

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

**Seventy-Ninth Session  
March 29, 2017**

The joint meeting of the Assembly Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Chairman Tyrone Thompson at 6:23 p.m. on Wednesday, March 29, 2017, in Room 4100 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4401 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at [www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/79th2017](http://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/79th2017).

**ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

**SENATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Senator Moises Denis, Chair  
Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Vice Chair  
Senator Tick Segerblom  
Senator Don Gustavson  
Senator Becky Harris



**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Assemblywoman Olivia Diaz (excused)  
Senator Pat Spearman (excused)  
Senator Scott Hammond (excused)

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Assemblyman Jason Frierson, Assembly District No. 8  
Assemblyman Paul Anderson, Assembly District No. 13  
Senator Aaron D. Ford, Senate District No. 11  
Senator Michael Roberson, Senate District No. 20

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brenda J. Erdoes, Legislative Counsel  
Risa Lang, Chief Deputy Legislative Counsel  
Todd M. Butterworth, Committee Policy Analyst  
Amelie Welden, Committee Policy Analyst  
Sharon McCallen, Committee Secretary  
Joan Waldock, Committee Secretary  
Trinity Thom, Committee Assistant

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

David Gardner, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Stephen Silberkraus, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Richard A. Derrick, Assistant City Manager and Chief Financial Officer,  
City of Henderson  
Annette Dawson Owens, Member, Break Free CCSD, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Lindsey Dalley, Member, Moapa Valley Community Education Advisory Board  
DeeAnn Roberts, Vice President Advocacy, Nevada Parent Teacher Association  
Steve Canavero, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of  
Education  
Steven Conger, representing City of Mesquite  
Steven Augspurger, Executive Director, Clark County Association of School  
Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees  
John Vellardita, Executive Director, Clark County Education Association  
Brian McAnallen, Government Affairs Manager, Office of Administrative Services,  
City of Las Vegas  
Annalise Castor, Member, Break Free CCSD, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Pat Skorkowsky, Superintendent of Schools, Clark County School District  
Sylvia Lazos, Policy Director, Educate Nevada Now  
Anna Slighting, representing Honoring Our Public Education, Las Vegas, Nevada

**Chairman Thompson:**

[Roll was called. Rules and protocol were explained.] We are hearing Assembly Bill 469 this evening. One thing we are excited and passionate about is education. We want to keep that level of professionalism, courtesy, and respect at its all-time high. We will start by talking about the three ways you can testify today. This is based on Assembly Standing Rule No. 54. Support means that you approve the measure as written, or approval of the measure as written along with proposed amendments accepted by the bill sponsor. Opposition means that you do not support the measure as written, and you oppose the measure. An amendment that you proposed may not have been accepted by the bill sponsor. Last is neutral, which is when you offer insight without a position in opposition or support. Now we will invite Assemblyman Frierson, Senator Ford, Senator Roberson, and Assemblyman Paul Anderson up and open the hearing for Assembly Bill 469.

**Assembly Bill 469: Provides for the reorganization of large school districts in this State.  
(BDR 34-986)**

**Assemblyman Jason Frierson, Assembly District No. 8:**

I present to you all today Assembly Bill 469. This may very well be the shortest introduction I have ever witnessed. My intention today is to set up how we got here. Assembly Bill 469 is an effort to take the regulations from the legislation dealing with Clark County School District (CCSD) in Assembly Bill 394 of the 78th Session and set them in statute. There are no changes from the most recently approved regulations. My reason for doing this was simply to provide the kind of certainty and stability that would allow the parties to move forward. That is, in the simplest terms, what I set out to do.

I recognize there are strong feelings about this issue, and there is concern across the entire building. My colleagues in leadership and I felt it was appropriate to discuss this with our colleagues across the aisle and ensure we were together on something that a lot of sweat equity had been invested in. We wanted to see this through. We had several meetings to talk about how to do this. We met with Senator Roberson and Assemblyman Paul Anderson to discuss how to proceed.

This is what we came up with that provided that certainty and stability without making any substantive changes to the regulations that a subcommittee had approved, but set them in statute. However long this process ultimately takes, there will be certainty in that process. That is essentially what we set out to do. I appreciate my colleagues joining in to ensure this is a united front and a bipartisan effort to reflect that we want to move forward and do what is best for Nevada's children and students. I think this is our effort to do just that. It is not my intention to address technical aspects of it.

I was not here during the interim, but I saw dysfunction and a need to address it. I will let the Committee know that it is my intention to offer a trailer bill that provides an opportunity to have more of those substantive conversations. That will be in a subsequent bill.

This bill was our effort to lift the regulations and place them in statute, so that the people who are working hard to see this through can focus on that. My intention today was to provide the road map of how we got here. We did not make any substantive changes to the regulations, so the Legal Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) can answer any technical questions there may be about the regulations and their development.

**Assemblyman Paul Anderson, Assembly District No. 13:**

I briefly want to thank Assemblyman Frierson, Senator Ford, and Senator Roberson for the opportunity to work together on this bill. I think the bicameral, bipartisan support is important. I am new to the advisory committee, and in the few meetings I have seen, along with looking from the outside in, the amount of work and effort those committees have put forth—both the technical and advisory committees—to get us to this point certainly deserves some kudos and applause. I am also cognizant of my own constituents and the changes they have seen in their ability to participate in the process at their local schools, whether they are elementary or high school. I have four kids who are going through, or have gone through, our public education system. Certainly we have taken advantage of the wonderful opportunities that CCSD has offered us. I look forward to seeing what our kids in every district in Clark County can achieve through this new reorganization.

