

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Seventy-Ninth Session
May 17, 2017**

The joint meeting of the Assembly Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Vice Chair Woodhouse at 4:07 p.m. on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, in Room 1214 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4401 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/79th2017.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Moises (Mo) Denis, Chair
Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Vice Chair
Senator Tick Segerblom
Senator Pat Spearman
Senator Don Gustavson
Senator Scott Hammond
Senator Becky Harris

SENATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

None



ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Chairman
Assemblywoman Amber Joiner, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson
Assemblywoman Olivia Diaz
Assemblyman Chris Edwards
Assemblyman Edgar Flores
Assemblyman Ozzie Fumo
Assemblywoman Lisa Krasner
Assemblyman William McCurdy II
Assemblywoman Brittney Miller
Assemblyman Keith Pickard
Assemblywoman Jill Tolles
Assemblywoman Melissa Woodbury

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblywoman Heidi Swank (excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Todd Butterworth, Committee Policy Analyst
Amelie Welden, Committee Policy Analyst
Asher Killian, Committee Counsel
Karly O'Krent, Committee Counsel
Betty Kaminski, Committee Manager
Linda Hiller, Committee Secretary
Shelley Kyle, Committee Secretary
Trinity Thom, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Pat Skorkowsky, Superintendent, Clark County School District
Steve Canavero, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education
Traci Davis, Superintendent, Washoe County School District
Mary Pierczynski, representing Elko County School District
Stephen Augspurger, Executive Director, Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees

John Vellardita, Executive Director, Clark County Education Association
Chris Daly, Deputy Executive Director of Government Relations, Nevada State Education Association
Sylvia Lazos, Policy Director, Educate Nevada Now
Nancy E. Brune, Executive Director, Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities
Lisa Morris Hibbler, Director of Youth Development and Social Innovation, City of Las Vegas
Tiffany Tyler, Chief Executive Officer, Communities in Schools of Nevada
Anna Slighting, representing Honoring Our Public Education, Las Vegas, Nevada
Jessica Ferrato, representing Nevada Association of School Boards
Dee-Ann Roberts, Vice President of Advocacy, Nevada Parent Teacher Association
Brent Husson, President, Nevada Succeeds
Jonas R. Peterson, Chief Executive Officer, Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance
Guillermo Vasquez, Executive Director, Education Support Employee Association
Steven Conger, representing City of Mesquite
Phil Kaiser, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Edgar Patino, Secretary-Treasurer, Latin Chamber of Commerce Nevada Inc., Las Vegas, Nevada
Felicia Ortiz, Appointee, District 3, State Board of Education
Lou Markouzis, Principal, Mary and Zel Lowman Elementary School
Anthony Nunez, Principal, Orr Middle School
Richard A. Derrick, Chief Financial Officer and Assistant City Manager, City of Henderson
Lindsey Dalley, Member, Moapa Valley Community Education Advisory Board
David Gardner, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Stephen Silberkraus, Private Citizen, Henderson, Nevada
Alicia Contreras, State Director, Mi Familia Vota

Vice Chair Woodhouse:

Welcome to the joint meeting of the Senate Committee on Education and the Assembly Committee on Education. [Roll was called. Rules and protocol were explained.] We have one item on the agenda today, Senate Bill 178.

Senate Bill 178: Revises provisions relating to the funding formula for K-12 public education. (BDR 34-792)

Senator Moises (Mo) Denis, Senate District No. 2:

I appreciate everyone getting together today to discuss Senate Bill 178. This bill modifies provisions related to the funding formula for K-12 education. Before I get into my formal presentation, I would like Assemblywoman Diaz to make some brief comments. I think the presentation and testifiers will answer all of your questions, but if you have any questions afterward, that would be great.

We have been working on this bill for a few months with a large group of individuals that represent school districts, teachers, parents, legislators, and others. Four legislators have been working on this. It is exciting to talk about something that can be a game-changer for education. Assemblywoman Diaz will talk about some of the successes she is seeing in the Zoom school program. Assemblyman Thompson will then talk about the Victory school program. That plays a big part in what we will talk about for this particular bill.

Assemblywoman Olivia Diaz, Assembly District No. 11:

Today I am here to speak to you about the groundbreaking work that we, as a Legislature, along with the leadership of the Governor, have been able to do for education in our state through the advancement of the Zoom schools. That happened in the 2013 Session. In that session, as in every session, we had a finite amount of money to allocate and figure out where we could make the most strategic and targeted investment to ensure our students are thriving in our schools. In 2013, we formed a cadre with the Department of Education and the Office of the Governor. We got our minds together and thought about how to put our English language learners (ELLs) on a path to make them college-ready and career-ready by the time they exited our system.

Through many conversations, we came up with a prescriptive Zoom school program model, in which there was access to prekindergarten in underachieving schools with high populations of ELL students. We also said that, because sometimes we have huge kindergarten classes and there are many students at different language proficiency levels, it would make sense to ensure the kindergarten class sizes were manageable for the teachers to ensure they could differentiate their instruction.

We also made sure, per the Zoom schools program, that we established reading centers. We know English language learners do not usually have the ability to have that literacy support in the home. We needed to ensure they got support in school. Working all my years in schools in a district with very high ELL populations, I saw the value of extending the school year for them. When I worked in a year-round model versus a nine-month model, I saw that my students were able to keep up their growth and achievement versus having the summer slide by, while they were not in the school or putting their English language skills to use.

It was those four things that we put into the Zoom schools program. It has been very successful. The Department of Education has had an external auditor say that it has been a good model for us to continue to implement and to stay the course. I always love to see this chart that the Department of Education presented to us in one of our very first meetings. It speaks to the needs of our Hispanic and African-American students, and where they are in terms of reading on grade level as well as what their trajectory will be. Some of these numbers are still not where we want them. We would want to see that all 42 percent of Hispanic and African-American students were on that path to graduate from high school and enroll in a postsecondary institution.

I just wanted to talk to you about the history of the Zoom schools program. In 2013, we only had a finite number of dollars. We know that this very targeted, strategic investment is yielding great benefits in our students. We need to stay the course. As you will hear in a bit, this funding formula will allow us to expand that work to other schools.

Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Assembly District No. 17:

I also would like to echo the comments that Senator Denis and Assemblywoman Diaz have made so far. I want to reiterate the group has worked diligently for the past two months on this scenario. We wanted to carefully consider the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). It was enacted in December 2015 with a major emphasis on reducing achievement gaps between subgroups of students. Subgroups can be very subjective. It is how and what it looks like in your community. We have been working diligently at that.

Senator Denis wanted me to talk about the success of the Victory schools program. We know that Victory schools have only been around for a bit over two years. We wanted to look at the 20 poorest ZIP Codes throughout our state and look at the students who were not achieving. It has been proven that poverty and a lack of student achievements sometimes run hand in hand. What are the needs we need to bring forth?

I am pleased to talk about the highlights of J.E. Manch Elementary School and Mary and Zel Lowman Elementary School. They are in my district; they are sister schools. Sometimes we have schools that are essentially on the same street, but these are two schools housing over 1,000 students. We have that situation in a very low-income community in North Las Vegas. Both of their programs were able to receive just shy of \$1 million. What those two principals decided to do was to put their plan together. They know that the community is the community. That is the beauty of the Victory schools. You have to address many of the social needs of students. You cannot just give them books and instruction. You have to look at the holistic approach of what is going on with students in order for them to succeed. I am very proud of those elementary schools.

This weekend, we were planting a community garden. We have been able to incorporate help from the Air Force base, and parents are engaged. People saying that parents are disengaged is one thing that always disheartens me. These parents really were involved. To see some of those fathers out there with their daughters or sons, doing the best they could with a rake or shoveling dirt, was great. Some of us may think that is something small, but that is actually something big and bonding.

Last, my big hope for this joint hearing is that we want your input. We want the input from our two committees and our community. We have to make this right. The Nevada Plan was created the same year I was born, 1967 [Senate Bill 15 of the 54th Session, Statutes of Nevada, 889]. It is 50 years later, and we need to make it better. I think we have a great opportunity here, and I thank you for your time and attention.

