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**Education Policy Center Newsletter**

**From The Independence Institute**

**March 25, 2014**

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**K-12 Online Education Task Force Recommends Changes**

The [K-12 Online Education Task Force](http://www.enetcolorado.org/k12online/) last Friday submitted its [formal recommendations](http://dkfoundation.org/sites/default/files/files/K%2012%20Online%20Commission%20recommendations.pdf) to the bipartisan team of four legislators who commissioned their work. Among the five recommendations are some long-overdue changes to provide fairness and flexibility in online education, as well as a visionary pilot program to advance some student-focused changes in the areas of funding, accountability, and interventions. Back in February, Ben DeGrow sat down to [interview fellow task force member Elizabeth Davis](http://education.i2i.org/2014/02/amy-oliver-show-task-force-looks-at-policy-answers-for-online-learning/) (principal, Colorado Calvert Academy) on air about the issues and the process as it began to unfold.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Colo. Digital Learning Alternate Policy Route Gives Some Spring Break Hope](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/03/colo-digital-learning-policy-alternate-route-gives-some-spring-break-hope/)

[Not Pretty: Colorado Is Getting Caught in Other States’ Digital Learning Dust](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/03/not-pretty-colorado-is-getting-caught-in-other-states-digital-learning-dust/)

**School Boards Seek to Reward Effective Teaching**

Several weeks ago the Colorado Education Association announced a two-pronged legal and legislative strategy to enhance teacher tenure protections. Radio guest and UCCS professor Joshua Dunn [compared the union’s court case here with a legal effort to challenge tenure in California](http://education.i2i.org/2014/02/amy-oliver-show-teacher-tenure-and-a-tale-of-two-court-cases/). Ben’s latest *Greeley Tribune* op-ed explained that while unions are pushing back against recognizing and rewarding effective instruction, [some local school boards are taking the lead](http://www.greeleytribune.com/news/10356218-113/teachers-union-effective-pay) by advancing compensation reforms.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Give Me Colorado, Not California: A Tale of Two Teacher Tenure Court Cases](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/02/give-me-colorado-not-california-a-tale-of-two-teacher-tenure-court-cases/)

[Colorado Education’s Political Soap Opera Almost Makes Me Want to Change Channels](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/03/colorado-educations-political-soap-opera-almost-makes-me-want-to-change-channels/)

**Jefferson County Builds Open Negotiations Trend**

While Jefferson County’s new board majority has jumpstarted the work on educator performance pay, they already have [increased transparency by opening union negotiations](http://completecolorado.com/pagetwo/2014/03/17/jeffco-open-negotiations-bring-hopeful-breeze/) for the first time in recent memory. Colorado continues to see progress in this area since [Ben DeGrow’s 2010 issue backgrounder](http://education.i2i.org/2010/04/colorado-education-and-open-negotiations-increasing-public-access-to-school-district-bargaining/) launched the call for change. Speaking of Jeffco, Raaki Garcia [featured a discussion of other changes in the large district](http://raakigarcia.com/2014/02/2-11-2014-raaki-garcia-show/) with the audience of her Spanish-language radio program.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Open Negotiations in Jeffco Schools: That Old Momentum Looks Like It’s Back](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/02/open-negotiations-in-jeffco-schools-that-old-momentum-looks-like-its-back/)

[Jeffco Teachers Union Takes Political Spectacle from Boardroom into Classrooms](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/02/jeffco-teachers-union-takes-political-spectacle-from-boardroom-into-classrooms/)

**Podcast Fever: Colorado School Grades and More**

Raaki’s program has taken on other key education topics, too, including a [February 25 interview with Colorado Succeeds’ Kristina Saccone](http://raakigarcia.com/2014/02/2-25-2014-raaki-garcia-show/) about the Colorado School Grades project. Kristina’s colleague Luke Ragland was interviewed by Ben on his weekly segment about [two of the bigger education issues at the State Capitol](http://education.i2i.org/2014/03/amy-oliver-show-education-reform-under-the-gold-dome/). Ben also conversed with Tom Kaesemeyer about Foundations for Great Schools’ [annual recognition of Denver-area schools that are beating the odds](http://education.i2i.org/2014/02/amy-oliver-show-some-denver-area-schools-keep-beating-the-odds/), and PACE’s Tim Farmer about [the need to change teacher licensure in Colorado](http://education.i2i.org/2014/03/amy-oliver-show-are-we-licensing-teachers-correctly/).

**Dougco Choice Scholarships Go Before Supreme Court**

More than a year after the [Douglas County Choice Scholarship Program](http://education.i2i.org/douglas-county-vouchers/)’s victory in the Court of Appeals, the Colorado Supreme Court announced last week that they would hear the very important case. The announcement was the lead story in the [March 20 episode of Choice Media TV’s Reform School](http://choicemedia.tv/2014/03/20/reform-school-32014-ben-degrow), with Ben DeGrow as special guest.

Dougco’s *former* school board president John Carson not only won the Independence Institute’s latest Vern Bickel Award but also was [featured along with Pam Benigno and Ben DeGrow in *Citizen Magazine*’s latest cover story](http://education.i2i.org/2014/03/citizen-magazine-features-education-center-remarks-on-colorado-reform-successes/). Meanwhile, Dougco’s *current* school board president Kevin Larsen talked with Ben on air about the district’s role in [changing the conversation about state testing](http://education.i2i.org/2014/03/amy-oliver-show-dougco-starts-student-testing-conversation/).

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Colorado Supreme Court Will Hear Dougco School Choice Case, More Waiting Ahead](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/03/colorado-supreme-court-will-hear-dougco-school-choice-case-more-waiting-ahead/)

**Eddie Agrees It’s Time for Colorado Kids to Win**

As the Choice Scholarship Program lingers over the coming months in the state’s highest court, the Education Policy Center continues to educate Colorado about another school choice idea to benefit students. Raaki talked [with her Spanish-speaking audience about K-12 scholarship tax credits](http://raakigarcia.com/2014/03/3-18-2014-raaki-garcia-show/) on March 18.

Our young blogging prodigy Eddie also [believes it’s time for Colorado kids to win](http://raakigarcia.com/2014/03/3-18-2014-raaki-garcia-show/) with tax credits, seeing similar school choice debates spread across the United States:

[A Beautiful Day to Celebrate Coming Major School Choice Victory in Mississippi](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/02/a-beautiful-day-to-celebrate-coming-major-school-choice-victory-in-mississippi/)

[Choice Media: Experts Set President Straight on School Voucher Research Claims](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/02/choice-media-experts-set-president-straight-on-school-voucher-research-claims/)

[Time to Go Wild: Legal Win for Kids Helped by Arizona’s Cutting-Edge ESAs](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/03/time-to-go-wild-legal-win-for-kids-helped-by-arizonas-cutting-edge-esas/)

[New York City Mayor’s Attack on Charter Schools Enough to Give Me Nightmares](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/03/new-york-city-mayors-attack-on-charter-schools-enough-to-give-me-nightmares/)

[McShane is Right: Choice Team Needs to Do More Than Cry about “Bad Schools”](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/02/mcshane-is-right-choice-team-needs-to-do-more-than-cry-about-bad-schools/)

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