



PLEASE SUPPORT *SB 09-123: Healthy Choices Dropout Prevention*

Overview

Creates a pilot out-of-school program to enhance academic achievement and physical and mental health of adolescent students to encourage healthy choices and reduce dropout rates. Allows at-risk middle schools to apply for and receive funds from grants within the Department of Education to use for out-of-school programs that incorporate physical exercise, academic assistance, nutrition counseling, mental health counseling and health education.

Bill Sponsors

Sen. Suzanne Williams; Co-sponsor: Sen. Paula Sandoval
Rep. Nancy Todd; Co-Sponsor: Rep. Judy Solano

Why SB 09-123 is important to Colorado

The objective of this bill is to address disturbing statistics relating to the health and dropout rates of Colorado's children and to encourage our students to make healthy choices as adolescents to stay in school and lead healthy, productive and economically self sufficient lives.

- According to the Colorado Children's Campaign, rates of childhood obesity are rising. **In 2005, nearly 29 percent of Colorado children ages 2 to 14 were considered overweight or at risk for being overweight.**
- If current trends continue, **by 2020, 76 percent of all Coloradans will be overweight or obese.** Most disturbing is that many experts now believe that today's generation of children will be the first generation to live shorter lives than their parents.
- Colorado's dropout rate is also startling. According to the Colorado Children's Campaign, **Colorado has a graduation rate of 70 percent. Colorado's non-graduates cost the state economy 3.4 billion annually.**
- Data from a 1994 study from the American Journal of Health Promotion shows that a **comprehensive health education and social skills program for high-risk students will improve school and test performance, attendance and school connectedness.** And this success was still apparent six years later.
- A 2007 study conducted by University of Pennsylvania shows a **clear link between obesity and school performance.** The study, published in *Obesity*, looked at the height, weight and absentee records of 1,069 students at nine public schools in Philadelphia. Obese children missed an average of 12.2 days, as compared to 10.1 days for a normal weight student.
- For more research, please visit: <http://www.healthyschoolscolorado.com/>

Funding Sources

Private gifts, grants and donations from coalition partners will be the primary funding mechanism for the program. Currently, the Junior League of Denver has committed a \$5,000 grant.

Supporting Organizations (2/11/09)

Colorado Medical Society, Do Well, Junior League of Denver, The Children's Hospital, YMCA

For More Information Contact

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