**Senator Aaron D. Ford, Senate District No. 11:**

I sit here as well simply to communicate one message. With the four of us sitting here, we wanted to indicate a bipartisan and bicameral approach to trying to address a very real issue. As Assemblyman Frierson indicated, we are committed together, and now we commit to you, to contemplate items in a trailer bill to address outstanding issues. However, this particular bill is an effort simply to allow the reorganization in Clark County to continue unimpeded by regulatory issues. We hope to accomplish that goal. I do not intend to testify beyond this absent a request by or need of the Chairman. Likely I will watch from my office unless there is a need for me to testify. I wanted to be here to show my support for this bill and stand ready for any preliminary questions if you have any.

**Senator Michael Roberson, Senate District No. 20:**

I will just echo the statements of my colleagues. I want to thank my colleagues for working together on this very important issue. I have spent the last two years of my life working on this. I feel personally invested in seeing this reorganization come to fruition and be successful. I want to thank you, Chairman Thompson and Chair Denis, for hearing this bill tonight. I know you are all very busy, and there are a lot of things going on in the building. Thank you for taking time out of your evening to hear this bill.

**Risa Lang, Chief Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau:**

I will briefly go through the bill, and if you have any questions, we are happy to go back. Starting at the beginning, section 2 includes some legislative findings and declarations. The next ten sections have definitions, the most important of which is section 7, which

defines "large school district." This bill applies to any large school district that would meet that definition, which would mean any school district with a pupil enrollment of 100,000 or more in their public schools. Currently, that is only Clark County. Other schools could meet that threshold in the future.

Section 15 requires all of the large school districts in the state to reorganize into local school precincts. The local school precincts are described in that section. It gives them more autonomy to make decisions and pushes some of the decision-making down from the central administration to the individual schools.

Section 16 explains the initial transfer of responsibility to the schools. It defines some of the responsibilities that a school has to be given. Those currently would be selecting teachers, administrators, and staff for the school; directing supervision of the staff; procuring equipment, services, and supplies in accordance with the plan of operation that they develop for the school—which can be obtained from the school district or outside the school district; and developing a balanced budget for the school for the use of money allocated to the school. All other responsibilities for the schools remain with the school district unless they are transferred at some other juncture. Section 16, subsection 7 describes the manner in which, at the end of each year, they can have a discussion and decide if additional responsibilities should be transferred down to the schools now called "local school precincts."

Section 17 requires the school district to make certain information available each year that would help them to plan for the next school year. It includes using an average unit cost for each type of employee; listing out the equipment, services, and supplies that schools could obtain from the school district through its allocated funds; and the cost of that equipment, services, and supplies. Section 18 requires the superintendent to make certain estimates regarding finances on or before January 15 of each year. In that section, it also requires them to come up with an estimate of what we call the "unrestricted funds" that would be available. Eighty percent of those unrestricted funds should be allocated to the local school precincts in the first year after reorganizing. Eighty-five percent should be allocated each year thereafter.

Section 19 requires the amount allocated to each school to be done on a per-pupil basis using a type of weighted funding that is described in that section. Section 20 requires the superintendent to inform schools on January 15 of each year of the estimated amount of money that will be allocated to each school for the next school year. Again, these are estimates, so they could come up with a plan of operation for the school. Section 21 requires the superintendent to make certain determinations about local school precincts each year and post that information on the Internet. Section 22 provides for school associate superintendents to be assigned to oversee not more than 25 schools. It provides for the procedure for hiring those schools' associate superintendents.

Section 23 sets out the duties of that school associate superintendent. That person will be held accountable for the performance of the various schools that person is responsible for. Section 24 establishes certain requirements of the principal of each school, including

establishing organizational teams. The organizational teams have an active role in helping to come up with a proposed plan of operation for the school for the next year, and they provide other types of advice and assistance to the principal of the school. Section 26 sets out the membership of the teams that consist of teachers, staff members, parents, and other stakeholders. In some schools, that may include a nonvoting member, who would be a student.

Section 25 of the bill requires the principal to present the plan of operation for the school at a public meeting, so people can see the intent for the next school year. Section 28 describes the duties of the organizational team. Again, they would assist the principal in establishing the plan of operation. They also get input in the selection of the principal for the school whenever there is a vacancy. They are authorized to provide feedback about the principal to the school associate superintendent up to two times per year.

Section 29 allows the organizational teams to appeal the plan proposed by the principal if they take issue with any part of it after it has been brought to the school's associate superintendent, who has to approve the plan of operation for the next year. Section 30 allows certain community education advisory boards to provide community input. Section 31 requires surveys to be given to all stakeholders to determine satisfaction with the local school precincts and the central administration. Section 32 requires the superintendent to prepare a report regarding the transfer of responsibility to the schools, the results of surveys and assessments of the performance of the schools, the effectiveness of the schools' operations under this local school precinct model, and any recommendations for changes to regulations or statutes. The report is forwarded to the Governor, Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Director of the LCB for transmittal to the Legislature.

