

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
OF
DOUGLAS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT, RE-1
IN OPPOSITION TO SB 13-213

WHEREAS, a Bill was introduced in the Colorado Senate SB 13-213 (SB 213) intended to create a new and improved school finance act, the stated purposes of which include addressing the constitutional mandate for a thorough and uniform system of public education, and addressing the “significant inequities in the tax burden borne by communities throughout the state” as a result of current constitutional and statutory provisions; and,

WHEREAS, SB 213 calls for additional revenues of \$1.05 Billion, conditional upon passage of a statewide ballot measure to increase state revenues for funding public education; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of Education concurs in the view of SB 213 proponents that the current funding system for education in this state has resulted in needless bureaucratic complexity, overly centralized decision-making, arbitrary regulations, as well as marked inequities among school districts, including the Douglas County School District, which remains the lowest-funded school district in the Denver metro area, and among the lowest in the state; and,

WHEREAS, despite the fact that the Board of Education agrees with the premise of reforming the antiquated School Finance Act regime and the financial inequities it produces, SB 213 fails adequately to resolve those inequities, and actually worsens them; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of Education favors a funding system in which appropriate dollars follow individual students based on their needs (*i.e.*, special education, free and reduced lunch, English Language Learners). SB 213, however, does not do this. Instead, it uses a complex allocation formula to fund at-risk students in some, favored districts more than at-risk students in disfavored districts, and in the case of at-risk students who receive their education on-line, it provides them with no additional resources at all. Rather than having funding truly and completely follow the at-risk student, regardless of the district in which that student is resident and regardless of the school he or she attends, SB213 follows the politics. It rewards some districts more than others on arbitrary and capricious grounds designed to achieve a desired and pre-determined result; and,

WHEREAS, while the Board of Education recognizes that there are additional costs associated with educating students with unique needs, the weighting of at-risk student funding in SB 213 makes no effort to base the weighting formula on any serious research, study, analysis or empirical data concerning the actual incremental increased costs of educating at-risk, gifted, English Language Learners, or special education students.

Indeed, SB 213 reflects no research, study, analysis or empirical data concerning even what “baseline” funding is needed to educate Colorado students in the general population; and,

WHEREAS, SB 213 provides \$100 Million in additional funds to an Education Innovation Grant Fund with no identified plan for spending those funds and for which many districts only qualify on a limited basis because they are not in an accreditation category of “Improvement,” “Priority Improvement,” or “Turnaround,” regardless of their relative per-pupil funding or the quality of the innovation ideas they may have, and creates another \$5 Million bureaucracy needed to administer this program; and,

WHEREAS, while SB 213, provides a “floor” funding level for all school districts, it does far too little to narrow the broad funding gaps and discrepancies among school districts or to revise small district and cost of living factors. Instead, the Bill merely *further redistributes* tax revenue among districts without regard to the actual costs of educating students in any district; and,

WHEREAS, SB 213 purports to provide funding to districts for full-day Kindergarten and Early Childhood Education, but SB 213 does so without any attention to the actual capital and operating costs of providing such services and at the expense of adequate funding for the K-12 students the state and the districts are already constitutionally obligated to serve; and,

WHEREAS, SB 213 provides for a “Return on Investment” analysis, it does not require or describe a plan for spending the additional hundreds of millions of dollars in at-risk and innovation funds, does not clearly identify any outcomes expected from the significantly increased funding that will go to a handful of school districts with certain demographic profiles, and does not describe any measure of accountability to those districts for achieving improved outcomes for their students. Without these accountabilities, school districts will merely use their additional funds to provide *more* of what they are currently doing for students, without any assurance that the additional resources will produce improved academic results or that desperately needed innovations will even occur; and,

WHEREAS, SB 213 is contingent on a voter-approved income tax increase of \$1.05 Billion, in the midst of an anemic macroeconomic recovery now underway, the taxpayers of Douglas County would pay an estimated \$90-100 Million in increased income taxes, but receive only an estimated \$45-50 Million for the students of Douglas County, thus aggravating the already inequitable funding Douglas County students receive and thus magnifying the redistributionist qualities of the already untenable approach to financing public education in Colorado.; and,

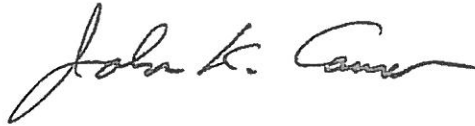
WHEREAS, weighing all of these serious shortcomings in SB 213 and mindful that a \$1.05 Billion tax increase would have a deleterious effect on macroeconomic growth, job creation, business formation, aggregate investment and Colorado’s interstate competitiveness – factors which are the key drivers of financial resources available to the

K-12 system, generally, and to the Douglas County School District, in particular, – it is evident that the impact of SB 213 would be decidedly and unambiguously negative; and,

WHEREAS, SB 213 has passed both houses of the General Assembly and is awaiting action by the Governor.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED that the Board of Education *strongly* opposes SB 13-213 as profoundly contrary to the best interests of the students of Douglas County and profoundly contrary to the best interests of the taxpayers of Douglas County.

APPROVED this 7th day of May, 2013, by a vote of 7-0



President, Board of Education

ATTEST: Norval Schellberger