



Taskforce School Improvement Recommendations

Recommendations made by the 2008-09 Public Policy Taskforce to the SVVSD Board of Education in April, 2008.

Proposed mill levy override projects

Recruitment & retention of teachers/restoration of lost positions/reduction of class sizes

Raise beginning teacher pay to competitive level with regional school districts, restore lost FTEs eliminated from the 2008-09 budget, and reduce class size.

- \$11,000,000 Increases beginning teacher pay scale, restores lost FTEs and reduces class size

Safety/operations & maintenance

To continue strengthening the network of school safety professionals by adding campus supervisors and additional school resource officers.

- \$500,000 Adds SRO's (school resource officers) and campus supervisors
- \$250,000 Funds existing school resource officers and avoids the reduction of these positions.

Improve the ongoing maintenance of facilities and grounds district-wide to extend their useful life.

- \$400,000 Adds school custodial positions
- \$300,000 Adds building maintenance positions
- \$140,000 Adds grounds positions
- \$65,000 Adds environmental compliance coordinator
- \$66,000 Increases building & grounds maintenance supplies budget and contracted services budget
- \$15,000 Increases school cleaning & disinfectant supplies budget
- \$40,000 School cleaning machine repairs budget

Instructional programming/technology upgrades

To ensure equity in academic programs throughout the district including early childhood education preschool and kindergarten programs and the expansion of Honors and Advanced Placement programming in math, science, social studies and English.

- \$300,000 District Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) program
- \$150,000 Funds preschool programs
- \$100,000 Expansion of pre-AP (advanced placement) programs at the middle school level
- \$10,000 Expansion of AP offerings

To provide students and staff the technological hardware and software needed for students to thrive in college and post-secondary career training and successfully compete in the 21st century global economy.

- \$1,000,000 Adds critical bandwidth capacity
- \$225,000 Adds computer network technicians

Total \$14,561,000



Taskforce School Improvement Recommendations, continued

Proposed bond projects

Deferred maintenance

Replace outdated and energy-inefficient roofs, HVAC systems, windows, boilers, plumbing, electrical, lighting, deteriorating walkways, parking lots, flooring, walls, ceilings, and ADA and code-compliance requirements.

- \$84,799,650 Infrastructure repairs and renovations to existing schools

Equity infrastructure improvements/STEM magnet school/elementary school playgrounds

Updating older school science labs, technology labs, playground equipment and implement the building improvements necessary to accommodate a comprehensive Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) magnet program at Skyline High School.

- \$28,093,000 Lab updates, playgrounds and implementation of STEM program.

Safety & security

Expansion of security systems in all schools.

- \$2,434,000 Reconfigured school entryways and security cameras

Information technology

Expansion of district technology capacity in all schools and departments.

- \$8,355,310 New hardware, wireless systems infrastructure, VOIP communication system and data center

Capacity at Frederick High School

The Carbon Valley communities of Frederick, Firestone, and Dacono have experienced rapid growth leaving Frederick High School over capacity to accommodate growth.

- \$46,000,000 New high school

Increase capacity for high growth areas

Bonds for enrollment growth are based on the recommendations brought forth by the Long-Term Planning Committee. The bonds are designated for the construction of a new elementary school and added classroom space.

- \$10,000,000 Construction of new elementary school
- \$8,400,000 Adds classrooms to high growth elementary and middle schools

Project contingencies & inflation

Funds designated for unforeseen project contingencies and increases due to inflation.

- \$22,768,040

Total \$210,850,000

Important: The Public Policy Taskforce submitted these recommendations to the Board of Education with the understanding that the board may receive additional information and data before making a final decision on a ballot initiative for a mill levy override and bond initiative for the 2008 general election.



