

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

**Seventy-Ninth Session
March 15, 2017**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Chairman Tyrone Thompson at 3:16 p.m. on Wednesday, March 15, 2017, in Room 3142 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4406 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.

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblywoman Heidi Swank (excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Teresa Benitez-Thompson, Assembly District No. 27
Assemblyman James Oscarson, Assembly District No. 36



STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Amelie Welden, Committee Policy Analyst
Sharon McCallen, Committee Secretary
Trinity Thom, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Amber Reid, School Social Work Liaison, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, Department of Education
Desiree Zepeda, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Victor Arriaga Medina, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
Ricky D. Gourrier, Sr., Government Affairs and Community Relations Manager, Communities in Schools of Nevada, Las Vegas, Nevada
Lindsay Anderson, Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County School District
James F. Hendrickson, Emergency Manager, Washoe County School District
Brad Keating, Legislative Representative, Community and Government Relations, Clark 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
Tom Dunn, District Vice President, Professional Firefighters of Nevada
Ryan Beaman, President, Clark County Firefighters, Local 1908
Natha C. Anderson, President, Washoe Education Association; and Nevada State Education Association
Les Lee Shell, Director, Office of Risk Management, Department of Finance, Clark County
Nicole Rourke, Associate Superintendent, Community and Government Relations, Clark County School District
Veronica Charles, Director of Legislative Affairs, Associated Students of the University of Nevada, Reno
Dr. Holly Schneider, Director of Conference and Events, Association for the Study of Higher Education, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, College of Education
Jill Robinson, Student Body President, College of Southern Nevada
Kim Nelhs, Executive Director, Association for the Study of Higher Education, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, College of Education
Jacob Allen, Intern, Department of Legislative Affairs, Associated Students of the University of Nevada, Reno
Nic Ciccone, Intern, Department of Legislative Affairs, Associated Students of the University of Nevada, Reno
Nicholas Ariagno, Intern, Department of Legislative Affairs, Associated Students of the University of Nevada, Reno
Brittany Blair, Senator, Associated Student Senate, representing the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology, and Natural Resources, University of Nevada, Reno

Curtis Hazlett, Policy Director, The Associated Students of the University of Nevada,
Reno
Constance J. Brooks, Ph.D., Vice Chancellor, Government and Community Affairs,
Nevada System of Higher Education
J. Kyle Dalpe, Ph.D., Interim Dean of Technical Sciences, Truckee Meadows
Community College
Michael Flores, Director of Communications and Government Affairs, College of
Southern Nevada
Kent Ervin, representing Nevada Faculty Alliance
Carlos Fernandez, Student Body President, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Rae Frost, President, Rebel Women Veterans, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
David Cherry, Communications and Intergovernmental Relations Manager,
City of Henderson
David W. Carter, Member, District 2, State Board of Education

Chairman Thompson:

[Roll was taken. Committee protocol and rules were explained.] We will hear three bills, Assembly Bill 127, Assembly Bill 202, and Assembly Bill 210, and then we will have a work session. We will begin with A.B. 127.

Assembly Bill 127: Revises provisions relating to emergencies in schools. (BDR 34-196)

Assemblywoman Teresa Benitez-Thompson, Assembly District No. 27:

For those who are members of the Assembly Committee on Education, this might feel like a little bit of déjà vu. In fact, Assembly Bill 127 is comprised mostly of a piece of legislation that was attempted in the 78th Session that did not get through, but that I believe is still very important and needed by our communities.

Assembly Bill 686 of the 70th Session established the interim Commission on School Safety and Juvenile Violence [slide 2, ([Exhibit C](#))]. On April 20, 1999, the shooting at Columbine High School occurred and the nation was left in shock. In that instance, there were 12 students killed and 21 injured. Being true Nevadans, we buckled down and planned for a response. In 1999, led by former Speaker of the Assembly, Joe Dini, the Nevada State Legislature established the Interim Commission on School Safety and Juvenile Violence. It was an 11-member commission comprised of law enforcement, school administrators, teachers, and parents. The Commission was charged with two responsibilities. One was to develop a statewide plan of emergency response to incidents of school violence, and the second was to recommend interventions and prevention programs to reduce the threat of youth violence. Senate Bill 289 of the 71st Session was deliberated on April 9, 2001, and codified much of *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 392.600 [now NRS Chapter 388], which we operate under today [slide 2, ([Exhibit C](#))].

What do our legislative statutes regarding school safety look like today? Currently, school districts and charter schools must establish a committee to develop a response plan to a crisis or emergency and review the plan annually. The schools themselves must

establish a committee to review the plan developed by the districts. The Department of Education must develop a plan for management of a crisis or emergency and the State Board of Education is also responsible for charter schools and private school responses. When you look at NRS 392.600 [now NRS Chapter 388] you will see that it touches on school districts, and charter schools. It also includes annual reviews, and deviations from plans [slide 3, ([Exhibit C](#))].

I will begin with what A.B. 127 is proposing to do. First, you will see a preamble. The goal of this preamble is to increase the number of social workers, behavioral health professionals, and counselors who are available to students. Assembly Bill 127 allows for a mixture of disciplines recognizing that there are many types of licensures and many types of professions that could fall into this category. It also includes a policy statement that there should be a ratio of 250 students to 1 social worker or behavioral health professional. School-based social workers and behavioral health counselors are making a difference. You are going to hear testimony later that, although the legislative policy piece did not make it out of the legislative session, the funding piece did. That is ironic as typically you get a policy and no money to fund it [slide 4, ([Exhibit C](#))].

There has been diligent work over the interim by the Department of Education, social workers, the State Board of Examiners, and the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) School of Social Work to put processes and applications in place to get social workers in schools. We have good news to report on how that has worked over the interim.

The goal of putting a preamble in place is that when talking about school safety, it is a broad stroke. It is not only the tactical measures that happen and how we build a school, but it is also about the supportive services that we provide to students. In fact, social workers help teachers be teachers. We should not ask our teachers to learn how to be social workers. We can put social workers in the schools, so we can dedicate our teachers to what they were trained to do, which is the academic education of children.

Sections 2 and 3 establish new definitions. In section 2, "'lockdown' means a circumstance in which the persons on school property are restricted to the interior of a school building and isolated from threats until the school property and surrounding vicinity are deemed to be secure" Section 3 establishes a new definition. "'School resource officer' means a deputy sheriff or other peace officer employed by a local law enforcement agency who is assigned to duty at one or more schools, interacts directly with pupils and whose responsibilities include, without limitation, providing guidance and information to pupils, families and educational personnel concerning the avoidance and prevention of crime." This will apply to all of the counties except Clark and Washoe. Of course, school resource officers have been long established. We sought to define what they really are so that when we reference them in statute, we actually know who we are talking about [slide 5, ([Exhibit C](#))].

As a reminder, today we are ten times more likely to have an active shooter incident in a school than a fire. One of the things this piece of legislation is looking to correct is the prohibition from being able to conduct drills that follow school safety plans specifically. By putting a definition of "lockdown" into statute and asking schools to drill following those procedures, it will reinforce in statute, practices for many districts.

Section 4 is going to require a mandate that a full-time emergency manager exists and resides in our two largest counties—Clark and Washoe. The person who holds the title of emergency manager should hold that title exclusively. The reason I have included this is because we found, during the economic recession, there were emergency managers in some school districts, but they were handed other assignments, duties, and titles as well. Perhaps that single focus of commitment to emergency management was hindered by having other responsibilities and duties. This would be one person appointed whose full-time job is indeed being the emergency manager [slide 6, ([Exhibit C](#))].

Section 5 requires emergency managers and chiefs of school police for Clark and Washoe Counties, respectively, to make recommendations regarding safety during the design, construction, and purchase of school facilities. What you will hear in testimony today is that the schools that were on the shelves and designed have been looked at with fresh eyes. We are now contemplating buildings, not only for safety as mandated by law in terms of fire, safety codes, and traditional building codes, but also from a tactical purview. If there is a crisis at a school or first responders in the school, what would make their lives easier tactically? What makes our students safer tactically? These ideas came from conversations that I had with the school chief of police in the Washoe County School District. When the report from the Sparks Middle School shooting incident was released, it talked about best practices. One of the things we learned is that there were small measures that could be taken in the design and building of our schools that would allow for greater safety [slide 7, ([Exhibit C](#))].

Section 6 will mandate an annual school safety conference. Why? I believe we have to be talking about it more. It has to be something that is not reactive to one particular incident, but is forward thinking and planned. Folks from all parts of the schools and the state can come together and talk about what it means to create safe schools on a practical as well as philosophical level. I am leaving this language open, and I want to clarify for the legislative record that this can work in a number of different ways. My interest is in having the conversation happen, but how it happens specifically will be left to the discretion of the school districts and the Department of Education.

There are a couple of different ways this can occur. Every other year, there is a national school safety conference, and I attended one a few years back. They alternate between Florida and Las Vegas. Every other year, there is an opportunity for folks to attend the conference in Las Vegas without large travel expenses. There are also other educational conferences that we could build a school safety forum into. There is the Mega Conference that happens every year. Every other year there is the Statewide Parent/Family Involvement Summit. That happens on the Legislature's off cycle. Adding a place at that conference

where we can talk about school safety could work. The goal is to minimize cost, minimize administrative burden, and maximize the conversation. If we have an educational gathering where we have parents, students, and teachers in one spot to discuss school safety, then we want to make it happen. I am open to all suggestions to "splice it and dice it."

We do have some required attendees for Clark and Washoe County School Districts. It would be their chief of school police or designee. For the rural districts, it would be their school resource officer (SRO) or local law enforcement officer, and also one administrator respectively. It is important to have an administrator there because we need someone within administration who has a constant line of communication about what is happening in terms of school safety [slide 8, ([Exhibit C](#))].

Section 7 is very short, but I believe it makes one of the biggest impacts. It states that the Department of Education will make and administer block grants for social workers and mental health counselors in the schools. We have seen tremendous success in implementing this over the biennium, and I believe we need to have it in statute—with not only the funding in place, but a policy prerogative within statute that works. Last session, there was a lot of concern from members of this Committee regarding workforce development issues such as having enough social workers to place in the schools. Are we going to have enough licensed professionals in the pipeline to hold these jobs? I am happy to report that, through diligent work in moving around regulations, we were able to unencumber some barriers that were found, and were able to get 213 social workers into Nevada schools under the title of social worker [slide 9, ([Exhibit C](#))].

Section 8 will also place sections 2 through 7 into the Crisis and Emergency Response statutes. Section 9 adds the Emergency Manager, SRO, or Chief of School Police to the school district's planning committees that are in place for responses to crisis or emergencies. Section 10 adds a new provision to the annual review of the required plans to make sure these plans are indeed reviewed annually [slide 10, ([Exhibit C](#))].

