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**Education Policy Center Newsletter**

**From The Independence Institute**

**July 3, 2014**

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**Colorado, California Tenure Rulings Take Center Stage**

School may be out for most students, but that didn’t stop a couple of similar court decisions from rocking the K-12 education world. Locally, a Denver District Court judge shot down a union lawsuit designed to undo a key part of the state’s tenure reform. The more well-publicized *Vergara* case ruled California’s teacher tenure and seniority laws to be unconstitutional for the harm inflicted on at-risk students. Luke Ragland of Colorado Succeeds lauded both powerful results in an [on-air interview](http://education.i2i.org/2014/06/amy-oliver-show-bad-verdicts-for-tenure/) with our own Ben DeGrow. A later interview with Prof. Joshua Dunn, though, [warned](http://educationnext.org/script-doctors/) about the dangers of using the California court strategy to shape good policy goals.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[High Fives All Around: Colorado Union’s Pro-Tenure Lawsuit Shot Down](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/06/high-fives-all-around-colorado-unions-pro-tenure-lawsuit-shot-down/)

[Vergara Big Win for California Kids, But Should We Worry about Courts’ Role?](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/06/vergara-big-win-for-california-kids-but-should-we-worry-about-courts-role/)

**DeGrow Challenges Jeffco Anti-Reform Crowd**

The new conservative school board majority in Jefferson County reached summer break with a new superintendent, a substantial improvement in charter funding equity, and near agreement on teacher raises (the union wants to boost pay for partially effective teachers). Ben’s comments on the selection of Dan McMinimee to run the district [made the *Denver Post*](http://education.i2i.org/2014/05/jeffco-superintendent-choice-brings-denver-post-comment/). He also highlighted board opponents’ irrational arguments and outrageous behavior in talk radio interviews with Mandy Connell, Randy Corporon, and Amy Oliver. In particular, Ben’s [Complete Colorado column](http://completecolorado.com/pagetwo/2014/06/04/jeffco-school-reform-foes-delete-rather-than-confront-challenging-facts/) showed how reform foes repeatedly censored challenging facts and dissenting views.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Jeffco Board Member Offers Tax Hike as Charter Funding “Compromise”](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/06/jeffco-board-member-offers-tax-hike-as-charter-funding-compromise/)

[Denver Builds on Low-Income Charter Success Stories: Will Jeffco Follow Suit?](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/06/denver-builds-on-low-income-charter-success-stories-will-jeffco-follow-suit/)

[Study Gives Another Jeffco Anti-Charter Myth a Serious Blow](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/06/study-gives-another-jeffco-anti-charter-myth-a-serious-blow/)

**New Reports Strengthen Case for Scholarship Tax Credits**

The Education Policy Center remains focused on informing state and community leaders how scholarship tax credits can help [**Colorado Kids Win**](http://coloradokidswin.org). Almost as if they were tailor-made for us (and trust me, they weren’t), a trio of reports was released that strengthen the case for such a program: the Friedman Foundation’s investigation [into private school regulation](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/06/look-at-private-school-regulation-sells-choice-through-scholarship-tax-credits/), ACE Scholarships’ [comparison](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/06/new-ace-study-opens-mind-on-comparing-public-private-schools/) of local student performance and parent satisfaction, and the Center for Education Reform’s [thoughtful analysis](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/06/cer-completes-trifecta-of-helpful-scholarship-tax-credit-studies/) of the 14 states with scholarship tax credit programs.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[New “Research” Pitting Public vs. Private Schools Leaves Bad Smell](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/05/new-research-pitting-public-vs-private-schools-leaves-bad-smell/)

**State-Level Reforms Stay on Radar for 2015**

Moving forward, more choice through scholarship tax credits isn’t the only promising K-12 change on Colorado’s horizon. Rep. Kevin Priola talked with Ben on air about [some good ideas that were killed](http://education.i2i.org/2014/05/amy-oliver-show-k-12-legislative-highlights-reveal-missed-opportunities/) during the 2013 legislative session. Little Eddie also recapped the session’s roller coaster school finance debates with an eye towards [something better than a “Kumbayah” moment](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/05/hoping-for-better-than-political-school-finance-kumbayah-next-year/) in 2015.

**Center Welcomes Ross Izard, Celebrates Independence Day**

For obvious reasons, Independence Day is our favorite holiday around here. We hope you not only have a fun time with family and friends, but also take the opportunity to reflect on the ideals that make our nation great.

A Colorado native, Ross is currently finishing the Accelerated Master of Public Administration program at the University of Colorado at Denver. Through his education and experience, Ross has developed a strong background in public policy issues. In particular, he looks forward to building on a strong interest in education reform and policy.

In typical fashion, we sign off with a few other of Eddie’s blog posts on other fresh topics here in Colorado and abroad that tout educational choice, accountability, and excellence:

[Friedman Survey Finds Big Shift on Standardized Testing, Not to Mention….](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/06/friedman-survey-finds-big-shift-on-standardized-testing-not-to-mention/)

[Accelerating Quality Colorado Charter Growth a Wise Idea, Not Just for Wonks](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/06/accelerating-quality-colorado-charter-growth-a-wise-idea-not-just-for-wonks/)

[Florida Doubles Number of States with Cutting-Edge Choice through ESAs](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/06/florida-doubles-number-of-states-with-cutting-edge-choice-through-esas/)

[Holyoke’s Pursuit of Innovation Status Raises Real Questions to Answer](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/06/holyokes-pursuit-of-innovation-status-raises-real-questions-to-answer/)

[Odds & Ends: Big Easy Goes All-Charter; Upgrading School Report Cards](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/05/odds-upgrading-school-report-cards/)

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