Senator Denis:

One of the significant and cost-cutting efforts we have undertaken in recent years, and particularly during the last session, has been modernizing the state's funding formula for K-12 education so more money is allocated to students with greater needs, including those who are from lower-income families, who are English language learners, who have disabilities, or who are gifted and talented. The historical funding formula referred to as the Nevada Plan was created in 1967.

I would like to offer background to provide you with some needed context. In 1967, it was understood that a new funding formula was desperately needed, but it would be unsuccessful if it simply set out to rearrange the furniture. The Legislature supplemented the new funding formula with the local school support tax. The Nevada Plan was designed to yield equity among Nevada's increasingly diverse school districts. Washoe County and Clark County were quickly becoming urban and very different from other districts in the state. There was no real consideration given to the diversity of Nevada's student population, because frankly, it was not diverse.

Fast-forward 50 years, and Nevada is an entirely different place. Clark County now has twice as many K-12 students as it had people in 1967. Only 1 percent of the state's residents were Hispanic back then, and now it is 28 percent. Looking to the future, Hispanics make up 50 percent of Clark County students in grades K-3. Nevada was also a very middle-class state half a century ago. Now, nearly half of our students qualify for free and reduced price lunch. Clearly, Nevada needs a school funding formula that provides equity among not only its diverse school districts but also among its diverse student body. We also need to ensure that the funding we provide is adequate. This brings us to recent efforts to revise the Nevada Plan.

As a result of interim studies and discussions in previous legislative sessions, a plan was established to provide additional services to the four groups of students I mentioned earlier, through either a multiplier or additional weighted funding, which is expressed as a flat dollar amount. For reasons that go beyond today's discussion, stakeholders are in general agreement that weighted funding may be preferable to a multiplier, so S.B. 178 uses weighted funding.

As decided in the 2015 Session, the first group moving to the new weighted-funding formula have been students with disabilities. Beginning in the current fiscal year, students with disabilities are funded at 150 percent of the standard per-pupil rate. Weighted funding for gifted and talented students is approximately \$500 per student beyond the basic support guarantee. The impacts of this funding for the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) Program students are being studied. For the other two subgroups—low-income students and English language learners—the 2015 Legislature appropriated a substantial down payment to serve them through new and expanded categorical programs, and they have been monitoring the cost of educating these students.

The very successful Zoom schools program, which provides literacy and other support for young English learners, was doubled in size to \$100 million over the current biennium. An additional \$50 million was appropriated for the new Victory schools program, supporting extra literacy instruction and other supports at 35 of Nevada's poorest and most underperforming schools. The funds invested in these programs are not only moving the needle on academic progress, they are also making it possible over the long term for English learners and lower-income students to be more equitably funded in the Nevada Plan, which brings us to this bill.

After hours of discussion with many stakeholders, including legislators and educators, and with the assistance of staff, we have developed a conceptual amendment to S.B. 178 ([Exhibit C](#)) that represents a significant step forward in our collective, long-term goal of adequately and equitably serving these special populations of students in our state who require additional resources to meet their needs.

I would like to describe the contents of this bill as it will look with the proposed conceptual amendment. First and foremost, S.B. 178 continues funding for existing Victory and Zoom schools. The kids in these schools are thriving, and the work must continue. This bill also builds a policy bridge to the future by establishing a strategy for ramping up supports for those ELL and free or reduced-price lunch (FRL) students who do not currently benefit from weighted funding.

This scale represents the performance of Nevada's higher risk students a few years back [page 2, ([Exhibit D](#))]. For too long, too many of these students found themselves on the left side of the scale, performing below proficiency. Their schools needed additional targeted resources to meet their additional academic needs. A significant portion of those students are ELLs. Students eligible for FRL represent the green blocks. Over the past three years, we have made a big investment in Zoom and Victory programs to serve ELL and FRL-eligible students. It has paid dividends. Many of the targeted students have already moved to proficiency, and more are getting close. However, some of those ELL and FRL-eligible students are not getting the additional help they need because they do not attend a Zoom or Victory school. Thus, it will be difficult for them to move to the other side of the scale.

Senate Bill 178 proposes to address this issue. The premise of the stakeholder conversation around the funding formula was that, in order to have the greatest impact on student achievement with the new money available this session, we would need to prioritize the lowest-performing students first because there is not enough money to serve all of the students in these categories, and because some of these students are already performing well. This bill, with the proposed amendment ([Exhibit C](#)), calls for identifying and providing weighted funding for those ELL and FRL-eligible students who score in the bottom quartile on statewide assessments, but who do not attend a Zoom or Victory school. This ensures the new funding we appropriate gets to students who need it the most.

The weighted funding is \$1,200 per student, and it is funded only once if the student falls into both the ELL and FRL categories. There is no doubling; you get one or the other. Funding for these students will be further prioritized according to the school they attend. First, to those at one- and two-star schools, and then three-star schools, and so on. If we do not have enough funding to serve an entire tier of schools, we will fund those schools with the greatest number of ELL and FRL students performing in the bottom 25 percent.

This funding will build capacity at schools that are struggling to meet the needs of underperforming students. Hopefully it will also help those schools to attract teachers that are more effective. The services provided with this money will be largely based on the successful Zoom and Victory models. The statute will broadly outline services options with further detail provided in regulation. They will have to pick from a list of services available. As you can review in the conceptual amendment ([Exhibit C](#)), the schools will have some limited flexibility in choosing their service mix. The statewide evaluation process will measure and monitor the effectiveness of each approach. We will also ensure alignment between the services provided and any school or district achievement plan, such as the English language master plans.

There are things in place now that measure and provide guidance for these schools that would have to be followed. In instances where schools may not have enough qualifying students to reach necessary economies of scale, as may often be the case in very rural areas, the bill encourages coordinating services between multiple schools in order to maximize the benefit to students. For example, if they wanted to do a reading center, but they do not have enough students, in some areas you could combine several schools to provide those services, depending on how much money they have available to them.

We will measure the impact and effectiveness of these programs through performance targets and annual measurable objectives aligned with the Nevada school performance framework, and an external evaluator will be contracted to analyze the outcomes and report back to the Legislature, as we did over the last interim with the Victory and Zoom schools.

Looking at the next slide [page 5 ([Exhibit D](#))], this is where we believe S.B. 178 will lead us. Though it may take a few years, we can see that a few additional red and green blocks have moved to the right. These are the new students funded through the bill, but there may be additional students represented by the blue and purple blocks that have moved to the right side, who have also achieved proficiency as an ancillary benefit to having the new services, like reading centers, in their schools.

Just to reemphasize the point, the new funds committed this session will serve students and schools that have not achieved additional support thus far. Some may be served through a few new Zoom and Victory schools, but students will be in lower-performing schools with

lower concentrations of ELL and FRL students. There is still the possibility that not only will we maintain the Zoom and Victory schools that we have, but also we may have a chance to expand those within the funding that has been provided.

This bill provides a vital structural bridge between the progress made over the past three years and our long-term objective of higher achievement for these special groups of students. The last slide shows what we hope the future will look like. Students living in challenging circumstances and performing below proficiency would be the exception rather than the rule. To ensure our success, there is continued policy work to be done. We need to further refine the definition of the students to be served and further clarify the cost of providing appropriate services. Thus, the bill also calls for an important interim study to proceed with these tasks.

Specifically, the study will update the information contained in the 2012 study of a new method of funding for public schools in Nevada. It will establish an appropriate definition of "pupils at risk." It will recommend funding to serve these students. Right now, we are using FRL-eligibility as a proxy for identifying students who are at-risk, but we want to see if there is a better measure to use going forward. This interim study will also review the weighted funding needed for students with disabilities, establish an appropriate definition of "gifted and talented," provide the Legislature with information needed to ensure ongoing research is used for the most effective interventions, and ensure future new resources are targeted to students with the greatest need.