Section 13 is relevant to charter schools by asking them to have an emergency manager designated with the understanding that some of our charter schools work a little differently than our public schools. You will see that it does not talk about the mandate of one per school, but rather the need to have one. I am open to ideas. If they have a shared Education Management Organization (EMO) where they can leverage resources to bring someone in that would be fine. The goal is to have an emergency manager in place. The requirement carries over to private schools also. What you see in section 14 amends part of NRS Chapter 394 [slide 11, ([Exhibit C](#))]. That is the overview of the bill, and what it does.

Assemblyman Pickard:

I like the idea behind this bill. I believe in the notion that failure to plan is planning to fail. I noticed that the Department of Education said there is no fiscal impact despite the requirement to put on the annual conference—or at least coordinate that, but I am wondering

if the school districts have this built into their budgets. Do Clark and Washoe County School Districts already have an emergency manager in their budgets, so this is not a burden on them?

Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson:

Right now, the individual school districts do budget to send people to conferences. Those conferences are ones that are already established, like the Parental/Family Involvement Summit, or the Mega Conference, or the conference that relates to the legislation we put in place regarding bullying and safe schools. The idea is not to create a whole separate conference that is apart from what is already in place, but to add conversations into an existing conference. In that way, we lower the cost. We do not incur additional cost, and we can work with other available sources to offset any other costs that come up. It is not our goal to create a freestanding conference and the need to create a new pot of money.

Assemblyman Pickard:

Is that also true for the position of emergency manager?

Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson:

As far as I know, the emergency managers do have budgets to attend a conference. I will allow the school districts to clarify, but when I attended the National School Safety and Exposition Conference in Florida, the emergency managers were there from the Washoe County School District (WCSD), and there was also the chief of police and other representatives from the Clark County School District (CCSD).

Assemblywoman Joiner:

I want to thank you for bringing this forward again. It was disappointing to watch it not go through last session. I know that many of the school districts are already doing good things. In WCSD, we have the Safe and Healthy Schools Commission, for example, and they just completed an audit of the district. This is perfect timing to say, as a state, that we really need to organize around the safety of our children. I was curious if you know of other efforts happening in other districts. What does the landscape look like as far as complying with this?

Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson:

What we know is the law mandates every school site have a school safety committee. Every school district has a school safety committee, and they review their plans annually. There have been times when we have been more diligent about that work than others, especially in different places in the state that have renewed or invigorated the commitment to ensure we are not just creating policies to be placed on a shelf, but have good practices and working habits in our communities and our schools.

Assemblyman Pickard:

With respect to the preamble, we are saying that the Legislature finds and declares it is optimal to have a ratio of at least 1 social worker to 250 students, I have not heard that statistic before. Can you share where that came from?

Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson:

That ratio comes from a meta-analysis of ten studies reviewed and summarized in a resolution statement by the School Social Work Association of America. That is the number that has been established. The reason we did it as a preamble is to have a statement that is aspirational. It may be motivational for us in seeking funding, but it in no way obligates us. You will see in section 7 that the Department shall make and administer block grants as funds are available. Whatever funding we receive is great, and the closer we fund to that ratio, the happier I am, but I acknowledge the realistic funding restraints that are in place.

Assemblyman Edwards:

Can you give us an update as to how many of the schools already have social workers, and how many more would be needed? I believe that you mentioned that UNR has been graduating a fair number of them. I know this is not a money committee, but if the categorical funding that we had put in for social workers last session is not renewed, what impact would that have?

Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson:

The good news is that there are dollars built into the budget to continue this program. They are maintenance dollars, not an increase. Hopefully, we will be able to stay close to the same number of social workers that were granted by the Department of Education over the last interim. I have those numbers, but I feel I should not be the only person to blow our horn on this. This is one area where many people worked really hard to implement a statewide program with many hurdles in a very short time.

Amber Reid, School Social Work Liaison, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, Department of Education:

Our budget does maintain funding at the current level for the 227 social workers or other licensed mental health workers that we have in place across 166 schools, 11 school districts, and 7 charter academies. That is maintained as flat funding. Moving forward, if that budget were to change, then we would obviously see decreases. The state block grant is the only source of funding for those positions.

Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson:

For the record, I will add that before this bill last session, I think there was a total of 30 social workers statewide, and they were all on grants that were set to expire. We were looking at not having any of this help available, so I am grateful the state was able to respond.

Chairman Thompson:

We will open it up for support of A.B. 127 in Las Vegas. [There was no one.] Is there anyone in support of A.B. 127 in Carson City?

Desiree Zepeda, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I am a junior Lady Hawk at Proctor R. Hug High School, and I am 16 years old. At my high school, I feel accepted because it is such a diverse environment. I consider myself to be well known and well respected. I look upon others just like they would look upon me. I attended Sparks Middle School where a tragic event happened on October 21, 2013. On the welcome back from our winter break, a seventh grader brought a gun to school and fired it on the basketball court. The boy shot another student, causing everyone to scatter in confusion. He shot the schoolteacher who stepped in and bought time for students to get away. He then shot and killed himself, leaving the Sparks Middle School community without a teacher and a fellow classmate.

The impact of the situation, whether it is a close relation or just blank faces, affects the whole community. Students who experience or witness a tragic event have to live with moving forward. I was not a witness, but I saw another perspective of life after that day. We created a make-a-difference club where students would be recognized by teachers and fellow students for noticing the positives. The tie-dye shirts were also very therapeutic. Our advisor and school counselor would meet with us daily to see how we were doing. The Make-a-Difference Club has made me value and respect other people's needs and differences. I still have close relationships that I hold deeply today. I refuse to be okay with a school that does not have a healthy learning environment or that is unaware of students who do not feel comfortable. I ask that you support the school safety bill, A.B. 127. Thank you for having me.

Chairman Thompson:

You did a good job, Ms. Zepeda, and I want you to stay there because we might have a question for you.

Victor Arriaga Medina, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I am a senior at Proctor R. Hug High School. I am the Regimental Commander of the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) as well as a dedicated student. More importantly, I am the oldest of three brothers, a future voter, and a member of this community. I would never have imagined that I would witness the horror that happened on December 11, 2016, where a student at my school angrily wielded knives and aimed to attack several of my peers. It was an event that compelled me to put my life in harm's way to protect those around me. In reaction to the chaos, I cleared my friends out of the area and quickly put down my backpack to begin my attempt to subdue the young man. Shaking with adrenaline, I found myself being pulled back by my dear friend, Eric, who most likely saved my life. The comfort of the teachers and staff that ushered us to safety calmed the combination of fear and confusion that haunted me with graphic nightmares in the nights to follow. The comfort and quick reactions helped my peers as well, but it did not prepare me for the rush of adrenaline I now get when I hear the loudness of students or the loud banging of a door that so accurately resemble the sounds of that tragic day. This is a trait that many of my peers now share.

There are more emergency events that must be planned for because of the rise in school violence since the 1990s. There must be plans and procedures in place for the worst-case scenarios. The school environment is vastly different from how it was 20 years ago. If we prepare students, staff, and teachers statewide, we will be able to handle situations such as these efficiently and with less fear. The best way to invest one's time and money is into the people. These statements brought us here before you today to ask you all to support A.B. 127, not just for the community, but for generations to come.

Chairman Thompson:

Great job. I like that future voter part. Are there any questions for our young people?

Assemblywoman Joiner:

I just want to say how proud I am of you. These are my constituents. You guys did a great job. Thank you.

Ricky D. Gourrier, Sr., Government Affairs and Community Relations Manager, Communities in Schools of Nevada, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am here today to support A.B. 127. As a representative of the largest dropout prevention organization in the country, we understand the importance of school climate, school culture, and children feeling safe. We know they must feel they have a place to go that has a respectful environment, and that they do not need to be fearful of situations like these.

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

I am in awe of those young people who just testified. As a mother of two small children, it is hard for me to talk and think about what they experienced. It is heartbreaking. I remember working with Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson last session and, in fact, running from the Senate side at 11:30 at night trying to get this bill across the finish line. She worked with us, and we appreciated that. It is wonderful to see it back in this form. We are here in full support. I have next to me the emergency manager for the WCSD who can hopefully answer Assemblyman Pickard's question. I certainly want to thank Assemblywoman Joiner for participating in our Safe and Healthy Schools Commission. We are currently conducting an audit. There are many people involved in this, and it is a really large undertaking. I share Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson's enthusiasm for building schools with this in mind. It is very exciting for our school district.

James F. Hendrickson, Emergency Manager, Washoe County School District:

A couple of questions I want to address directly are that my counterpart at CCSD, Mr. Michael Wilson, is the emergency manager. In answer to Assemblyman Pickard's question regarding the budgeting, I know the Clark and Washoe County School Districts both budget for emergency managers to attend these various conferences. Speaking of the conferences this year, at the end of July 2017, the National School Safety Conference and Exposition is occurring in Las Vegas, Nevada. It is being hosted by the School Safety Advocacy Council which is also the consultant that Washoe County hired to come in and do a comprehensive safety review of our district. It is reflective of the importance that our

district places on school safety. Also, regarding conferences, the National Conference on Bullying may be brought into the state in 2018, again, as a direct result of the support that these issues are getting out of Nevada, the school districts, and the Governor of the State of Nevada.

As emergency managers, we talk about increasing flexibility in the number of emergency drills, which is very important to us in the schools. We have seen this through our experience in WCSD with various natural disasters—the Red Rock fires, the flooding in January and February, the ongoing flooding in Lemmon Valley where the water is literally up to the back door of our elementary school and, of course, the incident at Hug High School in December. This has been a year our emergency planning and drills have really come to fruition and have paid off immensely in the district's ability to respond to these emergencies. Even more importantly, these drills are training our children how to respond and how to be resilient in the face of some of these adverse things that have happened to us.

Assemblyman Pickard:

I just want to be clear that I understand. You are the emergency manager for the school district and not the county, correct?

James Hendrickson:

Correct, the Washoe County School District. I am the designated emergency manager and that is my sole duty.

Brad Keating, Legislative Representative, Community and Government Relations, Clark County School District:

To echo the comments that have just been made, we do have an emergency manager in Las Vegas at CCSD, and as mentioned, we do have a budget to ensure we attend all of the conferences that take place. I want to say, from a personal perspective, that I come from the special education world. I was a special education teacher, and my number one priority in the classroom every single day was not only the academic achievement of those students, but making sure they were safe at all times. This bill goes one heck of a long way in ensuring that every one of our students—the most vulnerable students in the world—are safe at all times, and we are very fortunate to have Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson bring this forward. We will work as hard as we can to push this forward.

