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Legislative Update: April 23, 2013



School finance bill status report

SB 213 passed in second reading in the House on Monday on a party line vote. CASB will not change its position on the bill until the bill is heard in third reading – and possible conference committee – later this week. Bill sponsors still need to ensure there are no technical amendments missing and the bill conforms with SB 260, the 2013-14 school finance act that includes dollars to fund some of the amendments made to SB 213.

CASB has been heavily involved with crafting several amendments (along with CEA, CASE and others), and we are pleased to report that our amendment to address our concerns around the “backpack funding” was passed with no opposition. For your reference, the amendment number is L.121.

Amendment summary:

- Specifies that the building principal must develop a budget that specifies how the principal will use state ELL and at-risk funds.
- Specifies that the superintendent shall review the principal’s budget to ensure consistency with the major improvement strategies identified in the school’s improvement, performance, priority improvement or turnaround plan using standards, curricula, programs or interventions approved by the board.
- If the superintendent determines the budget does not align with the approved standards, curricula, programs or interventions, the budget must go to the board for approval.

Floor discussion facts:

Both sides raised very good questions, sometimes eliciting interesting answers. For example, Rep. Gerou asked why a “quadratic equation” was used in the bill’s formula. Rep. Young (a former math teacher) answered that “quadratic equations are a proven process for balancing factors addressing districts’ statistical ability to pay.”

Interestingly, when the question was raised regarding why \$1 billion dollars was needed for so little reform in SB 213, no member brought up the list of reforms passed over the last few years that were never funded (CAP4K, Literacy, Accountability and Educator Effectiveness).

More commentary to come ...

For a full recap, read the EdNews Colorado article, [School finance update passes floor test](#).

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