Administratively, this bill also requires a few important measures. First, it requires the State Board of Education to adopt regulations requiring districts and charter schools to report the number of students enrolled who are identified as ELLs and FRL-eligible. Second, it requires the Department of Education to prescribe annual, measurable objectives in performance targets to track school performance in supporting these students. Finally, districts and charter schools must submit an annual report to the Department of Education which details their results against the prescribed annual objectives and performance targets. It must submit a plan for meeting the objectives and targets in the ensuing school year.

There were a lot of early mornings and late hours involved, but the product of our work is both thoughtful and practical. I not only encourage your support for this bill, but also ask you to speak with our colleagues about what it does to undo the student achievement imbalance in our state.

Pat Skorkowsky, Superintendent, Clark County School District:

Clark County School District (CCSD) fully supports this bill. Over the past several weeks, my staff and I have worked with the sponsors of the bill and some amazing stakeholders on a transition plan to what we hope will ultimately be the foundation for the weighted funding formula. The conceptual amendment ([Exhibit C](#)) represents what we believe to be the best approach to serving our English learners and our most at-risk students with the limited funds as the state transitions to a weighted-funding formula. While this bill does not provide the

additional money needed to fully fund individual student weights, it is a critical first step to establishing this new approach to meeting student needs utilizing resources available to us today in law.

This categorical funding will serve over 25,000 students in CCSD who are not currently in Zoom or Victory schools. We have identified nonproficient students according to the state standardized assessments that require additional services to improve their academic achievement. By focusing on performance for our English language learners and our at-risk students, we can utilize the additional funds within the framework of our ELL master plan and individual school performance plans to provide meaningful services that will raise student achievement across the district.

We have modeled the potential impact of these funds in schools with small and large populations in each category to ensure the money amounts are enough either in a single building, or they can be used to cross a group of campuses to provide quality services. Our numbers show that this approach will work. We still contend that the weights must be fully funded in the future, and we commit to working with legislators and stakeholders in the coming years to see the weighted-funding formula implemented. It is important to note that this also complies with the recently signed Assembly Bill 469, which allows us to move forward with weighted funding in the capacity of the areas identified for ELL and FRL-eligible students. We can move forward with the reimplementation of the reorganization of CCSD.

Steve Canavero, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education:
I appreciate Assemblywoman Diaz's opening statements in taking a step back and reflecting on the tremendous progress that this state, under the Governor's leadership, has made in addressing issues related to underperformance and matters of equity across our state. We have a lot to be proud of. Over 70,000 students attend one of our 62 Zoom schools in Washoe or Clark County. We have over 47 Zoom grant schools in the rural districts serving English language learners. Since 2015, we have established 35 Victory schools across the state, serving children in poverty.

The problem statement as I saw it, and from a policy perspective, was how do we transition from the whole school models of Zoom and Victory to address English language learners and students in poverty with their academic achievement? How do we move from those models to a per-pupil investment that follows the student to the school site and is tied to specific evidence-based work. What we have learned from the Zoom and Victory programs is an invest-evaluate-reinvest model. We identify those programs that yield results for students. We can appreciate the costs of those programs and their return. We can make reinvestments. In 2015, we doubled the Zoom schools and established the Victory schools. That has given us a tremendous platform to learn from.

This bill is what I call "three steps down the path." It takes us a few additional steps past the Governor's recommended budget that I presented in January. It expanded the Victory schools program, but it contemplated the expansion of Zoom services, not necessarily Zoom schools, to English language learners across our state. Here we have an opportunity to take a few additional steps down that path and serve additional pupils that would otherwise not attend a Zoom or Victory school.

There are a few aspects of the bill that I will touch on briefly. Then I will give you an idea of the number of students we may be talking about. The first is section 1 of the conceptual amendment ([Exhibit C](#)). It continues to maintain these dollars as categorical. It ensures that we can identify the dollars that are being invested and trace those dollars as they move their way to the students and effective services. The second is aligned services. We learned a lot from Zoom and Victory programs. We have an appreciation for what works, and in some cases, there is built-in flexibility to leverage the economies of scale. All of those are aligned around services that we know work. Finally, there are accountability provisions within the bill that ensure we maintain a focus on closing the achievement gap and serving the bottom quartile of students who are receiving the benefit of these services through these dollars.

What does that look like? I know we have continued work to do on our numbers, but I will give you a framework. I have not reconciled this specifically to the language, but in spirit, we are aligned, working with the districts to understand what the number of students would be who are in the bottom quartile and who are not being served in Zoom or Victory schools. The reason I referenced that we should be proud is that there are many, many students across the state that would otherwise be in a one- or two-star school that are being served with Zoom or Victory programs. Across the state in one-, two-, and three-star schools, 32,000 to 35,000 pupils would benefit from this bill. I think we have some work to do in finalizing those numbers, but just to give you an indication, that is over 35,000 students, families, and communities that would be affected by these dollars.

In total, there are roughly 53,000 to 54,000 pupils across one- through five-star schools in the bottom quartile that are not in Zoom or Victory schools but who are English language learners or living in poverty. We are making significant headway in providing additional services to those students who need it the most.

Traci Davis, Superintendent, Washoe County School District:

Washoe County School District (WCSD) is in support of S.B. 178. We believe that the funding formula equitably directs resources to our students that need the most help. Weighted student funding is one way to address those needs. While the priority of WCSD is to address the needs of all students and stand strong that adequately funding all students is our priority, we understand when resources are limited, targeting students who are struggling the most is the pragmatic path forward. These additional resources will go to provide proven services to our struggling poor and second language students that are currently not being served under Zoom and Victory schools. In WCSD, 50 percent of our ELL students are not in Zoom schools, and 94 percent of our FRL-eligible students are not in Victory schools.

Examples of additional services we expect to provide with this money will include early learning, extended learning times through summer schools and intersessions, and ensuring our teachers are specially trained in how to teach our students who are either struggling with language or living in poverty.

Washoe County School District appreciates the Governor's request that the additional revenues go toward the weighted funding. While we have not been able to validate the eligible students in WCSD, we will continue to work with the Department of Education so that those numbers are validated to ensure eligible students in Washoe County are clearly funded. Providing this extra support for these students is critical to ensuring that we achieve our district goal of a 90 percent graduation rate by 2020. Moreover, for me, as a Nevadan raised in CCSD, this will ensure all children are being served so that we can get the very best and brightest students in Nevada.

Mary Pierczynski, representing Elko County School District:

I am here on behalf of Elko County School District Superintendent Jeff Zander, who participated in all of the meetings over the past month in preparation for this important topic about the weighted-funding formula. Mr. Zander represents the rural districts, and he wanted me to share with you a few thoughts. He said a number of discussions took place regarding the equity of whether funding should be differentiated between rural districts and more metropolitan areas. The cost of most services in rural districts is higher on a per-pupil basis as the result of the inability to consolidate services in many cases. This bill will provide additional resources that will reduce the application process and help the rural districts a great deal. Superintendent Zander also feels that this is an opportunity for us during the next biennium to study the process, distribution, programming, and results. Hopefully, we can come up with a plan to help all students throughout the state. Elko County School District is in support of S.B. 178. We believe rural students will benefit just as the metropolitan students will.

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

We are in strong support of this bill. I would like to thank the sponsors and the members of the work group. It was a collective effort, and I think we all learned a lot from listening to the comments of one another. This bill is unique because it does something that we have talked about doing for a long time: ensuring that the money proposed by this bill gets to the children who need it the most. The policy behind this bill is sound because it recognizes and acknowledges that it does not cost the same to educate all children. Some cost more, and this bill acknowledges that.

This bill does a number of things. Most importantly, it preserves the current Zoom and Victory programs. They will remain untouched, and we will see no changes in those. It makes use of money which is outside of the State Distributive School Account (DSA), so no one will find that they have less money because of this bill. In the current Zoom and Victory programs, money follows the school. It has been said that these programs have had

great success, but these programs serve only those students who attend those Zoom or Victory schools. Thousands of other students are in need of services. They do not receive those services because they do not attend the designated school.

