



Contact



Calendar



Facebook



Twitter



Staff



Partners



Publications



Videos



Awards

[Return to Headlines](#)

BB, May 17, 2013

Volume 24, Number 9



In this week's
BillBoard

- **Jane Urschel's video: Look back, look ahead, look out!**
- **Legislative wrap-up**
- **Graduation guidelines**
- **Killed Bills**
- **[CASB Bill Tracker](#)**

Lawmakers eased into the first regular session of the 69th Colorado General Assembly on Jan. 9 and quietly concluded on May 8, but things were quite hectic during the in-between months on Capitol Hill, with massive undertakings on everything from gun control and marijuana, to civil unions and school finance reform.

Watch **Jane Urschel's** video below as she looks back on the session and looks ahead to what's on the horizon for CASB.



Jane Urschel's recap of 2013 legislative session

from CASB

07:53

CASB's 2013 legislative priorities: How did we fare?

At the start of the session, the CASB board adopted five key legislative priorities for the advocacy team to keep front and center: modernization of the School Finance Act (SB 213), 2013-14 school finance bill (SB 260), electronic meeting participation for school boards (SB 15), BEST funding and constitutional tax reform.

School Finance Act

After two years in the works, **Sen. Johnston's** (D) school finance reform bill (SB 213) will cross **Gov. Hickenlooper's** desk for signature on May 21. The bill will be triggered by the successful passage of a statewide ballot initiative in November to provide an estimated \$1.1 billion for K-12 education.

SB 213 – which was first introduced in February – encompassed several recommendations from the Colorado School Finance Partnership, including the need to ask taxpayers for more resources. CASB started with a wait-and-see position, followed by an opposition position because of the bill's local control and inequity issues. After working hard to get those issues resolved, we were pleased to [join CASE and CEA in support of the bill](#). CASB will be on the ballot-question campaign trail over the next several months as we work to convince voters to approve the tax increase needed to overhaul the school finance system.

Additionally, if a ballot initiative passes, it will potentially generate 18 months of unallocated tax revenues (about \$1.5 billion) before the bill officially takes effect. Forty percent of the potential revenue generated will be earmarked for an education reserve fund. Another 40 percent will be used for capital construction, with 50 percent of that prioritized for full-day kindergarten and pre-school capital construction, and the other 50 percent allocated for new BEST one-time funded programs. Fifteen percent will be used for teacher recruitment, preparation and retention, and the final 5 percent will be applied toward the purchase and maintenance of technology.

Read Ed News Colorado article: [Finance was top education issue of 2013](#)

2013-14 school finance bill

CASB worked closely with the governor's office on the 2013-14 education budget and our position was steadfast: make a significant down payment on the \$1 billion negative factor and avoid earmarking new dollars for new programs. Passage of SB 260 only applied about \$40 million toward the negative factor – we lobbied for \$500 million – which makes it even more critical that voters pass the SB 213 ballot measure in November.

Read Ed News Colorado article: [School finance bills cross finish line](#)

Electronic meeting participation bill

Inclement weather, travel schedules and other extenuating circumstances will no longer keep school board members from attending meetings, thanks to the passage of SB 15. The electronic meeting participation bill allows school board members to use 21st century technology and participate electronically in school board meetings. The bill originated from a CASB resolution adopted at the Delegate Assembly last October and traveled quickly through the legislature with support from bill sponsors **Sen. Roberts** (R) and **Rep. Hamner** (D).

Read Ed News Colorado article: [Bill would tweak evaluation law](#)

Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST)

CASB has always recognized the value of the BEST program, especially for rural districts, and continued its work to preserve

funding needed to support its ongoing operation. While the program didn't receive much additional funding this year, the legislators came away from this session much more educated about the benefits of the program and what it means for a community to have a new or renovated school. We're especially pleased that a portion of the potential education reserve fund will be earmarked for BEST programs.

Constitutional tax reform

Reforming current constitutional measures and correcting the state's unsustainable fiscal course has been high on CASB's priority list for the last few years, but another legislative session came and went without any progress made. **Rep. Court (D)** – a champion of constitutional reform – tried to introduce a bill that would increase the number of signatures needed to get an issue placed on the ballot, but was unsuccessful in getting her party on board.

Graduation guidelines approved by the state board

The State Board of Education voted 7-0 Wednesday to approve the graduation guidelines proposed by the Graduation Guidelines Advisory Council. As stated in our written comments to the board, CASB believes the council's recommendations go beyond the statutorily required guidelines by establishing minimum requirements for local board's graduation policies.

Jane urged the board to engage in the formal rule-making process, as required by law, to allow school board members and other stakeholders a meaningful opportunity to comment on the proposed guidelines. While there was some debate on the issue, the board ultimately voted to adopt the proposed guidelines, calling it a "guidance document" that will be subject to further review and input prior to implementation in the 2014-15 school year

For more details, watch a [Fox 31 Denver segment](#) featuring Jane and read the Ed News Colorado article on [Board pushes ahead on grad guidelines](#).

