

**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Seventy-Seventh Session  
March 20, 2013**

The Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Joyce Woodhouse at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 20, 2013, in Room 2149 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412E of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Chair  
Senator Aaron D. Ford, Vice Chair  
Senator Ruben J. Kihuen  
Senator Barbara K. Cegavske  
Senator Donald G. Gustavson

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Ben Kieckhefer, Senatorial District No. 16  
David R. Parks, Senatorial District No. 7

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Pepper Sturm, Policy Analyst  
Sara Weaver, Committee Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Joyce Haldeman, Associate Superintendent, Clark County School District  
Dotty Merrill, Ed.D., Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Boards  
Carolyn Edwards, President, Board of School Trustees, District F, Clark County School District  
Nick Vassiliadis, Associate, Government and Public Affairs, R&R Partners Foundation  
Vanessa Spinazola, Director, Legislative and Advocacy, American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada

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Julianna Jaime, Ambassador, Flip the Script  
Mary Pierczynski, Ed.D., Nevada Association of School Superintendents  
Marcia Calloway, Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education and  
School Improvement Programs, Department of Education  
Lonnie Shields, Assistant Executive Director, Nevada Association of School  
Administrators  
Stephen Augspurger, Executive Director, Clark County Association of School  
Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees  
Lindsay Anderson, Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County School District  
Ron Dreher, Washoe School Principals' Association  
Chris Saldaña, Flip the Script  
Lee Lee Stephenson, Flip the Script  
Latoya Holman, Director, Projects and Community Outreach, R&R Partners  
Foundation  
Ron Quinn  
Deborah H. Cunningham, Deputy Superintendent for Administrative and Fiscal  
Services, Department of Education  
Ruben R. Murillo, Jr., President, Clark County Education Association

**Chair Woodhouse:**

The Committee will begin with the work session on Senate Bill (S.B.) 102.

**SENATE BILL 102**: Revises provisions relating to the Kenny C. Guinn Memorial  
Millennium Scholarship. (BDR 34-837)

**Pepper Sturm (Policy Analyst):**

The Committee has received the work session document (Exhibit C) for S.B. 102. The bill expands the requirement that the Board of Trustees of the College Savings Plans of Nevada award a Kenney C. Guinn Memorial Millennium Scholarship (Memorial Scholarship) annually to two seniors or rising seniors. The scholarships are provided to one student enrolled in an academic institution in northern Nevada and to one student enrolled in southern Nevada. The bill lists the eligible institutions in each geographic category.

There are two proposed amendments to the bill to change existing language of *Nevada Revised Statute* (NRS) 396.945, subsection 1. The first proposed amendment authorizes the Board of Trustees of the College Savings Plans of Nevada (Board) to expand the list of colleges and universities. The second proposed amendment provides that if the Board adds a new college or university

to the list in NRS 396.945, subsection 1, the Board must designate the college or university as an institution that represents the northern or southern portion of the State. This amendment ensures the Memorial Scholarship continues to be awarded to one student attending school in northern Nevada and to one student attending school in southern Nevada.

**Senator Cegavske:**

There are students who attend a community college for the first two years of their education but complete their degree in education at a college or university. May these students use the Memorial Scholarship for community college?

**Mr. Sturm:**

I believe the language drafted by the Legal Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau, in [Exhibit C](#), page 2, includes community colleges.

**Senator Cegavske:**

Do you believe it is covered or it is not covered? I want to ensure community colleges are included in this bill.

**Senator Kieckhefer:**

The Memorial Scholarship is a subset of the Kenny C. Guinn Millennium Scholarships program. The Memorial Scholarship targets only students entering their senior year of their course of study for a degree in education. Any community college that has a bachelor's degree in education qualifies under this bill.

SENATOR CEGAVSKE MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED  
S.B. 102.

SENATOR KIHUEN SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Chair Woodhouse:**

The hearing on S.B. 164 is open.