This bill will provide targeted funding to address students in the bottom quartile not currently attending a Zoom or Victory school. Under this bill, the money will follow the student. I think it is important to note that the money is not discretionary. It will provide choice and flexibility with programming, but only from a menu of prescriptive options. Money is targeted to those who need it most. Because that is how the money will be spent, we are in strong support of this bill.

John Vellardita, Executive Director, Clark County Education Association:

We are here in support of this bill. There has been a lengthy discussion over several legislative sessions about how we adequately fund education in our school systems. In 2009, after the economy tanked, significant cuts took place—over \$1 billion. We have been on this path to try to not just restore the funding, but also increase the funding. We had a watershed moment in 2013 because the Legislature introduced a different model to address the needs of particular student populations. That was the Zoom schools program. The 2015 Legislature expanded that model to the Victory schools program. We had a model that addressed a building-centric and ZIP Code-centric approach to give as many prescriptive resources as we could to students in need. The results are starting to come in, and the evidence shows that there was significant progress in those schools.

At a certain point, you cannot do a building model or ZIP Code model. This is the bridge to the weighted-funding formula. You have to figure out how much money you will give to each child, and where the money follows the child. What services and outcomes can come with that? Even if we were talking today about a \$1 billion solution for the weighted-funding formula, which is what S.B. 178 was when we introduced it, we would still be discussing what we are discussing today. How much money do you give to each child and what services does it buy for intervention that proves successful outcomes to educating kids?

What is significant about this hearing and this process was that we dug down on the lowest proficient student in the state. I think Dr. Canavero indicated there are about 54,000 students. What is important for this Committee to realize is that 84 percent of those are in Clark County. Clark County is an urban school district that has challenges that are unique and different from every other school district in the state. Among Clark County's 357 buildings, 248 have low-proficiency students in them that are a part of this target population. Thirty percent of them have fewer than 50 students. Sixty nine percent of them have 1 to 150 students. Figuring out a model that has intervention to teach these kids with the appropriate mechanisms to raise their proficiency has been the challenge. We support S.B. 178. We think the bill is prescriptive in that it is not discretionary on the part of a school district. There is a menu of options of proven intervention strategies. It is outside of the DSA, so it cannot be used except for those purposes. It goes specifically to those target populations.

Funding is a flat value; it is not a multiplier. A flat value clearly can demonstrate how much money we need. What is being proposed in this bill is \$1,200 a pupil per year in each year of the biennium. That is \$119 million. There is \$72 million that has been put into this bill that the Governor has proposed. We need another \$46 million to cover all 54,000 students, otherwise we will approach this starting with the one-star schools and move up the tier until we run out of money. We should not run out of money. No child should be left behind. We are here; we think this is a transitional concept. It is a bridge to the weighted-funding formula. It is a good policy discussion, and it is an acknowledgment of our political reality. There is limited funding, and there is only so far you can go to start addressing the needs in public education in Nevada.

Clark County is an urban school district, and the current Nevada Plan has not been successful for it. This is a step in the right direction. Our educators will like this because it will give them the appropriate tools and resources to do what they do best, and that is to have intervention strategies so they can teach these kids and raise their proficiency levels. For those reasons and more, we support this bill.

Chris Daly, Deputy Executive Director of Government Relations, Nevada State Education Association:

On behalf of our 31 local affiliates, the Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) supports this bill with the proposed amendment as a significant step toward the responsible implementation of the weighted-funding formula to serve low-income students and English language learners. We were pleased to support Senate Bill 508 of the 78th Session, setting forth a mechanism to adopt a weighted-funding formula in the Nevada Plan. We strongly support providing the additional resources necessary to educate English language learners and at-risk students. This is an equity and social justice issue for the NSEA that affects every Nevadan. Despite the significant efforts made during the last session to expand school funding, Nevada continues to rank near the bottom in per pupil education funding. In the current budget, even with increases proposed by the Governor for categorical funding and including the roll ups in the DSA, total per pupil funding for the next biennium barely keeps up with the increase in the cost of doing business.

We believe that the full implementation of the weighted-funding formula outlined in the original version of this bill reflects the true costs of providing a high-quality education to every Nevada student, and we stand committed to working towards this vision. That said, we support the amendments offered as an important step toward responsible implementation of the weighted-funding formula. While Zoom and Victory schools are strong models and worthy of widespread support, we know that not every student who is low-income or an English language learner can be reached through these school-site models.

As educators, NSEA knows that quality education for students who are at risk or learning English requires enhanced educational programs and services. This bill will give school sites across the state the opportunity to implement enhanced programs or services that have been found effective in the Zoom and Victory schools programs. As we support this move

toward a weighted-funding formula, NSEA is committed to continuing our work to finding additional resources to adequately fund public education for all of Nevada's students, including those who are at risk and English language learners ([Exhibit E](#)).

As we have heard before, even the full implementation for all students who would qualify in the new language would require more money than what is available. I would point out that we know where you can find \$60 million to actually make this meaningful.

Sylvia Lazos, Policy Director, Educate Nevada Now:

I think foremost is a thank you. The way that the sponsors led this effort by being open-minded and willing to listen to community voices and research-based data was exemplary. It led us to where we are in S.B. 178. This is the right policy. This is going to be a way that preserves the return on investment for our original Zoom and Victory programs so that we maintain that strong link between investment and results. We will have accountability. There will be a lot of transparency about what is done with the money. We will continue that third-party evaluation. This is the right policy. It may not be the full package that some people would have wanted to see, but it gets us going in the right direction.

[The testifier submitted prepared text that included additional testimony ([Exhibit F](#)).]

Nancy E. Brune, Executive Director, Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities:

The Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities supports the effort to move towards a weighted-funding formula as outlined in S.B. 178, and supports the articulation of a decision-making model as outlined in the conceptual amendment ([Exhibit C](#)). We support our legislative leaders, representatives of the Department of Education, community members, educators, and representatives from the school districts for working so hard on this.

Our support of the bill and the amendment is formed, in part, by feedback and testimony from local educational agencies throughout the session that are weary of unfunded mandates by the State Legislature. The Guinn Center believes that if the State Legislature partially funds the weighted-funding formula without infusing or targeting sufficient resources needed to enable that progress, then the local educational agencies will be in unfair positions of accountability. Further, the Guinn Center believes this is an equity approach versus an equality approach to the funding formula for K-12 public education.

To ensure the implementation of the transition to a weighted-funding formula model results in success, the amount of investment must be sufficient to enable services and interventions that are required for the targeted students to improve their academic performance. Otherwise, this will turn into an unfunded mandate and undermine any confidence in our state's ability to manage and leverage investment for a positive return on investment.

We believe the success of Zoom and Victory schools provides that appropriate, research-based proof of concept for the types of interventions, services, and incentives that lead to student progress. We believe we should use these programs to form the per pupil allocation. At Victory and Zoom schools currently, the per pupil allocation for all students is roughly \$1,200 to \$1,300 per student. The \$1,200 proposed in the conceptual amendment echoes the resources at Victory and Zoom schools where we have seen early success. Additionally, we want to support the decision model for prioritizing the distribution of limited funds so that they reach the students at our highest-needs schools. Specifically, we support prioritizing the distribution of funds targeting the least proficient kids in our highest-needs schools, as characterized by the lowest ranking—one- and two-star schools—on the Nevada School Performance Framework.

**Lisa Morris Hibbler, Director of Youth Development and Social Innovation,
City of Las Vegas:**

I want to recognize the sponsors for the work they have done in laying down the foundation for S.B. 178. The City of Las Vegas has 4 one-star schools, 33 two-star schools, and 46 three-star schools, so 73 percent of our schools would potentially benefit from the proposed weighted-funding formula. The City of Las Vegas believes that improving academic outcomes for our students in poverty or English language learners requires comprehensive academic, social, and health services that respond to the needs of our students. However, to achieve this goal, adequate funding is necessary. We support S.B. 178 and feel this bill will move us in the direction of an equity model that supports our most vulnerable students.

