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## ***Wealthy Colorado Community College System*** **Enrollment, revenues, rise while it keeps its teachers in poverty**

**DENVER**, Sept. 27, 2021 – Enrollment in the 13 colleges of the Colorado Community College System (CCCS) declined by less than half a percent since 2020, [Chalkbeat reported Sept. 15](#). This, despite a front-page story ten days prior in the [Denver Post describing the juggernaut CCCS](#) as “struggling” because enrollment was down 16 percent from 2019.

To be clear, CCCS enrollment has risen 20,000 since 2006 (see chart below). Furthermore, the CCCS, [Colorado’s largest and most financially secure institution](#) of higher education, with an annual budget of more than a half-billion dollars, never struggles nor it is about to do so. If that were the case, the credit-rating agency [Moody’s would not continue to give the CCCS its Aa3 rating](#).

Furthermore, the CCCS received recently more [than \\$170 million in federal aid](#) to cover any losses it experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Of interest is how only a fraction of the funding the CCCS receives from that windfall is required to be spent on students. The far larger, “institutional portion” is to cover shortfalls and to build back better. In many [states, officials used those](#) funds to send raises to workers. The tsunami of funds flooding the CCCS is newsworthy, especially considering alarming statements officials made earlier this month in the Sept. 15 *Denver Post* article, and when compared to [the 2020 CCCS Financial and Compliance Audit CCCS Independent Auditor’s Report](#) published March, 2021. That readily available legislative document shows Colorado lawmakers and taxpayers how CCCS operating revenues continue to rise more than \$10 million per year. The report describes how, by June 2020, CCCS revenues had topped \$505 million, 2020 operating revenues had grown \$13 million over 2019, and the CCCS had surpassed 2018 revenues by \$33 million. The same report shows an enrollment increase of 1.5%, in 2020, and an increase of \$8.7 million in 2020 student tuition and

fees. Statistics like these are necessary to disseminate, considering the thick layer of misunderstanding the CCCS has created so far this month.

Misleading statements in the air make it challenging for those unfamiliar with the CCCS to understand the situation of its army of teachers (adjuncts), who continue to press the CCCS for a much-needed pay raise. The CCCS has always had the funds to provide equal-pay-for-equal work among its approx. 1,500 full-time teachers and its 4,500+ adjuncts. The latter, who the CCCS pays \$10K below the living wage, are struggling to stay in the profession. Lunchroom rumors say the CCCS might consider a phased-in, 5% per year increase. That sounds promising unless you know the CCCS average wage for adjuncts is \$2,500/per course. Recent news out of the CCCS describes how it offers students hallway foodbanks, a free laptop program, and generous stipends to defray the cost of tuition. Such efforts are to be applauded. However, CCCS needs to send funds to its front-line because they are having the worst semester ever, post COVID-19.

How bad is it? Consider the welfare of typical CCCS adjuncts, who support their teaching by working two or three other jobs. Consider the message they receive when the CCCS sent them a 3% pay “increase” this fall that amounts to \$5/week after taxes and campus fees; enough for one latte. This, while they know that the CCCS Chancellor’s wages and benefits exceed \$450K, their campus president’s wages exceed \$250K, that the wage-and-benefits package for their full-time teaching colleagues tops \$70K, and that the state employees gardening outside the classroom doors are paid twice what they are paid for teaching. Keep in mind that the Consumer Price Index for this [Colorado is up 5%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). CCCS officials like to blame the Colorado State Legislature for low wages to CCCS adjuncts, when in fact, CCCS [governing board Policy BP3 -05](#) gives the 13 college presidents broad authority in personnel issues and the CCCS revenues continue to climb. Also worth noting is that in 2019-20, the CCCS spent more than [\\$27 million on pay raises](#). Of the bounty that academic year, CCCS adjuncts were sent a 3%, cup-of-coffee-increase similar to the one bestowed on them this year by CCCS officials.

What’s needed is for at least [a few of the 64 CCCS presidents and vice-presidents](#) (whose compensation packages exceed six figures) and the Colo. Dept. of Education to consider the effects on student learning when the overwhelming majority of the teachers in the CCCS are paid far less teaching classes than their students are earning in their own entry-level service jobs.

Table 2 illustrates how the needlessly impoverished CCCS adjuncts require not the rumored, phased-in-over-five-years, single-digit “pay raise,” but a double-digit pay increase *today*.

