

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Seventy-Ninth Session
June 2, 2017**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Chairman Tyrone Thompson at 6:53 p.m. on Friday, June 2, 2017, in Room 3142 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 E. 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.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Chairman
Assemblywoman Amber Joiner, Vice Chair
Assemblywoman Olivia Diaz
Assemblyman Chris Edwards
Assemblyman Edgar Flores
Assemblyman Ozzie Fumo
Assemblywoman Lisa Krasner
Assemblyman William McCurdy II
Assemblywoman Brittney Miller
Assemblywoman Heidi Swank
Assemblywoman Jill Tolles
Assemblywoman Melissa Woodbury

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson (excused)
Assemblyman Keith Pickard (excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

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



STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Amelie Welden, Committee Policy Analyst
Karly O'Krent, Committee Counsel
Sharon McCallen, Committee Secretary
Trinity Thom, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Nicole Rourke, Associate Superintendent of Community and Government Relations,
Clark County School District
Lindsay Anderson, Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County School District
Jessica Ferrato, representing Nevada Association of School Boards
Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents;
and Nevada Association of School Administrators
Ed Gonzalez, representing Clark County Education Association
Brett Barley, Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement, Department of
Education
Craig M. Stevens, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, Government Affairs,
Community and Government Relations, Clark County School District

Chairman Thompson:

[Roll was called and standard rules of the Committee were reviewed.] I will open the hearing for Senate Bill 390 (1st Reprint).

Senate Bill 390 (1st Reprint): Extending and revising the Zoom schools program for the 2017-2019 biennium. (BDR S-788)

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

Four years ago, I testified in support of Senate Bill 504 of the 77th Session, which first enacted the Zoom schools program. Building upon the success resulting from that legislation, we passed Senate Bill 405 of the 78th Session to expand the program and the related supports available to our English language learners (ELL). This year, it is my honor and pleasure to present Senate Bill 390 (1st Reprint) for the Committee's consideration.

You have heard many facts concerning ELL students in our schools, but some bear repeating. Nearly 80,000 Nevada students are English language learners; that is 17 percent of all students in Nevada. About 70 percent of them are enrolled in the Clark County School District. Close to 90 percent of the ELL population is Spanish speaking. According to a University of Nevada, Las Vegas study, Latinos are Nevada's fastest growing demographic under age 18, and now make up over half of our students in kindergarten through third grade. Until a few years ago, we did not have a coherent statewide program to address the needs of those students.

Many ELL children speak enough English for daily interactions, but not nearly enough for the academic challenges of school. According to experts, under normal circumstances, mastery of academic language requires anywhere from two to six years. In my own personal experience, I started school not speaking English. It took me until about fifth grade to really get the academic English. It was not that I could not speak English because I watched television to learn English. That did not necessarily make me a good student. That is the importance of this bill.

The good news is, by all accounts, the Zoom schools program has been an unmitigated success at bending the literacy learning curve. You will likely hear from others today about the impact of this program. Dr. Danielle Miller of the Clark County School District previously said that it is the most effective education initiative she has encountered in her 24-year career. I am excited that we are continuing this incredible program.

So what does S.B. 390 (R1) do? It requires Clark County and Washoe County to continue the Zoom schools program and provides competitive grants to charter schools in school districts in the balance of the state. The schools and students with the greatest needs are specifically targeted. Elementary level Zoom schools will be equipped to provide the following services: prekindergarten free of charge, reading skill centers, professional development as well as recruitment and retention incentives for school personnel, and programs to get parents involved. In a change from the existing program, elementary schools are also given flexibility to choose between extending the length of the school day and providing special academies in the summer or between year-round sessions.

Middle schools and high schools in Clark County and Washoe County are also funded for services. This will include reduced class size for target students, provide direct instructional intervention, extend the school day, provide special summer academies or between year-round sessions. This will also offer professional development as well as recruitment and retention for school personnel, conduct parental involvement programs, and provide other evidence-based services approved by the Department of Education.

The Charter schools in the remaining school districts applying for Zoom grants will have an opportunity to propose similar services at their locations. The funding made available to these schools will be based on their enrollment counts.

Through an amendment in the Senate Committee on Education, the bill has a couple of additional key provisions. It allows not more than 5 percent of Zoom funds to be used for professional development, parental engagement, and teacher incentives. It requires a reading skill center and Zoom elementary schools to provide additional instruction for students in the fourth and fifth grades—before it was limited up to the third grade—for whom academic barriers still exist.

Importantly, this bill also includes accountability provisions and continues to require the State Board of Education to prescribe statewide performance indicators to measure program effectiveness. It also requires the Department to contract an independent evaluation of the programs and services that are funded.

Of course, all Zoom schools are subject to potential legislative audits and are required to report the outcomes of their efforts. These reports will be aggregated by the Department of Education. The most important thing accomplished by S.B. 390 (R1) is the continuation of the Zoom schools program and its record of success for another two years.