Tiffany Tyler, Chief Executive Officer, Communities in Schools of Nevada:

Thank you for your leadership in this area. The commitment to addressing the needs of our most vulnerable students is not only a worthy priority, but the fact that you have attended to it with some path forward that addresses our challenges around adequacy and equity is unprecedented. I am here to say not only am I in strong support of this conceptual amendment, but I am also in strong support of anything we can do to prioritize ensuring that each of these students has the benefit of a safety net that addresses the whole child. I ask that you ensure that the services prescribed under this bill include services that respond to the varying needs that children face in our classrooms.

Vice Chair Woodhouse:

Next, we will take questions from the Committee, but this bill will be heard tomorrow in the Senate Committee on Education, so we will have plenty of time to ask questions then for the Senators. We have to be finished here tonight by 6 p.m.

Assemblywoman Krasner:

I see that the money is going for English language learners and at-risk students, but I do not see a definition for "at-risk" students. Can you let me know what that definition is?

Steve Canavero:

For purposes of S.B. 178 and the discussions we have had, "at-risk" is part of the consideration for the independent research firm. For purposes here, it is students in the lowest quartile of academic proficiency, students who are FRL-eligible, and students in poverty.

Assemblywoman Krasner:

It also says "or otherwise determined." What is that?

Steve Canavero:

It is likely that we are using language from S.B. 508 of the 78th Session. For the Victory schools program, we used poverty as the at-risk proxy or indicator for students who were at risk.

Assemblywoman Krasner:

We do not have any textbooks, online books, or learning materials in our schools right now for the general population. Where will the money be spent?

Senator Denis:

In the proposed amendment, there is a section that talks about authorized services [page 3, ([Exhibit C](#))]. These are the different types of services that funds may be used for. Schools have to come up with a plan and show how they did that. They cannot just do whatever they want; they have to do specific things. A reading center requires certain materials, for example. Those materials would be part of what they need in order to get the reading center up and running.

Assemblywoman Krasner:

If there is a reading center, will children from the general population be able to also use those books?

Senator Denis:

Yes. If we have a reading center up and running, then the whole school gets the benefit of the reading center.

Assemblywoman Tolles:

Something that I have long observed with our schools is that we have the schools that receive additional funding through Title I, Zoom, or Victory programs. We have the schools with high parental involvement that do a lot of fundraising. However, in Washoe County, around 40 percent of our schools are what we call "bubble" schools. They do not get those extra resources. I appreciate how this addresses those bubble schools.

We talked about Zoom and Victory schools, but how does this tie in with a school that may be receiving extra resources in the Title I schools for students who are FRL-eligible? Will that be on top of the additional resources they are getting federally?

Steve Canavero:

The federal funds follow the students and are funded through the school districts to the schools. This would be under the supplement. They would not supplant federal funding. These would be additional dollars in service to students at this school site. The weighted-funding formula should lay on top of the state, local, and federal appropriations.

Assemblywoman Tolles:

The only concern would be the bubble schools. Students who are ELL or FRL-eligible would be getting that additional funding. If we were to be concerned about spreading this further, is that doubling up problematic?

Senator Denis:

In order to provide the success we have had with Zoom and Victory schools, it has had to be prescriptive. The federal funds have to be used in a certain way. The problem you would run into is that you do not have a concentrated plan. They still have to do whatever they have to in order to get their free or reduced-price lunch. I understand what you are saying, but before Zoom and Victory schools they were using those funds for other things. They need additional funds on top of that. This is not the perfect number; they actually need more than this. But we do not want to take away from that and whatever success they have had there.

Assemblywoman Tolles:

Can you elaborate on the blue and purple blocks ([Exhibit D](#))? How will this help the students that do not fall into the ELL or FRL-eligible categories, but who are still in this 25 percent low-proficiency category?

Senator Denis:

As they get these services, while it does follow the students, because the services are available at the school, the other students will also get the benefit. For example, in Zoom schools, they have a reading center. Kids that need help go there. They do not say that you are not an English language learner, so you cannot go to the reading center. They just recognize that there is a need. In addition to that, these schools would have the benefit of the expertise that could be used with all of the teachers throughout the whole school. They will get additional benefits by having these programs that can be used with all of the kids in the school. Hopefully, at the end of the day, as the kids move up, then we move further and further up the scale for tiered schools.

Assemblywoman Joiner:

I have a question about section 2 of the conceptual amendment ([Exhibit C](#)). It says you are using the final count from the previous school year, and you are counting the students in the four categories of need. You mentioned the star ratings. Lower in section 2, it talks about the lowest rating categories, and those will be the schools that you send the resources to first.

I want to make sure we are using data that is current—like the previous year. My understanding is that the star system is not updated very often. Some of it is delayed. Further explanation on that would be helpful.

If you get the data and find out what the most at-need schools are with the most children who meet these categories, why would you not just create a new category rather than use our current star system? As students grow out of these need categories, will the data be recent enough that we can recategorize the schools quickly, so that the funds follow the student as they improve?

Senator Denis:

The only reason for the tier system was because we do not have unlimited funds to go across the board. If we have to start by saying that we do not have enough funding for all students, then after you have identified that they are low-achieving, FLR-eligible, or ELL, then you start at the one-star schools. That is on top of what we are already doing to identify the students. We do not look at the one-star schools first. We identify the students, and then look at the star rating.

Steve Canavero:

I am not sure I can do much better than that. That is exactly what we started with. We started with last year's data file. We looked at the bottom quartile of performance, and as we discussed this and added a dimension of priority to this related to stars, then we looked at where the students were enrolled and the school star rating as a way to begin identifying which tier you would hit first as you built a population that was somewhat consistent with the budget.

Assemblywoman Joiner:

I am still not clear why you would take old data from our star system and use it to categorize the previous year's data. Why would you not just create a new categorizing system of the most at-need schools in that moment? My second question was, as those students improve, will those categories be new every year?

Steve Canavero:

We would love to use the most recent data that we have. I do not know if the numbers of pupils that we have identified in the bottom quartile would change with regard to the star status of the school. The difference between running the file and running the file against the star rating of the school was 3,600 students out of 51,000. That is setting part of the refinement of our work going forward. I think as the dollars invested grow, the numbers of pupils and the students who are supported by the weighted funding would continue through time. They would not somehow get into a four-star school and lose the weight. I think the vision for the weight is that it grows and continues to follow those students.

Senator Hammond:

You will not find disagreement from me about some of the statements you had. You mentioned that every student learns differently. You said the amount of money it takes to educate is different from one student to another. Talking about that, I want to look back at how you determine which students receive this money. You have a formula for determining who is ELL. You also determine that if you are on the free and reduced-price lunch list, you also receive this funding. I want to know more about that process. How do we know for sure someone is eligible for free and reduced-price lunch? I believe we can figure that out; there is data for that.

If the money follows the child, what happens if that child is no longer FRL-eligible? What if, from one year to the next, they get off that program? Will the money stop following them? At some point, not every student who is FRL-eligible absolutely needs the extra help. Not every student is impoverished to that point. Some may need it more. There has to be a mechanism to ensure that students are able to get off that list so that we can get the money into the hands of students who really need that extra funding.

What happens if there are more ELL students, and they are taking more of the money? Do you have a preference in there? Do you weight it more towards ELL students who will have difficulty speaking the academic language compared to someone who is FRL-eligible and who may be on that fringe where they do not need the help as much as someone else who needs it? We start talking about ensuring we have enough funding for all students, but what if we start digging in and realize we do not have enough money for all of those students because one category keeps growing? Who gets the extra money?