Section 33 requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to oversee the reorganization of a large school district, and requires large school districts to cooperate with the Superintendent and provide any financial or other information requested. Section 34 requires the State Board of Education to adopt regulations that may be necessary to carry out provisions of the bill. Sections 35 through 37 are conforming changes. Sections 38 and 39 make some clarifications concerning local government purchasing laws to ensure the purchases made by these schools are not aggregated. Section 41 requires a large school district to comply with the dates that are in the regulation. It is basically to carry forth the requirements of the regulation without any interruption. Anything done prior to this bill enactment would be considered to have been done pursuant to the bill.

Section 42 requires the Department of Education to consider the competencies of principals to determine whether other types of training may be necessary as part of their licensing. Section 43 requires the Department of Education to consider the equity of using average unit costs in the planning for these schools. Section 44 declares the current regulation to be void. Section 48 repeals Assembly Bill 394 of the 78th Session. Section 45 continues the advisory

committee that met during the interim, and instead of developing a plan, the advisory committee will oversee the reorganization of large school districts until August of 2018. Those are the major provisions of the bill.

**Chairman Thompson:**

Are there any other questions from the Committee?

**Assemblywoman Swank:**

I have a question about section 19, subsection 1, paragraphs (a) through (d). I can see where it is setting up categories of weighted areas. I see the English language learners, which seems akin to our Zoom schools. I am not seeing analogous funding for our Victory schools. Where am I missing that?

**Risa Lang:**

Section 19 talks to the weighted funding. This list of types of categories matches the list for the weighted funding for the state. The Victory schools are more of a categorical funding. Unless I am misunderstanding it, that would be dealt with separately. That comes under a different allocation.

**Chair Denis:**

I wanted to clarify. Section 19, subsection 1, paragraph (a) says, "Pupils who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches pursuant . . . ." Part of that goes into the qualification for the Victory school. That is where part of that is coming from. On section 44, you said that is the repeal of the current regulations and the legislation from last session. Is that correct?

**Risa Lang:**

Section 44 declares the regulations to be void. Section 48 repeals Assembly Bill 394 of the 78th Session.

**Chairman Thompson:**

Are there any other questions from the Committee? [There were none.] Is there anyone wishing to testify in favor of the bill?

**David Gardner, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I am a proud parent of two students at CCSD. I have three on the way. I was working on this bill last session. I am very blessed to have seen it come this far and do these things. I really came up here to thank all of you. There were a lot of people who helped write these things. The leadership that brought this bill forward—Senator Ford, Senator Roberson, Senator Denis, and Senator Harris—were very helpful in drafting this. Assemblywoman Diaz and Assemblywoman Swank also helped write this. I want to thank you very much for this. It took a lot of time and effort. Everyone put in so much time to ensure our kids were taken care of here in Clark County.

**Stephen Silberkraus, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I am here to support A.B. 469. It has been a long process. It was my great pleasure to sit at the right hand of Assemblyman Gardner through this process and work with the many members of this Committee both on the legislative advisory committee and outside the building to move this process along. I think we all recognize this will make a huge difference in the lives of many children across Clark County. There are over 300,000 children that this legislation will affect. It will make their lives and our community better. I thank you for putting this into state law where it will be codified. Hopefully, there will be a trailer bill where a few other things will be adjusted. I know a few things have been adjusted in this bill. That will make a drastic improvement for all Nevadans.

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

First, I want to thank the Committee for hearing this important legislation and thank legislative leadership for sponsoring the bill. The City of Henderson is in strong support of A.B. 469. The community of Henderson places a high value on education. In multiple surveys, residents have identified education as their number one priority. The City of Henderson has been a strong partner with the advisory committee for A.B. 394 of the 78th Session. Mayor Hafen served on the technical advisory committee to assist in drafting the reorganization regulations. This bill will strengthen the pathway to reorganization by placing the regulations into statute and providing stability to the process.

We believe this legislation puts our students first and creates pathways for the city to collaborate with CCSD. It empowers our principals, gives our parents a greater role in their children's education, and creates data transparency by establishing relationships with the school district through our associate superintendents. We are also appreciative of the opportunity to create a Henderson community education advisory board (CEAB) to help increase academic performance, neighborhood integration, wraparound student support, and community involvement as well as strengthen the relationship between schools and educational partners.

**Annette Dawson Owens, Member, Break Free CCSD, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I am a parent of six and a teacher. I am on leave with the district in a charter for the past 20 years I have been teaching. I am also a member of Break Free CCSD. We have been able to be a part of this process for the last two years, and we have worked with some of the most amazing education-minded leaders—Senator Ford and Senator Roberson. Thank you for all the time, energy, and effort you have put into helping kids here and helping Nevada break free from being last in education. Break Free CCSD loves and is in favor of A.B. 469. We would like to have the reorganization continue without being impeded. We have been contacted through various individuals about problems they have had as these organizational teams have been formed. We had a meeting and recorded it on Facebook Live. We have had about 6,500 views of people who are highly interested and connected to education and what is happening. They are excited about it. They are a bit nervous to post and make comments, but they are watching, and they are excited about these changes that have been happening in



their communities. In a workshop yesterday, we have already seen people who want to change things and get rid of some of the input people will have on these school organizational teams. I happen to serve on a few organizational teams, and we love the influence they have and the way the communities can connect with their schools. They know what is best for their schools.

We would encourage you to move forward putting A.B. 469 into law, so we can continue to move forward. We are so excited for these changes. We really have nothing to lose. We have seen good things happening. We are also for the appointment of school board members by the CEABs in Senate Bill 381 as well. We can continue to move forward with education. Thank you to everyone who has been working hard on this. We appreciate Senator Denis, Assemblyman Paul Anderson, Assemblyman Frierson, and everyone's work. We appreciate you listening to us and our input. In the end, it will be great for our kids.

