

Legislative Update

CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

May 8, 2015

Highlights from Week 14:

As we move steadily toward the end of the session, it's impressive to see the work ethic of the many individuals involved in the Nevada State Legislature. We've just concluded teacher appreciation week, but it's also a good idea for us to express appreciation to legislators and the legislative staff who work hard to make sure the legislature runs smoothly and completes its work on time.

Legislators work long hours, with committee meetings scheduled from 8AM until well into the evening. Legislators often leave one committee meeting and go directly to another, usually meeting with stakeholders as they walk from one committee room to the next. Most people aren't aware that legislators receive very modest pay for their services – about \$130 per day – and they are compensated for only the first 60 days of the 120-day session. They're still reimbursed a modest per diem to cover living expenses, but these dedicated public servants leave families, put jobs on hold, and juggle personal issues so they can serve the State of Nevada. Even if you disagree with legislators on their positions and votes, we should all respect them for their willingness to make personal sacrifices to give this service.

The employees who support the legislators must never sleep. A committee analyst who has prepared massive amounts of documents for a meeting that lasts until 9:00 PM on one evening will be at an 8:00 AM meeting the next day with another set of documents that have been prepared. They are knowledgeable, courteous and even cheerful, in spite of the long hours they put in. It's an impressive group.

The upcoming week features another major deadline: Committee Passage, Second House. By Friday, May 15 bills that have made it through the process on one side of the legislature now must be passed out of committee on the other side of the legislature or they will be declared dead. As a result, Senate agendas are filled with Assembly bills and Senate bills are in now the Assembly. Keep in mind, however, that exempt bills are not required to meet the deadlines to remain viable.

Also noteworthy of the upcoming week is a special Saturday morning meeting of the Joint Subcommittee on K-12 Funding: the DSA budget will be closed on that day.

Here's a summary of what happened last week.

MONDAY, MAY 4

Joint Subcommittee on K-12 Funding

- ~ **Budget Closing:** The Joint Subcommittee on K-12 Funding met to close the budgets of the Nevada Department of Education. The Committee had a robust discussion on many of the new positions the Department requested to carry out Governor Sandoval's education reform plan. While not every request made by the Department was accepted, the Committee decided to substantially expand the funding the Nevada Department of Education receives so they can hire dozens of new employees. Most of these new employees will be carrying out evaluations of the new education reform programs that have been proposed this session (i.e., the new Victory Schools), as well as those that were implemented following last session and are recommended for expansion (i.e., Zoom Schools), and also to support other programs such as technological grants and the student data system.

Assembly Health and Human Services

- ~ **SB402** – This bill defines obesity, and was amended to eliminate the sunset on requiring schools to measure the height and weight of a representative sample of students. This provision was previously included in SB178 on physical education but that bill failed to meet the deadline for first house passage.

Assembly Education

- ~ **SB463** – Sponsored by Senator Becky Harris, this bill requires providers of educational electronic applications to provide written disclosures concerning personally identifiable information, to allow students and parents to

review and correct personally identifiable information, and to establish and carry out a detailed plan for the security of data concerning pupils. The bill also requires teachers and other licensed personnel to complete certain professional development. The bill will likely be amended before passage by the committee.

- ~ **Work Session:** The Assembly Committee on Education held a work session for two charter school bills. They passed both bills unanimously.
 - o SB208 – Requires new charter schools to notify parents in surrounding neighborhoods that they are opening.
 - o SB390 – Allows students who attend a school that is overcrowded by at least 25% to have priority if they apply to attend a charter school.

TUESDAY, MAY 5

Assembly Taxation

- ~ **SB411** – The focus of this bill is to allow Washoe County School District to form a Public Schools Overcrowding and Repair Needs Committee to make recommendations of new tax sources that would then be taken to the voters for approval at the November 2016 elections. Although the intent of the bill is to provide Washoe County an avenue to raise additional funds for school construction, the bill applies to any county in the state. The authorization to establish the committee expires April 2, 2016.

Senate Education

- ~ **AB447** was presented by the Nevada Department of Education and proposes to include district data in addition to state assessments for the student outcomes portion of the Nevada Educator Performance Framework. The bill also extends the implementation of the NEPF for “other licensed personnel” such as school nurses, counselors, etc. Amendments to the bill were proposed by several entities including the Nevada Department of Education, the Teachers and Leaders Council, and Clark and Washoe county school districts, among others.

