



Contact



Calendar



Facebook



Twitter



Staff



Partners



Publications



Videos



Awards

[Return to Headlines](#)

School Board Advocate: March 20, 2015

Volume 26, Number 5



School Board Advocate (formerly *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:

- Halfway there...and just getting started
- Restore Amendment 23 funding
- Bills to watch
- Things are happening quickly and we need your voice!
- ESEA reauthorization

Halfway there...and just getting started

We are more than halfway through the session and things are starting to move much more quickly at the Capitol. Important decisions are being made, and then un-made, on what seems to be an hourly basis with regard to finance, assessments, student safety and a myriad of other issues.



escalate annually.

Finance

A draft of the proposed school finance act was released this week and the numbers are less than exciting. However, we should not assume this will be the final bill. As reported in [Chalkbeat](#), the bill includes:

- An additional \$100 million dollars for school districts, which is one-time money that is not built into the base;
- An additional \$38 million allocated to districts according to the numbers of at-risk students;
- \$12 million in additional funding for charter schools authorized by the state Charter School Institute; and
- An increase of \$540,000 for charter school facilities, which will

These numbers fall short of the Governor's request for an additional \$200 million and the [superintendents' position statement](#) asking for an additional \$200 million plus \$20 million for small rural districts (with under 1,000 students) and \$50 million for students in poverty.

To justify the low numbers in the proposed school finance act, lawmakers point (at least in part) to [Wednesday's economic forecast](#), which confirmed expectations that the state's economy continues to boom and TABOR refunds will be required. We will exceed the TABOR limit this year and money will be set aside and refunded in 2016 as citizens file their 2015 tax returns. The total refund to taxpayers could be as much as \$220 million, barring a vote by the public to allow the state to keep the money.

The \$20 million for small rural districts, which was part of the superintendents' request, will be included as part of a resurrected Rural Flexibility bill, co-sponsored by Rep. Wilson and Rep. Hamner. As of press time, the details as to how that funding would be allocated among rural districts were still being worked out with the bill sponsors.

Assessments

The assessment debate is really heating up. On Tuesday, Governor Hickenlooper announced his support for Senate Bill 215, the bi-partisan assessment bill sponsored by Sen. Hill and based on the recommendations of the 1202 Standards and Assessment Taskforce. In its current form, the bill makes small changes to the state assessment regime but does not go far enough. CASB's legislative resolutions committee took a "work to amend" position on SB 215 and CASB's advocacy team is working hard to advance legislation, consistent with resolutions adopted at [CASB's 2014 Delegate Assembly](#), scaling state testing back to federal minimum requirements and creating an opportunity for districts to use local assessments for state accountability. [Click here to read the bill summary](#).

Restore Amendment 23 Funding

CASB sent a [legislative alert](#) several days ago, urging members to restore Amendment 23 dollars to the K-12 schools for which they were intended. Tell your legislators [to support the \\$200 million buy down of the negative factor](#) promised by Governor Hickenlooper.

S.B. 223, co-sponsored by Sen. Holbert and Sen. Todd, is creating quite a stir this week. The bill creates an express right for parents to opt their children out of state and local assessments and prohibits the state and local districts from imposing any penalties as a result of that decision. CASB delegates adopted a resolution supporting an opt-out without consequence for local districts this fall but our legislative committee voted to "work to amend" the bill over concerns regarding the scope/impact of the right of parents to opt out of local assessments and the impact on local control. [Click here to read the bill summary](#).

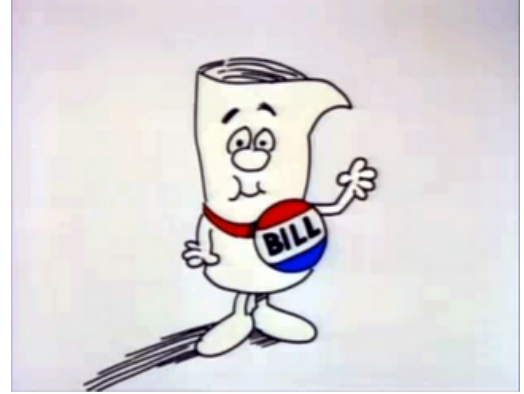
Student Safety

There was considerable debate this week around important issues related to student safety, sparked by the introduction of S.B. 213, which would waive governmental immunity for certain incidents of school violence. In essence, the bill would allow the victims of school violence to sue for damages and force districts to provide information about the incident. The bill was drafted with input from the parents of Claire Davis, a 17-year-old Arapahoe High School senior killed by a fellow student, and has the bi-partisan support of the leadership in both houses. Though CASB has serious concerns with the scope and impact of the bill, our committee took a "work to amend" position at this time and we are working with a coalition of stakeholders to address the issue raised by this bill. [Click here to read the bill summary](#).

Bills to Watch

House Education Committee, March 23 at 1:30 p.m.

HB 15-1165 SCHOOLS' USE OF AMERICAN INDIAN MASCOTS—Reps. Melton (D) and Salazar (D), Sen. Ulibarri (D). The bill establishes the subcommittee for the consideration of the use of American Indian mascots by public schools and requires the subcommittee to evaluate and approve or disapprove the use of American Indian mascots by public schools and public institutions of higher education within the state. If a public school receives notice from the subcommittee that the school's use of an American Indian mascot has been disapproved, the public school shall cease using the mascot on or before the date 2 years following such notice.
CASB Position: Monitor



HB 15-1196 CO FLEX ACCOUNTS FOR EDUCATION SERVICES—Rep. Lundeen (R) and Sen. Hill (R). The bill creates the Colorado flexible lifetime learning expenditures account program (C-FLEX program) to enable a parent, by directing the use of public moneys deposited to a savings account (C-FLEX account), to select the educational programs and services that most effectively meet the needs of the parent's child who is an eligible student.
CASB Position: Oppose

Senate Education Committee, March 26 at 1:30 p.m.

SB 15-216 SCHOOL DISTRICT EXCLUSIVE CHARTERING AUTHORITY—Rep. Fields (D) and Sen. Hill (R). Under existing law, the state board of education (state board) must grant exclusive authority to a school district to authorize charter schools located within the geographic boundaries of the school district (exclusive chartering authority) if the school district meets specified requirements. The state charter school institute (institute) cannot authorize an institute charter school within the boundaries of a school district that has exclusive chartering authority without the school district's consent.
CASB Position: Oppose

Things are happening quickly and we need your voice!

Now is the time to stay engaged with your legislators. Call or email them about the bills and issues that are of importance to you and your school district. [Click here to contact your legislators.](#)

[Click here](#) for a full list of the bills CASB is tracking and, as always, please contact [Jane Urschel](#) or [Michelle Murphy](#) with any questions or concerns.



ESEA Reauthorization

CASB created a new [page of useful resources](#) on the status of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was last reauthorized as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and is now working its way through Congress.

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.