

An Introduction to the Race to the Top In Colorado

Overview

- What is the Race to the Top (R2T)?
- Colorado Approach to R2T?
- Colorado's education system
- Other things to take into consideration
- Questions?

What is R2T?

- R2T is a competition between states for \$4 billion in stimulus funds
 - Colorado could get \$150-\$400 million
 - Application from Governor due in December
- Focus on 4 reform areas:
 - Data systems to support instruction
 - Standards and assessments
 - Great teachers and leaders
 - Turning around struggling schools
- Largest of several federal competitive grants to support innovation and reform

Priorities for the R2T Competition

- Absolute priorities--our plan MUST address:
 - Comprehensive approach to the four reform areas
- Competitive preference --it will help us in the competition to address:
 - Emphasis on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)
- Invited priority—we can address in our plan:
 - Expanding longitudinal data systems
 - P-20 coordination and vertical alignment
 - School level conditions for reform and innovation

What is Colorado's Process

- Lt Governor O'Brien is leading effort with Commissioner Jones and Executive Director Skaggs
- Developed a 4 committee process
 - One for each reform area
 - Responsible for proposing a slate of reforms for inclusion in the Colorado plan at November 13 meeting
 - Intended to build support for reforms and investments from R2T funding
- Governor Ritter will decide what to include in Colorado's plan

Colorado's Early Childhood Education System

- Serves children from birth through about age 5
- Mix of service providers
 - Families
 - Licensed day care 117,000 slots (23% of the population)
 - Public Schools
- Programs include:
 - Colorado Child Care Assistance Program (27,000 ECE served in 2007)
 - Head start (9,700 served 2006)
 - Colorado Pre-School Program (20,200 slots)

