

A Leg Up

The Weekly Legislative Update for the Clark County School District

April 6, 2013

Starting today, we're on the downhill slope as we march toward the end of the 77th Regular Session of the Nevada Legislature. Yesterday was Day 60, the halfway point of the 120-day session, and it concluded an extremely busy week characterized by early mornings and late nights, punctuated with numerous meetings in between. Friday, April 12 brings a major deadline: bills must receive passage out of committee in the house of origin in order to remain viable. That means an assembly committee must approve assembly bills and a senate committee must approve senate bills; bills that aren't passed out of committee or designated "exempt" will be labeled "dead." Long hearings on many bills were accomplished this week, considering the merits of most measures brought forth.

Due to the high volume of bills heard, this week's update will highlight only a few of the major bills heard.

This Week

MONDAY, APRIL 1

The Assembly Education Committee held a marathon hearing on **AB 230**, known as the "sex ed" bill. This is an intense issue and dozens of passionate speakers – both in Carson City and in Las Vegas – with divergent opinions spoke. Also heard was **AB 357**, which deals with the reorganization of the regional professional development programs.

In Senate Education, in addition to a couple of bills related to Higher Education, **SB 407** was heard, the bill which brings forth the recommendations of the Teachers and Learners Council, and **SB 447**, which also deals with the regional professional development programs. Also heard was **SB 444**, which would add a high school student to the State Board of Education as a voting member.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3

Wednesday was Latino Lobby Day at the legislature, and both education committees concentrated on bills supporting English Language Learners. Lucy Keaton, CCSD's newly appointed Associate Superintendent for English Language Learners (ELL), was in Carson City to provide insight into various issues related to these bills. **AB 272**, a bill presented by Assemblywoman Diaz would establish a new oversight body called the English Mastery Council, provide parameters related to the certification of teachers obtaining a Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) endorsement, and other related matters. **SB291** is a bill specific to

Clark County only and would establish prekindergarten programs for ELL. **SB 455** is a grant fund that would be administered by the Nevada Department of Education to be used for ELL programs in each Nevada school district. **SB 504** is a comprehensive bill that includes a variety of topics related to the establishment of ELL programs of instruction and professional development.

Also heard on Wednesday, in Assembly Education, was **AB 337**, a bill about serving fresh fruit and vegetables to students and **AB 259**, which would expand the scope of the P-16 Council to include pre-kindergarten topics. Meanwhile, Senate Education considered Senator Roberson's **SB 195**, the first of many bills related to "parent triggers," which would allow a majority of parents to convert a school to a charter school. Another bill, co-sponsored by Senator Roberson and Senator Woodhouse, **SB 240**, would provide funding for a program to reimburse teachers for expenses related to educational supplies.

THURSDAY, APRIL 4

In Senate Health and Human Services, health providers and educators came together to support **SB 453**, legislation that would authorize schools to obtain and administer Epi-pens under certain circumstances.

FRIDAY, APRIL 5

By Friday, weary legislators and frazzled lobbyists slogged through another long day of hearings. **SB179**, sponsored by Senator Manendo in Senate Transportation Committee would increase penalties and fines for traffic violations in school zones and school crossing zones for individuals who speed or make U-turns during the times posted for those zones.

In Assembly Education, **AB 288**, a bill joint-sponsored by Assemblywomen Flores and Dondero Loop was heard. This is a major piece of legislation that would change the exit exams now required for high school graduation, replacing the current High School Proficiency Exam with end of course exams aligned with the new Common Core State Standards, accompanied by an assessment designed to evaluate college and career readiness. Since this bill closely mirrors a similar bill requested by Assemblyman Kirner, he has been invited to co-sponsor AB 288, making it a bipartisan effort. This is a bill to watch closely.

On the Senate side, the Education committee heard a couple of bills related to charter schools (**SB 443** and **SB 471**), a bill which updates anti-bullying language (**SB 427**), and **SB 467**, which would dissolve a plethora of long-standing committees and require the State Superintendent of Instruction to assume their decision-making and duties. While there were some supporters for this move, there was also a long line of witnesses who testified in opposition to the change.