Jessica Ferrato, representing Nevada Association of School Boards:

We are here in support of the bill. As a resident of northern Nevada and having witnessed both of these shootings, I think this touches us all very personally. We want to thank Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson for all of her work on this bill. I know she has done a lot of work, and we are incredibly supportive. Anything we can do to help out, we will be here to offer our support.

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

Beyond academics, child safety is one of the top concerns parents have about sending their children to school. Research has shown that this bill helps promote that. Drills are very important, and a good piece of the bill is to make sure that lockdown drills are part of the drills. Thank you. We are in support.

Tom Dunn, District Vice President, Professional Firefighters of Nevada:

It is very interesting that we keep calling this a school safety bill, but I would like to term this more of a community safety bill. Our schools are one of the heartbeats of our communities, and when these incidents occur, they become multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional incidents because every agency responds. This is a fantastic bill. This is something that professional firefighters are proud to support. We have talked with Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson about the importance of ensuring that fire and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) responders are included in the safety committees on these schools as well. As I said, this becomes a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional response.

Ryan Beaman, President, Clark County Firefighters, Local 1908:

We support this bill, and we see the importance of training. As firefighters, we train all of the time. It is important for the students to know how to react when these types of incidents happen. As firefighters, our role has changed over the years. We now deal with active shooters when we train with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department. We actually go into those types of scenarios and learn how to take the victims out. It is very important for our schools to train in lockdown incidents. We do support this bill and appreciate the Assemblywoman for bringing this legislation.

Natha C. Anderson, President, Washoe Education Association; and Nevada State Education Association:

I am here today representing Washoe Education Association as well as the Nevada State Education Association and our 40,000 members across the state [([Exhibit D](#))]. We are also in support of this bill. There are a number of reasons which have already been mentioned, but I would like to bring up two additional points. Number one is to explain exactly what a lockdown is. Too often, it is assumed that people understand that a lockdown is when there is no movement. However, this bill actually defines it. Based on discussion with Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson, having these drills happen in nonclassroom time is very important. Both of the events that have taken place, which the students spoke so eloquently about, took place during nontraditional classroom time. One was at lunch, and one was right when the bell rang to have students come in. The expectation is that we would start to have some of these drills in different time frames, so we can prepare for them.

The other point is the statewide conference where we can talk about a myriad of school safety issues. We need to learn lessons from each other, and we need to share them. Too often we come in every two years and talk with each other in this building, but being able to have a conference where everybody is expected to be there and where we can talk to

each other about unexpected items helps. As Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson mentioned, the design of our schools makes a big difference as well. We are very much in support of this bill.

Chairman Thompson:

Is there anyone else in support of A.B. 127? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in opposition to A.B. 127? [There was no one.] Is there anyone neutral for A.B. 127?

Les Lee Shell, Director, Office of Risk Management, Department of Finance, Clark County:

We have a suggestion for an amendment which we have spoken with the sponsor about ([Exhibit E](#)). We suggest changing sections 13 and 14. Currently, the way fire drills work, they are scheduled first with our fire department, but that seems to be inconvenient for the schools. So we suggest making them at the schools' convenience, and then allowing the fire chief to approve those.

Chairman Thompson:

And you said you have spoken to the bill's sponsor, Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson?

Les Lee Shell:

Yes, we have.

Chairman Thompson:

Is there anyone else that is neutral for A.B. 127? [There was no one.] I am going to ask Mr. Keating to come forward. We have a question for you from Assemblywoman Diaz.

Assemblywoman Diaz:

The WCSD emergency manager brought this up and I was wondering, since there are a significant number of schools being built in Clark County, is CCSD taking into account the safety lens when they are creating the plans for these new schools?

Brad Keating:

Yes, we are. As we build our new schools, we are working with our chief of police, our planning team, and our architectural department to make sure they are as safe as possible.

Assemblywoman Diaz:

I also wanted to know, do we have a commission like WCSD's Safe and Healthy Schools Commission that meets and talks about safety issues? Is there a meeting of the minds at CCSD?

Brad Keating:

We meet with the jurisdictions.

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

We do not call it a commission, but we do have a planning team that includes the emergency manager and others from various departments. They are all looking at the issues trying to figure out what role each person plays. When we do drills, there is a lot of coordination from our communications department to the emergency manager, and more. We do have a group that coordinates all of that.

Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson:

I want to thank the Chairman for allowing the hearing today, and I want to thank the students who came to share very personal, moving, and compelling stories that can be hard to talk about. I love my community, and I love Washoe County. However, statistically, when you look at our community, we have had incidents at a higher rate than other places. It is so sad and unfortunate that we have to have this topic about safety and conversations about how we respond to active shooter crises among others. I believe this is good policy and gets us into a proactive mode to talk about what school safety should look like, what the tactical answers are, and, frankly, a place to make hard decisions. There are going to be more hard conversations coming up when the Reno Police Department releases the report about the incident that occurred at Proctor R. Hug High School in December. We need a place for those conversations to happen. I am so appreciative of your time in hearing this subject today.

Chairman Thompson:

Thank you so much, Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson. We will close the hearing on A.B. 127 and open the hearing for Assembly Bill 202.

Assembly Bill 202: Revises provisions relating to the Silver State Opportunity Grant Program. (BDR 34-722)

Assemblywoman Amber Joiner, Assembly District No. 24:

The University of Nevada, Reno's (UNR's) main campus is also in my district and so many of those students are also my constituents. With me today is Veronica Charles. She is the Director of Legislative Affairs for the Associated Students of the University of Nevada (ASUN), Reno. As many of you know, last session, the Legislature created a new program called the Silver State Opportunity Grant which provided state funding for low-income community college and state college students. However, university students at UNR and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) are not eligible for the Silver State Opportunity Grant. Assembly Bill 202 had a very simple intent—provide low-income university students with the same financial support from the state that community college students are receiving through the Silver State Opportunity Grant. Last year, the ASUN presented their legislative priorities to us, their legislators. This bill was listed as a key legislative priority for those students.

As you may know, I was president of ASUN about 20 years ago, so I know how seriously they take such a request. You will hear today about how they passed a resolution on this issue, bringing the full weight of the undergraduate student population behind it. I teach at UNR now, and I care deeply about the struggles my students are having, being able to afford and stay in school. I remember those struggles myself as a student. I had to work full time and cobble together financial aid just to get through. In short, I believe strongly that we should be doing more to ensure that education is affordable and accessible to our students in Nevada, so they can remain in school and graduate on time.

In my conversations with various stakeholders about this bill in the form that it was introduced, several concerns were brought to my attention. Mainly, I heard that community college students felt like this bill would harm them. To be clear, I have taught at community colleges. I believe strongly in their mission, and I want all students in Nevada to succeed. I never intended to take away the current grant that supports community college students. The intent was to simply add university students to the statutes, so that as the allocations of this program grow, they could also benefit. However, I have been told that adding university students to this grant will necessarily dilute the funds available for community colleges. Since introducing this bill, I have learned that the funds already do not stretch far enough to serve all of the eligible community college students. All of my attempts to discuss amendments and various ways of moving this program forward with other stakeholders have not resulted in any good ideas to resolve the key problem, which is there are just not enough funds to go around.

At the same time, I have been hearing comments that university students already get enough financial aid like the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship money. They do not need any more help, or there is not a need to give university students any more grants or financial aid. I strongly disagree with these statements because, despite having multiple resources for financial aid, the cost of education at our universities has climbed substantially in the last decade. Between the fall of 2005 and the fall of 2016, the average resident tuition and fees for Nevada's four-year institutions more than doubled. Income did not keep pace, so it is not surprising to see the statistic that, in the last decade, the ratio of tuition and fees to median household income has also doubled for those pursuing bachelor's or master's degrees.

Today, you will hear from students who will testify about their own financial needs while attending the university. I have requested volumes of data and information from our staff and from the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) who has been very cooperative and helpful, only to arrive at the conclusion that this is a much bigger problem than I originally realized. It cannot be solved by simply adding a group of students to a current program like the original version of this bill would have done. Therefore, instead, I am proposing an amendment today that I have provided to you on the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS) ([Exhibit F](#)).

I believe we need to take a comprehensive look at college and university affordability in Nevada. We need to find a way to make it more financially accessible. To be clear, I am not giving up on the idea that we, as a state, should be providing need-based grants to our

university students as most states do. Indeed, I believe that the study that I am proposing in this amendment will demonstrate the great need for such a program and provide us, at the Legislature, with a clearer path forward.

If you would please look at the amendment in front of you, there are three main provisions. I will not read all of it, but it would delete the whole bill except for section 6 which is the implementation date—that would stay the same. It would be replaced with a system-wide study of NSHE institutions. I am not singling out universities here. I do think we need to look at it comprehensively. It would first examine the cost and affordability of higher education for Nevada students and that is where it ties into this bill. I want to see if we can afford to do these state need-based grants for university students, and how can we do that is the feasibility study that I am looking for here. I list out Silver State Opportunity Grants, different options, comparisons with other states, and how to make the university more affordable.

The second is to update research conducted by the Committee to Evaluate Higher Education Programs which was created by Assembly Bill 203 of the 72nd Session. More than a decade ago, we did a comprehensive study as a system in the state. It was an interim study led by the Legislative staff, but also with consultants and other professionals, as well as a lot of input from NSHE and time from their staff as well. We looked at the university system overall, and I have the final report here; it is one of our bulletins here at the Legislature. It looked at all of the programs in the system and then analyzed how we should move forward. It has been ten years. Now we have seen a recession. We have seen a lot of changes in our needs for workforce development. We have seen technology changes, and we have seen a huge increase in student tuition at the universities. All of these issues need to be revisited.

I appreciate those folks who have brought this to my attention. I had heard that a study had been conducted a while ago, but when I began flipping through it, I thought, we live in a different world. It is a really good idea to update this.

You will see under number 2 of the conceptual amendment, there are several bullet points. Those are the bullet points in the original bill in 2003. I would update those, then add to the first bullet point, "conduct an examination of workforce development needs," needs that we know are so crucial. Many of those are at the community college level, but some of those are also at the university level.

I would add that the study must make recommendations to address findings relating to higher education affordability and programs. The recommendation should include where long-term state investments should be made in order to improve affordability and to address our workforce needs in Nevada.

Veronica Charles, Director of Legislative Affairs, Associated Students of the University of Nevada, Reno:

I currently serve as the Director of Legislative Affairs for the Associated Students at the University of Nevada, Reno (ASUN). I am here in support of A.B. 202. We, as a student body, passed a resolution last year that our students recognize the necessity for a need-based grant to combat their student debt. Based on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) reports from 2014 and 2015, the total unmet need for all NSHE institutions is more than \$435 million. This number is growing at an exponential rate. Since 2008, Nevada has experienced the eighth-largest increase in tuition nationwide. We are still one of the only states to have not implemented a need-based grant for university students.

