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**Education Policy Center Newsletter**

**From The Independence Institute**

**June 3, 2013**

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**In Print and On TV: Colorado’s Charter School Law Turns 20**

On this date 20 years ago, Gov. Roy Romer signed into law Colorado’s Charter Schools Act. To commemorate the event and share the compelling stories of how the idea of self-governing public schools came to life here, today we are releasing [*On the Road of Innovation: Colorado’s Charter School Law Turns 20*](http://education.i2i.org/CharterHistory), by Pamela Benigno and Kyle Morin. This page-turner, unlike any we have released before, combines careful and colorful recollections from many key figures with other original sources to highlight the origins of the Act.

We would be remiss not to highlight how our predecessors at the Independence Institute significantly paved the way for charter schools in Colorado, holding the influential June 1988 Western Education Summit with the theme “Better Schools through Wider Choice.” Further, before the 1993 plane crash that took his life, Institute co-founder **David D’Evelyn** played a very important role in the development and passage of the Charter Schools Act.

To learn more, you’re also invited to watch this week’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, June 7, at 8:30 PM**. Pam Benigno and longtime Colorado League of Charter Schools president Jim Griffin will share some stories from the past and discuss charter successes. The show is scheduled to repeat **Sunday, June 9, at 11:30 AM**, and **Monday, June 10, at 12:30 PM.** Griffin earlier joined Ben DeGrow for a radio interview about a new report that shows [Colorado charter schools on the rise](http://education.i2i.org/2013/04/amy-oliver-show-colorado-charters-on-the-rise/).

More from Ed Is Watching:

[State Report Shows Colorado Public Charter Schools Outpacing Their Peers](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/05/state-report-shows-colorado-public-charter-schools-outpacing-their-peers/)

[Passing Thoughts: Charters Well Established Part of Colorado’s Education Landscape](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/05/passing-thoughts-charters-well-established-part-of-colorados-education-landscape/)

**Center Celebrates Lobato Ruling, Highlights Tax Hike**

Last week brought good news from the Colorado Supreme Court, as the 8-year-old *Lobato* case came to an end with a 4-2 majority ruling that the state’s current school finance system is constitutional. Radio host Amy Oliver and Ben DeGrow were joined by University of Colorado-Colorado Springs professor Joshua Dunn to [break down the landmark ruling](http://education.i2i.org/2013/05/amy-oliver-show-high-court-overturns-lobato-school-funding-decision/) that spared our state a multi-billion dollar spending mandate and a potential constitutional crisis. As an education tax measure looms on the ballot, DeGrow also held separate interviews with [Rep. Justin Everett](http://education.i2i.org/2013/05/amy-oliver-show-too-much-tax-too-little-reform-in-sb-213/) and [Sen. Scott Renfroe](http://education.i2i.org/2013/05/amy-oliver-show-senator-says-sb-213%E2%80%99s-extra-tax-dollars-not-needed/) to discuss the high price tag for little reform voters face in deciding whether to ratify Senate Bill 213. Our senior policy analyst’s insights into SB 213 also were featured on a recent [Choice Media Ed Reform Minute](http://education.i2i.org/2013/05/degrow-tackles-sb-213-tax-proposal-on-choice-media/).

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Ray of Hope for True School Finance Reform in Post-Lobato Lawsuit Landscape](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/05/ray-of-hope-for-true-school-finance-reform-in-post-lobato-lawsuit-landscape/)

[More Than a May Day Coincidence: SB 213 Tax Hike and “Phantom” Funding Reform](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/05/more-than-a-may-day-coincidence-sb-213-tax-hike-and-phantom-funding-reform/)

**Surveys Show Good School Reform News in Douglas County**

A community survey released by the Independence Institute and a teacher survey released by the State of Colorado both offer strong, positive signs for the pioneering reform work taking place in the Douglas County School District. As pointed out in our [press release](http://education.i2i.org/2013/05/dougco-loves-choice-school-board%E2%80%99s-reforms/) and [podcast](http://education.i2i.org/2013/05/survey-says-dougco-residents-love-choice-reform/), solid majorities of Dougco residents back an innovative reform package that includes school choice and performance pay. Only days earlier, the state’s TELL survey came out showing [Dougco teacher satisfaction mostly high and growing](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/05/tell-ing-dougco-results-teacher-satisfaction-mostly-high-and-growing/).

On the other side of the Denver area, the fiscally conservative Adams 12 school board has had its hands full. After refusing a request to hold negotiations in open sessions, the local Colorado Education Association affiliate [asserted the continuation of its power as top priority](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/05/surprise-perpetuating-power-top-priority-for-teachers-union-leaders-in-adams-12/), prompting Ben DeGrow [to comment to the *Colorado Observer* on union strategy](http://education.i2i.org/2013/05/co-observer-features-comment-on-union-local-strategy/).

More from Ed Is Watching:

[A Tale of Two Surveys: Dougco Embraces Reform, Colo. Reluctant on New K-12 Taxes](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/05/a-tale-of-two-surveys-dougco-embraces-reform-colo-reluctant-on-new-k-12-taxes/)

[International Student Learning Comparisons Remind Why Dougco Is Raising Bar](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/05/international-student-learning-comparisons-remind-why-dougco-is-raising-bar/)

**Colorado Kids Still Can Win with Scholarship Tax Credits**

If you haven’t yet watched the pair of brief videos to explain how K-12 scholarship tax credits would work and how they could help real kids in our state, please take a moment now by visiting our new [**Colorado Kids Win**](http://coloradokidswin.org) website. Nor should you miss the chance to go more in-depth by reading our recent publication [*A Scholarship Tax Credit Program for Colorado*](http://education.i2i.org/2013/02/a-scholarship-tax-credit-program-for-colorado/). Don’t forget: We would love the opportunity to come speak to your group about this important topic, so [please contact us](http://education.i2i.org/contact/)! Speaking of causes that are great for kids, our own Raaki Garcia this past month [hosted a conversation with Maria Soto of Families First](http://raakigarcia.com/2013/05/05-07-13-raaki-garcia-show/) on her Spanish-language radio show.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Scholarship Tax Credits Gain in Popularity? Sounds Like a Win-Win-Win for Colorado](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/05/scholarship-tax-credits-gain-in-popularity-sounds-like-a-win-win-win-for-colorado/)

**Eddie Stays Up-to-Date on Digital Learning**

While the school year was winding down for most kids, little Eddie stayed busy covering the latest buzz on digital learning—from [explaining how blended learning benefits teachers](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/05/yes-really-blended-learning-great-reason-to-appreciate-and-celebrate-teachers/) and [highlighting Senate Bill 139’s small step of progress](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/05/thats-one-small-step-for-digital-learning-and-quality-options-for-colorado-students/), to [looking for the disruptive innovations in Colorado K-12 education](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/05/identifying-the-good-kind-of-disruption-in-colorado-blended-learning-innovation/). Last but not least, here are a few more of our young blogging prodigy’s gems you may have missed from the month of May:

[Finding the Positives in Colorado’s Latest 3rd Grade Reading TCAP Results](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/05/finding-the-positives-in-colorados-latest-3rd-grade-reading-tcap-results/)

[Who Would Game the System to Deprive Needy Students of More Choices?](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/05/who-would-game-the-system-to-deprive-needy-students-of-more-choices/)

[Disputed Dougco Evaluations? Don’t Turn Up the Heat, Just Share All the Facts](http://www.ediswatching.org/2013/05/disputed-dougco-evaluations-dont-turn-up-the-heat-just-share-all-the-facts/)

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