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National School Boards Association's Federal Relations Network (FRN) Conference

Protecting education during sequestration negotiations, reaffirming the role of local boards and local control, and ensuring the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is reauthorized were the priority issues addressed at the FRN conference held Jan. 27-29 in Washington, DC.

The 10-member CASB contingent consisted of Deputy Executive Director **Jane Urschel**, Board President **Matt Cook** and eight other directors and members of CASB's FRN committee, who headed to our nation's capitol to help present local school district priorities to Colorado's congressional representatives.

The NSBA recently formed a separate 501(c)(4) entity – the National School Boards Action Center – to allow the organization to lobby more aggressively at the federal level and campaign for better education policies. New lobbying efforts are exciting, **Cook** said, but several big questions remain about how the work will be conducted.

Sequestration and its possible 5.1 percent cuts to education programs was another major issue of concern for CASB's FRN committee members. **Laura Boggs**, JeffCo board member, noted that, "Unfortunately, that may be the way the government decides to cut spending instead of having thoughtful conversations about what cuts could be made."

President-Elect **Jan Tanner** said the FRN committee's message was "crystal clear" at the conference. "Our constituencies don't stand for school boards not acting in a timely manner on huge issues. Though we will not leave our most at-risk students underserved, we are using resources that should go to support our general population of students and they all lose out when ESEA and IDEA remain in effect and not fully funded."

She added that CASB's FRN committee stressed that each school district operates differently when given the flexibility to do so and local school boards don't need proscriptive legislation for them to "do right by our students and our communities."

2013 Legislative Priorities

During the legislative session, CASB's Legislative Resolutions Committee meets monthly to decide the positions CASB will take on education-related bills that are introduced. The committee also reviews CASB's resolutions and makes recommendations to the CASB Delegate Assembly. Last October, the delegate assembly adopted its 2013 resolutions to provide a framework to guide CASB's advocacy efforts.

In January, the CASB board adopted the following five key legislative priorities that CASB staff will keep front and center throughout its advocacy work and during the 2013 legislative session:

School Finance for 2013-14

CASB will continue working with the governor's office regarding Gov. Hickenlooper's 2013-14 budget request, as well as with Sen. **Evie Hudak** and Rep. **Millie Hamner** on a proposed school finance bill.

School Finance Partnership's Modernization of the School Finance Act

CASB will continue working with Sens. **Mike Johnston** and **Rollie Heath** on language to construct a school finance act that encompasses the partnership's recommendations. A new act would be triggered by the successful passage of a statewide ballot initiative to provide more funds for K-12 education.

SB 13-015 Authorization for Electronic Participation in Meetings of School District Boards of Education

CASB's Delegate Assembly passed a resolution to allow boards to attend and participate in regular or special meetings electronically. CASB pursued sponsorship of such a bill by Sen. **Ellen Roberts** and Rep. **Millie Hamner**, and will continue to represent the interests of local school boards as the bill travels through the legislature.

CASB Resolution 3.10 Capital Facility Needs - Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST)

CASB urges the General Assembly to maintain current funding levels for the BEST grant program and to increase the program's statutory capacity to allow for the funding of additional matching grants. CASB recognizes the value of the BEST program, especially for rural districts, and will continue to work to preserve the funding stream necessary to support the ongoing operation of the BEST program.

Constitutional Tax Reform

This has been on CASB's high priority list for the last few years. CASB will continue its efforts with the governor and legislators to develop a statewide consensus on reforming current constitutional measures and correcting the state's unsustainable fiscal course.

Regional Days at the Capitol

CASB's new advocacy program is off to a fantastic start with 25 school board members, principals and superintendents representing 11 districts joining us for our first two Regional Days at the Capitol.

Attendees from Regions 1 and 2 heard a legislative overview from **Jane** and **Michelle Murphy** before heading to the capitol to sit in on senate and house education committee meetings. It's been a great opportunity for members to meet and build relationships with their legislators. Attendees have noted the event is time well spent, informative and a great opportunity to see the legislative process at work.

Members of CASB's regions are assigned different days throughout the legislative session, but are encouraged to attend as often as they can. In fact, one "day" wasn't enough for board member **Deb Spenceley** from Elizabeth C-1 who quipped, "It was so great that I came back!"

For more information or to register, visit the [Regional Days at the Capitol webpage](#).

Bills in Action

HB 13-1006 K-12 BREAKFAST AFTER THE BELL NUTRITION PROGRAM

Sen. (D) Giron; Reps. Moreno (D) and Exum Sr. (D)

The bill creates the "Breakfast After the Bell Nutrition Program" (program). The program requires every school with 70 percent or more students eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch to offer a free breakfast to each student in the school. Individual schools may select a method and time to offer the breakfast, so long as it occurs after the first bell of the school day. Exemptions are made for schools with less than 100 students and districts with less than 300 students and for public and charter schools that do not currently participate in the federal school lunch program.

Status: Approved by House Education
CASB position: Monitor

HB 13-1023 ACADEMIC ACCELERATION SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICY

Rep. C. Murray (R)

The bill comes from the educational success task force and requires each school district and institute charter school to adopt a policy concerning academic acceleration for students. The policy may include provisions outlined in the bill.

Status: Approved by House Education Committee
CASB position: Monitor

HB 13-1056 ADVANCED PLACEMENT INCENTIVES PILOT PROGRAM

Rep. J. Wilson (R)

The bill creates the advanced placement incentives pilot program in the department of education. The bill was amended in committee to define a rural school district in terms of student population (less than 6,500 students) and proximity to urban areas. The participating schools, as well as the teachers or mentors for online classes, are eligible to receive bonuses through the pilot program for completion of advanced placement classes and passage of advanced placement exams. Additional bonuses are available if the passing student is eligible for the federal student lunch program. The pilot program is repealed after four years.

Status: Approved by House Education Committee with amendments
CASB position: Monitor

SB 13-002 DESIGNATE BOCES AS LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES

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

The bill allows boards of cooperative services (BOCES) to act as local education agencies for the purposes of state and federal law and allows them to apply for all federal and state grant moneys for which they are eligible but only with the approval of two or more participating members.

Status: Passed with amendments
CASB position: Support

SB 13-009 SCHOOL BOARD POLICY ALLOWS CONCEALED WEAPONS

Sens. Renfroe (R) & Harvey (R); Rep. Saine (R)

The bill authorizes a school district board of education and the governing board of a charter school to adopt a written policy to allow an employee of the school district or charter school to carry a concealed handgun on school grounds if the person holds a valid permit to carry a concealed handgun.

Status: Postponed indefinitely on Jan. 28, 2013

CASB Position: Monitor

HB 13-1073 PORTABILITY OF NONPROBATIONARY TEACHER STATUS

Rep. Landgraf (R)

Under current law, if a teacher who has nonprobationary status in one school district applies to teach in another school district and the teacher can show two years of positive effectiveness ratings on his or her performance evaluations, the new school district can hire the teacher only if it gives him or her nonprobationary status. The bill allows a teacher to waive this requirement so that the new school district can hire the teacher and give him or her probationary status.

Status: Postponed indefinitely
CASB position: Monitor

[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.

Winter Legislative Conference

Feb. 14-15, 2013

Join state education leaders and finance experts to hear their perspectives on school finance reform and education legislation, while learning how to advocate effectively on behalf of your students. To learn more, visit the [winter conference webpage](#).

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