St. Vrain Academic Accomplishments

State test results:

- Over the past four years, St. Vrain students have scored *at or above* their peers throughout the state in all 29 CSAP content areas (in 27 they score *above*).
- In 2007, 90 percent of student CSAP results exceeded the state average.
- District-wide, over 60 percent of student CSAP test results have increased.
- Over the past four years, over 70 percent of student CSAP scores have risen.
- Math scores have risen consistently throughout the District over the past 4 years.
- Test scores of disadvantaged students continue to improve.
- The percentage of students who perform unsatisfactorily continues to decrease.
- District ACT scores have increased for the third consecutive year.

Strategies for academic success:

- Introduced honors classes into middle schools across the district.
- Expanded honors and advanced placement offerings in all high schools.
- Increased graduation requirements in math and science.
- In 4 years the number of advanced placement tests taken by St. Vrain students has increased from 572 to 1222.
- Require all high school seniors to carry a full class load for the entire year.
- Expanded number of college credit classes offered in St. Vrain high schools.
- Introduced Mandarin Chinese on line and in some District high schools.
- Pending additional resources, the District is prepared to introduce a Financial Fluency class which, when implemented, will be a graduation requirement.

How St. Vrain students compare:

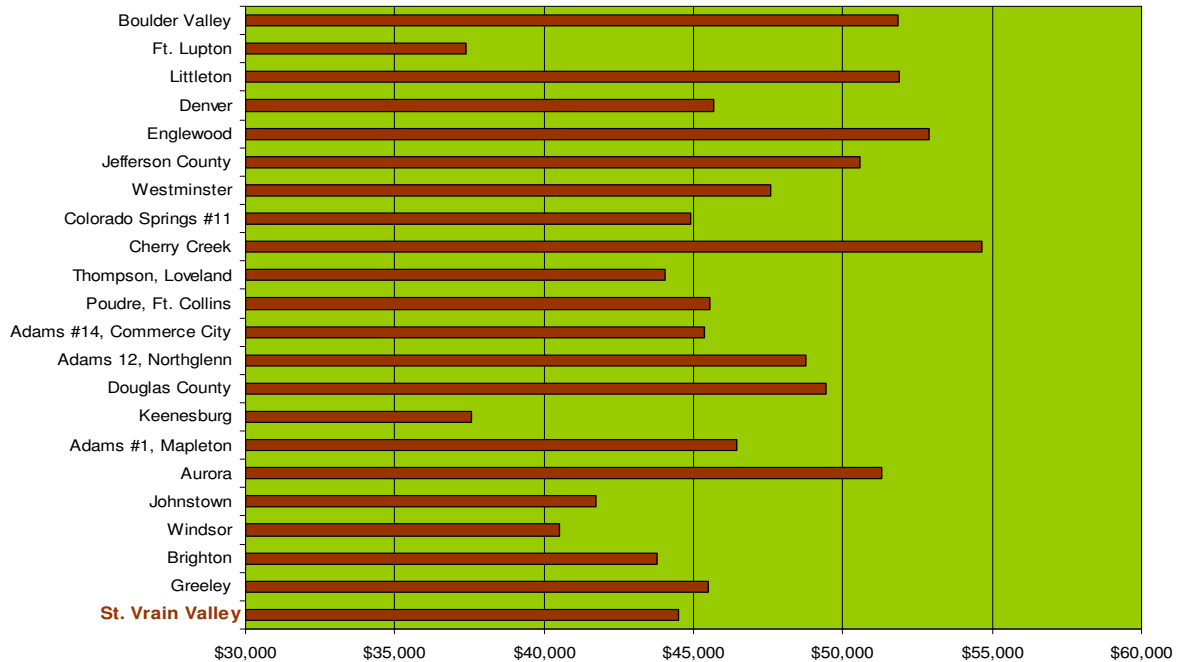
- Among Colorado school districts most similar to St. Vrain in demographics and funding, St. Vrain students outperform their peers in Reading, Writing, Science and Math.
- St. Vrain is home to 19 of the state's *Excellent* and/or *High* rated schools.



