

CESA 12 PAC

Legislative Update

May 16, 2014

Political Backdrop

- Most Challenging Session Ever for Public Education
- Damaging Legislation a Threat to Pass Right Up to the End of Session
- Senate/Assembly Split on Major Education Issues Worked to Our Advantage
- Race for Governor – Walker vs. Burke; What’s the Outlook?
- Lots of Legislative Retirements
- Schultz, Ellis and Kestell Decline to Run; A Great Loss for Public Education

2013-14 Legislative Session – Major Issues

- Given the Environment, What We Accomplished was Incredible
- Common Core – SB 619; SAA Strongly Opposed; March 6 Senate Ed. Hearing
- School Accountability – Governor Signed “Slimmed-Down” SB 286; SAA Support
- Charter School Expansion – SAA Helped Kill SB 76 and AB 549
- Special Needs Vouchers – SB 525; SAA Opposed
- Special Ed Subs – SB 271, Aid for Private Contracting, Governor Signed
- Remove 180-day Requirement – SB 589; Governor Signed
- Fund 80 – SB 478; Governor Signed; SAA Made Bill Better

Things to Watch in the Near-Term

- Report of Rural Schools Task Force
- Course Options Law
- Leg Council Studies on SAGE, WTCS, TIF Districts
- School Fund Balance

What Did We Do Well? How?

- More SAA Members in Active Communication with Legislators than Ever Before
- Our Rural, Senate GOP Strategy Worked Better Than I Could Have Imagined
- The Signature Event – March 6th Press Conference and Public Hearing on SB 619
- Showed GOP Majority We Can Deliver
- Showed Our Firewall We Will Support Them
- Showed SAA Members the Impact We Can Have Even in Difficult Environment
- After March 6th, “Bad” K-12 Legislation Got No Traction

Preparing for Next Session

- Recognize the New Political Reality
- WEAC is Essentially Gone – Voucher Proponents the New 800-lb. Gorilla
- Democrats Can’t Help Us Much Right Now
- Dependent on a Handful of Moderate GOP Senators – Our Firewall
- 2014 Elections: Environment Will Likely Get Worse Next Session
- More Leadership Expected of SAA – We Cannot Stand Pat as Political Organization

- We Must Expand K-12 Advocates' Capacity to Influence Public Policy
- We Have Little Time to Lose!!!

These Things We Must Do

- Some Things We Simply Must Do Better
- You Cannot Stand Pat With Your Current Grassroots Lobbying Effort
- SAA Members Must Build Stronger Relationships With Their Legislators
- We Must Do a Better Job of Helping K-12 Champions Get Elected (Our Firewall)
- We Also Must Build Influence in a New Way
- Collaborations/Partnerships With Groups Who Share SAA Principles/Objectives
- Create and Promote a Compelling Vision for Public Education
- Consistent, Positive Messaging About the Value and Effectiveness of Public Schools

Internal SAA Conclusions

- We Lack Critical Public Relations Capacity to Meet the Challenge
- We Lack Research-Based Education Policy Expertise As Well
- SAA Already Has Solutions in Place for Both of These Needs

Where Do We Go From Here?

- You Are the Chief Advocates for the Children in Your Districts
- Political Influence is a Part of Your Job Description
- You Are the SAA's Most Effective Lobbyist
- We Did Our Best Work Ever This Session . . . **It Made a Huge Difference!!!**
- Organizationally & Individually We Must Ratchet Up Our Effort
- Nobody is Coming on a White Horse to Save Public Education
- SADDLE UP!!
- If Not Us, Who?

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