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Final Words



The CASB Advocacy team truly enjoyed seeing so many friendly faces as we traveled around the state to meet with CASB members and put the final bow on the 2018 session. As a follow-up to some of the bills we could not cover during the Legislative Wrap-Up meetings, we include additional information below.

Want to know how your local legislators voted? Click [HERE](#) to view the bills then click on the VOTES link in the report. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Public Employees' Retirement Association (PERA)

[SB18-200](#) – “Modifications to PERA Public Employees' Retirement Association to Eliminate Unfunded Liability”

This bill makes several changes related to the PERA system that boards of education should know. **Governor John Hickenlooper (D)** signed the bill into law June 4, 2018. PERA created a concise document highlighting the changes – click [HERE](#) to view. CASB encourages board members to discuss potential impacts for your local district with your fellow board members and superintendent leadership team.

Educator Shortage, Recruitment and Retention

[HB18-1002](#) – “Rural School District Teaching Fellowship Programs”

Concerning teaching fellowship programs to assist rural school districts in hiring high-quality teachers. The bill calls for the creation of a teaching fellowship program and makes funds available to those selected for the fellowship.

[HB18-1189](#) – “Expanding Effective Teacher Residency Programs”

The bill creates the Teacher Residency Expansion Program in the Colorado Department of Education. The program's goal is to identify and communicate to school districts the best practices, effective strategies, and critical components of effective teacher residency programs and thereby facilitate expansion of the effective teacher residency programs across the state.

[HB18-1309](#) – “Programs Addressing Educator Shortages”

This bill requires the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado Department of Higher Education to create the framework for a Grow-Your-Own-Educator Program.

[HB18-1332](#) – “Collaborative Educator Preparation Program Grants”

The bill calls for the Collaborative Educator Preparation Grant Program to support joint initiatives among educator preparation programs, alternative teacher programs, school districts, boards of cooperative services and public schools for preparing and placing educators. The department, working with the Rural Education Coordinator, is directed to convene meetings of educator preparation programs, alternative teacher programs, school districts, boards of cooperative services and public schools to assist them in jointly preparing grant initiatives.

[HB18-1412](#) – “Retaining Teachers Grant Program”

This bill creates the Retaining Teachers Grant Program to assist school districts, boards of cooperative services, and charter schools in implementing initiatives to improve retention of teachers.

[SB18-085](#) – “Financial Incentives for Education in Rural Areas”

Current law allows the Colorado Department of Higher Education to provide up to 20 financial stipends annually, not to exceed \$6,000 each, to teachers in rural schools or school districts who are seeking certification as a national board certified teacher, seeking certification as a concurrent enrollment teacher or furthering their professional development plan through continuing education, and who commit to employment in a rural school for a minimum of three years.

The bill increases the number of available stipends to 60 and expands it to include teachers completing an approved alternative licensure program leading to initial licensure and full-time employment in a rural school or school district that serves rural schools. The bill also applies to individuals completing the required course work leading to certification and employment in a rural school or a rural school district that serves rural schools.

Building Excellent Schools Today (BEST)

[HB18-1070](#) – “Additional Public-School Capital Construction Funding”

Sponsored in the House by **Representatives Dave Young (D)** and **Cole Wist (R)**, HB18-1070 provided for two important changes to the funding for BEST. It increased the cash allocations to the BEST program to 95 percent of the marijuana retail excise tax. Prior to the bill's introduction, \$40 million was going to BEST. The remainder went to the Permanent Fund. This resulted in a loss of around \$30-40 million in state support for BEST and \$60-70 million in lost revenue for the program - after local matches are calculated. The other proposed change would use \$5 million in marijuana excise tax for two years to fund

Certificates of Participation (COP) for BEST. A COP is similar to your home mortgage: you are able to live in your home while paying interest and principal on the loan.

The 2017 CASB Delegate Assembly approved [Legislative Resolution #13](#) in support of the ideals contained in HB18-1070. The bill also had the support of the League of Charter Schools and the State Board of Education.

