



**Poudre School District Board of Education Legislative and Policy Agenda for 2021-2022**

**The Poudre School District's Board of Education supports the following state legislative and policy actions for 2021-2022:**

**State of Colorado Funding Impacting PreK-12 School Funding**

1. Structural Issues - TABOR

a. The Poudre School District Board of Education supports current efforts to build a coalition addressing Colorado state funding requirements resulting from TABOR or other provisions that may result in a future statewide referendum or initiative for a ballot measure amending the Colorado Constitution.

*(also submit to CASB – the Colorado Association of School Boards).*

b. The Poudre School District Board of Education recognizes that a structural change is needed in how the State of Colorado funds K-12 education and other critical state and local programs. This structural change includes addressing the negative impacts of provisions in the Colorado Constitution such as TABOR that continue to impact the state budget. These provisions have caused the Colorado General Assembly to subject K-12 education to significant budget cuts through the mechanism formerly known as the “negative factor,” which is now termed the “budget stabilization factor.”

Such budget cuts are contrary to the voters’ intent in passing Amendment 23 to the Colorado Constitution, which called for the State to sustain K-12 education funding at a level equal to the growth in enrollment plus inflation. These budget cuts also threaten the ability of K-12 educators to provide every Colorado child with a thorough and uniform education as required by the Colorado Constitution.

Therefore, The Poudre School District Board of Education supports continued efforts by the General Assembly in addressing and resolving these conflicting Constitutional provisions.



c. The Poudre School District Board of Education supports adoption of policies and legislation to change the Public School Finance Act of 1994 to provide more equity among districts generally and more support for rural school districts. The State funding formula needs to be updated to better reflect the needs of modern educational environments, such as recognizing advances in educational technology, innovation and creativity in delivering educational programs, online and other blended learning opportunities complementing seat time requirements, and equity for high-poverty districts. It is time to modernize these requirements with methods more compatible with existing technology for measuring and reporting attendance and work time.

*(also submit to CASB).*

### **Improving Mental Health**

2. The Poudre School District Board of Education supports adoption of policies and legislation recognizing the need and providing funding for more mental health support for students, teachers and staff, especially in the era of COVID-19 related changes to learning environments.

### **Educator Evaluations**

3. The Poudre School District Board of Education supports continued reform in the teacher evaluation process to encourage courageous conversations between administrators and teachers that leads to real goal setting and effective feedback. Evaluations are more effective when trust and communication are paramount, rather than rigidly imposed accountability measures that discourage continuous improvement in teaching methods.

*(also submit to CASB).*

### **Charter Schools**

4. The Poudre School District Board of Education supports adoption of policies and legislation amending the Colorado Charter Schools Act regarding the process of obtaining waivers from Colorado law, including requiring the requesting charter school to provide a written rationale for seeking each such waiver.

*(also submit to CASB).*



## **Superintendent Selection**

5. The Poudre School District Board of Education supports clarifying the Colorado Open Meetings Law subsection pertaining to school boards that itemizes what topics can be discussed in executive session to add the following:

**If a school board names more than one finalist for a superintendent opening and  
If there is a public forum with the finalists where finalists answer questions from members of the public**

Then the Board of Education can meet in executive session to interview each of the finalists and can meet in executive session to deliberate on the merits of the finalists (though not to vote on which finalist should be selected for the job – which still must be done in public)

*(also submit to CASB).*

### **Rationale:**

We want to clarify the executive sessions law to encourage more districts to name multiple finalists for the superintendent position rather than a single finalist. Right now, the laws on hiring a superintendent allow school boards to name a single finalist for the position of superintendent. There is an incentive to delay the selection of finalists and to name only one finalist for a superintendent position. Naming multiple finalists should be encouraged because it provides more opportunities for public input and scrutiny.

Although the open meetings law allows some discussion in executive session for purposes of determining positions subject to negotiations, for example, school districts have faced numerous, duplicative legal challenges in recent years. Such discussions are especially sensitive and demand strict confidentiality during the superintendent selection process, and districts should not have to devote public resources to litigation. Clarifying the law would allow districts to continue to discuss finalists in executive session without risk of costly lawsuits that detract from their educational mission.

Why is it important to clarify this law and clearly allow interviews of and deliberation on finalists in executive session? While in theory it is great to have everything done in public, in practice, candidates will not be as forthcoming on difficult interview questions in public and do not want negative things said about them in a public. Boards need to be able to ask difficult questions and discuss frankly the pros and cons of candidates in order to determine who is the best fit for a district. Search firms also advise that for many of the most qualified candidates, confidentiality is essential. Given those facts, some candidates may refuse to participate in a finalist round if all interviews and deliberations are in public, thus depriving our districts of otherwise excellent candidates.



**The Poudre School District Board of Education supports the following federal legislative actions for 2021-2022:**

**IDEA Funding**

6. The Poudre School District Board of Education supports full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and requests serious action by the 117th United States Congress to increase the federal share of funding.

(Currently, Poudre School District is reimbursed approximately 17 cents for every dollar the federal government requires we spend on education under IDEA. It is time to increase the funding to a minimum of the 40 cents of every dollar initially promised by this legislation more than 40 years ago)

*(also submit to CASB).*

7. The Poudre School District Board of Education supports expansion of and funding for the E-Rate program for school broadband connectivity to include efforts for students in a virtual learning environment lacking reliable internet connections.

*(also submit to CASB).*

8. The Poudre School District Board of Education supports additional federal funding for school districts to compensate for COVID-19 related expenses and shortfalls in budgets resulting from economic effects of the pandemic.

*(also submit to CASB).*



**PSD Board of Education Directors:**

Christophe Febvre, President

Rob Petterson, Vice President

D.J. Anderson

Nate Donovan

Kristen Draper

Carolyn Reed

Jessica Zamora

Email: [boe@psdschools.org](mailto:boe@psdschools.org) Web: [www.psdschools.org](http://www.psdschools.org)

**About PSD:** Home to nearly 30,000 students in Fort Collins, Wellington, LaPorte, Bellvue, Livermore, Red Feather Lakes and communities north to the Wyoming border.

**Mission:** Poudre School District exists to support and inspire every child to think, to learn, to care and to graduate prepared to be successful in a changing world.

*Educate...Every Child, Every Day*