

**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Seventy-ninth Session  
April 11, 2017**

The Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Moises Denis at 4:09 p.m. on Tuesday, April 11, 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

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Senator Aaron D. Ford, Senatorial District No. 11

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Todd Butterworth, Policy Analyst  
Asher Killian, Counsel  
Jan Brase, Committee Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Brooklyn Darmody, Nevada Youth Legislature, Senatorial District No. 5  
Spencer Lang, Nevada Youth Legislature, Senatorial District No. 16  
Brett Barley, Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement, Department of Education  
Nicole Rourke, Associate Superintendent, Community and Government Relations, Clark County School District, Clark County

Senate Committee on Education  
April 11, 2017  
Page 2

Lorna James-Cervantes, School Associate Superintendent, Performance Zone 5,  
Clark County School District, Clark County  
Barry Bosacker, Principal, C.P. Squires Elementary School, Clark County School  
District, Clark County  
Dustin Mancl, Principal, Lewis E. Rowe Elementary School, Clark County School  
District, Clark County  
Steve Canavero, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education  
Lindsay Anderson, Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County School District  
Patrick Gavin, Executive Director, State Public Charter School Authority,  
Department of Education  
Stephen Augspurger, Executive Director, Clark County Association of School  
Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees  
Jessica Ferrato, Nevada Association of School Boards  
Sylvia Lazos, Educate Nevada Now  
Mary Pierczynski, Nevada Association of School Superintendents; Nevada  
Association of School Administrators  
Ruben Murillo, Jr., President, Nevada State Education Association  
Justin Harrison, Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce  
Peter Guzman, Latin Chamber of Commerce Nevada  
Kenia Morales  
Alicia Blevins, Mi Familia Vota  
Fernando Romero, Hispanics in Politics  
Ricky Gourrier, Communities in Schools Nevada  
Aaron Ibarra, Mi Familia Vota  
Arlene Alvarez, Mi Familia Vota  
Alicia Contreras, Mi Familia Vota  
Jose Solorio, Latino Leadership Council  
Angie Sullivan  
Ed Gonzalez, Clark County Education Association  
Craig M. Stevens, Clark County School District  
Jim Frazee, Clark County Education Association  
Lindsey Dalley  
Jana Wilcox Lavin, Superintendent-in-residence, Nevada Achievement School  
District, Department of Education  
Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association  
Cindi Rivera, Associate Executive Director, Futuro Academy  
David Blodgett, Nevada Prep  
Kerrie Kramer, Charter School Association of Nevada

Senate Committee on Education  
April 11, 2017  
Page 3

CHAIR DENIS:

I will open the hearing.

BROOKLYN DARMODY (Nevada Youth Legislature, Senatorial District No. 5):  
I appear before you today as vice chair of the Nevada Youth Legislature (NYL). The NYL was created to provide Nevada's youth with a distinctive opportunity to have a voice in policy making. To maximize this experience, the NYL program teaches and inspires young people how to lead and how to serve. I have submitted my testimony ([Exhibit C](#)).

CHAIR DENIS:

Can you share your experience as a Nevada Youth Legislator?

Ms. DARMODY:

We have learned about the legislative process and have participated in hearings and a Senate Floor Session. It is interesting to see how the process works.

CHAIR DENIS:

I will open the hearing on Senate Bill (S.B.) 178.

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

SENATOR WOODHOUSE MOVED TO REREFER S.B. 178 TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

SENATOR GUSTAVSON SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

\* \* \* \* \*

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 178 and open S.B. 506.

**SENATE BILL 506**: Revises provisions relating to education savings accounts and education funding. (BDR 34-1101)

Senate Committee on Education  
April 11, 2017  
Page 4

SENATOR HAMMOND MOVED TO REREFER S.B. 506 TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

\* \* \* \* \*

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 506 and open the work session with S.B. 86.

**SENATE BILL 86**: Requires the provision of instruction in cursive handwriting to pupils enrolled in elementary school. (BDR 34-200)

TODD BUTTERWORTH (Policy Analyst):

Senate Bill 86 requires instruction in cursive handwriting to students enrolled in elementary school in each district and charter school. The instruction must be designed to ensure a student creates legible documents using cursive handwriting by the completion of third grade.

The sponsor has proposed a conceptual amendment to make the teaching of cursive writing optional for school districts and charter schools. I have submitted a work session document ([Exhibit D](#)).

SENATOR GUSTAVSON MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED S.B. 86.

SENATOR SEGERBLOM SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

\* \* \* \* \*

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 86 and open S.B. 108.

**SENATE BILL 108**: Revises requirements for the instruction in American government that is taught to pupils in public high schools. (BDR 34-523)

Senate Committee on Education  
April 11, 2017  
Page 5

MR. BUTTERWORTH:

Senate Bill 108 is sponsored by the Senate Committee on Education on behalf of the Nevada Youth Legislature. This bill requires high school American government coursework to include instruction in criminal law related to certain crimes that frequently involve persons less than 18 years of age.

The Clark County School District (CCSD) submitted a friendly conceptual amendment to require the State Board of Education to create a subcommittee to study this proposal and provide a report to the Legislative Committee on Education during the upcoming Interim. The NYL has submitted an additional amendment allowing the proposed instruction to be provided in any high school social studies course. I have submitted the work session document with the CCSD amendment attached and the proposed amendment from the NYL ([Exhibit E](#) and [Exhibit F](#)), respectively.

SPENCER LANG (Nevada Youth Legislature, Senatorial District No. 16):

We are neutral on the amendment proposed by CCSD because we do not want the process to be delayed until the next Legislative Session.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE:

If S.B. 108 is approved as amended, we would need language requiring a report to the Legislative Committee on Education by the next Legislative Session. Otherwise, the bill will not be in effect until 2021.

ASHER KILLIAN (Counsel):

We can conceptually express a requirement for the study to be completed in time to be included in the report the Legislative Committee on Education makes during the 2017-2018 Interim for consideration by the 2019 Legislative Session. I can draft language for inclusion in S.B. 108.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

The subcommittee must also review the proposed revisions to the standards if we are limiting the government class to a semester. If S.B. 108 is amended to include all social studies classes, we may be opening up all these classes to standards revisions.

CHAIR DENIS:

Can the report be completed before next Session?

Senate Committee on Education  
April 11, 2017  
Page 6

BRETT BARLEY (Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement, Department of Education):

Yes. There is a process to move standards which is generally completed in six months. We go through a community engagement process. Changes are ratified by the Council to Establish Academic Standards and submitted to the 2017-2018 Interim Legislative Committee on Education for approval.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

A report will be completed regarding changing social studies standards. The next Legislature will review the report and decide on legislation. School districts would then make required changes. No changes will be in effect until 2019 at the earliest. Is that correct?

MR. BARLEY:

Yes, that is the timeline as I understand it.

SENATOR HARRIS:

I can support changing standards, but I ask that school districts be sensitive to high-stakes testing that families are required to pay for. Teachers are also pressured to prepare students for testing before nationally mandated test dates.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED S.B. 108 WITH THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT FROM THE NEVADA YOUTH LEGISLATURE.

SENATOR SPEARMAN SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

\* \* \* \* \*

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close S.B. 108 and open S.B. 143.

**SENATE BILL 143**: Requires each public school in a school district to establish and maintain a school library. (BDR 34-59)

MR. BUTTERWORTH:

Senate Bill 143 requires each school in a school district to establish and maintain a school library with a licensed librarian and library services. It also requires the State Board of Education to adopt related regulations. The sponsor has proposed a conceptual amendment. I have submitted the work session document and amendment ([Exhibit G](#)).

SENATOR WOODHOUSE MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED S.B. 143 AND REREFER TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

SENATOR HARRIS SECONDED THE MOTION.

SENATOR GUSTAVSON:

I support S.B. 143 and am disappointed to learn that so many of our schools do not have libraries. Unfortunately, S.B. 143 does not fund the libraries and is an unfunded mandate. For that reason, I will not be able to vote to support it.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

I will vote against S.B. 143, but hope to be able to support the bill on the Senate Floor. I am concerned about the financial burden on Nevada's school districts.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE:

Funding will be difficult for some schools, but we want to state the importance of having a library in every school.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

Can we include permissive language to help with funding over a period of time?

CHAIR DENIS:

Some changes may be possible as S.B. 143 will be rereferred to the Senate Committee on Finance.

THE MOTION PASSED. (SENATORS GUSTAVSON AND HAMMOND VOTED NO.)

\* \* \* \* \*

Senate Committee on Education  
April 11, 2017  
Page 8

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close S.B. 143 and open S.B. 154.

