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Tuesday, May 19, 1999

(Originally sent to Tim Foster upon request by Governor Owens. He wanted me to put in one 'thinkpiece' the 'out of the box' ideas he had heard from me over many years.)

Tim Foster

“Radical School and college restructuring”

**TEACHER EDUCATION:**

**WHEREAS:**

1. Colorado's 35,000 K12 teachers are ill prepared for teaching using technology, standards and competency based system, and newer more cost effective methods;
2. This is true even if, or perhaps more, for new teachers just graduating from college of education programs;
3. Many school districts feel they must hire teachers from outside of Colorado;
4. Highly qualified professionals from other fields, such as, science, mathematics, business, and corporate training cannot become teachers without putting up with 2 years of college of education courses;
5. Colleges of education control all licensing evaluation, testing, course delivery, and they have an inherent self interest to make all applicants take as many courses, for as long as possible;
6. CDE and SBE have delegated all authority for actually getting qualified people into licensed teaching positions to the colleges of education;
7. College of education faculty are judged within the university by how many articles they publish, and how many hours of class time they make a student take;
8. School districts are increasingly having to pay for in-service training by sending senior and newly hired teachers to obtain necessary training to begin teaching to the few school buildings that seem able to teach literacy to children;
9. Even good teachers cannot get pay raises, rewards for excellence, or other incentives for excellence;

**THEREFORE:**

**1. ABOLISH ALL SCHOOLS OF EDUCATION IN COLORADO AND TAKE THOSE APPROPRIATED FUNDS TO:**

**2. CREATE A STATEWIDE TEACHER EVALUATION AND TRAINING ACADEMY THAT WILL:**

- 2.1 Determine the minimum needed skills and competencies to begin, or continue teaching according to a new 'licensing' framework organized around the principles of:
  - 2.1.1 Elementary teachers knowing all subjects well enough to teach all K-5 grader's in an manner using the individual learners learning style preference, keeping all learners actively learning, and using technology and other tools of efficiency.
  - 2.1.2 Middle school teachers organizing around issues based learning knowing how to integrate among math, science, language arts, etc., as much as any one content area,
  - 2.1.3 High school teachers being abolished and retrained for either middle school or college.
  
- 2.2 Recruit new teachers from professionals in other fields who will be assured that they will be assessed for teaching readiness with a focus on minimizing the amount of new areas they must learn. Instead we would focus on using their existing skills and competencies in subject area knowledge, student age appropriate knowledge, and methods to make students active, achieving learners.
  - 2.2.1 A diagnostic assessment would identify the few areas needing improvement and short, intensive, methods would be available to remediate the deficiency permitting these professionals to begin teaching within weeks of application.
  
- 2.3 Hire teachers of teachers by selecting those 'master' teachers known to peer teachers, administrators, and parents as having excellence in helping students achieve literacy competencies;
  - 2.3.1 Select only those college faculty recognized by working teachers as having value to a working teachers gain in skills and competencies
  - 2.3.2 Having a commitment to focus learning on individualized methods known to work differently for different students and using technology and other tools to promote cost efficiency
  - 2.3.3 Being willing to help restructure learning away from the traditional age based classroom and to learning environments that will make the student a responsible, active learner who achieves subject area competency, leadership skills and responsibility, and community awareness and positive action commitment.
  
- 2.4 Governing the Teacher Evaluation and training Academy through a governing board representing multiple groups including:
  - 2.4.1 Teachers, local board presidents and staff, current or former university faculty, and parents in a proportion that is not dominated by any group.

- 2.5 Offering evaluation and training in every local community using the local school, community college, or four-year college campus—not as control but for rented facilities.
- 2.6 Having the community colleges also teach teachers in skill areas such as computers, assessment tool use, etc.
- 2.7 Abolish the PLACE exam that although well intentioned has become a bureaucratic boondoggle for the testing company and college that administers the exam. Teacher spend a lot of money and time and yet few test takers are identified with deficiencies, and many of those deficiencies appear to be the result of poor testing, not poor teacher knowledge.