**SENATE BILL 164**: Revises provisions governing safe and respectful learning environments in public schools. (BDR 34-454)

**Senator David R. Parks (Senatorial District No. 7):**

Senate Bill 164 deals with the issue of harassment, intimidation, cyber-bullying and bullying in the public school system. We want to remain watchful of this important issue. Nevada ranks high among all states in the positive way it handles these issues. Individuals have suggested revisions to the language in the bill. I am sure we can address and resolve those concerns.

**Senator Cegavske:**

If the bill is amended, I would like to join the sponsorship of the bill. What is the explanation of the proposed amendments of the Clark County School District (CCSD)?

**Senator Parks:**

Attendees today will address their proposed amendments. In addition, others have indicated they would like their names added to the bill.

**Joyce Haldeman (Associate Superintendent, Clark County School District):**

Clark County School District (CCSD) is supportive of this bill; however, CCSD has a proposed amendment ([Exhibit D](#)).

There will be ramifications for students who intentionally and falsely report bullying, and there will be ongoing changes for reporting actual incidents of bullying. We think it is important that the definition of bullying be consistent with definitions used across the Country. There are three components in the definition of bullying: intentional abuse; repeated abuse; and exploitation of an imbalance of power. We want to ensure these components are included in the bill's definition. The NRS 388.122 defines bullying. We would like to remove the language "one time" from the definition. We think one incident could be because of a mistake or a misunderstanding. Bullying must occur more than once, and it must be intentional. In addition, we want to add language regarding exploitation of an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim. The author of the bill is supportive of CCSD's proposed amendment.

The CCSD has a Webpage "Say No to Bullying" for each campus, making it is easy for a student or parent to report incidents of bullying. Last school year,

there were 1,800 reports via this Webpage. Of those reports, 600 were found to be invalid while the remaining 1,200 were resolved by various means, including and up to suspension or expulsion. We recognize the importance of this reporting, and we have no objection to the reporting requirements of the bill with one exception. In August 2014, CCSD is implementing its new student information system. Until that time, it will be difficult for CCSD to do the reporting required in the bill.

The CCSD has many bullying-awareness resources through Vegas PBS that we would be happy to make available to other districts throughout the State.

**Senator Ford:**

I performed a search on the Internet regarding the exploitation language in the proposed amendment. You are correct that many school districts across the Country include this language in the definition of bullying. Are there circumstances regarding bullying that would be excluded because of the proposed amendment?

**Ms. Haldeman:**

We want to ensure the definition of bullying is not so broad. Sometimes students get in arguments or they say unkind things to each other, so we do not want those kinds of incidents to be construed as bullying. We want to ensure that incidents of actual bullying, and the victims of bullying, are addressed. The exploitation of an imbalance of power must be included in the definition of bullying because that differentiates between incidents of bullying and mere arguments between students. We want to ensure we can accurately describe when bullying has taken place.

**Senator Cegavske:**

When there is a single bullying incident, is it better to stop that one student from continuing his or her bullying behavior?

**Ms. Haldeman:**

We do not give a free pass to students. For example, there are consequences for students who fight on campus. Those consequences will not change. We do not want to report an incident as a bullying incident until the incident fits the pattern of bullying.

**Senator Cegavske:**

Is it only when incidents are repeated that it is considered bullying?

**Ms. Haldeman:**

There must be intention, repetition and exploitation of the balance of power for an incident to be considered bullying.

**Senator Cegavske:**

I believe CCSD is a model in its handling bullying issues, and I recommend that CCSD's programs be presented to the Education Commission of the States (ECS). The ECS is often seeking model information that other states can use. I would like Ms. Haldeman to present the programs CCSD has developed to the ECS.

**Ms. Haldeman:**

We are proud of the things we are doing, but we cannot take full credit for all programs in CCSD. We have partnerships with other groups that have developed programs. One of these partnerships is with R&R Partners Foundation. They are responsible for development of the materials we have. The successful "Flip the Script" program was developed by R&R Partners Foundation. However, we need to consult with them before making a commitment to present any information to the ECS.

**Dotty Merrill, Ed.D. (Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Boards):**

The Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB) supports this bill, and we have presented three proposed amendments ([Exhibit E](#)) to the Committee.

