

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Seventy-ninth Session
March 16, 2017**

The Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Moises Denis at 3:40 p.m. on Thursday, March 16, 2017, in Room 2134 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Todd Butterworth, Policy Analyst
Asher Killian, Counsel
Linda Hiller, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Tom Morley, Laborers International Union Local 872
Kristen McNeill, Deputy Superintendent, Washoe County School District
Byron Green, Chief Student Services Officer, Washoe County School District
Tom Ciesynski, Chief Financial Officer, Washoe County School District
Ruben Murillo, Jr., President, Nevada State Education Association
Paul Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, White Pine County School District
Sylvia Lazos, Policy Director, Educate Nevada Now
Nancy Brune, Director, Kenny C. Guinn Center for Policy Priorities
Nicole Rourke, Associate Superintendent, Community and Government Relations, Clark County School District

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Michelle Kim, Clark County Education Association
Steve Canavero, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education
Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association
Pat Skorkowsky, Superintendent, Clark County School District
Lindsay Anderson, Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County School District
Mary Pierczynski, Nevada Association of School Superintendents; Nevada
Association of School Administrators
John Vellardita, Executive Director, Clark County Education Association
Jared Busker, Policy Analyst, Children's Advocacy Alliance
Dawn Miller, President, Nevada PTA
Brent Husson, President, Nevada Succeeds
Carl Scarbrough, Nevadans for the Common Good
Anna Slighting, HOPE, Honoring Our Public Education
Susie Lee, Board Chair, Communities in Schools
Roxann McCoy, President, NAACP-LV
Yvette Williams, Chair, Clark County Black Caucus
Brad Keating, Clark County School District

CHAIR DENIS:

I will open the meeting of the Senate Committee on Education with two bill draft request (BDR) introductions. First, we have BDR S-4.

BILL DRAFT REQUEST S-4: Revises provisions relating to education. (Later introduced as Senate Bill 300).

This BDR is an act making an appropriation to Clark County School District (CCSD) to carry out a program of peer assistance and review of teachers and providing for other matters properly relating thereto.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE MOVED TO INTRODUCE BDR S-4.

SENATOR HARRIS SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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CHAIR DENIS:

Next is BDR 34-550. This BDR pertains to the educational sunset committee that was put together to recommend abolishing some things and renaming others.

BILL DRAFT REQUEST 34-550: Revises provisions relating to education. (Later introduced as Senate Bill 301).

SENATOR WOODHOUSE MOVED TO INTRODUCE BDR 34-550.

SENATOR HARRIS SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DENIS:

I will now open the work session with Senate Bill (S.B.) 173.

SENATE BILL 173: Revises provisions relating to facilities for achievement charter schools. (BDR 34-629)

TODD BUTTERWORTH (Policy Analyst):

This bill was sponsored by Senator Yvanna D. Cancela, and it was heard in Committee on March 9. It eliminates the prevailing wage exemption for charter schools operating within the Achievement School District. It also ensures that projects comply with the same local engineering design, safety and other building standards as district school buildings in the same county. There were no proposed amendments and no testimony in opposition. I have submitted the work session documents ([Exhibit C](#)).

SENATOR HAMMOND:

There are a few things I have to work out about this bill. If the vote does not work out positive on my side today, I will be still working toward making sure those questions are resolved.

TOM MORLEY (Laborers International Union Local 872):

Thank you.

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SENATOR HARRIS:

I was out of this Committee testifying on one of my bills, so I did not get to see this hearing. I need to have more information before I can vote in the affirmative today. Like Senator Hammond, I will continue to work with you to figure out what this all means.

MR. MORLEY:

Thank you.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE MOVED TO DO PASS S.B. 173.

SENATOR SEGERBLOM SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED (SENATORS GUSTAVSON, HAMMOND AND HARRIS VOTED NO)

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CHAIR DENIS:

We will now hear the rest of Mr. Butterworth's briefing on the legislative history of education bills in the last five sessions.

MR. BUTTERWORTH:

This is the final piece in my three-part presentation on the education legislative history of the past decade. During my committee briefing in our first meeting, I provided an overview of the 2015 Session and the 2016 Interim. On Tuesday, we covered the 2007 and 2009 Sessions, along with the three Special Sessions that occurred in between. Today, I am going to provide a brief presentation on the 2011 and 2013 Sessions.

In 2011, the Legislature passed A.B. No. 568 of the 76th Session, which appropriated \$2.8 billion for K-12 education, which was later vetoed by Governor Sandoval. The Legislature then enacted A.B. No. 579 of the 76th Session, with a compromise of \$2.2 billion in State General Fund support. The Legislature also appropriated nearly \$97 million to cover shortfalls in local taxes during fiscal year (FY) 2011.

In addition, State funding for all school employee salaries was reduced 2.5 percent due to projected revenue shortfalls. That percentage was the same amount reduced from the salaries of State employees. The Legislature also discontinued State funding for the employee portion of teachers' contributions to the Public Employees' Retirement System of Nevada.

That year, S.B. No. 11 of the 76th Session created an interim study to look at developing a new method for funding public schools. Chair Denis was that committee's vice chair. The Legislature then enacted S.B. No. 14 of the 76th Session, requiring the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop a model curriculum for English and math based upon the newly-adopted Nevada Academic Content Standards. That model curriculum was intended to be used as a guide for classroom teachers in developing lesson plans.

With the approval of S.B. No. 196 of the 76th Session, the Legislature removed the sunset on the empowerment school statute. It also eliminated the statutory cap limiting the number of empowerment schools.

Senate Bill 276 of the 76th Session required school accountability reports to include information on bullying incidents resulting in disciplinary action.

A trilogy of bills in 2011 addressed performance evaluations for teachers. For the first time, these evaluations were tied to the academic growth of students in a teacher's classroom. The first bill, A.B. No. 222 of the 76th Session, created the Teachers and Leaders Council through the State Department of Education (NDE) to establish a Statewide performance evaluation system for teachers and administrators.

The second bill, A.B. No. 229 of the 76th Session, required school districts to establish a program of performance pay and enhanced compensation for recruiting and retaining teachers and administrators. That bill also streamlined the evaluation process and expanded the grounds for immediate dismissal, extended the probationary period for new teachers and administrators to three years. It eliminated seniority as the sole criteria for workforce reductions.

The last of these three bills, A.B. No. 225 of the 76th Session, provided that a postprobationary teacher or administrator who received an unsatisfactory evaluation for two consecutive years would be returned to probationary status.