When voting on this resolution last year in our student senate, a diverse group of students spoke in support of the resolution, as they are facing a crippling amount of student debt after college—a debt range between \$5,000 and \$20,000, is not uncommon. As a first generation college student, I will be graduating from UNR in May owing \$19,000 in student debt. This debt has impacted my graduate school decision and could potentially affect my career choices as a public servant. As you all know, it is going to be very difficult to pay off tens of thousands of dollars on a government employee's salary.

While our student body understands the necessity for need-based funding for community colleges within the state, we also understand that the vast majority of the community college students enrolled in Nevada eventually transfer into our universities where they begin to pay more in tuition and receive less in need-based aid.

I would like to read into the record the following short testimony from former Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) student body president, Spencer Schultz, on why he and other students are supporting A.B. 202.

In the 2015 session, I lobbied as a student representative for Senate Bill 227 of the 78th Session, which created the Silver State Opportunity Grant program along with many fellow students from TMCC. I was elected student body president of TMCC and maintained representation through 2015 and into 2016. I currently serve as Projects Director in the Department of Legislative Affairs for the Associated Students of the University of Nevada, Reno. I heard a great deal of praise for this grant program from students at TMCC who are eligible to receive the benefits it provided. Yet, I also heard a great deal of dismay from the same students when they found out the grant would not be able to follow them to UNR despite their demonstrated financial need. As a northern Nevada native, community college graduate, and a current university student, I believe the benefits A.B. 202 can provide to the community will be substantial. It will not only provide important financial benefits for those who qualify, regardless of their attendance at any Nevada institution, but also incentivize the best and the brightest of the Nevada community to stay within Nevada with support from the state's first need-based program. The process of beginning your education at the

community college level and then transferring to a four-year institution is arduous enough for those of us who have struggled financially. I believe that with the passing of A.B. 202, this process can become slightly less difficult and infinitely more rewarding for northern Nevada natives who decide to stay in state and keep Nevada growing strong and equipped to face the future.

For the record, I would also like to read the resolution that the ASUN created in support of A.B. 202.

Whereas, there is currently no need-based financial aid program offered by the state of Nevada for students who attend one of the two state universities. Whereas, the Silver State Opportunity Grant Program was developed and passed by the Nevada State Legislature in the 2015 session, the first need-based aid program ever offered by the state. However, this program is only offered to students at the community colleges in the state. Whereas, 33 percent of students at the University of Nevada, Reno are Pell Grant eligible and financial need is certainly not limited to students at community colleges. Tuition rates are higher at universities and may lead to more debt by lower-income students as opposed to students at community colleges. Be it resolved by the Senate of the Associated Students that the Senate encourages the State Legislature to develop a plan for a need-based financial aid program for students at the universities in the state of Nevada in the 2017 Legislative Session.

On behalf of the ASUN, I hope we can see the need for a university need-based grant program, so we can continue to give back to Nevada, and students who want to give back to our great state. Thank you for your time.

Assemblyman Edwards:

I am curious about something you said, which was that in a ten-year period, the cost of the universities doubled. Do we know what the cost drivers are?

Assemblywoman Joiner:

That would be a great question for the system. I am sure they have more information on that. I know that with the recession, our state contributions to the university system went down, per student, in a lot of cases. What was happening was where they could raise tuition at the universities, sometimes they had to. They were raising tuition in order to compensate for some of the holes in the budget during the recession. That is a very simplistic overview of what I think happened, but I am sure the system has more details for you. The information that I provided is actually from a Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) study that is in our education data book compiled by the Legislative Counsel Bureau. There are several charts that show the doubling of the tuition at the universities and that is in-state especially.

Assemblyman Edwards:

Would that be part of the study, though, if we are trying to figure out the cost? We should consider the cost drivers. I would encourage that we add something. Maybe I will submit a friendly amendment to that.

Assemblywoman Joiner:

Actually, I meant to say that when I was going through the amendment. I am open to all suggestions and welcome ideas if this should go to a work session. I would request a mock-up with the final language. I would love to talk to you about that. Thank you.

Assemblyman McCurdy:

I just want to thank you for bringing this forward. The student government has a special place in my heart because not too long ago, I was student body president at the College of Southern Nevada (CSN) advocating for the Silver State Opportunity Grant, so I want to commend you for fighting the good fight and speaking for all of the students across our state. Thank you.

Assemblywoman Diaz:

Ms. Charles, did we hear about a number of students at UNR who would benefit from having financial aid assistance that currently do not have that financial support? Is there a percentage or a number or do we have an idea of how great the current need is?

Veronica Charles:

Currently, we know that 33 percent of the students that attend UNR are Pell Grant eligible. The Pell Grant eligibility can range, but it is determined by an Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) in our FAFSA. At this time, the Silver State Opportunity Grant program is available to community college students who have an EFC of less than \$8,500. We know that 33 percent of the students meet that requirement at UNR. We did hear testimony in our Student Senate from several of those students with personal stories, some of which you will be hearing today. That is the figure that I have at this time.

Chairman Thompson:

Is there anyone in support of A.B. 202 in Las Vegas?

Dr. Holly Schneider, Director of Conference and Events, Association for the Study of Higher Education, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, College of Education:

We are here in full support of the bill in its original form and also with the amendments that are being brought forward by Assemblywoman Joiner. We thank you for bringing this bill. We are hoping you will take into consideration some of the information that we have provided in a white paper that my colleagues and I have coauthored and have already sent to Carson City. We look forward to speaking with you next week.

Forty percent of income would be needed by families in the bottom quintile to attend two-year institutions, and when you look at the same group of students whose families are in the lowest quintile going to UNLV or UNR, they would have to spend 62 percent of their

income to enroll. We believe that this grant is really important to help relieve some of the burden that they would be assuming financially by taking on student loans or having to work nearly full time to just cover the cost of tuition.

Chairman Thompson:

If you could get us that white paper so we could post it on NELIS, we would love to do so.

Jill Robinson, Student Body President, College of Southern Nevada:

Thank you for another opportunity to speak for the students who could not be here to have their voices heard today. On behalf of the students of College of Southern Nevada (CSN), I would like to thank Assemblywoman Joiner for her dedication to the students here in Nevada since 1995. I would also like to thank you for not only fighting for and hearing the voices of the students, but also by using quick, critical thinking for all students, including community college students through NSHE, recognizing there is a much larger need in the state of Nevada.

By creating a clear path to the resources available and thoroughly filling the gaps between Clark County School District (CCSD) and higher education students, I believe together we can begin to set higher and more realistic goals for our students. This would be one in which we are preparing our students for a full quality education rather than one in which we are in a rush to meet deadlines that may leave behind fully credible, talented, and creative individuals that Nevada truly craves. Thank you. I am in support of the amendment on A.B. 202 ([Exhibit G](#)).

Kim Nelhs, Executive Director, Association for the Study of Higher Education, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, College of Education:

I am here in support of A.B. 202 in its original intent. Specifically, I want to talk about section 1, subsection 4, paragraph (e), that indicates, "If a student is enrolled or accepted to be enrolled at more than one institution within the System, the credit hours in which the student is enrolled or accepted to be enrolled at those institutions must be aggregated for the purposes of paragraph (a)." I want to speak to the fact that many of our students are transfer students or are currently enrolled at more than one institution at the same time. In fact, the U.S. Department of Education indicates that more than 60 percent of students nationwide will be enrolled at more than one institution, or will be transferring at some point. We also know that many students are concurrently enrolled at more than one institution. Specifically, to this part of the bill, it is important to note how many of our students are enrolled concurrently in more than one institution in Nevada. I am speaking on behalf of transfer students in our state and in support of A.B. 202.

Chairman Thompson:

Is there anyone else in Las Vegas in support of A.B. 202? [There was no one.] We are now here in Carson City.

Jacob Allen, Intern, Department of Legislative Affairs, Associated Students of the University of Nevada, Reno:

I do have a unique perspective that I believe I can bring and that is that I am a community college transfer student myself. I was born and raised in Nevada. Actually, my mom worked at the university my entire life, but unfortunately, as many students experience, university tuition was just not feasible. It was not something that was going to be able to happen for my family even with the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship coming out of high school. I took my first two years at TMCC, and during those two years, I served as a student senator. I actually worked with Spencer Schultz whose testimony was previously read by Director Veronica Charles. I, therefore, played a part in lobbying on behalf of Senate Bill 227 of the 78th Session, which created the Silver State Opportunity Grant. This was a huge step forward as far as addressing the needs, specifically of needs-based students, and though I did not have the ability to go straight to university, I would not have qualified for the EFC number, but I know plenty of people who would have.

These are the types of students that the Legislature and the state of Nevada should be looking at investing in. They are taking 15 credits each semester, and they are often working full-time, and maybe more than one job. If that type of student can make it through those two years utilizing the Silver State Opportunity Grant, I believe they have obviously demonstrated the ability and a desire to graduate. If that means continuing their education at a university, I believe we have to do what we can to make that feasible economically. I do not use the word "working" lightly. That is a lot with 15 credits on top of full-time work.

When factoring in that the university is a lot more expensive than a community college, we are essentially saying that if they cannot take this need-based grant over to the university, then we are preventing them from being able to afford college without taking on exorbitant amounts of debt. I do not believe that is in the best interest of the state or its younger generations. I look at states like Georgia and Arizona that have comparable populations and as of 2014, they were experiencing upwards of 75 to 77 percent increases in tuition. We need to do what we can now to mitigate that effect on these lower-income students.

As someone who had the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship, I can sympathize with the fact that it may not be enough, and when your family does not have the means to be there financially, then it is either you take out a loan or you stop going to school.

Nic Ciccone, Intern, Department of Legislative Affairs, Associated Students of the University of Nevada, Reno:

I am here in support of A.B. 202. Coming from a somewhat privileged background, student debt has never affected me personally. With that being said, as a member of many on-campus organizations, I have found that many of our students are deeply affected by this issue. The average student loan debt per borrower in the state of Nevada is roughly \$23,462. Students should not have to carry this burden on their shoulders. They should be focusing on

their academics and their careers. Expanding the Silver State Opportunity Grant program to include universities within the system would greatly reduce the unnecessary stress that working class students are facing. This would give students more time to stress about their academics and less about their financial struggles. Thank you.

Nicholas Ariagno, Intern, Department of Legislative Affairs, Associated Students of the University of Nevada, Reno:

I believe this bill would not only benefit the students at the university, but it would also benefit the image of the university itself. The University of Nevada, Reno currently has a graduation rate of 53.1 percent which is below the national average. Through my personal experiences at the university, I have a number of friends who have had to drop out, not because the academics were too hard, or that they could not handle the environment, but purely because of financial reasons. I believe that the passing of this bill would prevent students in the future from having to make these difficult decisions. Thank you.

