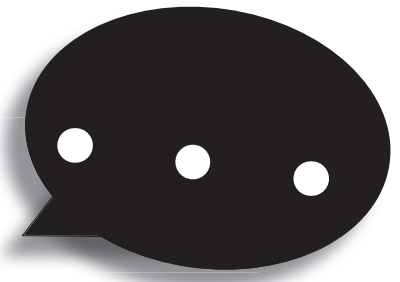


# Opinion



## We are **worth** more! Vote **YES** on Amendment 73

This was originally published last October; however, with Amendment 73 on the ballot this year, we thought it might be a good reminder of education funding in Brighton.

I believe that I am worth more than \$43. It is ridiculous that it's 2018 and the per pupil funding is still averaging around \$43 in School District 27j. Our schools are suffering due to underfunding and we cannot get that to change. 27j school resources are terribly outdated, and up until this year, I have been learning information from a textbook that has old material in it. So why are our schools so poor? Because of our community's decision to not help fund our schools that are in desperate need. So how do we change that? Last year we tried passing the bill 3D that would have approved a mil levy for 27j. That didn't pass. Because it didn't pass, we went a four-day school week this year.

This year there is another option that would change the way education is funded across the state.

Amendment 73 would increase education funding across the board, and Brighton would receive roughly an additional \$29.5 million dollars a year for our schools. That would be an additional \$1,615 per pupil, per year and funding would go to all public schools, including charter schools.

The Mill Levy would have been a local tax that would help finance school district 27j, but this Amendment would

mean ongoing funding from the state, which at this point, is a necessity for our completely outdated school district and the education funding crisis across Colorado. Brighton last passed a mil levy in 2000. That means Brighton has gone 18 years without an increase in education funding. Amendment 73 would fix that. I am not even eighteen years old, and there has not been an increase in education funding since BEFORE I was born.

The state has decided that it is time to do something about that. And your vote is needed to make it happen.

Not only is school district 27j funded 15th out of the 15 Denver Metro Area schools, but Colorado as a whole is funded 40th out of the 50 states in per pupil funding. According to Dr. Fiedler, 27j Superintendent, the passing of Amendment 73 would move Colorado "near, but not quite at, the national average on per pupil funding."

Part of the reason why past mil levies did not pass was because voters were concerned about an increase to their taxes. However, under Amendment 73, 92 percent of Coloradans would pay no new tax increase. It would only increase taxes on individuals who make more than \$150,000 per year, and it actually reduces property tax rates (compared to current levels).

Our district has some of the most outstanding staff; however, they are getting paid the least. We are losing fantastic teachers to bigger and better districts because they aren't getting paid enough here. We went to a four-day week in order to retain teachers and save money to purchase new text books and Chromebooks for all secondary students.

This hasn't changed the fact that there are numerous teachers I know who sometimes pay for certain resources for their students out of pocket. We have some great teachers in 27j that put in as much work and dedication as teachers in any other district.

"We want to be able to retain and attract quality educators here," said Superintendent Dr. Fiedler. "As beautiful as the new buildings are due to the renovations, they don't really become a school until we put the right people in

**How would this benefit 27J?**

- Additional \$1,615 per pupil, per year
- \$29.5 million in additional ongoing revenue
- Funding would go to all public schools, including charters

them to educate kids, keep them there, and provide them with the tools to be successful."

These great teachers in our district have the right to make as much as all of the other teachers in the state. Their dedication to kids in our district is admirable, and it breaks my heart to see these amazing teachers leave to other districts that are paying more.

We, as state, deserve better. Every student in 27j deserves more. If Amendment 73 passes, it would make a drastic change in our schools. Every student deserves the chance for a great education. In Brighton we do really well with what we have, but imagine what we could accomplish if we had the proper resources. We all know what a great state Colorado is, but our education funding doesn't show that. We need to put our education funding as a priority in the state. Amendment 73 does that.

I am worth more than \$43.

We all are.

Tell everyone we are worth more, and tell them to Vote Yes for Amendment 73.

Story By: Jenna Hays

Infographics are courtesy of Brighton 27J information on Amendment 73.

**How is Amendment 73 funded?**

- 92% of Coloradans would pay no new tax increase
- Income tax on filers making \$150,000+ annually
- Tax on corporations
- Creates a reduction in property tax rates
- Other locally-approved taxes not affected



## Take Care of Yourself First



Being a high school student can feel demanding and cause an excess amount of stress; however, everyone should find time to wind down, relieve stress, and decompress from a long day or week. Some people may find comfort in socializing and going out with friends, while others need a quieter and slow space to chill. Both activities are equally important and valid as forms of self-care and taking care of one's mental health. Just taking the time to focus on your own individual needs is a huge part of mental, social, and physical health that everyone should prioritize within their daily lives. Obviously, adding a whole new routine of self-care into one's already busy day may be too extreme and drastic of a change to implement for some people, but making small changes or just having a routine for when you need it can be extremely beneficial.

Some easy ways to find relaxation on a busy schedule is to incorporate it with something you already have to do. For example, you already have to take time for a shower, so while you're in the shower, just take a few moments to feel the water on your skin, take a few deep breaths, and enjoy the few moments of solitude and calm that you have. Spend those few minutes not thinking about what you have to do when you get out and instead appreciating the time you have off. Same with when you're brushing your teeth, getting breakfast, or really any other daily task. Be mindful of the present and focus on one thing at a time instead of being overwhelmed by everything you have to do and let the other things on the to-do list wait. Focusing your attention on each task individually will help to feel less overwhelmed and tasks will be completed without feeling rushed or hurried.

If you do have the time to spare, it is also really nice to just do things

that you want to do, simply because you want to. Is there a movie you've been dying to see? A food you've been craving? Someone you've wanted to get to know better? If there is some free time in your schedule, it can be a nice reset button and a good chance for your soul to get out and explore to just do something because you want to. Treat yourself to something. Don't worry if you have to do it alone. Don't worry about what others will think. Just let yourself enjoy something that you've wanted to. But on the other hand, learn to say no. If there is something that all of your friends are doing and you're just not feeling it, then say no. Going outside of your comfort zone and experiencing new things has its own time and place. As wonderful as it is to grow, it's not a necessity to always be down for everything. Learning how to say no in a society that is always telling you to say yes, can be difficult, but once you get used to it, it can be so liberating because you no longer have to deal with the pressure of following what everyone else is doing. It teaches you to be the master of your time and allows the freedom and confidence to choose how you spend your time.

Everyone needs to be self-centered and selfish in how you spend your time (to an extent). It is your time, and it's precious. Don't waste it doing something you don't want to do. However, this is NOT an excuse to drop all of your responsibilities and homework just because you don't want to. Life is a balance, a balance of what you have to do and what you want to do. Your own mental health is important and should be made a priority.

Story By: Ayaka Hayashi