The 2011 Legislature enacted two bills to expand and streamline the Alternative Route to Licensure process. Those bills were S.B. No. 315 of the 76th Session and A.B. No. 230 of the 76th Session. Another bill, S.B. No. 276 of the 76th Session, required the principal of each school to establish a school safety team and it established a Bullying Prevention Fund administered by the State Superintendent.

Also related to student safety, A.B. No. 455 of the 76th Session required the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association to adopt a policy for the prevention and treatment of head injuries that occur during an interscholastic activity or event.

Building on S.B. No. 143 from the 74th session in 2007, A.B. No. 224 of the 76th Session created the Office of Parental Involvement and Family Engagement within NDE.

A significant bill relating to charter schools, S.B. No. 212 of the 76th Session, created the State Public Charter School Authority as an independent chartering board with status as a Local Education Agency (LEA) defined in federal law. The LEA status allows the authority to receive and distribute State and federal categorical funding, such as Title I funds for disadvantaged students. Several additional measures were passed in 2011 to strengthen the State's charter school authorization process.

Another significant governance bill, S.B. No. 197 of the 76th Session, made wholesale changes to the structure and governance of Nevada's K-12 education system. These changes included revising the selection process for the SBE. Now, four voting members are elected in each of Nevada's Congressional districts and three members are appointed by the Governor. The SBE also includes four nonvoting members nominated by various entities specified in the statute and then appointed by the Governor. The measure also changed the selection process of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to require the Governor to appoint the State Superintendent from a list of candidates submitted by the SBE. The bill further granted the Superintendent with authority to enforce the State's K-12 education laws.

Due to continuing concerns about funding for higher education, the 2011 Legislature also enacted S.B. No. 374 of the 76th Session to create a Committee to Study the Funding of Higher Education.

Also on the higher education front, A.B. No. 570 of the 76th Session revised the boundaries of districts from which the Board of Regents are elected. The measure retains a 13-member Board with an ideal population in each Board district set at 207,735 individuals. This includes nine districts wholly in Clark County, one partially in Clark County, one wholly in Washoe County, one in parts of Washoe County and Pershing County and one district containing the remaining rural counties.

In 2012, Nevada was beginning to emerge from the Great Recession, and the Legislature was able to begin restoring some of the education funding lost over the previous five years. The 2013 appropriations bill for K-12 education included funding to meet enrollment growth and to increase the per pupil basic support level by approximately 5.6 percent over the biennium. The Nevada System of Higher Education also received a bump in funding of just over 5 percent.

During the 2011-2012 Interim, a study was conducted to look at a new higher education funding formula based upon the credit hours successfully completed by students instead of simple enrollment numbers. This new performance-based funding has been in use since FY 2015-2016. In FY 2019-2020, the performance funding set-aside will max out at 20 percent of each school's General Fund appropriation.

The 2013 Legislature also laid the groundwork for transitioning the State's K-12 education system to a new funding formula. Building upon the work of the 2012 Interim study, S.B. No. 500 of the 77th Session created a task force to develop a weighted funding approach for certain groups of students, requiring the weights to be used in formulating the next State budget. That funding formula continues to be phased in. With less time needed to worry about budgetary issues, the 2013 Legislature was able to focus more energy on education policy.

One bill, S.B. No. 504 of the 77th Session, established the Zoom Schools Program and the English Mastery Council. The bill's \$50 million appropriation also acted as a down payment on the future funding formula for English language learners (ELL).

On the testing front, the High School Proficiency Exam was replaced with a set of end-of-course exams and a college-and-career-readiness assessment administered in high school. Furthering the work of the Teachers and Leaders

Council, S.B. No. 407 of the 77th Session developed the new personnel evaluation system. Another bill, S.B. No. 305 of the 77th Session, enabled high school juniors and seniors to get credit toward graduation by completing an internship with a business or public agency.

One of the anti-bullying bills, S.B. No. 164 of the 77th Session, built upon the other anti-bullying statutes by requiring schools to notify the parents of both the bully and the victim when bullying occurs. It also required that training be provided to students, teachers, principals and members of the school board. Finally, the bill required school accountability reports to include data about bullying.

The 2013 Session also continued the improvement of our charter school statutes, starting with A.B. No. 205 of the 77th Session, which required Nevada's charter schools to begin operating under performance-based contracts, instead of written charters. The bill also prescribed grounds for termination of a charter contract.

Finally, S.B. No. 384 of the 77th Session provided Nevada's best charter schools with access to the public bond market, enabling them to raise capital for improved facilities and to repay capital debt over longer periods of time.

Following the 2013 Legislative Session, the economy began to gain momentum, as did State revenues. This laid the groundwork for the 2015 Session, which many feel was a landmark for education in Nevada.

We have now covered education legislation from the past decade. The story ended on a little higher note than it began, and at least now, you can talk about what to fund instead of what to cut.

CHAIR DENIS:

I knew we had moved a lot of legislation, and it is easy to forget some of the issues we addressed in the last decade. When you advocate for education, it seems like it takes a long time to get things done. Sometimes it takes a decade to do some things.

I will now open S.B. 49, already heard in the Senate Committee on Finance. We will address the policy side of this bill since that discussion did not take place in that Committee.

SENATE BILL 49: Revises provisions relating to funding for pupils with disabilities in public schools. (BDR 34-405)

KRISTEN MCNEILL (Deputy Superintendent, Washoe County School District):

I am a native Nevadan and a lifetime educator as a teacher, principal and administrator. At Washoe County School District (WCSD), we have made special education a priority by putting an emphasis on improving outcomes for special education students. We are doing this by contracting with a national leader on improving inclusive practices, identifying inclusive practices as one of the areas of focus, and increasing supports and funding for our students with disabilities. This has all come at a price tag of approximately \$10 million this school year. We have also performed a complete review of all current special education practices, structures and supports. We also created a special education panel comprised of parents, community members and district staff to guide our work.

During our focus on improving outcomes for special education students in Washoe County, the new weighted funding formula was rolled out, including the 13 percent cap on students eligible for additional State funds. This seemed to be in direct conflict with the work we are doing at WCSD in focusing on all students. The question then is, why the cap?

We understand it was put in place to protect against overidentification of special education students by school districts to get a financial advantage, which is a real concern. In Washoe County, we have taken significant steps to ensure that we have a process to prevent overidentification, especially minimizing disproportionality. We also believe underidentification is a serious concern, because not addressing the special needs of a student is what leads to kids falling through the cracks.

In a school district that is over the 13 percent cap, does the cap then create an incentive not to serve students because it will require a greater investment away from other general education funding? We believe in robust accountability and the consistent use of best practices to identify students. In section 1, subsection 6 of S.B. 49, we have added language allowing the NDE to audit our process for an extra layer of accountability.