The first proposed amendment addresses section 3 of the bill. The proposed amendment states that the board of trustees of each school district or governing body of each charter school must develop a plan to ensure the most effective method of instructional delivery with focus on the major areas. Some board members believe having an assembly during the "Week of Respect" may not be effective and may be counterproductive.

The second proposed amendment focuses on changes to language in section 6 of the bill. The NASB proposes that the period of time for providing training to new members of boards of trustees be extended. This will ensure there is an appropriate length of time for the NASB to provide the required training. The proposed amendment changes the language to provide training

6 months after the member begins his or her term of office or after the employee begins his or her employment. Following the 76th Session, we provided the opportunity for school board members to receive focused training on the issues of cyber-bullying, and we worked with a law firm to provide template language that school boards could use in their board policies regarding cyber-bullying. We cannot provide these opportunities within 90 days as the bill states, but we can within 6 months.

The third proposed amendment addresses language in section 7 of the bill. We propose that each administrator in each school within a school district or charter school be required to participate in mandatory training each 3 years unless the training is revised after he or she has participated in the training within 90 days of his or her appointment. This section of the bill pertains to training for principals only, but it should include all administrators, students, community members and others to stress that the school climate is about healthy, positive and connective relationships. We will not have bullying if we have that kind of school climate. We are also suggesting that training be provided each 3 years rather than annually unless the training is revised.

We support this bill, and we appreciate your consideration of our proposed amendments.

**Carolyn Edwards (President, Board of School Trustees, District F, Clark County School District):**

My objection to this bill is one of philosophy concerning the issue of prescribing specific types of training for elected officials. It is unclear how specific the training will be and how much training will be required for elected officials. I am concerned about the precedent we will be setting.

**Nick Vassiliadis (Associate, Government and Public Affairs, R&R Partners Foundation):**

The enforcement of anti-bullying policies should not be considered an additional burden on our schools. This is one of the primary responsibilities of a school. If we cannot keep students actively engaged in a healthy and safe learning environment, we cannot expect to educate them. The key way to address the problem of bullying is the collection of data. We do not have enough Nevada-specific data available to help schools in their efforts to maintain positive environments. That is why we believe that sections 1, 2 and 9 of the bill containing the reporting requirements are crucial to identifying and

preventing bullying in our State. We cannot assess the problem of bullying without accurate data. The R&R Partners Foundation is in support of S.B. 164. We believe the bill will provide the data necessary to understand underlying problems that may exist.

**Senator Cegavske:**

Are you willing to share your anti-bullying programs with the ECS?

**Mr. Vassiliadis:**

We would be honored to present our work to the ECS.

**Vanessa Spinazola (Director, Legislative and Advocacy, American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada):**

The American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada supports the bill, and I submit my written testimony ([Exhibit F](#)). We have one proposed amendment. We want students to feel comfortable reporting instances of bullying. We want to ensure the sexual orientation and gender identity of students is protected for those students who may not have communicated this matter to their parents.

Section 8, subsection 2 requires that a principal or designee provide notice of bullying to each pupil involved. There may be situations where gay students are reluctant to report bullying if it means their parents will be notified. Our proposed amendment is that the principal or designee meet with each pupil involved in the reported violation to design an appropriate parental notification process.

**Julianna Jaime (Ambassador, Flip the Script):**

I support S.B. 164 and submit my written testimony ([Exhibit G](#)) to the Committee. The topic of bullying is personal to me because I was bullied in elementary and middle school. I will read my written testimony.

**Mary Pierczynski, Ed.D. (Nevada Association of School Superintendents):**

We appreciate the continued effort to ensure we have safe learning environments in our schools throughout the State. We are supportive of S.B. 164 as amended by CCSD and the NASB.



**Marcia Calloway (Director, Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education and School Improvement Programs, Department of Education):**

The Department of Education (NDE) offers its qualified support for S.B. 164. We are in agreement with the importance of this bill for schools to be safe havens for student learning. Our concern resides with the additional data collection and training development.