**Lindsey Dalley, representing Moapa Valley Community Education Advisory Board:**

I am a member of our middle school organization team. Moapa Valley is in Clark County and the CCSD system. I am also a member of the Moapa Valley Community Education Advisory Board. We enjoyed working with the advisory board during the process of passing A.B. 394 of the 78th Session. We found it supportive, and everyone truly wanted to reform and improve education. The Moapa Valley Community Education Advisory Board was very active in supporting A.B. 394 of the 78th Session, and as this bill mirrors it, we do support A.B. 469.

However, I would like to caution that we have seen that CCSD cherry-picks which laws they choose to enforce and follow at the school level. It is important that the state stay in touch with the individual schools to enforce both the spirit and statute of the CCSD reorganization. I do not think it is that the individuals mean it maliciously, but it is a big agency and there are a lot of opinions on what reorganization means. Section 17, subsection 3 of Legislative Counsel Bureau File No. R142-16 requires that ". . . rural school that exists on the effective date of this regulation continues to receive not less than the proportionally larger amount of money that was used to fund the specialty school or rural school for the 2016-2017 school year." I am here to tell you that we are not seeing that being followed while creating this year's budget. This is not the forum for that discussion other than an example of cherry-picking the regulations.

I personally would like to mention that S.B. 381 would add additional support to educational reform by providing support at the trustee level, so the Superintendent will have an easier job instituting meaningful reform.

**DeeAnn Roberts, Vice President Advocacy, Nevada Parent Teacher Association:**

I am speaking in support of A.B. 469. The Nevada Parent Teacher Association (PTA) represents 16,000 families across the state of Nevada. Nevada PTA appreciates the value this bill places on parent participation and voice. In addition, we thank you for the language in

section 26, subsection 7, related to liability for parents and guardians while serving on their schools' organizational committees. Nevada PTA looks forward to working with CCSD as a partner as we prepare parents and guardians for this important work.

**Steve Canavero, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education:** I am here in support of A.B. 469. I am deeply appreciative of the leadership demonstrated by the leaders of both houses and both parties. I am also appreciative of you taking the time to hear this bill today. This language has taken a long path. I want to honor the path the language has taken.

As you are well aware, the advisory committee established under Assembly Bill 394 of the 78th Session engaged in the public process to develop a plan and recommendations for the reorganization of CCSD. The advisory committee engaged in extensive fact-finding and involved other public bodies in this process as well. The committee held five public meetings from October 2015 to October 2016. The technical advisory committee had 11 public meetings from November 2015 through July 2015. The Board of County Commissioners for Clark County held eight town hall meetings. In August of 2016, the advisory committee, following significant fact-finding and public outreach, adopted a revised plan to reorganize CCSD. On that same day, they provided draft language that was unanimously endorsed by the committee. That language was sent to the State Board of Education for consideration to adopt as regulation.

The State Board of Education adopted the Legislative Counsel Bureau File No. R142-16 on September 1, 2016, and the Legislative Commission approved it on September 9, 2016. It roughly reflects the language you have before you. Consistent with the enabling law, it is a matter of policy that the State Board of Education's intent was, and continues to be, to adopt regulations that are necessary and appropriate to effectuate the implementation of the plan developed through the fact-finding process and public engagement by the advisory committee. Indeed, the State Board of Education frequently relies upon various bodies, councils, boards, and commissions to conduct extensive fact-finding and public engagement to develop consideration for regulatory language suitable for adoption. These processes range from informal stakeholder meetings to formal adoption by statutorily-created committees.

Looking back over my service to the state, never have I seen the regulation or language that you see today go before the State Board of Education with such a significant public engagement and highly regional application. The Board's action on the language that models the language you see before you reflects its intent to support regulations that are aligned with the adopted plan. The Board's action reinforces that the plan is thoughtful. Indeed, the Board appreciated all the work done by the advisory committee and others in the plan. Being here today is further evidence of honoring that process and ensuring that this language remains consistent with the intent of the plan.

**Steven Conger, representing City of Mesquite:**  
We are in support of this bill.

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

We are also in support of this bill. I would like to address a number of things. I appreciated the overview that Superintendent Canavero gave of the process. I would like to add a different perspective. Assembly Bill 394 of the 78th Session was passed 22 months ago. That process began in earnest in October 2015. There were close to 30 meetings with public input, involving all kinds of citizens in Clark County. We talked to educators, businesspeople, parents, et cetera. Those regulations were approved in final fashion in early September 2016. I applaud CCSD's initial efforts for implementing the regulations that were developed and passed in September 2016. However, I am concerned that as long as that public input process went—from October 2015 to September 2016—not a single time did a CCSD representative go to the table and express a concern about the contents of this bill. Not one time. At one point, the CCSD Board of Trustees notified the superintendent that he was no longer to work with this process. Nevertheless, the process moved forward.

I believe, and I think others believe, that the genesis of this bill was that there was some dissatisfaction with the way education existed in Clark County. I think this bill does fabulous things for improving that. I would like to speak about two or three of them. The intent of this bill is to create and deliver greater autonomy and support to schools. There exists a very different decision-making process in schools that involves a principal, teachers, support staff, and parents. This is unlike anything that has occurred before.

