

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

**Eightieth Session  
May 29, 2019**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Edgar Flores at 4:33 p.m. on Wednesday, May 29, 2019, in Room 3138 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4406 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at [www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019](http://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019).

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Chair  
Assemblywoman Bea Duran  
Assemblywoman Michelle Gorelow  
Assemblywoman Alexis Hansen  
Assemblywoman Melissa Hardy  
Assemblywoman Lisa Krasner  
Assemblywoman Brittney Miller  
Assemblywoman Connie Munk  
Assemblywoman Sarah Peters  
Assemblywoman Selena Torres

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Assemblywoman Jill Tolles (excused)

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Senate District No. 5  
Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Senate District No. 8

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kelly Richard, Committee Policy Analyst  
Victoria Gonzalez, Committee Counsel  
Lori McCleary, Committee Secretary  
Trinity Thom, Committee Assistant

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Evan Gong, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Jayne Malorni, Education Programs Professional, Department of Education  
Jimmy Lau, representing Nevada Credit Union League  
Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents  
Sean Mulvenon, Associate Dean of Research and Sponsored Projects, College of Education, University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
Bradley Keating, Director, Government Relations, Clark County School District

**Chair Flores:**

[Roll was called. Committee rules and protocol were explained.] We have three bills on the agenda today. I will open the hearing for Senate Bill 314 (2nd Reprint).

**Senate Bill 314 (2nd Reprint): Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR 34-730)**

**Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Senate District No. 5:**

I am here to present Senate Bill 314 (2nd Reprint). This bill further supports the work we started with Senate Bill 249 of the 79th Session. Last session, the Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities testified before the Legislature that the Great Recession adversely impacted economic and financial security of households in Nevada. Poverty increased for families, unemployment rose, income fell, and housing foreclosure rates were the highest in the nation. Nevada is working hard to recover from some of those impacts.

It was also noted that Nevadans have low levels of financial literacy and also may not take advantage of existing financial instruments or use instruments that underline long-term strategies to build wealth. According to the 2018 Prosperity Now Scorecard, which ranks each state's health in various issue areas, including family financial wealth, Nevada ranks forty-eighth overall for the prosperity of its residents and forty-third in the financial assets and income category. Specifically, Nevadans have a difficult time managing debt. The scorecard found that almost 1 in 5 of Nevada consumers with debt are 90 or more days behind in their payments, and more than 1 in 5 student loan borrowers are severely delinquent. Among other things, the report also found growing income inequality and racial disparities.

To counter these concerns, the organization suggested that Nevada lawmakers "invest in the state's most financially vulnerable residents." The bill before you today tackles just that—our students.

This last interim, I served on the Nevada Task Force on Financial Security. We examined the financial security of the residents of Nevada and the causes, the extent, and the consequences of financial insecurity in the state. The task force identified concrete strategies and recommendations for improving the financial condition in Nevada. One of these recommendations was to support funding for professional development to expand teaching financial literacy in our schools.

It is critical that we provide the foundation in personal financial literacy at the front end early in life so that Nevada residents will have a sound base of knowledge for a life after high school, when they will be confronted with complex financial decisions. Senate Bill 314 (2nd Reprint) addresses many of the issues that I have mentioned by expanding the reach of financial literacy principles.

Senate Bill 314 (2nd Reprint) establishes the State Seal of Financial Literacy Program. The program provides that a special seal denoting financial literacy be affixed to the high school diploma and noted on the transcript of a student who has achieved a high level of proficiency in related coursework. If financial resources are available, S.B. 314 (R2) requires that Nevada's Department of Education establish a Financial Literacy Month to include a Student Smart Week and a Money Week. The bill also establishes the State Financial Literacy Advisory Council to develop financial literacy curriculum and support the coordination of related outreach. The Commission on Professional Standards in Education must establish the requirements to obtain a teaching endorsement in financial literacy.

Additionally, S.B. 314 (R2) requires regional training programs to provide related training and professional development. Finally, the bill provides for certain requirements for a program offered by the Nevada System of Higher Education to obtain an endorsement to teach financial literacy courses.

