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BillBoard is a semimonthly

newsletter on the latest developments at the state capitol that impact K–12 education. It is distributed during the legislative session to school board members, superintendents, legislators, governor's office, various statewide organizations, BOCES executive directors and the Colorado Council of School Board Attorneys.

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- Winter Legislative Conference highlights
- The Negative Factor song and other conference videos
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Highlights from Winter Legislative Conference

Discussions surrounding the negative factor and “legislative relation-shiping” (a **Jane Urschel** coined phrase) took front and center at CASB’s Winter Legislative Conference, Feb. 20-21.

Jane noted the number one priority for the conference was for school board members to start building relationships with their legislators and sharing their stories about how the negative factor has impacted their districts.

At the leader and legislator luncheon – attended by 35 legislators from both sides of the aisle – **Holyoke Superintendent Bret Miles** explained ([watch video here](#)) that he is proud that his district’s student achievement appears to be “flat” because his teachers have not backed down on expectations even as the district’s ELL population has been on the rise and more and

Sample resolution on erasing the negative factor

[A sample resolution for local school boards to call upon the Colorado Legislature to](#)

more students are impacted by poverty.

"We are doing more and getting the same or slightly improved results with fewer resources," he said. "Looking at our schools this year, we are staffing them with \$750,000 less than we did five years ago."

"The negative factor is not about the money," Miles said. "It is about what we used to do with the money, which is hire teachers to meet the needs of our diverse student population and try to close the achievement gaps and make sure all students are growing each year."

With all the talk surrounding the negative factor, CASB's **Mark DeVoti** brought some levity to the luncheon by singing about it – and was met with an enthusiastic response (watch video below).

Later, special guest **Lt. Gov. Joe Garcia** was in the hot seat during the Q&A portion of his presentation and was peppered with questions and comments about the negative factor ([watch video here](#)). **Executive Director Ken DeLay** thanked the Lt. Gov. for his participation and credited him for taking tough questions. He also recognized all those at the state capitol who are working toward improving Colorado's education system. "These people work hard for us, too," he said.

CASB Days at the Capitol, Wednesdays, through April 16

Make sure your school board voice is heard! Join us for breakfast, a briefing, and a visit to the Colorado Legislature to see the House and Senate. To register, visit the [Day at the Capitol webpage](#).

The "share your story" theme continued with the closing session, which featured an impassioned speech by former **Rep. Tom Massey** ([watch video here](#)) who told school board members their legislators need to hear from them, and often.

"It's not an opposition issue. It's an awareness issue. They need to hear your story on a daily basis," Massey said. "I think you are at a point where you push for no compromise. You need to be loud and aggressive. You need to be the squeaky wheel."

For example, he said, legislators should know about the cost-intensive programs districts have in place – such as school bus drivers traveling 50 miles one way to pick up a single student – to help ensure all students gets the education they deserve.

During Friday's legislative briefing in the Old Supreme Court Chambers, several legislators stopped by – **Rep. Jim Wilson**, **Rep. Cory Gardner**, **Rep. Chris Holbert**, **Rep. Pete Lee**, **Rep. Tracy Kraft-Tharp** and **Rep. Tim Dore** – to thank school board members for their service and update them on some of the bills they are working on.

Rep. Wilson gave an update on two bills he's supporting on rural flexibility and transparency [HB 1204](#) and [HB 1145](#). Additionally, Rep. Holbert said he doesn't know where the legislature will end up with buying down the negative factor, but hopes to see \$250-\$275 million with no strings attached.

"What we stand together on is local control," he said. "The General Assembly needs to trust locally elected school boards to decide what's best for their districts."

[Download the Negative Factor song lyrics.](#)

Videos from the Winter Legislative Conference:

- Negative Factor story: Holyoke School District
- Lt. Gov. Joe Garcia at CASB's leader and legislator luncheon
- Former Rep. Tom Massey at CASB's Winter Legislative Conference
- Negative Factor stories: Elizabeth C-1 and Littleton Public Schools
- Negative Factor stories: Garfield Re-2 and Mapleton Public Schools

Many of the [handouts](#) from our Winter Legislative Conference also are available for download on our website.

