

Great Education Colorado is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, statewide, grassroots organization focused on increasing Colorado's long term investment in public education.

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Great Education Colorado: A Leading Voice for Improved Public Education Since 2003

Great Ed's mission is to improve education in Colorado through wise and increased investment in public schools, colleges, and universities.

Great Ed began in 2003 as a grassroots organization of public school parents who were concerned about the eroding funding of schools, the increasing disparities among schools, and the dangers of using the K-12 budget to balance the state's budget. Since then, Great Ed has played a key role in major accomplishments for Colorado students, including the passage of Referendum C in 2005, the Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST) program, and the development of the "Great Futures Campaign."

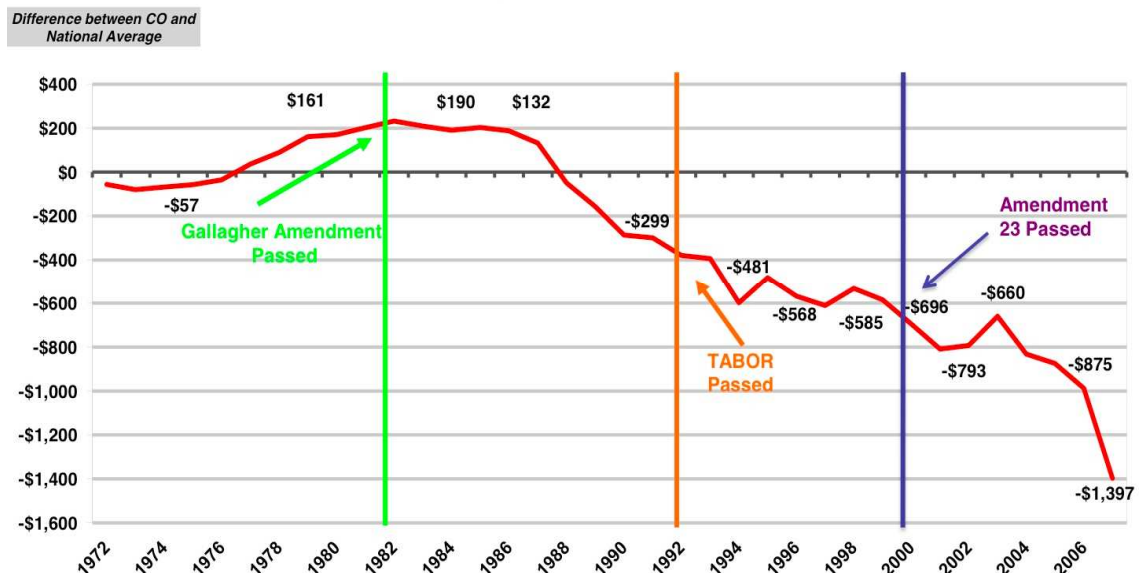
Over the years, Great Ed has built a strong reputation in the legislative arena for integrity, well-referenced information, and timely, effective statewide grassroots action. Our cooperative relationships with numerous advocacy organizations have uniquely positioned Great Ed to work effectively and collaboratively for improved investment in public education.

Today, Great Ed has matured into a non-profit organization with an active board of directors, a professional and effective staff, an expanded capacity to organize and collaborate, a significant online presence, and a broader and stronger revenue base.

With Colorado's schools, colleges and universities facing unprecedented, devastating cuts beyond anything we could have envisioned, the need for Great Ed has never been greater. Colorado is at a crossroads where successful, sustainable education reform is dependent on statewide passage of meaningful, long-term budget reform. With continued community and philanthropic support, Great Ed will continue to educate and organize to make both a reality.

K-12 Per-Pupil Funding: Colorado vs. National Average

Source: National Center for Education Statistics





Lisa Weil, director of Policy and Communications, addressing a Denver parent organization

“Education is increasingly recognized as one of the preeminent civil rights issue of our time.”



Great Education Colorado volunteer meeting

Dear Supporters:

As this report indicates, 2009 was a year of continued growth and challenges for Great Education Colorado.

While policymakers promise education reforms, public education funding in our state faces a severe cliff with the end of federal stimulus dollars and the effective demise of Amendment 23. Even before the proposed cuts of at least \$440 per pupil, Colorado ranked 42nd in the nation for K-12 per-pupil funding, and our higher education funding is among the lowest in the country.

Instead of being forced to debate which is more important, Colorado needs to find the will to adequately fund both P-12 and higher education. No longer can we pit rural districts versus urban districts, special needs versus gifted and talented versus at-risk, P-12 versus higher education. With education increasingly recognized as one of the preeminent civil rights issues of our time, we need an education system that addresses the needs of all children throughout their school careers.

To this end, Great Education Colorado worked hard to meet our stated goals for 2009. We furthered our mission of education and advocacy for improved investment in schools, aware of the need to match education reform with necessary resources. We mobilized and expanded our community of public school supporters, strengthened our community partnerships, and accelerated our grassroots preparation for a ballot measure to reach these goals.

