1. Doesn't the money from marijuana taxes go to kids and schools?

It is a misperception that most of the marijuana tax revenue goes to K-12 education. The majority of funds go to the Marijuana Tax Cash Fund for healthcare, health education, substance abuse and treatment programs and law enforcement. Schools are eligible for $40 million in competitive grants for school construction and about $30 million will go to rural schools in 2017-18.

2. Why isn't there more money for our schools and for public services?

While Colorado has one of the best economies in the nation, funding for our schools has not caught up from the cuts made during the Great Recession. For this school year, it would take more than $800 million to restore Colorado schools to their pre-recessionary levels of funding.

3. Why do all voters need to be knowledgeable on the state budget?

Colorado is the only state where legislators, because of constitutional restrictions, cannot make decisions on taxes ... meaning citizens must be informed and engaged in order to make important policy decisions.

4. How do Colorado schools compare to other states in performance and funding?

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce ranks Colorado second nationally in “return on investment” in the realm of K-12 education. While our schools are some of the most efficient with their resources, efficiency is not the same as sufficiency. We spend $2,685 less per student than the national average and rank 40th in per pupil spending.

5. What is the Budget Stabilization Factor (formerly the Negative Factor)?

Colorado has been underfunding schools each year through what is known as the Budget Stabilization Factor. In an effort to generate budget savings for the state, House Bill 10-1369 included a new factor called the budget stabilization factor designed to reduce total funding proportionately across districts. These cuts have been taken from the factors designed to help rural districts and at-risk kids.

Learn more at www.MissionPossibleCO.com
Does funding really matter?

Studies demonstrate that well-targeted dollars have a direct, positive effect on student outcomes. Mission: Possible provides two funding scenarios that show the investment levels for the best- and worst-performing states and the significant differences in resources provided.

Why is there a wide discrepancy in the amount of local funding versus state funding provided to schools?

Each school district’s Total Program Funding starts with a "base" per pupil amount that is run through a formula that takes into account economies of scale, additional costs needed to educate every student, and the Negative Factor. The School Finance Formula calculates how much local property tax will be collected under the district’s mill rate. Most districts can’t raise enough locally so, the state “backs up” the difference between the state-calculated per pupil — Total Program — funding and the local contribution. This equalization allows each district to receive its Total Program amount regardless of the amount of local taxes raised.

How does Colorado rate in funding colleges & career training?

Colorado ranks 47th per full-time student in state funding. In 2000, Colorado invested 68% of the average cost per student, and the student/family was responsible for 32%. Today, the ratio has flipped: the state invests 34% and the student/family pays 66%. Per capita debt for Colorado graduates has increased 59% since 2000.

What is Mission: Possible?

Mission: Possible is an educational tool that allows state residents to learn about how the state raises and spends money. This tool enables us to explore options that legislators can’t, since Colorado is the only state where lawmakers cannot make decisions on tax policy. They can refer a measure to the voters asking for a tax increase, but this has not happened in the past 25 years.

Use Mission: Possible to design budgets that will allow our state to fully fund our schools, colleges and transportation — and all of the state’s essential public services.

The Colorado Association of School Boards and Great Education Colorado teamed up on this project because we believe all state residents must understand Colorado’s fiscal challenges and all possible solutions. In Colorado, because of constitutional amendments, it is voters — not legislators — who make the most important decisions about how Colorado invests in its future.

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