There is evidence against the 13 percent cap. Federal law obligates school districts to seek out all children with disabilities who are in need of special

education services. At WCSD, we have taken this responsibility seriously by actively looking for these vulnerable students to give them the head start they deserve. The U.S. Department of Education (USDoE) is now targeting 12 school districts in Texas with a federal investigation as to whether students with disabilities are getting the help they need because of that state's 8.5 percent special education cap. This is a follow-up to an October 2016 admonition by the USDoE to Texas to stop using a cap on special education because there had been evidence reported of students being denied services.

BYRON GREEN (Chief Student Services Officer, Washoe County School District): We understand that the 13 percent was selected because it was the national average at the time, but averages can be deceiving. Nationally, the cap ranges from 17.5 percent in Maine and Massachusetts to Texas at 8.5 percent. The majority of states have a much higher rate than Nevada.

Similarly, the range in Nevada is wide and mirrors the Nation, from 8 percent to 17 percent. That information is in our handout ([Exhibit D](#)). The varying methods of identification of students and the varying makeup of communities is likely the reason for difference across districts. This one-size-fits-all approach does not work for Nevada school districts.

Ms. McNEILL:

All of this information has led the leaders of WCSD to the conclusion that a cap on the number of special education students eligible for weighted funding is wrong for Nevada's most vulnerable students. We are trying to improve graduation rates and give our special education students access to rigorous curriculum while being held to strong accountability measures. We at WCSD are committed to all students. We think the State funding format should follow suit.

CHAIR DENIS:

How does this impact other districts in the State?

TOM CIESYNSKI (Chief Financial Officer, Washoe County School District):

Based on the model I have seen presented from NDE, I believe there are 12 school districts that are at or above the 13 percent cap. Taking the cap off would create some additional abilities for those districts to address their special education students.

RUBEN MURILLO, JR. (President, Nevada State Education Association):

We support this bill. We know it is a difficult situation when it comes to funding our special education students, and we realize it will have a negative impact on our general education students when you have to take money from them to educate special education students. We believe that all students should have adequate funding.

PAUL JOHNSON (Chief Financial Officer, White Pine County School District):

To answer your question about how the cap affects other school districts, the NDE has a spreadsheet that shows the percentage of students that would not be funded with the 13 percent cap; it ranges anywhere from 8 percent to 24 percent of the special education student population. Eight percent of students in Carson City would be missed; Churchill County would miss 17 percent; Douglas County would miss 13 percent; and Humboldt County would miss 17 percent. Lincoln County would miss 9 percent; Lyon County would miss 4 percent; Mineral County would miss 24 percent; and Nye County would miss 22 percent. Both Pershing County and Storey County would miss 9 percent; Washoe County would miss 7 percent; and White Pine County would miss 10 percent of their special education funding needs. That is the percentage of the special education student population that would not get funding if this 13 percent cap were in place.

SENATOR HARRIS:

So, to that percentage you gave for each school district, if we added 13 percent to it, would we get the true percentage of special education students in that district?

MR. JOHNSON:

That number is the percent of special education students who would not receive funding if the 13 percent cap were in place. For example, in Carson City, they have a total special education population of 1,066 students, but only 978 students would be allowable under the 13 percent cap. That would mean that 88 students would not be funded through the funding formula.

SENATOR HARRIS:

Then the numbers you gave are on top of the 13 percent?

MR. JOHNSON:

Correct.

SENATOR HARRIS:

The 13 percent plus the 24 percent you mentioned for one of the counties is a pretty high special education population.

MR. JOHNSON:

Yes, it is significant in some instances.

SYLVIA LAZOS (Policy Director, Educate Nevada Now):

We testified before the Senate Committee on Finance in support of this bill on February 21. In our testimony, we attached Mr. Johnson's spreadsheet.

NANCY BRUNE (Director, Kenny C. Guinn Center for Policy Priorities):

We support this bill. In January, the Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities released a report, "Pathways to Nowhere, Postsecondary Opportunities for Students with Disabilities." We identified the fact that there is significant room for improvement in the way school districts provide pathways for their students with disabilities. Based on our analysis, we believe that one of the best ways to improve the ability of districts to provide robust and value-added pathways for students with disabilities is to resource them appropriately. We support S.B. 49, believing that it would remove the artificial cap and fund school districts according to the actual number of their students with disabilities. As Mr. Johnson said, this would help about 12 rural school districts. In our analysis, we found that oftentimes, securing services to help students with disabilities is more costly in rural school districts.

NICOLE ROURKE (Associate Superintendent, Community and Government Relations, Clark County School District):

We are neutral on this bill. All school districts continue to contribute significant general funds to special education, regardless of the cap. We believe that before we address the cap, three things need to happen. First, we need to create a State formula to be used by all school districts for counting students to ensure accuracy and consistency. Second, we need an equitable Statewide multiplier. Right now they vary, based on the funding. Finally, we need an enhanced emphasis on disproportionality for all school districts.

At CCSD, we do extensive analysis in this area, and it would serve all districts. We contract with Vanderbilt University for an external evaluation of our identification. This provides a higher standard than the State's current standard.

As to the potential financial loss, it is our understanding that by the State estimate produced by NDE, for FY 2017-2018, it would reduce our allocation in Clark County by \$1.66 million. We support adequate resources, certainly, so if this leaves everyone whole, we think it would be a worthy policy to consider. However, we are all contributing significant resources from our general fund into our special education fund. We transferred approximately \$361 million last year, including special education transportation.

MICHELLE KIM (Clark County Education Association):

I am testifying neutral on S.B. 49. Our position as neutral is fiscal-based and not because of the removal of the 13 percent cap. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit E](#)).

STEVE CANAVERO (Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education):

Last Session, we were for the 13 percent cap, but we are testifying in the neutral position today. I appreciate the very clear differentiation between the obligation to serve pupils, regardless of a cap or not, and the cap based upon funding. That is what this is. It is on the funding side, not a cap on the number of students a district may identify or serve because that is an obligation under federal law.

Fiscal year 2016-2017 was the first year we took the unit-based funding. Prior to having the individual districts per pupil funding, we had unit funding that was allocated based on units. Everyone received a certain number of units, with or without regard to the number of students they served. I would imagine that at some point in history, they were linked to the number of students they served. What it uncovered in the FY 2016-2017 transition was that when we looked at it on a per pupil basis, some districts received lower per pupil amounts for students with disabilities than other districts. That became readily apparent in the one year we made the transition, which was in FY 2016-2017. Into the biennium, the Governor's budget includes, over the course of the biennium, \$30 million in additional dollars for special education.

