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**Education Policy Center Newsletter**

**From The Independence Institute**

**July 18, 2013**

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**TV Alert: Benigno Tackles Tuition Tax Credits**

We invite you to tune in and watch tomorrow’s episode of [*The Devil’s Advocate with Jon Caldara*](http://cpt12.org/tv_schedule/program_details.cfm?series_id=35206794), on Colorado Public Television (Channel 12 in Denver), **Friday, July 19, at 8:30 PM**, for a back-to-back education spectacular. Out of the gate, Pam Benigno discusses the case for scholarship tax credits in Colorado as a way to give low- and middle-income students more educational options. As tax credits [expand in Arizona](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/06/good-summer-news-two-arizona-choice-programs-on-verge-of-expansion/) but [face an unprecedented legal setback](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/06/particularly-odd-logic-in-new-hampshire-ruling-sets-back-tax-credit-choice/) in New Hampshire, now is the time to get educated and engaged on this important issue at [**ColoradoKidsWin.org**](http://ColoradoKidsWin.org). We are ready, willing, and able to make engaging and informative presentations on this topic to your group… just let us know!

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Scholarship Tax Credits and the Bizarre Scapegoating of Corporate Philanthropy](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/07/scholarship-tax-credits-and-the-bizarre-scapegoating-of-corporate-philanthropy/)

**TV Alert (Cont.): Kafer Touts New Blended Learning Report**

The second half of Friday’s *Devil’s Advocate* features a conversation with education senior fellow Krista Kafer, who just completed our new issue paper [*The Rise of K-12 Blended Learning in Colorado*](http://education.i2i.org/2013/07/the-rise-of-k-12-blended-learning-in-colorado). The paper helps readers understand how students can access the best of both digital technology and professional instruction. She also highlights the growing number of opportunities available to students in Colorado, as various charter schools and districts begin to break the traditional mold of what education looks like. Both parts of the television show are scheduled to repeat **Sunday, July 21, at 11:30 AM**, and **Monday, July 22, at 12:30 PM.**

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Louisiana Successfully Revamps Course Choice: Pay Attention, Colorado!](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/06/louisiana-successfully-revamps-course-choice-pay-attention-colorado/)

**Center Exposes 49th in Education Funding Fallacy… Again**

Supporters of the statewide billion-dollar tax hike initiative, collecting signatures to make the fall ballot, have [revived the deceptive “49th in education funding” canard](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/07/somebodys-got-to-expose-the-tax-hikers-49th-in-education-funding-deception/) to make their case. The decision may stem from a sense of desperation built on the [track record of statewide tax hikes](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/06/walk-down-colo-tax-hike-memory-lane-fails-to-inspire-sb-213-confidence/). Besides a hefty dose of accuracy, they also could use a clearer understanding of [recent K-12 spending context and trends](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/06/numbers-tell-part-of-the-tale-drilling-into-census-bureaus-colorado-k-12-data/). Stay tuned for more analysis on this topic of growing importance.

**Read, Watch, or Listen to Learn Colo. Charter School History**

Last month marked the 20th anniversary of Colorado’s Charter Schools Act. The Education Policy Center commemorated the occasion with the release of [*On the Road of Innovation*](http://education.i2i.org/2013/06/on-the-road-of-innovation-colorados-charter-school-law-turns-20/)by Pamela Benigno and Kyle Morin, a thorough account described by the *Denver Post*’s Vincent Carroll as [“painstakingly evenhanded.”](http://education.i2i.org/2013/06/carroll-invokes-centers-charter-school-history-paper/) For those who don’t have time to read, you can go back and [watch the *Devil’s Advocate* episode](http://education.i2i.org/2013/06/devils-advocate-colorado-charter-schools-turn-20/) with Pam and longtime Colorado League of Charter Schools president Jim Griffin, or listen to Pam and senior policy analyst Ben DeGrow discuss the highlights on a [podcast of the Amy Oliver Show](http://education.i2i.org/2013/06/amy-oliver-show-colorados-charter-school-law-turns-20/).

**Center Spreads Word for Employee Freedom Week**

The Independence Institute joined dozens of other organizations in celebrating the first-ever [National Employee Freedom Week](http://employeefreedomweek.com/) (June 23-29), by unveiling news that 3 out of 8 Colorado union members [would get out if they could](http://www.independentteachers.org/2013/06/national-employee-freedom-week-3-in-8-colorado-union-members-want-out/). Other postings focused on union issues affecting Colorado teachers and other K-12 employees: [“dues equivalency,”](http://www.independentteachers.org/2013/06/many-non-union-colorado-school-employees-still-must-opt-out-every-year/) [opt-out windows](http://www.independentteachers.org/2013/06/employee-freedom-means-giving-teachers-more-chances-to-opt-out-of-union/), [political refunds](http://www.independentteachers.org/2013/06/ask-first-better-but-every-member-option-gives-glimmer-of-employee-freedom/), and [local-only membership](http://www.independentteachers.org/2013/06/national-employee-freedom-week-wraps-up-what-about-local-only-option/). Ben DeGrow later [interviewed Tim Farmer](http://education.i2i.org/2013/07/amy-oliver-show-teachers-union-membership-drops-dues-rate-climbs/) from the non-union Professional Association of Colorado Educators about declining union membership numbers and the case for school districts to stop collecting union dues.

Looking for more good education conversations? You can hear Falcon School District 49 innovation zone leader [Kim McClelland](http://education.i2i.org/2013/06/amy-oliver-show-new-statewide-online-school-breaks-innovative-ground/) talk about the newly-approved statewide Colorado Prep Online Academy, a K-12 school authorized by the first-of-its-kind Colorado Digital BOCES. Spanish-language audiences also will enjoy recent episodes of the Raaki Garcia Show that feature [a conversation about school choice](http://raakigarcia.com/2013/07/july-2/) and parent power with Tom Intorcio, and [a discussion on the Common Core](http://raakigarcia.com/2013/06/06-11-13-raaki-garcia-show/) with Parent Led Reform’s Karin Piper.

**Easy as 1-2-3: Eddie Debunks Anti-Dougco Myths**

Trying to keep up with an excellent Complete Colorado Page Two [column on Douglas County’s pay-for-performance system](http://completecolorado.com/pagetwo/2013/07/15/dougcos-pay-for-perfomance-system-rewards-excellence-threatens-union-bosses-power/) by school board member Doug Benevento, our own little Eddie debunked outlandish criticisms of Dougco’s cutting edge innovation not [once](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/06/discrepancies-in-dougco-stories-beg-question-how-many-union-members-remain/), not [twice](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/06/attacks-against-dougco-market-based-pay-miss-economic-mark-educational-reality/), but [three times](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/07/more-anti-dougco-rumors-debunked-as-successful-track-record-continues/). He also has covered a few other important education-related reports that otherwise might have fallen through the summertime cracks:

[NCTQ’s Report on Teacher Prep Programs Must Do More Than Rattle a Few Cages](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/06/nctqs-report-on-teacher-prep-programs-must-do-more-than-rattle-a-few-cages/)

[National CREDO Study Robs Anti-Charter Crowd of Big Bogus Talking Point](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/07/national-credo-study-robs-anti-charter-crowd-of-big-bogus-talking-point/)

[Jeffco Schools Earns Unwelcome Financial Distinction from State Ed Department](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/07/jeffco-schools-earns-unwelcome-financial-distinction-from-state-ed-department/)

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