



# SESSION SPOTLIGHT

**May 21, 2021**

With 10 days left in the 81st Nevada Legislative Session, all of the education-related puzzle pieces are starting to come together. The education budget has been closed and the Pupil Centered Funding Plan (PCFP) is moving full steam ahead. All that's left is the final K-12 budget bill to be introduced. This should occur by Wednesday, May 26th, 2021, in order to get a true handle on what the education funding level will be for the next two years.

Meanwhile, today is Second House Deadline Day, meaning any non-exempt bill that has not passed a vote on both the assembly and senate floor by the end of today will be considered dead. Legislators may be working late into the night to try and get as many bills as possible through to the Governor's desk for a signature.

Below is a summary of this week in the Legislature!

## **Education Budget Closings**

On both Tuesday night and Wednesday morning, both the Senate Committee on Finance and the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means met jointly to finish closing out the education budgets and move forward with implementation of the PCFP. At Tuesday's night's meeting, the committees combined multiple smaller education budgets to reallocate the dollars into the PCFP. The committees also finalized several decision points in order for the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Fiscal Division to work through the night and into Wednesday morning in order to share the updated model with the committees and the public.

Some of the decision points made by the committees were favorable to CCSD such as taking the Commission on School Funding's recommendation to use the Nevada Cost of Education Index. The Committees also put \$50 million into the Education Stabilization Fund and in total reallocated \$67.2 million from multiple education accounts into the funding formula to fund as many districts as possible in order for them to not be in a hold harmless position.

On Wednesday morning, with those decision points reached, the joint committees approved a new infusion of \$502 million for the biennium to go toward the funding formula. This included \$67.2 million that was reallocated from closed accounts for FY22 and as well as \$207.8 million from the general fund for FY22 and \$227 million for FY23. This means the new statewide per-pupil average will be \$9,096 for FY22 and \$9,185 for FY23. County specific data will be available from the Nevada Department of Education in the coming days.

## **SB439 - Pupil Centered Funding Plan**

A joint meeting of Assembly Ways and Means and the Committee on Education took place on Wednesday, May 19th. During this meeting, CCSD thanked the committee for moving to this funding formula, and also explained that the District will work with Zoom and Victory school principals to ensure their funding is not reduced over the biennium as the formula is implemented. These committees also adopted an amendment to the bill reducing school districts' protected budgeted ending fund balance from 16.6% to 12%, excluding restricted funds such as school carryforward dollars. Prior to the 2019 session, districts were only protected at 8.3%.

The bill then passed on the Assembly floor Friday afternoon with a vote of 36-5 and will now head back to the Senate where they must vote on if they concur with the amendments made by the Assembly. If they do not, then the bill will go to a conference committee (see more below), if they do concur, then the bill will move to the Governor's desk awaiting approval or a veto.

## **SB450 - School Capital Improvement**

On Monday, SB450 was introduced as an emergency measure, sponsored by twenty legislators including Majority Leader Nicole Cannizzaro and Speaker Jason Frierson. The bill extends the rollover bond for school capital improvements for an additional ten year period from 2025 to 2035. SB450 was then heard in Senate Government Affairs on Wednesday with Senate Majority Leader Cannizzaro presenting the bill alongside representatives from CCSD, the Washoe County School District and the Nevada Association of School Superintendents.

SB450 received a wide array of community support from 27 different stakeholders from throughout the state such as parent groups, unions representing district employee groups as well as trade unions, non-profits, and multiple chambers of commerce testified in support. With such support and no one speaking in opposition to the measure, the committee immediately passed SB450 by a vote of 3-2. The bill then went to the Senate floor where it received overwhelming support and passed in a bipartisan vote of 16-4. The bill now heads to the Assembly floor.

## **CCSD Bills SB2 - and SB66**

Following up on last week's update of the two CCSD bills, both bills passed the Assembly floor and are now headed to the Governor's desk! SB2, which looks to remove duplicate reporting or tasks that take away from the classroom, received a 35-7 vote on the floor Wednesday. Meanwhile, SB66, which looks to bridge the digital divide by identifying students who lack a digital device or sufficient internet access passed the Assembly floor by a 35-4 vote on Thursday.

By law, the Governor must act on a bill within five days after it is received if the legislature is still in session. However, if there are fewer than five days remaining in session, or if the bill is delivered after the adjournment of the legislative session, the governor has ten days after adjournment (Sundays excepted) to act. The governor may sign the bill into law, allow it to become law without a signature, or veto it.

## **Want to Learn More?**

The Role of Conference Committees: As we come to the close of the 2021 Legislative Session, bills will be brought before their respective floors and passed with or without amendments. Almost all bills that are passed (or defeated) will look different from when they were first adopted and transmitted over from their house of origin. A bill that passed the Assembly a month ago may look entirely different than the bill that just passed the Senate.

At this point, since the bill is allowed no more hearings, who decides which version of the bill gets to go to the Governor for his signature?

The Nevada Legislature has a process in place for this exact scenario. First, there is the opportunity for the house of origin of the bill to either confer or not confer with the amended version of the same bill from the 2nd house. If the body confers, this is the version that will head to the Governor's office. If the body does not confer, each house will then appoint a certain number of members from their respective bodies to serve on what is called a "conference committee."

Conference committees are formal meetings where the assigned legislators attempt to find middle ground on the two versions of a bill. If no agreement can be reached, the bill dies. If they do find agreement, a report is delivered to each house explaining the negotiated language. The report can then be adopted by acclamation, which is considered the equivalent of final passage. Should both houses consent to the conference committee report, the final version of the bill will then be sent to the Governor's Office for his signature.

For bills that are important to you, following the work of a conference committee can be challenging and frustrating, but is also very important since a small group of legislators are tasked with the responsibility of working toward agreement.

For a list of bills CCSD is tracking click [here](#).

### [Current Scheduled Meetings for the Week of May 24, 2021](#)

The "[Calendar of Meetings](#)" on the Nevada Legislature website provides up to date information regarding meetings.

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