Comparing St. Vrain to other Front Range School Districts

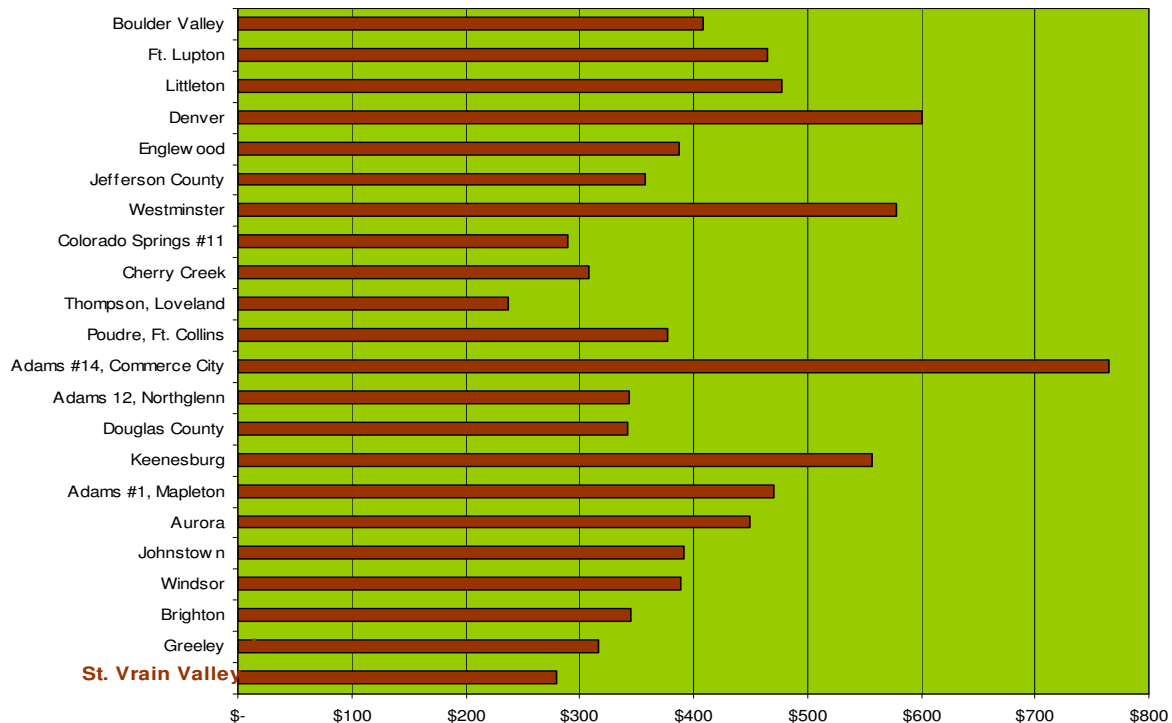
FACT: St. Vrain pays the lowest average teacher salaries among large Front Range school districts and ranks 16th in average teacher salary among 22 Front Range school districts. Average teacher retention at St. Vrain is *only* 7 years, the lowest retention average among all Front Range districts.