This bill requires that the CCSD Equity and Diversity Education Department establish training programs in a variety of ways that have not been required in the past. Training programs must be established for school districts and their respective boards, so we need to ensure we develop training in conjunction with the school districts' needs. We support the proposed amendment to expand the training program to administrators. In addition, there is a requirement in the bill for NDE to establish a training program for annual school assemblies. We need to research these requirements to ensure we are using best practices in the development of the training modules for all districts.

There will be a requirement for additional data collection. A year ago, I spoke to the Senate Committee on Education, and I was forthright with my concerns about the reliability and validity of collected data. We know when we collect data, numbers can swing between intimidation and harassment from year to year. Schools self-report bullying data, but we must have training developed for the collection of data that is consistent and reliable. Since we will be required by this bill to expand data collection, training in proper data collection is important. We have only begun collecting data regarding suspensions and expulsions. The bill expands this reporting requirement. We want to ensure we are collecting reliable and valid data that can be used to make decisions. Because of the fiscal impact of the increased data collection and development of training programs, we need a person dedicated to performing this function.

**Lonnie Shields (Assistant Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Administrators):**

The Nevada Association of School Administrators supports S.B. 164. We had some concerns about the bill, but those have been addressed in [Exhibit E](#). The emphasis on professional development has come to the fore. This illustrates the importance of professional development in ensuring these laws become successful.

**Stephen Augspurger (Executive Director, Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees):**

There is nothing as important as creating safe and positive learning environments for students. The Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees supports S.B. 164 as amended by NASB.

**Lindsay Anderson (Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County School District):**

I represent Washoe County School District (WCSD), and we support S.B. 164. Our board has developed policies pertaining to safe and respectful learning environments. Our district has its own "Flip the Script" program. In addition, we support the proposed amendments by CCSD and NASB.

**Ron Dreher (Washoe School Principals' Association):**

I represent the Washoe School Principals' Association, and we support S.B. 164. We ask the Committee to support the bill along with the proposed amendments.

**Chris Saldaña (Flip the Script):**

I have been a television anchor and reporter for approximately 9 years in southern Nevada. One of the topics I have covered over the last year is the rate of suicides, and I have wondered whether that can be linked to bullying. I do not believe suicide can be linked to bullying in every case, but I have met parents, students and friends of those who have ended their lives. Many of them witnessed their friends being bullied before committing suicide. This bill must hold school board members, administrators and teachers accountable for quality of reporting. I am curious as to how many of these school board members, administrators and teachers are on social media. The problem of bullying is widespread on social media. The town hall meetings using "Flip the Script" give students a venue to express their experiences. Training every 3 years, as suggested in [Exhibit E](#), only delays where we should be as a state. We need to keep the training as relevant as possible. This training is crucial to save lives. I am passionate about this because of the stories I have covered in my career.

**Lee Lee Stephenson:**

I graduated from Las Vegas Academy, CCSD, and I work with the "Flip the Script" movement. I am actively involved in middle school and high school choir

and theater productions. Through social media, I am able to interact with students on a different level than some of you might. It is a bit disturbing and humbling that students come to me with their stories of being bullied. If teachers knew how to handle bullying, students would feel more comfortable bringing their concerns to teachers. Cyber-bullying is one of the most vicious forms of bullying because it is difficult for students to defend themselves from such attacks. Students come to me daily, and I wish they felt comfortable taking these issues to their teachers. The "Flip the Script" program encourages students to express themselves and to be proud of themselves. The goal is for students to have a safer environment in which to learn.

**Latoya Holman (Director, Projects and Community Outreach, R&R Partners Foundation):**

I support S.B. 164. I see the collaboration happening in our community. The R&R Partners Foundation has formed an anti-bullying council in Nevada comprised of the CCSD Equity and Diversity Education Department, the Anti-Defamation League, Nevada PEP, Welcoming Schools, Operation Respect, the PTA and the Nevada Association of Student Councils. The goal of the council is to reduce bullying incidents and review reports we are provided. Reporting is critical to us, and I support the collection of valid and reliable data.

Teachers and administrators must have heightened levels of preparedness about bullying-related suicides. We have thousands of "Flip the Script" ambassadors. Although we have a procedure to follow, we would like to be better prepared for the emotional ramifications of such incidents. Training is critical, and we need to support our teachers. We need to ensure we are investing in teacher training on a regular basis.