Jacob Allen:

I want to add to what my colleagues have said and what I previously said. Not only is this the type of student that this grant would be targeting—those who are demonstrating an ability to succeed in school and the ability and desire to receive a diploma one day—but the passage of A.B. 202 would also have much wider effects in pulling these younger generations out of what is often cyclical poverty and things of that nature. I believe the benefits of this piece of legislation go beyond simply helping the student who is receiving that money.

Brittany Blair, Senator, Associated Student Senate, representing the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology, and Natural Resources, University of Nevada, Reno:

I also represent the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology, and Natural Resources as the Senator in the Associated Student Senate. I am here today to support A.B. 202 for my fellow students. While I have enough scholarship money to pay for my undergraduate degree, I can sympathize with them when they have to take out loans just before their undergraduate degree. I had a friend who also attended the university the same year that I did, and she ended up having to transfer to the Truckee Meadows Community College because she could no longer afford the university. I definitely can see that impact on my fellow students. It is a shame when I hear my fellow classmates say that they only had three hours of sleep and only a couple of hours to study for a test because they had to work a 20-hour-a-week job, or they had to work in the hospital just so they could afford to go to the university.

I found it startling when I heard another senator say that she may have to take out another grant to fund going to the university to pay for food, so she could continue learning. When you begin seeing the impact on the grades of students, you can see that we definitely need more grant opportunities. It is not just the loans that these students are going to be carrying past their graduation dates, it is the fact that they may not pass their classes because they are worried about keeping enough hours on their job. Their mental health goes down because they are stressed out from being unable to pay for their degrees. These are all reasons why I encourage you to extend the Silver State Opportunity Grant to university students. There is definitely a need for these students.

Curtis Hazlett, Policy Director, The Associated Students of the University of Nevada, Reno:

I am here on behalf of the student body of the University of Nevada, Reno in support of A.B. 202. I am a third-year political science major at UNR as well as the policy director for the Associated Students of UNR. As I begin the last half of my college career, I look around me and realize how blessed I have been to have had financial support from my parents who helped me cover costs that less fortunate students have to face completely on their own.

Having said that, in 2018, I will be walking out of UNR with \$14,000 in student debt. I will not be going into the workforce because I am an aspiring law student, and I have a feeling that law school is going to cost a little more than \$14,000.

Being the oldest of my three siblings, all of which are very eager to join the Wolf Pack family, I worry if they will be able to share the same college experience that I have been fortunate enough to have. When you look across the nation, colleges are becoming more expensive, yet less rewarding. According to a recent Georgetown study, less than half of college students under the age of 25 are working a job that does not actually require a bachelor's degree or more. The employment rate for a bachelor's degree holder is currently more than 10 percent. College tuition has risen almost six times above the rate of inflation because universities now have to get their money from somewhere else to replace their lost state funding. That, of course, comes from tuitions and fees which are paid for by the students and their families.

As a fiscal conservative, I have never been a proponent of simply throwing money at the problem, and I do not even know if this is the solution, but by supporting A.B. 202 and investing in the state's higher education, you are directly investing in the future of Nevada's workforce.

Chairman Thompson:

Thank you so much, and you are probably right about the \$14,000. You are doing a great job.

Assemblywoman Diaz:

I want to commend the students who have come before our Committee and for being advocates for students. Some of you are commenting that you might not necessarily be in need of this aid, but I find it commendable that you are here advocating for others that might need it in order to make ends meet. Thank you so much. I want for you both to expand on what the hardships are for the students who have to work and go to school and might have a family. Can you shed some light for those of us who have been out of your shoes as students for a while? What are the realities that some students are facing when they do not have the aid to make things go smoother?

Brittany Blair:

I definitely see a lot of my fellow students get sick because they are working ten extra hours and do not get home until 9 or 10 p.m. and still have homework to do and then have 9 a.m. classes. It makes sense that they get sick, they miss more classes, and subsequently fail more classes. One of my friends even said she was going to fail her last class because she just did not have time to study. Students are not just failing math or science classes, but classes across the board if students do not have the time to study. Grant programs and scholarships want to require 15 credits—science majors sometimes have to take 18 credits to even graduate on time. You are seeing more pressure just to take enough classes, let alone having to work on top of that. Seeing some of my fellow classmates having to retake classes and pay for them again, just because they did not have time, is devastating.

Curtis Hazlett:

It is inspiring when I see students that are working more hours than me, taking more credits than me, are more involved than me, and getting better grades than me. It took me a few semesters to understand the extent of my financial privilege. I do not think this is a solution, but it is a step, it is progress. As we see our state grow, it is important to educate our students here so that they stay here.

Assemblywoman Tolles:

I want to commend you all for coming here and using your voice to advocate for others. I appreciate it and you all get an A.

**Constance J. Brooks, Ph.D., Vice Chancellor, Government and Community Affairs,
Nevada System of Higher Education:**

We are in full support of A.B. 202 as it has been amended to include an interim study on higher education with a particular focus on affordability. Before going more into my support testimony, I would like to address a couple of the questions that were brought up by the Committee members.

Assemblyman Edwards asked about cost drivers, and in general, I do agree with what Assemblywoman Joiner presented with—overwhelming budget cuts and how our students have, unfortunately, had to bear the burden of filling the gap for funding in some ways. For example, at Nevada State College, our newest NSHE institution, the students elected to fund their student union building that was opened two years ago. They fully funded it themselves without the help of the state, the Board of Regents, or NSHE. The students decided to step up in ways to try to fill gaps in funding that would otherwise leave them without places to gather with their peers.

In addition, we have really worked hard to keep ourselves aligned with workforce development with the rest of the nation. Innovative programs, workforce development, career and technical education are all very expensive programs. These are programs that require teachers and instructors at higher salaries because they are very specific programs. We have had to fill that gap as well. As a result, again, our students have had to bear that burden.

To Assemblywoman Diaz, you asked a question regarding the number of students who would be affected at UNR and UNLV. The total combined who would meet the Silver State Opportunity Grant, as it is currently written with a zero to \$8,500 expected family contribution, is 26,000 students. The cost for the Silver State Opportunity Grant to add them to that pool would cost, in one year of a biennium, \$96 million. That demonstrates the need and that brings me back to the support for this bill.

Affordability is at the forefront of everything the Board of Regents cares about. It is at the forefront of how we can help our students to be successful, how we can help them to not have to work so many jobs and experience the hardships that our wonderful students just described to you. This bill is extremely important to us, so we look forward to the interim study and contributing in any way that would help our students to succeed and to do so without experiencing such financial hardships.

I also want to commend our students who were at the table today who took time out of their very busy schedules to advocate for themselves, their peers, and future college students.

J. Kyle Dalpe, Ph.D., Interim Dean of Technical Sciences, Truckee Meadows Community College:

I am going to piggyback on that last comment because I am pretty proud of the students here, especially Jacob, who I worked with extensively last year. I always wonder where they go, and it looks like they are going places, so good job everyone here today.

We appreciate the support of this Committee and that of the Legislature for the Silver State Opportunity Grant which was put through the last session and recently enacted. Thank you to Assemblywoman Joiner and her colleagues for bringing this forward as a way to spotlight additional needs of students within the system. Truckee Meadows Community College supports Assembly Bill 202 as amended with the study. We encourage continued discussion to support all students regardless of where they choose to begin. Community colleges are about access and helping students who may not otherwise be able to attend, but have done so with this support. We help students at TMCC, as do other institutions, understand the loan debt and hope they graduate with the least amount of debt possible. We understand that this is a concern for all students whether they start at a community college or the university or hop from one to the other.

I hear stories all of the time about the Silver State Opportunity Grant and how it has helped students reach their educational goals. Highlighting the issue of affordability from a system-wide perspective will be a benefit to all students.

Michael Flores, Director of Communications and Government Affairs, College of Southern Nevada:

I will ditto what my colleagues just said, and add just how important the Silver State Opportunity Grant is. Assembly Bill 202 is the second bill we have heard in this Committee this week on this issue, and we know the need that is out there for our students. I also commend the students who are here today. I was an advocate in 2011, beating the drum

against budget cuts. I know how hard it is to organize students to come up here and fight for what they believe in. I also want to thank Assemblywoman Joiner for meeting with us and for talking and figuring things out with us. The study is very important, and it will be helpful in the future.

Kent Ervin, representing Nevada Faculty Alliance:

We support this bill for the study as amended. We support whatever can be done to assist our struggling students. There is a spectrum of students at every NSHE institution. There was a diversity panel of students last fall, and I particularly recall a Latina student talking about the special challenges that she had in fitting into the university system, but her predominant identity was "cash poor." She talked about all the little things that could go wrong during a semester that could completely upset a student's plan when they are living on the edge. Having enough dollars to make do, or if a family member has issues, is a real problem, so this need is widespread. It particularly affects our diverse student populations. Public higher education has been a driver of social mobility in this country. It used to be inexpensive. Forty years ago, I was able to go to my state university—Kansas—on what now, even in inflation-invested dollars, was a pittance compared to what students now have to pay. The reason for that is, over the past 10 to 15 years, as previously stated, state support has declined, and student fees have been raised to fill the gap. The statutes say that in-state students do not pay tuition; they only pay fees. We are long past the myth that fees are not really paying for the core function of the university and that only out-of-state students have to pay tuition. I get the distinction; it is just defined that way.

For example, from fiscal years 2007 to 2017, in looking at total state-allocated dollars to NSHE, the General Fund has gone down approximately 11 percent in that time period. With inflation adjustment, the General Fund dollars have gone down approximately 20 percent, and inflation-adjusted revenue from students has gone up 43 percent. That is not inconsistent with double for university fees in actual dollars.

In addition, we are still in the situation where the current budget proposal does not fully fund the student growth through weighted student credit hours formulas. We need to find a way to fix this problem, particularly for our poorer students who are struggling.

One thing I would add, besides the financial aspects, are nonfinancial struggles students have involving rules that are inconsistent between programs, such as 9 a.m. classes. Next fall, we are starting 7:20 a.m. classes to better utilize the classrooms.

Carlos Fernandez, Student Body President, University of Nevada, Las Vegas:

I am here in support of A.B. 202 as amended. I find it extremely important that we cater to not only community colleges, but all of higher education. Our students who go to the universities struggle the same. At UNLV, we have the second-most diverse campus in the nation. That says something. It says that we want to improve our students, but we also need the backing and the support in order to be able to accomplish that. Many of our students hold additional jobs, and academics fall behind. We want to support this bill

because we need more research into being able to support this issue in the future and UNLV will greatly benefit from this. There are many first generation college students and minority students, and we need all of the help we can get. That is why, as student body president, I am proud to be supportive.

