



# BriefCASE

*Legislative & Advocacy Issues*



**FEBRUARY 3, 2014**

## **Cindy Stevenson to join association as Director of the CASE Leadership Initiative**



We're so pleased to announce that Dr. Cindy Stevenson has been selected as the Director of the CASE Leadership Initiative. In this new position, Stevenson will provide support to school leaders and school districts to positively impact teaching and learning, as well as school improvement efforts. She will help ensure a CASE presence at essential gatherings of school leaders and education policy makers throughout the year.

"Cindy is a nationally-recognized leader in public education, and she will play a critical role in CASE's ongoing work to assist school administrators as they seek to improve student results," said CASE Executive Director Bruce Caughey. "She brings to CASE a real-world grounding and has been recognized by her peers as a former Colorado Superintendent of the Year as well as one of four finalists for the national award. We are so thrilled to have her help guide these efforts and know she'll be an invaluable resource to education practitioners."

Stevenson will join CASE at the close of the school year. In late 2013, she announced her upcoming retirement as superintendent of the Jefferson County School District.

"CASE supports education leaders so that our students can all have bright futures, and I am honored to work on critical leadership initiatives through the association," said Stevenson. "Public schools in Colorado have been instrumental to my success in my own life, and I'm so looking forward to continuing my career in education with CASE."

Stevenson has over 41 years of experience in public education and served as a teacher, principal, and deputy superintendent prior to being named Jeffco superintendent in 2002. She has had numerous other leadership roles, including

-serving as chair of both the Denver Area School Superintendents Council and Colorado State Principals and Administrator Standards Board, and on the boards of directors of the Public Education and Business Coalition and Jefferson County Economic Council.

Stevenson earned her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Colorado at Boulder, as well as her Ph.D. in Administration, Supervision, and Curriculum Development.

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## Improve school funding now by restoring cuts

To say it has been tough to find the right political path after the defeat of Amendment 66 would be an understatement. It's been a difficult environment for schools and district leaders and there is no immediate relief in sight. The will to do what is right for schools and kids has eluded many politicians, who argue that the public trust for schools is damaged.

Many policymakers believe the only solution for helping schools is more transparency and counting students on average daily membership. In fact, those are the only two education talking points from Governor Hickenlooper's State of the State Address earlier this year.

*How will these technical changes to our operations improve student outcomes? It won't.*

Colorado superintendents in this state have banded together to demand that the state follow through on its obligations. Take a moment to read the Sunday [Denver Post story](#) that you may have missed with all the Super Bowl hoopla and end result. This effort has occurred largely independent of CASE, but we fully share their priorities and that is reflected in our work.

Superintendents rightly see the only path forward as one that reduces the cuts every district has endured—they are demanding the return of the resources to local districts that the state has cut in order to balance its budget since the major recession several years ago. Now that the economy has rebounded and the forecast looks bright, we believe it's time to restore some of those cuts.

The negative factor hit every single school district in unique ways based on local conditions. School districts need a significant down payment on those cuts without state demands for yet another new slate of priorities.

CASE will continue to argue that it is not a loss of trust in our local schools and districts, as evidenced by great success at the polls for mill levy and bond overrides, but rather a political problem in this state. The best way forward is evidenced in the School Finance Principles that our members overwhelmingly support and have been shared over the past two months (below).

These principles are in line with what Colorado superintendents are asking, and our CASE leadership is using to guide positions on bills with the help of the CASE Legislative Committee.

### **CASE School Finance Principles - Final Version 2.5**

Educators charged with providing a quality public education must have adequate resources to produce desired results for all students. Numerous unfunded mandates continue to drain resources from Colorado classrooms. Any spending requirements for districts and schools must be funded at the outset. A study of existing demands and student needs—including but not limited to Special Education, English Language Learners and At-Risk students—should inform current funding levels.