The bill won overwhelming approval in the House passing out of the chamber on a 60-3-2 vote. However, when it arrived in the Senate, the Senate bill sponsors moved to remove the COP language. Under legislation passed two years ago, [SB16-072](#) sponsored by **Senator Andy Kerr (D)** and **Representatives Alec Garnett (D)** and **Jim Wilson (R)**, excise taxes were available to be used for COPs. Without the language in the bill, 2018 is the last year the BEST program will be able to issue COPs.

The loss of the COP language was significant, as it was the primary mechanism for BEST to be able to fund major renovations or new schools. BEST will still be able to fund smaller projects for the next round of grant applications. The bill ultimately passed in the Senate with just the increase in cash allocations to BEST remaining.

This year, the BEST board experienced the highest number of applications it has ever had, continuing a trend of increasing requests over the past several years. The requests totaled nearly \$900 million. The BEST board met in May and awarded nearly \$275 million in grant requests. When you include the matching funds from districts, approximately \$450 million in grants were awarded.

The funds in the BEST program are the only state support for capital construction. Outside of the BEST program, facility construction is entirely dependent on local property wealth. This means a huge number of Colorado school districts have little or no ability to construct safe and adequate educational facilities. CASB looks forward to continuing the conversation regarding how to address the vital issue of capital construction funding for Colorado students.

School Safety and Student Mental Health

[HB18-1094](#) – “Children and Youth Mental Health Treatment Act”

This bill reauthorizes the “Child Mental Health Treatment Act” and renames it the “Children and Youth Mental Health Treatment Act.” The bill significantly changes a number of aspects of the Act.

[HB18-1413](#) – “Create School Safety Grant Program”

The bill creates the “Enhance School Safety Incident Response Grant Program” in the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management in the Department of Public Safety to provide funding for research, program development and training to improve school safety incident response.

The funding can be used by recipients to provide training, develop best practices and protocols, conduct research and development and upgrade technology and infrastructure used for training related to school safety incident response.

[HB18-1434](#) – “Safe2Tell Program New Duties and Annual Report”

The bill expands the requirements for training and support to all preschool, elementary and secondary schools. It makes training material and technical assistance available to both school and law enforcement officials. The bill requires the Safe2Tell program to file an annual report to the Colorado General Assembly analyzing data from the previous year.

[SB18-269](#) – “School Security Disbursement Program”

This bill creates the School Security Disbursement Program in the Department of Public Safety. A school district, charter school, institute charter school or board of cooperative services may apply for a disbursement by submitting an application to the Department. The Department must give priority to applicants that commit to providing matching funds for the grant amount received. A disbursement recipient may use the money for one or more of the purposes specified in the bill, which include building improvements to enhance security and training for school personnel.

[SB18-272](#) – “Crisis and Suicide Prevention Training Grant Program”

The bill creates the Crisis and Suicide Prevention Training Grant Program in the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. The purpose of the grant program is to provide financial assistance to schools in providing crisis and suicide prevention training, with priority given to those schools that have previously not received such training.

Broadband Networks

The issue of extending broadband network service to all areas of Colorado has been a stubborn problem to resolve. However, a quartet of bills approved during the session will make significant strides in connecting all of Colorado.

[HB18-1099](#) – “Broadband Deployment Level Playing Field”

The broadband deployment board in the Department of Regulatory Agencies implements and administers a grant program regarding the deployment of broadband service in unserved areas of the state. The board is required to develop criteria regarding

an incumbent telecommunications provider's exercise of its right to develop a broadband project in an unserved area upon another telecommunications provider having submitted to the board a proposed project for the unserved area.

The bill requires that the board's criteria include requirements that an incumbent telecommunications provider exercising its right to implement a broadband deployment project for the unserved area agree to provide demonstrated downstream and upstream speeds equal to or faster than the speeds indicated in the applicant's proposed project and at a cost per household that is equal to or less than the cost per household indicated in the applicant's proposed project.

