

Negative factor at issue in Colorado education funding

Written by Marianne Goodland

Bret Miles, Dennis Herman represent school districts in March 3 hearing

Rural school superintendents took a strong stand this month to oppose a bill at the State Capitol that weights education funding in favor of special programs rather than restoring dollars that have been cut over the past several years.

On March 3, the House Education Committee looked at the annual school finance act, House Bill 14-1298, and an accompanying bill, HB 1292, dubbed the “Student Success Act.” The committee amended both bills last week and sent them on to the House Appropriations Committee.

At issue is the so-called “negative factor,” a budget stabilization device implemented in 2009 to allow lawmakers to make across-the-board cuts in education funding. During the recession, lawmakers realized they no longer could meet the requirements of Amendment 23, the 2000 ballot measure passed by voters that requires the state to annually increase K-12 education funding by the rate of inflation.

According to Great Education Colorado, lawmakers decided that Amendment 23 applied only to “base” per pupil funding, which is the same amount of dollars for every student in every district. In 2013-14, that was \$6,585 per student.

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