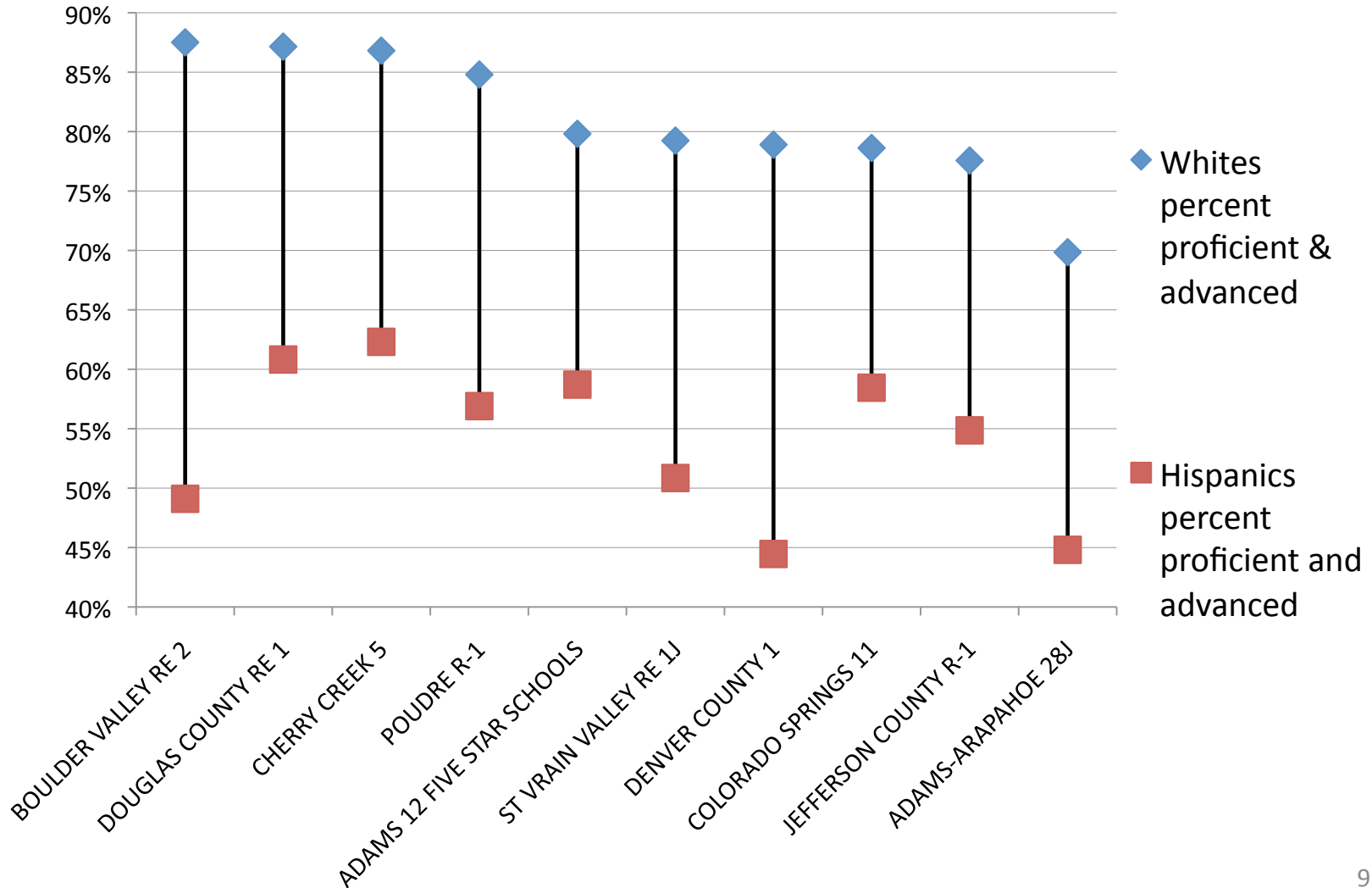
Colorado's K-12 Education System

- 820,000 students, 1,800 schools in 178 districts
- Districts range in size from 54 to 85,000 students
- Half of students in largest 10 districts
- Rapidly growing Hispanic and English language learner populations
- Relatively low funding compared to other states
- Relatively high achievement
- Large differences in achievement between
 - White students and black or Hispanic students
 - Poor and non-poor students