Although, I would say, our best principals have always operated that way. I think the most critical piece, and the missing piece to date, has been that this bill requires CCSD to transpose itself into a central service agency, delivering greater levels of support and money to schools. Without that support and money, schools will not be able to do what this bill intends for them to do; that is to deliver a superior education to the children of Clark County. We are in very strong support of this bill. We believe it will take this kind of legislative oversight to ensure this happens for children, parents, and staff in Clark County. They deserve to have the various component parts of this bill implemented with fidelity.

The Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees is in strong support of this. We look forward to working with you. I know we have talked a number of times about trailer bills. As I review the CCSD proposals that were presented to the Department of Education yesterday, there ought to be great concern about what the content of those trailer bills could be. Those proposals would serve to completely decimate this bill.

**John Vellardita, Executive Director, Clark County Education Association:**

I also sat on the technical advisory committee of this bill and was at every single meeting the previous testifiers spoke to. I want to address a few things. First, I am here in support of A.B. 469. The first thing I want to share is that I do not know, in the history of the Nevada Legislature, that there has been as much time and substantive discussion around a piece of legislation as there was for this bill or A.B. 394 of the 78th Session. It had meetings over a period of a year and a half with many stakeholders. There was outreach to the community to get input as well. I think what we have here today is a product of that effort. I say kudos ten thousand times over to Senator Ford, Assemblyman Frierson, Senator Roberson, and Assemblyman Paul Anderson for bringing this forward as a bipartisan effort. I think this session will get more things done when we see four good leaders and a closer making legislation.

The other thing I want to bring to people's attention is that this is a game-changer. This is the fifth largest school district in the country. This is about a delivery system. It turns the top-down, highly centralized model inside out. Clark County School District gets \$2.2 billion, has 40,000 employees, and 320,000 children. This bill transfers responsibility, authority, and empowerment to the buildings where education is taking place. That, by itself, is significant. Let me share a bit about how this has been embraced by those in the buildings.

When these regulations were passed by the State Board of Education, we immediately held nominations for leaders to be a part of the site organizational teams and elections. Let me cite some facts. There were 1,642 teachers who were nominated to be on these teams for over 350 buildings; 10,200 educators voted in the elections that produced 853 leaders who are now in place. Since the regulations were passed and up until this day, over 1,700 educators and parents have participated in ongoing training to empower these new leaders with the responsibility they have.

In the month of February, over 350 buildings were empowered to make decisions about how to use the \$2.2 billion for their budgets with two objectives. One, make a plan that is based on student outcomes—that is the north star. Two, attach the revenue to execute that plan. This is significant. One of the concerns you will hear is whether this is happening too fast.

When we were on the advisory and the technical advisory committees, we looked at experiences in large urban school districts in this country where they made this transformation. New York City has the largest school district in the country. They made this transformation to empower schools with a similar decentralization model. Ninety-four percent of the budget of unrestricted funding was in the hands of these teams and these buildings. We looked at Chicago, the third largest school district in this country. They shifted towards a model with site-based councils. We looked at Los Angeles Unified School District. We looked at similar models and examples where this experience took place.

We learned that it could be done. To the concern that doing it in one year is too quick, we were counseled by three individuals with extensive experience in this process. Michael Strembitsky was hired as the consultant to run this. He is the guru of empowerment and the transformation from top-down to a decentralized model.

We also had William Ouchi's support. He has extensive experience in this country around reforming education. We also had assistance from Eric Nadelstern, the deputy chancellor of New York City Department of Education. They all said that two systems cannot coexist. You cannot have a centralized system in place while you are trying to transform to a decentralized model. Hence, the recommendation was to make the transformation in one year to convert central administration to a service agency and transfer responsibility, budget, authority, power, et cetera, to the school buildings. That is the light-switch model we are on. You will hear an argument against that.

The second thing I want to say is the concept of how much money is in control of these schools. The regulations have 80 percent of unrestricted money. This is the paradigm-switch. This is truly giving empowerment to these buildings when these resources are in the hands of these schools and these teams. For those reasons, Clark County Education Association of Nevada supports A.B. 469.

**Brian McAnallen, Government Affairs Manager, Office of Administrative Services,  
City of Las Vegas:**

The City of Las Vegas supports A.B. 469. We appreciate everything that has gone into bringing this bill forward in over two years' worth of meetings that have taken place on the issue of ensuring our students and schools have what they need to move forward. It is hard to follow the testimony of state Superintendent Canavero and directors John Vellardita and Steve Augspurger. They have articulated everything that the city would support on this particular issue.

First, I want to recognize the four leaders who brought this bill forward and appreciate the unified, bipartisan support for this issue. I want to thank the legislators here who have served on the advisory committee and spent the time over the last interim in these many meetings that have taken place. I echo the three comments the previous testifiers made. I have never been involved in a process that has had so much public vetting and engagement. This comes from an organization that spends its time in public meetings and engagements to bring the community together on these issues. We have had additional meetings where the county commission districts have drilled down and brought the community involved to come in and talk about A.B. 394 of the 78th Session.

I am representing Mayor Goodman, who served on the technical advisory committee. She spent a significant amount of time as an individual engaged in this issue and working across the community to bring forward everything that has been encompassed in A.B. 469. We believe this will move our school district forward. There is nothing more important to the City of Las Vegas than its future, its children, and resolving the issues needed for

our urban core districts as well as the schools that serve the rest of our school system. Please take these regulations and put them in statute. We appreciate the ability to engage in this process through the last interim. Our commitment is to continue to fix and work with CCSD as we move forward and ensure the fifth largest school district is doing everything it can to improve education outcomes for our students.