Consumers today are faced with a dizzying array of financial options, requirements, and decisions forcing citizens to select among a sometimes confusing mix of prices and fees. College tuition is now so costly that postsecondary education has become a serious personal financial decision for our students. Defined benefit pensions have largely been replaced with defined contribution plans, shifting the responsibility for saving and investing to the employee. We need to make sure they know how to do that.

Funding to support these efforts is included in the budget. I want to put that in front of you in bold letters. The *Executive Budget* includes all of the funding needed for S.B. 314 (R2). That budget has been closed and the money is there. I am proud to say that many of you were involved in making that happen.

I urge your support of S.B. 314 (R2), which is an important step in making education more relevant for our students and in preparing them for life after high school. Mr. Chair, this concludes my remarks and, at this time, I would like to turn the testimony over to Mr. Gong, who is in Las Vegas. As my former Nevada Youth Legislator, Mr. Gong brought this issue to my attention. He is now a student at the University of California, Berkeley. He will share with you why he feels so strongly that we need to continue this program for our teachers and our students. Following Mr. Gong's remarks, Jayne Malorni with the Nevada Department of Education is also available to answer any questions you may have. Parenthetically, I would like to say when we first started this work in 2015, Ms. Malorni was a curriculum supervisor

for the Clark County School District and is now at the Department of Education. She is the person who really knows financial literacy. She is our guru in the state of Nevada in this area. I hope you will have an opportunity to ask her some questions on how this is working in the schools across the state and how this bill will make the program better for even more students in our state.

**Evan Gong, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I am currently a rising senior in college and a former Nevada Youth Legislator. In my brief testimony today, I will offer to you why I think financial literacy is such an important issue for young people as well as a history of our work promoting this issue over the past four years.

During my time as a Nevada Youth Legislator, my responsibilities included listening to my peers' concerns and advocating for important issues affecting youth. In the process, I came up with the idea to require financial literacy in our academic standards after realizing that our high school education did not include enough real-world practical skills. My peers also shared similar concerns with me. Many of us had part-time jobs but hardly knew about the taxes withheld from our paychecks. Many of us were also in the process of applying to colleges and were baffled by the confounding array of financial aid options. Many of us did not think to keep an emergency savings fund or think about starting a Roth IRA for retirement.

Indeed, financial literacy is so important to young people because it provides us with the clarity to better navigate a world in which our financial decision-making plays a major role in our prosperity. The responsibility will fall on us as individuals to secure our own well-being.

I would also like to mention that, based on our work for Senate Bill 249 of the 79th Session in 2017 and with this bill, we have the potential, as kids learn financial literacy in their schools, to bring that knowledge home to their parents, many of whom may not understand the subject or do not have the knowledge to teach their child. The effect goes both ways. The kids are learning financial literacy and they are bringing this knowledge home to help parents. We believe this will particularly help those who are low-income have the information and know-how to navigate this world.

My deep concern about financial literacy led me to reach out to Senator Woodhouse, who graciously sponsored Senate Bill 220 of the 78th Session, later reintroducing it as Senate Bill 249 of the 79th Session. Senate Bill 249 of the 79th Session was signed into law in 2017 and expanded financial literacy to third- through twelfth-grade standards. The bill you are hearing today, Senate Bill 314 (2nd Reprint), will further improve on the progress we made. It would offer teachers the necessary resources and training to provide students with the best instruction possible on this crucial topic.

I would like to conclude by saying how much of an honor it has been to have this opportunity to work so closely on these bills. I remain steadfast in my commitment to elevating financial literacy, and I am really humbled to see our work help tens of thousands of students across Nevada think more prudently about their financial decisions. Thank you so much to this Committee, to Senator Woodhouse, and to everyone who has been so helpful in providing feedback. I am happy to take questions.

**Chair Flores:**

Senator Woodhouse, would you like for us to go into questions now, or is there something else you would like included in the presentation?

**Senator Woodhouse:**

At this time, I think we would be more than happy to take questions. If there are questions on the technical side or if any Committee members want to discuss how this program is working across the state, then I would suggest those questions be addressed to Ms. Malorni.

**Chair Flores:**

Are there any questions from the Committee?

