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School finance: The week in review

It has been a quite a week at the capitol! SB 260, this year's annual school finance act, was approved by the Senate Education Committee last Thursday, passed out of appropriations on Tuesday and got preliminary Senate approval late last night. (For details, see the EdNews Colorado article on [Funding bill passes with surprise.](#))

The bill brings some new money to special education and other early childhood programs, but the state is not seriously committed to buying down the negative factor. At press time, only \$40 million has been applied to the negative factor, though this amount is up slightly from the \$35 million figure quoted just days ago. As **Jane Urschel** explains, "It feels like the state prefers a lay away/go away plan."

In other news, **Sen. Johnston's** school finance reform bill (SB 213) passed out of the House Education Committee on a 7-6 party line vote late Monday night. Despite our hard work and commitment to crafting a bill our members could support, CASB testified in opposition to the bill after our negotiations around the backpack funding provisions failed in the 12th hour.

Our partners at CASE and CEA spoke to their support for our concerns, and **Sens. Johnston and Heath** received an earful Wednesday when they met with 20 of our members who were in town for CASB's regional day. The senators listened for 90-plus minutes while board members from Boulder, Cherry Creek, Adams 12, Littleton, Aurora, Mapleton, Elizabeth, Agate and Genoa Hugo told the bill sponsors – in no uncertain terms – that backpack funding was an unacceptable affront to local control.

Ultimately, we believe the conversation resulted in a better understanding of both sides concerns and, as of press time, we are still working towards a compromise with Sen. Johnston. SB 213 is expected to be heard on the House floor on Monday.

We also got some much-needed good news this week when Sen. Johnston told **Ken DeLay** that he would not move forward with plans to introduce a bill to overhaul the state's educator licensing system. Among other things, the bill would link licensure to effectiveness as determined by each educator's performance evaluation. (For more details, see the EdNews Colorado article on [Licensing bill on ice for 2013.](#))

CASB members adopted a resolution at the 2012 Delegate Assembly directing us to oppose any legislation linking educator licensure to local performance evaluation ratings. We are deeply relieved by Sen. Johnston's decision to pull the bill and will continue to advance our concerns as the conversation continues.

Three weeks and counting ... stay tuned!

SB 252 raises concerns over increased electricity costs to operate districts

A bill that would mandate customer-owned rural cooperatives and rural utilities to substantially increase their share of electricity generated from renewable resources has some districts concerned about the possibility of rising costs of electricity to operate their districts.

Customer-owned rural co-ops are currently required to produce 10 percent of their power from wind, solar and other renewable fuels. SB 252, which passed out of the Senate this week, would raise that standard to 25 percent by 2020.

Colorado Rural Electric Association is the statewide trade association representing 20 of Colorado's 22 electric distribution cooperative associations. To see a coverage map and contact information for each co-op, visit the [CREA website](#). Most likely, the bill will next be heard in the House Transportation & Energy Committee at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday.

All good things must end ... or at least until the 2014 legislative session! *CASB's Day at the Capitol program concludes*

From rural districts tucked away in the mountains and plains, to large districts neighboring the state capitol, the 100 school board members and superintendents who joined CASB for our Day at the Capitol program were as strong in their united voice as they were in their diversity.

When CASB kicked off its new advocacy program in January, Wednesdays quickly became Jane Urschel's favorite day of the week. "I'm going to go through withdrawal now," she said at our final "day" on Wednesday. She added, "When we first explored the idea last fall of offering members from our 12 regions a 'day' to come visit the state capitol, we didn't know what to expect. The participation has blown us away – members from 43 different districts – and we can't wait to do it again next year."

For some, it was a chance to learn how the legislative process works – observe the House and Senate from the floor, watch legislators in action at education committee meetings, or tour the capitol. Others used it as an opportunity to build relationships with their legislators – meet face-to-face, invite them to lunch or a board meeting, or talk to them about their district's successes, needs or concerns.

And for others it was a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the crucial work CASB does to advocate for its members. Whether it was witnessing Jane's always eloquent (and sometimes heated) testimony, watching her powwow with legislators and other lobbyists, or furiously taking notes/sending texts/emailing, they left with a undeniable answer to the question: "*What exactly does CASB do at the state capitol?*"

On our final "day," Jane presented **Deb Spenceley**, Elizabeth C-1 board member, with the Day at the Capitol Shining Star Award for her impressive attendance – 9 out of 11! The award noted her journey from "legislative newbie to capitol queen," and her commitment to school board advocacy, eagerness to learn the legislative process and for sharing her insights with her fellow board members.

"From the very first one, I was hooked," Deb said of her weekly visits. As a new board member, not only did Deb learn the important role she plays as an advocate for her board, but she also witnessed first hand CASB's role in representing the interests of its members. "It was amazing to see the influence of CASB," she said.

With one year now under our belt, we want to make next year's Day at the Capitol program even better. Please send any feedback and ideas to **Nancy McKendry** at nmckendry@casb.org.

Bills at a Glance: Summary and status of bills that affect school boards

HB 13-1081 COMPREHENSIVE HUMAN SEXUALITY K-12 EDUCATION

Sen. Todd (D); Rep. Duran (D)

The bill moves and adds language to the content standards for the instruction of comprehensive human sexuality education. The bill creates the comprehensive human sexuality education grant program in the department of public health and environment. An oversight entity will assess available funding opportunities and work with appropriate state departments to apply for federal and

state grant moneys to fund the program. The state board of health shall promulgate rules for the implementation of the program.

Status: First Conference Committee Result - Adopt Re-revised with Amendments

CASB position: Monitor

HB 13-1211 ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY PROGRAMS

Reps. Buckner (D) and Navarro-Ratzlaff (R)

The bill repeals and reenacts the existing English Language Proficiency Act (ELPA). The bill expands the time to provide ELL services from 2 to 5 years but does not bring new money to the ELL categorical. The bill also increases district's program requirements consistent with federal law, increases CDE oversight and resource support obligations, and establishes additional reporting requirements (which are consistent with those required by Title III). The bill creates a \$250,000 award fund and a \$6.5 million support fund to be distributed to districts on a per pupil basis to support professional development and new reporting requirements. The bill also includes 5 FTE for CDE.

Status: Passed House Third Reading

CASB position: Monitor

HB 13-1257 DEVELOPING LOCAL-LEVEL EDUCATOR EVALUATION SYSTEMS.

Sen. Todd (D); Rep. Hamner (D)

If a local board of education or board of cooperative services develops its own distinctive personnel evaluation system for educators, the local board of education or board of cooperative educational services must do so in conjunction with the superintendent and any teachers' association that has a master employment contract or that demonstrates support from a majority of teachers in the school district or districts of the board of cooperative educational services.

Status: House Second Reading Laid Over

CASB position: Monitor

HB 13-1220 CONFIDENTIALITY K-12 EDUCATOR PERFORMANCE DATA

Rep. Salazar (D)

The bill clarifies that any information collected pursuant to an educator evaluation shall be confidential and otherwise available to a nonprobationary teacher upon appeal. If information is provided to CDE, the identity of the individual educator must remain confidential.

Status: Passed Senate Third Reading

CASB position: Support

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Here's the link:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Colorado-Association-of-School-Boards/371148837667>

[House Education Committee Members & Schedule](#)

[Senate Education Committee Members & Schedule](#)

CASB makes it easy for you to keep track of education bills through our master bills list via [Colorado Capitol Watch](#). Visit the list to learn more about education-related legislation, including the date each bill was introduced and CASB's position.

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