## **K-12 Structure and Governance:**

### **WHEREAS:**

- 1. K-12 education is graduating only 2/3 of Colorado's 18 year olds, contributing to the US being the least literate 'first world' country in the world, and
- 2. K-12 education costs more per student in the US than other nations of the world;
- 3. 2/3 of Colorado's young children cannot read and write adequately with little improvement in spite of many efforts to add to the present system; and
- 4. High school has become a system with three kinds of students:
  - 4.1 1/3 have already dropped out and left
  - 4.2 1/3 are working hard to prepare for college
  - 4.3 1/3 are just there for the social, sports, and co-curricular activities; and,
- 5. Seniors in high school are almost all not learning, with many taking only 1 or 2 courses while the state pays full PPOR—since those going to college are judged by their grades and test scores as Juniors, and;
- 6. Most high schools have evolved into a negative social culture with the few athletes and other 'elite' students dominating and emotionally abusing other students; and
- 7. Some school districts have created good programs for seniors whereby they are already taking college credit courses through advanced placement and direct enrollment in site and distance delivered college learning;
- 8. Colorado colleges are spending additional public money to remediate over 1/3 of the students who have graduated high school and begun college, but are found deficient in necessary preparation for college work;
- 9. School building capital facility deterioration is severe and likely to require state funding of K12 capital—forced by court if necessary;
- 10. We need an improved learning program for pre-school, kindergarten, and primary grades with new methods, more personal attention to each learner, and in many cases parental education to assist the child;

### **THEREFORE:**

## **WE MUST ABOLISH THE 11<sup>TH</sup> AND 12<sup>TH</sup> GRADES, OR HIGH SCHOOL AS WE KNOW IT:**

1. Take the funding presently used for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades and shift those funds, within the districts present funding level to:
  - 1.1 add improved instruction for young children and their parents if necessary (parent as first teacher)
  - 1.2 improve buildings, teacher training, new method adoption and technology for cost-effective learning improvement
2. Shift the sports, music and other social focus of high school to community based funding and control (like the other countries of the world) in order to:
  - 2.1 Insure greater numbers of participants in each activity with multi-generational participation in sports, music, arts, etc.
  - 2.2 Use lottery, recreation districts, city and county funding to support these valuable, but not literacy and job based learning activities;
  - 2.3 Insure that teachers are hired for teaching, not sports coaching, ability, and
  - 2.4 Build a more positive culture around these activities and eliminate the negative 'clique' culture of the present high school.
  - 2.5 Create 'positive gang' activities for youth and multi-generationally with parents and other adults.
  - 2.6 Create Community Learning Centers that are jointly funded by the local school taxes, local government, and state higher education with facilities for all those programs and shared usage of community-funded space and facilities.
- 3.

## **THIS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED BY:**

1. High school graduation would occur at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade with literacy and skill achievement now expected by the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. (This is the expectancy and achievement of all other developed nations)
2. Expanding access to community colleges and four-year colleges for 16-year-old high school graduates.
3. Insuring through state examination that all high school graduates (now 16 year olds) actually can demonstrate those high school content standards.

## **POTENTIAL THREATS/OPPORTUNITIES:**

1. Sports are the biggest problem.
  - 1.1 For the few students who would be involved in NCAA sports we limit our thinking in ways no other country does.

- 1.2 Perhaps we should go ahead and make college football a minor league pro franchise that has the ‘naming rights’ of being the college team.
- 1.2.1 Students would or would not be the sole players
- 1.2.2 Many could play full time and earn tuition credit to actually attend college after their sports career when they can actually focus on learning

### **OTHER RELEATED CHANGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURE:**

1. Have the community colleges expand their sites if necessary so they are the secondary statewide system providing 11-14<sup>th</sup> grade education on existing college campuses, as well as the area high schools they would be transferred to the community colleges and state control/expense.
2. Some high schools might be retained to become additional middle schools for the new P-10 grade local district
3. Former high schools that become new community college centers would be better able to also offer adult job training, literacy, and other programs.
4. Regional economic development could be centered on better adult use of these facilities.

### **OTHER CHANGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION NOT DIRECTLY TIED TO THE HIGH SCHOOL SHIFT:**

#### **5. Create regional governance of higher education in a more organized structure.**

##### 5.1 Southwest:

- 5.1.1 Fort Lewis College would accept the 2-year and new high school mission and operate learning centers in Cortez, Durango, and other communities in the southwest.

##### 5.2 south-central

- 5.2.1 Adams State College would operate the Alamosa community college site, and area 10-14 learning centers that were high schools

##### 5.3 Southeast

- 5.3.1 Lamar and Otero Community College would become one regional learning center operating the 10-14<sup>th</sup> learning centers in that vast geographic, but sparsely populated area.

##### 5.4 Northeast

- 5.4.1 Northeastern Community College and Morgan Community College would be combined to operate with the area regional 10-14 learning centers.

##### 5.5 North Central

- 5.5.1 Front Range Community College-

## 5.6 Mountain Central

- 5.6.1 Western State College would operate area new 10-14 learning centers and expand to have a community college focus prior to its upper division and graduate activity.