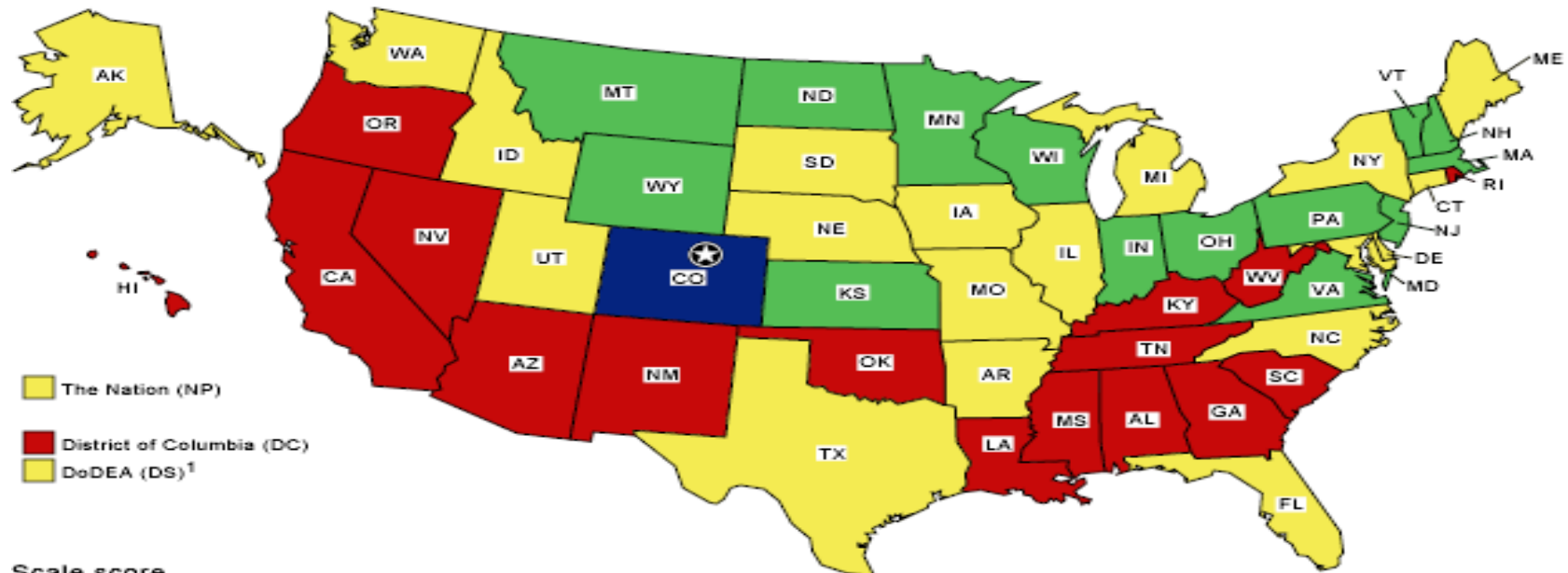
Colorado's Higher Education System

- Public System
 - 12 public 4 year institutions
 - 15 public 2 year institutions
 - 220,000 students
 - 49th in nation in per student funding
- Private system
 - 103 Private Accredited institutions
 - 316 Private Occupational Schools
- Colorado Paradox
 - 6th in the nation for college educated adults
 - 24th in the nation for sending our high school graduates to college

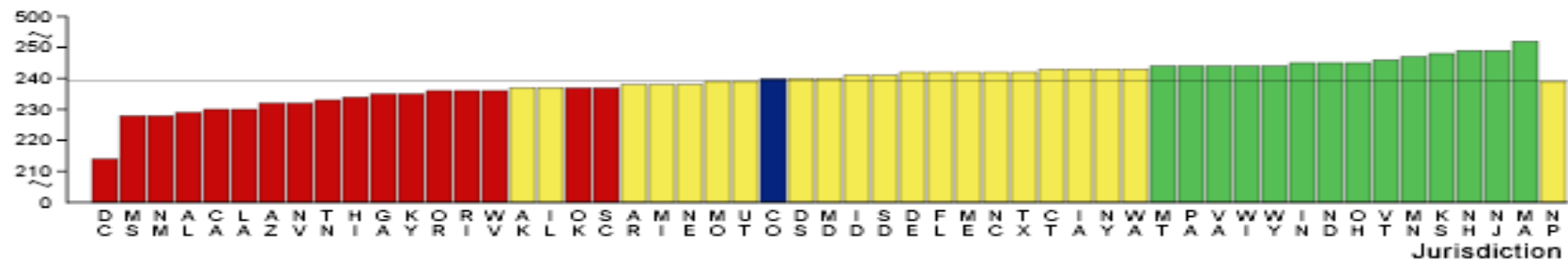
White/ Hispanic Achievement Gap, 4th Grade Math 2008



4TH Grade NEAP 2007



Scale score



- Focal state/jurisdiction (Colorado)
- Has a higher average scale score than the focal state/jurisdiction
- Is not significantly different from the focal state/jurisdiction
- Has a lower average scale score than the focal state/jurisdiction
- Sample size is insufficient to permit a reliable estimate

Colorado K-12 Education Governance

- Legislature and Governor
 - Make laws organizing the school system
 - Allocate state funds—about 43% of total revenues
- State School Board (independent elected body focused)
 - Hires Commissioner and
 - Approves regulations applying laws
 - Implement many state and federal programs
 - State accountability system
 - Sets state standards and assessment systems
- School Boards and Charter Boards
 - Run schools
 - Set curriculum,
 - Set policy
 - Allocate funds,
 - Hire/fire employees

Thinking About R2T

- R2T is a one-time investment over a four year period
- Goal is to improve student outcomes through:
 - Investing in technology and infrastructure
 - Investing in knowledge and skills
 - Accelerating reforms through investment
- Must watch out for the “cliff” when the money runs out
- Cannot promise changes in Colorado law

Additional Questions?

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