Average Teacher Salaries along the Front Range



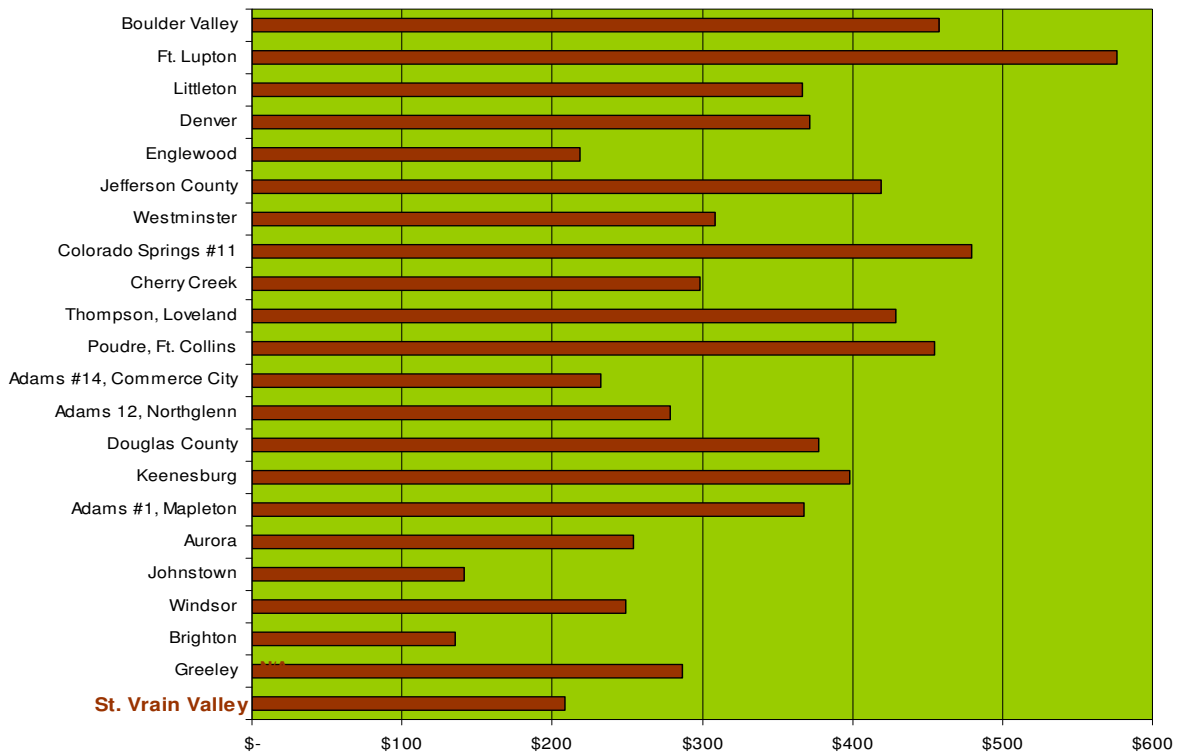
FACT: St. Vrain spends a smaller proportion of its budget on central administration than all but one of the 22 Front Range districts.

Comparison of Central Administration Costs per Student



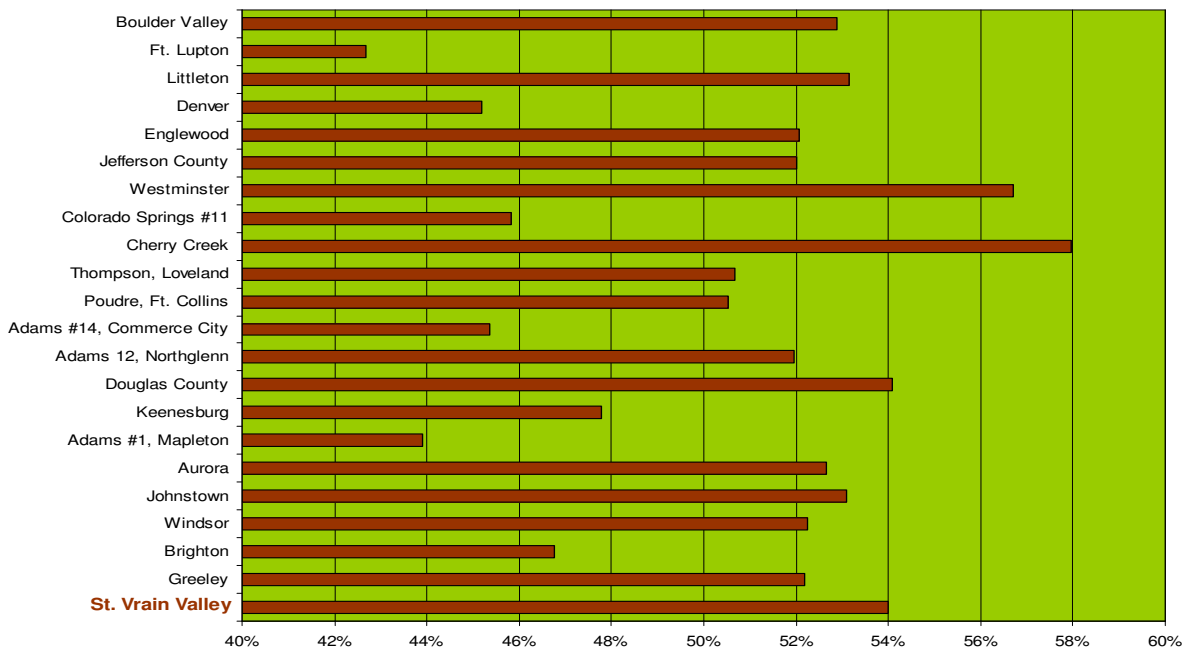
FACT: St. Vrain spends a smaller proportion of its budget on Instructional Administrative costs (curriculum development, teacher training, school librarians) than 19 of 22 Front Range districts.