## 5.7 Western Slope

- 5.7.1 Mesa State College would become the learning center operator for area 10-14 schools, as well as expanding its mission so it offered graduate programs as a part of CU or CSU, but with more autonomy than the existing regional campuses of those governing boards.

## **UNIVERSITY STRUCTURAL REORGANIZATION:**

### **WHEREAS:**

1. Colorado has too many separate governing boards
2. CSU and CU are focused on graduate mission and programs
3. Undergraduates at CSU and CU are often exploited to fund graduate programs
4. A regional structure for the college upper division and graduate programs needs to be established.
5. The present campuses of the CSU system do not work well, as judged by graduation rate, quality, or community satisfaction.
- 6.

### **THEREFORE:**

1. Create UNC as a branch of CU with increased attention to academic quality and the elimination of its school of education—replaced by the statewide teacher training academy
2. Make Leave school of mines as is
3. Leave CU Boulder and Cu Springs but with the elimination of the schools of education
4. Leave CSU with only the Fort Collins Campus, and its extension/ experiment stations and eliminate its school of education
5. Move USC to be a CU Campus, with increased attention to academic quality and the elimination of its school of education—replaced by the statewide teacher training academy
6. CU would operate the upper division and graduate programs of Western State College.
7. CU-Denver would take over Metropolitan State College and operate the Auraria campus.
8. CCD-Auraria would leave the campus and operate learning centers of smaller size in multiple neighborhood centers, expending upon the success of its existing tech centers and Lowry

### **MORE THINKING OUT LOUD:**

## **1. FAIRNESS OF COLORADO TAXPAYER SUBSIDY:**

- 1.1 We need to come up with a better way to manage graduate programs with a focus on separating out the areas to be subsidized by Colorado taxpayers, and the areas that need to be funded as research or full tuition national programs. For instance; CU-Boulder has some Ph.D. programs that cost over \$ 50,000 a year for each student produced and that student may not be a Colorado resident prior to becoming a CU student. Why should the Colorado taxpayer subsidize this persons learning?
- 1.2 Similar examples probably exist on every graduate school campus.
- 1.3 Should each Colorado taxpayer receive an education subsidy for him/her self and children based on so many dollars per month that they are residents and that money is made available to them as a higher education voucher for purchasing higher education credits and degrees?

## **2. UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY AND EFFECIEINCY:**

- 2.1 Given the inherent inefficiency of industrial age structure of state purchasing, personnel rules, classified staff organization, pay salary structure, rewards for mediocrity, etc., should we abolish all state colleges and universities and have them become independent non profit corporations (501 C3's).
  - 2.1.1 They could then walk away from tenure, classified staff, mandated state salary increases, state purchasing restrictions, etc.
  - 2.1.2 They would operate more like the Harvard's of the world.
  - 2.1.3 Students would be given a voucher for higher education to be spent at whichever college they would like, including the old private universities like DU and Regis, as well as the newly independent CU, Mines, CSU, UNC, etc.?
    - 2.1.3.1 That voucher could be differentiated by amount by program recognizing both the different costs of different programs, the market value of degrees, and the state's need for qualified people in certain areas.

## **3. K-12 Vouchers:**

- 3.1 Although the Colorado voters have rejected vouchers we should move to test their effectiveness by:
  - 3.1.1 Start with a voucher for drop-outs, or what I have called "Learning Certificates"
  - 3.1.2 Any family whose student has dropped out, been expelled, or is at least one grade level below expectation could receive a voucher for the full local, state, and federal dollars pertinent to that local district and use those funds at any private or church school.
    - 3.1.2.1 This would give public education the 'right of first opportunity', but not a life long monopoly with its inherent abusive structure.
    - 3.1.2.2 Unlike vouchers put on the ballot this would be for the full amount of funding which in Denver is as much as \$ 7,000 per student, not just the state \$ 2,500.
    - 3.1.2.3 It would not take money away from public education since the student had already left and the PPOR with the student
    - 3.1.2.4 It would give the taxpayer that is expecting a trained productive adult for their education investment a better and more complete return on their investment.

#### **4. MAKE K-12 ACCOUNTABLE:**

- 4.1 Have each college admittee, and new job applicant, take a state designed, content standards based exam though would. /could be the same as the graduation exam, and determine who failed to meet those skill competency demonstrations.
- 4.2 If a recent (within 2 year) high school graduate failed, and needed college or employer remediation the college, or employer, could bill the school district for the cost of remediation.