Senate Finance (Evening Edition)

- ~ **Work Session:** In a meeting that began at 6PM, the Senate Committee on Finance held a work session to consider several major education bills. The meeting was moved from the Committee’s daily 8AM schedule to allow adequate time for questions and input on the bills. It’s important to note that when bills come before the “money committees” (Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means), the focus of the discussion is on the cost of implementing the bills, not on the policy itself. The expectation is that the policy issues in the bills are worked out in the policy committees (such as Senate or Assembly Education), and the money committees then determine the level of funding the bill requires. The following bills were considered:
 - o **AB391** (Read by 3rd Grade): The Committee decided to remove all funding from the bill with the intention of addressing funding for the program at a later time when they close the education budget. The Committee did not feel it appropriate to pass a specific level of funding when there is still uncertainty if Governor Sandoval’s tax package will pass.
 - o **SB405** (Zoom schools): The discussion surrounding this bill centered on allowable expenses and the expansion of the program to middle and high schools. The committee passed this bill unanimously.
 - o **SB432** (Victory schools): Similar to the discussion on Zoom schools, the committee agreed upon allowable expenses for this program and the scope of services that can be funded. A unanimous vote sent this bill on its way.
 - o **SB474** (Great Teaching and Leading Fund): Several questions related to allowable uses of the funding, including ensuring ongoing funding for Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs) throughout the State, were asked and discussed. This bill passed out of committee, but the votes were along party lines, with the Republicans supporting the bill and Democrats voting nay.

Assembly Ways and Means (Evening Edition)

- ~ **Work Session:** Like the Senate Committee on Finance, Assembly Ways and Means also held a 6PM meeting since the full agendas of its daily 8:00 AM meetings didn’t allow enough time for a thorough discussion of important bills. Education-related bills on this agenda included:
 - o **AB 448** (Achievement School District): This bill was thoroughly discussed, but no action was taken. School districts and education associations raised questions related to fiscal issues anticipated when charter schools are allowed to operate in a public school building.

- **AB485** (Office of Science, Innovation, and Technology): This bill would establish an office to oversee several duties, including STEM grants, and implementation of broadband services. This bill is likely to be combined with SB236, as they have similar purposes. No action was taken.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6

Assembly Education

- ~ **SB330**. This bill will allow students who transfer schools to request a hearing officer if they are not eligible to participate in athletics due to their transfer. The hearing officer will be provided by the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association, the group that determines the rules and regulations of Nevada's school athletic programs.
- ~ **SB394**, which requires that personal safety curriculum be taught to children in grades K-12, is the result of the work of the interim Task Force on the Sexual Abuse of Children. The bill was supported by the Nevada Department of Education, school districts, and child advocates and no one opposed it.
- ~ **Work Session: SB13** (special education), **SB75** (CCSD bill), and **SB212** (student discipline) were passed unanimously by the committee.

THURSDAY, MAY 7

Assembly Committee on Judiciary

- ~ **SB58** provides for the sharing of data regarding certain pupils between the juvenile justice system and school districts. The bill was brought forward as a result of the work of the Supreme Court of Nevada's Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform during the 2014 interim. The bill was supported by members of the Commission and was not opposed.

Senate Education

- ~ **AB278** requires the Nevada Department of Education to develop policies, procedures and guidance related to class-size reduction. The bill was supported by the Department.
- ~ **AB328** provides a process for the selection of hearing officers related to certain hearings related to pupils with disabilities. CCSD testified neutral on the bill after working with the sponsor to address several concerns.
- ~ **SB341** will help address support services for students suffering from dyslexia. The bill generated a discussion about how this bill, and **SB391** (the Read by 3rd Grade bill) could work together in helping students who are dyslexic be identified and supported. CCSD did provide an amendment to the bill to remove a section that required all applicants for a Nevada teacher license to have been previously trained in the dyslexia. Requiring this training would restrict the state from hiring great teachers who can be trained on how to serve students with dyslexia once they are hired.
- ~ **AB421** creates the Spending and Government Efficiency Commission to study K-12 public schools and the Nevada System of Higher Education on their financial efficiency. The bill was supported by a couple of individuals and opposed by the Nevada System of Higher Education. CCSD testified as neutral on the bill, discussing the district's current efforts to look at the return on investment of programs, departments and schools.

FRIDAY, MAY 8

Assembly Government Affairs

- ~ **SB157** will enact the State and Local Government Cooperation Act. This bill will make it easier for state emergency agencies to communicate with different counties and local government entities such as school districts.

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). There you will find the most accurate list of committee meeting dates and times as well as the bills scheduled to be heard.