**Assemblywoman Miller:**

This is a programming question because I have been using the curriculum Money Smart, which was developed with the FDIC [Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation] 25 or 30 years ago. It is always updated, though. I have used it in community programming, prisoner reentry, adult education, students in third grade, and all of that. I was wondering if that is part of the programming or if that is something that has been looked into.

**Senator Woodhouse:**

I would like Ms. Malorni to answer that question.

**Jayne Malorni, Education Programs Professional, Department of Education:**

To that question, districts and schools actually have the choice as to what curriculum and programs they want to use. That one is used around the state and it is of value. There are multiple programs that schools can use. We do not tell a school which program they should use as long as it is meeting the standards and is meeting the needs of the students.

**Chair Flores:**

Are there any additional questions from the Committee? [There were none.] I will open the hearing to those wishing to speak in support of Senate Bill 314 (2nd Reprint) in Carson City and Las Vegas.

**Jimmy Lau, representing Nevada Credit Union League:**

We support the expansion of financial literacy education. We feel it provides a multitude of skills that are very useful as students begin to enter into the adult world. Our members take pride in their community outreach efforts, and we are excited to see how this implementation, in addition to those community efforts, help our students.

**Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents:**

We appreciate what Senator Woodhouse has worked on for a very long time, and we appreciate this bill. We think our students will be much better off with a little financial information. We are in full support of the bill.

**Chair Flores:**

Are there any questions from the Committee? [There were none.] Is there any further testimony in support of the bill? [There was none.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify in opposition to the bill? [There was no one.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify as neutral to the bill? [There was no one.] Are there any closing remarks from the sponsor? [There were none.] I will close the hearing on Senate Bill 314 (2nd Reprint). I will open the hearing on Senate Bill 376.

**Senate Bill 376: Revises provisions relating to the Nevada Institute on Teaching and Educator Preparation. (BDR 34-732)**

**Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Senate District No. 5:**

I appreciate the opportunity to share with you Senate Bill 376, which revises the provisions relating to the Nevada Institute on Teaching and Educator Preparation, sometimes referred to as NITEP or Nevada's Top Gun Initiative.

It is no secret that Nevada suffers from an acute shortage of teachers. Moreover, this shortage has grown in recent years as enrollment in teacher colleges has declined dramatically—40 percent in some reports. As a result, our school districts have been forced to hire an army of substitute teachers and to sometimes compromise on the education and experience that are desired of our teachers. As more of the state's baby boomers retire, our need for new teachers will only grow, making our teaching corps even younger and less experienced. A problem separate from our need for more teachers is the need for teachers who are better prepared for the rigors of the classroom when they arrive to begin their teaching careers.

The growing complexity of our world and the increasing diversity of our communities necessitates that teachers possess knowledge and skill that would have seemed totally unnecessary back when I was a first-grade teacher in the classroom.

Think about this. As our high school seniors walk across the stage, many will be heading off to careers in industries that did not exist when they entered kindergarten in 2006—things like coding for mobile applications, autonomous vehicles, drones, virtual reality, advanced robotics, and so many others. However, the same is true for kids who will enter kindergarten this fall. What new industries will develop before they graduate? Our schools need to be nimble enough to prepare these children for whatever may come 13 years from now. Our schools must also provide a depth of education sufficient to the challenge of these unknown opportunities.

On top of this spiraling complexity, our teachers need to deliver vigorous and technical academic content to all students, many of whom enter school unable to speak English. Imagine the challenge of a Clark County School District teacher where nearly 1 in 5 students speak a different language, and not just Spanish but literally dozens of different languages. How do we educate these children and prepare them for a life of opportunity? The answer is not easy, but it is simple. We need excellent teachers. That is the bottom line. A teacher who is adequately resourced, appropriately compensated, properly supported, and well prepared can achieve wonders.

How do we get those teachers? Nevada already invests millions of dollars in professional development programs to enhance our teachers' knowledge and skills. Such programs, however, can be costly for school districts. A more cost-effective approach to recruiting and retaining the best educators is to effectively prepare them right from the beginning.

