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**Education Policy Center Newsletter**

**From The Independence Institute**

**July 7, 2015**

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**In this issue**

-- Center Shares Dougco Choice Ruling’s Silver Lining

-- Izard Provides Inspiring Arrupe Jesuit Profile

-- Colorado Lags Growing National Choice Momentum

-- Jeffco, Thompson Boards Press Forward in Reform Battles

-- Eddie Takes On Charter, Other Reform Issues

**Center Shares Dougco Choice Ruling’s Silver Lining**

After a four-year saga in the Colorado courts, last week’s long-awaited Supreme Court ruling on the [Douglas County Choice Scholarship Program](http://education.i2i.org/douglas-county-vouchers/) came as a disappointment to choice supporters. We issued [our reaction](http://education.i2i.org/2015/06/colorado-supremes-reject-dougco-choice-program/) to the decision overturning the Court of Appeals’ judgment and the program within an hour of the announcement, and earned a quote in [Chalkbeat Colorado’s breaking story](http://co.chalkbeat.org/2015/06/29/douglas-county-voucher-program-unconstitutional-supreme-court-rules/#.VZVvZ_lVhBd).

It was heartening to see both the [*Denver Post*](http://www.denverpost.com/editorials/ci_28402501/regrettable-ruling-dougco-school-voucher-program) and [*Wall Street Journal*](http://www.wsj.com/articles/religious-bigotry-in-colorado-1435873668) editorialize against the ruling, and urge the Dougco school board to appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. In a [new Freedom Minute video](https://youtu.be/iGx7j8VaifM), our own Ben DeGrow also called out the ugly anti-Catholic Blaine Amendments as a ripe target for the nation’s highest court to reconsider and reject once and for all. In the meantime, there seems to be an opening for Dougco and other Colorado school boards to start up narrower versions of local choice involving non-religious private schools.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Dougco Decision Brings Good News and Bad](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/06/dougco-decision-brings-good-news-and-bad/)

[Denver Post Hits Back-to-Back Homers for Students, Parents](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/07/denver-post-editors-hit-back-to-back-homers-for-students-parents/)

**Izard Provides Inspiring Arrupe Jesuit Profile**

Denver’s Arrupe Jesuit High School serves as a real beacon of hope and opportunity for kids in challenging situations. We are proud to share with you the new release of education policy analyst Ross Izard’s [“Building Hope,”](http://education.i2i.org/2015/06/building-hope-a-profile-of-arrupe-jesuit-high-school/) which profiles the private high school serving low-income, minority students with a rigorous academic program, signature Corporate Work Study Program, and a deep-rooted culture of justice, giving, and compassion.

Trust us; this is far from your typical wonky policy paper. Read Ross’s inspiring and heartwarming piece to learn more about the human stories underlying Arrupe Jesuit’s success.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[New Arrupe Jesuit Profile Highlights the Power of Educational Freedom](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/07/new-arrupe-jesuit-profile-highlights-the-power-of-educational-freedom/)

**Colorado Lags Growing National Choice Momentum**

It’s been another strong year for educational choice, at least nationally. Our young blogger “Eddie” shared with you news of [scholarship tax credit breakthroughs in two western states](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/05/two-new-scholarship-tax-credit-states-help-bolster-choice-equation/), a pair of [legal victories in Louisiana and Florida](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/05/tuesday-twofer-more-legal-victories-for-school-choice/), and Nevada’s [potentially game-changing adoption of Education Savings Accounts](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/06/nevada-joins-ranks-of-esa-states-adds-momentum-to-educational-choice/).

Ross pulled the stories together in a *Loveland Reporter-Herald* op-ed that [explains how Colorado is falling behind](http://www.reporterherald.com/opinion/guest-columns/ci_28333807/education-choice-still-has-ways-go-colorado) in providing needed opportunities. He and Ben also carried forth the message as guests on the [June 19 episode of *Devil’s Advocate*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KP8xvUA2sAc) with host Jon Caldara. Later, as *Devil’s Advocate* guest host, Ben [covered the topic in greater depth](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykIvTC6WGCE) with guest Brittany Corona of the Friedman Foundation.

**Jeffco, Thompson Boards Press Forward in Reform Battles**

In recent weeks, local reform struggles in key districts have escalated. Our active involvement in promoting student-centered policy in Jeffco has been bolstered by Complete Colorado breaking stories about [the teachers union’s strike memo](http://completecolorado.com/pagetwo/2015/05/20/jcea-sends-out-strike-faqs-flier/) and the [potentially staggering costs of a recall election](http://completecolorado.com/pagetwo/2015/07/02/jeffco-recall-organizers-face-short-time-to-collect-signatures-or-big-expenses-to-district/) against conservative school board members.

On a positive note, [we celebrated](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/06/thompson-and-jeffco-stand-up-for-fair-charter-funding/) the Jeffco board majority’s recent [approval of full funding equalization](http://completecolorado.com/pagetwo/2015/06/19/jeffco-thompson-schools-equalize-funding-for-charters/) for charter public schools, as well as the Thompson board majority’s step toward fairer funding for its charter students. *Devil’s Advocate* guests Nora Flood, Colorado League of Charter Schools president, and Sherrie Peif, Complete Colorado education reporter, [explained the development](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mxm2curP9QM) in a special episode guest-hosted by Ben.

Thompson has received the most attention for its [difficult showdown with the union](http://completecolorado.com/pagetwo/2015/05/21/thompson-school-district-votes-down-contract-for-second-time-in-two-weeks/) that resulted in a 4-3 vote to reject the collective bargaining agreement—causing some [reform opponents to go haywire](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/05/thompson-board-stands-firm-on-bad-contract-union-backers-go-haywire/). The agreement, set to expire June 30, remains in effect as the union takes its case to the courts to decide. Meanwhile, the Colorado Education Association has [filed large public information requests](http://completecolorado.com/pagetwo/2015/06/24/colorado-education-association-looking-into-thompson-attorneys-records/) on the Thompson school board attorney. And the drama continues.

More from Ed Is Watching:

[Jeffco School Board Recall Underway: What’s Really Going On?](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/06/jeffco-school-board-recall-underway-whats-really-going-on/)

[Thompson Gears Up for the Final Battle](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/05/thompson-gears-up-for-the-final-battle/)

[Fact Checking the Fact Checkers: Counting Local Teachers Unions in Colorado](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/06/fact-checking-the-fact-checkers-counting-local-teachers-unions-in-colorado/)

**Eddie Takes On Charter, Other Reform Issues**

Despite all the big activities going on, young Eddie still found time to post his thoughts on the following other important and relevant K-12 education topics:

[Performance-Based Learning, Strategic Compensation Keep My Eyes on Mesa 51](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/06/performance-based-learning-strategic-compensation-keep-my-eyes-on-mesa-51/)

[Exodus or Exaggeration: A Look at Colorado’s Teacher Turnover Rates](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/06/exodus-or-exaggeration-a-look-at-colorados-teacher-turnover-rates/)

[Stop Dumping Paperwork on Charter Applicants and Focus on Success](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/05/stop-dumping-paperwork-on-charter-applicants-and-focus-on-success/)

[Big Bucks or Big Misconception: Report Sheds Light on Philanthropy in Charter Sector](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/06/big-bucks-or-big-misconception-report-sheds-light-on-philanthropy-in-charter-sector/)

[State Board Resignation Raises Eyebrows](http://www.ediswatching.org/2015/06/state-board-resignation-raises-eyebrows/)

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