

A Leg Up

The Weekly Legislative Update for the Clark County School District

April 13, 2013

Monday morning in Carson City started out with a surprise snowstorm but by the end of the week the sun was shining and the blossoms on the trees were in full bloom. Inside the Legislative Building, activity was also in full swing. The building buzzed with meetings and hearings from 7:00 in the morning until well after 10:00 at night. It was a very busy week as legislators made decisions about hundreds of bills, either passing them out of committee in their original form (“Do Pass”), or attaching amendments to the bill (“Amend and Do Pass”) or letting bills die. The CCSD lobbying team had a record-setting day on Wednesday: we monitored and/or provided testimony on 38 bills in 8 different committees. It was a hectic day!

This activity, known as “First Committee Passage” is the first major test of a bill, and a long list of bills – including 68 that had been on our tracking list – didn’t make it out of committee. This can be a heartbreaking process for some, since committees are a much smaller size than the entire legislature, and many bills live to see another day or are stopped in their tracks on as small as a 3-2 vote; the majority determining the bill’s fate.

Happily for CCSD, both of our bills (SB 58 and SB 59) survived, and will continue on the path toward passage, as did several other major bills that are significant to education.

Next week, the emphasis will shift from committee work to “floor” work. The next deadline for these bills is to be voted upon by the full body and receive the required number of votes to move to the next house. What this means is that for a bill that started out in the Assembly (noted by the “AB” designation), it must have been passed out of committee by April 12, and then moves to the Assembly Floor for a vote by the full Assembly body, which must be accomplished by April 29. Next week, to accommodate this requirement, many committee meetings have been cancelled in anticipation of long floor sessions with hundreds of bills to be presented and voted upon. As bills are passed by the Assembly, they are sent to the Senate floor where they are read and assigned to a committee so the process can take place in the other house. While this activity is taking place on the Assembly side, the same thing is happening in the Senate, where the “SB” bills that made it out of committee are being voted on the Senate Floor and then sent to the Assembly side.

The attached tracking report shows the “dead” bills that did not survive yesterday’s deadline with a gray shading. Next week, we’ll move the “dead” bills to the end of the list so they’ll get out of your way.

We’ll be going through the list of “Amend/Do Pass” bills carefully in the next few days to make sure there are no surprises on the amendments that went through.

Status of a few bills: Here's where we are with a few of the major education issues being considered by the legislature.

Signature Education Programs

AB 161 – Third Grade Literacy (“Social Promotion”)

AB 162 – Class Size Reduction

AB 163 – Pre-K Programs

SB 182 – Full-day Kindergarten

The three Assembly bills received “Amend/Do Pass” votes to get them out of committee, and the Senate bill received “Amend/Re-refer” status, meaning it has been sent to another committee (Senate Finance) for consideration. That means all four of the bills are still on track for passage. They have a hefty price tag, so funding will be important.

English Language Learner (ELL) Bills

AB272 Creation of 17-member English Mastery Council

SB 291 Pre-K ELL bill formulated based on your recommendations (Senate Minority Leader's Roberson's bill)

SB 455 Grant program for ELL (the Governor's bill and the only ELL bill with funding in the Governor's Recommended Budget)

SB 504 Comprehensive ELL bill requiring a \$100 million dollar appropriation (this is the Senate Majority Leader's Bill)

All four of these bills are also on their way. These bills compete with each other in many ways, so it will be interesting to watch how they are coordinated or consolidated.

Regardless of which bills survive, it's obvious that ELL is a primary focus of legislators.

Other Selected Bills

AB 222 Reading Skills Development Centers bill. This bill was a “Do Pass”—one of the few bills to move forward without an amendment added to it.

AB 230 Sex education. One of the most controversial bills heard this year, the bill moved on with “Amend/Do Pass” support.

SB 58 CCSD's Digital Learning Act was passed out of committee last week.

SB 59 CCSD's Charter School Bill was approved at Friday's Senate Education.

Here's a tidbit: For the entire list of bills that died yesterday, visit here:

<http://leg.state.nv.us/Session/77th2013/Reports/MissedApril12th.cfm>.