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Legislative Update: Nov. 2, 2016



Hickenlooper's budget cuts K-12 by adding \$46 million to negative factor

Gov. John Hickenlooper is predicting another tough year for the state's budget. For school finance, the governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting (OSPB) proposes an increase in the negative factor of approximately \$46 million for Colorado K-12 education in 2017-18. The negative factor would rise from \$831 million to \$876 million under the governor's proposed budget.

Amendment 23 in the Colorado Constitution mandates that K-12 education funding increase every year by the rate of inflation, and the governor's budget meets that requirement. However, funding is then taken away by reducing funding for "factors" that account for variations in school districts, including size of a district, cost of living and number of at-risk students. Even when Colorado school districts do not receive their full factor funding, they are nonetheless required to provide full student services.

Under the governor's proposed budget, per pupil funding would increase to \$7,606 in 2017-18, an increase of \$182 per student. An additional \$52 of per pupil funding would be required to hold the negative factor flat at \$831 million. To fully pay the current negative factor would require \$1,007 in additional per pupil funding.

Henry Sobanet, director of the OSPB, said his office worked very hard to craft a budget that did not require state funds to be returned for the current 2016-17 budget year – an action to account for lower revenue that is known as a rescission. That would have required school districts to repay state funds that may have already been allocated.

Colorado law requires the governor to submit a budget proposal to the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) on November 1st of each year. While the governor's budget offers some clues to what the budget might look like, the JBC will craft the final budget that is sent to the General Assembly for consideration. The membership of the JBC in 2017 won't be known until after the 2016 election.

The next clue to what the 2017-18 budget might look like will come with the December economic forecast. The December forecast is the final forecast before the General Assembly convenes in January to begin the work of crafting the Long Bill, which outlines

state funding. One additional economic forecast, in March, will be reviewed before final passage of a state budget, which usually happens in the late spring.

[View the governor's proposed budget](#)

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