**SENATE BILL 154**: Creates the Program to Develop Leadership Skills for Elementary School Pupils. (BDR 34-819)

MR. BUTTERWORTH:

Senate Bill 154 creates a program to develop leadership skills for elementary school students. It also creates an account for leadership skills to be administered by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and appropriates \$400,000 from the State General Fund to the account for competitive grants to be awarded to public elementary schools. Senator Hammond has proposed a conceptual amendment to clarify the program will be available to both elementary and middle schools and to add the term "without limitation" to section 7, subsection 3, paragraph (b) relating to reporting the effectiveness and impact of the program. I have submitted the work session document ([Exhibit H](#)).

SENATOR HAMMOND:

We have had conversations with administrators of Title I schools. This program has had very good results in changing and improving the culture of the schools.

SENATOR GUSTAVSON:

Appropriations for S.B. 154 are not included in the Governor's budget. At this point, I will vote against the bill, but may change my vote on the Senate Floor.

SENATOR HAMMOND MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED  
S.B. 154 AND REREFER TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED. (SENATOR GUSTAVSON VOTED NO.)

\* \* \* \* \*

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close S.B. 154 and open S.B. 164.

**SENATE BILL 164**: Authorizes a school district to lease school buses or vehicles belonging to the school district in certain circumstances. (BDR 34-668)

Senate Committee on Education  
April 11, 2017  
Page 9

MR. BUTTERWORTH:

Senate Bill 164 allows a school district to enter into written agreements to lease school buses or vehicles for special events that are not part of any school program. I have submitted the work session document with a proposed amendment ([Exhibit I](#)).

SENATOR HAMMOND MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED  
S.B. 164.

SENATOR SEGERBLOM SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

\* \* \* \* \*

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close S.B. 164 and open S.B. 166.

**SENATE BILL 166**: Establishes a program to survey pupils enrolled in public schools concerning the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs. (BDR 34-795)

MR. BUTTERWORTH:

Senate Bill 166 requires the Department of Education to establish a program to anonymously survey certain students enrolled in public middle schools, junior high schools and high schools concerning the use and abuse of drugs and alcohol. A conceptual amendment has been proposed. I have submitted the work session document and proposed amendment ([Exhibit J](#)).

SENATOR HAMMOND:

The amendment allows for an opt-in rather than opt-out option for parental consent. Is that correct?

MR. KILLIAN:

Section 1.5, subsection 3, paragraph (a) of the proposed amendment allows the school district participating in the survey to require the consent of parents or guardians for student participation. This is the traditional opt-in provision. Section 1.5, subsection 3, paragraph (b), subparagraphs (1), (2) and (3) allow the survey to be administered to a pupil without consent of a parent or guardian

if the information is elicited in a manner that allows the pupil to remain anonymous, the pupil has not refused to participate and the parent or guardian has not submitted a form opting out.

This gives the school district the ability to decide on the framework of the program.

SENATOR HARRIS:

With regard to the opt-out option, are parents given a form at the beginning of the school year or will they need to ask for a form?

MR. KILLIAN:

Section 1.5, subsection 4 of the proposed amendment to S.B. 166 addresses consent forms. Participating school districts are required to provide a consent form to parents and guardians on an annual basis. They must also provide consent forms upon request.

SENATOR HARRIS:

Would the form be provided before or after the survey is conducted?

MR. KILLIAN:

The language of the amendment does not specify timing. This language requiring the distribution of a consent form before conducting any survey could be added to the amendment.

SENATOR HARRIS MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED  
S.B. 166 AND REREFER TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE SECONDED THE MOTION.

SENATOR GUSTAVSON:

I cannot support S.B. 166 because it is an unfunded mandate.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

I will vote no and reserve the right to change my vote on the Senate Floor.

Senate Committee on Education  
April 11, 2017  
Page 11

THE MOTION PASSED. (SENATORS GUSTAVSON AND HAMMOND  
VOTED NO.)

\* \* \* \* \*

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close S.B. 166 and open S.B. 213.

**SENATE BILL 213**: Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR 34-583)

MR. BUTTERWORTH:

Senate Bill 213 authorizes the Superintendent of Public Instruction to order an on-site inspection of a school district, charter school or other entity providing education or services to students with disabilities after determining that good cause for the inspection exists. I have submitted the work session document and proposed amendment ([Exhibit K](#)).

SENATOR GUSTAVSON MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED S.B. 213 AND REREFER TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

SENATOR SPEARMAN SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

\* \* \* \* \*

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close S.B. 213 and open S.B. 248.

**SENATE BILL 248**: Revises provisions relating to pupils with disabilities.  
(BDR 34-328)

MR. BUTTERWORTH:

Senate Bill 248 is a bill sponsored by the Committee on Education on behalf of the Legislative Committee on Education. The bill allows a student with a disability to complete a school year if the student reaches 22 years of age during that school year. I have submitted the work session document ([Exhibit L](#)).

Senate Committee on Education  
April 11, 2017  
Page 12

SENATOR HARRIS MOVED TO DO PASS S.B. 248 AND REREFER TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

\* \* \* \* \*

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close S.B. 248 and open S.B. 310.

**SENATE BILL 310**: Revises provisions governing the credit-hour requirement for eligibility under the Silver State Opportunity Grant Program. (BDR 34-878)

MR. BUTTERWORTH:

Senate Bill 310 revises provisions relating to the Silver State Opportunity Grant program. I have submitted the work session document ([Exhibit M](#)).

SENATOR WOODHOUSE MOVED TO DO PASS S.B. 310.

SENATOR HARRIS SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

\* \* \* \* \*

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close S.B. 310 and open S.B. 391.

**SENATE BILL 391**: Provides for awards of scholarships by community colleges in the Nevada System of Higher Education. (BDR 34-815)

Mr. Butterworth:

Senate Bill 391 establishes the Nevada Promise Scholarship Account in the State General Fund. The program is subject to audit, and the Board of Regents must submit an annual report to the Legislature. I have submitted the work session document and proposed amendments ([Exhibit N](#)).

Senate Committee on Education  
April 11, 2017  
Page 13

SENATOR WOODHOUSE MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED S.B. 391 AND REREFER TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

SENATOR SPEARMAN SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

\* \* \* \* \*

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close S.B. 391 and open S.B. 458.

**SENATE BILL 458**: Revises provisions relating to the development and operation of the statewide longitudinal data system. (BDR 34-331)

MR. BUTTERWORTH:

Senate Bill 458 is sponsored by the Committee on Finance on behalf of the Legislative Committee on Education. The bill abolishes the P-20W Advisory Council and creates the P-20W Research Data System Advisory Committee. I have submitted the work session document and a friendly conceptual amendment proposed by the Governor's Office ([Exhibit O](#)).

MR. KILLIAN:

Senate Bill 458 as written repeals the provision of existing law that creates the authority to establish the statewide longitudinal data system. The bill moves this authority to the newly created P-20W Research Data System Advisory Committee. To accomplish the proposed amendment, we would need to make a technical change to S.B. 458 and, effectively, create parallel sections.

Senate Bill 516 proposes moving the responsibility for the oversight of the State's statewide longitudinal data system from the P-20W Advisory Council to the Executive Director of the Office of Workforce Innovation.

**SENATE BILL 516**: Revises provisions governing workforce innovation and apprenticeships. (BDR 53-913)

The proposed amendment to S.B. 458 anticipates the passage of S.B. 516. We need to include language in S.B. 458 to accommodate either the passage or

Senate Committee on Education  
April 11, 2017  
Page 14

failure of S.B. 516. The issue is the hosting of the statewide longitudinal data system. We want to ensure the data system does not cease to exist.

SENATOR SPEARMAN MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED S.B. 458.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE SECONDED THE MOTION.

SENATOR GUSTAVSON:

I have some issues with the data collection and will not support S.B. 458 at this time.

THE MOTION PASSED. (SENATOR GUSTAVSON VOTED NO.)

\* \* \* \* \*

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close S.B. 458 and close the work session.

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

I will open S.B. 390.

**SENATE BILL 390**: Extending and revising the Zoom schools program for the 2017-2019 biennium. (BDR S-788)

SENATOR MOISES DENIS (Senatorial District No. 2):

Four years ago, I testified in support of S.B. No. 504 of the 77th Session, which first enacted the Zoom Schools Program. Building upon the success resulting from that legislation, we passed S.B. No. 405 of the 78th Session to expand the program and the related supports available to our English Learners (EL). This year, it is my honor and pleasure to present S.B. 390 for the Committee's consideration.

You have heard many of the facts concerning the EL students in our schools, but some of it bears repeating: nearly 80,000 of Nevada's students are English Learners, which is 17 percent of all students in the State; about 70 percent of EL are enrolled in the Clark County School District; close to 90 percent of the EL population is Spanish speaking; and according to a University of Nevada, Las Vegas study, Latinos are Nevada's fastest growing demographic under

age 18, and now make up over half our students in kindergarten through Grade 3.