[HB18-1116](#) – “Broadband Deployment Board Apply for Federal Funds”

The bill authorizes the Broadband Deployment Board to apply for federal funding and allocate federal money received to broadband deployment projects approved by the Board. The bill directs the Board to petition the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for a waiver from certain FCC rules.

[SB18-002](#) – “Financing Rural Broadband Deployment”

The bill makes several amendments to existing state laws to facilitate funding to improve and expand broadband networks across Colorado.

[SB18-104](#) – “Federal Funds for Rural Broadband Deployment”

The bill requires the Broadband Deployment Board, on or before January 1, 2019, to petition the FCC for a waiver from the FCC's rules prohibiting a state entity from applying for federal money earmarked for broadband deployment in remote areas of the nation through the Remote Areas Fund created as part of the Connect America Fund established by the FCC.

CASB's policy, member legal and advocacy departments are working diligently this summer to provide pertinent information and policy updates resulting from the 2018 session of the Colorado General Assembly, in addition to the actions of the State Board and other authorities. Click [HERE](#) to view the complete list of education related bills and possible recommendations from the CASB Legal and Policy teams. Keep your eyes open for the Special Policy Update with complete information later this summer.

Be it Resolved



The CASB Delegate Assembly will be here before you know it. This October, delegates will convene at the Cheyenne Mountain Resort in Colorado Springs – click [HERE](#) for details. This means it is time to think about what resolutions your board would like to propose. The resolutions passed by the Delegate Assembly provide the foundation of our advocacy efforts. In addition, they bring the force of your CASB membership in

support of these ideas.

So, whether you are enjoying the Rocky Mountains or relaxing by the pool this summer, take a few minutes to think about how your local board of education would like to express themselves on important policy issues. The deadline for submission of resolutions is August 31, 2018 and resolutions can be submitted online [HERE](#).

Pomp and Circumstance



High school graduations are a very special occasion especially for CASB members. The ceremony offers an opportunity for boards of education to see first-hand the fruits of their hard work. There is nothing better than watching students walk across the stage to receive their diploma; a diploma earned after years of hard work.

The flip side of this coin – especially if you attend multiple ceremonies – is that there are only so many ways to share about the transition from high school to the “real world.” Which means, if you are asked to provide a graduation speech, you really need to rack your brain to come up with a good one!

A frequent piece of advice is to “count your blessings” – which is awesome because it also happens to be true. With that in mind, we would like to thank the CASB membership for being actively engaged in the advocacy process this past legislative session. Thanks to your efforts, CASB was able to significantly increase interactions

with legislators. A few highlights help to illustrate this:

- CASB members made more than 1,900 contacts with state legislators using the CASB Digital Advocacy Network.
 - *Haven't signed up yet? Text the letters CASB to 52886 to join.*
- The Federal Relations Network team met with every member of the Colorado Congressional delegation during our annual trip to Washington, D.C.
- More than one hundred students attended the CASB Days at the Capitol.
- The strong voice of CASB members helped to ensure increased funding for Colorado students and in part lead to an additional \$50 million to buy down the Budget Stabilization Factor.
- More than 130 folks attended one of the Legislative Wrap-Up meetings to educate themselves about new laws.

For all of this and more we say THANK YOU! The power of CASB is you; the locally elected members of your board of education. Colorado students, now more than ever, need everyone who cares about quality public education to make their voice heard. This will be especially important with the November elections looming large.

With that in mind, hopefully you are able to take some much-deserved time off to reflect and re-energize this summer. The School Board Advocate is not published in July. We will be back in full-swing in August ready to kick off the 2018-19 school year.

CASB Advocacy Tools



[CASB Legislator Vote Tracker](#)

CASB Advocacy Text Alerts – To subscribe, send a text to 52886 and type in “CASB”.

Social Media – Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/ColoSchoolBoards/>

Twitter - @casbconnect and @casbmattcook

CASB publishes the School Board Advocate once a month when the Colorado General Assembly is not in session, except for July and December. During session, it is published twice a month. If you have suggestions or feedback about the School Board Advocate, please contact Matt Cook, director of public policy and advocacy. Matt can be reached at 303-832-1000.

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