

## Pop Quiz for School Finance Interim Committee

### Q: Can you name the state that...

- Gives kindergarteners who are advanced enough to learn with second-graders only *half* the funding of their older peers.... but the exact same instruction?
- Withholds funds for high school students who are advanced enough to take more than two vocational or college courses a semester – while they are still in high school?
- Urges students to earn as many academic credits as possible before graduating from high school, but penalizes them if they learn the material too fast? Even if students learn material quickly, they *must* sit through 360 hours of instruction per course each semester. If they don't, this state withholds funding for the student. And it doesn't matter if the student mastered the material weeks or even months ago.

### A: Colorado

- School funding is not aligned with Colorado's new goal to emphasize student learning. Instead, it's more narrowly focused on how many hours students sit in classrooms (also known as "seat time").
- Help us align school funding not with the amount of time students sit at their desks, but rather with their academic progress. If students have mastered the material, let them advance to the next level so they are challenged and not bored in school. If students need more help to learn a subject, let's give them the extra attention and time they need to succeed.

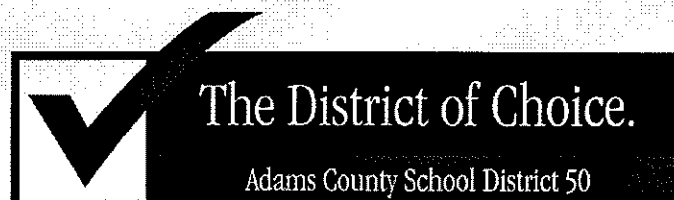
### Why now?

Standards-based education in Adams County School District 50:

- Groups students by what they know and are able to do – instead of by age.
- Clearly spells out what students must know and be able to do from one level to the next in each subject.
- Advances students to the next level in each subject as soon as they are ready.
- Emphasizes student learning – not "seat time."

**We invite legislators to visit our classrooms!**

Call Adams County School District 50 to schedule a visit: 303.428.3511.



[www.adams50.org](http://www.adams50.org)

**Outline: Funding Dilemma in a Standards-based System**

**Presented by: Dr. Roberta Selleck**

**Presentation Time: 15 minutes**

**July 27, 2009**

**It's about children. It's about success. It's about learning – not about time.**

**Demographics of Adams County School District 50:**

- Our district is in Westminster located between Denver and Boulder.
- We have 21 schools serving about 10,000 students.
- 68% percent are Hispanic; 23% are White; and 9% are Asian, African American and Native American.
- Nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of our students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.
- Another 43% are learning English as a second language.
- About 1,100 people work for our school district. Of those, about 550 are teachers. Our teachers average 8 years of experience, and 79% have advanced degrees.
- Approximately 75 % of our CSAP scores improved or remained stable last year. On most CSAP tests, less than half of District 50 students received a proficient score.
- We know that our students can achieve at higher levels, and all of them should be graduating from high school instead of only 66%.
- Those that go on to college should not need remediation whether it's one or more classes – currently 42% of Colorado students and 48% of Adams 50 students entering college need remediation. That's not acceptable.

To help our students achieve, we are transitioning to a performance-based, standards-based system.

**Standards Based Education:**

Standards-based education is a proven approach to teaching – and learning. It clearly spells out what students should know and be able to do from one performance level to the next in all subjects.

Highlights of our standards-based system include:

- Students know exactly what they are expected to learn.
- Teachers know exactly what they are expected to teach.
- Parents understand exactly what their students know and can do.
- Parents can keep an eye on their students' progress.
- Teachers use a rubric – a scoring guide – to make sure students are learning what they need to in each subject.
- All students will meet proficiency on measured topics before advancing and will have multiple opportunities and ways to demonstrate their mastery.
- Expectations are consistent from class to class and school to school.

### **How can the State help District 50?**

Grant Adams 50 a waiver and or amend the K-12 school funding model to match children's needs.

### **Examples of variances from actual funding versus needs**

Adams 50 provides examples of how Colorado is holding back – penalizing - successful students and how state funding conflicts with our standards-based system.

### **Summary:**

The educational strategies and tactics we have used in the past have not produced the results we desire. Students are not performing at high levels, high school graduation rates are stagnant, and college completion rates have been flat for the past 35 years. I think you would agree - it's time for reform. We need to help our children be successful. Funding is tied to reform. Adams 50 is reforming and trying to do so on PPR funding – but that funding is not and will not meet the needs of all children.

- Every student is unique – with different goals, interests, abilities and learning styles.
- Progress cannot be measured by how much time a child spends in a classroom chair.

Adams 50 is prepared to act as the lighthouse for other school districts – showing how a performance-based district can improve achievement for *all* students. It is essential for Adams 50 to receive a waiver in order to fund our standards-based system and meet the needs of all our children. The state of Colorado must examine its' school funding methodology.

It's about learning – not about time. It's about children.