



PROPOSITION NN

Keep and Spend Revenue for Education

My recommendation: VOTE YES

Why I support Proposition NN

Colorado's working families expect excellent public schools, but for too long our teachers and students have been asked to do more with less. Proposition NN will provide dependable funding to Colorado Springs School District 11, Academy School District 20, and public schools across Colorado for better teacher pay and retention, smaller classes, special education, and career and technical programs.

Proposition NN does not raise tax rates, but it does mean giving up some future TABOR refunds. I believe that is an honest and worthwhile investment in our children, our workforce, and Colorado's future. The measure protects important working-family tax credits, restricts how districts may spend the additional funding, and requires public reporting and annual state oversight.

This is different from a narrow, permanent carve-out for a particular interest. Public education is a constitutional responsibility of the state, every school district receives a formula-based share, and the ten-year funding plan addresses priorities I hear directly from working families. Putting working families first means giving every child a genuine opportunity to succeed.

What it would do

Proposition NN would raise Colorado's TABOR revenue cap by an amount tied to state K-12 funding. It would not increase tax rates, but it would allow the state to retain revenue that otherwise would be returned through TABOR refunds.

1. First, reimburse local governments for existing homestead property-tax exemptions for qualifying seniors, veterans with disabilities, and Gold Star spouses.
2. Next, distribute a new positive factor to school districts for teacher pay and retention, smaller classes, and career and technical education.
3. Through FY 2035-36, ensure at least half of the Children's Account supports K-12 education, including school services, disability services, and increased student contact hours.
4. Use remaining money during that period for programs supporting children, prioritizing childcare and full-day preschool.

The positive factor grows by 2% annually for ten years. It then stops growing but continues at its accumulated level. Beginning in FY 2036-37, the legislature may allocate remaining retained revenue after property-tax reimbursements and the continuing school commitment.

1. Effect on working families in HD-22

D-11 and Academy D-20 would receive formula-based funding without competing for grants. The permitted uses respond directly to family concerns: keeping qualified teachers, reducing class sizes, strengthening special education, and preparing students for skilled careers that do not necessarily require a four-year degree.

An earlier fiscal note estimated about \$2.85 million for D-11 and \$131,000 for Academy D-20, but those estimates used an earlier distribution formula. The enacted measure distributes the positive factor proportionally under the final school-finance formula. Updated district estimates were not included in the final fiscal note, so the earlier figures should not be presented as current.

2. Evidence that the investment can work

National school-finance research has found that sustained increases in per-pupil spending are associated with more completed education, higher adult wages, and lower adult poverty, with especially strong effects for children from low-income families. The measured improvements included higher teacher salaries and lower student-to-teacher ratios.

Teacher-workforce research also finds that higher salaries and supportive working conditions are associated with better retention. Reducing turnover avoids repeated recruitment and training costs and gives students more stable learning environments.

Money alone does not guarantee better outcomes. Proposition NN therefore limits positive-factor spending and requires districts to publish downloadable expenditure information. The State Auditor must report annually on how much revenue was retained and how it was spent.

3. Cost to families, businesses, and the state

Proposition NN creates no new tax rate and no new compliance requirement for small businesses. Its real cost is reduced TABOR refunds.

Fiscal year	Projected reduction in TABOR refunds
FY 2026-27	\$329.9 million
FY 2027-28	\$521.0 million

Under the current forecast, the measure would eliminate projected state TABOR refunds in those years. Actual amounts will vary with the economy. If revenue does not exceed the existing Referendum C cap, the proposition produces no additional revenue to retain.

The measure preserves the Family Affordability Tax Credit and the expanded state Earned Income Tax Credit, protecting assistance aimed at working families. State administrative costs are minimal, including approximately \$20,000 annually for the required audit report.

Bottom line

Fully funding public schools is not merely another desirable line item. It is a core state responsibility and a direct investment in working families and Colorado's future. For those reasons, I recommend a YES vote on Proposition NN.

Sources

- Colorado General Assembly, SB 26-135 enacted bill and summary: <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/SB26-135>
- Colorado Legislative Council Staff, Final Fiscal Note, August 10, 2026: https://leg.colorado.gov/bill_files/117533/download
- Colorado Legislative Council Staff, Fourth Revised Fiscal Note and earlier district estimates, April 28, 2026: https://leg.colorado.gov/bill_files/115392/download
- National Bureau of Economic Research, The Effects of School Spending on Educational and Economic Outcomes: <https://www.nber.org/papers/w20847>
- Learning Policy Institute, Teacher Turnover in the United States: <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/teacher-turnover-united-states-brief>