Rae Frost, President, Rebel Women Veterans, University of Nevada, Las Vegas:

There is a myth that student veterans graduate without any debt because we have GI Bill funding and other resources through our Veterans Administration educational benefits, which we earned while we were on active duty. That simply is not true. Student Veterans of America (SVA) recently published a study on the National Veteran Education Success Tracker (NVEST) data that is widely available on their website that works to dispel that myth. It is very important that we look at these kinds of issues and the challenges we face. We earned a different wage set when we were on active duty, and many of us are older students. Especially at UNLV, you have a large nontraditional student body with a lot of commuting students. We are 30 years old, work 25 hours a week, and we have a family, a mortgage, and maybe a car payment. The GI Bill alone is not enough to live on for even a lower quality of living. Things like this are very important so that students are not borrowing against their future in such a way that it sets them up for failure. We need to be setting ourselves up for success.

Chairman Thompson:

Thank you for your leadership and your service. Is there anyone else in support of A.B. 202? [There was no one.] Is there anyone opposed to A.B. 202? [There was no one.] Is there anyone neutral for A.B. 202? [There was no one.]

Assemblywoman Joiner:

Thank you for your patience and time. I so much appreciate the students who all came out in support of this measure and being involved in the Legislative process. It is a big request to ask them to come here from their classes, their jobs, and their student government responsibilities. I love seeing the future of public service right here in the room.

I hope through all of that testimony that you heard, you see the compelling need that I do to seriously and closely examine the affordability of higher education in Nevada. I also think it is extremely important to update the report that was done a decade ago because a lot has changed.

Chairman Thompson:

We will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 202 and call up Assemblyman Oscarson to open the hearing on Assembly Bill 210.

**Assembly Bill 210: Authorizes the creation of community education advisory boards.
(BDR 34-457)**

Assemblyman James Oscarson, Assembly District No. 36:

I have been listening to some of the great bills that have come before the Committee today, and I think it is a tribute to listen to the students tell their stories, and what they have been through. This is another one of those bills that hopefully will be helpful in getting some parental involvement to help our students move forward and join the great students that are here today.

I am here to present Assembly Bill 210 for your consideration. Assembly Bill 210 aims to give parents greater involvement in their children's education. We want to give parents a voice and greater decision-making power at the local level. Data and history have shown a positive correlation between parent involvement and exemplary schools. Unfortunately, we have seen a deterioration of community education advisory boards as of late.

I have an interesting statistic from a 2002 report from the Southwest Education Development Laboratories called *A New Wave of Evidence*. They found that regardless of family income or background, students with involved parents are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores; enroll in higher-level programs; be promoted; pass their classes and earn credits; attend school regularly; have better social skills; show improved behavior; adapt well to school; and graduate and go on to postsecondary education.

Assembly Bill 210 facilitates the creation of community education advisory boards across the state, enabling parents to have a say in, and a positive impact on, their children's education. If we want to build great schools, then we need to work with parents, not against them. I would like to walk you through the bill.

Assembly Bill 210 authorizes the creation of a community education advisory board. As you see in section 1, subsection 1 of the bill, these boards are intended "To facilitate broad community input on issues relating to public education and to provide advice and assistance to the board of trustees of a school district, one or more community education advisory boards may be created by" The same subsection allows the creation of one or more of such advisory boards by the governing body of a city or board of county commissioners. I would like to emphasize that this bill simply provides authorization to create these boards; it does not mandate their creation.

Section 1, subsection 2 makes provisions regarding the membership of a community education advisory board. The board may include, without limitation—and we made it a broad and diverse group of folks—a member of the relevant school district's board of trustees; parents and legal guardians; students; principals, teachers, or other licensed educational personnel; and school support staff. I think that is very interesting because we

know that school support staff provides a tremendous amount of impact on our kids' lives, from the person who serves lunch to the man or woman who cleans up after the student; officers or employees of a local government; and any other person or entity who has a role in public education in the city or county.

Section 1, subsection 3 requires each community education advisory board to establish rules for its organization and procedures. These rules must include provisions regarding the number of members who may serve on the advisory board as well as their membership, terms, and voting status. The rules must also address how meetings will be called and any other items necessary to carry out the provisions of the bill.

Finally, subsection 4 provides that once a community education advisory board is established, the board of trustees of a school district must include a separate agenda item at their regular meetings allowing the advisory board to provide input, advice, and assistance. The value of them being able to provide their assistance and not just submitting a written report, and to have input to that process, is so important, especially when you have volunteers doing these programs.

What I learned in the past two sessions, and am learning very quickly this session as well, is the key to our education process is involvement from our parents. So many times we say the parents are not involved or engaged, and so many times, we have pushed them away, making them feel like their input was not valuable, and they were not part of the process. This bill addresses that and gives an opportunity again of a "may," not a "shall."

As you can see, A.B. 210 creates the mechanism that encourages involvement from parents all across Nevada who step up because they want a better future for their children. I hope we can work together with schools and parents to help all children in Nevada receive an excellent education.

Assemblyman Edwards:

Thank you for bringing this bill forward because I know how important it is. This is an opportunity for us to not just "talk the talk" about having parents involved, but to actually help them to "walk that talk." I look forward to supporting A.B. 210. I think it is a great bill and will greatly benefit all of the students across the state. Thank you.

Assemblyman Oscarson:

We do have one amendment provided from the City of Henderson ([Exhibit H](#)). I do like their language much better than mine. In section 1, it changes the wording to "Authorizes the governing body of a city or the board of county commissioners to establish a Community Education Advisory Board to provide advice and assistance to the organizational team of any local school precinct if applicable, the board of trustees of the school district, the governing body of a city or the board of county commissioners.

A community education advisory board may be established by" It then goes on through the other verbiage of the bill. I accept that as a friendly amendment, and I appreciate their work and their diligence in coming to visit with me. That is a tremendous way to start the language.

Assemblywoman Diaz:

Thank you for bringing this bill forward, Assemblyman Oscarson, but I need you to make it clear for me. I was privileged to sit as a vice chair for the hearing on Assembly Bill 394 of the 78th Session, the reorganization of the Clark County School District. I believe the intent and the direction in which we are going with the reorganization of the Clark County School District is basically establishing this kind of a board, but at each school level. First and foremost, I would like to know, for the Clark County School District, would this be a separate group that is being created? I know this is permissive, but I am just thinking in the context of the Clark County School District, would this be a separate group, or are we already implementing your bill? I just want clarity if this is different from where we are with school organizational teams.

Assemblyman Oscarson:

This would be a separate entity. It currently is a separate entity in places in the Clark County School District now. Several have existed for up to 15 to 20 years that I am aware of, and provide extremely valuable input. If other schools wanted to incorporate that into their Community Education Advisory Boards (CEAB), again, the permissive language allows them to utilize it however they would like. This gives us a vehicle to implement in other counties across the state, not just the Clark County School District. I submit to the Committee that any parental involvement we can get, at whatever level, is extremely beneficial to us, and on the other side of that coin, extremely beneficial to the students of those parents. I hope that answers your question.

Assemblywoman Diaz:

I believe it does. This is a separate entity from the school organizational teams, and I understand the vision about the community coming together. The only thing that I question is how we ensure that there is diverse representation. We know that we have some working parents, and it makes it difficult to participate even if they want to be engaged. I am trying to figure out how we are making sure that the makeup and membership of these CEABs is diverse and reflects all of the students in the community. I read in section 1, subsection 4, that they would be given an opportunity to provide updates to the board of trustees. I want to make sure that we are encompassing all viewpoints on the CEABs, embracing all children, and we are hearing all concerns.

Assemblyman Oscarson:

I think your point is well taken. What I saw in this last interim—especially with some of the interim health issues we had—the passion, the ability, and the amazing talent that came from parents who talked about some of the issues with their students when it came to their health and the reimbursement issues. I have no doubt in my mind that those parents are going to

make it known that they want to be on these boards. The people who are going to pick those boards—as you see, we have it very well defined—will recognize the diversity and the value of those folks being able to come in and provide input. It is a separate entity in some ways from what Assembly Bill 394 of the 78th Session says because it is not focused on the fiscal part of the operation. It is more focused on the psycho-social ways that they can help and provide input to the board of trustees from the standpoint of the community.

Chairman Thompson:

Let us look on the amendment. Who can come forth to create such an advisory board? When you look at A.B. 394 of the 78th Session, usually the school principal is the lead on creating an advisory board. Does the amendment say that the governing body of a city, or board of county commissioners only can establish an advisory board, or can it work the other way where the community comes forth and says they want to have this advisory board? Can you clarify that?

Assemblyman Oscarson:

My hope is that it could be both ways. My hope is that the parents would say that they now have a vehicle to do this. They are not mandated to do it, but they want to do it. For a principal or a board of trustees, what better resource could they have than the parents of the students they are trying to educate? I would not limit it. I would simply say it could be any diverse group or number of people who put together an organization and want to participate in the education of their children.

Assemblywoman Miller:

Following up on Assemblywoman Diaz's question, I do not feel this is clear. It seems very similar to the groups with A.B. 394 of the 78th Session, and yet, you are saying it is an addition. With this added layer of accountability, it seems like it fits between the board of trustees and the boards that we already have. Also, what types of things would they have the authority over?

Assemblyman Oscarson:

I think it would be a cohesive group. It would be a group that would work together. They really do not have authority. What they have is input. They have the ability to recognize many times what we do not see when we are in a bubble, a trustee situation, or in a situation like A.B. 394 of the 78th Session. Those folks are going to have their hands full, and we all know that. I know you are well aware of this, but for the Legislative record, there are other places besides the Clark County School District. Excluding Clark County specifically would not be fair, because there are parents in the Clark County School District that would want to take advantage of this. In my ideal world, my vision is that they would interface with each other. I do not look at it as another layer. I look at it as a cohesive group of parents doing what is best for their children.

Assemblywoman Miller:

I definitely appreciate how it could be helpful in our other 16 districts where it has not been established, but it seems like there are many moving groups that need to be cohesive. The roles that the groups have now in the Clark County School District according to A.B. 394 of the 78th Session are pretty well laid out, so I am guessing how it might conflict or overlap concerning input.

Assemblyman Oscarson:

The CEABs that I have been associated with and am familiar with, specifically the one out in Moapa Valley, and I think Boulder City and Mesquite have one, are very active. They provide a different level than the groups who have already been appointed or who have been called for implementation in the Clark County School District for A.B. 394 of the 78th Session. Those are going to be seriously engaged in the fiscal components because all of the fiscal needs and responsibilities fall on those committees to make sure all the money is there, the books and the teachers are there, and all of those kinds of things. What occurred in the past is a group of people who are really in touch and in tune with their communities. What they bring to the meetings is how to solve problems, present information, and make sure that the students' needs are being represented. It is not an authoritative group; it is an independent group that makes sure information is channeled in the right direction and is provided to those who do end up making the final decisions.