To conclude, the dollars being spent on ELL, particularly in the early grades, are an investment in Nevada's future. Economists have estimated that for every \$1 invested in ELL education, Nevada will see a return of between \$1.15 and \$2.03 in saved expenditures and future revenue. Our goal for all Nevada students is that they be provided with a high-quality education. For too long, we have ignored our responsibility and our opportunity to address the academic needs of our English language learners. This bill continues to be a symbol of hope for these kids in our state.

Chairman Thompson:

Is there anyone in support of S.B. 390 (R1)?

**Nicole Rourke, Associate Superintendent of Community and Government Relations,
Clark County School District:**

We are here in full support of Zoom. We have scaled up Zoom since it was first approved in 2013. We have added different cohorts of schools along the way, and we are up to 38 schools—7 secondary schools and 31 elementary schools. We have provided a 54-slide presentation ([Exhibit C](#)), which I will not go through, but I do want you to have the data. There is some very good data behind our progress over time.

For the first time, we will have Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) results from third graders who started with Zoom as kindergartners. We look forward to reporting the results to you next session. We are in full support, and we see a real difference in our schools. I know that several of you have toured our Zoom schools. I think one of the star elements of the program is our reading centers within the elementary model, where we are taking our English language learners into an intervention in a reading center, working with tutors and project facilitators. According to various assessments, many students are exiting on or above grade level, after being behind one to two years. We see that as a very successful model. We have provided the data to you.

Lindsay Anderson, Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County School District:

We are also here in full support. We started with seven Zoom schools in the very first iteration after the 2013 Legislative Session. We are now up to 24 Zoom schools; 20 elementary schools, including some of our District's charter schools and 4 middle schools were added during the last biennium with the additional funding. We appreciate the amendments that Senator Denis mentioned on the Senate side because we do our

school calendar a little differently. The extended learning time is important to us, so we can offer what we call "catch-up sessions" during our fall break, Christmas break, and spring break, in addition to doing some summer academies that have been very popular with our students.

Jessica Ferrato, representing Nevada Association of School Boards:

We are here in full support of the bill. As you know, this program is a wild success in Nevada. I want to tell you a little bit about the rural districts. All of the rural districts that applied for grants have received them. They use it a little differently; they spread the funding across services in schools based on how many students they need to serve. I also want to thank Senator Denis for the inclusion of professional development in the bill. That helps us in our various districts to ensure that teachers are fully prepared in the classroom. We think this is a critical part of providing high quality education for our English language learners in Nevada.

Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents; and Nevada Association of School Administrators:

This has been a wonderful program. We are in full support of it. One good thing about the rural schools is that the grants are noncompetitive. There is always a little bit of difficulty for rural districts that do not have grant writers. This makes it easier for the rural districts to get help also.

Ed Gonzalez, representing Clark County Education Association:

We are in full support of S.B. 390 (R1). Many of the speakers have previously stated why this is a good program. In fact, we took some of those principles with Senate Bill 178, which was passed unanimously in the Senate earlier today, and applied it to this bill. We have to ensure that we are serving all of our students, whether they are ELL or the Victory schools program, as well as at-risk schools throughout the state.

Brett Barley, Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement, Department of Education:

We are in support of the bill for all the reasons articulated. This coming fall we look forward to sharing with you all the most recent Zoom reports which will tell us how students who began the Zoom schools program after it was passed—and received all the prekindergarten supports, and early literacy supports—how they are doing now that we are getting their (SBAC) scores in the third grade. That is going to be some very interesting data, and we are very optimistic that it will tell a great story.

Chairman Thompson:

Is there anyone else in support of S.B. 390 (R1)? [There was no one.] Is there anyone here in opposition? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in neutral? [There was no one.] I will close the hearing on S.B. 390 (R1). I will entertain a motion to do pass.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DIAZ MADE A MOTION TO DO PASS
SENATE BILL 390 (1ST REPRINT).

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SWANK SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYMEN ELLIOT T. ANDERSON,
KRASNER, AND PICKARD WERE ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

I will assign the floor statement to Assemblywoman Diaz. I will now hear public comment.

**Craig M. Stevens, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, Government Affairs,
Community and Government Relations, Clark County School District:**

Clark High School senior and previous ELL student Ezra Yoseph has earned close to \$6 million in scholarships. I want to tell you about a very special student at Clark High School. You wonder how in the world someone can get \$6 million in scholarships. He has been accepted to the following schools: Vassar College, Swarthmore College, University of Notre Dame, Columbia University, Patten University, Brown University, Duke University, Stanford University—of which he chose to attend—Yale University, Princeton University, Emory University, University of California-Berkeley, Dartmouth College, Cornell University, University of Chicago, Vanderbilt University, Johns Hopkins University, Tufts University, University of Southern California, Northeastern University, Rice University, University of Louisville, Williams College and Pomona College. Those are all full-ride scholarships for one student in Clark High School. We are very proud of all of our graduating students and hope you are too.

Chairman Thompson:

Thank you. We are adjourned [at 7:07 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Sharon McCallen
Recording Secretary

Nancy Davis
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 copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "Clark County School District Zoom Schools Implementation Summary SY 2013-2015 (SB504) and SY 2015-2017 (S.B. 405)," provided by Nicole Rourke, Associate Superintendent of Community and Government Relations, Clark County School District.