

SB 16-209 - CONCERNING AUTHORIZING A SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION TO CONSTRUCT A BUILDING FOR LEASE TO A STATE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

Background

- Aurora Public Schools is working with local lawmakers to propose new legislation that would help students gain access to higher education and more opportunities to shape successful futures.
- One of the goals of our strategic plan, *APS 2020: Shaping the Future*, is that every student will have a plan for his or her future.
- Aurora Public Schools strongly believes that creating more opportunities for students to pursue higher education is an important step to realizing this goal.
- The cost of college is often an insurmountable obstacle for students and families. By easing the financial burden, Aurora Public Schools hopes to increase college and career options for every student.

What the bill would do

- Colorado law already encourages and authorizes partnerships between K-12 and high education. C.R.S. 22-32-122
- The proposed bill, SB 16-209, has bipartisan support and would clarify that such cooperation can include capital construction.
- Specifically, the bill clarifies that school districts can seek voter approval to use bond proceeds to build and lease buildings to be used by state institutions of higher education. The bill also clarifies that in lieu of lease payments or as part of a lease agreement, school districts would be able to accept in-kind services including professional development, scholarships and reduced tuition rates.

Why the bill is important

- APS currently has one of the lowest college-going rates in the state. If allowed, APS intends to ask its voters to support a partnership with higher education to promote and support higher education access for all APS students.
- APS serves a highly impacted community. By engaging in this unique partnership, students who might otherwise have no opportunity to go to college will have an incentive to stay in school, work hard, and graduate.
- This partnership will be designed to enhance current college prep programs and expand APS' community college relationship by providing Community College of Aurora with a steady stream of students seeking access to college credits necessary to participate in the scholarship program.

What the bill won't do

- The bill would not take students away from the community college system.

- APS' contemplated partnership only involves APS students who would transfer after acquiring a minimum of 24 post-high school college credits.
 - If successful in raising college going levels, APS' program will increase revenue for partner institutions.
- The bill would not change current law around concurrent enrollment or role and mission of higher education institutions.
 - APS' contemplated partnership works within the framework of the existing law and regulations related to these issues.