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**Education Policy Center Newsletter**

**From The Independence Institute**

**February 4, 2014**

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**In this issue**

-- DeGrow to Serve on New Online Education Task Force

-- Families Join School Choice Week Celebration

-- Center Responds to Union’s Anti-Reform Lawsuit

-- Financial Issues Top Education’s Legislative Agenda

-- Douglas County Report Sent Statewide

-- Vigilant Eddie Blogs as 2014 Gets Underway

**DeGrow to Serve on New Online Education Task Force**

A bipartisan team of legislators appointed senior education policy analyst Ben DeGrow as one of [a seven-member task force](http://co.chalkbeat.org/2014/01/30/online-task-force-named-faces-tight-schedule/) to make policy recommendations that would “improve the quality of education for all students in Colorado who use online learning as part or all of their access to learning.” Final recommendations are due March 21. The task force will take public testimony at the State Capitol’s **Senate Committee Room 356** on **Wednesday, February 5** (tomorrow), at 1:30 PM.

Also in the world of digital learning, Raaki Garcia hosted a Spanish-language radio discussion with a representative [from Denver’s Rocky Mountain Prep blended learning charter school](http://raakigarcia.com/2014/01/1-28-2014-raaki-garcia-show/).

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Good Information is the Fuel That Makes Good Policies Like Course Choice Work](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/02/good-information-is-the-fuel-that-makes-good-policies-like-course-choice-work/)

[“All Aboard” with Blended Learning and My Future “Learning Engineer” Career](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/01/all-aboard-with-blended-learning-and-my-future-learning-engineer-career/)

**Families Join School Choice Week Celebration**

For the third straight year, the Education Policy Center sponsored an event to celebrate the growing phenomenon known as [National School Choice Week](http://schoolchoiceweek.com). This year our event room was packed with families who came for dinner and a chance to see the Spanish-language version of the 2010 education reform movie *Waiting for Superman*. Colorado Succeeds and the Libre Initiative served as co-sponsors. [Pictures are available on our Flickr page.](http://www.flickr.com/photos/51219410@N06/sets/72157640468285434/)

Kristina Saccone from Colorado Succeeds [appeared as a guest on Ben DeGrow’s weekly radio segment](http://education.i2i.org/2014/01/amy-oliver-show-the-latest-colorado-school-grades-are-out/) and [on the Spanish-language Raaki Garcia Show](http://raakigarcia.com/2014/01/1-30-2014-raaki-garcia-show/) to discuss the latest release of [Colorado School Grades](http://coloradoschoolgrades.com/) (CSG). Ben’s wife and colleague Marya wrote two blog pieces ([here](http://coloradoschoolgrades.com/wordpress/guest-post-which-school-is-right-for-my-child/) and [here](http://coloradoschoolgrades.com/wordpress/guest-post-open-enrollment-season-is-upon-us/)) for the new CSG blog to help arm parents with information and strategies for school open enrollment season. Ben also interviewed Tim Farmer from the non-union teacher group PACE [to highlight their upcoming School Choice Week event](http://education.i2i.org/2014/01/amy-oliver-show-colo-teachers-weigh-in-on-education-issues/).

More from Ed Is Watching:

[School Choice Week Kicks Off; Good Luck Trying to Contain My Excitement](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/01/school-choice-week-kicks-off-good-luck-trying-to-contain-my-excitement/)

[Easy for Me to Help Point Colorado Parents to Timely Info on Open Enrollment](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/01/easy-for-me-to-help-point-colorado-parents-to-timely-info-on-open-enrollment/)

**Center Responds to Union’s Anti-Reform Lawsuit**

Right in the middle of School Choice Week, the Colorado Education Association announced its strategy to try to roll back changes that keep schools from having to accept ineffective teachers. The Center quickly responded with a [media release](http://education.i2i.org/2014/01/cea-missteps-with-anti-sb-191-challenge/), then followed up with appearances on [Grassroots Radio](http://grrc.podomatic.com/player/web/2014-01-29T18_37_51-08_00) and the [Mandy Connell Show](http://www.khow.com/media/podcast-mandy-connell-mandyconnell/jan-30-2014-8am-24260360/) to discuss the union’s claims that the state constitution requires strict tenure protections.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Lawsuit to Protect Tenure Over Students Makes CEA Not Only Wrong But Lonely](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/01/lawsuit-to-protect-tenure-over-students-makes-cea-not-only-wrong-but-lonely/)

[Colorado and Washington, DC: A Tale of Two School Principal Evaluation Systems](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/01/colorado-and-washington-dc-a-tale-of-two-school-principal-evaluation-systems/)

**Financial Issues Top Education’s Legislative Agenda**

The Colorado legislature has more on the K-12 education agenda besides the attempt to roll back Senate Bill 10-191 tenure and evaluation reforms. Ben discussed an overview of education issues in the legislative session in [an interview of Todd Engdahl from Chalkbeat Colorado](http://education.i2i.org/2014/01/amy-oliver-show-school-funding-at-forefront-of-k-12-legislative-business/). He also penned a *Greeley Tribune* op-ed [shedding light on the debate](http://education.i2i.org/2014/01/education-spending-transparency-doesnt-require-massive-tax-hike/) about expanding public school financial transparency.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[K-12 Legislative Session Look Opens New Chalkbeat Colorado News Site](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/01/k-12-legislative-session-look-opens-new-chalkbeat-colorado-news-site/)

[“If I’ve Told You Once…”: K-12 Financial Transparency Isn’t New to Colorado](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/01/if-ive-told-you-once-k-12-financial-transparency-isnt-new-to-colorado/)

**Douglas County Report Sent Statewide**

Following last year’s intense and highly publicized school board elections, Douglas County education leaders continue to move forward with an innovative agenda focused on educational choice and world-class standards. We have created a helpful report to shed light on the background of changes in Colorado’s third-largest school district. This past week the Center mailed out hard copies of our 2013 issue paper [*Douglas County: Building a Better Education Model*](http://education.i2i.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/IP-8-13-Douglas-County-Building-a-Better-Education-Model-Web.pdf) to school board members, superintendents, and other key policy figures.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Dougco Collision on Testing and Accountability Could Rattle Reform Debate](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/01/dougco-collision-on-testing-and-accountability-could-rattle-reform-debate/)

[Shouldn’t Dougco Score Higher on Brookings’ Choice and Competition Index?](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/01/shouldnt-dougco-score-higher-on-brookings-choice-and-competition-index/)

**Vigilant Eddie Blogs as 2014 Gets Underway**

Eddie kicked off 2014 with his eyes wide open, making observations about a range of other education issues in Colorado and nationally:

[Charter Schools Continue to Grow; We Need More #SchoolChoice Now](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/01/charter-schools-continue-to-grow-we-need-more-schoolchoice-now/)

[I’ll Stick My Toe into the Fordham-Cato School Choice Argument… for Five Minutes](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/01/ill-stick-my-toe-into-the-fordham-cato-school-choice-argument-for-five-minutes/)

[Denver State’s New Largest School District; Falcon 49 Open Enrollment Soars](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/01/denver-states-new-largest-school-district-falcon-49-open-enrollment-soars/)

[A Little Progress on Students First Policy Report Card No Reason to Stop Going](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/01/a-little-progress-on-students-first-policy-report-card-no-reason-to-stop-going/)

[Good News for a Friday: More Colorado Kids Graduate High School On Time](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/01/good-news-for-a-friday-more-colorado-kids-graduate-high-school-on-time/)

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