**Legislative Update**

**CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**February 27, 2015**

A Friday night snowfall in Northern Nevada makes it especially good to be back in Las Vegas for the weekend! After 25 days of being in session, the Nevada State Legislature has:

* introduced 196 bills in the Senate;
* introduced 202 bills in the Assembly;
* heard 71% of the Senate bills; and
* heard 72% of the Assembly bills.

The CCSD lobbying team is tracking 112 bills at this point, but we’re still waiting for many of the major education bills to come forward. The Legislative Counsel Bureau bill drafters are up to their ears in bill draft requests, and they are cranking out new bills as fast as they can. Led by legendary Chief Counsel Brenda Erdoes, they are an amazing, little-known group of legal staffers who do their best to turn a legislator’s great idea into legal language so the hearing process can begin.

**Update On CCSD Priority Bills:**

**SB119,** the bill that would allow a 10-year extension of current property tax rates for capital projects, was heard Thursday morning in Government Affairs. Just as happened on the Senate side, the hearing was lengthy and controversial, because the bill also provides an exemption from paying prevailing wage on school construction projects. On the senate side, the hearing featured a long line-up of people who indicated their support for school construction but opposition for the prevailing wage portion of the bill. At this hearing, many members of the committee questioned various aspects of the school construction portion of the bill. No action was taken, but the chair has indicated the bill will be voted upon next week.

It isn’t clear whether or not we’ve got the votes yet to get this bill out of committee, but in Clark County, the need for schools is becoming more urgent. Consider this: On February 4, when SB119 was originally heard by the Senate Government Affairs Committee, the committee was told that as of 11:00 that morning, CCSD had increased 1,922 elementary students since count day. Three weeks later, when SB119 was heard by the Assembly Government Affairs Committee, that number had increased to 2,587 new elementary students since count day. An increase of 665 new elementary students in less than a month begs the question: where will our students sit?

In addition to school districts, those in support of the bill included representatives of the business community, chambers of commerce, and many parents. They were passionate and well informed and very articulate. The rooms were filled with those in opposition, primarily workers from various labor unions.

A correction was made to the "infograph" posted last week; the updated version is attached to this email. It lists the projects we've identified as "shovel-ready" -- we would begin construction on these schools and additions (listed in priority order) as soon as the bill is passed.

***If you have strong feelings about this bill, now is the time to let your voice be heard. A list of members of the Government Affairs Committee is attached.***

**AB55**, CCSD's bill to create a temporary permit to allow new hires six months to take required tests for licensure, was heard on February 9 and is scheduled for a work session on March 2. During the initial hearing, the Committee suggested an amendment that would require the Commission on Professional Standards to pass these regulations by a certain date or they would go to the State Board.

**Highlights from Week 4:**

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23**

Senate Finance

* **SB100**, a bill that allocates funds for the education of students when they are in a behavioral health treatment facility, was heard on Monday. The allocation was created in 2013 and this version will allow the Nevada Department of Education to pay the facilities directly rather than deduct the funds from the District’s per pupil allocation.

Assembly Committee on Education

* **AB120** was heard on February 23rd in the Assembly Committee on Education. This bill states that school districts must enforce policies to ensure religious activities are treated equally to non-religious activities. CCSD is currently working with the sponsor of the bill on an amendment to better clarify the rights and privileges of the school district in setting these policies.

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24**

Senate Transportation

* **SB144** is a bill that attempts to make our school traffic zones safer by increasing penalties for speeding through school zones, as well as making U-turns illegal in school zones. CCSD testified in favor of SB144, emphasizing how important it is that our students and parents feel safe coming to school.

Senate Education

* **SB75**, CCSD's bill to require a minimum amount of instructional time prior to high-stakes testing, was amended in Tuesday's Senate Committee on Education. The amendment changes “instructional time” to “school days.” The bill was unanimously voted out of committee and is on its way to the Senate.
* **SB178**, sponsored by Senator (Doctor) Hardy, mandates Physical Education (PE) classes every day in grades K-11 and continues to require height/weight screening. Although strongly supportive of PE, we testified in opposition to the bill based on the unfunded mandate it would create. We agreed to work with Senator Hammond, who also expressed concerns during the hearing, on an amendment. Senator Hardy told the Committee he would consider all amendments “friendly” during the hearing.

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25**

Senate Government Affairs

* **SB70**, the bill that would make changes to the Open Meeting Law, was proposed by the Attorney General's office and adds requirements to approve the minutes of one meeting by the next meeting of the Board, among other items. Our team worked with the AG's office to amend the bill to allow “30 working days or by the next meeting, whichever is longer” to approve the minutes.