Steve Canavero:

I believe that is one of the reasons why the working group looked at the bottom quartile of performance as a way to identify those students who needed the first lift as we take this step into a weighted-funding formula. Depending on the analysis, that was why we created a new dimension around prioritizing the schools based on a star rating in order to distribute the funds. We set the first criteria around the bottom quartile of performance. Then we added the order in which the funds would be distributed. We are using last year's proficiency data and the October count, which is our official snapshot of ELL or FRL-eligible status within that bottom quartile. On the off chance that, as we get deeper into the data sets, we see these numbers grow, we should consider this nuance and continue to learn how many students come in and out of these categories. Free and reduced-price lunch-eligible status would apply to any school that is not identified as a whole free and reduced-price lunch-eligible school. In some cases, students do not have to come in and submit the paperwork. I think it is a relevant point to study and review.

Senator Hammond:

What happens if you take the bottom quartile and you put the money into the school and the school does improve, and maybe goes from a two-star school to a four-star school? Do you reevaluate and say that the students do not get the money because the school is performing as they should be? Is there a reverse incentive to not perform that well in some cases?

Steve Canavero:

Interestingly, when we reviewed our data around Zoom and Victory schools and how many students are being served with those whole-school investments, the majority of students in the bottom quartile are in our three-star schools. When we begin to exclude students who are in Zoom and Victory schools, we suddenly see fewer and fewer students in one-star schools that are not being supported. We see more schools in the three-star category that are not being supported. To your point about providing interventions and having students grow out of services, the data not only provided additional supports to students in those schools, but it also picked up a group of students in the bubble schools that are not in the sweet spot of one- or two-star schools where they get a tremendous amount of intervention.

Senator Denis:

In addition, we have to remember that the first piece we are talking about is a bridge. What we are trying to get to is a weight. As we get to that weight in the future, we will be able to answer some of these questions. When you have limited funds, we have to target a specific need. We do not want to punish one- and two-star schools that move up to three-star schools, but if we have to make a choice, we have to target the schools that need it most. We are hoping to come back in two years and implement some kind of a weight.

Senator Hammond:

I can appreciate that. That bridge you are talking about is the independent consultant and how we are going to do that. Is that correct? Is there any idea of how much that will cost?

Steve Canavero:

I want to say between \$120,000 and \$200,000 when we reviewed the cost of the last study conducted during the last biennium.

Assemblywoman Miller:

The money was supposed to follow the student and not necessarily the school, but the amendment makes it seem like it will follow the school. I am looking at the school rankings, and there are multiple examples of four- and five-star schools with very high FRL-eligible, ELL, and special education populations. If they are four- and five-star schools, will those students not receive the weighted funding? Other schools with two and three stars have even lower FRL-eligible populations.

Senator Denis:

It does follow the student, because that is the qualifier. It is the student before you get to the school. However, there is that possibility because of the prioritization of the one-, two-, and three-star schools. We know there are lower-achieving students and English language learners in the four- and five-star schools, but because we have limited funds, the students in the four- and five-star schools will not get the funding if we run out of money.

Assemblywoman Miller:

They will not get the funding if they are in a four- or five-star school?

Senator Denis:

Correct.

Assemblywoman Miller:

When it comes to the measurement that there will be an evaluation later, are we measuring proficiency or growth to determine whether this has been effective?

Steve Canavero:

Both.

Assemblywoman Miller:

When there is a menu of evidence-based strategies that the schools can choose from, if a school or a school organizational team comes up with an evidence-based strategy that is not on the list, are they able to petition to employ that strategy?

Senator Denis:

Yes. That piece is in there.

Senator Spearman:

I am reflecting on a conversation I had last week about the difference between equal and equity. I think what we are looking at here is a paradigm for equity versus equality—meeting the students where they are and trying to get them on par with where they should be. I think the lens is equity versus equality.

Assemblyman McCurdy:

I am excited about where we are headed. I know when this was initially done it was with Senate Bill 432 of the 78th Session. It provided for roughly \$1,137 to go towards those Victory schools. With that, it included that 49 percent could also be geared towards a list of services including wraparound services, which helps with social and emotional support, food insecurity, unstable homes, et cetera. As I look through the amendment, we are moving toward \$1,200, which is great. How are we going to allow for students to still receive those extra wraparound services that they would once get when we are decreasing what can be allocated towards those services? There is a list of items, and it includes

wraparound services for students in the most at-risk schools. I know we are still trying to flesh out the definition of "at-risk," but could you walk us through what this will look like now? I do think it needs to be closely considered, especially coming from Assembly District No. 6 and having eight Victory schools. I know we are not just talking about Victory schools, but I want it on the record how we will cater to those schools and those students who are in desperate need of those services.

Senator Denis:

The language in this bill is pretty much the same language coming out of the Victory bill, except for the percentage. When we had the discussion as a group as to what kinds of services to offer, we thought about it being more prescriptive than the current Victory schools program. The Zoom schools program is actually very prescriptive. They will still be able to do those services, but we are asking that they do other things in addition to that. Were you asking why they do not have the ability to spend half of it on the other services?

Assemblyman McCurdy:

Not exactly. I did want to know why it went down from no more than 49 percent to be allocated towards many services, including those wraparound services. Now we are going down to not more than 30 percent to be allocated for the authorized services. It is not just to spend 50 percent of what you have on wraparound services, because not all schools are alike. We all know this, but I wanted to know if this will be looked at more closely when we talk about emotional support and food insecurity. Many students suffer from this. This is important to me.

Assemblyman Thompson:

I just want to piggyback on that. In the Assembly Committee on Education we recently voted for the Victory school bill to move the wraparound services and evidence-based practices into the upper percent of what a Victory school plan could be. I think that is where he could be trying to go with that, and not seeing that it is in the secondary category. He may want to see it bumped into the 70 percent.

Senator Harris:

My question centers around the accountability as I read both the bill and the conceptual amendment. It seems the accountability centers around a bunch of reports. What happens if your school qualifies and you use the extra money, but you are unable to show any measurable improvement based on the objectives determined? Does that mean in the next school year, funding will be pulled from the school? Will another school be able to utilize that? Has there been any thought about what happens if success is not demonstrated? I think, based on what I am seeing in front of me, we will not have enough money to fund every child who will qualify under the FRL-eligible and ELL categories. How do we equitably distribute this? How do we get schools to buy in and not have them worry about losing their funding? What are the parameters around their losing their funding and giving it to another more successful environment?

Steve Canavero:

There is no provision for that. In Victory schools, the superintendent has universal authority for corrective action plans. There is a means that the Legislature has provided to the superintendent of the Department of Education to enter districts or schools into corrective actions for a variety of reasons. Continued underperformance or not spending in accordance with the bill could be one of those reasons. It would not mean withdrawing the funds; it would mean being more prescriptive and increasing monitoring.

One of the areas we were discussing in the Committee was aligning the accountability in the schools towards the targets and metrics in our new school performance index—the star rating system. We would be able to track this progress not only annually within a school, but it would accrue to the star-rating system, which has federal and state consequences for accountability. Both of those angles provide immediate corrective action and long-term focus on improving outcomes for students. If they do not happen, there are obviously consequences.

Senator Harris:

I would like to see more detail. I think I am hearing you say that once you get the money, you will continue to get the money, even if you are not showing a measurable improvement. We will just make the way you use the money more and more prescriptive. How many times will you be able to not move the needle before those limited funds will be able to be moved?

Vice Chair Woodhouse:

It is critical that we give enough people time with their questions, so this is going to be the next iteration. I will continue to take questions, and then at 5:55 I will turn the chair over to Senator Spearman and we will continue to take questions, but we will ask the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Committee on Finance members to be excused to go up to the next joint hearing. Senator Spearman has agreed to stay here.

Assemblywoman Diaz:

I think it is important in the scope of the conversation that we nearly unanimously supported Assembly Bill 469, which is a reorganization of CCSD. We know that for it to be successful, we cannot just reorganize without giving schools resources they need to truly make that school what the community needs. It is not about what they want; it is about what the children need. If we are ever going to get to that perfect empowerment model, this is where we need to start. We have to ensure the funding is following the kids so that parents involved in school organizational teams can have a voice at the table and say that they would like to see different programs implemented in the schools. It may not be front and center, but we all supported that. I think that is an important piece as to why this legislation is important.