Comparison of Instructional Administration Costs Per Student



FACT: St. Vrain spends a larger proportion of its budget on classroom instruction than 18 of the 22 Front Range school districts.

Percentage of Budget Allocated to Teachers



SOURCES: The Colorado Department of Education 2006-2007 School Accountability Reports (SAR) and disaggregated data from the Colorado Department of Education 2007 Chart of Accounts for Support Services for Instructional staff, General Administration, Business and Central Services.



Business Facts about the School District

Today's education imperative:

Our nation competes in a complex global economy. It is imperative that our students be equipped with the knowledge, work skills, and discipline needed to thrive and enhance our way of life.

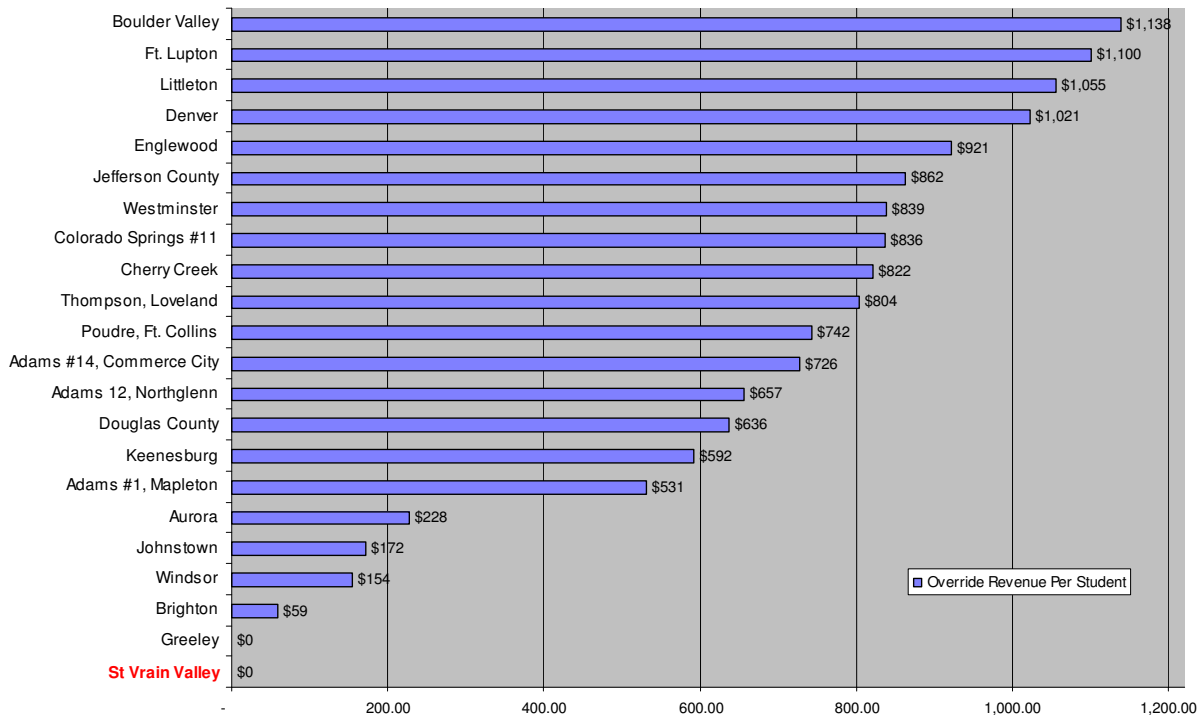
The St. Vrain Valley School District is committed to education excellence and fiscal responsibility. Superior schools promote innovation, civic involvement, public safety, community cohesion, increased property values, and business development.