As we listened to the school districts in the stark transition in FY 2016-2017, we made a few adjustments in developing the model that was referenced here. One adjustment was using the available dollars, which was \$10 million for the first biennium, we would provide an increase across all the school districts, somewhat like an inflationary adjustment up. This way, everyone could keep

pace with the cost related to special education, similar to what has historically been called a rollup in the State budget on the Distributive School Account (DSA) side.

The second approach was to look at enrollment growth. If 13 percent is based on the enrollment growth and a district's enrollment continues to grow, the number of students under the 13 percent cap could also grow.

In the third approach, we would continue to make those investments in the school districts that have the lower per pupil amount. This way, we continue to build those districts up to the State average.

That is the approach we are taking in this biennium. If the 13 percent cap is removed, we would make those changes. According to our model, we would have three school districts that would be contributing back as the cap is removed because the pot does not change. The numbers of pupils would be adjusted.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

In the 2015 Session, we used an outside auditor. I would like to see something like that. What are your thoughts on how efficient that was? I would also like to know if the sponsors of the bill would be willing to use an outside auditor instead of an inside auditor.

MR. CANAVERO:

I can speak generally to that. Because of the federal obligations to serve students with disabilities and the due process related therein, the State ultimately has a layer of responsibility to ensure compliance with all the laws. This can be in the form of requests for hearing officers that come through us to adjudicate challenges within delivery of certain services for students in the schools. That is consistent with the external evaluation of the six programs you might be referring to, where they look more at outcomes than at the actual dollars.

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 49 and open the hearing on S.B. 178. I will be presenting this bill, so Vice Chair Woodhouse will take over.

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

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

Senate Bill 178 revises provisions relating to the funding formula for K-12 public education.

SENATOR MOISES DENIS (Senatorial District No. 2):

After serving as the Chair of the 2013-2014 Interim Task Force on K-12 Public Education Funding that came up with the weighted funding formula, I did not get a chance to talk about it during the last Legislative Session. Senate Bill 178 modifies provisions related to the funding formula for K-12 education. One of the significant and cross-cutting efforts we have undertaken in recent years, particularly during the last Session, has been modernizing the State's formula for funding K-12 education so more money is allocated for students with greater needs, including lower income students, ELL, gifted and talented students and those with disabilities.

The funding formula, referred to as the Nevada Plan, was created by the 1967 Legislature. The Nevada Plan was actually a model for distributing money for students in an equitable way. Let me put that in perspective. I was a first grader at Robert E. Lake Elementary School in Las Vegas at that time. Back in 1967, I was one of the few Latino kids in CCSD, so the dynamic was different than today. Back then, it was understood that a new funding formula would be unsuccessful if it simply set out to "rearrange the furniture." So, the 1967 Legislature supplemented the new funding formula with a source of revenue called the Local School Support Tax. The Nevada Plan was designed to yield equity among Nevada's increasingly diverse school districts. Washoe County and Clark County were quickly becoming urban and very different than other districts in the State. There was no real consideration given to the diversity of Nevada's student population because, frankly, it was not diverse.

Fast-forward 50 years, and Nevada is an entirely different place. Clark County now has twice as many K-12 students as it had people in 1967. Only 1 percent of Clark County residents were Hispanic back then. Now, 50 percent of Clark County's students in grades kindergarten through Grade 3 are Hispanic. Clearly, Nevada now needs a school funding formula that provides equity, not

only among its diverse school districts, but also among its diverse student bodies.

As a result of our legislative work in 2015, the first group moving to the new weighted funding formula has been students with disabilities. In the current fiscal year, students with disabilities are funded at 150 percent of the standard rate per pupil. For other subgroups of students requiring weighted funding, the 2015 Legislature decided to monitor the costs to educate them, partially offsetting those costs through new programs to target their specific needs. For example, to improve literacy instruction in the early grades and to address the weighted-funding needs of lower-income students and ELL students, we created or expanded three vital programs.

First, the very successful Zoom Schools program, which provides literacy supports for young ELL students, was doubled in size to \$100 million over the biennium. Second, \$50 million was appropriated for the new Victory Schools program, supporting extra literacy instruction at 35 of Nevada's poorest underperforming schools. Finally, the new Read by Grade 3 program received \$27 million to support early literacy programming in targeted schools. There is an important pattern here that emphasizes the importance of kids being able to read if they are to succeed. The funding invested in these programs is not only moving the needle on academic progress, it is also making it possible, over the long term, for ELL and lower-income students to be funded at a higher rate in the Nevada Plan.

Senate Bill 178 requires the SBE to adopt regulations requiring each school district and charter school to report the number of students enrolled who are identified as ELL or at risk. It also requires the NDE to prescribe annual measurable objectives and performance targets to track school performance in providing education and services to these students. Each school district and charter school must submit an annual report to the NDE, detailing results against the prescribed annual objectives and performance targets. Each school district must also submit a plan for meeting the objectives and targets in the ensuing school year.

This bill further provides for a multiplier of 2.0 in the basic support guarantee for each student with a disability, and a multiplier for each student identified as ELL or at-risk as follows: 1.05 for school year 2018, 1.15 for school year 2019,

1.3 for school year 2020 and 1.5 for school year 2021. Only one multiplier is used if a student is identified as both ELL and at risk.

If we are going to be committed to a weighted funding formula, we should make an actual commitment. In the coming years, if we find these weights are too high or too low, they can be adjusted. There are some proposed amendments for this bill, and I still need some time to review them before committing to any specific changes.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

I am thinking about the testimony we just heard on special education in the other bill, S.B. 49. Does this have any impact if we keep the same amount of money going into the budget?

SENATOR DENIS:

There have been some projections that were submitted as to what it would cost. When we started the process, I thought we were just redistributing the pie, so it would not cost anything. Since some of these things are considered categorical and would be outside the funding formula, to be truly successful, we would have to find additional funds. The categorical funds for Zoom Schools and Victory Schools are outside that realm and could be helpful. Based on the discussion we just had about the 13 percent cap, this puts it back to a 2.0 multiplier, which is much higher than what is in place now. There is some funding that has been set aside for special education. In the end, the short answer is, you have to have more funding to make it work.

SENATOR HARRIS:

In the bill, the federal term for English learner, is being used. I did not have a chance to look up the U.S. statute on this to see who exactly we are capturing under that definition.

SENATOR DENIS:

I would have to check that myself. I am sure there are some people here who can clarify that.

MR. CANAVERO:

This is being responsive to a change in the federal law that identifies English learners. They are identified by what we call the ELPA, the English Language

Proficiency Assessment, which is an assessment of a student's language capability.