Assemblyman Thompson:

I wanted to say that we have to be careful that we do not look collectively at the school star rating. We are looking at the individual student to move the needle. I think it mixed our message when we talked about looking at one-, two-, and three-star schools. That was just the way in which we were trying to look at the allocation of dollars. We have to come back to the 50,000 or 60,000 kids to see progress. We have to be careful that we do not show a full improvement of a school. There are 300 kids at the school and a certain number in that cohort made a change. We see upward mobility. It goes back to the scale. The scale is more balanced. I wanted to visually put that out there. We do not want to get caught up in that the school has to move from one to two stars. It is not collectively looked at like that. We look at the student achievement.

Vice Chair Woodhouse:

Is there anyone wishing to testify in favor of the bill?

Anna Slighting, representing Honoring Our Public Education, Las Vegas, Nevada:

Weighted funding has been one of the platform issues for our board and membership since last session. We have had multiple conversations with other educational advocates and Senator Denis. We are confident that these conceptual amendments are a great first step. There are more steps that need to be taken, but this bill is in the right direction. We are in full support. We thank the sponsors. To touch on Assemblywoman Diaz's comments about the school organizational teams—we really like the guidelines of the services we can give to support those teams and the decisions they make.

Jessica Ferrato, representing Nevada Association of School Boards:

We are here in strong support of the bill. This is a part of iNVEST, which all of our districts and boards have voted to support. I would like to highlight Chairman Thompson's comments—that after all the discussion today, this is funding students. There has been a lot of talk about schools, and we need to bring it back to the fact that this is an effort to fund students equitably throughout Nevada.

Dee-Ann Roberts, Vice President of Advocacy, Nevada Parent Teacher Association:

We are in full support of S.B. 178. We would like to thank everyone who has been working on it. We feel that it is critical to have equitable funding for all students.

Brent Husson, President, Nevada Succeeds:

We are a K-12 policy organization funded by the business community. Most of what I was going to say in support of this bill has already been said. I do not want to reiterate that. I will bring up a few points brought up during the question period. If I am not mistaken, the Zoom and Victory schools started as a conversation at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in 2012. We were at lunch with a few professors who were talking about the

reading skills development centers that they were developing there. That conversation led to the 2013 Legislative Session, where Zoom schools were built by some of the people in this room and others in the community, especially Ms. Lazos. In 2015, they were expanded and we added Victory schools.

Now, we are looking at the next iteration. I point to that to show that this is an iterative process. We have not figured it out completely, but this is the next step. I would suggest that this is not the final step. Senator Hammond made the point that if you have students who are funded and they increase their achievement, is the funding revoked later? Does that hurt the school they are in because they receive fewer dollars? I think that goes beyond the scope of this discussion, but I think all of you would do well to think about that, because we will have to figure that out in the future. But for now, this step will get us to where we need to be today to fund the children who need it the most. Most importantly, to fund the structure that will be placed on all districts by 2022. That is the critical piece for us. In a lot of cases, the school districts are put upon to implement things in a quick way. In this case, if we start weighted funding now and do it in small doses, they can figure out what is wrong with it and what works with it. Over time, we can get it right, so that by 2022 when it is mandated to be funded fully, we will have a better grasp of how to achieve that.

Jonas R. Peterson, Chief Executive Officer, Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance:

This bill has the full support of our organization and our policy committee. We believe it is a powerful step in the right direction to ultimately move us toward a weighted-funding formula. We also believe this approach demonstrates to companies considering locating in Nevada that we are committed to improving our education system.

Guillermo Vasquez, Executive Director, Education Support Employee Association:

We represent the 11,000 education support staff, and we are here to express our strong support for the weighted-funding formula. For us, we represent the employees who work with the students every day. We deal with them in various settings, including the classroom, lunchroom, and buses. We see the need for the at-risk students as well as English language learners to have additional services. We believe they merit the additional support. They are the most vulnerable, and that is why we are standing here with them.

These funds can definitely provide an additional layer of support and wraparound services, and we stand in support of that. A lot of the delivery of those services will come from our members, so we are definitely on board. As support staff, we want to thank everyone working in collaboration to move this bill forward. We know it has taken a lot of effort. We urge you to get on board and support S.B. 178. We go the extra mile for the students, and we are asking you to do the same.

Steven Conger, representing City of Mesquite:

We are in strong support of this bill. The Virgin Valley has a sizable Hispanic population. Joseph L. Bowler Sr. Elementary School has a 30 percent ELL population—about 172 students—who are not being affected by the current funding model. A total of approximately 300 pupils in the whole valley are not being calculated in the current education funding. The weighted-funding formula would fill in those gaps and lift those students up.

Phil Kaiser, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I am speaking as a parent and a teacher in the public schools. I had three children who went through the public school system. One had some special education services. As a teacher and as a parent, I support the weighted-funding formula. I think it creates greater equity. My concern is that we make sure it goes outside the Zoom and Victory schools and outside the one- and two-star schools. The bubble schools are a critical factor. It may seem expensive—education always seems expensive. As we know, ignorance is more expensive. I would like to say that if we want to look for money, we should keep the public funding in the public schools and not divert it to private and religious schools.

Edgar Patino, Secretary-Treasurer, Latin Chamber of Commerce Nevada Inc., Las Vegas, Nevada:

I would like to thank the sponsors for their strength and leadership and ensuring our most at-risk students receive additional funding to address their academic needs. That said, I would like to begin by stating that we support the conceptual amendment to S.B. 178 that focuses funding on the proficiency of ELL and at-risk students. The bill will provide needed services to over 50,000 students throughout the state and support efforts to increase academic development.

We believe more funding is needed to address all students. The weighted-funding formula should be fully funded. We look forward to following the interim study to ensure Nevada continues to progress towards that goal. At the Latin Chamber of Commerce, we fully understand and appreciate the nexus between educational success and economic prosperity for families and businesses across our state. Toward that end, we sincerely appreciate your efforts and leadership on this matter.

Felicia Ortiz, Appointee, District 3, State Board of Education:

I am also the vice chair of the Legislative Interim Studies' Community Implementation Council overseeing the reorganization of CCSD. I am here today to speak in support of this bill. I feel that we have come a long way since 2013, and we need to recognize the success we have had with Zoom and Victory schools. We need to continue those programs. They have done amazing things for our most needy students in our communities. Zoom schools provide reading centers and wraparound services that are providing things like food or clothing pantries for our students so that they are comfortable coming to school to sit at the table to start their education process. I think those things are really important.

The fact that we can continue that is huge. I think this is a step in the right direction, but to echo what others have said, it is just one more step in order for us to become the fastest-improving state in the nation. We need to continue these conversations in the next biennium and hopefully fully fund the weights by the time we get to 2022. I am also a business owner in town, and I think this is a great opportunity for us to change the trajectory of our state and our educational system.

Lou Markouzis, Principal, Mary and Zel Lowman Elementary School:

I would like to share a few data sets from the successes of the Victory school legislation implemented a few years ago. We are near the tail end of our second year as a Victory school. We really started by doing a needs assessment and surveying the community. There were three priorities that I would like to touch on from the data. The first is wraparound services. The second is instructional components. The last thing is teacher retention.

One of the biggest things we could do at Lowman and Manch Elementary Schools was partner with Communities in Schools. We have three Communities in Schools counselors at both campuses. As many of you know, there are a litany of services that come along with the partnership between schools and Communities in Schools in terms of food, clothing, and major social and emotional issues. Both Lowman and Manch Elementary Schools were able to add a full-time social worker with those additional dollars. They are dealing with the needs and adult-based issues that go on in these children's lives. We were able to address them for the first time. By addressing the wraparound service component, we have seen a 67 percent decrease in behavioral incidents because of these wraparound services.

[Senator Spearman assumed the Chair.]