We all realize that success at the ballot will be impossible without the further coordinated efforts of public education supporters - especially parents. Our electoral force has never before been informed and mobilized on a statewide level to affect meaningful change. *Until now.*

Over the past five years, Great Ed has been working methodically and strategically to form a coalition that spans preschool through higher education; that joins communities of all locales, demographics and needs; and that enables partner organizations to inform their members of the depth and true causes of, and possible solutions for, the budget woes that have been steadily eroding our state's ability to provide a 21st century education for every child.

The “Great Futures Colorado Campaign,” developed in 2009 and launched this year, activates public school supporters to advocate for a ballot proposal that will improve investment in Colorado's schools and colleges.

We are grateful to the individuals, companies, and foundations listed on the back of this report for making this work possible. We hope you will join us in this important mission, in 2010 and beyond, because great futures start with a great education.

Sincerely,



Liane Morrison
Executive Director



Carol Boigon, Denver City Councilwoman
Board Chair

“BEST” (Building Excellent Schools Today)

BEST, the most significant legislative investment in Colorado school construction since statehood, was inspired by Great Ed’s statewide tours for state leaders in 2007 and 2008. Governor Ritter signed BEST into law on May 22, 2008. In 2009, more than \$100 million in construction projects was spent to improve our state’s schools.



Students at Sangre de Cristo Elementary look at layout of new school

The Second Annual Great Education Colorado Tennis Open

Back by popular demand, the second annual Great Education Colorado Tennis Open took place on September 20, 2009 at the Gates Tennis Center in Denver. Once again, more than 250 kids, teenagers, parents, tennis players, public officials and local celebrities made our largest fundraiser a success, raising over \$30,000. Food and drink was generously donated by a wide array of contributors and sponsors, and over 80 volunteers participated.



Denver DA Mitch Morrissey and State Senate President Brandon Shaffer

Great Ed Communication Network

Great Education Colorado has continued to utilize the latest forms of technology to reach the public about the crucial issues in education. In addition to our website which received tens of thousands of visits last year, our blog, Twitter, Facebook, Flickr and email communications continue to keep our readers up-to-date on the latest in education funding news. Great Ed’s staff and volunteers reach out in person as well through our regular “Lunch and Learns” for supporters who want to stay current on the issues.

RAFT for Teachers and Students

The first Great Education Colorado Volunteer Day was at the Resource Area for Teachers (RAFT), which provides a tangible, effective way to help kids and teachers. We did the set-up work while volunteers put together low cost electric circuit kits and DNA models for teachers who need hands-on, interactive student experiences at affordable prices. All materials were donated from businesses who would normally discard the items.



RAFT grand opening on Oct. 4 in Denver

SAVE OUR STATE

In September of 2009, Great Ed joined other advocacy groups and citizens at a rally at the Capitol urging our elected officials to consider all options in addressing our state’s budget crisis.



Save our State rally, September 2009

Great Education Colorado received several generous grants in 2009, including those from the Gay and Lesbian Fund for Colorado, the Rose Community Foundation, the El Pomar Foundation, the Brett Family Foundation, the Reinisch Family Foundation, and the Barton Family Foundation.



\$25,000+

Rose Community Foundation
El Pomar Foundation

\$10,000 — \$24,999

Barton Family Foundation
Gay & Lesbian Fund for Colorado
Reinisch Family Foundation

\$5,000 — \$9,999

The Cherryble Fund
Colorado Campaign for Children
and Public Schools

\$1,000 — \$4,999

1st Bank
Brett Family Foundation
Carson Foundation
Comcast
Deane Family Fund
El Pomar Foundation
Lederer Family Foundation
Steele Street Bank & Trust
Lisa Weil
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\$500 — \$999

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Katie Reinisch
Scott Reisch
Stephanie and Stephen Ruyle
Jamie Sarche
Gail R. Sigman
Webb Group International
Wheeler Trigg Kennedy

\$250 — \$499

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Alice Guin

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Misty Hart

Lisa Hartman

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Heather Taussig

Tina (Elizabeth) Taylor

Michael Theis

Shelley Thompson

Joyce Thorn

Carol Torsch

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Anthony Viorst

Daniel Wake

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Martha Ward

Carrie Warren-Gully

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Kenneth Weaver

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Terry and Jolene Whitney

Chris Williams

Jill Williams

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Elizabeth Wright

Kathleen Wussow

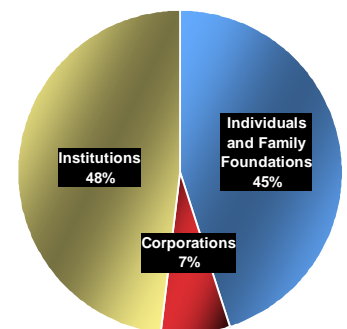
Francoise and Lynn Yehle

Kathleen and Bob Zachman

Laurie and Marty Zeller

Great Education Colorado relies on the generous contributions of individuals, foundations and corporations to further its mission to advocate for fully funded public education reform.

Our revenue comes from three sources:



In addition to the generous amount of monetary support we received, our volunteers contributed an invaluable number of hours throughout the year. Thank you – we could not have done it without you!

Staff

Liane Morrison
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Lisa Weil
Director of Policy & Communications

Casey Shea
Research & Community Partnerships Coordinator

Eva Cherin
Organizational Coordinator

Professional Services

Patty Bortz
Volunteer & Fundraising Consultant