CASB's Regional Days at the Capitol

Wednesday quickly became Jane's favorite day, as members from our 12 regions joined us each week at the state capitol. In all, 100 school board members and superintendents representing 43 districts learned more about how the legislative process works, built relationships with their legislators and got a behind-the-scenes glimpse of CASB in action at the capitol.

Visit [CASB's Day at the Capitol](#) webpage for a recap and photos.

Killed bills

Every year, our advocacy team works hard to sideline legislation that may disadvantage our members. Here's a brief highlight of four bills that we played a role in defeating.

HB 1313 Local Public Bodies & Executive Session

This bill would severely curtail executive sessions for school boards by requiring them to record and take copious notes, and also allow a judge to listen to the tapes and determine if the board violated open meetings law. We worked to get an amendment we could live with, but it turned out to be unnecessary thanks to **Stephanie Garcia** of Pueblo 60. She contacted **Rep. Garcia (D, no relation)** to convince him to oppose the bill. Her call paid off and he joined Republicans to kill the bill.

SB 164 Repeal Residency Requirements for School Boards

This bill stemmed from a parent who wanted to serve on the school board of the district his children attended. It would repeal the requirement that a school board candidate be a registered elector of the district. During the Senate Education Committee hearing, **Sen. Hill (R)** asked sole bill sponsor **Sen. Brophy (R)** a simple question: Should someone who lives in a different senatorial district be allowed to run for *your* seat? The bill quickly died in committee.

HB 1037 Cost of Providing Public Records Under CORA

This bill would modify fees that agencies charge for processing open records requests under the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) and potentially increase the amount of resources agencies would need to handle copying requests.

HB 1172 K-12 Public School Accountability

This bill proposed converting the state's district and school rating categories to a system of A-F letter grades. It would also authorize parents of students enrolled in a public school operated under *priority improvement or turnaround plan* for at least two consecutive years to petition the state board requesting that it direct the local school board to take action to reform the school immediately.

CASB sample policies coming your way

CASB's policy department is working to dissect the dozens of bills signed into law this session for any policy implications that might affect school boards. Keep an eye out for an upcoming issue of Policy Parameters – a newsletter and updated sample policies provided as a benefit of CASB membership.

Many, many thanks!

CASB's advocacy team extends its deepest thanks to board members who carved time out of their busy schedules to testify before the House and Senate Education Committees:

Lyndon Burnett, Agate 300
 Jan Tanner, Colorado Springs D-11
 Tom Sifers, East Grand School District
 Cheryl Miller, Telluride R-1
 Tom Balchak, Poudre R-1

We would also like to thank our **Legislative Resolutions Committee** for invaluable input and feedback on proposed legislation:

Lyndon Burnett, chairman, Agate 300
 Robert Carruth, Morgan County Re-3
 James "Scott" Curley, McClave RE-2
 Sean Ash, Weld RE-4 (Windsor)
 Debbie Lammers, St. Vrain Valley RE-1J
 Nancy Sarchet, Weld County RE-1
 Nancy Tellez, Poudre R-1
 Jennie Belval, Boulder Valley Schools
 Ray Garcia, Mapleton Public Schools
 Robin Johnson, Jefferson County Public Schools
 Mary Nichols, Littleton Public Schools
 Anne Rowe, Denver Public Schools
 JulieMarie Shepherd, Aurora Public Schools
 Sheryl Dillon, Cheyenne Mountain 12
 Doug Lundberg, Academy 20
 Stephanie Garcia, Pueblo City Schools
 Christine Balderston, Moffat County RE-1
 Lezlie Burkley, Salida R-32-J
 Michael Lobato, Center Consolidated 26JT
 Leslie Kiesler, Mesa County Valley 51
 Cheryl Miller, Telluride R-1
 Matt Cook, ex-officio, CASB board president, Aurora Pubic Schools
 Jan Tanner, ex-officio, FRN chairperson, Colorado Springs D-11

Friends of Legislative Resolutions Committee

Dale McCall, Colorado BOCES Association
 Paula Stephenson, Colorado Rural Schools Caucus

Council of School Board Attorneys

Darci Mohr, Boulder Valley School District
 David Olson, Colorado School District Self Insurance Pool
 Adele Reester, Lyons Gaddis Kahn & Hall
 Toni Wehman, Caplan and Earnest

CASB Bill Tracker

Visit the master bills list via [Colorado Capitol Watch](#) to learn more about education-related legislation, including what passed, what didn't and CASB's position on each bill.

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](#)

[Terms of Use](#) [Questions or Feedback?](#) [Blackboard Web Community Manager Privacy Policy \(Updated\)](#)

Copyright © 2002-2019 Blackboard, Inc. All rights reserved.