Until a few years ago, we did not have a coherent statewide program to address the needs of these students. Many EL children speak enough English for daily interactions, but not nearly enough for the academic challenges of school.

According to experts, under normal circumstances, mastery of academic language requires anywhere from two to six years.

The good news is, by all accounts, the Zoom Schools Program has been an unmitigated success at bending the literacy learning curve. You will likely hear more today from the school districts about the impact of this program.

Dr. Danielle Miller of CCSD previously said this is the most effective education initiative she has encountered in her 24-year career.

Senate Bill 390 requires Clark and Washoe counties to continue the Zoom Schools Program and provides for competitive grants to charter schools and school districts in the balance of the State. The schools and students with the greatest need are specifically targeted. Elementary-level Zoom Schools will be equipped to provide the following services: pre-K programs, free of charge; reading skills centers; professional development, as well as recruitment; and retention incentives for school personnel and programs to get parents involved.

In a change from the existing program, elementary schools are given the flexibility to choose between extending the length of the school days, or providing special academies in the summer or between year-round sessions.

Middle schools and high schools in the Clark and Washoe County School Districts are also funded for services. These schools will: reduce class sizes for targeted students; provide direct instructional intervention; extend the school day; provide special academies in the summer or between year-round sessions; offer professional development, as well as recruitment and retention incentives for school personnel; conduct parental involvement programs; and provide other evidence-based services approved by the Department of Education.

The charter schools and remaining school districts applying for Zoom School grants will have an opportunity to propose similar services for their locations.

The funding made available to these schools will be based on their enrollment counts.

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

Of course, all Zoom Schools are subject to potential legislative audits and are required to report the outcomes of their efforts; these reports will be aggregated by the Department of Education.

The most important thing accomplished by S.B. 390 is the continuation of the Zoom Schools Program and its record of success for another two years.

To conclude, the dollars being spent now on EL education, particularly in the early grades, are investments in Nevada's future. Economists have estimated that for every \$1 invested in EL education, Nevada will see a return of between \$1.15 to \$2.03, in saved expenditures and future revenues.

Our goal for all Nevada students is that they be provided with a high-quality education. For too long we ignored our responsibility, our opportunity, to address the academic needs of our English Learners. This bill is a continuing symbol of hope for these kids and our State.

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

We have submitted a proposed amendment ([Exhibit P](#)). The purpose of the amendment is to eliminate the 2 percent cap on the use of Zoom School funds for professional development, family engagement and teacher incentives, and to expand reading center services of Zoom Schools to include students in kindergarten through Grade 5.

SENATOR DENIS:

I am willing to work with CCSD to accommodate their requests. We want to be certain that expanding programs does not reduce the number of Zoom Schools.

SENATOR HARRIS:

Senate Bill 390 provides grants to charter schools. Are these public school-sponsored charter schools or all charter schools?

SENATOR DENIS:

Grants will be available to all charter schools.

SENATOR HARRIS:

My Senate district does not have Zoom Schools. Can public schools as well as charter schools qualify for a grant?

SENATOR DENIS:

Any school receiving a grant needs to meet Zoom School requirements, which begin with low achieving and high EL populations. Schools in Senator Harris' district may be eligible for funding through the funding formula, rather than the Zoom Schools Program.

SENATOR HARRIS:

The literacy component of S.B. 390 addresses students up to Grade 5. Some charter schools serve students up to Grade 8. Will we be able to capture all the students in a charter school environment with the amendment?

SENATOR DENIS:

The literacy component is a reading center. The program serves kindergarten through Grade 3.

SENATOR HARRIS:

If a reading center is in a charter school serving students in kindergarten through Grade 8, will access to the center be limited?

SENATOR DENIS:

The reading center system works a little differently in charter schools. Administrators of charter schools with Zoom programs submit program proposals.

SENATOR HARRIS:

I want to be certain the language of S.B. 390 reflects the necessary flexibility for participating schools. The program and resources should be available to as many students as possible.

SENATOR DENIS:

That only happens now when the funding runs out.

LORNA JAMES-CERVANTES (School Associate Superintendent, Performance Zone 5, Clark County School District, Clark County):

We support S.B. 390. I have provided a presentation, outline and summary of Clark County School District's Zoom Schools implementation strategy ([Exhibit Q](#)).

Funds provided by S.B. No. 405 of 78th Session were systematically used in 26 CCSD elementary schools and three secondary schools in the 2015-2016 school year to implement the initiatives mandated in the legislation, universal pre-K, full-day kindergarten with reduced class sizes of a 21 to 1 student to adult ratio, Zoom reading centers and summer academies. In 2016-2017, we added five new elementary schools and four new secondary schools that have continued implementation of the Clark County Zoom model with increased oversight of kindergarten assessments and newly added Tier I instructional materials. All Clark County Zoom Schools have aligned their school improvement goals and objectives with State and district goals.

We look forward to the continuation of Zoom services for all students at Zoom Schools and the opportunity to expand Zoom services to additional students in the next biennium.

The Zoom universal pre-K program with an 18 to 2 student to adult ratio has been utilized at all CCSD Zoom Schools and serves 1,762 students. The half-day program consists of instructional days on Mondays through Thursdays with family home to school activities scheduled on Fridays.

Students come to Zoom Schools with more limited English language skills than their peers at other schools. They have consistently made progress in academics and English language development and have closed the gap with their peers by the end of pre-K.

In 209 kindergarten classrooms, 3,730 students are served at a 21 to 1 student to teacher ratio. The Zoom team supports kindergarten classroom teachers with assessment gathering, professional development and Tier I instructional materials and resources.

Kindergarten students at Zoom Schools have made significant growth on the essential Kindergarten Skills Assessment with letter sounds, phoneme segmentation and blending, and high frequency words. These are the areas identified by the National Reading Panel as having a high impact for predicting later reading success.

The Clark County School District recognizes the Zoom initiative is a school-wide and student-targeted initiative. Each Zoom classroom in Clark County has become a reading center using standards-aligned materials. Zoom and Read by Grade 3 legislation charges CCSD with getting English Language Learner (ELL) students on a level with their peers using reading centers and increased rigor in all Zoom classrooms. Effective Tier I instruction aligned with Tier II Zoom reading center interventions closes the achievement gap for our ELL students. Each classroom is equipped with a classroom library of 1,000 books. This provides students with access to quality grade-level reading materials and strengthens the home to school connection. The pull-out component of the reading centers is also supplied with a book room. These are sets of six leveled readers that provide high interest topics for students at various grade levels in both informational and literary text and are used in small groups.

More than 2,800 students are receiving services in Zoom reading centers in the 2016-2017 school year. Project facilitators and paraprofessional tutors provide small group instruction daily to selected students in Grades 1 through 3 at each Zoom School. The tutoring and lesson framework focus on literacy and language acquisition through reading comprehension, fluency, vocabulary and work activities. This service was provided as reading intervention with an additional 30 minutes of reading and language instruction provided for identified students at each school. During the reading center lessons, students receive targeted instruction tailored to their reading levels and focused upon the specific reading skills needed to read and write proficiently and access challenging text.

Attending Zoom reading centers has had a significant impact on student success on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and WIDA ACCESS assessments. On average, students who receive reading center services made growth comparable to, or higher than, the expected growth on the Diagnostic Reading Assessment independent reading levels.

Additional full days of instruction were offered to all Zoom School students who were registered at their home school. In June 2016, 8,149 attended and

11,740 are projected to attend in June 2017. A detailed curriculum was developed for all subject areas with a focus on intensive Tier 1 instruction to continue literacy and language development. Each grade level's English language arts curriculum focuses on highly engaging themes through curriculum developed by CCSD teachers. In most cases, students remained with the same teacher for Zoom summer academy, making the transition as seamless as possible, and all services have continued to be provided bridging the traditional school year calendar with Zoom summer academy. Data has historically shown that students who attend Zoom summer academies do not show the summer slide experienced by their peers who do not attend.

We know we are only reaching 50 percent to 75 percent of students through the Zoom summer academy. We advocate for allowing an extended school day for students at all schools so we can reach 100 percent of students with extended time to learn and improve their English language skills.

In the 2015-2016 school year, three secondary schools were designated as Zoom Schools and implemented initiatives to impact language acquisition and student achievement. The initiatives implemented were reduced class size, instructional interventions and universal summer instruction programs. New teachers were hired, and existing teachers were offered prep buy-outs to reduce student numbers in core classes. Implementation of a Zoom university and providing teachers with all curriculum materials for exciting themed career and technical education units generated high student enrollment and teacher participation in Zoom summer university. On average, 45 percent of invited students attended Zoom university extending literacy and language development beyond the school year.