Upcoming Meetings

Upcoming Meetings Week of May 11, 2015

Bill #	Description	Next Meeting Title	Next Meeting Date
SB402	Makes various changes concerning the prevention and treatment of obesity. (BDR 40-891)	Assembly Committee on Health and Human Services -- Work Session Item	5/8/2015 12:30 PM
AB49	Revises provisions governing crimes. (BDR 15-158)	Senate Committee on Judiciary	5/8/2015 1:00 PM
AB124	Revises provisions governing punishment for crimes. (BDR 4-182)	Senate Committee on Judiciary -- Work Session Item	5/8/2015 1:00 PM
AB352	Revises provisions relating to concealed firearms. (BDR 15-1070)	Senate Committee on Judiciary	5/8/2015 1:00 PM
SB70	Revises provisions governing meetings of public bodies. (BDR 19-155)	Assembly Committee on Government Affairs	5/11/2015 8:30 AM
AB54	Revises provisions relating to local governments existing in a severe financial emergency. (BDR 31-308)	Senate Committee on Government Affairs	5/11/2015 1:30 PM
SB254	Revises provisions relating to construction. (BDR 28-791)	Assembly Committee on Government Affairs	5/12/2015 8:30 AM
SB340	Revises provisions governing public works. (BDR 28-255)	Assembly Committee on Government Affairs	5/12/2015 8:30 AM
SB5	Revises provisions governing elections for nonpartisan offices. (BDR 24-90)	Assembly Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections	5/12/2015 4:00 PM
SB19	Authorizes the board of trustees of a school district to place an advisory question on the ballot at a general election. (BDR 24-477)	Assembly Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections	5/12/2015 4:00 PM
SJR1	Urges Congress to enact legislation transferring title to certain public lands to the State of Nevada in accordance with the report prepared by the Nevada Land Management Task Force. (BDR R-451)	Assembly Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections -- Work Session Item	5/12/2015 4:00 PM
SB12	Revises provisions governing certain personnel of the Public Employees' Retirement System. (BDR 23-385)	Assembly Committee on Commerce and Labor	5/13/2015 1:30 PM
SB137	Enacts provisions governing stand-alone dental benefits and policies of health care. (BDR 57-575)	Assembly Committee on Commerce and Labor -- Work Session Item	5/13/2015 1:30 PM
SB168	Revises provisions relating to collective bargaining by local government employers. (BDR 23-602)	Assembly Committee on Commerce and Labor -- Work Session Item	5/13/2015 1:30 PM
SB231	Revises provisions relating to workers' compensation. (BDR 53-986)	Assembly Committee on Commerce and Labor -- Work Session Item	5/13/2015 1:30 PM
SB232	Makes various changes relating to workers' compensation. (BDR 53-987)	Assembly Committee on Commerce and Labor -- Work Session Item	5/13/2015 1:30 PM
SB241	Revises provisions relating to collective bargaining. (BDR 23-1030)	Assembly Committee on Commerce and Labor -- Work Session Item	5/13/2015 1:30 PM

Attachments

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

- *CCSD Legislation Status Report 5-8-15*

Want to Learn More?

In case you didn't know: Every interim (the 2 years between legislative sessions) the Nevada Legislature does not simply go into hibernation. While the 120-day biannual session gets most of the publicity, members of the Legislature are still hard at work the other 610 days they serve as elected officials. This work is done through interim committees that are created to work on complex issues between sessions. These committees also receive reports and provide oversight to programs the government has already put in place.

Several interim committees are established through Nevada law. These committees deal with fiscal issues (Interim Finance Committee), education (Legislative Committee on Education), health (Legislative Committee on Health) and many other issues that challenge Nevadans every day.

Beyond these mandated committees, the legislature may create additional ones to look at specific issues that either could not be decided upon during the 120-day session or to review an issue that may be creeping up on the horizon. These committees are born through a bill during the legislative session requiring the body to study a certain issue during the interim. These studies, however, cost money. So it is up to the Legislature to prioritize the studies that are most critical and those that can wait for until another time.

Once the legislature creates its priorities, each study committee has its members appointed and, usually, a technical committee appointed to help with the work. As soon as the interim committee is ready to do its work, meetings are held both in Carson City and Las Vegas in order to keep travel costs low and to encourage as much public participation as possible. Most committees will meet between 3-6 times depending on the budget and the complexity of the issue.

All in all, these interim committees and studies help shape the next legislative session. Just as the work of a legislator doesn't end once the final gavel is heard, the work of an education advocate must continue as well. To follow which studies are passed this session and when the work of the interim shall begin, please visit the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us.