This brings me to the Nevada Institute on Teaching and Educator Preparation (NITEP). You may remember Senate Bill 548 of the 79th Session establishing NITEP, which was designed to attract and graduate the most promising future educators. These top graduates would then remain in Nevada and teach in our schools. The bill before you, Senate Bill 376, improves upon previous statutory requirements and provides more direction to the institute. The bill additionally requires the institute to give priority to Nevada students when recruiting those students to participate in the program. It is to help identify job placement opportunities for the graduates, to identify a recruitment target, and to establish certain mentorship requirements for graduates.

The bill also authorizes NITEP to accept gifts, donations, bequests, grants, or other sources of money, property, or services to support NITEP. Funding for this program, again, is in the *Executive Budget*, which has already been closed. Once again, we are thrilled that the Governor has included this in his budget and we are able to continue to move forward.

In working with NITEP, we saw these new pieces we needed to put into place to make the program even better. We do need to be proactive, we need to recruit and attract the best and brightest to the profession of teaching, and we need to provide them with the education and the preparation that is second to none. Nevada's future leaders, innovators, and job creators are counting on it. I urge your support of this bill, and I hope that we have a representative from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas College of Education, which was the institution that was awarded the funds from the last biennium to be the first participant in NITEP.

**Sean Mulvenon, Associate Dean of Research and Sponsored Projects, College of Education, University of Nevada, Las Vegas:**

I am currently overseeing the NITEP program. Through the first year of class, we are making tremendous growth. The amendments to this bill are going to make a tremendous improvement to what we are doing in the success of the program. We are currently innovating many interdisciplinary research models to improve the professional development of teachers while they are in the program. It is going really well.

In addition, we are leveraging additional available resources with grants and scholarships to make recruiting teachers something that is more proactive and more successful compared to other academic fields on campus.

**Chair Flores:**

Are there any questions from the Committee? [There were none.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify in support of the bill? [There was no one.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify in opposition to the bill? [There was no one.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify as neutral to the bill? [There was no one.] Are there any closing remarks? [There were none.] I will close the hearing on Senate Bill 376. I will open the hearing for Senate Bill 321 (2nd Reprint).

**Senate Bill 321 (2nd Reprint): Abolishes the Achievement School District.  
(BDR 34-682)**

**Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Senate District No. 8:**

I am here to present Senate Bill 321 (2nd Reprint), which repeals provisions relating to the Achievement School District. In 2015, this body enacted many bills related to education reform. While many of those programs were positive and merit continuation, some reforms turned out to be long on promises and short on delivery. The Achievement School District (ASD) is one of those reforms that never quite lived up to the hype [Assembly Bill 448 of the 78th Session].

Sold as a last-resort option to improve the performance of lowest-performing schools, the provisions of the ASD legislation would have turned our neighborhood public schools over to charter school operators. I use the phrase "would have" because to date, no public school, as defined by that enabling legislation, has been converted to an achievement charter school under the ASD. I will talk more about that in just a minute, but there is no doubt transforming our lowest-performing schools is difficult and requires immense resources and special leadership with a skill set for implementing change.

Our public schools should have the flexibility, funding, resources, and staffing to ensure those transformations occur. The lack of funding that plagues our public schools is likely the cause of the failure of the ASD. It has not been successful in its goal of attracting high-quality charter school operators to the state. The lack of high-quality operators, combined with the lack of enthusiasm in our communities to offer up their neighborhood schools for conversion, led the ASD to look for other schools to bring under its purview.



For the school year 2017-2018, it authorized two charter operators to establish charter schools under the ASD. Recognizing this method was not authorized by statute during the 2017 Session; the Department of Education attempted to enable these charter conversions in an amendment to a measure that failed to pass [Senate Bill 430 of the 79th Session].

Despite the failure of the legislation that would have allowed charter schools to be converted into ASD charters, the ASD converted three additional charter schools into the ASD for school years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. This is why Senate Bill 321 (2nd Reprint) not only repeals the provisions that created the ASD, but also contains section 37, which provides for the transfer of charter schools currently under contract with the ASD to the sponsorship of the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority. These schools will be required to apply for sponsorship by the Authority, which will ensure they are qualified to operate a charter school in the state and are held to the same standards as every other charter school.

