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**Education Policy Center Newsletter**

**From The Independence Institute**

**May 15, 2014**

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**HB 1382 Marks Small Step Forward for Online Innovation**

The legislature is finally out of session, but not before sending a bill to the governor that represents a small gain for student-centered digital learning innovation. [House Bill 1382](http://www.leg.state.co.us/Clics/CLICS2014A/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/840DD0A29E48BBF687257CA6005CE629?Open&file=1382_enr.pdf), which advanced through the Colorado General Assembly with bipartisan backing, changes policies that subject online schools and students to extra scrutiny to prove attendance. The legislation also calls for the formal development of new quality standards and enables testing of more innovative funding models.

HB 1382 follows the recommendations of a K-12 Online Education Task Force convened by four legislators. Task force member Ben DeGrow and the Donnell-Kay Foundation’s Matt Samelson [discussed the recommendations on air](http://education.i2i.org/2014/04/amy-oliver-show-commission-recommends-online-education-policy-improvements/).

More:

Ed Is Watching, [So Glad to Find Insights and Direction for HB 1382′s Online Pilot Programs](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/05/so-glad-to-find-insights-and-direction-for-hb-1382s-k-12-online-pilot-programs/)

Podcast, [Amy Oliver Show: Greeley Dives into Blended Learning](http://education.i2i.org/2014/04/amy-oliver-show-greeley-dives-into-blended-learning/)

**Jeffco Front and Center in Fight for Local Reform**

Jefferson County Schools continues to make the headlines, most recently with the announcement of superintendent finalist Dan McMinimee, not to mention the teachers union’s efforts to [close negotiations](http://completecolorado.com/pagetwo/2014/04/11/jeffco-union-could-honor-its-own-calls-for-transparency/) while [fighting to give ineffective teachers raises](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/05/how-can-jeffco-union-leaders-bad-faith-bargaining-be-good-for-kids/). In April, school board director John Newkirk [joined Ben on the Amy Oliver Show](http://education.i2i.org/2014/04/amy-oliver-show-jeffco-school-board-steps-forward/) to share his goals and vision for Jeffco students, as well as to deflate some myths. On another episode, the Heartland Institute’s Joy Pullmann recounted her trip to a different reform-minded Colorado district, sharing her insights on [what she saw in Douglas County schools](http://education.i2i.org/2014/05/amy-oliver-show-an-outside-look-at-douglas-county-reform/).

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Filling In a Few Compelling Reasons to Go Watch Jeffco Open Union Negotiations](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/03/filling-in-a-few-compelling-reasons-to-go-watch-jeffco-open-union-negotiations/)

[Yes, Fordham, Colorado School Boards Matter; Let’s Encourage True Local Control](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/04/yes-fordham-colorado-school-boards-matter-lets-encourage-true-local-control/)

**DeGrow Praises Progress on Charter Funding**

Another big issue in Jefferson County has been the new board majority’s decision to share funds more fairly with charter schools in the budget process. While recognizing progress toward funding equity still needs to be made, [Ben’s new column for the *Greeley Tribune*](http://www.greeleytribune.com/news/opinion/11418469-113/charter-charters-schools-colorado) praises both the Jeffco proposal and the legislature’s addition of extra charter facilities funds in House Bill 1292. Colorado League of Charter Schools president Nora Flood also joined Ben for a radio conversation about the [push for fairer charter funding](http://education.i2i.org/2014/05/amy-oliver-show-charter-schools-look-for-fairer-funding/).

Another part of HB 1292, the most heavily debated and negotiated K-12 legislation in this year’s session, was a proposal to create a website to shine a light on school-level spending. Ben chimed in at the *Denver Post* with a [quick analysis of competing transparency proposals](http://www.denverpost.com/opinion/ci_25594790/step-backward-school-transparency). Also at the State Capitol, Jeffco mom Sunny Flynn talked on air about the fight she and other parents were leading [to protect student data privacy](http://education.i2i.org/2014/04/amy-oliver-show-moms-lead-effort-to-protect-student-privacy/).

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Denver Post: “Fundamental Fairness” in Jeffco Charter Student Funding Plan](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/04/denver-post-fundamental-fairness-in-jeffco-charter-student-funding-plan/)

[Jeffco Board Makes More Money Follow Students, Brings a Jan Brady Smile](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/04/jeffco-board-makes-more-money-follow-students-brings-a-jan-brady-smile/)

[Forget HB 1292 Transparency Soap Opera: Make it an Old Gangster Film](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/04/forget-hb-1292-transparency-soap-opera-make-it-an-old-gangster-film/)

**National News: Kansas Joins Scholarship Tax Credit Ranks**

Another state stepped forward to give students and families more educational choices last month as Kansas, our neighbor to the east, [became the 14th state to adopt a scholarship tax credit program](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/04/hooray-kansas-becomes-14th-state-to-adopt-k-12-scholarship-tax-credits/). Led by Pam Benigno, the Education Policy Center continues to educate policymakers, thought leaders, and others about how such a program could help [**Colorado Kids Win**](http://www.coloradokidswin.org).

Since our last newsletter, our young blogger Eddie has been busy surveying some other national developments, too:

[North Carolina to Follow Colorado’s K-12 Open Enrollment Policy Standard?](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/05/north-carolina-to-follow-colorados-k-12-open-enrollment-policy-standard/)

[Happy Teacher Appreciation Day! Let’s All Cheer for Performance Pay!](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/05/happy-teacher-appreciation-day-lets-all-cheer-for-performance-pay/)

[Could Stopping a Teachers Union Vote Make a New “Hammer” Celebrity?](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/04/could-stopping-a-teachers-union-vote-make-a-new-hammer-celebrity/)

[Cheering for New Hampshire Kids to Win Their Day in (the Supreme) Court](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/04/cheering-for-new-hampshire-kids-to-win-their-day-in-the-supreme-court/)

[How to Avoid the Munchkins: A Little Tenure Reform Advice for Kansas](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/04/how-to-avoid-the-munchkins-a-little-tenure-reform-advice-for-kansas/)

**Roundup: Class-Size Reduction Examined and More…**

In April, we published [a paper by research associate Ross Izard](http://education.i2i.org/2014/04/the-truth-about-class-size-reduction-problems-examples-and-alternatives/) explaining the overpriced and overrated track record of large-scale [class-size reduction policies](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/04/large-scale-class-size-reduction-doesnt-work-more-moderation-please/). The issue backgrounder represents Ross’s Education Policy Center debut.

Last but not least, Eddie has reminded us lately how important it is to keep up with his regular musings (even though [he worries too much about fictional takeovers by the Koch Brothers](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/04/new-independence-institute-ownership-goodbye-eddie-hello-little-ed-koch/)), as he covered a number of other important Colorado K-12 education topics that wouldn’t fit anywhere else in our newsletter:

[Colorado Ranks 21st in Per-Pupil Spending (and Other New Numbers from the NEA)](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/03/colorado-ranks-21st-in-per-pupil-spending-and-other-new-numbers-from-the-nea/)

[Is It Time to Rethink the Colorado Department of Education’s Role?](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/04/is-it-time-to-rethink-the-colorado-department-of-educations-role/)

[Student-Based Budgeting: Part of Colorado K-12 Future that Can Work](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/05/student-based-budgeting-part-of-colorado-k-12-future-that-can-work/)

[Newly Reported Test Scores Bring (Mostly) Disappointing News](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/05/newly-reported-test-scores-bring-mostly-disappointing-news/)

[Adams 14 Troubles Revealed; Jeffco, Colorado Can Work to Overcome](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/05/adams-14-troubles-revealed-jeffco-colorado-can-work-to-overcome/)

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