Chairman Thompson:

I have a request to have the City of Henderson come forward and share a bit more about the amendment.

**David Cherry, Communications and Intergovernmental Relations Manager,
City of Henderson:**

First, we want express our thanks to the bill's sponsor for allowing us to come forward and present this friendly amendment for his consideration and acceptance. Forgive us if it was not clear at the outset what our goal was. I can tell you that the language that is now in section 1 of the bill actually mirrors the language that is in A.B. 394 of the 78th Session.

The intent was to make sure that this bill did not change what A.B. 394 of the 78th Session gave to communities in southern Nevada by way of the ability to create a community education advisory board.

Mayor Andy Hafen from the City of Henderson actually sat on the technical advisory committee for A.B. 394 of the 78th Session. It was his work, in part, that lead to the creation of the new CEAB model. As the sponsor of the bill mentioned, this had been in existence for a while in Clark County, but we asked that it be the cities or the counties that would be able to determine whether or not a CEAB would come into existence as opposed to the board of trustees, where the power had vested originally. We wanted to mirror the language in this bill so that it would be consistent across the entire state.

The reason it mentions the school organization teams is because that is a term familiar to folks from Clark County and because it is an A.B. 394 of the 78th Session term. That is what is happening in each of the schools. It is just a reference point in here. The CEAB is totally separate. It does not have anything to do with the school organization teams except that it can provide guidance to and ways to assist with what is happening at each of the schools. That is the goal in Clark County. The City of Henderson will be the largest city in the state to finally have a CEAB when we create ours later this year. Our goal is to do everything we can by working in conjunction with the local schools—to give them guidance, to provide them with resources that they feel are necessary and can enhance what students and teachers are receiving. I hope that helps clarify the section 1 language.

We simply added in paragraph (g) to section 1, subsection 2, after the long delineation of who can be included, that the business community be specifically among those that are named even though it would be covered in the "all other persons." We feel there is a real nexus to education and the business community. We see that our CEAB would have the opportunity to go out to the business community and invite them to be a resource and to help provide resources in the classroom. That is why we felt it was important to have them delineated as included.

Finally, in subsection 4, there was just a slight change from what the sponsor had originally envisioned. We asked that instead of having the board of trustees place an item on their agenda that it be a mandatory item included on every agenda that the CEAB is allowed to provide input. It was not clear how often our CEABs would meet. It may not be in alignment with how often the board of trustees is meeting. We felt it better that when the CEAB felt like it needed to report to either the school board of trustees, the city council, or the county commission, they could come forward and be able to add an agenda item. Then they could appear before that body to give an update, or to ask for assistance, or whatever the CEAB needed to be heard on. I hope that explains what the items in our amendment are seeking to accomplish.

Assemblyman McCurdy:

I understand the intent, but if we are taking mirroring language from A.B. 394 of the 78th Session and putting it into this bill, why did you feel it was necessary to put that amendment in section 1? What is the intent behind that? We are mirroring language as far as the participation, and then we are giving our cities and counties a little bit of input that is not mandated; it is optional. Then, later in the amendment, we are including "The governing body of a city or board of county commissioners shall include an item at the request of the community education advisory board on the agenda of a regularly scheduled public meeting" It strikes out "of the board of trustees." Where are we going with this? Walk me through what this is going to look like after this comes to fruition, please.

Assemblyman Oscarson:

I heard from many parents who were not chosen for those committees who wanted to be a part of them. There were a lot of applicants who felt they could contribute to that process. By mirroring the language, it provides an additional resource that allow these folks to participate at the same level with the same passion, and the same enthusiasm that they would have had they been appointed to that board originally.

Assemblyman McCurdy:

So it is the same exact language that was supposed to entice a parent to get involved that was in A.B. 394 of the 78th Session. Now the parents have been excluded and feel they have been left out, right?

Assemblyman Oscarson:

They only had a certain number of slots they could fill with parents. I do not know that they were specifically left out. There were individuals who wanted to be on those advisory committees that were within A.B. 394 of the 78th Session, and they were not chosen to do that. This is another mechanism. Again, mirroring the language from A.B. 394 of the 78th Session, although it does not give them the same authority, it gives them some autonomy to participate at a different level. This was the cleanest, easiest language we could come up with. It then allows the rest of the state to use the same language that had been vetted very well and was therefore the appropriate to utilize.

Assemblyman McCurdy:

Mr. Cherry, please explain why that language was amended, and what the intent really is. How are we going to fulfill Assemblyman Oscarson's mission?

David Cherry:

Had this bill simply been for the other 16 counties in the state, we would not be at the table today because we already have the system in place for the Clark County School District. It was established through A.B. 394 of the 78th Session. But the point at which the bill covered all counties in the state, we wanted to make sure that there was not a difference between what had been proposed in the original bill and what A.B. 394 of the 78th Session enabled us to do as a city. If you look at what has been struck out in section 1, the difference is the mechanism. In the sponsor's bill, it was the board of trustees who created the CEAB. We, in A.B. 394 of the 78th Session, took the opportunity to say we think cities and counties should be the ones to create the CEABs. Had this bill passed, it would have taken away the ability for cities and counties to do that, as was agreed upon in A.B. 394 of the 78th Session by the bipartisan members of that committee who put that plan together. That is why we are mirroring A.B. 394 of the 78th Session language. It simply says that in all 17 counties of Nevada, now everyone will have the same opportunity, be it a city or a county, to create the CEAB.

We are strong believers in the CEAB and want to associate ourselves with what the sponsor of the bill is saying in terms of empowering parents. We really heard from parents when we were in the A.B. 394 of the 78th Session process. I do not mean to make this testimony

about that bill from last session, but education is very important to the citizens of Henderson, and they wanted a role. As the sponsor said, there was not a role for everyone, because if you are not a parent, you are not necessarily going on one of the school site councils at the precinct level. Where is another opportunity for you to do that? Now you can put some of those resources into being a member of a community education advisory board. We even envision having subgroups within the CEAB. Let us say you are a member of the business community, and you want to be a mentor. Maybe, as part of our CEAB, we can establish a mentoring program, or a fundraising element where we raise money that goes directly to the schools. We really think the CEAB gives the opportunity for a larger part of our community to have some way to contribute to our students' educations.

As I mentioned, we delineated "business" into paragraph (g) because we wanted them to be part of that overall participation. At the end, originally, the language had said the board of trustees would have to put an agenda item on at every single meeting to have the CEAB come and talk to them. Because we were not sure how often the CEAB would meet, we felt that instead of having the board of trustees make it mandatory to put that agenda item on, that instead, the CEAB would have the opportunity to come forward and say to the board of trustees, county commission, city council, whichever it might be, that they want to present something that is important to express at the CEAB. The language says they will have the ability to come to one of those bodies, ask for that agenda item, it would be agendaized, and they would then appear and share that information. I do not want to speak for the sponsor, but I think that the goal is to make sure that when citizens have something to communicate, there is an opportunity for them to do that in front of one of these CEABs.

Assemblyman McCurdy:

I get it. We are making it more uniform throughout the state. We are allowing everyone the opportunity to participate and have their voice be heard. Love it. Get it. Is there a maximum number of individuals who can be on the CEAB? As we are expanding it, what is that going to look like?

Assemblyman Oscarson:

What it does is allow them to set up their bylaws and their rules and regulations within their CEAB itself. That allows them flexibility to do what they need to do. I love the idea of having the subgroups because you get more participation. Some people think that if we have more participation and more seats at the table, things do not get done. I contend that when parents are engaged and interested in their children's education, they are truly a group of people who get a lot of things accomplished.

Assemblyman Edwards:

Assemblyman Oscarson, you and I share the Moapa Valley. We have both seen the CEAB up there, and we are both amazed at what they do. They are such an enormous talent, dedicated to improving the schools in Moapa Valley. I can see where we would not want to lose a single person's voice from that talent pool in order to help us get the schools where they all need to be. The CEAB offers that opportunity to everyone, whereas A.B. 394 of the 78th Session may not. This is a great way to increase the level of participation,

give everybody a role who wants to participate, and help the school system. When it comes to including diverse groups, I think the CEAB may actually offer a more autonomous way of doing that, especially in the inner city. I know it will play well in the rural districts, but I think it also will in the inner cities. You are spot on when saying this is a way to include that pool of talent that is out there and looking for a way to help.

Chairman Thompson:

Is there anyone in support of A.B. 210 in Las Vegas? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in support of A.B. 210 in Carson City?

David Cherry:

Hopefully, I have explained why we support A.B. 210, but I would again like to state, for the record, we are very supportive of this bill and thank the sponsor for his willingness to accept our amendment.

Chairman Thompson:

Is there anyone in opposition to Assembly Bill 210 in Las Vegas or Carson City? [There was no one.] Is there anyone neutral on A.B. 210 in Las Vegas? [There was no one.] Is there anyone neutral on A.B. 210 in Carson City?

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

We are here as neutral and will answer any questions you may have regarding our process. As has been mentioned, we have had some community education advisory boards or CEABs as they have also been referred to for many years. In addition to the one already mentioned, we also have one in Virgin Valley, as well as Boulder City. In the past, we have also had them come together to address a particular problem with schools in a particular area and then disband once a resolution was found. We have a history of different models as well as a policy on this issue. The language in this bill mirrors that of our reorganization regulation. As a point of clarity, the school organizational teams are different than the community education advisory boards, not just in this bill, but also in the regulation. Both are established in the regulation. You have worked that through during the discussion, but I thought that might need to be pointed out as well.

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

We are neutral on the bill. It is good that it is permissive; it leaves that local control. In the rural districts, we have a lot of community committees that have come together—bond advisory committees, and committees to help establish strategic plans—so there is a history of communities coming together and offering advice to the school districts. It has been well received and very helpful.

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

I am here in the neutral position and just wanted to offer the following bit of information. The Washoe County School Board has official committees that, by and large, do not have

representatives of the school district on them. They are what we would call external, but official, committees of the board, which means they are subject to the open meeting law and all of the same requirements as being a board that advises the committee. We have an audit committee, board policy committee, calendar committee, capital funding protection committee, career and technical education advisory committee, council on career and technical education, council on family resource centers, and an education alliance emergency management group. We also have an insurance company, other postemployment benefits (OPEB) committee, oversight panel for school facilities, zoning advisory committees, safe and healthy schools commission, school naming policies, Sexuality, Health, and Responsibility Education (S.H.A.R.E.) advisory committee, student advisory board, student attendance advisory committee, student wellness advisory committee, and textbook adoption. I will not bore you with the ones that our trustees sit on that are outside of the school purview with other local governments. I know that is part of the bill.

