

**From Mike Johnston.org**

**Big Wins for Kids, Public Safety, and Managing Marijuana:**

After the defeat of Amendment 66, we had dozens of meetings with students, parents, and educators, who told us we needed to find a way to restore funding to Colorado's education system using existing revenues in the most equitable, efficient, and bipartisan way. That sent us back to the drawing board to draft [The Student Success Act](#), which helped make the 2014 legislative session the largest restoration in K-12 funding since I entered the legislature five years ago.

As part of a school funding package that restores more than \$400 million to K-12, we focused on:

- Giving districts local flexibility with targeting needs that range from professional development to technology to teacher retention
- Prioritizing funding for supporting struggling readers, building schools in rural districts who lack the property base to do so on their own, and supporting our English Language Learners to reach proficiency
- Providing funding equity for charter schools by investing in charter capital construction costs
- Creating a first-in-the-nation website where parents and taxpayers can see how every education dollar is spent right down to the school level

On top of that, the Student Success Act passed with overwhelming bipartisan support – 33-2 in the Senate and 51-14 in the House. A huge thanks to my cosponsors, Representatives Millie Hamner and Carole Murray in the House and Senator Jessie Ulibarri in the Senate.

This package will mean an average of almost \$400 per student for every school in Colorado ([click here](#) to see the impact in districts across the state). Here are just a few examples from around my district:

School	# Students	Total New Funding
Maxwell Elementary	532	\$204,820
Cole Elementary	540	\$207,900
Bill Roberts Elementary	821	\$316,085
Bruce Randolph MS/HS	870	\$334,950

\*These estimates are preliminary. The DPS School Board will have to approve final spending.

Public safety was a top priority as I worked to reduce hit and run accidents by passing a bill to [extend the statute of limitations for hit-and-runs](#) from 5 years to 10. After meeting with parents, victims, and prosecutors, I was proud to sponsor "[Jessica's Law](#)," which creates mandatory minimum sentences for felony sex offenses against children and avoids the potential injustice of forcing victims of sexual abuse watch their perpetrator walk out of court with probation. The legislature has tried unsuccessfully for years to pass legislation in both of these areas, and I am proud we were finally able to get them done. Many thanks to Representative Mike Foote and Representative Kathleen Conti for sponsoring these important bills with me.

I also tried to put my new seat on the Judiciary Committee to good use. As Colorado continues its social experiment with legalized marijuana, I fiercely advocated for sensible regulations to keep marijuana out of the hands of kids, a priority for many of the parents I've listened to over the last year. I [strengthened](#)

background checks for marijuana licenses, and I also fought to have clear markings for edible marijuana products.

**In the News:**

*Denver Post Interview:* I was honored to sit down with the incredible editor of *The Denver Post*, Greg Moore, to debrief the 2014 legislative session. Click on the link to hear us discuss school funding, marijuana regulation, and even a failed proposal to make it a felony to have multiple DUIs.

*Channel 4 News - Celebrating Great Schools:* HB14-1385, a bill I sponsored with Rep. Kevin Priola, creates an academic state championship, mirroring our high school athletic system, to honor the schools that show the highest levels of student growth each year. Click on the link to see Channel 4's interviews with students about the new award.

**Other Bills I Worked On:**

As the prime sponsor of 28 bills, it was a busy year. Here are some quick added highlights:

*Marketplace Fairness & Small Business Protection Act—HB 14-1269:* Places brick-and-mortar stores on equal tax footing with online vendors.

*Funding for Alzheimer's Research—SB14-211:* Provides \$250,000 to the Alzheimer's Disease Center at the University of Colorado, Anschutz Campus.

*Attracting and Retaining Minority Teachers—HB14-1175:* Requires the Department of Education to study the recruitment, preparation, development, and retention of minority teachers.

*Supporting Colorado Non-Profits--HB14-1074:* Allows non-profits to charge reasonable expenses which help them cover capital costs, facilities maintenance and utilities.

*Celebrating Great Schools—HB14-1385:* Creates an academic state championship, mirroring our high school athletic system, to honor the schools that show the highest levels of student growth each year.

*Chop Shops—SB14-176:* Establishes penalties for trading in stolen vehicles or stolen vehicle parts or for operating "chop shops."

*Fair and Open Elections—SB14-161:* Ensures election integrity, clarifies deadlines for voter registration, and expands access for overseas and military voters.