- We believe the negative factor must be eliminated, starting immediately.
- We believe significant progress must be made in paying down the negative factor before funding any special programs or initiatives.
- We believe that changes must occur in Colorado’s competing constitutional mandates. Until such changes occur, Colorado must provide floor funding under Amendment 23 by applying both the base and factors to the inflation and growth calculation.
- As funding is restored through the formula and constitutional requirements, spending decisions are best made by individual school districts that best understand community priorities and needs.
- State categorical funding should be increased to cover district expenses.

Addressing K-12 funding in Colorado is an urgent priority for CASE and it will take all of us continuing to work together to help bring about a much-needed funding fix.

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## **CASE Members’ Day and Principals’ Day at the Capitol**

We are intent on providing ongoing avenues for our members to connect directly with legislators. Please join us at this year’s CASE Members’ Day at the Capitol on March 12 and for Principals’ Day at the Capitol on April 24. Mark your calendars now for what promises to be a compelling intersection of education policy conversations with those people who actually do the work. They need to hear directly from the field—that’s you! Mark your calendars and RSVP to Barb Albright at [balbright@co-case.org](mailto:balbright@co-case.org) if you can attend.

- **March 12, 2014**, 8 am-4 pm, CASE Member Day at the Capitol. Briefing at 8 am with CASE Executive Director Bruce Caughey and CASE Lobbyist Elisabeth Rosen followed by visits to the House and Senate Education Committee Hearings. Make an appointment to meet with your legislator. Lunch provided with key legislators. Afternoon at the State Board of Education meeting or back at the Capitol depending on what is

calendared. Open to all current school administrators who are Active CASE Members.

- **April 24, 2014**, noon-4 pm, CASE Principals Day at the Capitol. Start with a luncheon with legislators and then afternoon activities scheduled at the Capitol with support from CASE Executive Director Bruce Caughey and CASE Lobbyist Elisabeth Rosen. Open to all current principals and assistant principals who are Active members of CASSP and CAESP, the CASE principals' departments.

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## Improving K-12 Online Education

The K-12 Online Education Task Force is seeking input at a public forum on Wednesday, February 5, 1:30-3 p.m. at the Colorado State Capitol, Senate Committee Room 356.

The task force is charged with providing policy proposals that improve the quality of education for all students in Colorado who use online learning as part or all of their access to learning. The proposals are due on March 21, 2014 to a bipartisan group of legislators—Senator Andy Kerr, Senator Ellen Roberts, Representative Jim Wilson, and Representative Dave Young—that convened the task force.

The task force consists of the following members: Elizabeth Davis, Colorado Calvert Academy; Ben DeGrow, Independence Institute; Dale McCall, Colorado BOCES; Kim McClelland, Falcon 49 School District & Digital BOCES; Dan Morris, eNetColorado; Judith Stokes, Branson School District, and Rick Tanski, Academy 20 School District.

The task force would like to receive ideas, suggested issues for consideration, and recommendations on improving the state's policies related to online education. All members of the public are invited to attend the public forum and to provide their thoughts in written form. Please send all comments to Dan Morris at [danmorris@enetcolorado.org](mailto:danmorris@enetcolorado.org) by noon on February 5th, so they can be distributed to the entire task force in a timely manner. A copy of all public comments that are submitted in writing will be made available on request to any interested citizen.

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## Center's George Welsh receives Tech-Savvy Superintendent Award

Congratulations to Center Superintendent and CASE Past President George Welsh, who is a recipient of the eSchool Media 2014 Tech-Savvy Superintendent Award. He is one of 10 superintendents from across the country

to receive the award, which recognizes superintendents who effectively use technology to advance the goals of their district and positively impact student learning. Welsh was commended for Center's integrated use of technology for students and teachers alike, including iPads, online instructional support, and web-based resources like Edmodo and Moodle. He and the other honorees will be recognized in a series of eSchool Media webinars that will air in March; to learn more about the webinars and the award, please click [here](#).

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**Questions or Comments?** Contact Bruce Caughey at 303.762.8762 x105 or email [bcaughey@co-case.org](mailto:bcaughey@co-case.org)



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