



What happened to all that marijuana money?

In November of 2012, when Colorado voters approved Amendment 64 (the legalized sale of marijuana for recreational use and the subsequent 15% excise tax) they thought they were solving the state's problem of funding our public schools. Not so.

While there are funds from the "Marijuana Tax" that go toward funding schools, the devil is in the details. The funds directed to schools are limited to the first \$40 million and are directed into a "state fund used for constructing public schools". No funds for operating expenses, construction only. But there's more.

Let's begin with a brief outline:

Amendment 64 – was approved by voters in November, 2012

From the Colorado General Assembly website:

"Amendment 64 requires the legislature to enact the state excise tax; however, the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR) requires a separate statewide vote to approve the tax and any future tax increases. Under the measure, the excise tax is limited to tax and any future tax increases. Under the measure, the excise tax is limited to 15 percent until January 1, 2017, when the legislature may set it at any rate. Each year, the first \$40 million in revenue raised by the excise tax will be credited to a state fund used for constructing public schools. Medical marijuana is not subject to the state excise tax required by the measure, or to any existing state excise tax.

- The statewide vote to approve the tax (referred to in Am. 64) was not passed by voters until 2013 – Proposition AA.
- The 15% excise tax on Marijuana is only partially directed to schools – the first \$40 Million.
- Funds exceeding that amount are directed to support the regulation of the sale of marijuana as well as educational programs regarding the use of marijuana, etc.

This \$40 Million are designated for the "state fund used for constructing public schools", the BEST program: Building Excellent Schools Today.

The \$40 Million is intended for construction ONLY, is a matching grant, and provides no funding for operating expenses.

So then, why can't our school district use some of the \$40 Million for our repairs and new buildings?

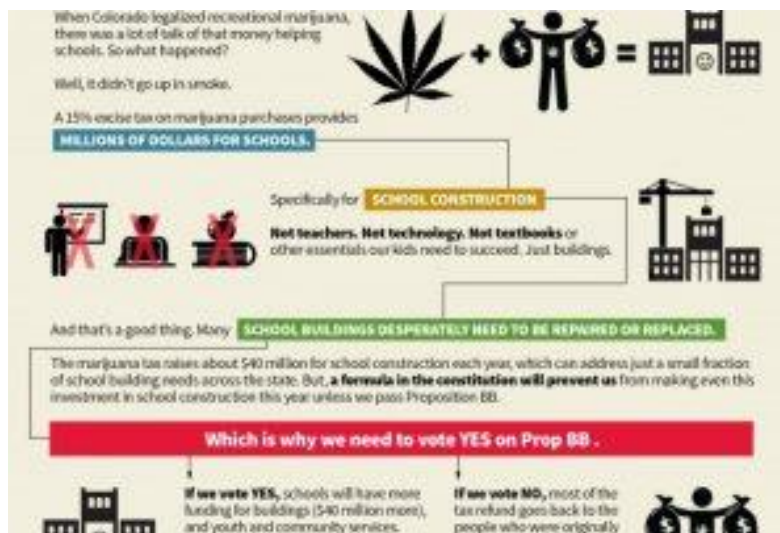
The answer lies in a couple of key factors:

\$40 million funding for a statewide program does not go very far when there are 178 school districts in the state; especially if you look at the cost of building one school, which depending on the size, location, and various other considerations of construction, can range anywhere from \$10 or \$15 Million for some extremely small elementary schools to \$45 Million plus for a high school.

The BEST program has other limitations and was intended for some specific uses.

BEST, Building Excellent Schools Today, is a fund that was established in 2008. It is grant based and requires matching funds. The key focus of BEST (in 2008) was directed toward those poorer, small, and rural school districts that simply do not have the tax-base of the city and suburban school districts to support a bond large enough to do major construction. Most schools in the metro area run anywhere from \$10, \$15, and \$25 million-plus; a small district like Creede, Haxtun, Kim and many others can't come close to that.

Read more at our website - <http://www.supportjeffcokids.org/marijuanamystery/>



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