The "Week of Respect" is a success. It is an opportunity to conduct a mandatory assembly to ensure bullying is addressed in a group forum, and it keeps the topic of bullying in the forefront.

**Ron Quinn:**

I am a member of the Board of Governors for the Human Rights Campaign. Bullying is a very personal issue to me, and it is on the agenda of the Human Rights Campaign. It is very important for our youth to know they can speak to someone who will listen to their concerns. There must be proper training for teachers and administrators. In addition, we need valid and reliable data collection to track incidents of bullying. Bullying today is not the same as it

was when we were children. Bullying today takes place 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and bullying follows children wherever they go. Nevada is a leader in antidiscrimination. This bill will assist us in continuing to be a leader in this regard.

**Senator Parks:**

Thank you for hearing S.B. 164. I will work with all parties to develop an amendment to present to the Committee.

**Chair Woodhouse:**

We will hear S.B. 207.

**SENATE BILL 207**: Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR 34-196)

**Mr. Sturm:**

This bill has four objectives: the unification of our system of student assessments; the elimination of outdated educational programs and reports; the clarification of data on bullying in the statewide longitudinal data system; and the improvement of Nevada's biennial educational technology needs assessment.

The Nevada student assessment system was created by the Nevada Education Reform Act of 1997. The system was built upon a norm-referenced assessment model. In 2010, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers coordinated a state-led initiative to develop the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The CCSS were adopted for use in Nevada in 2010, and our State began a transition toward a standards-based assessment system.

During the 2011-2012 interim, the Legislative Committee on Education received testimony from NDE recommending that the State statutes relating to assessments be amended and consolidated to reflect that the system is standards-based. Dr. Keith Rheault, former Superintendent of Public Instruction, retired during the 2011-2012 interim. Before retiring, Dr. Rheault recommended several outdated and duplicative reports and programs be removed from statute. The Legislative Committee on Education agreed that statutory changes were warranted.

The Legislative Committee on Education also heard concerns about data on bullying. The NDE's System of Accountability Information for Nevada (SAIN) contains data that must be reviewed by schools to develop their plans for improvement. Testimony presented to the Legislative Committee on Education indicated that data collected about incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment and intimidation may not be comparable across school districts because of different classification triggers.

The Legislative Committee on Education heard testimony on NRS 388.795. The statute requires that each even-numbered school year the Commission on Educational Technology conduct needs assessments of technology in public schools. Historically, the budget for the needs assessment has been included in the budget for the Legislative Committee on Education. However, the Legislative Committee on Education recommended that future budget requests follow the normal process through NDE's budget accounts.

There are two reasons for this recommendation: First, it will expedite access to funds needed during the spring semester of even-numbered years. Because the first meeting of the interim committee is not authorized until November 1 or later in odd-numbered years, it is difficult for the funds to be approved, for a consultant to be selected, for the work to be completed and for the final report to be submitted to the interim committee by the following May 1. Second, moving the funding for this assessment to the NDE budget reduces the likelihood of duplicative funding, which may happen when funds for a single entity are contained in the budget accounts of separate agencies.

The Legislative Committee on Education determined there was no formal data about broadband access among school districts in Nevada. They made this determination following review of the technology report and following testimony from school districts about their progress in implementing State- and district-level technology plans.

Based on these findings, the Legislative Committee on Education is recommending four major amendments to S.B. 207.

First, the bill amends NRS to reflect that the assessment system in Nevada is unified as a standards-based system. This incorporates all examinations including the State writing exam.

Second, the bill removes the requirement for certain education-related programs and reports that are outdated or duplicative including: an annual report of truancy disposition; a State-level summary report of accountability; reports of school-level plans for progressive discipline; and statutes related to empowerment schools.

Third, the bill includes a transitory provision requiring the NDE to analyze data in the SAIN system related to reports of bullying, cyber-bullying, harassment or intimidation, and to ensure reliability of the data. A report of their findings will be presented to the Legislative Committee on Education during the upcoming interim.

