

Making Colorado's Teacher of the Year Program the Best in the Nation

By Rep. Joe Miklosi (HB 1240)

SUMMARY:

Numerous education studies have concluded that one of the most vital factors for increasing student graduation rates, reducing truancy rates, and improving the overall quality of a child's educational experience is a well-trained, engaged, and experienced teacher. However, compared to other states, the Colorado Teacher of the Year program does not honor or reflect the important role and impact that teachers play in the lives of students. HB 1240 changes this situation by making the Colorado Teacher of the Year program the best in the nation.

Specifically, the bill raises private grants, gifts, and donations to empower the teacher of the year to travel throughout Colorado for one year and to share their best practices with their fellow teachers. The bill also compensates the school district to hire a substitute, and form a partnership with an education professor and mentor at either the University of Colorado, Colorado State University, or the University of Northern Colorado to create a research project and or a publishable paper. The three universities would rotate the mentor position. The grant would be managed by the Colorado Department of Education.

KEY POINTS:

1. Dramatically improves the current Colorado Teacher of the Year program by increasing the recognition and rewards for Colorado's Teacher of the Year by incorporating best practices from leading states across the nation.
2. Adds substantial responsibilities to the role of Teacher of the Year. These additional responsibilities are focused on sharing their best practices with other class room teachers and with future teachers at the University of Northern Colorado.
3. Provides funding to the Teacher of the Year's school district for backfill while the Teacher of the Year tours the state propagating their best practices. This funding to the school district provides strong incentive for a school district to fully support Teacher of the Year competition at all levels.
4. Funded through private sector donors resulting in improved teacher recognition at no incremental cost to the taxpayers. Approximately \$20,000 would be allocated to the teacher as an award, \$25,000 to the school district to hire a substitute, \$10,000 to the University to mentor the teacher, \$5,000 for administrative costs, and \$15,000 for the teacher's travel related costs.

Teacher of the Year State Comparison

State	Banquet	Luncheon	Reception	Conference / Forum	Other Plaques	Monetary Award	Scholarship	In Kind Items	State Funding	Private Funding	Total Funding
Alabama			\$3,000	\$500		\$6,000		\$31,000	\$31,000		\$31,000
Arizona		\$16,000			\$500	\$45,000			\$131,000	\$131,000	\$131,000
Colorado			\$5,000			\$2,500	\$1,000		\$5,500	\$5,500	\$5,500
Georgia	\$50,000	\$1,500			\$1,000	\$2,800		\$25,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
Maryland	\$73,000	\$6,500		\$17,000	\$10,000			\$100,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$300,000
North Carolina	\$100,000			\$5,000	\$300	\$42,500		\$125,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$160,000

Source: National Teacher of the Year Program data base - data as of early 2006

Observations

Colorado funding last among the leading states
 Funding range is \$5,500 (CO) to \$300,000 (MD) with three of the six states over \$100,000
 Monetary awards range from \$2,500 to \$45,000 but unclear how many participate in that funding pool
 Two states provide TOY with use of auto for a year
 Vast majority of funding comes from donations / sponsors, etc

Comments

Alabama Monetary Award going to both TOY and Alternate; TOY gets use of new auto for one year
 Arizona Monetary Award going to TOY and 10 finalists
 Colorado
 Georgia
 Maryland
 North Carolina TOY gets use of auto for one year