**Annalise Castor, Member, Break Free CCSD, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I am with an organization called Break Free CCSD. We are so grateful to see all of our government leaders so supportive of this. It is so encouraging! I really cannot get over that. We want to bring up that we did a site organizational team training. It was only 30 minutes long, and we put it on Facebook Live two weeks ago. As of yesterday, we had 5,400 views. As of today, we had 6,500. I think that is so telling. There are people who are so excited about this process and are involved.

The interesting thing is that, in our training, we mentioned people from Senator Roberson's office, Senator Ford's office, and from the Community Implementation Council of the Advisory Committee to Develop a Plan to Reorganize the Clark County School District. We said that they could reach out to these people if they had questions, comments, or things they wanted to say. No one has commented. Not one comment has been made. For me, that is very telling that there is still a level of fear or that the process might not work. People are scared to express their concerns or frustrations for fear of any feedback to their jobs.

We are so supportive of this bill. We are also supportive of Senate Bill 119. It is a wonderful bill to protect these school organizational team members. We are so grateful for these, and we want this bill to go forward so people will have more confidence to share ideas about how to make this school district better. I know this is not the appropriate place, but we are also supportive of Senate Bill 381.

**Chairman Thompson:**

Is there anyone wishing to testify in opposition to the bill?

**Pat Skorkowsky, Superintendent of Schools, Clark County School District:**

I want to thank the legislators who have engaged in this process. We respect the legislative process and the opportunity to give input on this. We are in opposition of this bill, but for some very specific reasons. I will talk about the specifics and how we might be able to work through these if the bill is passed. These are issues that affect the support we provide to our students, teachers, principals, and other employees in our schools each and every day. I am asking you to work with us to solve these concerns as we proceed with the reorganization so that we can ensure our students are getting the best possible education as we move forward. We also have to work through the system to ensure our employees have the resources they need. The first is the work we are doing through Senate Bill 178, the weighted funding formula. That is imperative to the success of the reorganization of CCSD. In the 78th Session, legislative leaders came together and began to implement something that we brought forward as a bill draft in 2011. We wanted to work on supporting our students in

our most challenged neighborhoods as well as our most accelerated students. We have identified these four categories. They do cost more to educate, and we have to work towards ensuring we put the funding behind that so the dollars can go from the Legislature, as they do in the categorical funding, straight to the students in the classroom. Without additional funds to do this, it is difficult for schools to make decisions that can impact the academic achievement of their students. We have to work on that piece.

With a finite amount of dollars assigned to the State Distributive School Account, we would have to take money from students with the weighted funding formula if this was required to be fully implemented without a variance. We would have to take money from students who are not identified in one of those four categories to supplement the additional funds needed to support the students with those four identified categories. I will give you an example. If the average per-pupil dollar amount was \$3,500 and we had to implement weights as this is written, without a variance, then we would have to take money from general education students mostly in our suburban rings and give it to students in our most challenged neighborhoods. With that, a school in a suburban ring may only get \$2,000 per pupil. Other students would get upwards of \$7,000 depending on how the formula is identified.

The reorganization's regulations were finalized on September 9, 2016. That is 130 days, including weekends, that we had to implement the largest reorganization of the fifth largest school district in the nation. When you talk about how we can put that into place, our team has done yeoman's work. We have worked with the advisory and the technical advisory committees on the process. We worked with the Community Implementation Council. We have worked closely with TSC<sup>2</sup> Group to ensure we are following the guidelines of the regulation and implementing it with fidelity and full transparency.

One of the challenges in there is the 80/20 funding split. I know my counterpart said that New York City did 94 percent, but I spoke directly with Andrés Alonso, who was the deputy chancellor of the New York City school district when this was put in place. They had challenges at that time because they did have two systems running. But he took the concept from Baltimore, Maryland. It took him 18 months to come up with the 80/20 unrestricted funds to go out to schools. I talked to Terry Grier in Houston, Texas. He said it took almost 24 months to go through that process. We have done what we can in the 130 days that we were given, and we are committed to getting more resources out into the schools. The other piece we need to talk about is how we can ensure we are meeting the mandates with the 80/20. We need to ensure we have enough central services to support the mandates required by the Legislature and the federal government. We are not opposed to getting more dollars out to schools. We just need to do it in a way that ensures the success of students and protects the district as we may have to deal with mandates from the Legislature and federal legislation.

One of the biggest challenges with the 80/20 funding is trying to take an average teacher salary and turn it into specific dollars to be assigned to schools. For example, our adaptive physical education teachers are on an average salary, but they travel to five schools.

We have to turn that into the actual dollars for that individual and transfer the money to the school. We cannot give that school flexibility and freedom to use the State General Fund unrestricted funding. Federal law requires adaptive physical education through the Individualized Education Program. This is not an easy task. We are working hard to get to those amounts and ensure the dollars all follow our students, but we want to do it with fidelity to ensure that building principals do have flexibility in how they do that and present their plan of operation for approval with the school organizational team.

