

How Colorado Public Schools Rank:

FACT: 49th in the portion of state wealth devoted to K-12 public schools. Only Nevada and Florida rank lower.

FACT: 48th in graduation rates.

FACT: 47th in elementary class size.

FACT: Colorado ranks in the top ten for wealth and the bottom ten for public K-12 funding.

FACT: When the Gallagher Amendment (continually reduces property taxes) passed in 1982, Colorado was \$232 **above** the national average in per pupil spending.

FACT: When the TABOR Amendment (restricts revenue and spending) passed in 1992, Colorado was spending \$394 **below** the national average in per pupil spending.

FACT: Today, Colorado spends \$700 less per student than the national average.

Source: Colorado Protectors of Public Schools (www.copops.org.) Rankings include the 50 states and Washington D.C.

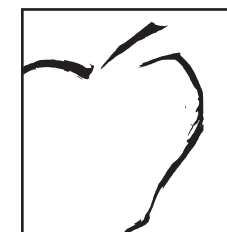
For Your Information

• **Helping Kids Thrive:** Since 1990 JCEA has worked with the Jefferson Center for Mental Health, PTA and JPS to provide hands-on, practical parenting information. Tentatively planned for the evening of **October 20 at Everitt Middle School.**

• **JCEA's Professional Tutor Referral Service:** During the summer many parents are looking for tutors for their children. This may be for catch-up work or simply enrichment. JCEA will provide you a list of tutors who meet or exceed district performance standards, know and understand the curriculum, and agree to abide by the NEA Code of Ethics. For information and a list of qualified tutors, call us at 303-232-6405.

• **The JCEA Excellence Fund:** This unique endowment funds our Christa McAuliffe Excellence Award Scholarships that are given annually to deserving Jeffco graduates who demonstrate an aptitude of, and love for, teaching. It also supports the ongoing work of the Dave Sanders Quality Teaching Foundation including staff development efforts like our Sustaining Success: Closing the Achievement Gap instructional conferences. We welcome community donations, which are tax deductible. Call our office for information.

• **Visit www.jcea-cea.org:** Our "parenting" page is filled with information, just for you!



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Professional programs you won't see in the media

by Nancy Henderson, JCEA President

If you haven't already noticed that it's summertime, the advertisements and merchandising for the mega-movies should convince you. I'm not sure if this year's **Star Wars** is the first, last or in the middle of the series (I've lost track), but I can tell you that one of my favorite quotes comes from these movies. The all-knowing Yoda said to a reluctant Luke: **"Try not. Do or do not. There is no try."** This quote appeals to me because I am a results oriented person.

So, here I am at the end of my first year as JCEA president. I'm taking a critical look at what we **do**, and I like what I see.

Most of you are aware of our high profile activities in bargaining and member mobilization, since these are widely reported in the media. However, we also provide many professional learning opportunities that we **do** equally well. Though worthy, they rarely receive much publicity or media coverage.

For example, over the last two years, we have been quietly working with schools that face challenges to improve student learning—we call them High Priority Schools. Our work with the seven Jefferson Area schools, district leaders and the community to close the achievement gap for all students is funded by a grant from the National Education Association (NEA). It has garnered accolades from all involved.

After the first year, schools saw evidence of measurable progress. So successful is this work—done by a cadre of JCEA staff, teachers, and administrators—that two other articulation areas have now asked us to expand this effort to their schools.

Our commitment to quality teaching and learning runs deep. Throughout the year we offer meaningful opportunities for professional development to en-

hance teachers' skills in the classroom. One example is our critically acclaimed class to improve classroom management. In addition, the JCEA Excellence Fund provides nationally recognized, challenging speakers our district could not otherwise afford.

We have also been concerned about how JPS can improve school-based staff development. For over a year, our Instructional Advocacy Committee has worked collaboratively with the school district on a planning model for schools to use to improve instruction. It will be piloted next fall.

In addition, because JPS has high performance expectations for all teachers, JCEA and JPS collaborate to provide the best new teacher orientation program in the state—some would argue in the country. We teach classes to help new teachers learn to use the district's performance-based evaluation process to improve their instruction.

We also join with JPS administrators to co-teach classes on professional ethics and the importance of protecting our students through strict enforcement of the Colorado Child Abuse Law.

Our commitment to quality teaching and learning also embraces our changing school district demographics. JCEA's Ethnic Minority Advisory Committee provides workshops and networking options for teachers to recognize the gifts and opportunities our increased student diversity presents.

Overall our record is admirable. As a professional teachers union, we are proud of our advocacy for teachers, kids and public schools. So, following Yoda's lead, JCEA is not just **trying** to improve student learning, we are actively **doing** it, and it's making a positive difference.



Our Mission Statement: *The Jefferson County Education Association exists to empower educators to promote professional rights, responsibilities and practices to achieve educational excellence within a changing society.*



Jefferson County Education Association
1050 Wadsworth Blvd.
Lakewood, Colorado 80214

State compromise sends Referendum C to voters

After two years of saying the state's fiscal crisis is the most critical issue facing Colorado, the leadership of our state legislature is finally doing something about it.

Following a long awaited compromise with the governor, the Colorado House and Senate approved "The Colorado Economic Recovery Act" that will go to the voters in November as Referendum C. Key among its provisions is the modification of the Taxpayers' Bill of Rights.

