

Great Education Colorado is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, statewide, grassroots organization focused on increasing Colorado's long term investment in public education.

## 2008—Another Year of Impact and Success

2008 was a year of growth and impact, education and advocacy for Great Education Colorado. Through grassroots organizing, community partnerships, legislative action, web communication and election activities, Great Education Colorado continues to lay the groundwork for a long-term solution to reverse Colorado's chronic failure to invest adequately in public education.

### Board Members

Denver City Councilwoman  
Carol Boigon, Chair

Rachel Chaparro, Vice-  
Chair

Patty Bortz, Secretary

Tish Maes, Treasurer

Tyler Chafee

Lynn Dolven

Jane Feldman

Herb Fenster

Fred Franko

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Terry McCullough

Scott Reisch

Jamie Sarche

Frank Tijerina, Jr

### Expanding the Grassroots Network

This year, Great Education Colorado used both "low-tech" and "high-tech" tools to broaden and deepen our network of supporters. We communicated with tens of thousands of Coloradans through our accessible and informative website and blog, our online newsletters, our speakers' bureau, our efforts in support of Amendment 59, (the ballot initiative that would have loosened Colorado's constitutional fiscal straightjacket) and even a series of "viral videos" (the "Granny Files") that used humor to underscore the serious issues of education resources.

### Making a Difference at the Statehouse

Great Education Colorado was instrumental in the passage of the "Build Excellent Schools Today" (BEST) Act, the most significant commitment of state resources for replacing and repairing Colorado's crumbling classrooms in Colorado's history. We provided our members with meaningful ways to communicate their support of – and personal stories about – public schools and colleges to their legislators. And we gained ground in our long-term goal of matching critical education reforms with the resources necessary for their ultimate success.

### Partnering for Progress

Leveraging our resources to maximize our impact, Great Education Colorado partnered with a broad array of child and education advocates to raise awareness of critical issues: the importance of summer learning with Denver's remarkable Summer Scholars program, challenges for at-risk children with the Colorado Children's Campaign and Every Child Matters and exploring education reform policies with a broad coalition of organizations.

Great Education Colorado was honored to partner with the following organizations to inform, advocate, educate and build a vision for Colorado's future:

*Children's Voices*  
*Civic Canopy*  
*Colorado Children's Campaign*  
*Colorado Parent Teacher Association (PTA)*  
*Colorado School Finance Project*  
*Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition*  
*Democratic National Convention Education Platform*  
*Denver Public Schools*  
*Every Child Matters*  
*Padres Unidos*  
*Partnership for Families and Children*  
*Piton Foundation*  
*Prepare the Future*  
*Republican National Convention Education Forum*  
*Summer Scholars*



Dear Supporters:

As the pages of this Annual Report indicate, 2008 was a year of growth, success and impact for Great Education Colorado. We are proud of the accomplishments of this young organization, and grateful to the individuals, companies and foundations listed on the back of this report, for making our work possible.

As we look forward to 2009, we see new challenges and opportunities for Colorado.

The new challenges are obvious. As of this writing, the economic downturn has forced Colorado into a round of deep and painful budget cuts, jeopardizing much of the progress made in recent years. Cuts will occur to additional preschool slots, expanded full-day kindergarten and planned capital construction for K-12 and higher education.

And yet, now more than ever, the future of our economy depends on the quality of the education that Colorado provides for our children. In the nearer term, a successful education system critically contributes to Colorado's ability to attract new, expanding and relocating businesses. In the long term, educated children will be the engine that renews our economy and our communities in an ever changing future.

Simply put, increased investment in public education is an opportunity that Colorado cannot afford to pass up. *Unfortunately, because of Colorado's strictest-in-the-nation fiscal restrictions, our current level of investment for P-20 education is about as good as it can ever get - without a vote of the people.*

That's why Colorado's students -- and our economy -- need Great Education Colorado more urgently than ever. Our plans for 2009:

- Educate and advocate about the need for improved investment in schools and colleges;
- Work to match education reforms with necessary resources;
- Mobilize and grow our community of public school supporters; and
- Accelerate our grassroots organizing in preparation for a ballot initiative to improve investment in schools and colleges.

Great Education Colorado looks forward to turning today's challenges into long-term opportunities. Faced with unprecedented economic changes, Colorado now has the opportunity to re-envision education to meet the needs of a new century.

Most importantly, this economic crisis gives us the opportunity to do what every generation has done before us: rise to the occasion to make the world better for the next generation.

We hope you will join us for this important journey.