Not to contradict Mr. Derrick, but I think he was still an employee at CCSD when I started working with the municipalities. Part of the piece is the concern about the municipality participation in the process. We continue to work with the municipalities. I worked with the City of Henderson ten years ago on the APPLE Partnership. I have worked with the City of Las Vegas. I have presented them data, explained what is going on in their schools in their districts, and broken their data down by wards. This is not something I am afraid of. I was doing it before A.B. 394 of the 78th Session was passed. I think we need to work together to look at how these reports go out to the municipalities, because in our first round of reports, there was no discussion about the reorganization and the impact on their constituents. It was all of these elected officials wanting to talk about constituent concerns with our school associate superintendents. If we are truly going to talk about what is important to schools, it cannot be individual constituent concerns. As we go forward, we need to ensure we are making a difference with our students. We are not fearful of the reorganization. We are fearful of making sure we do not make mistakes that will impact our students for years to come. This reorganization, if codified into law, will last long after all of us are in this room. We need to ensure it is done correctly. We should not jeopardize the future of our students by making quick decisions on things that will impact their lives as well.

**Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson:**

Initially, I was not a huge fan of the reorganization effort, but I ultimately voted for it because I thought the reorganization committee would be able to do it more effectively. I stand by that choice today because I think it was a very good one. I think the stakeholders have done a lot of hard work I think we all recognize. Something like the reorganization should have been done in that process versus a piecemeal approach. But I wanted to ask two things. We heard testimony today, and I remember some news articles that said for some time you were not allowed to participate in those meetings. Can you help me understand exactly what happened there?

**Pat Skorkowsky:**

The Board of Trustees had not taken an official position at that point. Therefore, anything I would have said would not have represented the Board of Trustees and their position on the reorganization.



**Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson:**

We are here out of necessity because of lawsuits over those regulations. We have the need for our legal counsel to protect the Legislature's interests. That takes up a lot of time. We have four months every two years to pass laws for the entire state. Instead of working on legislation, they are busy in a lawsuit. It is not appropriate. Is it not difficult on the one hand to sue over regulations and then get upset when we codify them?

**Pat Skorkowsky:**

I am not sure how to answer that question. I understand the concern. If you look at what we have put into the lawsuit, they are exactly the things that I talked to you about. They are still concerns today. I think that probably answers it the best I can at this point in time.

**Chairman Thompson:**

Is there anyone wishing to testify as neutral to the bill?

**Sylvia Lazos, Policy Director, Educate Nevada Now:**

I want to ask your forbearance to make part of the record the written testimony we submitted earlier today ([Exhibit C](#)). I will not read the entire written testimony because it is very detailed, but I do want to hit some highlights. Good will is abundant here, and reform is a good thing. The collaboration of CCSD in the manner that Pat Skorkowsky has described is absolutely necessary for this to be successful. We appreciate everything that is being done. I want to start by countering some factual claims that have been made. There were claims made that there was plenty of input from the community. I have an anecdote.

I went to one of the town halls at Winchester Cultural Center. I saw a parent with five children there. I thought it was great that we were finally getting parents to come out to town halls. When I asked what was going on, he said he stopped to get Pokémon for his children. He was not there for the town hall. When I went into the town hall, it was essentially completely CCSD employees. I would dispute the claims made that this has had great input from the community because certainly there was not input enough from parents. I saw a whole lot of employees and a whole lot of confusion about this.

Furthermore, at the final time the State Board of Education was going to adopt the regulations, President Wynn began the meeting by basically saying they were going to vote for it, and that they were uninterested in amendments. That is part of the reason you are still hearing these ongoing conversations. The process was rushed because we did not have parents fully engaged, but mostly because this is complex. This is a tough issue. As Mr. Skorkowsky pointed out, it is an issue with great consequences for children. We support putting this aside, so the Legislature can get its work done. We want to point out three important issues we absolutely must resolve for the trailer bill. We parallel the concerns that CCSD is voicing.

First of all, CCSD has said that this 80/20 split in the budget is totally unworkable. Other stakeholders say that is not true, and they do not believe CCSD. I do not know what to believe. How do we resolve this going forward? Our suggestion is that we get a third party to do a forensic study of the budget of CCSD and resolve it in regulation after session when this can be done with greater care.

The second big issue we see is the per-pupil weighted funding argument. We have spoken to other school districts and our partner, the Education Law Center. They are an expert on school finance. There simply is no parallel in the country of pushing down per-pupil weighted funding to a school district without the state having a weighted funding method of school finance. This is pretty much the tail wagging the dog. We support the issue that CCSD is putting forth. Per-pupil weighted funding needs to be resolved. We should institute a weight of 1.0, or we should think about another way of doing this.

My final comment is that nowhere in the regulation is this tied to student achievement. It makes no sense to us when we have worked so hard for reform and have had a six-year, ongoing bipartisan effort, to have a reform that is not tied to and measured by student achievement. I will say that I spoke to the deputy superintendent of Oakland, California. She related that one of the reasons Oakland pulled back from reorganization is because they saw inequality in how reorganization was implemented and student achievement was measured in schools. After reorganization, minority and English language learning students saw a lag in student achievement. We are fearful we may see a repeat of that here in CCSD as we move forward with reorganization. We think the regulation going forward should have metrics tied to student achievement, so we can monitor whether the claim that reorganization is better for students is true.

**Assemblyman Pickard:**

I just have one question because I am not sure I understood what you were saying. I thought you were saying that there was not a lot of opportunity for public comment. My understanding is that there have been over 30 or more public hearings that ran multiple hours. I want to confirm that you believe that was not enough.