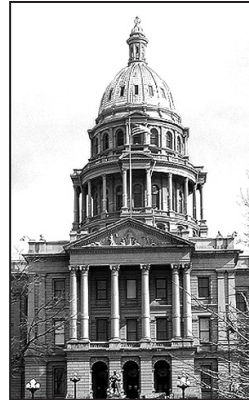
TABOR was passed by the voters in 1992 as an amendment to the state constitution. It restricts growth in both government revenues and spending to the increases in population growth plus inflation.

Other states have passed limits on state spending. Fewer, however, have put limits on revenues. None have applied the infamous "ratchet down" scenario to all levels of state government.

This unique aspect of TABOR is particularly harmful in recessionary periods when state revenues plummet. The ratchet-down impact of TABOR does not allow the state's budget to recover at the same speed as the economy recovers. This results in drastic budget cuts to—and in some cases the elimination of—programs and services for the citizens of Colorado.

Referendum C calls for a limited "deBrucing" that would allow state government to keep and spend revenue above the TABOR limit for five years. This additional revenue would be used for health care, public schools, state colleges/universities, and transportation projects.

Over those five years, this revenue is projected to be approximately \$3.1 billion.



As a part of the compromise with the governor, the legislature also approved a companion bill, HB 1317. This second referendum would reduce the state income tax rate, beginning after 2010, from 4.63% to 4.5%, if revenue above the TABOR limit is available.

CEA was part of a broad and growing coalition working for passage of a measure that would modify TABOR.

We are pleased that the compromise forged between the governor and the legislature is now gaining support from county and municipal leaders, as well as key business leaders and organizations.

In the short run, we believe it is the right thing to do for the citizens of Colorado. In the long run, we believe it will have a positive impact on the state's ability to adequately fund its system of public schools.

New contract lowers class sizes

In May, JCEA and JPS successfully completed negotiations on the annual reopener to the four-year contract that expires August 31, 2007. The new agreement contains good news for parents and taxpayers.

Since good schools enhance property levels, and smaller classes enhance good schools; the new contract calls for hiring 115 new elementary and secondary teachers. This will restore the cuts made the last few years and allow our secondary schools to meet the new state mandates for math and science instruction.

We also improved the district's ability to recruit and retain high quality teachers by improving the salary schedule by 2.5%. While Jeffco starting salaries remain low in the metro area, we are closing the gap.

JCEA welcomes new readers

JCEA is continually updating the mailing list for **Shaping Tomorrow Today**. If you are a new reader, welcome!

Obviously, this is a newsletter that reflects the thinking of the 5,000 teaching professionals in Jefferson County. We hope you find the information in this newsletter helpful and at times provocative. We want you to be able to trust the information you read in this newsletter and know that it reflects the integrity of our profession and JCEA.

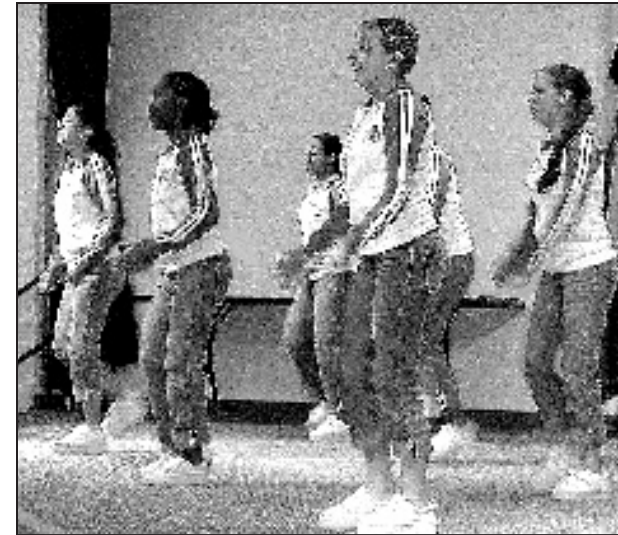


Shaping Tomorrow Today

Shaping Tomorrow Today is the community newsletter of the Jefferson County Education Association (JCEA) and is published periodically throughout the year. Comments may be mailed to: JCEA, 1050 Wadsworth Blvd., Lakewood, CO 80214. Our phone number is 303-232-6405; our FAX number is 303-238-2215. Visit our web site at www.jcea-cea.org.

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The JCEA Photo Gallery



JCEA is an important sponsor and contributor to the annual Good News Breakfast held each April. This year's entertainment was provided by the Fletcher Miller Bell Choir (above) and Jefferson High School's T.R.O.O.P. (left).



Above: Annually, The Jefferson Foundation sponsors a reception honoring approximately 600 JPS employees who exemplify district values: integrity, exemplary performance, valuing people, and teamwork. The Foundation's Executive Director, Mona Sandoval, presided.

Left: Members of the Jefferson County International Reading Association (JCIRA) joined with JCEA to co-sponsor a Sustaining Success literacy workshop.



Above: JCEA's JoAnn Johnston awards Marta Murray our Friend of Education Award. Right: JCEA-Retired's Carolyn Campbell celebrates NEA's Read Across America day at Lawrence Elementary.