Sincerely,



**Liane Morrison**  
Executive Director  
Great Education Colorado



**Carol Boigon**  
Board Chair  
Denver City Councilwoman

## Colorado Public Schools By the Numbers:



U.S. rank in per pupil  
K-12 spending  
40th



U.S. rank in funding for  
higher education per full-  
time student  
48th



U.S. rank in eligible  
children enrolled in  
kindergarten programs  
36th



U.S. rank in overall  
technology in K-12 schools  
41st

# A Year in Review

## Laws 2008

### **Building Excellent Schools Today**

(BEST), signed by Governor Ritter in May, will replace and repair crumbling schools throughout Colorado. BEST marks the most significant investment in Colorado school construction since statehood. Great Ed is proud to have been part of the genesis of this important legislation, having organized school tours that inspired former House Speaker Andrew Romanoff to work with Senate President Peter Groff, Treasurer Cary Kennedy and others to develop this plan.



Governor Ritter signing B.E.S.T. into law. May 22, 2008

### **Shouldn't we know how much it costs?**

The Legislature passed the Colorado Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4Kids), a bipartisan plan to align standards and assessments from preschool through higher education/workforce readiness. A "Costing-Out" requirement, conceived by Great Ed Action, was attached to this legislation. It commissions an objective study to determine what resources will be necessary to ensure the success of the plan. We believe that this "costing-out" study is a critical step to ensuring that we match meaningful reforms with meaningful resources.

## Election 2008

### **Put Kids First**

Put Kids First is a coalition of three organizations (Great Education Colorado, Every Child Matters and the Colorado Children's Campaign) that came together during the 2008 election season to educate and ensure that candidates for elective office view campaign issues through the lens of their impact on children. The coalition promoted this with candidate tours of schools, health clinics, preschools and other providers of children's services and with candidate forums.

### **Amendment 58**

Because the high cost of college is putting higher education out of reach for so many Colorado families, Great Education Colorado endorsed and worked for passage of Amendment 58 - "A Smarter Colorado." The plan would have ended a tax subsidy for the oil and gas industry and used a majority of the resulting revenue to create the Colorado Promise Scholarship program.

### **Amendment 59**

For over a decade, Colorado's investment needs in schools, colleges, and other critical services have been stymied by the budget straightjacket created by the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR). Great Education Colorado Action contacted tens of thousands of voters with literature, phone calls and newsletters in support of Amendment 59 - "SAFE," which would have created a rainy day fund to protect education during bad economic times. The campaign highlighted the need for improved investment in schools, as well as for budget reform.

## Ways to Communicate

### **Videos**

Bringing some humor to the serious issue of school resources, "Granny", played by Denver actor Amie MacKenzie, made her appearance on the Great Education Action website, the GEC blog, YouTube, and in our newsletters. In the videos, Granny learned about the dismal state of school funding in Colorado from conversations with her grandson. Granny's appearances were a prelude to our delivery at the Capitol of a petition, signed by over 1,000 supporters, requesting legislators to make public education a high priority.



### **Website and Blog**

In total, the Great Ed website had 13,620 page views with a 50% increase in new visits from the previous year. The Great Ed Blog, used as a resource by thousands last year, offers an eye on the news and allows readers to post their own views and responses to education policy and funding.

## Great Education Colorado Tennis Open

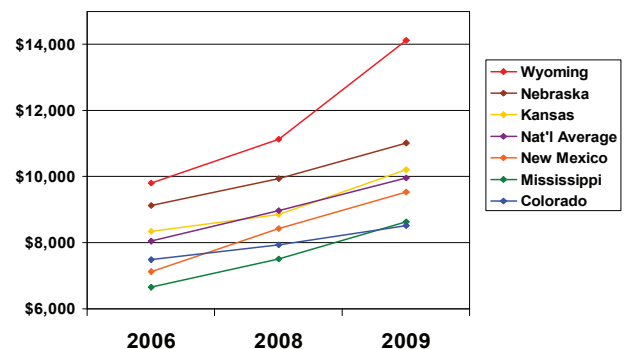
The first annual Great Education Colorado Tennis Open was held on September 21 at Gates Tennis Center in Denver. More than 300 participants - kids, teenagers, parents, tennis players, celebrities and public officials - ensured a high "fun" quotient. The afternoon included free tennis lessons and competition on the "Courts of Law" and "Courts of Public Opinion". Food and drink provided by a wide array of contributors made dinner an easy night out. We are indebted to all our sponsors and recognize the event would not have been a success without the support of our co-hosts and a remarkable crew of volunteers/supporters. *Be sure to save the date for the*



*Second Annual Great Education Colorado Tennis Open on September 20, 2009!*

## Regional-Cost-Adjusted Per Pupil Spending of Selected States

[Source, Education Week "Quality Counts" 2006, 2008, 2009 - data not reported in 2007.  
Per pupil amounts are based on data from 2004, 2006 and 2007]



This graph demonstrates the need for Great Education Colorado's advocacy for improved investment.