SENATOR HARRIS:

My concern is that it might be too restrictive. In the Technical Advisory Committee to Develop a Plan to Reorganize the Clark County School District during the last Interim, we took testimony from a variety of stakeholders in Clark County who indicated that some subsets of the Asian population struggle with English acquisition, but they are often presumed to be proficient in English. We also have many children who live in poverty and struggle with basic language acquisition skills, even though English may be their primary language. I want to make sure that when we look to English language learners, we are capturing the subsets of our population that are overlooked and continue to struggle.

MR. CANAVERO:

Good point. This is specific to the federal protected class of English learner, not particularly to students who wrestle or struggle with it. That would be identified through a screening process.

SENATOR HARRIS:

I would like a more expansive definition if the sponsor is open to it. I know budgets are tight and it will be a policy decision that this Committee and the Senate Committee on Finance makes.

SENATOR DENIS:

Because we have a weight for Free and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL) as well as ELL, there is some help there. Some of the school districts may also talk today about how they identify ELL students that may include some of the students you talked about who speak English, but do not master it.

SENATOR HARRIS:

Even though we are going to have some overlap between at-risk kids and ELL students, we are not going to capture everybody who struggles with language acquisition. I would like to be a little broader in our understanding of where those struggles are, because I think they directly feed into our literacy challenges.

SENATOR DENIS:
I agree.

SENATOR HARRIS:
My second question pertains to section 2, subsection 3 and paragraph (a) of S.B. 178, where it says, "The Department shall review each report to determine whether: (a) The school district or charter school is meeting the annual measurable objectives and performance targets prescribed by the Department." That is of the greatest concern for me because I do not see what happens if they are not. Are there consequences? Are we just going to capture if we are not successful, or is there going to be some kind of consequence if measurable objectives and performances are not being met? I see there is a plan to meet those objectives, but if that plan is not successful, what are we going to do about that?

SENATOR DENIS:
I have had some discussion about that in some of the recommendations we are looking at, especially with the ELL students and where they need to be and where they are.

SENATOR HARRIS:
We would then continue to fail our at-risk populations that we are already failing. I do not know that I would want to see punitive actions so much as additional support and assistance if we are not meeting measurable goals.

SENATOR DENIS:
I do not disagree. I am just saying there need to be consequences. This is really based on the 2013-2014 Interim Task Force on K-12 Public Education Funding.

SENATOR SEGERBLOM:
Why not piggyback? It seems to me if you have a student with English language learning problems who is also disabled, it will cost three times as much as the general student.

SENATOR DENIS:
This was something that came forward from the very diverse group on that Task Force, partially because of the funding issue. In some places, they do piggyback, but in most examples we looked at, they do not.

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

If a child has disabilities and is also an ELL student, the weight for that special education student is higher, so that individual would be funded at the higher rate. I agree with Senator Denis's statement that you do occasionally have students who could be in each one of those groups and then you are dealing with a funding issue.

SENATOR SEGERBLOM:

My point is that it seems like it is more of a money issue than it is a formula issue. If we had all the money in the world, we would piggyback, so we are trying to shortchange Las Vegas.

SENATOR DENIS:

I will say that it would not be as simple as just saying that if one student needs language help, it would be a 1.5 multiplier and then a FRL student would be 1.5. It would probably not be a doubling, but if you looked at the actual formula, it would not be exactly that. Part of the challenge would be coming up with what the formula would be if you combined the weights.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

Senator Segerblom really identified the problem. We can have 5 or 6 formulas, but if we continue to starve our public schools, diverting money to other places, we will always have this issue. That is what we have done in the past. We have starved our public school system, and that is why we are here.

Ms. LAZOS:

I am very happy and proud of the work we did in the 2013-2014 Interim in the bipartisan, multistakeholder Task Force that Senator Denis referenced. We interpret this bill as a continuation of that conversation on the complex issue of how to adequately fund public education. We support S.B. 178 and acknowledge that it is a complex and difficult issue. Because of what Senator Spearman pointed out, we have to be thinking about revenues. Part of the work may not be realistic for this Legislative Session, so maybe it is a good idea to be thinking about an Interim Committee to look at marrying revenue back to the need we are identifying here.

We also support looking at the base. As Senator Denis pointed out, the base is really part of the overall complex question, because when we say weighted funds, of what base is a difficult issue, one that really divided Task Force

members. We have done so much work in the last three Legislative Sessions, thanks to the leadership of both parties. I am so proud of our joint work and where we are right now, and any move from here on out has to preserve the basic architecture of reform, focus and high intensity interventions. The Zoom Schools and Victory Schools have been particularly effective.

As we are building our capacity to fund these with highly vulnerable populations, we do not undo the architecture that has been effective and shown a positive return on investment (ROI). In education reform, many interventions do not have positive ROI. These do, and we have a third party evaluation sponsored by the NDE that corroborates the positive ROI, but there is still work to be done. The long-term ELL issue is pressing, both in the WCSD and CCSD and in the rurals, but we have not solved that as part of the blueprint. One of the wonderful things we have done together in this bipartisan effort is to get that architecture, have high accountability and be able to focus on programs that have ROI. I have submitted written testimony from Educate Nevada Now (ENN) ([Exhibit F](#)) and a proposed amendment ([Exhibit G](#)).

CHRIS DALY (Nevada State Education Association):

We support this bill, and I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit H](#)).

PAT SKORKOWSKY (Superintendent, Clark County School District):

We support S.B. 178. To answer some of the questions about the identification of students, we use the ELPA identification and the WIDA Assessment Management System to monitor our students. Over the past three years of working together with our community, we also have recognized that we have to use the term, "English language acquisition," because we have many native English speakers who struggle with academic language. This can almost amount to a foreign language when these students walk into a classroom.

This bill represents the collective work on weighted funding that has been conducted over the past six years. Clark County School District requested S.B. No. 11 of the 76th Session to begin the work necessary to update the Nevada Plan developed in 1967. This bill, and all the bills subsequent to it, recognized that we have a very different population today and that weighted funding is required to support our students learning English, living in poverty, requiring special education services and accelerating their learning through gifted and talented education (GATE) programs.

The work on weighted funding was advanced through an Interim study created by S.B. No. 500 of the 77th Session, resulting in a report by the American Institutes of Research (AIR) that called for a weight of 2.0 for special education, 1.5 for English learners and 1.5 for students living in poverty.

In 2015, the Nevada Legislature passed S.B. No. 508 of the 78th Session, requiring the NDE to start implementing the new formula by establishing a weight for special education. We know educating students qualifying for these services takes additional resources. Here are some examples of costs for this at CCSD and how we have addressed these needs.