Both William E. Orr Middle School and Dell H. Robison Middle School showed significant progress toward meeting the fiftieth growth percentile goal set by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE). Global Community High School is a newcomer school of choice. This designation means that students are not assigned based on a predetermined attendance zone. Students must be categorized as limited English proficient or long-term learners as determined by CCSD assessments. Under those circumstances, teachers were offered extended contracts to provide an extended school day. Each class period was increased from 55 minutes to 63 minutes so students would have more time to master academic content and acquire academic language.

At Global Community High School, credit retrieval was offered through the Zoom university program, resulting in a 12 percent graduation rate increase. During the 2016-2017 school year, Achieve3000, which is a program that provides grade level texts at students' individual readability levels, was purchased for all secondary Zoom middle schools. Each Zoom middle school was allocated a full-time learning strategist to support ELL students in general education classrooms and to monitor progress in Achieve3000.

All schools are showing averages of 23 percent to 61 percent of students making exceptional growth of 70 percent or more Lexile scale points growth in reading. Students at every level of WIDA language acquisition are showing growth using Achieve3000.

Global Community High School began to implement the Evaluate Assessment system to monitor students' academic progress throughout the year. They utilized prep buy-outs and hired additional staff to reduce class sizes and provide more support to students in core content areas.

The Zoom university summer program will continue in June with a focus on career-based project learning and credit retrieval at the high school level.

In conjunction with S.B. No. 511 of the 78th Session, teacher incentives such as the ability to work in extended day or year environments and the \$350 recruitment and retention pay have had a significant impact on Zoom Schools. Teacher vacancies have dropped from 145 at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year to 36 at the same time this year. The majority of those vacancies were in hard-to-fill special education program classes. We suggest increasing the cap from 2 percent to 15 percent in order to strengthen teacher incentive and recruitment pay and in order to have an even larger impact in future years.

Title I funds were used for all CCSD Zoom Schools to engage parents and students at two Zoom family nights each year in an effort to assist parents in assisting their children in practicing English language and curriculum skills at home. In partnership with the CCSD and Zoom, three elementary and six middle schools have engaged parents at academic teacher team meetings three times during the year to engage parents in academic conversations specific to their children's academic progress to set specific improvement goals and to create ways parents can work with their children at home to meet those goals.

Parents at Zoom Schools have rated their experiences with schools and their understanding of their children's progress at a much higher level than other schools on the annual CCSD survey.

As of July 2016, the Zoom initiative was shifted from instructional design and professional learning development to the CCSD English Language Learner Division. This was done to create greater alignment between the Zoom initiative and the Master Plan for ELL Success and to continue to address English language development practices in all schools. Through the use of Title I, Title II and Title III funds, the ELL Division has provided, in collaboration with national experts, professional learning aligned to academic language in content achievement model sessions for all Zoom School teachers. This included participation in high-quality professional development, instructional rounds centered on improving instruction for ELL students and a belief that students could be seen from an asset orientation. Additionally, to ensure English language development practices were addressed using Tier I instructional materials, the ELL Division funded additional teacher collaboration time focused on differentiating the curricula to meet the needs of ELL across all content areas.

This year will mark the first year of students who started in Zoom Schools at the pre-K level in 2013-2014 who will have SBAC test results. Students are now taking the SBAC and we look forward to seeing their success on the examinations. Winter i-Ready formative assessment data shows that students who entered Zoom pre-K classes and stayed continuously enrolled are tracking at least 10 percent above their noncontinuously enrolled peers.

Universal pre-K, full-day kindergarten, Zoom reading skill centers and Zoom summer academy have had a marked impact on English language acquisition and academic success. Of the 1,653 students who entered Zoom pre-K in the 2013-2014 school year, 496 students have remained in Zoom Schools through the 2016-2017 school year. An additional 399 students have been continuously enrolled since kindergarten. Those students who have been enrolled in Zoom Schools since pre-K or kindergarten have made significantly faster growth in acquiring English and exiting ELL services than their noncontinuously enrolled peers.

It is our recommendation that through the continuation of the Zoom initiative and S.B. 390 we expand reading centers to include kindergarten, Grade 4 and

Grade 5 targeting newcomers or long-term ELLs in Grade 4 and Grade 5. We recommend extending the day for all elementary schools and middle schools, create a model for and implement Zoom reading centers in middle schools that target newcomers and long-term ELLs, create intake centers to support newcomers and refugee students and families and expand the 2 percent cap for teacher recruitment and recruitment incentives, family engagement and professional learning.

We support S.B. 390 so existing programs can continue to have this positive and lasting impact on students. We can expand services to a larger number of students in Clark County and Nevada.

BARRY BOSACKER (Principal, C.P. Squires Elementary School, Clark County School District, Clark County):

We support S.B. 390. As principal at C.P. Squires Elementary School, I have seen the impact of the resources and supports provided to us as a Zoom School. My school serves 447 ELL students, and Zoom provides critical systematic supports for our students who are working to acquire English language and literacy skills. Because of Zoom, we are offering students a high-quality, language-rich learning community. Our students grow rapidly as language learners. We also experience a high level of family engagement. Annually, we sponsor two Zoom family nights. Zoom's systematic approach to supporting ELLs has resulted in outstanding gains in their language and literacy development.

We have seen a dramatic increase in the percentage of English language learners who demonstrated proficiency on the WIDA ACCESS assessment. In the 2013-2014 school year, prior to C.P. Squires becoming a Zoom School, 5.5 percent of our ELL students were English language proficient. In 2014-2015 school year, Squires' first year as a Zoom School, the number increased to 10.4 percent. In the 2015-2016 school year, 16.4 percent of ELL students scored proficient on the WIDA ACCESS assessment.

This is evidence the additional supports provided by the Zoom initiative are helping us to rapidly increase the number of ELL students meeting language proficiency. We also attribute our gains to our ability to retain our staff over the past few years. Because of the incentives we can provide Zoom School teachers, Squires started this school year with no teacher vacancies. We are projected to begin the 2017-2018 school year with no vacancies. This allows us

to continue to develop our existing staff with high-quality professional learning with a major focus on instruction for ELLs through the CCSD Master Plan for ELL Success.

Zoom's systematic approach has helped align our work and meet the needs of all our students.

DUSTIN MANCL (Principal, Lewis E. Rowe Elementary School, Clark County School District, Clark County):

We support S.B. 390. You heard about the opportunities Zoom Schools provide to our students. I would like to discuss the impact on the school. Two years ago, Lewis E. Rowe Elementary School became a Zoom School. I understood the potential for our students and the benefits it would bring to our school community. Becoming a Zoom School helped stabilize our school. Teacher turnover has been almost eliminated. Before the changed system, we experienced an almost 40 percent teacher vacancy rate every year. After our first year as a Zoom School, our turnover rate dropped to 3.4 percent. I attribute much of the change to the instructional supplies and ongoing professional development provided to our teachers through Zoom. Each classroom was given student libraries, i-Ready and Zoom literacy materials. We know instructional materials are difficult to acquire, especially for our new teachers. With 60 percent of our staff in their first 4 years of teaching, Zoom's initiatives are an attractive benefit.

Zoom supports teachers by giving them access to high-quality instructional materials. The system acknowledges teachers and their hard work by offering stipends for remaining on campus. Zoom promotes effective teaching practices by providing ongoing professional development and coaching.

As a school leader, I find this often overlooked information is imperative to the success of our Zoom School. We understand that stable schools filled with certified teachers who have access to high-quality materials and who feel valued as educators will develop more engaging and robust lessons to support all students. These factors produce better results. We have seen and experienced this at Rowe.

Zoom has impacted our school beyond the initial goals. We have pride in the Zoom initiatives at Rowe. Our students and teachers have made great strides over the past two years. The school is thriving again, and you can feel it as you

walk through the doors. I look forward to continuing improvement for our school, teachers and community.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

Can you clarify the number of teachers at your school who are in their first year of teaching?

MR. MANCL:

Sixty percent of our teachers are in their first four years of teaching.

SENATOR GUSTAVSON:

How many more full-time employees will be needed to expand the Zoom School Program? Are there qualified candidates? How will the expansion be funded?

MS. ROURKE:

We have existing staff for the expansion. Incentives have helped with recruitment.

SENATOR DENIS:

The expansion will be in the form of a longer school day and will not increase costs.

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

The Department of Education has submitted proposed amendments ([Exhibit R](#)). If the Governor's recommended budget is approved, there will be an additional \$42 million over the biennium available to expand services to ELL students. We suggest allowing schools, not necessarily designated as Zoom Schools, to provide services to ELLs and long-term ELLs in a manner that is consistent with districts' policies in accordance with *Nevada Revised Statute* 388.407. It would mean providing services over the classification of a whole school intervention. There are a number of technical changes.

