

JEFFERSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. R-1

RESOLUTION DECLARING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION'S OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED REFERENDUM "J"

WHEREAS, a proposed ballot measure on classroom spending requirements referred by the Colorado General Assembly, which will appear on the general election ballot this November as Referendum J, will change state law to require each school district in Colorado to spend at least 65 percent of its operational expenditures on instructional and non-instructional services that directly affect student achievement; and

WHEREAS, this measure is similar to an amendment to Colorado's Constitution which will appear on the ballot this November as Amendment 39 in that it requires any school district that spends less than 65 percent to increase its spending on the specified items by 2 percentage points each year until the 65% threshold is met; and

WHEREAS, this "one size fits all" approach, which imposes an arbitrary percentage for classroom expenditures on all the school districts in the state regardless of size or unique circumstances, removes the ability of local communities to set their own budget and spending priorities for their public schools; and

WHEREAS, the analysis of data for the 2004-05 school year indicates that only three school districts did not meet the spending requirement imposed by Referendum J during that year because the definition of allowable spending is more inclusive than the one in Amendment 39; and

WHEREAS, the fact that nearly all school districts are already in compliance with the spending requirements of Referendum J means the measure will simply create new administrative burdens for school districts with an unnecessary new mandate; and

WHEREAS, there is nothing in Referendum J that will enhance student achievement or school accountability because it is a school district's ability to achieve high returns on available resources, rather than its ability to reach arbitrary spending levels, that drives student achievement; and

WHEREAS, while Referendum J is intended to be an alternative to Amendment 39, both measures are misleading to the public because voters may assume more funding will support classroom instruction when, in fact, the revenues available to school districts will not change as a result of either measure, but will have to be reallocated from programs that the community, through the elected board of education, has deemed important; and

WHEREAS, Referendum J is contrary to the constitutionally established right of local control of instruction given to locally-elected boards of education to establish and maintain educational programs for their students; and

WHEREAS, the elimination of local control over expenditures will deprive the Board of Education of important decision-making authority and interfere with the Board's ability to develop its own priorities for expenditure of revenues based on local needs and circumstances.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education of the Jefferson County School District officially declares its opposition to Referendum J because, like Amendment 39, it imposes a "one size fits all" solution on the state and eliminates the flexibility of the local Board of Education to make decisions about appropriate allocation of school district funds based on the needs of this community; and

BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of Jefferson County hereby urges registered voters to sustain local control by voting against Referendum J because decisions about classroom funding should be made through the local budget process, not through an arbitrary formula that has no relationship to the operation of this School District.

Adopted this 5th day of October, 2006.

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By



Jane Barnes, President
Board of Education



Attest:

Scott D. Benefield, Secretary
Board of Education