I would like to recognize my colleague, Senator Woodhouse, for her diligence in shining a light on this issue through the interim and ensuring that our children are attending high-quality schools operating with boundaries established by this Legislature.

I would also like to bring forward that we have an amendment to Senate Bill 321 (2nd Reprint) that will require any application to operate an achievement charter school that shall be deemed to be approved by the Nevada State Charter School Authority to operate as a charter school and require that the charter contract be entered into the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority for each school described in section 37, subsection 1 [Senate Amendment No. 982]. That is the Senate bill you have before you that was amended in the Senate. I will stand for questions.

**Chair Flores:**

Are there any questions from the Committee? [There were none.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify in support of the bill?

**Bradley Keating, Director, Government Relations, Clark County School District:**

We truly appreciate Senator Dondero Loop bringing Senate Bill 321 (2nd Reprint). As you have heard, the Achievement School District was created in 2015. It has not lived up to its expectations in any way. In 2015, \$10 million was allocated to bring charters into the state of Nevada and take over schools. Unfortunately, the state has not been able to do that and was not successful. It was a terrible process, as they targeted only the Clark County School District. Parents, teachers, and students were all upset and frustrated as to how the process was rolled out.

We feel that we have a great plan moving forward for addressing those schools and working with the Nevada Department of Education. We do not need the ASD moving forward. For those reasons, we support this bill.

**Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents:**

The initial thought on the ASD was that it was well-intentioned. It did not work out well. We have a good public charter school authority now, and there seems to be no reason to have two different groups heading our charter schools. We are in support of this bill.

**Chair Flores:**

Is there any further testimony in support? [There was none.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify in opposition to the bill? [There was no one.] Is there anyone present who would like to testify as neutral to the bill? [There was no one.] Are there any final comments? [There were none.] I will close the hearing on Senate Bill 321 (2nd Reprint).

Members, as you know, we have suspended the rules. We have heard three bills, and in the interest of time, I think it would be prudent for us to consider motions on these bills, starting with Senate Bill 314 (2nd Reprint).

**Senate Bill 314 (2nd Reprint): Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR 34-730)**

**Chair Flores:**

I will entertain a motion to do pass Senate Bill 314 (2nd Reprint).

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER MADE A MOTION TO DO PASS  
SENATE BILL 314 (2ND REPRINT).

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNK SECONDED THE MOTION.

Is there any discussion? [There was none.]

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

I will assign the floor statement to Assemblywoman Munk. Next we will consider Senate Bill 321 (2nd Reprint).

**Senate Bill 321 (2nd Reprint): Abolishes the Achievement School District.  
(BDR 34-682)**

**Chair Flores:**

I will entertain a motion to do pass Senate Bill 321 (2nd Reprint).

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GORELOW MADE A MOTION TO DO PASS  
SENATE BILL 321 (2ND REPRINT).

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TORRES SECONDED THE MOTION.

Is there any discussion? [There was none.]

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

I will assign the floor statement to Assemblywoman Torres. Next we will consider  
Senate Bill 376.

**Senate Bill 376:** Revises provisions relating to the Nevada Institute on Teaching and  
Educator Preparation. (BDR 34-732)

**Chair Flores:**

I will entertain a motion to do pass Senate Bill 376.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN DURAN MADE A MOTION TO DO PASS  
SENATE BILL 376.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER SECONDED THE MOTION.

Is there any discussion?

**Assemblywoman Krasner:**

I will be voting yes to get this bill out of Committee, but I would like to reserve my right to  
change my vote prior to floor.

**Chair Flores:**

Is there any additional discussion? [There was none.]

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

I will assign the floor statement to Assemblywoman Hardy.

Is there anyone here for public comment, either in Carson City or Las Vegas? [There was no one.] Committee, for the rest of this session, there will be an agenda posted for every day at the call of the Chair. If we have to hear something at the last minute, we may have to do last-minute hearings. It is not the intent to catch anyone off guard, but unfortunately, we have to work with what we have.

This meeting is adjourned [at 5:05 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

---

Lori McCleary  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

---

Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Chair

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

## **EXHIBITS**

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

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