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BillBoard is a semimonthly

newsletter on the latest developments at the state capitol that impact K–12 education. It is distributed during the legislative session to school board members, superintendents, legislators, governor's office, various statewide organizations, BOCES executive directors and the Colorado Council of School Board Attorneys.

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And so it begins ... The uphill battle to erase the negative factor

"Execution is the chariot of genius."

This famous quote perfectly articulates what CASB has outlined this legislative session to tackle a monumental challenge: Erasing the negative factor.

The "genius" lies with the CASB Delegate Assembly and CASB Board of Directors adopting resolutions making restoration of the negative factor our

CASB events to help you put your advocacy efforts into action!

**Every Wednesday,
Jan 22-April 16**

highest priority. The “execution” will lie with Colorado’s 178 school districts that must share their voices and stories with legislators: What cuts and sacrifices has your district made over the last four years because of the negative factor? What have you lost and what would you do if you got it back?

Armed with this mindset, CASB’s advocacy team and 20 school board members and superintendents headed to the state capitol on Wednesday for our first [Day at the Capitol event](#).

The morning started off on a positive note. Sen. Kerr, Senate Ed Committee chair, graciously welcomed CASB members representing school districts in Agate, Calhan, Deer Trail, Edison, Elizabeth, Genoa-Hugo, Kiowa, Mapleton, Stratton and Rocky Ford. “It’s great to have other elected officials observing our process,” he said.

But then, things took a rather ominous turn.

Discussions between Joint Budget Committee staff members and the Legislative Council, as well some education committee members, changed the tone from *informing* to *warning* school boards that there is no money to buy down the negative factor.

The JBC staff presentation was billed as an “Overview of the State Education Fund and K-12 Public School Funding,” but the discussion felt more like a lecture and litany of justifications for not paying down the negative factor.

The committee grudgingly acknowledged the state’s “bump” in revenues, but then stressed how “irresponsible” it would be to “eliminate the negative factor even by buying it down incrementally.” The committee emphasized how strapped the state’s budget is, but it never acknowledged how cuts in school finance the last few years have rescued the rest of the state’s budget, or how strapped districts’ local budgets now are.

So, the Battle for the Negative Factor is on, and the JBC now holds the high ground. CASB cannot win this battle without your help. We need school boards to join CASB in this crucial effort and to help us grow our army of advocates ... Not by holding a sign on the capitol steps, but by sharing your district stories in person with your legislator: elected official to elected official.

Join us for breakfast and a briefing, followed by a visit to the Colorado Legislature to see the House and Senate in action. Gain more visibility for local school boards and connect with education leaders to help ensure they are kept informed about the issues that matter to your district! To register, visit the [Day at the Capitol webpage](#).



Feb. 20-21, Denver

Join state education experts and leaders to hear their insights on education legislation and Colorado’s political landscape and learn how to advocate effectively on behalf of your students. To learn more or register, visit the [Winter Legislative Conference webpage](#).

Executive session bill: Here we go again ... on our own

One of the few high points from last session occurred when Rep. Garcia, a Democrat from Pueblo, crossed party lines to kill a bill (HB 13-1313) that would have required all local governments to, among other things, record executive session conversations with their attorney and keep a “privilege log” identifying the subject matter of the communications so that any party could challenge the claim of attorney-client privilege and obtain access to the tapes and the underlying board discussion.

Rally the Rurals!

Colorado Legislative Rural Caucus announces 20 charter members. The first meeting will be at noon Monday, Feb. 3, in Room 0107 at the Colorado State Capitol.

CASB opposed the bill for fear of the chilling effects the recording and reporting requirements would have on the attorney-client conversations and we worked hard, along with other local government associations, to kill the bill. That’s the good news.

The bad news is that the bill is back in the form of HB 14-1110. To make matters worse, the sponsor, Rep. Penniston, has narrowed its scope so that the changes to the executive session laws apply only to school boards. We are highly offended by this approach and deeply concerned by the fact that we do not have the political force of the other local governments behind us

as we lobby against this bill. The bill will be heard by the House Education on Monday, Feb. 3, and we will likely call on some of you and/or your attorneys to help us in our fight.

UPDATED: Must-have tools and resources for school board members

1. **Read** the [negative factor resolution](#) adopted by CASB’s Delegate Assembly. **Coming soon:** A sample resolution local boards can adopt in their own districts, along with with an easy-to-understand fact sheet and talking points on the negative factor to help boards prepare their resolution and lobby their legislators and local communities.
2. **Start** the negative factor conversation with your board with an [Individualized Lobbying Plan \(ILP\)](#) and sample meeting agenda item.
3. **Educate** yourself about the [financial impact the negative factor has on your district](#). Note: These numbers are subject to change. Pay special attention to columns E and N.

- 4. **Find** your senator and representative on the Colorado state [legislator map](#).
- 5. **Track** bills and learn about CASB’s position on education-related legislation through [Colorado Capitol Watch](#).
- 6. **Tune** in to [Jane Urschel's legislative roundup podcast](#).
- 7. **Stay** apprised of education-related legislative news by [signing up for a daily newsletter](#) from Chalkbeat Colorado (formerly EdNews Colorado).
- 8. **Know** the [Senate Education Committee](#) and [House Education Committee](#) members, schedules and calendars.
- 9. **Watch and listen** to floor sessions and committee meetings on the [Colorado Channel webpage](#).
- 10. **Read** the Advocacy chapter of CASB’s [2013 School Board Member Leadership Workbook](#).

Want to help support BillBoard?
 Sponsorship information is available at the [CASB Underwriting Opportunities webpage](#).

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