Please take a moment and familiarize yourself with the following District facts.

Finance:

- ✓ In 2003, the St. Vrain Valley School District restructured its Financial Services Department, retaining a certified public accountant as its chief financial officer. With rigorous financial controls and salary reductions for all employees, the District eliminated prior deficits and was restored to fiscal responsibility.
- ✓ St. Vrain is one of only three large Front Range school districts without a mill levy override. Voters in 94 Colorado districts have approved overrides for their schools.

**Per student Override Revenue among Front Range School Districts
2006 - 2007**



Administration:

- ✓ Only 2.46 percent of the District's 2007-2008 budget is allocated to central administration (includes the departments of the superintendent, financial services and human resources). In recent years this allocation has not exceeded 2.8 percent.

Teaching and learning:

- ✓ St. Vrain currently ranks 21st out of 22 Front Range districts in beginning teacher pay.
- ✓ St. Vrain eliminated 48 teacher positions in 2005 by increasing the student-teacher staffing ratio. This staffing ratio continues to rise in the absence of additional funds. Some classes now have 30 or more students per teacher.
- ✓ The challenge of retaining our experienced, highly qualified teachers increases as salaries in neighboring districts outpace St. Vrain. Meanwhile, neighboring districts are increasingly aggressive in recruiting St. Vrain teachers.
- ✓ Replacing a highly qualified teacher lost to a competing district is costly. St. Vrain must avoid losing its highly qualified teachers to districts that pay higher salaries.
- ✓ St. Vrain lacks the funding to fully implement many 21st century instructional programs offered in nearby districts.

Facilities & maintenance:

- ✓ St. Vrain currently spends .84 cents per sq. ft. annually for deferred maintenance (roofs, boilers, lighting, windows, etc.). The recommended national average for annual spending on deferred maintenance is \$2.93 per sq. ft.
- ✓ Properly funded maintenance saves money by extending the life of existing facilities. Replacing worn out facilities is much more expensive than maintaining facilities.
- ✓ The total square footage that each St. Vrain custodian services each day has increased from 18,497 sq. ft. per custodian in 1993 to 27,684 sq. ft in 2007.
- ✓ The total square footage that each St. Vrain maintenance worker services is approximately 120,000 sq. ft. as compared to approximately 80,000 sq. ft. per maintenance worker in other large Front Range districts.

Energy costs:

- ✓ The cost of heating schools has risen dramatically despite significant efforts to implement energy efficiency measures. Since July, 2003, heating costs have increased by 34 percent, electric by 28 percent and water and sewer by 31 percent.
- ✓ The cost of busing students to and from school has dramatically increased with rising fuel costs. The District currently spends \$446,794 on fuel, up from \$351,794 in 2003, an increase of 27 percent.

State funding:

- ✓ In Colorado, funding per student ranks among the lowest in the nation. Colorado spending per \$1,000 of personal income ranks
 - 48th in the nation in K-12 spending (*Colorado Legislative Council, 2006*)
 - 48th in higher education spending (*Center for Budget Policy & Priorities, 2005*)
 - 49th in spending for teacher salaries and benefits (*US Census Bureau, 2004-2005*)
- ✓ Colorado's taxes are among the lowest in the nation, according to the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation. In addition Colorado ranks
 - 4th lowest state and local tax burden
 - 6th lowest state sales tax rate
 - 2nd lowest residential property tax burden

Alternative source of school funding:

- ✓ St. Vrain aggressively pursues state and federal grants. Last year the District received approximately \$7.3 million in grants. Grants are an unreliable source of funding for staff and programming.