

A Leg Up

The Weekly Legislative Update for the Clark County School District

March 9, 2013

Although the purpose of this update is to provide readers information about legislative activities, the announcement of Dwight Jones' decision to step down as superintendent of the Clark County School District cannot go without notice. Although we are saddened at his decision to leave, we recognize the strong leadership Superintendent Jones has provided our District over the past two years and we appreciate all he has done for our students and employees. He will be missed, and we wish him well as he devotes himself to the care of his mother. In his absence, the District's lobbying team will continue to represent the initiatives of the District as approved by the Board of Trustees and directed by the Interim Superintendent, an appointment the Trustees expect to make at a special meeting on Thursday, March 14 at 9:00 a.m.

Other news this week includes the hearing on NEA's initiative petition to create a margins tax in Nevada, and the announcement of several Republican senators of their intent to increase taxes assessed on mining.

This Week

MONDAY, MARCH 4:

On Monday, the Assembly and Senate Education committees held another joint meeting to receive presentations from the Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) and the Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDP). Pam Salazar, TLC Chair, and Rorie Fitzpatrick, TLC member and Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning at the Nevada Department of Education gave a presentation and answered numerous questions on the Council's progress toward creating a new system for teacher and site-based administrator evaluations. The Nevada State Education Association in coordination with local affiliates discussed the role of professional development in the advancement of teachers and the profession. Finally, several teachers spoke about the support they have received from the RPDPs followed by Bill Hanlon who described the services provided by the organization.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6:

During the meeting of the Senate Education Committee on Wednesday, **SB58** (CCSD's Digital Learning Act) was voted out of committee unanimously, with members thanking the District for explaining the details and intent of the bill. The committee also received several presentations on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) initiatives from around the state including one by CCSD's Mary Pike, Director of K-12 Science, Health, Physical Education, Foreign Language, and Driver Education.

On the same day and at the same time but in a different room, the Assembly Education Committee heard Harvey Munford present **AB 124** which would prohibit a student being awarded the Millennium Scholarship if they had a record of three or more violations of the Code of Honor which is distributed to all students and parents in the State. This bill has been introduced several times in the past, with the District consistently opposing it for several reasons, including the difficulty of distinguishing between types of cheating (such as copying a classmate's homework compared to hacking into the computer

system to change a grade) as well as the amount of time it would take for counselors or other district personnel to investigate allegations of infractions instead of assisting student success. Additionally school administrators already take seriously infractions related to violation of the code of honor and ensure appropriate consequences follow.

Also on Wednesday, the Assembly Government Affairs Committee heard testimony on **AB 103**, which would expand School Police to Category 1 officers and repeal the text defining their current jurisdiction. This is another concept that the legislature has considered in the past, but is not supported by the District, primarily because school police would no longer have a focus of providing support for schools, which does not make sense at a time when student safety in the front of our minds.

FRIDAY, MARCH 8

The Joint K-12 Subcommittee met on Friday morning to hear a couple of budgets connected to the Nevada Department of Education, including the budgets for administration, student nutrition, and career tech programs.

Coming Up

Tune in to the Joint Committee Meeting of Assembly and Senate Education Committees on Wednesday, March 13 at 3:30 p.m. to watch the presentation of *iNVEST 2013*, to be introduced by the Nevada Association of School Superintendents. It's the 10th anniversary of *iNVEST* and it's startling how many of the things superintendents asked for ten years ago are still needed today in order to improve student achievement.

Senator Debbie Smith, chair of the Senate Finance, announced her intent to hold a Saturday hearing to allow enough time for testimony and input related to education-related budgets. The hearing will be held on Saturday, March 23 and will be video-conferenced to the Sawyer Building (located at 555 E. Washington). Please plan to attend the hearing if at all possible. Even if you cannot stay for the entire meeting, please stop by for as much time as your schedule will allow and be sure to sign the meeting roster as you enter the room. If you would like to speak during the public input portion of the meeting, please make your comments brief – less than a minute, if possible. Just as effective as speaking at the meeting is an email to committee members expressing your opinion on education funding.

Here's a Tidbit

Every session, the Research Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau compiles a publication with pertinent data related to K-12 education. You can view this book by visiting <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Publications/EdDataBook/2013/>. It's a gold mine of information.