All school districts except Washoe and Clark Counties receive Zoom grants and do not necessarily designate schools as Zoom Schools. They receive funding to provide services to ELL students. We propose shifting from Zoom grants to a per-pupil funding system based on agreements on certain conditions. Details are available in the proposed amendments.

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

We support S.B. 390 and the Department of Education's proposed amendments. We want to be at the table to explore the idea of expanding Zoom to serve our ELL students who are not in Zoom Schools. In Washoe County, about two-thirds of our ELL students are not in Zoom Schools. We agree with removing the 2 percent cap and allowing our schools to better meet their needs in accordance with the approved ELL plan.

In response to Senator Harris' question, in Washoe County, Mariposa Academy is a district-sponsored charter Zoom School. The school qualified under the high-ELL concentration, low-performing category.

PATRICK GAVIN (Executive Director, State Public Charter School Authority, Department of Education):

We support S.B. 390 and appreciate the language related to charter schools. This is an opportunity to pilot the weighted funding and how it can be distributed in a way which is consistent with what we have learned from the program. The flexibility builds on the work we have done with funding from S.B. No. 504 of the 77th Session and S.B. No. 405 of the 78th Session. Senate Bill 390 is consistent with the spirit of the original legislation and moves us toward weighted funding.

STEPHEN AUGSPURGER (Executive Director, Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees):

We support S.B. 390.

JESSICA FERRATO (Nevada Association of School Boards):

We support S.B. 390. Our rural members support the Department of Education's amendments.

SYLVIA LAZOS (Educate Nevada Now):

Zoom Schools is possibly the most effective program enacted in Nevada. Third-party assessments have been favorable. This is a program with significant return on investment.

During a recent meeting with The National Council of La Raza, I was asked about Zoom Schools and the program. These national leaders said they have not seen anything else like it in the Country.

Senate Committee on Education  
April 11, 2017  
Page 27

Within four years, we have begun to solve some parts of the ELL problem, especially in elementary schools. Every teacher I know who is in a Zoom School is happy and proud to be making a difference.

Why would the Legislature consider changing a working formula before the job is finished? Several years ago, a longitudinal study of 100 ELL students found that only one of those students graduated from high school in Washoe County. An ELL in high school is likely a long-term ELL. In the ELL master plan for CCSD, long-term ELL students make no academic progress throughout middle school. Our challenge is to keep this excellent program as it is and start talking about helping ELLs and long-term ELLs who are not in Zoom Schools. They all need to have a chance at life.

We support expansion of Zoom programs and not diluting them.

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

We support S.B. 390 and the Department of Education's amendments. The rural counties are especially supportive.

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

We support S.B. 390. The Zoom School Program is proof that when you invest in public schools, good things happen. We need to continue to gather data to measure the progress of both Zoom and Victory Schools.

JUSTIN HARRISON (Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce):

We support S.B. 390. We support the continuation and expansion of Zoom Schools.

PETER GUZMAN (Latin Chamber of Commerce Nevada):

We support S.B. 390. The data support the contention that Zoom Schools can be successful and we should not dilute the program. Zoom Schools can make a difference in children's lives.

KENIA MORALES:

My child is in Grade 3 at Vail Pittman Elementary School, which is both a Title I and a Zoom School. I see the program working and the students benefiting. I support S.B. 390.

ALICIA BLEVINS (Mi Familia Vota):

We support the expansion of Zoom School opportunities and S.B. 390. The Zoom Schools Program serves Clark County schools with the highest percentage of English language learner students. They offer extended school years, reading skill centers, family engagement tools, half-day preschool and professional development for teachers to be able to teach ELL students in the most effective ways.

In turn, the program recipients demonstrate the ability to read, write and comprehend at grade level after only two years of intervention. Only 38,000 ELL students in Clark County benefit from Zoom Schools, leaving 30,000 students without the opportunity to benefit from the same program. This program has been tested and proven to provide a return on investment and the opportunity for ELL students in Zoom Schools to thrive in their educational careers, future professional careers and in life.

I am a mother of a student in Grade 3 at Helen Herr Elementary School, which is not a Zoom School. My daughter thrives, making the honor roll every single semester, but she is not an ELL student. If she were, who knows how well she would be doing academically if she had the opportunity to attend a Zoom School. I believe in fairness. I believe in the opportunity for all to catch up and get ahead on their road to success.

I am also here representing Daniela Pelayo who asked that I read her remarks into the record ([Exhibit S](#)). She supports S.B. 390.

Zoom Schools provide assistance to ELLs which has been successful in ensuring that our Latino students catch up and stay ahead. These programs work. They serve our students early and set them up for success to graduate on time and prepare them for college and the workforce.

For Daniela Pelayo, having an autistic brother has made ensuring him a better education much harder. Her family knew that every possible program that was available was crucial in helping him improve and better his future. Zoom is a program that helped her brother develop his language abilities while other students were taking some time off school. Throughout that time, her brother was able to build upon his speech in school and become more social with people he is not comfortable with. Zoom is able to help more students, like her brother, reach their potential and contribute to this society the best they can.

FERNANDO ROMERO (Hispanics in Politics):

Zoom Schools are very successful. I support S.B. 390 as written. I do not agree with the proposed amendments because they may have the effect of diluting the program.

RICKY GOURRIER (Communities in Schools Nevada):

We are the chosen provider for integrative students support services at a number of Zoom Schools in southern Nevada. We witness, first-hand, the positive impact of these concentrated categorical interventions have had on the youth of our State. These interventions are very important and we hope they will not be diluted.

AARON IBARRA (Mi Familia Vota):

I support S.B. 390. My cousin is attending a Zoom School and has benefitted from the program. Both her grades and her confidence have improved. It is a good program for all ELLs.

ARLENE ALVAREZ (Mi Familia Vota):

I support S.B. 390. I was once an ELL and had teachers who were able to help me. The Zoom Schools Program is successful and should be expanded.

Johan Hernandez has asked that I read his statement into the record ([Exhibit T](#)). He supports S.B. 390. He grew up with fellow students who spoke Spanish as their first language. Seeing colleagues struggle to read, write and understand English seemed unfair. Their parents were not in a position to teach them English, so they looked to teachers and fellow students for help. He supports extending funding for Zoom Schools. Starting from elementary school all the way through middle school, these students will then have the help and guidance in order to succeed at life.

Francis Julieta Hernandez asked that I read her statement of support for S.B. 390 ([Exhibit U](#)). She is in Grade 12 at Rancho High School. She is on her way to successfully completing high school and has been accepted to several universities. She is a product of a program like Zoom Schools. Her parents came to the United States 19 years ago. Neither she nor her parents spoke English. She learned to speak English in elementary school and has helped her parents. She asks that we remember that when children cannot speak or understand English, we are not working to help them. We are hurting them.

ALICIA CONTRERAS (Mi Familia Vota):

I would like to read two letters into the record. Adriana Martin-Sanjuan supports S.B. 390 because she struggled with English language skills in elementary school and wants other students to have the opportunity to improve academically ([Exhibit V](#)).

Susan Florian supports S.B. 390 because Zoom Schools are successful and will help ELLs to study in a healthy environment ([Exhibit W](#)).

Mi Familia Vota supports S.B. 390. Zoom Schools have been very successful and we support expanding and not diluting the program.

JOSE SOLORIO (Latino Leadership Council):

I was an ELL student, but there was no program for me. Funding for Zoom Schools is addressing the needs of the students and the community. We need to make the program available to more students. We cannot decrease the funding in any way. Changing the funding may result in a dilution of the program.

ANGIE SULLIVAN:

I am neutral to S.B. 390. I teach Grade 2 in a Zoom School. We received learning materials for the Zoom Schools Program. I am neutral because I am worried about competitive grants which are sometimes not awarded fairly. We do not have enough funding for education in Nevada. The more needy students should have more supplies and support to be successful in the short term. In the long term, they will be productive community members.

I am concerned about the possibility that this successful program may be diluted.

SENATOR DENIS:

I do not support any measures that would weaken or dilute the Zoom Schools Program. I want to be certain we can continue the program. The grants we discussed are for the rural schools because they do not have large enough ELL populations to support a full Zoom School Program. We will continue to improve the program.

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 390.

CHAIR DENIS:

I will open S.B. 369.

