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**Education Policy Center Newsletter**

**From The Independence Institute**

**March 6, 2015**

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**Report Points to Promise of Performance Pay in Harrison**

Generally speaking, effective education reform is not easy work. But it can lead to some promising results. Harrison School District 2 in Colorado Springs has broken the mold on K-12 compensation systems with its Effectiveness & Results program. In his new issue paper [*Performance Pay Pioneers*](http://education.i2i.org/2015/02/performance-pay-pioneers-harrisons-effectiveness-and-results-raises-the-bar/), senior education policy analyst Ben DeGrow unpacks the plan and its supporting components, explores the essential ingredients of strong leadership and culture, and highlights some of the promising indicators Harrison has achieved thus far.

**More from Ed Is Watching**

[Harrison: More about Real Performance Pay than Former Presidents](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/02/harrison-more-about-real-performance-pay-than-former-presidents/)

**Covering Collective Bargaining and Other Sacred Elephants**

Ben’s other new paper, an issue backgrounder on [the state of K-12 union contract transparency](http://education.i2i.org/2015/02/the-state-of-k-12-union-contract-transparency/), offers insights to citizens looking to keep tabs on their school districts’ open negotiations after Proposition 104. An earlier paper on collective bargaining reform earned Ben a mention and a citation in the new book [*Sacred Elephants*](http://education.i2i.org/2015/02/the-state-of-k-12-union-contract-transparency/). Retired educators and co-authors Karen Kay Harvey and Donna Nicholson discussed their diagnosis and solutions for K-12 education both on [a radio interview with Ben](http://education.i2i.org/2015/02/amy-oliver-show-veteran-educators-take-on-k-12-sacred-elephants/) and on [a televised episode of the *Devil’s Advocate with Jon Caldara*](http://education.i2i.org/2015/03/devils-advocate-the-education-elephant-in-the-room/).

**Center Digs Deeper into Testing Conversation**

Legitimate concerns have been raised about the amount of standardized testing and the need for more flexibility, but credible measurements of student progress are needed to inform public school choice and to promote educator accountability. Following the timely release of policy analyst Ross Izard’s [op-ed on the testing debate](http://education.i2i.org/2015/01/colorados-k-12-testing-debate-what-should-stay-and-what-should-go/), the complex issue remains a lively one at the State Capitol and State Board of Education. In his weekly K-12 radio interviews, Ben discussed different facets of how the debate is shaping up with two education journalists, Chalkbeat Colorado’s [Todd Engdahl](http://education.i2i.org/2015/02/amy-oliver-show-k-12-testing-funding-take-stage-at-state-capitol/) and the *Denver Post*’s [Eric Gorski](http://education.i2i.org/2015/02/amy-oliver-show-where-is-colorado-gop-on-education-reform/).

**More from Ed Is Watching**

[Testing Issue Isn’t as Easy as 1-2-3, But You’ve Got to Start Somewhere](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/01/testing-issue-isnt-as-easy-as-1-2-3-but-youve-got-to-start-somewhere/)

[State Board Gets Even Weirder on Testing Issue](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/02/state-board-gets-even-weirder-on-testing-issue/)

**New Video Shines Light on Local School Choice Week Celebration**

As promised in our last newsletter, the Independence Institute has produced a terrific [4-minute video on Denver’s recent National School Choice Week festivities](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_t2qQxP6LI), with narration by Ross and interviews by Ben. Speaking of interviews by Ben, two of our recent K-12 radio segments featured important charter school topics: Windsor Charter Academy principal [Rebecca Teeples](http://education.i2i.org/2015/02/amy-oliver-show-successful-windsor-charter-to-open-high-school/) discussed what sets her school apart, and Northstar Commercial Partners CEO [Brian Watson](http://education.i2i.org/2015/03/amy-oliver-show-fund-helps-meet-charter-facilities-needs/) talked about the innovative Education Opportunity Fund.

**More from Ed Is Watching**

[Keeping the Conversation Going: Independence Institute’s New Video on National School Choice Week](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/02/keeping-the-conversation-going-independence-institutes-new-video-on-national-school-choice-week/)

[Give Me Serious Charter Policy Debate over Silly Anti-Charter Deception](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/03/give-me-serious-charter-policy-debate-over-silly-anti-charter-deception/)

**School Choice Captures Eddie’s Attention**

School choice developments across the nation (including Colorado) made the spotlight of young Eddie’s blog a few times in recent weeks, in addition to other key topics. Check out some of his newer postings:

[New ESA Momentum Could Make 2015 Year of School Choice Part II](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/02/new-esa-momentum-could-make-2015-year-of-school-choice-part-ii/)

[Another Victory for Choice: Alabama’s STC Program Wins the Day](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/03/another-victory-for-choice-alabamas-stc-program-wins-the-day/)

[Overcoming the Gloom, Focusing on the Sunshine of #SchoolChoice](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/02/overcoming-the-gloom-focusing-on-the-sunshine-of-schoolchoice/)

[Today’s Policy Field Trip to Senate Ed and the Discussion to Come](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/02/todays-policy-field-trip-to-senate-ed-and-the-discussion-to-come/)

[Reading New ETC Report on Millennials Not Likely to Cheer You Up](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/02/reading-new-ets-report-on-millennials-not-likely-to-cheer-you-up/)

Pamela Benigno, Director  
Ben DeGrow, Senior Policy Analyst

Ross Izard, Policy Analyst  
Marya DeGrow, Research Associate

**Contact Information**

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email: [pam@i2i.org](mailto:pam@i2i.org)

phone: 303-279-6536

web: <http://www.education.i2i.org>

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