

WELCOME

Teacher Salaries and Turnover  
Equity and Accountability in an Era of Teacher Shortages

December 7, 2018

Colorado Association of School Boards

Douglas Bissonette, Superintendent  
Dee Lindsey, VP Board of Education



Terry Bonewell  
former Elizabeth High School teacher

- “During my ten years working at EHS, I was paid so little that I had to work a second job four days a week and have a roommate in order to pay my living expenses.”
- “I also drove over 250 miles a week to and from work due to the lack of affordable housing in the Elizabeth area.”
- “Regardless of my love for the students, parents, and community of Elizabeth the realities of life forced my decision to leave EHS.”



Terry Bonewell  
former Elizabeth High School teacher

- “I was offered a job in a neighboring community much closer to where I live. Much to my astonishment, I was offered a 50% pay increase... my new employer offered better benefits and continuing education opportunities.”

## FACT

Teachers have the single most important influence on student success

## FACT

Colorado is facing a **WORSENING** teacher shortage

## SITUATION

Colorado has large inequities in teacher salaries

including salaries well below the cost of living:

- Affects supply of teachers in rural CO
  - Contributes to high turnover
- Impacts overall teacher effectiveness

## INEQUITIES

Teachers in districts paying the top 9%  
make 84% more  
than those employed in  
districts paying the bottom 9%

In 2009, this gap was 60%.

How many students and teachers are  
in districts paying the bottom 9%?

75,445 students

4,843 teachers

Taken as a whole...

would rank as the **THIRD** largest  
district in the state

How many districts pay in the  
bottom 9% average salary?

108 districts

Located throughout the state



What is the average salary of  
teachers in districts paying the  
bottom 9%?

\$39,592 per year

# Commonality among bottom 9%?

All are classified by CDE as  
RURAL schools.

Does average salary correlate with  
teacher turnover rates\*?

21% turnover in districts  
paying bottom 9%

\* Percentage is 5-year average to account for fluctuations in smaller districts

How do average salaries compare  
to cost of living ?

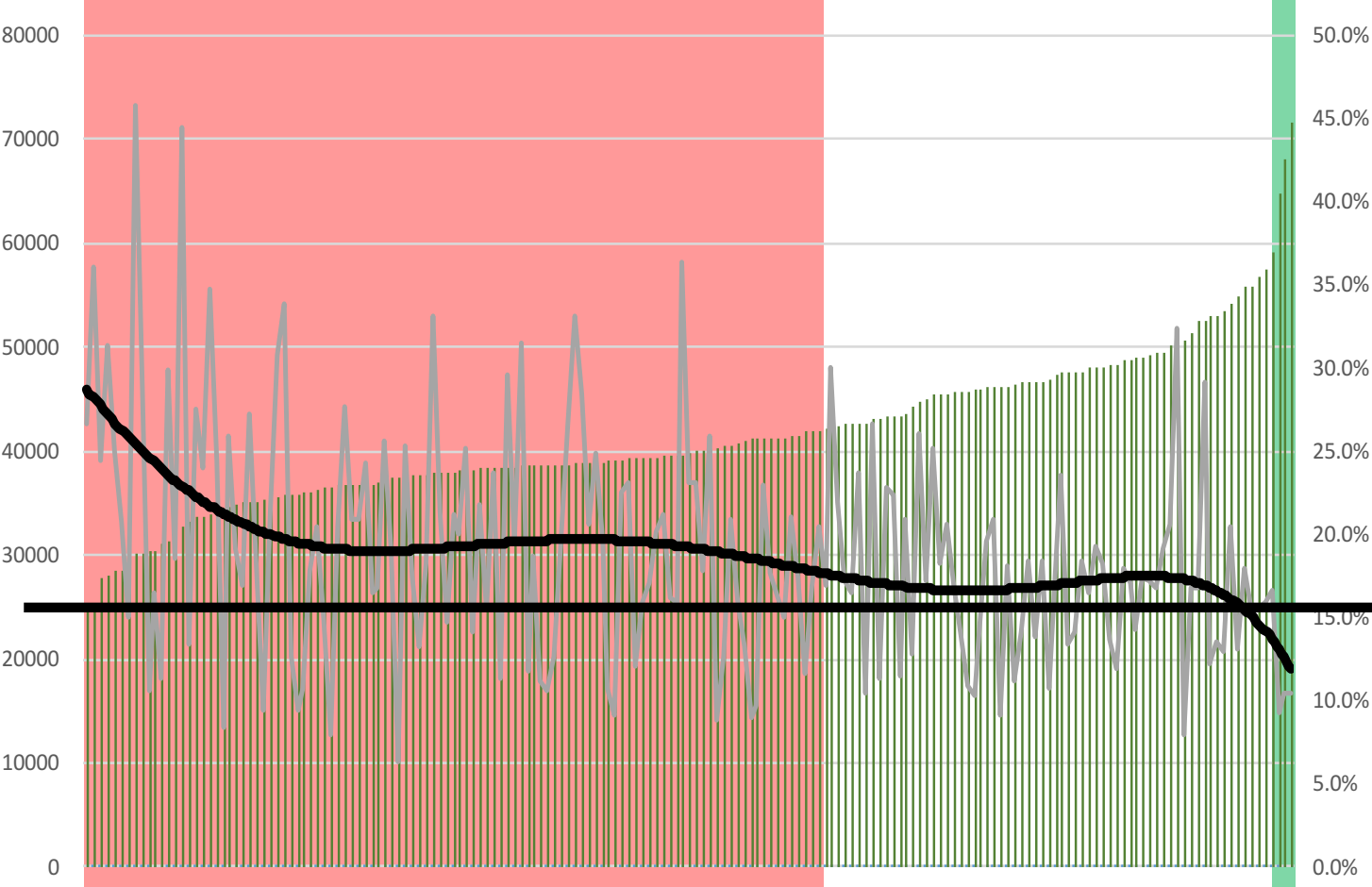
Average teacher salary in districts  
paying the lowest 9% is  
20% below the cost of living\*

