

STATEMENT OF RESOLUTION

In Opposition to Amendment 39 – The 65 Percent Mandate

WHEREAS...an initiative to amend the Colorado Constitution will appear on the general election ballot this November as Amendment 39 and require each school district in Colorado to spend at least 65 percent of its expenditures on a narrow definition of “in the classroom”; and

WHEREAS...this initiative is being promoted by First Class Education, a Washington, D.C.-based organization chaired and funded by the chief executive of Overstock.com, whose mission is to change the laws in 50 states to “make public schools more effective and efficient by requiring at least 65 percent of every dollar be spent on classroom instruction”; and

WHEREAS...the ballot initiative attempts to change the Colorado Constitution by placing a spending limit permanently in the state constitution, thus tying the hands of school districts and depriving them of important decision-making authority and the ability to develop its own priorities for expenditure of revenues based on local needs and circumstances; and

WHEREAS...this proposal is misleading to the public because it implies more funding will support classroom instruction when, in fact, the revenues available to school districts will not increase as a result of this measure, but will have to be diverted from programs that the community, together with the locally elected board of education, has deemed important; and

WHEREAS...this ballot initiative will do nothing to directly increase student achievement; and

WHEREAS...this “one size fits all” approach, which imposes an arbitrary percentage of classroom expenditures on all the school districts in the state regardless of size or unique circumstances, is not a valid measure for allocation of school district revenues because of all the variables and constraints under which school districts function such as the number of at-risk students, geographic size, student population; and

WHEREAS...this narrow definition of “core mission of classroom instruction” excludes important components of delivering an education, such as school lunches, student support services including nurses and counselors, campus security, instructional support such as teacher training and curriculum development and transportation, and also excludes areas where school districts have no control over escalating costs, such as utilities and fuel.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education for the Cañon City RE-1 School District officially declares its opposition to Amendment 39 because it fails to improve student achievement, diverts existing resources from valuable programs, imposes a “one size fits all” solution on the state, ignores priorities of local communities regarding education, and is being promoted primarily by supporters who are not taxpayers or voters of Colorado; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education for the Cañon City RE-1 School District hereby urges Colorado registered voters to vote against Amendment 39 because decisions about classroom funding should not be made through an arbitrary constitutional formula that has no direct bearing on student achievement.

Dated this 23rd day of October, 2006.