

What happened to the marijuana money?



(Visit website for enlarged graphics)

As we look at the needs of our school district and all of the items that may end up on our November ballots, the same question comes up again and again – What happened to all the marijuana money?

The perception that marijuana dollars are a part of the State K-12 funding allocation distributed to all districts is not the current practice. As outlined here, the dollars are distributed through the BEST program. This is a good program but can only assist given the amounts that fund the program and following applicant reviews.

Although we can apply for the BEST funding, some of which comes from marijuana tax revenue, in all likelihood there would not be dollars in amounts that could truly help us with our overall needs, such as constructing a new school facility. This does not mean that we may never apply for an award, only that it isn't currently an attractive source given the many needs statewide, the preferences to assist districts having more dire needs with a lesser ability to raise capital monies, and the actual dollars that we could receive in comparison to our significant needs.



Support Jeffco Kids
 5683 Fig Way
 Arvada, CO 80002
www.supportjeffcokids.org



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About SJK:

In the beginning, there was a Republican mom (Shawna Fritzler) and a Democratic mom (Jonna Levine), who had both been involved in the Jeffco School District including mill/bond campaigns, actively participating on the district's accountability committee and other district level committees, the PTA, and much more. We came together to form a Bi-Partisan partnership for a Non-Partisan Non-Profit to Support Jeffco Kids. Our mission is a simple one:

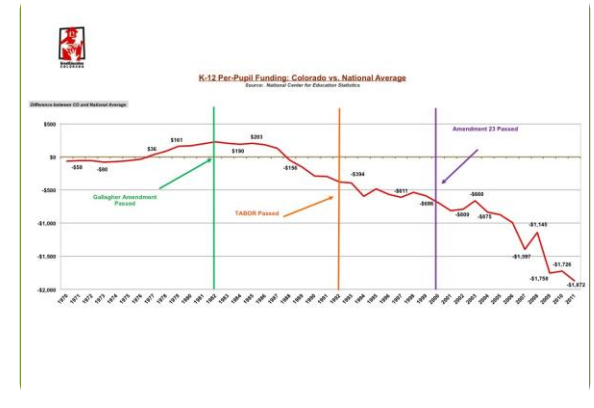
Our mission is to educate the Jeffco Community on the importance of supporting public education for ALL kids in Jeffco, inform the community on current events, and to support a school board that understands the importance of educating all 86,000 students in Jeffco.

There are still more than 86,000 kids waiting on you. They get one chance at each grade for a bright future. So here are a few facts that we hope you'll consider:

- Having a good teacher can make all the difference in a classroom. In Jeffco, we must retain and attract the best teachers. Surrounding districts are paying nineteen percent more than Jeffco. We don't have the funding to recognize our experienced staff who sacrificed by taking a 3% pay cut during past budget cuts and are being paid below average salaries.
- Maintaining a safe environment where students can learn without worrying about being harmed. (The children in our schools should not have to worry about being harmed while at school. The district is committed to protecting their safety and security, and a review of the facilities has identified high priority safety and security needs at our schools that could be funded by a ballot measure.)
- We must provide students with the instruction and skills necessary for success in college and the workplace.
- This includes promoting the teaching of skills and technology necessary to prepare students to compete for 21st century jobs.

- Providing hands-on learning opportunities in science, technology, engineering and math, sometimes called STEM.
- Continuing the district's commitment to high academic standards and accountability.
- The average school building in Jefferson County is 45 years old. Many of the heating and cooling systems, boilers, and plumbing are dated and inefficient.
- In the last five years, Jeffco Public Schools has received 481 million dollars LESS from the state of Colorado than was supposed to be budgeted. And there are more budget cuts on the way. We need to work together to support our kids and teachers, and provide them with safe, well maintained classrooms and school buildings. We can do it but it does mean we will have tough decisions ahead of us.
- Looking forward, we must think about expanding our ability for schools being able to provide students with hands-on, real world experience – whether that is health care training in a vocational program, creating a middle school science experiment that was rocketed into space, or learning computer coding in elementary school. Students need these kinds of skills to go on to college and the jobs of the future.
- Every single school in the district has some repair need, with many of them facing critical ones like leaky roofs, faulty wiring, outdated fire alarms, and other basic needs. Funding approved by voters in 2012 fixed the most urgent needs on time and within budget, but state cuts has caused a growing repair backlog.

- We need to make sure that our public schools continue to be some of the best in the metro area. The value of our homes is increased by the good reputation of our schools.



It's a statewide issue!

Which is more important — supporting my local mill election or working on the state funding issue?

Both. The systemic defunding of schools over the past two decades has eroded both local and state support. Ultimately, our students won't get the quality education and opportunities they need to succeed until we fix Colorado's broken funding system at the state level. But until then, every community (and school) has to do what it can to protect students from the impact of deeper cuts.