In special education, at Red Rock Elementary School, we looked at the school population of more than 500 students and found that more than 100 of those students had an identified special education need. Speech services alone to the students cost about \$3,000 per year, while a child needing medical services at school such as a full-time nurse, costs more than \$50,000 per year.

With our ELL students, we have focused in on establishing certain pieces of the Zoom School program that could be replicated in other schools. Reading skill centers that provide language acquisition and reading interventions for Grade 1 through Grade 3 cost about \$290,000 per school to implement. To extend the day at the high schools for ELL students for professional development for all staff costs approximately \$330,000. To reduce class sizes in core content areas at the middle school level costs an average of \$250,000 annually.

Students living in poverty require additional wrap-around services, as well as different academic interventions. Costs for a wrap-around services coordinator starts at \$58,000, more than \$8,000 for a preparation time buyout to provide an early-bird or late-bird classes or around \$81,000 for an academic interventionist.

Implementing a new funding formula will take time, but we must have a statutory timeline to set the expectations and move forward. It is our position that the weighted formula cannot work without additional funding. We cannot take from one district or school to give to another when Nevada ranks near the bottom for district funding for all students. A shift of this magnitude takes time, money and political will, so we thank Senator Denis for sponsoring this bill and championing this effort. We look forward to working with other stakeholders on

appropriate language to address the transition period that will occur over the next biennium.

To Senator Segerblom's question about piggybacking or stacking the weights, we did some research and we have three students in CCSD who are identified as special education, ELL and FRL. The more interesting piece of that is, we have 13 students identified in all four categories, including special education, ELL, FRL and GATE.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

Is there a way to track the spending we are doing and show how spending impacts learning?

MR. SKORKOWSKY:

Yes. Part of the study that was done by the outside evaluator looked at those pieces. We have done some of our own ROI work and are modeling the students who have been in the program from prekindergarten through Grade 2 and students from kindergarten to Grade 3. With the CCSD reorganization, we are now able to track the dollars down to the student. If we were to look at any type of implementation to that level, we would follow those dollars to the student to look at the academic levels of those students to track them and be accountable for those extra dollars.

LINDSAY ANDERSON (Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County School District):

The WCSD is in support of S.B. 178. We have been working in good faith on this issue with the rest of the school districts, both in the 2011-2012 Interim and in the 2013-2014 Interim. We have made it clear that we have to address adequacy first, because it does not matter what the weights are if the starting number is too low to begin with. It certainly cannot be done at the expense of other districts. We do not support taking from one to pay for the other in any policy area.

MARY PIERCZYNSKI (Nevada Association of School Superintendents; Nevada Association of School Administrators):

Today I am also speaking for Jessica Ferrato, representing the Nevada Association of School Boards. Superintendent Skorkowsky and all the other superintendents support this bill. Both the rural and urban school districts had representatives on these committees. This has been a long time coming, we

know it is not perfect, and that other work still needs to be done. We will all work to support those efforts and to help out.

JOHN VELLARDITA (Executive Director, Clark County Education Association):

I am here in support of S.B. 178 and caution that we have to be realists about this issue. There is not a billion dollars being proposed in this Legislative Session, either by the Governor or the party in power. When we look at these multipliers, they are quite expensive. There is no way you can have a conversation about equitable funding without looking at how much it is going to cost and where the money is coming from. Given that, we need to be sober about how we approach this problem.

We at the Clark County Education Association (CCEA) propose that this biennium be a transition year. We can look at what realistic funding is available this Session, see if we can get additional funding, and then brainstorm how we can get to a spot where we put as much money as possible toward each student in need to make a difference in their education.

For example, in the categorical model, we do not think weights and categorical programs can coexist because they are a fundamental contradiction. I am submitting a document ([Exhibit I](#)) that lists all schools in CCSD with kids who are eligible for the Zoom School program and for the Victory School program, and which students are in it and which students are not. The statistics are overwhelming. There are 154,000 kids in CCSD right now who are left behind because they are not in a school building that has been designated as a Zoom School or a Victory School. That is the model of the categorical. It is not money that follows a student; it is a business model that is built around a school and implementing programs that service the entire population. There are 32,000 ELL kids that could be eligible, but because they are not in a Zoom School building, they do not get any kind of service. We have gone four years with the Zoom program. It is a good program because the ingredients are specific resources for specific programs with specific accountability and specific results. That is the formula behind the categorical. You need evidence that suggests that formula works, and it does, but a continuation of that program creates a second-class educational experience for the other students not privy to those additional resources.

It is also not the most efficient model we have in place. For example, out of all the Zoom buildings in CCSD, roughly 55 percent of the students are ELL

students, but the entire population has access to those services. There is an additional 8,400 kids who get services with those resources in the Zoom School, and who are not ELL students. That is a value of \$13 million annually that CCSD spends, roughly around \$1,600 per student in addition. The Zoom model, the categorical model, has its upside with resources and prescribed intervention and accountability and outcomes, but it leaves people behind. It is servicing people who do not need it, and that is not the best use of resources.

We are not suggesting we abandon that model, but we are saying that when you talk about weights, you have to talk about transition from a categorical to the weights. In that context, what are the realistic resources we can use to make that transition viable? We suggest that this biennium adopt a universal weight that does not have a multiplier but has a flat value, outside of the DSA and not discretionary on the part of a school district. Instead, it is very prescriptive in terms of what the additional money pays for. It also follows the kid in the school that is mandated to provide that service, and there is a system of accountability to measure outcomes. We think that is the first step in looking at the realistic amount of money we have to work with now and also contemplate additional money.

For example, the only person who has put more money on the table right now is the Governor. He put \$107 million more on K-12, \$30 million of that is for special education. The balance of that is for Zoom Schools and Victory Schools. If we were to take 75 percent of that money to CCSD, which is what the allocation is, and we put that on those existing 32,000 ELL kids who are not getting any service and need it, in the first year of the biennium, it amounts to \$350 per kid and in the second year of the biennium, \$630 per kid. This is in addition to their baseline. It is fair game to have a debate about what that service can buy. It could very well be that it does not pay for enough needed service, but given the fact that this whole discussion has been set with parameters around existing funding and new funding that has only been proposed by the Governor, it is fair game to look at whether we can use those resources differently to service the 32,000 kids who are left behind.

Victory School and FRL students are a bigger population and the money the Governor has on the table has less value. It amounts to about \$67 per kid in CCSD and \$122 per kid the second year of the biennium, and we would argue that we have to get additional resources for these kids. We embrace the concept of the multiplier, but we do not think that in this Session you can move

to a multiplier in terms of a value that will really address adequacy and equity for all kids in need without addressing the funding issue. If this Legislature is not prepared to address this in a significant way, then let us get real and talk about the money we have now and how it is utilized, and the additional money being proposed and whether there is additional money on top of that. We need to figure out a way to address the needs of every kid.