Bills at a Glance

Track bills and learn about CASB's position on education-related legislation through [Colorado Capitol Watch](#).

HB 14-1182 PUBLIC ED ACCOUNTABILITY 2015-16 SCHOOL YEAR

Rep. Hamner (D)

The proposal would allow school and district performance ratings earned in the 2014-15 school year to be carried over into the following year. The change is intended to bridge a data gap that will be created when the state moves from the current TCAP

immediately eliminate the negative factor in K-12 education funding and restore within the next 5 years funds lost due to its use to date. If your board adopts a resolution in support of erasing the negative factor, please send a copy to anavratil@casb.org.

testing system to the new CMAS system. The change wouldn't affect the five-year accountability clock for low-rated districts and schools.

Status: Approved by House Education Committee (Feb. 26)

CASB Position: Support

HB 14-1202 LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Rep. Scott (R)

As amended, this bill creates the Standards and Assessment Task Force, a 15-member group tasked with studying and reporting on a long list of issues related to state tests, including how tests are given, how test data is used, the impact of state tests on local assessments, assessment costs and the amount of classroom and administrative time consumed by testing. The task force also is to study the interaction of the testing system with educator evaluations, the performance rating system for schools and districts, the ability of districts to implement new tests and related new academic standards and the feasibility and effects of allowing districts – and parents – to opt out of state tests. Members of the task force would have to be named by July 1 and the first meeting convened by July 15. The group's report (or reports) would have to be presented to the legislature's two education committees by Jan. 31, 2015.

Status: Approved by House Education Committee (Feb. 26)

CASB Position: Support

HB 14-1204 FLEXIBILITY FOR RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Rep. Wilson (R)

As amended, the bill allows small rural districts with less than 1,000 students that are rated as accredited or accredited with distinction to submit performance plans every two years. The bill also allows such districts to work with BOCES to obtain the services of literacy specialists for implementation of the READ Act.

Status: Approved by House Education Committee (Feb. 24)

CASB Position: Monitor

Online education has been a controversial subject since 2006, when a state audit found low academic performance by online students and weak state oversight. This session, a bipartisan group of legislators has launched a fast-track task force to study possible improvements in online education and report back by March 21.

*The K-12 Online Education Task Force
is seeking input at a public forum
Tuesday, March 4
10 – 11:30 a.m.
1560 Broadway
Suite 1175 in the Aspen Room*

[Task Force's Potential Issues and Problem Statements](#)
[Visit the Task Force website and submit comments and concerns.](#)

Killed Bills

HB 14-1262 HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS & LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

Rep. Priola (R) and Sen. Newell (D)

The bill would create the Highly Effective Teacher Incentives Program to enable districts, BOCES and and charter schools to offer salary bonuses to attract highly effective teachers to teach in schools that are implementing priority improvement or turnaround plans.

Status: Postponed Indefinitely by House Education Committee (Feb. 24)

CASB Position: Oppose

SB 14-086 CREATION OF REVOLVING LOAN PROGRAM FOR CHARTER SCHOOL CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION

Sen. Roberts (R) and Rep. Rosenthal (D)

Creates the charter school capital construction revolving loan program to provide loans for charter schools and institute charter schools that have charter contracts and have been in existence for four or fewer years.

Status: Postponed Indefinitely by Senate Education Committee (Feb. 19)

CASB Position: Oppose

UPDATED: Must-have tools and resources for school board members

1. **Download and share** our one-page handout on [School Finance 101: What Every Coloradan Should Know About Education Funding](#).
2. **Educate** yourself about the [financial impact the negative factor has on your district](#). Note: These numbers are subject to change. Pay special attention to columns E and N.

- 3. **Continue** the negative factor conversation with your board with an [Individualized Lobbying Plan \(ILP\)](#) and sample meeting agenda item.
- 4. **Identify** [how reducing the negative factor by \\$200 million would impact your district's budget](#) for the 2014-15 school year.
- 5. **Prepare** to attend and testify at a committee hearing by reading these [lobbying tips](#).
- 6. **Share** your story! Tell us how the negative factor has impacted your students, families and schools.
- 7. **Track** bills and learn about CASB's position on education-related legislation through [Colorado Capitol Watch](#).

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