**Sylvia Lazos:**

I am saying parents—normal people—were not engaged in the process. We had town halls during the summer when most parents, including myself (if I would be considered a normal parent), would check out from the goings-on of CCSD. Most town halls were filled with employees who were very concerned about their jobs. What I also observed was a lot of confusion from parents from the very beginning. They did not know if it was about CCSD reorganization, Achievement School Districts, or if there was a takeover. I do not think we really have had clarity about that. The claim is being made that reorganization is a good thing for parents. If it were a good thing for parents, maybe we would want to listen to what they have to say a bit more.

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

I am a parent, a proud CCSD teacher, and a school organizational team member. We are neutral on A.B. 469 because we cannot support any bill that comes with an unfunded mandate. We hope that the Legislature will provide the needed money for this bill before the end of session. We do appreciate all the time and service you have given to serve the people and the students of Nevada, and, in particular, to improve our K-12 public education system. As we look forward to trailer bills, we would like to bring a few items to your attention. For the sake of time, I will just briefly mention them.

We would like to reiterate our support for the removal of the union requirement for teachers and support staff on the school organizational teams. We have some suggestions on how that could be reworded in section 26. We also ask for some clarification on parent qualifications as it relates to parents of fifth- eighth- and twelfth-graders. We want them to be able to serve possibly after their child leaves the school to finish their term before the next election. We have suggestions on that. We will email them out to you.

We also have concerns about the principal hiring process. I am a teacher and a parent, so I understand both sides of where issues are coming from. We also have suggestions that we would like to put forward with that. We do look forward to working with you ([Exhibit D](#)). We agree with some of the things Ms. Lazos mentioned about weighted funding. We would like to see that addressed. We would be willing to send out questionnaires that you have for parents through our broadcasting messages.

**Assemblyman Pickard:**

I wonder if Senator Roberson could briefly comment on the outreach and the number of meetings that were held. You were at all the meetings, so you can comment on whether it was as one-sided as was suggested.

**Senator Roberson:**

There were plenty of meetings over the course of a year and a half. Senator Harris was the chair of the technical advisory committee. There were over 25 stakeholder members of that technical advisory committee from the community. The advisory committee was made up of myself, Assemblywoman Diaz, Assemblywoman Neal, Senator Ford, Senator Denis, former Assemblyman Silberkraus, Senator Hardy, et cetera. We had nine or so meetings. We had more meetings up until our last, which was on February 1, 2017. There were about 20 or so meetings between those two committees. Then we had eight or ten public meetings held jointly with Clark County commissioners in their districts. We had a lot of meetings and covered a lot of ground. I think Mr. Vellardita and others have spoken. Mr. McAnallen from the City of Las Vegas spoke. They had never seen a policy issue come from the Legislature with this much discussion.

There will always be naysayers. You cannot go through a process like this and not have people quibble or say that they would have done it differently. There is no perfect legislation. There are no perfect bills or regulations. As many have said, we are open to

considering modifications that can gain the support of this Legislature going forward. The school district today is not the same as it was yesterday or will be tomorrow. Things are constantly evolving. Things change with time. We acknowledge that we will have to address issues as we go forward. I think you will find A.B. 469 provides for ongoing regulations by the Department of Education. We are happy to consider other issues as we go forward during the session, but I think this is a really great piece of work.

A lot of people have their fingerprints on this. It is not one person. We have mayors from the City of Las Vegas, the City of Henderson, and the City of North Las Vegas all on this. Assemblywoman Harris's technical advisory committee helped. We had representation from the Latin Chamber of Commerce Nevada Inc., the Urban Chamber of Commerce, the Las Vegas Asian Chamber of Commerce, and the PTA. We had a member of the CCSD School Board of Trustees, Linda Young, as a member of the technical advisory committee. Pat Skorkowsky was on the technical advisory committee. We had a member of the Clark County Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Mary Beth Scow, on the technical advisory committee.

We have heard a lot of viewpoints. We had the benefit of the most expert professionals at large school reorganizations in the country and the world to advise us. Mike Strembitsky is the father of the empowerment model. He has brought this model successfully around the country. We had Eric Nadelstern, the deputy chancellor of the New York City Department of Education. We had Bill Ouchi, who is a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles and who has written many books on how to successfully transform a large school district. We have had the best people advising us, and we have put a lot of work into this. I am probably giving a long answer to your short question, but without demeaning the opinions of others, who I clearly disagree with, I will just say from my perspective, this has been a pretty good job by everyone involved.

**Chairman Thompson:**

Thank you, Senator Roberson and the leadership team. We will close out the hearing on A.B. 469. Is there any public comment? [There was none.] I want to thank everyone, this has been great. It shows the dedication we have as a body. I appreciate us coming together. I also want to thank our amazing LCB staff. You are our team; you do great work. We appreciate you guiding us through this. The meeting is adjourned [at 7:42 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

---

Sharon McCallen  
Recording Secretary

---

Isabel Youngs  
Transcribing Secretary

APPROVED BY:

---

Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Chairman

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

---

Senator Moises Denis, Chair

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

## **EXHIBITS**

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

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

[Exhibit C](#) is written testimony regarding [Assembly Bill 469](#), dated March 29, 2017, authored and submitted by Sylvia Lazos, Policy Director, Educate Nevada Now.

[Exhibit D](#) is written testimony regarding [Assembly Bill 469](#), dated March 29, 2017, authored and submitted by Anna Slighting, representing Honoring Our Public Education, Las Vegas, Nevada.