## \$1–\$499

Arthur and Patricia Aaron	Vincent and Regina Famularo
Andrea Abramson	Jane Feldman
Nancy Abramson	Beth Ferguson
Joseph Adams	Sara Fidanza
Tim Adams, DDS	Diana Fields
Taryn Archer	J.D. Finley
Wendy and Ed Aro	Robin Fleischmann
John and Frances Augenblick	Lynnae Flora
Tina Axelrad	Peter and Georgianna Forbes
Stephen and Lisa Bain	Jill Frasier
Barry Schwartz and Deborah Baker	Diane Rosenthal and Dan Friedlander
Tamara and Francis Barron	Sandra Fritz
Tannis Bator	Alan and Belina Fruitman
Robert Baumgarten	Meg Gehl
Joseph and Jill Bednarek	Lynne Gertz
Belcaro Animal Hospital	Timothy Dudley and Lindy Gilchrist
Virginia Belval	Julie Gonzales
Rep. Debbie and Scott Benefield	Gillian Goodman
Kim Benson	John Gordon
Travis Berry	Melanie Grant
Sue Bishop	Elizabeth and Scott Groginsky
Bonita Bock	Celeste Grynberg
Jerome Borison	Mariellen Guerra
Alan Bortz	Todd Harrington
Patricia Bortz	Ancella and Jim Hart
Anne and Maxine Brehmer	Misty Hart
Joan Brennan	Ruth Hart-Segal
Bruce Broderius	Vicki Cowart and Chris Hayes
Wes and Linda Brown	Carol Hedges
Brad Buchanan	Susan Heinzeroth
Eric Butz	Patrick Hildebrand
Jana Caldwell	Jennifer Hilger
Kathy Callum	Susan Homiak
Jenny Cargile	Suzanne Hoover
Lisa Carlson-Marks	Nora Hoskins-Neureiter
Meghan Cave	Hi Howard
Tyler Chafee	Bruce Hoyt
Susan Chandler	Raymond Huff
Cynthia Chapman	Carol Hunt
Mary Cheever	Michael Huttner
Christopher and Carolyn Clemens	Claudia Ingraham
Ann Coggeshall	Elizabeth Jackson
Ken Connell	Deborah and Rob Jaffe
Charles Cook	Diane Jarbawi
Hon. Michael Bennet and Susan Daggett	Michael Johnson
Lesley Dahlkemper	Bruce Kaye
Leigh Dale	Bernie Kern
Michelle Dally	Elizabeth Kern
William Daniel	Theseme Kidane
Aileen Daproza	Jeffrey and Lisa Kipp
Michael Darling	Rita Byrnes Kittle
Paula Daukas	Wayne Knox
Jerry Dauth	Laura Kornasiewicz
Miles Davies	John Kundts
Krissie Decks	Peggy LaPlante
Anthony DeNovellis	Martha Lassen
Suzanne DeYoung	Lederer Foundation
Faye and Greg Diamond	Daniel Perlman and Lili Lehrberger
Lynn Dolven	Virginia Lew
Andrea Dowdy	Dave Lewis
Michael and Marylys Dowling	Andrew Loizeaux
Kim Elder	Laura Lunde
Elisa Erickson	Tish Maes
	Stephanie Major
	Judith Mamet