Assembly Education

* **AB166**, this bill creates the State Seal of Bi-literacy to recognize pupils who have attained a high level of proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English. The seal would be attached to every student’s diploma that qualifies for this program.
* **AB112** clarifies that the safe and respectful learning environment laws also includes school administrators, teachers, and support staff. While many believe bullying only exists between students, the bill sets forward that educators must set the example and are held accountable for any bullying tactics that may go on within a school. The bill contains reporting requirements for those educators who feel bullied, as well as, requires the Department of Education to create policies that are aimed at improving the school environment.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26**

Assembly Government Affairs

* **SB119** – See description in introduction

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27**

Assembly Committee on Ways and Means and Senate Committee on Finance, Subcommittees on K-12/Higher Education

* **DSA Hearing:** The final portion of the presentation by the Nevada Department of Education on the Distributive School Account (DSA) was held, with the focus on many of the Governor’s new education initiatives and their accompanying budgets. Following the presentation, the Joint K-12 Subcommittee Chair (Senator Ben Kieckhefer) asked State Superintendent of Instruction Dale Erquiaga to provide an overview of the Nevada Plan, the formula used to determine funding for local school districts. Mr. Erquiaga turned the time over to Julia Teska, Nevada Budget Director, who made an in-depth presentation on her last day of work before she leaves Nevada to join her family in Colorado. The presentation helped resolve some of the questions local financial officers had about how this year’s budget was calculated. Conversations are continuing on this topic as districts work to ensure the base is fully funded even as the State moves to increase categorical funding for education programs.

**Coming Up:**

To keep current about hearings that are scheduled (and sometimes rescheduled) during the session, it’s important to utilize the “Calendar of Meetings” link on the Nevada Legislature website ([www.leg.state.nv.us](http://www.leg.state.nv.us)). There you will find the most accurate list of committee meeting dates and times as well as the bills scheduled to be heard.

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| Content | Description | Next Meeting Title | Next Meeting Date |
| AB54 | Revises provisions relating to local governments existing in a severe financial emergency. (BDR 31-308) | Assembly Committee on Government Affairs | 3/2/2015 9:00 AM |
| SB167 | Revises provisions relating to employment. (BDR 18-265) | Senate Committee on Judiciary | 3/2/2015 1:00 PM |
| SB147 | Requires certain training for peace officers concerning dog behavior. (BDR 23-10) | Senate Committee on Government Affairs | 3/2/2015 1:30 PM |
| AB30 | Revises provisions relating to plans to improve the achievement of pupils enrolled in public schools in this State. (BDR 34-312) | Assembly Committee on Education -- Work Session Item | 3/2/2015 3:15 PM |
| AB55 | Revising provisions relating to the licensure of certain teachers and other educational personnel. (BDR 34-473) | Assembly Committee on Education -- Work Session Item | 3/2/2015 3:15 PM |
| AB178 | Revises provisions governing the discipline of pupils. (BDR 34-248) | Assembly Committee on Education | 3/2/2015 3:15 PM |
| AB190 | Revises provisions governing public employees' retirement. (BDR 23-184) | Assembly Committee on Government Affairs | 3/3/2015 8:00 AM |
| SB138 | Revises provisions governing the forfeiture of property. (BDR 14-222) | Senate Committee on Judiciary | 3/4/2015 1:00 PM |
| SB143 | Revises provisions governing concealed firearms. (BDR 15-221) | Senate Committee on Judiciary | 3/4/2015 1:00 PM |
| AB72 | Revises provisions governing state professional licensing boards. (BDR 54-161) | Assembly Committee on Commerce and Labor -- Work Session Item | 3/4/2015 1:30 PM |
| AB89 | Makes various changes to provisions relating to certain professions. (BDR 53-295) | Assembly Committee on Commerce and Labor -- Work Session Item | 3/4/2015 1:30 PM |
| AB157 | Revises provisions governing service animals. (BDR 38-638) | Assembly Committee on Health and Human Services | 3/4/2015 1:30 PM |
| AB179 | Revises provisions governing personal information. (BDR 52-756) | Assembly Committee on Commerce and Labor | 3/4/2015 1:30 PM |
| AB180 | Revises provisions governing the biennial audit requirements for the Public Employees' Retirement System. (BDR 23-569) | Assembly Committee on Commerce and Labor | 3/4/2015 1:30 PM |
| AB121 | Revises provisions governing the discipline of pupils. (BDR 34-173) | Assembly Committee on Education | 3/4/2015 3:15 PM |
| AB57 | Revises provisions governing the taxation of purchases of direct mail. (BDR 32-306) | Assembly Committee on Taxation -- Work Session Item | 3/5/2015 1:30 PM |
| AB70 | Provides for the administration and enforcement of excise taxes on medical marijuana. (BDR 32-322) | Assembly Committee on Taxation -- Work Session Item | 3/5/2015 1:30 PM |

**Attachments**

This update references the following materials which are attached to the email:

* *CCSD Legislation Status Report 2-27-15*
* *CCSD Construction Facts 022615*
* *Assembly Gov Affairs Committee/78th Leg Session*

**Want to Learn More?**

In case you didn’t know:

The power of phone calls! Go to <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/Legislator/A/Senate/> and <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/Legislator/A/Assembly/> to get contact information for legislators. Email addresses, office addresses, phone numbers (sometimes even personal cell phone numbers!) are listed on this Web site. It’s easy to call a legislator and leave a message on any bill or issue you care about.