**SENATE BILL 369**: Revises provisions relating to public schools. (BDR 34-971)

SENATOR AARON D. FORD (Senatorial District No. 11):

Senate Bill 369 supports our schools in fostering a collaborative environment focusing on student academic outcomes. Discussions over the Interim about the reorganization of the Clark County School District have highlighted the importance and urgency of collaborative efforts. If the students are going to be successful academically, the adults involved in their academic lives must work together toward a shared vision. It is especially true when a school is locally managed by the principal and his or her staff as is envisioned by the Clark County School District reorganization. Senate Bill 369 proposes to provide CCSD teachers and principals with the training, skills and knowledge needed to be effective collaborators with school staff and parents. The District must make the training available and it must be attended if attendance is directed by principals or the superintendent of the District.

Senate Bill 369 also requires the board, upon the petition of at least 50 percent of a school's licensed and classified employees or 5 percent of the families, to investigate whether the staff of the school is effectively engaging with the families of the students or whether the culture of the school is focused on student outcomes. If the board conducts an investigation, it must provide related training to the staff of the school as is necessary and appropriate. The process of petition and investigation will ensure a school's staff and families have a voice in encouraging a collaborative environment. It will also help to identify schools most in need of professional development in collaborative relationships.

ED GONZALEZ (Clark County Education Association):

We support S.B. 369. A collaborative environment leads to better student results. Previous Legislative Sessions have raised education standards. We have increased teacher accountability and principal responsibility. We have not provided a mechanism for professional development when issues arise.

In Clark County, we are in a transition period with reorganization. We have formed 357 reorganization teams. A general theme from the teams is a need for training. If a school's culture is not focused on pupil outcomes,

S.B. 369 provides a means of requesting professional development training for teachers, principals, staff and parents.

MR. AUGSPURGER:

I worked for the CCSD as a teacher for 30 years. I can recall only two times in my years in education when I worked in a culturally unhealthy environment. In an environment like this, staff cannot be productive and students will not be successful. Senate Bill 369 acknowledges that unhealthy environments still exist in some of our schools. The bill identifies three important focuses: school culture, parent engagement and student outcomes. It allows the superintendent or a principal to make a request for training. It also allows licensed and support staff to make a request. We support S.B. 369.

SENATOR FORD:

The Clark County School District has offered an amendment which I support ([Exhibit X](#)).

SENATOR HARRIS:

I am a proponent of parental involvement and engagement in our public schools. I am concerned about the lack of clarity with regard to calculating the 5 percent or more of parents or legal guardians who can request an investigation into the culture of their children's schools. Will the calculation be made on the first day of school when the question arises or will it be on Count Day? Clarity is important in the process. We do not want different schools to be making different calculations. We will need consistency across the State.

MR. GONZALEZ:

We can work to address this issue.

CRAIG M. STEVENS (Clark County School District):

We support S.B. 369. The improvement of culture and collaboration is a top priority of CCSD. Our school trustees have laid out six goals to move CCSD forward. The fourth goal is increasing engagement through better climate and culture for students based on academic achievement.

We have proposed a friendly amendment, [Exhibit X](#). We propose including a majority of members of the School Organizational Teams (SOT) to groups permitted to petition for an investigation of a school's effectiveness in parental engagement and culture and climate. We also propose to delay for one year any

petitioned investigation of turnaround schools. The transition for turnaround schools can be complicated. Principals and staff will need time to put new systems in place.

JIM FRAZEE (Clark County Education Association):

I am a high school teacher in Clark County. I also teach credit retrieval in the evenings in the inner city. Senate Bill 369 will have a powerful impact on education. Teachers are excited about the School Organization Team model, but we also have reservations about school climate and retaliation by principals and administrators who are having a hard time changing and giving up power. I am not suggesting this is the standard, but colleagues have related some of their experiences. Some distinguished teachers who are members of SOTs have been given class assignments which seem questionable.

Many times, incompetent employees retain their jobs while those who speak out and ask questions lose theirs. Senate Bill 369 gives parents and teachers the cover to speak out in the best interests of the students and the teaching profession.

Ms. SULLIVAN:

Senate Bill 369 will give teachers a voice. In my career, I have worked with 19 administrators. I teach in at-risk schools and have seen that we have a retention problem due to sometimes toxic working conditions. We need to discuss how our schools are working and how we can develop a mechanism to improve them.

LINDSEY DALLEY:

I am a member of a middle school SOT, and I support S.B. 369. The organizational gap between the board of trustees and the principal is a critical barrier to establishing a collaborative environment. The tone of our meetings are very different when a school's associate superintendent is in the room. Open communication suffers, and I would support including administrators above the principal in the process.

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close S.B. 369 and open S.B. 430.

**SENATE BILL 430**: Eliminates the Achievement School District. (BDR 34-793)

SENATOR MOISES DENIS (Senatorial District No. 2):

The Legislature enacted A. B. No. 448 of the 78th Session to create the Achievement School District (ASD) to act as an accountability backstop for the State's lowest performing schools. We heard about approximately 80 schools in Nevada that have been the poorest performers, some for more than a decade.

Under the ASD statute, each year up to six underperforming schools can be transferred from their local school district to the ASD, which is housed within the Department of Education. These schools would be converted to charter schools and would undergo substantial change, sometimes including a replacement of the school principal and many on the teaching staff. In selecting the schools proposed for conversion, the Department is required to consider student achievement data, as well as parental and community input, in consultation with the local school board. When a school is converted, parents have the right to transfer their children to another school.

The ASD statute specifies how the schools will be operated, staffed, financed and the process for schools to leave the Achievement School District after a minimum of six years. These schools could ultimately return to their local school districts or operate as independent charter schools.

The business of turning around an underperforming school is incredibly difficult. It requires special leaders with a very distinct set of skills. It also requires dramatic change and the flexibility to craft a solution unique to each school. The Achievement School District was envisioned to provide the necessary environment for a successful turnaround effort.

Unfortunately, A. B. No. 448 of the 78th Session was passed along party lines and did not have a broad base of support. During its implementation over the past two years, the ASD has been a bit of a political football, and has resulted in a great deal of community discussion and media coverage. There is a proposal in the Assembly to delay implementation of the ASD, and another to abolish it, as does the bill before you now, S.B. 430.

I have had lengthy discussions with the Department of Education about this bill, and have come to believe there may be a productive compromise which could retain the original vision of the ASD but respond to some of the very real concerns that have been raised by the community.

In general, those concerns have included: giving schools every possible resource and chance for success before entering the ASD, recognizing effective local school turnaround interventions and giving them an opportunity to work, protecting students during ASD transitions and empowering parents early on and throughout the process.

The Department has proposed a series of amendments to address these issues, within the construct of the ASD.

MR. CANAVERO:

The Department of Education is dedicated to improving underperforming schools. Over 60,000 students attend a school where less than 2 out of 10 students perform at grade level. These schools enroll a disproportionate number of African-American and Hispanic students. The work is difficult, but the kids cannot wait.

Over the past two years, we have listened, and we have learned. The conversations have inspired a number of recommendations for the Nevada Achievement School District that will further empower parents and give every school in need a rapid improvement strategy.

Governor Brian Sandoval has encouraged us, and our recommendations are consistent with his vision of maintaining a critical measure of accountability. We have provided an overview of Nevada Department of Education's conceptual amendments ([Exhibit Y](#)). I will discuss a presented flow chart ([Exhibit Z](#)).

The Department of Education is dedicated to maintaining accountability, protecting the interests of our most vulnerable students, elevating and empowering parents through a petition process, honoring effective local interventions through a performance compact, ensuring collaboration between districts and the State and protecting district capital investments.

The NDE has always released a list of low-performing schools. We experienced an incredible outpouring of interest in the list following the recent release of this report. It is not a coincidence this is the first time there are tangible consequences. Our charge as a State is to put that positive energy to work for children. The proposed amendments accomplish this goal.

We have submitted an overview of the NDE's responses to public feedback with links to the supporting materials ([Exhibit AA](#)).

MR. BARLEY:

I will discuss the flow chart, [Exhibit Z](#). The chart is divided into three categories; eligible schools, annual process, and intervention and support. *Nevada Revised Statutes* require that the bottom 5 percent of elementary, middle schools and high schools with a graduation rate of less than 60 percent be eligible for consideration for the ASD. In 2016, there were 47 schools identified as eligible for the ASD. During the fall of 2016, the Nevada State Board of Education went through a review process of these schools to narrow the list to six eligible schools for recommendation into the ASD. The final six schools must also pair with a high-quality charter school. The NDE approved only two of ten applications for high-quality charter operators to serve ASD eligible schools.

At the conclusion of the statutorily mandated process, of the 47 schools identified as eligible, only one was given intervention or support. The NDE has worked to develop a program which will serve all eligible schools. In these schools, two out of ten students are reading and understanding math at grade level. Seventy percent of the students tell us they want to go on to post-secondary education. Very few of those who do go to post-secondary education graduate in four years. We know there is urgency and that implementation of the ASD generated wide-ranging conversations.

