

## **A Message from the Executive Director**

**Winter 2017**



**Welcome 2017!**

***I cannot believe how fast 2016 went by! I think I say, and feel this way every year! I hope that you, your families, and friends have a wonderful 2017. The staff and providers at the UnBOCES have continued their efforts to support our five member-districts (Norwood, Ouray, Ridgway, Telluride, and West End) in all areas of special education, gifted education, professional development, and alternative licensure. As always, if the employees of UnBOCES can assist you please do not hesitate to contact us.***

***Zoe Denison, Administrative Assistant- [zdenison@ridgway.k12.co.us](mailto:zdenison@ridgway.k12.co.us)***

***Lisa Sagal, Program Facilitator/Early Childhood Special Education Teacher- [lsagal@ridgway.k12.co.us](mailto:lsagal@ridgway.k12.co.us)***

***Julie Derbes, Fiscal Manager- [jderbes@ridgway.k12.co.us](mailto:jderbes@ridgway.k12.co.us)***

***Michelle Barkemeyer, Gifted Coordinator- [mbarkemeyer@ridgway.k12.co.us](mailto:mbarkemeyer@ridgway.k12.co.us)***

***Tammy Johnson, Executive Director- [tjohnson@ridgway.k12.co.us](mailto:tjohnson@ridgway.k12.co.us)***

***Here are my thoughts as Governor Hickenlooper begins work on the budget...***

***Once again schools are underfunded, the suggested plan negatively impacts senior citizens, and puts public education and our elderly population at odds. Using retail marijuana sales tax to “backfill” school funding is not the answer either. The proposed budget indicates that the General Fund Summary SHOWS MORE REVENUE THAN EXPENDITURES, but puts those funds in “reserve” rather than using them to fund education. Last week over 50 superintendents decided that they would not accept a reduction in the negative factor and would push for additional money for their most vulnerable districts, and that they would not tolerate proposals that move current money from one district to another. For too many years we, school districts, have been told that there just isn’t any money and we have accepted that. This is the year that we need to push back and ask the JBC and Governor Hickenlooper to RE-PRIORITIZE within the current budget by moving money from the “reserve” back into education. His press release is below.***



**Gov. Hickenlooper submits budget amendments to Legislature, calls for reductions in Senior Homestead Exemption & higher retail marijuana sales taxes to backfill school funding reductions**

**DENVER – Tuesday, Jan. 17, 2017 –** The Office of State Planning and Budgeting (OSPB) today submitted budget amendments to the Joint Budget Committee that apply to the FY 2017-18 budget request.

Within the request, the OSPB outlined Gov. Hickenlooper's plan to address a \$135.1 million reduction in property taxes triggered by the "Gallagher" amendment in the Colorado Constitution. The amendment requires that the total property tax burden in the State be shared more by non-residential owners than by residential owners. Because residential values have grown faster than non-residential values and the relative burdens are out of compliance with the Constitution, the mechanism to adjust the burden is to lower the residential assessment rate.

The Division of Property Taxation at the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), using more updated information than the State had in December, projects that the residential assessment rate will drop 17.6 percent - from 7.96 percent to 6.56 percent. As a result, the lower residential assessment rate, net of other changes to projected enrollment, requires \$106.2 million in State funds to keep the budget request whole. This equates to \$122.70 per student in the school finance formula.

To bridge the gap, the Governor is asking for legislation to 1) reduce the Senior Homestead Exemption by half in FY 2017-18 (\$68.1 million), and 2) increase the special sales tax on adult-use recreational marijuana to 12.0 percent in FY 2017-18 (\$41.9 million). These amounts would be earmarked for K-12 education finance. Both changes require legislative approval but have prior voter approval, and the revenue can be retained by the State.

Without the increase in resources from these two legislative requests, the "negative factor" would increase to \$982.3 million compared with \$876.1 million in the FY 2017-18 budget request.

"One part of the Constitution lowers property taxes for schools and shifts the burden to the State, and another part of the Constitution says the K-12 school budget has to grow. This is a prime example of why we call our budget rules a 'fiscal thicket,'" said OSPB director Henry Sobanet.

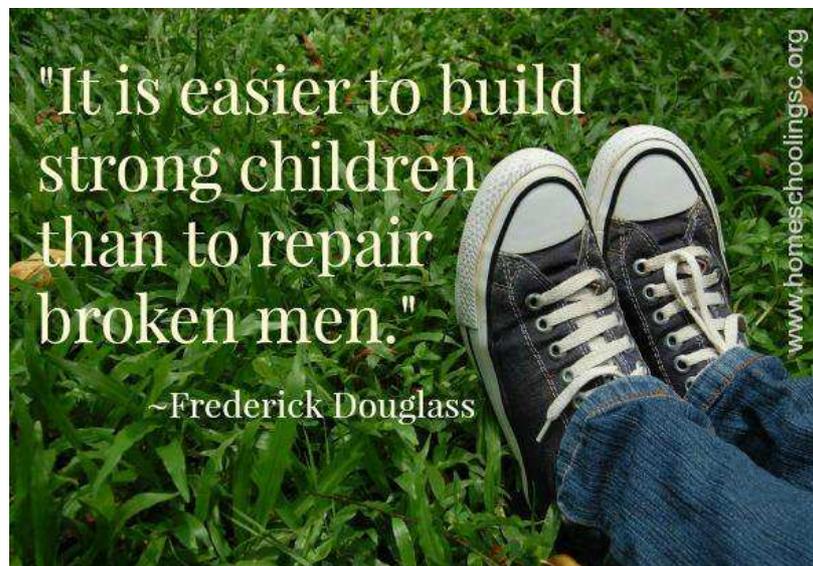
In the State of the State address last week Governor Hickenlooper asked legislative leaders to convene on the subject of K-12 education funding rules.

***I will try to keep UnBOCES staff and contractors informed of any new budget proposals, and will send any action items to you through email.... United, our voices are stronger.***



***In happier news... Once again the UnBOCES has earned the ranking of "Meets Requirements" by the Colorado Department of Education...***

***This is due to the diligence of our teachers, providers, and office staff (Lisa and Zoe) in completing high quality paperwork in a timely fashion! Thanks everyone for your hard work and dedication to our students, families, communities, and schools. We couldn't do what we do without you and you are appreciated more than you know!***



***Until the spring!***

***~Tammy***

