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**Education Policy Center Newsletter**

**From The Independence Institute**

**May 16, 2012**

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**Report Proposes New Funding System to Support “Self-Blended” Learning**

Last month we told you about our new [Digital Learning Policy Roadmap for Colorado](http://education.i2i.org/2012/03/the-future-of-colorado-digital-learning-crafting-a-policy-roadmap-for-reform/), which gives an overview of needed changes in the areas of student access and eligibility, assessments and accountability, and funding. Delving more deeply into some areas addressed in the road map, a brand new issue paper by our senior policy analyst Ben DeGrow takes a deeper look at how to modify K-12 funding in Colorado. [*Online Course-Level Funding: Toward Colorado Self-Blended Secondary Learning Options*](http://education.i2i.org/2012/05/online-course-level-funding-toward-colorado-secondary-self-blended-learning-options/)proposes a new system for our state to promote greater student choice of quality online-provided courses to blend with their traditional brick-and-mortar school learning.

In a similar vein, the Education Policy Center also recently released a 2-minute video titled [“Rethinking Colorado School Finance.”](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPZ-R-k-l1w) The video features the “outside-the-box” insights of national experts Dr. Eric Hanushek and Dr. Marguerite Roza, as they shared their thoughts at a March 19 Denver event sponsored by the Colorado State Board of Education.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Video: Time to Rethink How Colorado Finances Student Learning Success](http://www.ediswatching.org/2012/05/video-time-to-rethink-how-colorado-finances-student-learning-success/)

[Advancing Digital Learning Reform Means Hard (and Smart) Work Lies Ahead](http://www.ediswatching.org/2012/04/advancing-digital-learning-reforms-means-hard-and-smart-work-lies-ahead/)

**Watch “Teachers Matter” Brown Bag Lunch Event**

[Forty guests came](http://education.i2i.org/2012/04/teachers-matter-author-marcus-winters-headlines-first-independence-institute-brown-bag-lunch-event/) to our Independence Institute Freedom Embassy on April 12, most with brown bag lunch in tow, to hear Dr. Marcus Winters explain the findings of his new book [*Teachers Matter*](http://www.manhattan-institute.org/teachersmatter/). If you missed our speaker’s research-based insights on everything from teacher licensure and evaluations to performance pay systems, you can [watch full video of the April 12 event](http://education.i2i.org/2012/04/event-video-marcus-winters-on-teachers-matter/) or [listen to a 15-minute iVoices podcast discussion](http://education.i2i.org/2012/04/research-says-teachers-and-teacher-policy-matter/).

**Legislative Committee Kills HB 1333 Options for Teachers**

In the closing days of the regular legislative session, a Senate Democrat committee killed [House Bill 1333](http://www.ediswatching.org/2012/04/house-bill-1333-options-for-teachers-generates-tweets-clears-first-committee/) – a proposal that would have granted teachers monthly discretion to opt in or out of union membership. Currently, many districts have [brief revocation windows](http://www.independentteachers.org/revoking-membership/) in which teachers can choose to exit the union. In both the [*Denver Post*](http://www.denverpost.com/opinion/ci_20416361/guest-commentary-bill-colorado-would-allow-denver-classroom) and [Ed News Colorado](http://www.ednewscolorado.org/2012/05/03/37731-commentary-failed-bill-a-blow-to-teacher-freedom), teachers told of their firsthand difficulties and the respect HB 1333 would have shown them. You can watch the Professional Association of Colorado Educators’ Tim Farmer [tout the issue on a *Devil’s Advocate* episode](http://education.i2i.org/2012/05/devils-advocate-tim-farmer-touts-hb-1333-options-for-teachers/), [read Ben DeGrow’s comments in *School Reform News*](http://education.i2i.org/2012/04/degrow-touts-case-to-expand-colorado-teacher-options-in-school-reform-news/), or listen to them both [hash out the aftermath on an iVoices podcast](http://education.i2i.org/2012/05/house-bill-1333-the-fight-to-expand-teacher-options/).

More from Ed Is Watching:

[House Bill 1333 Options for Teachers Generates Tweets, Clears First Committee](http://www.ediswatching.org/2012/04/house-bill-1333-options-for-teachers-generates-tweets-clears-first-committee/)

[Union Leaders Bullying Teachers Is Not Something We Have to Accept, Either](http://www.ediswatching.org/2012/04/union-leaders-bullying-teachers-is-not-something-we-have-to-accept-either/)

**Local Innovations in Dougco, Falcon Garner Attention**

While education policy action has wound down at the State Capitol, at least a couple key local initiatives bear close watching. With open union negotiations now well underway, the Douglas County school board [has put forth a bold performance-based proposal](http://www.ediswatching.org/2012/04/vincent-carroll-sounds-bold-themes-of-dougco-school-board-budget-proposal/) to promote productivity and challenge special interest privilege. The Falcon School District’s innovative plan to engage parents and school leaders in remaking the district [faces a crucial crossroads](http://www.ediswatching.org/2012/05/nearing-falcon-innovation-crossroads-proposals-approved-opposition-strong/), while Harrison’s cutting-edge teacher performance pay system [quietly and gradually builds support](http://www.ediswatching.org/2012/04/encouraging-news-performance-pay-in-harrison-gradually-gaining-teacher-support/).

**Center Roundup: Latest Podcasts and Blog Entries**

The Education Policy Center is starting to give the new Denver podcast studio some good use. Our two other new iVoices productions: [Karin Piper explains](http://education.i2i.org/2012/05/parent-led-reform-steps-forward-in-colorado/) the origins, early successes and long-term vision of her growing new group Parent Led Reform, while Branson Online teacher [Christina Narayan tells](http://education.i2i.org/2012/04/nbc-teacher-town-hall-participant-talks-technology/) what it was like to take part in NBC’s televised teacher town hall event in Denver last month. What else might you have missed? Senior fellow Krista Kafer’s issue paper [*A Chronology of School Choice in the U.S.*](http://education.i2i.org/2012/05/a-chronology-of-school-choice-in-the-us/) has been updated to reflect current changes.

Finally, youngest but not least, our prodigious blogger Eddie offered up his takes on a few other key developments in the world of education, both in Colorado and beyond:

[The Bright & Not-So-Bright Spots of Colorado's Latest 3rd Grade Reading Scores](http://www.ediswatching.org/2012/05/the-bright-not-so-bright-spots-of-colorados-latest-3rd-grade-reading-scores/)

[Dougco, Dougco, Dougco! State Board Reapproves Teacher Licensure Waiver](http://www.ediswatching.org/2012/04/dougco-dougco-dougco-state-board-reapproves-teacher-licensure-waiver/)

[Teachers and Charter Schools: A Whole Lot of Appreciation Going On This Week](http://www.ediswatching.org/2012/05/teachers-and-charter-schools-a-whole-lot-of-appreciation-going-on-this-week/)

[Change the Blended Learning Categories, Just Don't Call Me Late for Dinner!](http://www.ediswatching.org/2012/05/change-the-blended-learning-categories-just-dont-call-me-late-for-dinner/)

[SB 172 Testing Consortium Dispute Colors Last Days of Legislative Session](http://www.ediswatching.org/2012/05/sb-172-testing-consortium-dispute-colors-last-days-of-legislative-session/)

[Go to Choice Media TV's "Reform School" for Your Education Viewing Enjoyment](http://www.ediswatching.org/2012/05/go-to-choice-media-tvs-reform-school-for-your-education-viewing-enjoyment/)

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