oehlert, High School Counselor, and President of the Colorado Education Association. "We applaud Governor Polis for taking swift action to address the long-standing funding challenges faced by Colorado's public schools. Colorado public schools are ready to finally shake off the decades-long BS Factor."

The Colorado Education Association views his budget proposal as a pivotal step toward guaranteeing that Colorado's students receive the high-quality education they rightfully deserve. We eagerly anticipate collaborating with the many public education advocates in the legislature to further enhance this financial investment and secure the most substantial funding for our public education system in Colorado history.

**Highlights of the Governor's budget proposal include:**

- **Full Buy Down of the Budget Stabilization Factor:** Governor Polis's proposal addresses this critical issue, ensuring that the state's budget is no longer balanced on the back of our schools.
- **Increase Per Pupil Funding:** The budget prioritizes an average increase of \$705 more per pupil, allowing schools to provide a better learning environment and resources for students.
- **Funding for summer EBT program:** Help over 300,000 food-insecure children receive the nutrition they need in the summer.
- **More Housing Now:** Prioritizing state funding and policy to increase Colorado's housing supply.

"It is clear that Governor Polis has listened to the persistent voices of CEA members and, in his budget proposal, has demonstrated a profound commitment to public education and a deep understanding of its crucial role in our state's future," said Baca-Oehlert. "We commend his bold budget proposal and look forward to collaborative efforts with him and our state legislators to transform this vision into a reality. Together, we can provide the resources and support needed for our students and educators to thrive."

"A fully-funded education system would lead to attracting and retaining more educators, smaller class sizes, safer schools equipped with ample mental health professionals – all of which contribute to improved student outcomes for all students. This is the Colorado that our students deserve, that our education professionals deserve, and the future we must demand,"

"We understand that this will be a long fight, marked by numerous significant challenges along the way. However, as Colorado's largest labor union, we are ready for it. We are committed to working collaboratively with our state legislators to create policies around critical issues, from adequate funding to improved learning environments. By joining forces with our elected representatives, we will make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students and educators."

***About the Colorado Education Association***

*The Colorado Education Association is a membership-based organization that represents nearly 40,000 Colorado education professionals. The CEA promise to our students and communities is that the members of the Association will lead the way in guaranteeing every student access to the best public education. By working collectively with all education stakeholders, we will provide the best public education for every student and assure Colorado's standing as an excellent state in which to learn, live, work, and raise a family.*

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