We suggest offering eligible schools Performance Compacts and Improvement Plans (PCIP). The PCIPs are voluntary, but would accomplish a number of goals and be a demonstration of a commitment from the school, the district and the Department to work together to improve the schools to become 3-Star schools in a minimum of three years. It would identify a strategy that otherwise would have gone through the ASD process, without result. The strategy would be to achieve a positive action and outcome, building on the public interest in the ASD.

The selection of the PCIPs would be locally driven and collectively decided by the school site, the district and the Department. They could review it to be certain it makes sense for the school and the community.

Page 2 of [Exhibit Z](#) outlines various interventions and supports; Empowerment Schools, Autonomous Schools, Evidence-Based Intervention 1003a, other State and local interventions and nonprofit partnerships.

If a school is identified as eligible for the ASD but chooses to enter into a Performance Compact and Improvement Plan, achieves their targeted goals and is on track to becoming a 3-Star school in three years, we make a commitment to the school and to the community to remove that school from the ASD consideration process. If they are making progress, we do not want to hinder or disrupt them.

In the past year, six districts had eligible schools, and four have voluntarily opted into the program. There is interest in the Performance Compact and Improvement Plan.

Stakeholders expressed a desire to elevate parents' voices and participation. In the regulation presented to the Legislative Commission on Education, we articulated a means, for 1-Star schools or 2-Star schools that are underperforming, to allow parents to petition to enter either the ASD or a PCIP. The petition process was influenced by many conversations across the State.

Our plan gives parents the opportunity to choose a strategy of success for their schools. The parent petition process has three options. First, when there are insufficient petition signatures, the school will fall under the ASD consideration process if the school meets that program's criteria. Second, if the required number of signatures are collected, and the parents request moving into the ASD, the petition would be honored, and the school would be prioritized and matched with a high-quality approved charter school. Finally, parents could choose to participate in a PCIP.

SENATOR HARRIS:

Parents and communities have expressed frustration with the ASD system. One of the options for parents in your plan is to petition for ASD conversion. Why would parents choose this path?

MR. BARLEY:

We are confident the program can be successful. When we can demonstrate success, there will be more interest in the ASD.

Senate Committee on Education  
April 11, 2017  
Page 38

SENATOR HARRIS:

I do not see incentives or benefits to participation in the ASD system.

MR. BARLEY:

Our goal is to work with communities in developing ideal learning environments.

MR. CANAVERO:

We are addressing options and choices and want parents to be empowered as decision makers. Page 4 of [Exhibit Z](#) outlines clear paths available to parents who want to improve their schools. We anticipate a time when parents will embrace the ASD system.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

In our State, we have low-performing schools and teachers with limited experience. We have many problems, but the most serious problem is a lack of adequate funding.

On page 1 of [Exhibit Z](#), the first column is Eligible Schools. I suggest making the first column, the first step in the process, "100 Percent Funding for Education." Teachers should be paid in accordance with their worth. Teachers fill many roles in their positions. More social workers in public schools would help teachers do their jobs. Teachers need support the way other professionals do.

Any plan to improve our school system must begin with 100 percent funding.

MR. CANAVERO:

Education funding is important. We can improve education in Nevada. This is the first year the NDE has released two lists, an underperforming schools list which we have renamed The Rising Stars List and a Shining Stars List. Shining Star schools are at-risk schools that are outperforming their peers. We have seen improvement when we capitalize on success, and when we build strong teams.

SENATOR DENIS:

We need adequate funding. One strategy may be to give schools more flexibility in the way they allocate their funds.

SENATOR SPEARMAN:

There are a number of things we could do. We can examine schools that succeed for ideas. We could build a network of support for teachers. If we had educator extenders, teachers could concentrate on doing what they were hired to do.

During visits to schools in my district, I was told that more funding would help. They also asked for more autonomy. It is important to remember, in every discussion, that we are not funding public education at adequate levels.

MR. BARLEY:

A common theme in public feedback was eligibility for the ASD. We have proposed regulations to allow parents in any school to directly petition for the ASD.

In [Exhibit Z](#), the green boxes represent direct parent choice. The blue boxes are schools eligible for consideration and the process they would follow. The purple boxes represent local decision making and choices.

Page 6 of [Exhibit Z](#) summarizes 2016 Rising Star Schools and Performance Compacts. The orange schools are ASD schools for school year 2017-2018. The blue schools are those that have entered into the PCIPs. The purple schools are those that did not enter into a PCIP, but have another local improvement strategy. The green schools are those moving to an Alternate Performance Framework. The red schools are closed or in the process of being closed. Remaining schools do not have an articulated school improvement strategy.

Our challenge is to serve all of these schools in need of rapid and dramatic improvement. We are working with Washoe County regarding PCIPs and are optimistic about the outcome.

JANA WILCOX LAVIN (Superintendent-in-residence, Nevada Achievement School District, Department of Education):

Over the past two years we have listened and learned from families. We learned how they want to participate in school improvement. They are concerned about being left out of conversations.

We did find opposition, but we also found energy and desire for the opportunity to participate. The vision of parents in the driver's seat is about reorienting roles

in school improvement. We need to make sure we as practitioners are working in service to our families and students. We are committed to shared accountability.

The Nevada Achievement School District is dedicated to being community informed and community led. After many conversations, we have realized the missing ingredient in our formula is parents. One mother, Dahlia Jimenez, said in the last months she has watched the ASD make changes, and the changes feel like a revolution and an opportunity for competition.

The parent petition gives parents who feel disempowered and discounted the power to organize and advocate for the change they want to see in their schools. There are many options, and we want to see them advocate for something rather than against something.

Gabby Ardon, a mother of four said that most of the charter schools she was considering were too far away. She is happy about the opportunity to update our educational system.

SENATOR DENIS:

We have the opportunity to improve the ASD, continue discussions and explore options.

Ms. ROURKE:

We support S.B. 430. Over the past few sessions, the Legislature has passed a number of different reforms still being implemented by schools. Programs such as Zoom Schools, Victory Schools and turnarounds are showing improvements in student achievement. We need more time to collect evidence of their effectiveness. The evaluation provided by the Nevada Department of Education shows that these programs have been successful. Yet, some of the same schools have been identified for the Achievement School District and takeover by a charter operator.

During the 2015 Legislative Session and throughout the Interim, we raised many questions about the Achievement School District that remain unanswered.

How do we ensure the appropriate schools are assigned to the Achievement School District and that the transfer process works in a manner that provides the least disruption for students and staff?

Dean Petersen Elementary School was listed as eligible for the Achievement School District. They were already in turnaround mode. A well-regarded principal was hired, and she brought many experienced and highly effective teachers to her staff. The first year of turnaround was difficult, but by the second year a good deal of progress was being made. Parents were happy, students felt safer at school and attendance was improving. Once Dean Petersen Elementary School was identified for the ASD program, the turnaround process was disrupted.

Interventions listed in [Exhibit Z](#) do not seem to recognize Zoom or Victory Schools.

How do we ensure that students in the schools selected to become Achievement Schools will be provided the services they need? Turning around a failing school means that we must improve the achievement of the students attending that school. According to the law, it appears that local students will be given priority to attend, but there is no guarantee that the same students will remain in the student body. Changing the demographics of the school alone could have a significant impact on the achievement level of the school.

There is no requirement for a charter operator to have demonstrated success in rapidly improving academic results in a school where a student body has a comparable demographic profile. Without well-documented results, the State should be hesitant in investing taxpayer dollars in an unknown and unqualified entity, especially when there is the opportunity for the school to enter into a local or State turnaround program where taxpayer dollars can be easily accounted for and there is a strong history, at least in CCSD, of positive results.

The law requires the school district to hand over a school building, without any consideration to the current cost or debt of the building itself. The law also requires a school district to allow the charter school to use the building without compensation and the district must also continue to pay an undetermined amount of capital expenses on the building. The charter school is only required to maintain the building; however, there is no reference to any standards or expectations to meet warranty requirements or ensure proper upkeep. Our CCSD Bond Oversight Committee has expressed a series of concerns regarding the facilities aspect of the legislation.

We have many questions surrounding the return of a school to the home school district once it has reached the desired achievement level. The law is open-ended and does not include any requirements for upkeep of the facility, the basis of a decision to remain as a charter school, or any requirement to purchase or lease the facility should the school remain a charter school.

Regarding reform for low-performing schools, turnaround schools have been successful. With additional funding for staff, we could expand capacity to meet the needs of all our identified schools.

Any amendments need to address parity. Statute allows charter schools six years to show improved student achievement while Performance Compact and Improvement Plans give traditional schools only half that amount of time.

