

# We can do better than Prop. 119

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*The Durango Herald* Sunday, Oct 24, 2021 5:00

<https://www.durangoherald.com/articles/we-can-do-better-than-prop-119/>

I encourage voters to read this article in The Colorado Sun, <https://coloradosun.com/2021/10/07/proposition-119-colorado-explained/>, for a discussion about the pros and cons of Proposition 119; there appears to be bipartisan support and opposition.

It is aimed at helping students recover pandemic incurred educational losses by providing direct payments to families for out-of-school tutoring, counseling and other interventions. There is no oversight by the Department of Education and no standards set for providers or for measuring results. Those standards would be set by an appointed nine-person oversight board.

Initially, distribution of funds is intended to prioritize impoverished families with children in need of educational remediation, but the oversight board can change the distribution guidelines after one year. Impoverished parents, overwhelmed by the daily slog, are less likely to apply for this type of assistance so the funds will roll over to more financially secure families. This would be funded by increasing the tax on marijuana and diverting funds from the State Land Trust and the General Fund.

Research suggests the best way to help students is to invest in in-school learning and intervention and to provide students with breakfast and lunch. Instead of setting up a new bureaucracy with mutable guidelines, wouldn't it be better to adequately fund our public schools, paying teachers higher salaries; hire trained interventionists and mental health professionals to help these students during school hours? Please consider voting "no" on Proposition 119. We can do better.

**Lee Stopher**

*Pagosa Springs*