

TESTIMONY OF LIANE MORRISON ON HB 1345
School Finance Act – Amendment 11

- Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My name is Liane Morrison and I am the Executive Director of Great Education Colorado. Great Ed is a statewide, non-partisan, grassroots organization.
- We represent thousands of public education supporters throughout Colorado, who believe we must do a better job of investing in education – from early childhood, through K-12 to higher education.
- I want to thank the Chairman for offering this amendment to the School Finance Act to commission a costing-out study.
- This amendment reflects solid, common sense policy: if we want to make Colorado’s vision for education a reality, the first step is to do an objective study of what resources are necessary to ensure that *every* child graduates ready for post-secondary education and for the workforce.
- Commissioning a costing-out study signals that Colorado is serious about successfully implementing the reforms that the legislature has put in place over the past several years – the new P-20 standards, accountability, Teacher Effectiveness, and, soon, Literacy.
- Over the past several years, Great Ed has collected stories from every corner of Colorado. We have heard from parents, teachers and students in over 200 communities.
- And so, when we think about the impact of a costing-out study, we think about what it will mean to specific students whose stories have come our way:
 - The child in Denver whose learning disability is not being addressed because of the state’s minimal special education funding.

- The students in science classes across the state who won't meet standards because lab experiments are either too costly or dangerous because of overcrowded classrooms.
 - The students who won't meet technology standards because their schools don't have adequate access to computers or high-speed internet.
 - The students in rural districts that simply cannot pay enough to attract, train or retain high quality educators.
 - The students who come to school at an almost insurmountable disadvantage, because quality preschool was not available.
- What does a costing-out study have to do with any of these kids? It will finally ground our aspirations for our children, for our workforce, for effective reforms, in the reality of what it will take to achieve them.
 - Studying the true costs of providing every child with the education and supports they need to meet state standards and to graduate ready for college and/or career is the first, critical step toward turning hopes into reality.
 - I urge all committee members to support this common sense proposal.