Amendments should address facilities and remove the requirement that school districts provide facilities at no cost.

We raised these and a multitude of other concerns that remain unanswered during the Interim. For these reasons and many others, we support the repeal of the Achievement School District.

CHRIS DALY (Nevada State Education Association):

We support S.B. 430 as originally written to repeal the Achievement School District. The ASD is the wrong answer for our State's struggling schools. Conversion of public schools to achievement charters would take away control of school sites from parents and communities. I have submitted my testimony ([Exhibit BB](#)).

The Nevada State Education Association has concerns regarding the conceptual amendments [Exhibit Y](#). Any compromise to address struggling schools needs to include the entire school community. We appreciate the emphasis on parent involvement. We need to have educator involvement also.

The NDE has discussed a line in the sand on accountability for the lowest performing schools. We support accountability to the children of Nevada.

MR. MURILLO:

We support S.B. 430 as written. We need to acknowledge the negative reaction by the parents to the Achievement School District plan. We are working with

improvement programs in the schools which should be given a chance to succeed. We need to be realistic about the effect of the ASD on our communities.

MR. ROMERO:

My son is autistic. He is 12 years old and a student at James Cashman Middle School. He has an Individualized Education Program and has been successful at Cashman. We were told that charter schools do not have programs for special needs students.

I support S.B. 430 as written. The NDE presents the ASD in a positive light. I disagree. The schools selected for the ASD are minority-majority and most are Latino. This is a process that takes schools out of the mainstream, and it seems like segregation. Parents lose the right to vote for school trustees.

MR. DALLEY:

I had the opportunity to work on A.B. No. 394 of the 78th Session and am a member of Break Free CCSD. I represent a coalition of Moapa Valley parents, all of whom are active in education. We oppose S.B. 430 unless it is amended as proposed. Instead of eliminating the ASD, make changes to improve it.

The coalition of parents I represent want the four rural Moapa Valley public schools improved and protected. We want to maintain our teachers and principals. We support several changes. Give rural and all CCSD parents the parent petition option. Protect and preserve public schools by allowing communities to form community run, autonomous public schools under the ASD. The autonomous public schools should be fully funded, but funds should not pass through CCSD and the bureaucracy.

We support modifying the ASD to make it better. Rural schools need the ASD option.

CINDI RIVERA (Associate Executive Director, Futuro Academy):

Futuro Academy is an ASD Fresh Start School opening in 2017. Our mission is to educate all students. A cornerstone idea of the ASD and charter schools like Futuro is to use the transformative power of an excellent education for the success of our students. I have submitted my testimony ([Exhibit CC](#)).

DAVID BLODGETT (Nevada Prep):

We oppose S.B. 430. We are proposing to be a Fresh Start, nonprofit, locally-governed public school. On the Rising Stars Schools list there are more than 22,000 students in Clark County, 62 percent are Latino, 28 percent are ELL and 76 qualify for free or reduced priced lunches.

We support providing options for Clark County parents. As a proposed charter school, we appreciate the ASD. Our goals and the ASD's are the same, to provide students in consistently struggling public schools with the opportunity to attain an education that will prepare them to be college, career and community ready. If the work of the ASD is delayed or dismantled as proposed in the original draft of S.B. 430, it would weaken our ability to serve students and families who are most in need of an excellent college preparatory education.

MR. SOLORIO:

I am part of the founding team of Nevada Prep. I support Nevada Prep because it is a choice and because 100 percent of public funds go directly to the school. We have no private sector management firms. Our school will be located near an overcrowded CCSD school, and we expect to relieve some of that crowding.

I oppose S.B. 430. I support education funding when the funding follows the students. We do not fairly fund our schools. Districts use average teacher salaries to hide actual school funding. When money follows the child, funding is equal and schools improve. This issue should be addressed any time we discuss school reform.

KERRIE KRAMER (Charter School Association of Nevada):

We are neutral to S.B. 430. We do not believe the ASD is the perfect intervention solution; however, it is an option. There should be choices.

MR. GONZALEZ:

The Clark County Education Association is neutral on S.B. 430. The proposed amendments improve the bill, and we hope to be able to support it. Earlier this Session we supported A.B. 432 which takes a collaborative approach.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 432:** Delays the implementation of the Achievement School District. (BDR 34-1036)

Teachers need a sense of security not found in A.B. No. 448 of the 78th Session. This process is a good start, but more is needed. We need to improve the ASD.

MS. SULLIVAN:

I opposed the ASD when it was proposed. Parents and community members were concerned about the narrowing of the lists of eligible schools and there was a good deal of confusion.

We have some excellent models, but we are experimenting on kids. During the meetings I attended with parents and teachers, the feeling was that our children are being used in experiments.

MR. GAVIN:

Eighty-seven percent of State charter schools created since 2011 perform at 3-Star level or higher. In 2015, we eliminated our last 1-Star school. We have taken aggressive steps to assist the four remaining low-performing schools in our portfolio.

We are the most rapidly diversifying public education system in the State. Our student population is now minority majority. We have increased our special education population by 467 percent since our inception. We have increased our ELL population by 5,000 percent while continuing to outperform the State.

We are working to address areas which need improvement. On the whole, charter schools in Nevada are successful with strong authorizing oversight and good public policy.

SENATOR DENIS:

The purpose of S.B. 430 and the proposed amendment are to generate discussion. We want to help our students succeed.

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 430.

MR. STEVENS:

The Basic Academy Of International Studies has become the first CCSD school, and the second Nevada school, to be named an authorized International

Senate Committee on Education  
April 11, 2017  
Page 46

Baccalaureate (IB) Career-related Programme. According to the IB Chief Schools Officer Andrew Macdonald, the designation means Basic Academy is now:

part of a global community of schools committed to developing knowledgeable, caring young people who will be ready to negotiate their futures successfully and make contribution resulting in a more harmonious and peaceful world.

We are proud of the students at Basic Academy.

MR. SOLORIO:

Walter Johnson Junior High School has been designated an IB school. All students will be receiving an IB education.

Remainder of page intentionally left blank; signature page to follow.

Senate Committee on Education  
April 11, 2017  
Page 47

CHAIR DENIS:

I adjourn the meeting of the Senate Committee on Education at 9:09 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

---

Jan Brase,  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

---

Senator Moises Denis, Chair

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

<b>EXHIBIT SUMMARY</b>				
<b>Bill</b>	<b>Exhibit / # of pages</b>		<b>Witness / Entity</b>	<b>Description</b>
	A	2		Agenda
	B	12		Attendance Roster
	C	5	Brooklyn Darmody / Nevada Youth Legislature	Presentation
S.B. 86	D	1	Todd Butterworth	Work Session Document
S.B. 108	E	3	Todd Butterworth	Work Session Document
S.B. 108	F	1	Todd Butterworth	Proposed Amendment
S.B. 143	G	4	Todd Butterworth	Work Session Document
S.B. 154	H	1	Todd Butterworth	Work Session Document
S.B. 164	I	3	Todd Butterworth	Work Session Document
S.B. 166	J	5	Todd Butterworth	Work Session Document
S.B. 213	K	5	Todd Butterworth	Work Session Document
S.B. 248	L	1	Todd Butterworth	Work Session Document
S.B. 310	M	1	Todd Butterworth	Work Session Document
S.B. 391	N	6	Todd Butterworth	Work Session Document
S.B. 458	O	2	Todd Butterworth	Work Session Document
S.B. 390	P	2	Nicole Rourke / Clark County School District	Proposed Amendment
S.B. 390	Q	54	Lorna James-Cervantes / Clark County School District	Presentation of 2016 Zoom State Report
S.B. 390	R	3	Steve Canavero / Department of Education	Proposed Amendments
S.B. 390	S	1	Alicia Blevins	Written Testimony from Daniela Pelayo
S.B. 390	T	1	Arlene Alvarez	Written Testimony from Johan Hernandez
S.B. 390	U	1	Arlene Alvarez	Written Testimony from Francis Julieta Hernandez
S.B. 390	V	1	Alicia Contreras	Written Testimony from Adriana Martin-Sanjuan

S.B. 390	W	1	Alicia Contreras	Written Testimony from Susan Florian
S.B. 369	X	1	Senator Aaron D. Ford	Proposed Amendment, Clark County School District
S.B. 430	Y	2	Steve Canavero / Department of Education	Conceptual Amendments
S.B. 430	Z	6	Steve Canavero / Department of Education	ASD Flow Chart
S.B. 430	AA	29	Steve Canavero / Department of Education	Responses to Public Feedback
S.B. 430	BB	1	Chris Daly / Nevada State Education Association	Written Testimony
S.B. 430	CC	1	Cindi Rivera / Futuro Academy	Written Testimony