Fourth, the bill requires that the even-numbered school year report on educational technology be submitted on May 1. In addition, the bill includes a transitory provision requiring the 2014 needs assessment to include a report about broadband access in Nevada school districts.

**Senator Cegavske:**

I have two concerns about the bill. First, the bill includes provisions that remove statutes related to empowerment schools. Are we removing these statutes because we no longer have empowerment schools, or are we calling them by another name?

Second, in section 23, subsection 1 there is a recommendation that the State Board of Education (SBE) establish academic standards and exams for Grades 3 through 8. In section 23, subsection 5 the bill addresses scoring of reading, math and science but not writing. What will replace the high school proficiency test?

**Mr. Sturm:**

The bill eliminates empowerment school provisions from statute. This recommendation was made in the 76th Session.

**Senator Cegavske:**

We have heard positive testimony from teachers and principals in the past about the effectiveness of empowerment schools. Are we discontinuing this program?

**Chair Woodhouse:**

The elimination of the empowerment school program is in this bill. There are several bills that will be coming before this Committee that address empowerment schools. In addition, there are a number of Assembly bills regarding a replacement for the high-proficiency exam.

**Deborah H. Cunningham (Deputy Superintendent for Administrative and Fiscal Services, Department of Education):**

Senate Bill 207 includes proposals made in March 2012. Last Session, S.B. No. 197 of the 76th Session was enacted, and the education governance has changed. The issue of streamlining, planning and reporting continues to be important.

The first five sections of S.B. 207 recommend eliminating reports that are duplicative or where the burden of preparing and reviewing the reports exceeds the benefit. Section 14, subsection 2, eliminates the requirement that the Commission on Educational Excellence prepare an annual report describing their activities and certain analyses relating to public schools. Originally, the Commission on Educational Excellence was established to oversee a grant, and that grant was eliminated in 2010. The NDE is recommending that a number of education commissions and councils be consolidated under and overseen by the SBE.

Section 18 proposes to eliminate the requirement that the superintendent compile certain reports made by the governing body of each charter school. The need for these reports is duplicative in the school accountability report cards, in the Adequate Yearly Progress Analyses in Nevada and in the New Education Performance System being developed by the NDE.

Section 22 proposes to eliminate the requirement that NDE prepare a written report describing any discrepancy in the proficiency of pupils on certain examinations. It also proposes to eliminate the requirement that the Council to Establish Academic Standards for Public Schools review and evaluate the report. This requirement is duplicative of the school accountability report cards, the New Education Performance System and the consolidation of councils and commissions under a single advisory council reporting to the SBE.

Section 38 proposes to eliminate the requirement of a school attendance council established by the boards of school trustees of certain school districts. These

councils are required to provide annual truancy reports. This requirement is duplicative of the school accountability report cards.

Section 39 proposes to eliminate the requirement that the principal of each public school establish a plan relating to the discipline of pupils and the requirement for additional reports relating to those plans. The NDE lacks the capacity to review and analyze these reports. These reports need to be in place, but they do not need to be submitted.

Section 19, subsection 7, includes a requirement that the Superintendent of Public Instruction prepare a written compilation of certain assessments relating to educational technology. Senate Bill 207 proposes that the report be transmitted to the Governor and the Budget Division of the Department of Administration on or before May 1 of each even-numbered year.

Several sections in the bill include conforming technical changes. We are in the process of examining our next generation assessment system. We are part of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium with a group of states to develop assessments to be consistent with CCSS.

The NRS 385.34692, subsection 1, requires the SBE to prepare an annual report of accountability and a summary of that report. Section 3 of this bill proposes to eliminate the requirement that the SBE prepare the summary.

Section 41 proposes to eliminate existing law establishing empowerment schools.

The NDE has two objections to the bill. First, there is a fiscal note related to the incorporation of the additional data elements on bullying into our Statewide Longitudinal Data System. Second, NDE is opposed to eliminating the empowerment school statute. The flexibility provided with the empowerment school program for increased results in school improvement is positive, and NDE does not agree with its elimination.

