

## Updating Colorado's public school funding model to prioritize student needs—for the first time in thirty years

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The last time Colorado underwent a major rewrite of its school finance formula, the internet wasn't a part of our daily lives. The formula was confusing, inequitable, and not focused on student needs. Because of the complicated math that was baked into the system, districts with greater costs of living generated more funding than districts serving students with greater instructional needs. As an example, a student identified as at-risk attending school in wealthy Aspen received \$7,000 more in funding than a similarly identified student attending a less-resourced district, Pueblo City.

After many failed efforts to rewrite the formula, Colorado Succeeds participated in a School Finance Task Force and then supported a bipartisan group of legislators to finally rewrite the model based on the Task Force's recommendations.

The new model is simpler, it prioritizes the students with the most needs, and it invests more than \$500 million to hold districts harmless and ensure sustainability. For districts systematically underfunded for decades, this new formula will make tremendous changes by:

- ▶ Putting students first by increasing the student weights for at-risk, English Language Learners, and adding a new special education factor. Each student factor is given a weight of 25%—an increase from .12 for at-risk students, and .08 for English Language Learners.
- ▶ Fixing the “Order of Operations” to make the formula simpler and more understandable.
- ▶ Targeting District Funding for size and cost of living and adds a new remoteness factor
- ▶ Increasing funding for every district by adding 500M to the overall system
- ▶ Adding significant funding for capital construction in the BEST program
- ▶ Ensuring sustainability by incorporating financial safety valves that would pause implementation if financial forecasts change

## THE NEW PUBLIC SCHOOL FINANCE FORMULA BY THE NUMBERS



**100%**  
of Colorado  
school districts  
will receive  
more funds  
beginning  
in 2025



**100%**  
of Colorado kids  
will receive  
more funding  
for their schools  
beginning  
in 2025



**\$250  
MILLION**

in additional  
funds will  
go toward  
rural schools  
each year



**\$380  
MILLION**

in additional  
funds will  
support  
multilingual  
learners and  
learners who  
are at-risk  
each year



**\$280  
MILLION**

in additional  
funds will  
support learners  
receiving  
special education  
services  
each year