Ellen Mangione	James Schmidt
Eva Marez	Heidi Schnicker
Pete Maysmith	Sara Schreiber
Beth McCann	Jack and Katy Schuster
Janice McCoy	Rod and Victoria Schuster
Marnie McKercher	Sally Shafroth
Janine and Mark Melberg	Steven Shapiro
Jennifer Mello	Michelle Shedo
Laura Michaels	Kerry and Stephen Shelanski
Eric Mills	Janet Sherman
Julie Milner	Gail Sigman
Patricia Mitchell	Karen Silverman and Bill Goldberg
Tom and Linda Molner-Kelley	Walter and Amy Silvesky
Peter Monson	David Skaggs
Lisa Morris	Robert and Anne Sneed
Brenda Morrison	Margaret Sobocinski
Kelly Morrison	Peggy Solinsky
Chris Moyer	Jim Spaanstra
Scott Murphy	Split Step
John Myers	Pat Steadman
Felicia Nassi	Pam Stearman
Cora Neslin	Judy Stein
Andrew Newman	Katherine Steinberg
Iris Newsome	Karen Steinhauser
Betty and Peter Ney	Meg Stenson
Kristen Nordenholz	Merril Stern
Andrea Novins-Montague	Cynthia Stevenson
Jack and Valerie Nuanes	Swim Dogs
Jane Nyman	Sophia Symko
Tricia O'Connor	Glenn Tacke
Kathleen Odle	Heather Taussig
Randy and Cathy Oglesby	Edward and Constance Thomas
Laura Owens	Lisa Thomas
Karin Pacheco	Jessica Toll
Robert Palaich	David and Stephanie Tryba
Elizabeth Palmquist	Wayne Turnbow
Amanda Paschal	Betty Vean
Patricia Pascoe	Robin Vidimos
Nicole Pearce	Stephen Vogler
Jeffery and Jessica Pearson	Karen Voss
Maureen Poli	John Walsh
Caren Press	Jay Want
John and Denise Prevedel	Carrie Warren-Gully
Bart Prieve	Nancy Watzman
Nancy Printz	Randall Weeks
Eilenn Prosser	David and Miriam Weil
Ellen Quest	Steve Zansberg and Lisa Weil
Tracie Rainey	Judy Weingarten
Diane Reeder	Mary Wessels
Nancy Reinisch	Kyle West
Gayle Reising	Julia White
Nancy and Thomas Rhine	Terry Whitney
T.R. and Ann Rice	Jennifer and David Wiener
Lynn Richards	Wild Woman Truffle Company
Ripple Creek Business	Roxanne Wilderman
Kristin Robbins, DDS	Gary Williams
Connie Robertson	Carla Witt
Barry Rosenberg	Priscilla Wolfe
Judy Rothman	Lisa Wolff
Jay and Kathleen Rust	Philip and Elaine Workman
Carol Sarche	Betsy and Jody Wright
Jamie Sarche	Linda Yale
Bruce and Martha Sattler	Bonnie Zeller
Sue Schafer	
Rosalie and Don Schiff	

## \$500–\$999

Liz Adams	Anonymous
Gary Benson	Berenbaum, Weinsienk, and Eason
Gwen Fornia	Foster Graham Milstein Miller Calisher
Fred and Meg Franko	George K. Baum & Company
Paula and Stan Gudder	Hogan and Hartson
Craig and Lorraine Jones	Cyndi Kahn
Leventhal, Brown, and Puga	Levine, Sullivan, Koch, and Schultz
Ellen Marshall	Marcy Morrison
Jim Polsfut	Daniel Recht
Scott Reisch	Martha Records and Rich Rinaldi
Doug Robinson	Sherman and Howard
Springer and Steinberg	Stifel Nicolaus
Frank Tijerina	WheelerTrigg Kennedy
Mark and Louise Williams	

## \$1000–\$4999

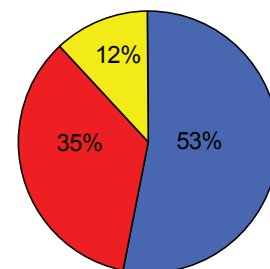
Anonymous	Anonymous
Bruce Benson	Carol and Howard Boigon
Dawn Bookhardt	Libby Bortz
Brett Family Foundation	Carson Foundation
Harvey and Judy Cohen	Comcast
Deane Family Fund	Herb Fenster
First Bank	Richard Geller
Benjamin Graebel	Kamlet Shepherd and Reichert, LLP
Roger and Robbie Marks	Ridder Braden
Chris Romer	SmartThinking, Inc.
St. Charles Capital, LLC	Jerry and Nancy Weil

## \$5000–\$9999

American National Bank
\$10,000 +
Barton Family Foundation
Gantz Family Foundation
Rose Community Foundation
The Denver Foundation
The Reinisch Family Foundation

Great Education Colorado relies on the generous contributions of individuals, foundations and corporations to further its mission to advocate for fully funded public education reform.

Our revenue comes from three sources:



■ Individuals and Family Foundations  
■ Foundations  
■ Corporations

Volunteer Hours donated:  
**500+**

Not only did Great Education Colorado receive generous amounts of monetary support, we cannot forget the invaluable number of hours our volunteers worked with us throughout the year. Thank you!

### Staff Members

Liane Morrison  
Executive Director

Lisa Weil  
Policy Director

Patty Bortz  
Outreach/Volunteer Coordinator

Kady Everard  
Administrative Coordinator

Eric Mills  
Technical Director