**Table 1: CCCS Enrollment: 2006 to 2021**

Academic Year	Enrollment	Source
Fall 2021	125,000	<a href="https://www.cccs.edu/">https://www.cccs.edu/</a>
2020-21	125,000	<a href="https://leg.colorado.gov/audits-for-department/Colorado-Community-College-System">https://leg.colorado.gov/audits-for-department/Colorado-Community-College-System</a>
2019-2020	125,000	<a href="https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/documents/audits/2011f_cccs_fy2020_financial_audit_0.pdf">https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/documents/audits/2011f_cccs_fy2020_financial_audit_0.pdf</a>
2018-2019	125,000	<a href="https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/documents/audits/2011f_cccs_fy2020_financial_audit_0.pdf">https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/documents/audits/2011f_cccs_fy2020_financial_audit_0.pdf</a>
2017-2018	120,000	<a href="https://www.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/CCCS-Fact-Book-2017-2018.pdf">https://www.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/CCCS-Fact-Book-2017-2018.pdf</a>
2016-2017	119,724	<a href="https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-2016-17-Final.pdf">https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-2016-17-Final.pdf</a>
2015-2016	120,635	<a href="https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-2015-16.pdf">https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-2015-16.pdf</a>
2014-2015	126,963	<a href="https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-2015-16.pdf">https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-2015-16.pdf</a>
2013-2014	134,324	<a href="https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-2015-16.pdf">https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-2015-16.pdf</a>
2012-2013	141,330	<a href="https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-2015-16.pdf">https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-2015-16.pdf</a>
2011-2012	145,910	<a href="https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-2015-16.pdf">https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-2015-16.pdf</a>
2010-2011	144,783	<a href="https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-AY11.pdf">https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-AY11.pdf</a>
2009-2010	135,000	<a href="https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/documents/audits/2085-10_cccs_from_contractor_june_2010_final.pdf">https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/documents/audits/2085-10_cccs_from_contractor_june_2010_final.pdf</a>
2008-2009	117,245	<a href="https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-AY09.pdf">https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-AY09.pdf</a>
2007-2008	107,000	<a href="https://www.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/CCCS-Contribution-to-Communities-FINAL-Combined.pdf">https://www.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/CCCS-Contribution-to-Communities-FINAL-Combined.pdf</a>
2006-2007	104,685	<a href="https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-2015-16.pdf">https://internal.cccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/documents/Fact-Book-2015-16.pdf</a>

**Table 2: Snapshot values of percentage wage increases for CCCS adjuncts**

CCCS avg. adjunct wage, per class*	Percent increase proposed	Increase expressed in dollars	Dollars per week	Purchasing power of per/week % increase per adjunct	Difference % increase, per class avg. adjunct wage
\$2500	5%	\$125.	\$8.3	1 deluxe burrito	\$2,625.
\$2500	10%	\$250.	\$16.7	Three teeth cleaned	\$2,750.
\$2500	15%	\$375.	\$25.0	½ tank of gas	\$2,875.
\$2500	20%	\$500.	\$33.3	One oil change	\$3,000.
\$2500	25%	\$625.	\$41.7	1/3 monthly health ins. bill**	\$3,125.
\$2500	30%	\$750.	\$50.0	½ of one snow tire	\$3,250.
\$2500	35%	\$875.	\$58.3	1 leather shoe, on sale	\$3,375.
\$2500	40%	\$1,000.	\$66.7	the other leather shoe + tax	\$3,500.

\*Avg. wage is conservative, as it considers slightly varying wages for adjuncts teaching Arts, Humanities, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math courses at the six metro-area community colleges (Arapahoe CC, CC Aurora, CC Denver, Front Range CC, Pikes Peak CC, and Red Rocks CC). The CCCS wages for the few hundred adjuncts teaching at the seven rural community colleges in Ft. Morgan, La Junta, Lamar, Pueblo, Rangely, Sterling, and Trinidad are far lower.

\*\* [Avg. cost of health insurance, per month](#), for a single adult in Colorado (\$459), minus the federal subsidy of \$336. Many CCCS adjuncts qualify for the subsidy for two reasons. Even those adjuncts who somehow are able to teach the same number of courses as are their full-time colleagues, are [still paid \\$10K below the living wage \(10 classes x avg. wage of \\$2,500/class\)](#). Most CCCS adjuncts would prefer to teach full-time, but are able to gather only six courses per year or fewer to teach, [most often across more than one CCCS college](#). Wage & benefits package for average [CCCS full-time teachers averages \\$70K](#).