

A Leg Up

The Weekly Legislative Update for the Clark County School District

February 22, 2013

What a week! Things are moving so fast it's hard to believe it's only February and not the end of May. Both houses are trying to introduce major bills within the first 40 days of the 120-day session, and as we wrap up Day 19, we are hard at work responding to requests for information, preparing presentations, and providing input on various topics. It's hectic, but we love having such intense focus on education so early in the session. We feel our leaders are truly focused on students and teachers and what is going on in the classroom.

This Week

On Monday, Feb. 18, CCSD lobbyist team member Brian Daw provided testimony to the Assembly Education Committee hearing in opposition to AB17, which concerns the Department of Corrections being able to overrule a three-person panel regarding removal of CCSD personnel from facilities for incarcerated persons. Concerns were raised about the possibility of suspension of due process rights for teachers, counselors and administrators who work at these schools.

On Wednesday, in Senate Education, Trustee Erin Cranor and Chief Technology Officer Jhone Ebert presented SB58, CCSD's Digital Learning Act. Trustee Cranor shared with the committee the view from a focus group of parents: "Please, remove all barriers to great digital learning here, and please, get it done, like, yesterday." Virtual High School teacher Andrea Damore demonstrated the online learning environment, and students Seth Goolsby, Jose Mendez, and Dominique Quattrini gave testimony on their experiences with Virtual High School. The bill received support from the Nevada Association of School Boards and the Nevada Association of School Superintendents.

Today, Friday, February 22, Deputy Chief Financial Officer Jim McIntosh made a presentation before the Joint K-12 Subcommittee which summarized the budget cuts CCSD has made since 2008. His presentation is attached ("McIntosh to K12 Subcommittee on Budget Cuts") you are encouraged to take a few minutes to review it. Seeing the year-after-year of cuts totaling over \$564 million is sobering.

Although not an education issue, you may have heard that the Nevada Legislature passed the online gaming bill. We just sat back and kept out of the way on Thursday, February 21 as a flurry of activity took place as the bill was introduced, heard in committee, passed the in the Assembly and then sent over to the Senate for the same procedures. The bill was passed by the Senate around 1 PM, then sent over to Governor Sandoval who signed the historic bill into law around 3:30 pm. It was a true whirlwind and a bipartisan effort to help Nevada continue to be the leader in gaming.

Coming Up

Monday, February 25 is Education Awareness week and to emphasize the needs of K-12 students, the Assembly Education Committee and the Senate Education Committee will be holding joint committee

meetings on Monday and Wednesday to hear 4 major education bills. On Monday they will hear SB 182, which expands full-day programs to all kindergarten students in the State, and AB 162, a bill dealing with early childhood programs for Pre-K students. On Wednesday, AB 161 will be heard, a bill to ensure literacy by third grade; and AB 162, which aims to reduce class sizes.

A major budget hearing for education will be heard on Friday morning, March 1st, at the meeting of the Joint K-12 Subcommittee. The full name of the committee is the *Senate Committee on Finance and Assembly Committee on Ways and Means, Joint Subcommittee on K-12/Higher Education/CIPS - K-12 Budgets*. It is the "money committee," comprised of members of Senate Finance and members of Assembly Ways and Means that oversees all education budgets and makes recommendations to the full legislature regarding funding levels for K-12. The subcommittee is not listed separately on the legislative website, so when looking for their committee meetings, you can find them posted under Senate Finance or Assembly Ways and Means. We consider them the most important committee we work with.

These three meetings – one on Monday, one on Wednesday, and one on Friday – are extremely important meetings for education supporters. **You are encouraged to participate in these meetings.** You can do so by attending in person (if you feel like jaunting up to Carson City!), by attending the meetings at the Grant Sawyer Building (555 E. Washington, 4th Floor), where the proceedings are video-conferenced, or by listening via Internet. At every meeting the committee chair calls for public comment, so if you attend – either in person or via videoconferencing – you will have the opportunity to make a brief comment related to the topics discussed at the hearing. Please consider taking the time to be there and weighing in on these important topics. Remember to keep your comments as brief as possible – under a minute, if you can – because brevity is essential for these hearings. If you're too shy to speak, being there is still important, and you can always submit written comments to the staff and they will ensure committee members receive them.

Here's a Tidbit

For many, attending meetings held during the workday is simply not possible, but anyone can provide input. There are many ways to provide input, most of which don't take much time, and you are encourage to communicate with your elected officials

Here are a few ways you can let your legislator know how you feel:

1. Send an email. Go to <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/77th2013/legislators/> to find email addresses of your representatives. Be sure to include the bill number or topic of your comments in the subject line. Be brief, don't forward messages written by someone else, and be clear about what you like or don't like. While email is a handy way of sending a message, please know that most legislators receive hundreds of emails every day and wading through them is a daunting venture, so when they get several hundred copies of the same email, it doesn't have the impact of a personally written message. Take a minute to compose your own message, using your own thoughts.

2. Make a phone call and leave a message. Here are the phone numbers:

From Northern Nevada	1-775-684-6800 OR 1-775-684-6789
From Southern Nevada	1-702-486-2626
Toll Free	1-800-978-2878 OR 1-800-995-9080 OR 1-800-992-0973

3. Take advantage of the “Share Your Opinion” option on the front page of the Nevada Legislative website [<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/Opinions/77th2013/A/>]. You can indicate the bill you are watching, express your support (or lack of it) and write a comment. Legislative aides compile the input received and provide it to the appropriate legislator(s).

Finally, a word about the attached tracking list. Right now, we’re simply providing the list of bills we are following or at least keeping an eye on to see how they will impact education. More information will be added each week as hearings are held and details fleshed out. Amendments will change the bills and the impact statement so if you’re interested in a particular bill or topic, be sure to check for updates.

Thanks for subscribing to the update list, and please participate in any or all of the hearings coming up next week!