Senator Denis, I want to submit for the record a document that shows there are 12,000 kids in your district who are left behind with the categorical funding ([Exhibit J](#)). Senator Woodhouse, there are about 10,000 kids in your district who are left behind ([Exhibit K](#)). Senator Harris, there are about 10,000 kids in your district left behind ([Exhibit L](#)). Senator Hammond, there are about 11,000 kids in your district left behind ([Exhibit M](#)). Senator Segerblom, there are about 22,000 kids in your district left behind ([Exhibit N](#)), and Senator Spearman, there are about 14,000 kids in your district who are left behind ([Exhibit O](#)). These kids are eligible for Zoom or Victory dollars, but they are left behind under our existing system. We support the multipliers, but we also have to be realistic in terms of what can be accomplished this Session. We are advocating that we start thinking about a transition model. We are suggesting that a universal weight be applied for at-risk kids and ELL kids. At-risk zeros in on low proficiency students because they are the ones with highest needs, but it is flexible for school districts to determine, under the guidance of the NDE. I look forward to working with Senator Denis and all the other stakeholders on this.

SENATOR SEGERBLOM:
I did not hear the solution.

MR. VELLARDITA:
I would say we need \$200 million more out of this Legislative Session to address this issue. Not the \$1.2 billion price tag; not the \$600 million price tag, but at least another \$200 million.

JARED BUSKER (Policy Analyst, Children's Advocacy Alliance):
We ditto all the testimony that has been given in support of the bill and also for the need to have additional funding.

DAWN MILLER (President, Nevada PTA):

I am the president-elect of Nevada PTA, which stands for Parent Teacher Association, representing 16,000 parents and teachers in the State. We support S.B. 178, and we echo WCSD and CCSD in saying we have to hold harmless everybody else and ensure that no county or student is injured or hurt by the fact that we are applying the weighted funding formula to one student or group of students. Additional funding needs to follow this weighted formula.

BRENT HUSSON (President, Nevada Succeeds):

We support this bill, but I have a little different take on the issue. We agree the transition period between now and 2021, when we expect to have this fully implemented, is a critical time. We hope this Committee will think about where we sit today versus where we want to be in 2021. I think Mr. Vellardita's comments were probably most to the point. We can talk about needing \$1 billion more now and that would be the wish, but what is practical and what is reality?

If we are going to deal with reality, we need to think about what transition model could allow all our school districts to work through the process of going from a categorical system to a weighted funding formula. If you want to look at a true weighted formula and the problems these weights present, you can pick holes in all of it. Who is to say that 1.5 is the right weight for ELL or for FRL? There is a range of need for these children, not to mention an even broader range for special education. The idea that there is one weight that works for everybody is simply not realistic. It is a good place to start, but to work through those problems, we have to give the school districts the opportunity to begin to get that money in the weights and start to use it in the way they know they need to use it. That should start now. If we do not do this until 2021, it will be in their laps all at once, probably with not enough funding, and we know that just causes more confusion in the long run.

Lastly, if we want to make the argument for more dollars in education, that has to be preceded by the notion that what we are getting now is spent well. We have done some good work in the last two Sessions to start making that argument, and it did pay dividends last time. As a member of the business community, I can tell you that the work done in 2013 and the great work that was done in 2015 helped make the argument to the business community to raise taxes and fund education at a higher level. However, to now come back and say we need another billion will not be politically palatable. We need to

continue to lay the groundwork for the argument for more dollars by talking about accountability and what the districts can do to make sure those dollars that follow the kids are spent on programs that work.

CARL SCARBROUGH (Nevadans for the Common Good):

We have had some great testimony from some really smart people. We support S.B. 178, and given the CCSD reorganization, we think it is important that the money follow the students.

MR. MURILLO:

We support this bill, and we agree with the testimony so far. I have been in contact with a lot of teachers who work in Zoom Schools and Victory Schools, and they are concerned about what is going to happen to those schools. We understand there may be a transition where, at some point, there may not be that categorical funding. The teachers I have spoken to are very concerned. One teacher said it reminded her of the programs that they had to learn and implement because it was decided on by an administrator, and then later it was decided the program would be discontinued. The things we learn that have worked in Zoom Schools and in Victory Schools should be applied across the board. As Mr. Husson said, it is important to know you have accountability and things that work, and then spend the money accordingly. We want to encourage the Zoom Schools and Victory Schools to continue on in some form and that the lessons learned there are applied all across the districts.

ANNA SLIGHTING (HOPE, Honoring Our Public Education):

I represent HOPE, which stands for Honoring Our Public Education, representing nearly 1,000 parents in support of public education in southern Nevada. We are neutral on this bill, although we feel it is a good step to meet the recommendations as outlined in the Task Force on K-12 Funding. It also supports the modernized funding formula voted on in the 2015 Legislative Session. Additionally, we feel weighted funding will provide increased support for our newly formed School Organizational Teams to make decisions based on the needs of their individual communities, much like AIR made in its thirteenth recommendation for the 2013 Task Force, referring to autonomy and accountability.

Our biggest concerns with the bill are the fiscal notes. We feel the reported numbers are on track and need to be funded or this bill is moot. This cannot be an unfunded mandate because it cannot rob from another educational fund.

Categorical funding has so far proved to be an initial success with the Zoom Schools and Victory Schools and needs to remain separate from new money and the potential use of these fund weights. If these weighted formulas are not adequately funded, it will only ruin currently successful schools and do little or no good at others.

At HOPE, we are even concerned that in order to provide the services at a level similar to the proven success of Zoom Schools and Victory Schools to all qualifying students, we need the basic support increase and this proposed weighted funding formula funded. We need to make a larger pie and not just slice it differently; maybe find a hybrid transition to address funding at the existing Zoom Schools and Victory Schools and apply weighted funding for those left out.

We know this cannot happen overnight, but we would like realistic means of obtaining revenue to be attached to the timeline of this bill. It might take a decade, but I do not want to be here in 20 years, still asking for per pupil funding to be at a national average no more than you want to be here in 20 years, asking me, a teacher, why we still have achievement gaps and a teacher shortage. We would like to see existing categorical funds remain in place and maintained. We would like the base increase, and we would like these proposed weights to be fully funded. We at HOPE are reserving our support of this bill until we know more from the money committees.

SUSIE LEE (Board Chair, Communities in Schools):

I represent Communities in Schools (CIS), one of the top dropout prevention organizations in Nevada, serving 59,000 at-risk students in 20 Victory Schools and 14 Zoom Schools. We have been providing integrated student supports in those schools as part of the concentrated intervention that has shown a significant ROI. I am somewhat neutral on S.B. 178, but like every speaker so far today, I support the concept of increasing weights to address the individual needs of our students.