Anthony Nunez, Principal, Orr Middle School:

I am the former principal of Manch Elementary School. I am the current principal of Orr Middle School. As a principal, I have had the opportunity to work in both a Victory and a Zoom school. I want to highlight two important components that the extra funding has helped with. First, is an example from a Victory school. Because of the tools, programming, and people we were able to obtain as a result of this funding, we were able to strategically monitor our students and predict their proficiency in the middle of the year. We were able to orchestrate mid-year course corrections. We noticed that we were not on track to make the growth that we wanted. Because we had already built those relationships with the community and our teachers, we were able to make aggressive changes in the classroom regarding how we provide instruction, how students were situated, et cetera.

In just three months, we saw a 19 percent increase in math proficiency and a 14 percent increase in English language arts proficiency, as measured by evaluations. That speaks to quick changes that we can make for the benefit of the students within the 180 days we

do have. Both Lowman and Manch, for the past two years, have had an 80 percent to 90 percent retention in staff. That is significant; it means we are not losing our return on investment with staff.

As a Zoom school example, because we are able to market ourselves as a school that can support its students, in the seven weeks I have been there, we have been able to take our staff vacancies for the next year from 14 to 2. We have interviews set up, and I anticipate being fully staffed before the end of this school year for the following school year.

**Richard A. Derrick, Chief Financial Officer and Assistant City Manager,
City of Henderson:**

I want to thank the committees for hearing this important legislation. The City of Henderson is in strong support of the bill with the conceptual amendment. Henderson residents place a high value on education, and on multiple community assessment surveys, our citizens have identified education as their number one priority. The City of Henderson has had a longstanding partnership with CCSD and continues to support student outcomes through funding youth enrichment programs such as early childhood development in the Safekey program, providing crossing guards at elementary schools to help children stay safe, partnering with developers to identify future school sites, and sharing facilities to accommodate school and community needs.

More recently, Henderson has increased our support efforts through the creation of a Community Education Advisory Board and partnering with the Public Education Foundation to help raise private dollars to support our school's efforts to improve student outcomes. However, we recognize these efforts are not enough. Schools across the valley are confronted with challenges in the classroom that impede student learning. Schools need the appropriate resources to help educate their unique populations. We appreciate the state's investment to create Zoom and Victory schools. However, many students who need the additional services are not receiving them.

As an example, my alma mater, Robert L. Taylor Elementary School in Henderson, has a student population that is 80 percent FRL-eligible. It currently does not receive any Victory school funding. We believe this bill will significantly help to improve student outcomes at Taylor Elementary and others by providing additional resources to students for appropriate interventions for student success.

[The testifier submitted prepared text that included additional testimony ([Exhibit G](#)).]

Lindsey Dalley, Member, Moapa Valley Community Education Advisory Board:

Our schools are in CCSD and 60 miles from Las Vegas. We have four schools, and this bill would help our schools. We support having the funds go directly to the school to use the funds most effectively for our rural students. I strongly agree with Assemblywoman Diaz that this begins the weighted-funding formula journey for the reorganization of CCSD.

I have two points. Rural students never have access to the Zoom and Victory schools available in Las Vegas. We would ask that rural schools be exempted from the school star prohibition so that if their school is higher than two stars, they will not get lost. Second, a reality check. I have checked with two of our school organizational teams, and because of the new transparency from school reorganization, they now see and understand what the district is planning on doing. They fear that CCSD could add expenses on the other end to negate the additional funds brought to the school, even though the funds in this bill would be categorical. If CCSD plays these financial games, this can strangle the school and additional funds will not be as effective. I do not have time to give specific examples, but safeguards and oversight need to be in place to prevent financial shell games at the school level.

David Gardner, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am the parent of two CCSD children, and I have a third one coming on this next year. I just want to thank the sponsors who worked on this bill. This is a giant leap forward from where we started in 2013. I want to echo Assemblywoman Diaz's comments. The reorganization gave parents, teachers, and frontline staffers a voice. I think with bills like this, you have to give them tools to do something with that voice. Things like this are imperative. I wanted to add my voice that bills like this and how it is targeted are very important in improving our student achievement in this state.

Stephen Silberkraus, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am here to support S.B. 178 with the conceptual amendment. It is never easy going after former Assemblyman Gardner since he is the godfather of reorganization. I did want to say that this is a huge step forward for our students. During the two years of work to develop the plan for the reorganization of CCSD, it was clear that the weighted-funding formula is a key piece to truly moving the needle in our state's education system. Zoom and Victory schools are working well, but they do not cover all of our needy students. Speaking about bubble schools and the City of Henderson pointing out Robert Taylor Elementary School—it is tragic that so many students in that school are not receiving the extra services that they need which could make an impact in their lives. I would strongly encourage you to support the legislation and ensure all of our students get an equitable shot at having a successful future.

Alicia Contreras, State Director, Mi Familia Vota:

As other supporters have said, we would like to echo that this bill is a good step toward equity among our students. It is an opportunity to lift students whose voices may not be heard if they are not able to be in a Victory or Zoom school. I just wanted to thank you for your time.

Moving forward, there are a lot of educators here, but we do appreciate community involvement in regard to phone calls and planning for this. We should continue this work and reach out to community organizations such as Mi Familia Vota to connect with parents

who may not be here in this meeting. I do appreciate the amendments, but they are coming very late for us. In order to encourage community involvement, it would be nice to get those a bit earlier.

Acting Chair Spearman:

Is there anyone wishing to testify as neutral to the bill? [There was no one.] Is there anyone wishing to testify in opposition to the bill? [There was no one.]

[([Exhibit H](#)) was submitted but not discussed.]

Senator Denis:

I want to thank everyone who has been involved in the process. We have tried to put a lot of thought into how we can make a difference. I appreciate all the work we have been doing. I appreciate the work the Governor is doing. I got involved in this process because I want to make education better. You are all here because you want to make education better. This is one of those pieces that can make a difference. I think there are over 70,000 Zoom and Victory students who are being helped today. This would add at least another 30,000 more. That is over 100,000 children. That is one-fourth of all the kids in Nevada that go to school. This could make the difference and provide the help they need that we have talked about for so long. It could provide the bridge so that we could get to the ultimate weighted funding that would help all of the kids. I appreciate the ability to present this today. I hope a few of you may be able to support this as we move forward.

Acting Chair Spearman:

It is never easy to go to bat and do what we can for public education. It is difficult enough when you do not have enough money, but it is increasingly difficult when parameters around you seem to be emboldened. I want to thank the sponsors and those who have taken time today to come and hear about this bill. I would echo the sentiments of the last person who testified in support. It will be imperative that we fully engage our friends and family so that we have more support for endeavors like this, rather than less. Teamwork makes the dream work, and we are stronger together. I will close the hearing on S.B. 178.

[Senator Denis assumed the Chair.]

Chair Denis:

Is there any public comment? [There was none.] This meeting is adjourned [at 6:07 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Isabel Youngs
Assembly Transcribing Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Chairman

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

[Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster.

[Exhibit C](#) is a proposed conceptual amendment to Senate Bill 178 presented by Senator Moises (Mo) Denis, Senate District No. 2.

[Exhibit D](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint Presentation titled "Senate Bill 178 2017 Legislative Session," presented by Senator Moises (Mo) Denis, Senate District No. 2.

[Exhibit E](#) is a letter dated May 17, 2017, from the Nevada State Education Association, in support of Senate Bill 178 to the Senate Committee on Education and the Assembly Committee on Education, presented by Chris Daly, Deputy Executive Director of Government Relations, Nevada State Education Association.

[Exhibit F](#) is a letter dated May 17, 2017, in support of Senate Bill 178 to Senator Moises (Mo) Denis, Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, and the Senate and Assembly Committees on Education, co-authored by Amanda Morgan and Sylvia Lazos, and presented by Sylvia Lazos, Policy Director, Educate Nevada Now.

[Exhibit G](#) is written testimony in support of Senate Bill 178, authored by Richard A. Derrick, Chief Financial Officer and Assistant City Manager, City of Henderson.

[Exhibit H](#) is written testimony, dated May 16, 2017, submitted by Margaret Cullinane, in support of Senate Bill 178.