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**Education Policy Center Newsletter**

**From The Independence Institute**

**August 14, 2014**

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**In this issue**

-- Friday TV Alert: What’s New in Colorado Blended Learning?

-- Center Conquers New Territory with Dougco Amicus Brief

-- Employee Freedom Message Comes to Pueblo

-- Choice and Charters Backed by Strong Opinions, Research

-- Eddie Rounds Up Summer

**Friday TV Alert: What’s New in Colorado Blended Learning?**

What better way to get in the back-to-school spirit than tuning in to tomorrow’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 (CPT12)! On **Friday, August 15, at 8:30 PM**, watch our education senior fellow Krista Kafer and Donnell-Kay Foundation executive director Tony Lewis join the host to discuss some of the latest blended learning developments in Colorado schools. The episode also re-airs on **Sunday, August 17, at 11:30 AM**, and **Monday, August 18, at 12:30 PM.** Set your DVRs, and don’t forget to tune in!

Last month we released Krista’s second paper in a two-part series on blended learning. Providing some practical insights, [*School District Partnerships Help Colorado K-12 Blended Learning Take Flight*](http://education.i2i.org/2014/07/school-district-partnerships-help-colorado-k-12-blended-learning-take-flight/) closely examines local innovations in Greeley, Falcon, St. Vrain, and the San Luis Valley. (If you need a refresher, check out last year’s paper [*The Rise of K-12 Blended Learning in Colorado*](http://education.i2i.org/2013/07/the-rise-of-k-12-blended-learning-in-colorado/).) Also in July, Ben DeGrow [hosted an on-air conversation with Jon Hanover](http://education.i2i.org/2014/07/amy-oliver-show-blended-learning-grows-denver-roots/), who is working to start the Denver blended learning charter Roots Elementary.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Blended Learning Takes Flight in Colo. Districts: How High Will It Soar?](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/07/blended-learning-takes-flight-in-colo-districts-how-high-will-it-soar/)

[Let’s Grow Colorado K-12 Course Access But NOT Reinvent the Wheel](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/07/lets-grow-colorado-k-12-course-access-but-not-reinvent-the-wheel/)

**Center Conquers New Territory with Dougco Amicus Brief**

Don’t ever say our Education Policy Center is afraid to venture into new territory: Add helping to write an amicus brief to our list of accomplishments. With tremendous input from our dynamic policy analyst duo of Ross Izard and Ben DeGrow, the Independence Institute partnered with the Friedman Foundation to [weigh in before the Colorado Supreme Court](https://www.dcsdk12.org/sites/default/files/choicescholarshiplegalfund/%5BSC%5D%20Brief%20of%20Amici%20Curiae%20II%20and%20Friedman%20Foundation%20in%20support%20of%20Respondents.PDF) on the design of the [Douglas County Choice Scholarship Program](http://education.i2i.org/douglas-county-vouchers/) and the research that supports it. Independence Institute research director and attorney David Kopel, who put in many hours pulling together the final brief, [summarized the argument on the *Washington Post*’s Volokh Conspiracy blog](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2014/08/11/amicus-brief-on-empirical-data-about-school-vouchers/). It’s an excellent amicus brief, if we do say so ourselves.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[BFFs of the Court: Chiming in for Choice in Douglas County](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/08/bffs-of-the-cour/)

**Employee Freedom Message Comes to Pueblo**

For the second consecutive year, we are honored to take part in celebrating National Employee Freedom Week (August 10-16). As highlighted in [the *Pueblo Chieftain*](http://education.i2i.org/2014/08/chieftain-highlights-institutes-billboard-message-to-pueblo-teachers/), we posted a billboard in Pueblo to remind both union member **and** non-member educators in the two local school districts that they have to act by **September 15** if they want to avoid paying a year’s worth of union dues or fees.

On Wednesday’s Amy Oliver Show, [Tim Farmer joined Ben to discuss](http://1310kfka.com/audio/amy081314hr2.mp3) the hurdles teachers in many parts of Colorado face when they want to opt out of the union. We will contact teachers across the state with locally specific information about their membership options that are only available this time of the school year. [Check out our Independent Teachers website for details you can share.](http://www.independentteachers.org/revoking-membership/)

Blogs:

[Pueblo Teachers (& other K-12 Employees): Options to Get Union Money Back End Sept. 15](http://www.independentteachers.org/2014/08/pueblo-teachers-other-k-12-employees-options-to-get-union-money-back-end-sept-15/) (Independent Teachers)

[Union Leaders Miss Bus as Union Bus (Thankfully) Misses Me](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/07/union-leaders-miss-bus-as-union-bus-thankfully-misses-me/) (Ed Is Watching)

**Choice and Charters Backed by Strong Opinions, Research**

Last month Ben also [interviewed the Friedman Foundation’s Paul DiPerna](http://education.i2i.org/2014/07/amy-oliver-show-what-do-americans-think-about-standardized-tests-school-choice/) about the group’s national poll showing a [big shift of opinion on standardized testing](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/06/friedman-survey-finds-big-shift-on-standardized-testing-not-to-mention/), while support remains strong for various school choice programs. Speaking of choice, Ross penned a [*Greeley Tribune* op-ed](http://education.i2i.org/2014/07/colorado-charter-schools-serving-students-and-families-well/) that made the point Colorado charters continue to serve families and students well. The [good news research for charters](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/08/too-good-too-true-kipps-continuing-success/) is not the only thing pouring in; so is some of the [outrageous rhetoric from desperate charter foes in Jeffco](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/08/adults-say-the-darndest-things-too-jeffco-anti-charter-edition/).

**Eddie Rounds Up Summer**

Some may have decided to take a late-summer break from the world of education, but little Eddie as usual found a variety of related topics on which to sound off. Besides his one-two punch on productivity in [school districts](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/07/douglas-county-falcon-49-eaton-top-colorado-in-k-12-productivity/) and [charter schools](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/07/cant-get-enough-productivity-charter-schools-doing-more-with-less/), he also came up with the following highlights:

[Overconfidence, Low Expectations, Little Innovation: Not a Good Mixture](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/07/overconfidence-low-expectations-little-innovation-not-a-good-mixture/)

[Colorado Starts New School Finance Lawsuit: How Different than Lobato?](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/07/colorado-starts-new-school-finance-lawsuit-how-different-than-lobato/)

[Gamblin’ for Children](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/07/gamblin-for-children/)

[Evaluation Valuation: Goals, Issues, and Questions for the Coming Year](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/08/evaluation-valuation-goals-issues-and-questions-for-the-coming-year/)

[1000s Embrace Florida K-12 Choice: When Can Colorado Kids Win, Too?](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/07/1000s-embrace-florida-k-12-choice-when-can-colorado-kids-win-too/)

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