I also stress the importance of putting together a finance plan that needs to be multiyear and strategic to understand what our needs are. I have heard anywhere from \$850 million to \$1.2 billion is what we need to adequately fund a weighted funding formula. Until that issue is addressed, anything we do around weights is basically taking from one pot and putting it in another. Therefore, we will always have students who suffer.

Consider looking at the classifications with respect to how we identify at-risk students. We use FRL to identify these students in poverty now, yet we all understand that there are varying degrees of poverty and additional pressures that students have. Consider if there is a possibility that we can track and potentially weight for the least proficient students as well. At CIS, we serve at-risk students in Elko County and we do face additional resource needs because of that. Is there a consideration for any type of rural allowance?

Finally, when we talk about fully funding and transitioning from a categorical system to a weighted formula, that is where the discussion and the discrepancy comes with your presenters today. We have seen progress by concentrating on our most at-risk schools, the Zoom Schools and the Victory Schools, especially those that serve our FRL students. Even though those students might not be getting the additional reading centers, they are still getting intervention and additional resources. I contend that you are not wasting money by continuing with the Zoom School approach. I would like to see us continue to identify our most at-risk students and schools, focusing on the school-wide approaches, because I have been in the community for more than 20 years, involved in nonprofits serving at-risk students and seeing the ROI with Zoom Schools and Victory Schools is unprecedented.

I caution that if we go to a universal weight, spreading money across each child, which is equitable, the thing we need is accountability and training. If we go to a universal weight, so FRL kids are getting an extra \$67 per kid, what is that school going to be able to do with that money and how would you prove what you did to have an improved effect on those students? We know the Governor's proposal has \$172 million, and then Mr. Vellardita said we might need another \$200 million. If we spend the money and then are unable to show ROI, when we go back to the well, which we all know we are going to have to do to find that additional \$1.2 million, people will say more money does not give improved results.

That is why I would argue that perhaps we consider through 2019, to continue down the categorical road and put together, as Ms. Lazos said, a committee that helps track how we change from categorical to weighted and more importantly, how we can fund it. I think we can all agree that the finance end of this is the most important.

ROXANN MCCOY (President, NAACP-LV):

We are neutral on S.B. 178, but we believe it has the potential to provide students with a more equitable education in Nevada. I want to echo the sentiments of Senator Harris and Superintendent Skorkowsky that I think we need a more expansive definition of what ELL is. There are many students with English as their first language who are not proficient and who struggle with the English language. Those students seem to be invisible and left behind. I also want echo the sentiments of Mr. Vellardita and hope we can take those ideas into consideration. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit P](#)).

YVETTE WILLIAMS (Chair, Clark County Black Caucus):

I am a supporter of the weighted funding formula where the funds follow the child, but I want to ensure that our kids who are the least proficient get what they need. We are neutral on S.B. 178 because it does not go far enough. We are hoping you can come up with a better solution that does not leave a large segment of our population out because we are mandated by federal law through the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 to make a priority of students who are least proficient. I appreciate the comments from John Vellardita from CCEA on his support for us speaking on behalf of a subgroup of students, these African-American students who are invisible under FRL, whom we have been fighting for over the years.

It is our opinion that if a weighted formula provides the equitable education we are all striving for in Nevada, we must reconsider student designations. Otherwise, there will remain a need for categorical funding for those subgroups not receiving the tools and resources they need to be successful. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit Q](#)).

SENATOR DENIS:

We have heard some good ideas. Everyone agrees we need be able to provide the resources for our kids to succeed. I think we have some work to do, but I think we can get there. Many have offered to help, and we can work together to come up with something that works now and moves us to the future. That is the purpose of this bill.

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

Thank you. I will close the hearing on S.B. 178 and hand the gavel back to Chair Denis for the next order of business.

CHAIR DENIS:

I will open public comment.

BRAD KEATING (Clark County School District):

The National Association of Secondary School Principals has selected Derek Fialkiewicz, an assistant principal at Brian and Teri Cram Middle School in North Las Vegas, as one of the three finalists for the National Assistant Principal of the Year award.

MS. ANDERSON:

Since we did not get to wrap up our hearing for S.B. 49, we have a tag line we have been using for it that I want to share: "The only cap we should have for our students is the one they wear when they walk across the graduation stage."

Also, we just broke ground on our first major project as the result of the passage of Washoe County Ballot Question 1, the sales tax increase that goes to WCSD. This project is a major expansion to our most overcrowded high school, Damonte Ranch High School. It is the first of many groundbreakings.

MS. MCNEILL:

At the groundbreaking, we had WCSD Superintendent Traci Davis and our WCSD Board of Trustees vice president gave an impassioned speech about former Nevada Legislator Debbie Smith and her tireless efforts for education and for making this happen. We could not have done it without Senator Smith.

CHAIR DENIS:

She had a hand in the weighted funding formula and the Zoom Schools, so it is always good to think good thoughts of all the great work she did.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

Debbie Smith worked tirelessly for so many years to make sure that happened. My tag line is, "Some folks talk about it, she always was about it."

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CHAIR DENIS:

Having no other business to come before us at this time, I adjourn this meeting
at 5:45 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Linda Hiller,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Moises Denis, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit / # of pages		Witness / Entity	Description
	A	2		Agenda
	B	8		Attendance Roster
S.B. 173	C	1	Todd Butterworth	Work Session Documents
S.B. 49	D	2	Kristen McNeill / WCSD	Purpose Statement
S.B. 49	E	1	Michelle Kim / CCEA	Written Testimony
S.B. 178	F	4	Sylvia Lazos / ENN	Written Testimony
S.B. 178	G	2	Sylvia Lazos / ENN	Proposed Amendment
S.B. 178	H	1	Chris Daly / NSEA	Support and Seek Amendment
S.B. 178	I	10	John Vellardita / CCEA	CCSD Data Spreadsheet
S.B. 178	J	2	John Vellardita / CCEA	Chart SD 2
S.B. 178	K	1	John Vellardita / CCEA	Chart SD 5
S.B. 178	L	1	John Vellardita / CCEA	Chart SD 9
S.B. 178	M	2	John Vellardita / CCEA	Chart SD 18
S.B. 178	N	2	John Vellardita / CCEA	Chart SD 3
S.B. 178	O	2	John Vellardita / CCEA	Chart SD 1
S.B. 178	P	1	Roxann McCoy / NAACP	Written Testimony
S.B. 178	Q	1	Yvette Williams / CCBC	Written Testimony