



Joint Testimony on House Bill 29

November 30, 2020

The Colorado Association of School Executives, Colorado Rural Schools Alliance, and the Colorado Association of School Boards support House Bill 20B-0029 Prohibit Reduction Of School Funding FY 2020-21 introduced by Representative Jim Wilson.

The last nine months have been an extraordinary challenge for our state, and in particular, public schools who have strived to provide uninterrupted service for students, including: meals, mental health supports, as well as virtual learning, hybrid learning, and in-person learning models.

When the final budget was approved for 2020-21, the final increase to the Budget Stabilization Factor was over \$600 million. While districts appreciated the relief of CARES funds, the costs to operate schools were actually higher than typical years in order to meet the COVID-19 health and safety precautions necessary for operation.

Therefore, it is critical that the supplemental appropriations during the 2021 regular legislative session maintain the current level of investment in K-12 education that the legislature approved in June 2020, if not increase that level of funding as schools navigate these complex situations to stay open.

Schools have gone to great extremes to meet the public health guidelines and community expectations to open for students in a safe and productive manner. Any reduction in the total appropriation jeopardizes school districts' abilities to have quality instruction in place this year.

We wholeheartedly support Representative Wilson's bill and ask the General Assembly to make K-12 a priority this upcoming session, starting with maintaining the funding approved in June 2020 through the supplemental budget. Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this important legislation.