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**Education Policy Center Newsletter**

**From The Independence Institute**

**February 7, 2013**

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**Digital Learning Celebrates Innovation, Calls for Policy Changes**

Yesterday’s second annual celebration of Digital Learning Day offers another platform to promote current Colorado blended learning innovations and to explore future policy changes. To discuss what makes Rocky Mountain Prep unique and cutting-edge, the Denver Charter School’s founder James Cryan [appeared on the Amy Oliver Show](http://education.i2i.org/2013/02/amy-oliver-show-rocky-mountain-prep-pioneers-blended-learning-innovation/) and the blended learning school’s community engagement coordinator Rebecca Kisner addressed a Spanish-language audience [on the Raaki Garcia Show](http://raakigarcia.com/2013/01/raaki-garcia-show-january-15/). As legislative issues emerge, we continue to place our 2012 [digital learning policy road map](http://education.i2i.org/2012/03/the-future-of-colorado-digital-learning-crafting-a-policy-roadmap-for-reform/) in policymakers’ hands.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Digital Learning Day Could Help Propel Colorado to Course Choice](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/02/digital-learning-day-could-help-propel-colorado-to-student-course-choice/)

[PBS Features Rocketship Education Charter Expansion, Continuing Innovation](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/01/pbs-features-rocketship-education-charter-expansion-continuing-innovation/)

**DeGrow Addresses Looming School Finance Debate**

In another 2012 publication, the Education Policy Center [proposed school finance reforms including backpack funding](http://education.i2i.org/2012/05/online-course-level-funding-toward-colorado-secondary-self-blended-learning-options/), which would allow dollars to follow students directly to the course level. Publication author Ben DeGrow last month wrote in Ed News Colorado that the state’s voters [would need to see some truly bold changes](http://www.ednewscolorado.org/2013/01/25/55132-voices-more-money-isnt-always-the-answer) to consider a tax hike proposed by the legislature for this fall’s ballot. It at least would have to be something more than [union leaders are asking for](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/01/video-begs-question-what-would-union-leaders-like-tax-hike-to-pay-for/).

More from Ed Is Watching:
[Looming Legislative Session Evokes More Hope Than Heartburn for K-12 Issues](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/01/looming-legislative-session-evokes-more-heartburn-than-hope-for-k-12-issues/)

[A Couple More Weeks of Waiting for School Finance “Grand Bargain” Details](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/01/a-couple-more-weeks-of-waiting-for-school-finance-%E2%80%9Cgrand-bargain%E2%80%9D-details/)

**Independence Institute Celebrates School Choice Week (en español)**

For the second straight year, the Education Policy Center team was proud to be a key part of [National School Choice Week](http://schoolchoiceweek.com). Along with the Libre Initiative and help from Jeffco Students First, on January 31 we sponsored a showing of the Spanish-language version of *Waiting for Superman* at Denver’s Centro San Juan Diego. Dozens of families from the Hispanic community joined us for the educational film and discussion, delicious food, and fun prizes. [Check out some colorful pictures from last week on our Flickr page.](http://www.flickr.com/photos/51219410%40N06/sets/72157632662649175/)

Speaking of *en español*, on her weekly radio show Hispanic Education Coordinator Raaki Garcia [talked with representatives from Denver’s Ana Maria Sandoval dual-language Montessori school](http://raakigarcia.com/2013/01/01-29-13-raaki-garcia-show/) about their philosophy of education. Also, two January English-language radio interviews commemorating School Choice Week celebrated [options for teachers](http://education.i2i.org/2013/01/amy-oliver-show-school-choice-week-celebrates-teacher-options/) and [options for students](http://education.i2i.org/2013/01/amy-oliver-show-school-choice-week-celebrates-colorado-options/) in Colorado.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Climb (Dance & Tweet) Aboard the National School Choice Week Train with Me](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/01/climb-dance-tweet-aboard-the-national-school-choice-week-train-with-me/)

[National School Choice Week Simply Means More Reasons to Celebrate](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/02/national-school-choice-week-simply-means-more-reasons-to-celebrate/)

**Citizens Seek Union Transparency in Thompson Schools**

Colorado’s citizen-backed efforts to promote transparency and union accountability have taken root in Loveland’s Thompson School District. On his weekly K-12 radio segment on AM 1310 KFKA, [Ben DeGrow interviewed Nancy Rumfelt of Liberty Watch](http://education.i2i.org/2013/01/amy-oliver-show-petitioning-for-transparency-in-thompson/) about her petition to open collective bargaining negotiations, to end payroll union dues deductions, and to stop subsidizing the release of union officers from classroom duties.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Liberty Watch Push for Open Union Negotiations Gains Traction in Loveland](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/01/liberty-watch-push-for-open-union-negotiations-gains-traction-in-loveland/)

**Grading Colorado and More: Eddie Rounds Up K-12 Scene**

While our first radio interview of 2013 [highlighted updates to the Colorado School Grades website](http://education.i2i.org/2013/01/colorado-school-grades-keeps-tabs-on-school-performance/), recent weeks have brought a different kind of report card to light. Little Eddie didn’t pass up the chance to comment on the inaugural [Students First Policy Report Card](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/01/top-10-yes-but-c-for-colorado-on-students-first-policy-report-card/) or on [national comparisons of state charter school laws](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/01/on-this-measure-of-charter-school-laws-colorado-ranks-4th%E2%80%A6-not-bad/). Other key tidbits from our blogging prodigy include:

[To Free Up Education Funds, Fix PERA and Offer Scholarship Tax Credits](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/01/to-free-up-education-funds-fix-pera-and-offer-scholarship-tax-credits/)

[EIA Reports $15 Million Spent by NEA Union on Advocacy Groups in 2011-12](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/01/eia-reports-15-million-spent-by-nea-union-on-advocacy-groups-in-2011-12/)

[Colorado, Be Wary of Reading Too Much into Cyberschool Critiques](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/01/colorado-be-wary-of-reading-too-much-into-cyberschool-critiques/)

[Too Many Elementary Teachers Makes Case for Market-Based Differential Pay](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/01/too-many-elementary-teachers-makes-case-for-market-based-differential-pay/)

[It’s Hard to Get Beyond Emotion in Legislative Debates on School Safety](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/01/it%E2%80%99s-hard-to-get-beyond-emotion-in-legislative-debates-on-school-safety/)

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