



Contact



Calendar



Facebook



Twitter



Staff



Partners



Publications



Videos



Awards

[Return to Headlines](#)

## School Board Advocate: Feb. 2, 2015

Volume 26, Number 2



*School Board Advocate* is the new name for *BillBoard*, CASB's semimonthly newsletter on our advocacy efforts and the latest developments at the state capitol that impact K–12 education. During the legislative session, we share this newsletter with school board members, superintendents, legislators, the governor's office, various statewide organizations, BOCES executive directors and the Colorado Council of School Board Attorneys.

### In this issue ...

- Don't just do something, stand there!
- CASB board adopts 2015 legislative priorities
- Day at the Capitol
- Winter Legislative Conference



### “Don't just do something, stand there!”

This quote has been attributed to a wide array of individuals, including Clint Eastwood, Calvin Coolidge, Lewis Carroll's White Rabbit and, most recently, Senator Owen Hill (R), chairman of the Senate Education Committee.

Senator Hill joined Senator Merrifield (D) and Representatives Lundeen (R), Taft (R) and Klingenschmitt (R) at CASB's legislator breakfast last week. It just so happens that each of these legislators are sponsoring bills on standards and assessments, and we had a very interesting discussion regarding the details of each of their proposals. [Click here](#) for an

overview of the primary provisions of each of their bills.

Senator Hill, who has not yet introduced an assessment bill of his own, spoke to the complexity of the issues and his intention to delay committee hearings until late February or March to allow more time for meaningful debate and consideration of the recommendations included in the [1202 Task Force's Report](#), which was delivered to the House and Senate Education Committees last Wednesday. [Click here](#) for Chalkbeat's coverage of the task force's report and recommendations.

We applaud Senator Hill and all the members of the Senate Education Committee for their leadership on this issue and encourage our members to weigh in on the debate.

**To help our members better understand the myriad issues related to standards and assessments, including waivers and opt-out rights, we have created an [on-line resource page](#), which includes several legal memos and other resources.**



Our next [Days at the Capitol](#) is Wednesday, Feb. 4. Join us for breakfast at CASB and a briefing with our advocacy team, followed by a visit to the Colorado Legislature to see the House and Senate in action and attend education committee meetings. To find out what's scheduled, visit the [Senate calendar](#) and the [House calendar](#).



## CASB board adopts 2015 legislative priorities

### By Jim O'Brien, president

On the final day of the CASB board retreat in Estes Park, the board of directors tackled our 2015 legislative priorities. While our advocacy team is engaged with all education issues, the board's priorities define the emphasis of our efforts. Dr. Jane Urschel started the discussion with Latin, not surprisingly, and noted that the State's motto "Nil Sine Numine" (Nothing Without Spirit) perfectly describes what she thinks is going to be one of the most spirited legislative sessions in recent memory.

The board reviewed and discussed the resolutions adopted at the Delegate Assembly. After meaningful discussion and debate, the CASB board adopted the following priorities:

- **Negative Factor/Restore Amendment 23 Funding**

Because K-12 education has endured a billion dollar annual cut over the past four years, and with state revenues increasing this year, the board believes that restoring Amendment 23 dollars is a top priority again this year. By focusing on the elimination of the Negative Factor, and to ensure adequate funding for Colorado schools, the board of directors believes these resolutions will more effectively address the needs of all its members and send a message to our state legislators that there is, indeed, an obligation on their part to address this critical need.

- **Assessments**

The standards and assessment resolutions adopted at the 2014 Delegate Assembly highlight the priority that many in the state education community, particularly parents, place on the relevance of assessments to student learning. The CASB membership spoke loud and clear about the need to cast a critical eye on the broad issue of assessments. While the 1202 Task Force released its findings to the public on Wednesday, January 28, the board of directors, after much discussion, voted to approve the broad topic of assessments, as debated at the Delegate Assembly, as the second legislative priority for the organization this year.

- **Constitutional Reform**

Because nearly every issue in K-12 education policy involves funding, the board of directors spent considerable time discussing the merits of trying to fix the state's tax policy system. Clearly, no easy answer surfaced and no single remedy came to light. The common thread running through the annual debate to fund schools in Colorado is the state constitution. The board participated in a detailed presentation by the Colorado Fiscal Institute that clearly outlined the fiscal challenges facing the state in the near term. The funding challenges, and budget constraints, are: TABOR revenue caps, increases in Medicaid, the hospital provider fee and the limitations of Colorado's current tax structure that is constitutionally preserved. Unless a workable solution is devised that addresses these funding challenges, the state budget will necessarily implode in the not-too-distant future.

Given this reality, the board of directors identified tax policy reform as the third legislative priority for this year. While CASB alone cannot solve the constitutionally mandated tax system this year, the board felt that the discussion must start—and educating the general public and the CASB membership on the pending fiscal crises must be a cornerstone of the organization's advocacy going forward.

Dr. Urschel opined about the legislative priorities that were discussed and debated by the board of directors. She recommends "work to amend" as the position for the assessment bills, saying she doesn't think we should endorse or oppose yet—and that CASE is doing the same. And though each CASB member may not agree with every resolution, by adopting them formally, we are making a strong commitment as an organization to tackle these issues as were recommended by our larger membership at the Delegate Assembly.

## Wednesday, February 4 is our third Day at the Capitol event for 2015



Day at the Capitol – Region 2

help ensure they are kept informed about the issues that are most important to you and your district.

If you can't attend the "day" your region is assigned, that's OK. We encourage you (and anyone else from your district) to join us **whenever** and **however** many times you can.

So far we've had two successful Day at the Capitol events with Regions One and Two. We so appreciate our members making the trip to Denver to meet with their legislators.

Each Wednesday throughout the legislative session, we'll start at 9 a.m. with breakfast at CASB and a briefing with our advocacy team, followed by a visit to the Colorado Legislature to see the House and Senate in action and attend education committee meetings.

This is a great opportunity to gain more visibility for local school boards and connect with education leaders to

**We need our members**—to strengthen the voice of school boards by helping state lawmakers understand our legislative priorities. [Click here to register.](#)



## 2015 Winter Legislative Conference

Our Winter Legislative Conference will take place on February 26-27 at the Brown Palace Hotel and Holiday Inn Express. Click [here](#) for a complete list of our speakers and panels. It's going to be a great opportunity to learn more and discuss issues of importance to you and your communities.

For more information or to register, click [here](#).

Address **Colorado Association of School Boards**  
2253 S. Oneida St., Ste. 300  
Denver, CO 80224

Phone  
303-832-1000 or 800-530-8430

Fax  
303-832-1086

*Advancing excellence in public education through effective leadership by locally elected boards of education.*

[Site Map](#)