**Senator Ford:**

What is the rationale for the elimination of empowerment school statutes?



**Ms. Cunningham:**

I do not know the answer to that question. Empowerment schools had funding tied to them, and the funding ended. Empowerment schools have flexibility over their budgets, their hiring and management of their schedules. Those are valuable tools for school improvement that we need to do more of, not less. The empowerment school concept is good, and Superintendent Guthrie and I are interested in continuing this program.

**Senator Ford:**

I agree with the concept of empowerment schools. Has there been any effort to review the minutes of past meetings to determine the rationale for the elimination of the empowerment school statutes?

**Ms. Cunningham:**

I believe the elimination of empowerment schools was relative to funding, but I will try to determine the rationale and provide you with that information.

**Senator Gustavson:**

I support empowerment schools, too. What is the rationale for eliminating them?

**Mr. Sturm:**

My recollection is that there was going to be a pilot program of empowerment schools. Clark County School District took the lead and formed empowerment schools. They provided the funding that the pilot program was originally going to provide before the funding was reverted.

There was discussion among the districts about whether there was a need to have empowerment schools in statutes as a State program since we were not going to have a State pilot program of empowerment schools. We had CCSD forming empowerment schools on their own. There were no funds for the pilot program of empowerment schools.

**Ms. Cunningham:**

The statutes are permissive and do not require schools to be empowerment schools. This is a concept NDE would like to see developed, not eliminated.

**Ms. Haldeman:**

Clark County School District supports the bill with the exception of the elimination of empowerment schools. The provisions in the bill to eliminate

empowerment schools have to do with funding. The original funding ended when budgets cuts were instituted. Clark County School District was the only district that had empowerment schools. We believe empowerment schools have a place in the NRS because there are other bills this Session that are dependent on empowerment school statutes. The existing empowerment school model we have is morphing into an innovative school model. Empowerment schools were funded by CCSD through private sources and our general fund. We would like to retain empowerment school statutes.

**Dr. Merrill:**

I can clarify the elimination of reports enumerated in this bill. During the 76th Session, several bills about education reports emerged, and there were concerns those bills would eliminate reports that were needed for various reasons. This concern led to consideration by the interim Legislative Committee on Education in 2012. The bill before us has the recommendations from the Legislative Committee on Education. We support the elimination of the unnecessary work that is being done repeatedly in all school districts.

The NASB supports the language that includes unified standards-based assessment and removal of the language that is no longer applicable.

**Ruben R. Murillo, Jr. (President, Clark County Education Association):**

I speak in opposition of removing the language regarding empowerment schools. Before the U.S. Department of Education provided School Improvement Grants to schools, Clark County Education Association came to an agreement with CCSD to restructure our schools. The agreement meant that teachers had to reapply for their positions at two of our schools. Our empowerment process was based on Boston's Empowerment Through Education and other successful pilot programs across the Country. We support the empowerment school program because it provides more autonomy for schools in terms of governing, budgeting and staffing. Staff could be reassigned to schools during the course of the school year or choose not to remain in an empowerment school. A key component of empowerment schools is the link they have to community partners. The original funding was based on the benchmarks the school had created. Empowerment schools create an atmosphere where there is decision making by teachers and parents.

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In addition, the flexibilities we are seeking in school reporting are those that promote better student performance, and reporting that provides for additional accountability.

We hope the Committee will continue with the program of empowerment schools because they promote school reform and collaboration between all members of the community.

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**Chair Woodhouse:**

The meeting is adjourned at 6:12 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Sara Weaver,  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Chair

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

<b><u>EXHIBITS</u></b>				
<b>Bill</b>	<b>Exhibit</b>		<b>Witness / Agency</b>	<b>Description</b>
	A	1		Agenda
	B	6		Attendance Roster
S.B. 102	C	4	Pepper Sturm	Work Session Document
S.B. 164	D	1	Joyce Haldeman	Proposed Amendment
S.B. 164	E	3	Dotty Merrill	Proposed Amendment
S.B. 164	F	1	Vanessa Spinazola	Written Testimony
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