

A Leg Up

The Weekly Legislative Update for the Clark County School District

March 30, 2013

Monday, March 25 marked the deadline for all committee bill introductions and a total of 177 new bills were dropped that day. In order for bills to move forward they must be passed out of the committee in the house of origin by April 12. The next two weeks will be busy as legislators hear bills and conduct work sessions to pass bills by the deadline. Both education committees have scheduled additional meetings for the next two Fridays to get through all the bills on their docket. A note about the timing: the chair of Assembly Education has indicated he plans to start those Friday meetings at 2:30 p.m. or at the conclusion of the Assembly Committee on Health and Human Services, whichever comes first. If you plan to participate in or observe any of those Friday meetings, just check in often so you don't miss anything.

The Assembly of the 77th Nevada Legislature made history on Thursday, March 28 as they expelled a member of their body. Since January, Assemblyman Steven Brooks has shown erratic and threatening behavior, causing the leadership to appoint a Select Committee to consider whether or not he would continue to serve in the Assembly. After an emotional floor session that included the reading of the report of the Select Committee by Majority Leader William Horne and statements by Assemblyman Wes Duncan and Assemblywoman Dina Neal, the members voted by an overwhelming majority to remove Steven Brooks from his seat as the representative of District 17. According to statute, it is now the responsibility of the Clark County Commission to appoint a representative for the remainder of the term.

This Week

MONDAY, MARCH 25

On Monday, the **Assembly Education Committee** heard **AB222** which was presented by Assemblywoman Olivia Diaz along with Sylvia Lazos and Scott Loe from UNLV as well as Deena Holloway from CCSD's Curriculum and Professional Development. The bill includes funding for the five existing reading skills development centers and expansion to six additional schools in CCSD and five schools in Washoe County School District during the 2014-15 school year. If the bill passes, it will also provide funding to UNLV and UNR to support the programs in CCSD and WCSD, respectively.

AB278, Assemblyman Munford's Multicultural Education bill, was also heard. Information was provided to the committee about the varied and extensive program of multicultural offerings currently provided by CCSD's Equity and Diversity Department, and several facts relating to the participation in those programs by CCSD teachers and administrators.

Also on Monday afternoon, in Senate Education, three bills were heard. Senator Aaron Ford introduced **SB 269**, his bill which would link the ability of a student to obtain a driver's license to school attendance. The concept of this bill was taken from CCSD's Graduation Priority Act from the 2011 session, so we are especially appreciative of Senator Ford for championing this proposal.

Also heard was **SB 163**, Senator Cegavske's bill on the inclusion of civics education in the curriculum, and **SB 384**, a bill which would give charter schools bonding authority.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27:

On Wednesday, in **Assembly Education**, the State Charter School Authority presented **AB205**, a bill that would require performance contracts for charter schools and allow for preferences in the lottery system for siblings of students already enrolled in a charter school.

Also heard was **AB 414**, which would require training in CPR to be added to the curriculum for middle and high school students. Although we are supportive of including the training, the bill would have districts rely on volunteer groups to provide the required training and does not include funding to purchase the mannequins that would be needed for practice.

Simultaneously, in Senate Education, a robust discussion was held on **SB 320**, Senator Hardy's bill related to students with diabetes. The concerns expressed centered on the issue of whether someone who is not a health care provider should be delegated the responsibility of administering medication, and whether a principal can be charged with soliciting volunteers for this purpose.

THURSDAY, MARCH 28:

AB376, which would provide funding to teachers for instructional supplies, was heard by **Ways and Means** on Thursday. If passed, this bill will provide \$3.5M (statewide) for each year of the biennium.

Coming Up

This week's hearing schedule (Education Hearings March30) is presented to you in a different format. First, I've included every bill we're following, not just the bills that focus primarily on education issues. If you're not interested in things like tax abatements, energy issues, and construction contracting, just skip over those items and tune into the education topics. Second, the list contains embedded links – to both the NELIS website for the committee pages, and also links to the bills themselves. I hope you find this helpful.

Keep in mind, the hearing schedules change often, so be sure to check the website on the day of a hearing to make sure nothing has changed. And don't be surprised if meetings start late.

Here's a Tidbit

Recently I was asked why some agendas list some bills in a separate section called "Work Session." (Please refer to the attachment, "Sample Agenda," for an example.) It's an excellent question, particularly for observers who want to offer input on bills, and leads to a discussion about the difference between a *hearing* and a *work session*.

Before bills are processed by a committee, a *hearing* is held. During the initial hearing, the bill is introduced, usually by its sponsor, and the purpose and impact of the bill is explained to the committee. Sometimes these introductions include presentations, a panel of speakers, and a lot of details; sometimes the introductions are short and sweet. While committee chairs have flexibility in how they treat bills in their committees, typically a chair calls for public input following the introduction. Speakers in attendance (whether in Carson City or at the Sawyer Building) are asked to provide input, usually starting with those who support the bill, followed by those who oppose the bill, and ending with those who are neutral. If a bill is complex or if there are elements of the bill that need to be worked out, several hearings may be held over the course of the session. Sometimes bills have only one committee hearing.

Once the committee chair is satisfied that the bill is ready to be processed, the bill is scheduled for a *work session*. Unlike a hearing, members of the audience generally are not allowed to provide input on the bills during a work session. Sometimes the chair or a committee member may ask for clarification or additional information from the sponsor or from individuals who would be impacted by the bill, but the purpose of the work session is to process the bill, not to seek additional input. For those wishing to impact the outcome of a bill, it's important to participate either during the hearing or during the span of time between the hearing and the work session (by email, letter, phone, personal visits and/or weighing in on a bill at <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/Opinions/77th2013/A/>).

Please let me know if you have any questions about the legislative process; I'm happy to include the information in the update for those who want to learn more.

One more tidbit: for those interested in referring to previous editions of A Leg Up, please visit the Government Affairs portion of the CCSD website at <http://ccsd.net/departments/government-affairs>.