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**Education Policy Center Newsletter**

**From The Independence Institute**

**January 29, 2015**

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**School Choice Week Takes Off at State Capitol**

Happy School Choice Week: It’s time to celebrate the educational options from which Colorado families have to choose, and cast a vision for expanding those options. The fifth year for the fast-growing [National School Choice Week](http://schoolchoiceweek.com) phenomenon has generated more than 11,000 events nationwide.

Right here in Denver, we were proud to be one of 14 groups co-sponsoring a School Choice rally Monday morning at the State Capitol. Senators Owen Hill (R) and Michael Johnston (D) both spoke, and Excel Institute students sang and danced for the hundreds of kids and adults in the crowd. Our Independence Institute team is editing footage to make a video of Monday’s event. Stay tuned for it to be completed, and we will share it with you soon.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[School Choice Week 2015 Has Officially Arrived](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/01/school-choice-week-2015-has-officially-arrived/)

[After School Choice Week, How About Educate the Reporters Week?](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/01/after-school-choice-week-how-about-educate-the-reporters-week/)

**Center Wades into Great Testing Debate**

Here’s a not-so-bold prediction: 2015 in Colorado will go down as the Year of the Great Testing Debate. It’s not an issue we usually tread into deeply, but we believe policymakers need to exercise great care as Colorado moves forward. Policy analyst Ross Izard has penned [a thoughtful new op-ed for the *Greeley Tribune*](http://www.greeleytribune.com/news/14827826-113/izard-colorados-k-12-testing-debate-what-should-stay-and) on the need to balance flexibility and a reduced testing burden with an authentic, accountable measurement of student and school performance. Douglas County school board member Craig Richardson also shared his views on this important debate in [a January 14 radio interview](http://education.i2i.org/2015/01/amy-oliver-show-dougco-board-member-talks-testing-changes/) with our own Ben DeGrow.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[State Board Gets Weird on Testing Issue](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/01/state-board-gets-weird-on-testing-issue/)

**Scholarship Success Stories Told**

Moving into a new year, we continue our work to educate Colorado about the benefits of a scholarship tax credit program—especially for the many students whose lives it could change for the better. If you missed the *Devil’s Advocate* episode just before Christmas, please [watch Denver’s Jamilla Dennis](http://education.i2i.org/2014/12/devils-advocate-k-12-scholarships-change-lives/) give a powerful first-hand account of the powerful effect K-12 tuition scholarships can have on a student’s life. Also, in a special column for the education website redefinED, Ben wrote about [how ACE Scholarships has brought James Coleman full circle](http://www.redefinedonline.org/2014/12/wishing-for-educational-opportunity-to-be-extended-to-all/).

For those who want to dig a little deeper into recommended program specifics, read our newly revised issue paper [*A Scholarship Tax Credit Program for Colorado*](http://education.i2i.org/2015/01/a-scholarship-tax-credit-program-for-colorado/).

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Snow or Not, Let’s Keep Sharing School Choice Wishes for 2015 and Beyond](http://www.ediswatching.org/2014/12/snow-or-not-lets-keep-sharing-school-choice-wishes-for-2015-and-beyond/)

[ESAs + Tax Credits = Grand Plan for Brighter School Choice Future](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/01/esas-tax-credits-grand-plan-for-brighter-school-choice-future/)

[Survey Highlights Importance of Keeping State Tests off Private Schools](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/01/survey-highlights-importance-of-keeping-state-tests-off-private-schools/)

**Has Jeffco Union’s Fight Started?**

Late last year the president of the Jefferson County Education Association told union colleagues in Boulder that they were preparing to [“beat the [school board] bas\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ back.”](http://completecolorado.com/pagetwo/2015/01/07/jeffco-union-head-just-know-the-fight-is-on/) Then he announced to his members that [“the fight’s going to start in January.”](https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=aDkWJhUGBnU)

Well, the month is almost over, and it’s not entirely clear whether the promise exactly has been delivered. We’ve seen a lot of [union organizing rhetoric on JCEA’s Facebook page](http://completecolorado.com/pagetwo/2015/01/16/labor-unions-politics-trump-teaching-learning-on-jceas-facebook-home/) and a failed attempt [to disrupt a board meeting and embarrass conservative board members](http://completecolorado.com/pagetwo/2015/01/19/union-linked-groups-efforts-to-disrupt-jeffco-board-meeting-backfire/). But we will continue to keep our eyes on the situation, while district leaders look to improve student achievement.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[JCEA Says the Fight Is On, So It Doesn’t Hurt for Me to Stay in Shape](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/01/jcea-says-the-fight-is-on-so-it-doesnt-hurt-for-me-to-stay-in-shape/)

[Ding Ding Ding! JCEA’s Round Two Battleflop](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/01/ding-ding-ding-jceas-round-two-battleflop/)

**Eddie Starts 2015 in Style**

In addition to the previous big issues, little Eddie has sounded off on a variety of topics since our last newsletter. Here are some highlights:

[Colorado Looks Terrible at K-12 Spending (If You Fudge the Numbers)](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/01/colorado-looks-terrible-at-k-12-spending-if-you-fudge-the-numbers/)

[Let’s Get This (Legislative) Party Started](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/01/lets-get-this-legislative-party-started/)

[Detective Eddie and the Case of the Missing ESEA SOTU Mention](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/01/detective-eddie-and-the-case-of-the-missing-esea-sotu-metion/)

[Little Eddie’s Transparency Soap Box](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/01/little-eddies-transparency-soap-box/)

[Learning Relationship Management: A Glimpse into Colorado K-12 Future?](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/01/learning-relationship-management-a-glimpse-into-colorado-k-12-future/)

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