\* Based on 2018 Colorado Legislative Council *School District Cost of Living Report*

# Average Teacher Salary by District

vs.

# Turnover Percentage



2015-16 Average Teacher Salary      4-Yr Avg Turnover (F 2012 to F 2015)  
Poly. (4-Yr Avg Turnover (F 2012 to F 2015))

CO Ave  
16.4%

How do starting salaries compare  
to cost of living ?

Starting teacher salary in districts  
paying the lowest 9% is  
27% below the cost of living\*

\* Based on 2018 Colorado Legislative Council *School District Cost of Living Report*

In fact...

Starting teacher salaries in ALL Colorado districts are an average of \$15,445 below the cost of living for their communities\*

\* Based on 2018 Colorado Legislative Council *School District Cost of Living Report*

Are there other inequities?

Boundary Differences:

Ex - Sheridan average salary of \$49,535  
is significantly below two neighbors:

Cherry Creek – \$71,711

Littleton – \$66,399



# Assessed Property Values Vary Greatly

Assessed Valuation:

## **Platte Canyon**

Residential 75% Commercial 8.4%

## **Crowley County**

Residential 13.8% Commercial 54.6%

## **DeBeque**

Residential 1.7% Oil & Gas 81.4%

# Assessed Property Values

The overwhelming majority of districts with average salaries above the state average have some of the highest percentages of local property taxes coming from commercial property.

## Assessed Property Values

### Percent from Commercial Property

ENGLEWOOD 1 51.7%

DENVER COUNTY 1 49.2%

ADAMS COUNTY 14 48.6%

ADAMS-ARAPAHOE 28J (Aurora) 43.6%

CHERRY CREEK 5 42%

MAPLETON 1 41.8%

Since 2010 school districts have raised \$7.4 billion in local taxes for capital expenses,

and

\$635 million for operating expenses through MLO's

\$635 million is 94% of the current negative factor

In the three years from 2010 to 2012, school districts put 61 MLO questions on the ballot.

48% had a staff compensation component

In the last three years, 2016 to 2018, school districts put 64 MLO questions on the ballot

75% had a staff compensation component

From 2010 to 2018...

50 districts passed MLO's with compensation included raising \$415 million (not all the money was for for compensation)

45 districts passed MLO's without compensation specifically stated

81 districts have not passed MLO's since the Negative Factor was instituted.

Is the impact of these two MLO's similar or different?

Weld RE-1 \$2,094 per student (1,938 students)

AND

Boulder \$2,158 per student (31,282 students)

Littleton \$1,792 per student (15,643 students)

AND

Del Norte \$1,171 per student (411 students)

Is the impact of these two MLO's similar or different?

Weld RE-1 \$4 million

AND

Boulder \$67.5 million

Littleton \$28 million

AND

Del Norte \$480 thousand



How much per student does 1 mil generate  
for these districts:

Rocky Ford \$44

Garfield RE2 (Rifle) \$262

Garfield 16 (Parachute) \$1,153

What if Colorado had a system to reduce (not eliminate) teacher pay inequities, decrease turnover and improve the supply of teachers?

As one possibility, how much would it cost to bring the average salary for all districts up to 90% of the state average?

90% of the state average is \$47,455?

Cost (including PERA): **\$69,110,584**

Number of districts impacted: **139**

# Data Sources

Data from these slides is from 2010-2018 extracted from public documents:

Colorado Department of Education  
Colorado School Finance Project  
Colorado Legislative Council

---

Created by the Elizabeth School District  
Dec 2018