We do have within the city of Reno an official liaison from the Reno City Council that is voted on by the city council to work directly with us. We have what we call joint regional governing board meetings on a quarterly basis where the Reno City Council, Sparks City Council, Washoe County Commission, and sometimes the Washoe County School Board meet together in one room and talk about issues that are affecting all four local governments. My point is, we do not shy away from advice of the school board and regional cooperation. Thank you.

Assemblyman Oscarson:

Thank you for the opportunity to present this bill. My passion is single-fold and that is to allow parents a voice to have a better education for their children. You have heard from the diverse group that has testified here in favor and as neutral. Those are valuable resources and assets. This just provides a vehicle to do that. I am grateful for the time and for all of those who have testified today.

Chairman Thompson:

At this time, we will close the hearing for A.B. 210 and move to our work session. We will ask our policy analyst to walk the Committee through the work session document beginning with Assembly Bill 117.

Assembly Bill 117: Requires certain educational personnel to take certain actions to ensure pupils in grade 11 in public high schools are college and career ready. (BDR 34-292)

Amelie Welden, Committee Policy Analyst:

As nonpartisan staff, I do not advocate for or against any legislation. Assembly Bill 117 was heard in the Assembly Committee on Education on March 6, 2017 ([Exhibit I](#)).

Assembly Bill 117 requires school districts to adopt a policy ensuring that eleventh-grade students at public high schools are offered at least one individual meeting with a counselor, administrator, or other licensed educational staff member to review the academic plan that has been developed for the student pursuant to existing law.

Such a meeting must use the student's academic records and the results of his or her college and career readiness assessment, if those results are available, to review areas of academic strengths and weaknesses, including areas where additional work is necessary to prepare the student for college and career success without remediation. The counselor, administrator, or other licensed educational staff member must coordinate with the student and the student's parent or legal guardian to revise the student's academic plan if it is determined that remediation is needed.

In consultation with other stakeholders, Assemblyman Flores has proposed an amendment to:

- Provide that the meetings described in the bill are *required* rather than offered, with an option for parents to opt out;
- Provide that the meetings are required in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 rather than in grade 11 only; and
- Add the option of using a student's results from a preliminary National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test for the purpose of reviewing areas of academic strengths and weaknesses as specified in the bill (see attached proposed amendment from Clark County School District).

Chairman Thompson:

Are there any questions for staff? [There were none.] At this time, I will entertain a motion to amend and do pass A.B. 117 with the amendments proposed in the work session document.

ASSEMBLYMAN MCCURDY MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS
ASSEMBLY BILL 117.

ASSEMBLYMAN EDWARDS SECONDED THE MOTION.

Is there any discussion on the bill?

Assemblyman Pickard:

I tend to resist removing parental options, but as we heard no opposition to that component, I am going to vote yes.

Assemblyman Flores:

I would add that the amendments were in response to the feedback I received from the Committee. I took them as my own amendments, but they belong to the Committee.

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYWOMEN SWANK AND TOLLES
WERE ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

Chairman Thompson:

Assemblyman Flores will carry this to the floor.

**Assembly Bill 144: Creates the Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring.
(BDR 34-31)**

Amelie Welden, Committee Policy Analyst:

Assembly Bill 144 was heard in the Assembly Committee on Education on March 6, 2017 (Exhibit J). Assembly Bill 144 creates the Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring to support and facilitate existing mentorship programs in the State for the purpose of addressing issues relating to education, health, criminal justice, and employment with respect to socioeconomically disadvantaged children. The bill sets forth the duties, powers, and membership of the Commission and makes certain provisions for its operation.

Among other duties, the Commission will establish model guidelines and parameters for existing mentorship programs; develop a model financial plan for the sustainability and financial stability of mentorship programs; develop model protocols for the recruitment, screening, training, matching, monitoring, and support of mentors; develop model protocols for the effective management of mentors, mentees, and matches under mentorship programs; and employ a coordinator for mentorship programs, within the limits of legislative appropriations.

Assemblyman Thompson, with input from other interested parties, has proposed the following amendments to A.B. 144:

- In subsection 2(a) of section 5 of the bill, change the definition of the term "child" to mean a person who is 24 years of age or younger.
- Require the Commission to develop and, in conjunction with the Office of Grant Procurement, Coordination and Management, administer a competitive grants program to award grants of money to mentorship programs in this State. Additionally, require the Commission, in consultation with the Office of Grant Procurement, Coordination and Management, to: (1) establish guidelines for the submission and review of applications to receive money from the Grant Program; and (2) consider and approve or disapprove applications for money from the Grant Program.

- Remove the words "socioeconomically disadvantaged" from subsection 1 of section 5 of the bill and from subsection 1(a)(2) of section 5 of the bill.
- Delete subsection 2(b) of section 5 of the bill (including subparagraphs [1] through [3] of that subsection), where "socioeconomically disadvantaged child" is defined.
- Amend language in subsection 1(a)(2) of section 5 of the bill to provide that the process for identifying children in need of mentorship must include consideration of certain children, including, without limitation, children who:

Are disproportionately at risk of being deprived of the opportunity to develop and maintain a competitive position in the economy (included in the original bill's definition of "socioeconomically disadvantaged child").

Are disproportionately at risk of failing to make adequate yearly progress in a school (included in the original bill's definition of "socioeconomically disadvantaged child," but removing the word "public" from that original bill language).

Have contact with the juvenile justice system or criminal justice system as an offender or a victim (similar to language included in the original bill's definition of "socioeconomically disadvantaged child," with some changes).

Are involved in Nevada's child welfare system (not explicitly referenced in the original bill).

[Assemblywoman Joiner assumed the Chair.]

Vice Chair Joiner:

Since this is the Chairman's bill, I will be vice chairing this particular vote. Are there any questions for staff or for the bill's sponsor on any of these proposed amendments? [There were none.] I will accept a motion to amend and do pass.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DIAZ MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS
ASSEMBLY BILL 144.

ASSEMBLYMAN FLORES SECONDED THE MOTION.

Is there any discussion? [There was none.]

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYWOMEN SWANK AND TOLLES
WERE ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

The Chairman will take his own floor assignment.

[Assemblyman Thompson reassumed the Chair.]

Assembly Bill 221: Requires a school district to allow pupils and employees of a charter school to evacuate to a public school in the district during a crisis or emergency. (BDR 34-594)

Amelie Welden, Committee Policy Analyst:

This bill was heard in the Assembly Committee on Education on February 27, 2017 ([Exhibit K](#)). Assembly Bill 221 requires that the model plan developed by Nevada's Department of Education for the management of a crisis or emergency involving a school must include a procedure for the evacuation of pupils and employees of a charter school to a school in a school district. The bill also requires school districts to ensure that each school in the district is prepared to accommodate such evacuations.

At the hearing on A.B. 221, Assemblywoman Bilbray-Axelrod and the Clark County School District proposed an amendment (see attached) to:

- Stipulate that only certain schools in a district—specifically, identified middle or high schools with sufficiently large spaces that are separate from the general school population—would be required to accommodate charter-school evacuations pursuant to the bill; and
- Include liability and indemnification language.

Chairman Thompson:

Are there any questions for the staff? [There were none.] At this time, I will accept a motion to amend and do pass A.B. 221.

ASSEMBLYMAN PICKARD MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS
ASSEMBLY BILL 221.

ASSEMBLYMAN EDWARDS SECONDED THE MOTION.

Is there any discussion on the motion? [There was none.]

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYWOMEN SWANK AND TOLLES
WERE ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

Assemblywoman Bilbray-Axelrod will take the floor statement. We will close the work session at this time and move on to public comment.

David W. Carter, Member, District 2, State Board of Education:

I know you all have a lot of work to do, not just with this Committee, but other committees, but our monthly meeting for the State Board of Education meets tomorrow morning at 9 a.m., and you are welcome to come yourself or send a staff member anytime. We meet on the third Thursday of most every month. For those of you who live in Las Vegas, we have teleconferencing, so you are able to visit when you are in that area.

**Brad Keating, Legislative Representative, Community and Government Relations,
Clark County School District:**

For those of you who have been on the Committee before, we have done this in the past, but it is the first time this session. I will tell you that it has been a big hit on the Senate side, so I expect rave reviews from this side.

Every once in a while, the Clark County School District will present a good news minute. We like to talk about our schools and what we are doing in them. For the record, I want to talk about Jo Mackey Academy of Leadership and Global Communication. They have, once again, produced top-notch robotics teams in Nevada. As you have seen, we have had a big push with the first robotics. The Mackey teams, the Lego Leaders, received the first place award, and the Mackey Mind Storms received the top programming award during the southern Nevada First Lego League championship. This is the fifth year in a row that a team from Jo Mackey won first place in that competition.

The Mackey Mind Storms team is going to California for regional competition, and the Lego Leaders are going to compete in a global competition in Houston, Texas. We are proud of them and proud of what is happening with robotics in Clark County.

[Assemblywoman Swank entered, but was absent for the voting.]

Chairman Thompson:

If I could add, I went to Jo Mackey in the sixth grade. We did not have robotics then. Is there anyone else for public comment? [There was no one.] Are there any other comments from our Committee? [There were none.]

The meeting is adjourned [at 5:43p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Sharon McCallen
Committee 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 "A.B. 127 School Safety Bill," presented by Assemblywoman Teresa Benitez-Thompson, Assembly District No. 27.

[Exhibit D](#) is a letter dated March 14, 2017, in support of [Assembly Bill 127](#) to the Assembly Committee on Education, authored by the Nevada State Education Association, and presented by Natha C. Anderson, President, Washoe Education Association.

[Exhibit E](#) is a proposed amendment dated March 14, 2017, to [Assembly Bill 127](#), submitted by Les Lee Shell, Director, Office of Risk Management, Department of Finance, Clark County.

[Exhibit F](#) is a conceptual amendment to [Assembly Bill 202](#), presented by Assemblywoman Amber Joiner, Assembly District No. 24.

[Exhibit G](#) is written testimony in support of Assembly Bill 202, submitted by Jill Robinson, Student Body President, College of Southern Nevada.

[Exhibit H](#) is a proposed amendment to Assembly Bill 210, presented by David Cherry, Communications and Intergovernmental Relations Manager, City of Henderson.

[Exhibit I](#) is the Work Session Document for [Assembly Bill 117](#), presented by Amelie Welden, Committee Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau.

[Exhibit J](#) is the Work Session Document for [Assembly Bill 144](#), presented by Amelie Welden, Committee Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau.

[Exhibit K](#) is the Work Session Document for [Assembly Bill 221](#), presented by Amelie Welden, Committee Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau.