

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

**Eightieth Session  
February 14, 2019**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Chairman Tyrone Thompson at 1:33 p.m. on Thursday, February 14, 2019, in Room 3138 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4401 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at [www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019](http://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019).

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Chairman  
Assemblyman Edgar Flores, Vice Chairman  
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:**

Assemblywoman Teresa Benitez-Thompson, Assembly District No. 27

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kelly Richard, Committee Policy Analyst  
Victoria Gonzalez, Committee Counsel  
Sharon McCallen, Committee Secretary  
Trinity Thom, Committee Assistant



**OTHERS PRESENT:**

John Eppolito, Private Citizen, Incline Village, Nevada  
David W. Carter, Member, State Board of Education  
Donald G.T. Gallimore, Sr., Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada  
Jonathan P. Moore, Ed.D., Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education  
Karl Wilson, Education Programs Professional, Office of Student and School Support, Department of Education  
Nancy Brune, Executive Director, Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Bettye Haysbert, Member, Clark County Black Caucus  
Janeen Kelly, Director, Department of English Language Development, Washoe County School District  
Ruben R. Murillo, Jr., President, Nevada State Education Association  
Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents; and Nevada Association of School Administrators  
Pat Hickey, Executive Director, Charter School Association of Nevada  
Vikki Courtney, President, Clark County Education Association  
Madeline Martinez, Treasurer, Nevada Association of SkillsUSA  
Shealyn Kelley, State Secretary, Nevada HOSA  
Harrison Jones, President, Nevada FBLA  
Shania Taylor, Vice President of Community Service, Nevada Family, Career and Community Leaders of America  
Hunter Drost, Secretary, Nevada State Future Farmers of America  
Raj Patel, Acting President, Nevada DECA  
Bradley Keating, Director, Government Relations, Clark County School District  
Lindsay Anderson, Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County School District  
Elena Fabunan, Principal, Global Community High School, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Erika Merlos, Teacher, Global Community High School, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Mariana Colin, Student, Global Community High School, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Ignacio Ruiz, Superintendente Auxiliar, English Language Learner Division, Clark County School District  
Brad Evans, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Stan Willis, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada

**Chairman Thompson:**

[Roll was called. Committee protocol and rules were explained.] Today we get to hear our first bill, Assembly Bill 92. We also have a group of students who are visiting the Legislature to promote career and technical student organizations. We welcome you. We will have presentations concerning programs for English learners from the Department of Education and the Clark and Washoe County School Districts. At this time I would like to open for public comment.

**John Eppolito, Private Citizen, Incline Village, Nevada:**

I am the president of Protect Nevada Children. I have three kids in the Washoe County School District (WCSD) and I have one who has graduated.

I want to speak briefly about student data mining and what is happening in our schools ([Exhibit C](#)). For a couple of years we have been trying to get WCSD to educate parents on what is happening with their children's data. I am talking especially about third-party, free educational technology vendors. They are free for a reason. They are paid with the students' data. Since we began talking to WCSD, one of the biggest vendors, Edmodo, has had a data breach. Edmodo has over 78 million student records and a whole bunch of schoolwork, then they have a social media platform as part of Edmodo. In 2017 the data was stolen and placed for sale on the dark web. The WCSD will not tell the parents.

Less than a year later, that same company, Edmodo, was sold to the Chinese. Many people think that the reason that company was sold to the Chinese was for the student data. The school district will not tell parents about that.

In September 2008, the Federal Bureau of Investigation came out with a public service notice warning parents and school districts about these free third-party edtech vendors. The WCSD district will not tell the parents about that either. All we are asking is for the WCSD to educate the parents and to please let the parents decide if they want their kids logging into all of these third-party vendors and sharing work.

Last month *The New York Times* wrote an article saying, "Tech companies should not be permitted to collect data on children and profile them using their personal data without a parent or guardian's meaningful consent to the data collection." That is exactly what is happening. They are worried about how this is going to affect our children's future. We are pretty sure it is going to affect their admissions to college, work, and military. It is the profiles that are being created on these kids and nobody has to tell the parents.

Tim Cook in *Time* magazine said about the right to knowledge that people should know what data is being collected and why.

Michelle Malkin basically agreed with Tim Cook in *The New York Times*, parents deserve the right to know. They should know what is going on with their kid's data and they should have the right to say no. So far, we do not have that right. We do not have a bill and 500,000 kids in this state are not being protected. Mine are because mine do not do it. Senator Kieckhefer's kids are protected because he does not do it.

**David W. Carter, Member, State Board of Education:**

District 2 is the 11 northern counties of Nevada, not counting White Pine. Two quick items. One is to let you all know that tomorrow afternoon we will be starting the process of replacing the Superintendent of Public Instruction within the Department of Education. I am excited and looking forward to seeing the applications that will come in for that position.

I am mentioning the second thing now because I have to leave. It is in regard to Assembly Bill 92. My wife moved here from Holland 60 years ago when she was 3 years old. Because she did not speak English, she needed what this bill will do. I am in support of A.B. 92.

**Donald G.T. Gallimore, Sr., Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada**

I agree with everything that John Eppolito said and more. I know that the minority kids are having problems in school, and they are having to worry about their data. Their parents do not know; nobody knows. Many American children are handing over all of their data by it being stolen. Concerns are already legitimate—the sharing and access to student data have been raised by parent groups, consumer watchdogs, and Privacy Act advocates. We have very little digital privacy. We have been here since 2011 to try to allow some opt-in information. We have come close, but it has not happened. We want to try it again. We want to protect our kids. That is all we want.

**Chairman Thompson:**

Do we have any public comment in southern Nevada? [There was none.] I will close public comment. We will go to our first bill, Assembly Bill 92.

**Assembly Bill 92: Revises provisions governing the English Mastery Council.  
(BDR 34-393)**

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

Before you today is Assembly Bill 92 which makes changes to the English Mastery Council and extends the sunset for the Council's work by another three years. The bill is a result of a recommendation adopted by the Legislative Committee on Education. It was a pleasure for me to serve on that Committee this past interim with Chairman Thompson along with Assemblywoman Miller and Assemblywoman Tolles who serve on this Committee, as well as many of our Senate colleagues.

First, let me share with you a little background information on the English Mastery Council. In 2013 the Legislature enacted Senate Bill 504 of the 77th Session. The bill funded a comprehensive program targeting the needs of English language learners (ELLs) who struggled with English proficiency. Nevada had a large ELL population. Until that time, there was no statewide program to address the needs of the students. According to testimony and support of the bill in 2013, 70 percent of Nevada's ELL students attended school in Clark County School District. Close to 90 percent of the ELL population are Latino and Spanish speaking. There was a wide achievement gap between the ELL students and their English-speaking peers, and the high school graduation rates for the ELL was significantly lower.

Also, according to a study by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Latinos are the fastest-growing demographic under the age of 18 years old in Nevada and making up more than 50 percent of the students in kindergarten through third grade.

The ELL interventions funded by S.B. 504 of the 77th Session were intended to capitalize on the experience of our most successful existing ELL programs and to duplicate them in more schools throughout the state. To coordinate this effort, the bill created a 16-member English Mastery Council. The Council is required to recommend criteria for teaching ELLs, and school districts must develop policies that reflect those criteria. The Council must also make recommendations about properly licensing teachers of English as a second language and recommend changes to the course of study offered in Nevada colleges and universities to improve training for ELL teachers.

As a sidenote, something that is interesting, when I went back and did some history research on the bill, this was part of the Zoom school effort that we initiated in 2013. There was a big funding piece attached to this and it was a pleasure for me to look back and remind myself that the bill passed with bipartisan support as well as regional support. Assemblywoman Kirkpatrick made the motion to move the bill out of the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means. Assemblyman Hickey made the second to move it out, and it passed unanimously.

The measure also called the English Mastery Council to sunset on June 30, 2019. The Department of Education approached the Legislative Committee on Education during the interim and recommended a continuation of the Council for an additional three years, until June 30, 2022. This change appears in sections 2 through 4 of A.B. 92 and representatives from the Department of Education are here today to discuss this recommendation in additional detail.

The Clark County Black Caucus also made a recommendation relative to the Council which was embraced by the interim Legislative Committee on Education. The group noted that improvement in English proficiency was desirable for all low-performing students, not just English learners. The Committee recommended that the Council develop recommendations related to the academic achievement of all English learners who are in the lowest 25th percentile in certain standardized exams. You will see this change appear in section 1 of the bill.

**Jonathan P. Moore, Ed.D., Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education:**

I will be introducing the speakers who are representing the collaboration Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson spoke of regarding Assembly Bill 92 as sponsored by the interim Legislative Committee on Education.

Proposals to expand the English Mastery Council were originally heard as recommended topics during the interim Legislative Committee on Education's work session in August 2018. The presentation of A.B. 92, as it will be heard today, includes recommendations from the Department of Education, the English Mastery Council, and the Clark County Black Caucus that were originally heard during the work session.

**Karl Wilson, Education Programs Professional, Office of Student and School Support,  
Department of Education:**

It is a privilege to share information regarding the English Mastery Council and the proposed language in Assembly Bill 92. Much of the information has been shared already in terms of the origination of the English Mastery Council. Let me reiterate for those who are new that it was established in 2013 as part of Senate Bill 504 of the 77th Session. At that point in time, the Legislature found and declared that it is the public policy of the state to provide every child enrolled in public school with high-quality instruction. Additionally, children with limited English proficiency benefit from instruction designed to address the academic and linguistic needs of those children. It is the intent of the Legislature that children who have limited English proficiency be provided with services and instruction designed to address the academic needs of such children so that those children attain proficiency in the English language and improve their overall academic and linguistic achievements and proficiency.

The English Mastery Council was established in the *Nevada Revised Statutes* to be a 16-member advisory council made up of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the state, and then representatives from the classroom such as teachers, building- and district-level principals, parents, community members with experience in policy related to English learners, and representatives from higher education [NRS 388.409]. The charges that they received at that point in time have been shared with you.

I would like to highlight some of the things the English Mastery Council has done since it was originally organized ([Exhibit D](#)). The English Mastery Council provided recommendations regarding the English language acquisition and development (ELAD) endorsement that have been codified. It has also provided recommendations regarding future educator preparation and coursework, and that in future development of educators in Nevada, the coursework related to ELAD be part of that course of study. They have also provided recommendations that have been adopted regarding relicensure of current teachers and recommendations regarding the criteria for local policies regarding English learners and the services to provide for their support. Lastly, they have also provided and have been supported by the State Board of Education recommendations regarding standards of English language development.

The original law set June 2019 as the sunset for the English Mastery Council, and this proposal looks to extend that authorization through June 2022. There is a small fiscal impact related to this bill and that is to provide for the travel and the support of the English Mastery Council meetings, along with the cost of transcription services for their meeting agendas and minutes.

I have been asked to share the following joint statement regarding A.B. 92 on behalf of the Department of Education, the English Mastery Council, and the Clark County Black Caucus. In the spirit of this bill being born out of the Legislative Committee on Education's August 2018 work session, the English Mastery Council, the Clark County Black Caucus, and the Department of Education respectfully request through February 21, 2019, the opportunity for

a work session to ensure that the ideas from the August work session are fully realized in A.B. 92 and that the stakeholders present today will be anticipating a return on Thursday, February 21, to share an agreed-upon amendment.

**Nancy Brune, Executive Director, Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

On behalf of the full English Mastery Council, we believe a three-year extension would enable the Council to continue our work in several areas still in progress. Briefly, our work has covered the areas of teaching English as second language (TESL) endorsement, the development of district policies as they relate to ELLs and standards and curriculum.

The first area of our work has been in the area of TESL and, as Karl Wilson mentioned, the English language acquisition and development mandate was passed in 2016. Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) institutions are currently developing supporting course and structures to support the requirements related to the endorsement here in Nevada.

With respect to future work, we seek to lead a discussion and the work to address the endorsement requirements related to secondary teacher preparation. School districts and NSHE institutions are currently developing resources and assistance to support the ELAD endorsement in building educator, administrator, and teacher capacity to offer the endorsement.

We plan to facilitate discussions related to more effective professional development models to ensure that our teachers, our school administrators, et cetera can bridge theory to practice in effective ways.

Also, high on our list of priorities is an interest in addressing an overidentification of ELLs in special education settings across the state. We are looking for ways to ensure the individualized education program process follows federal regulations to ensure equitable practices for ELLs.

With respect to our second area of work, addressing district policies as they relate to ELLs, we are pleased to report that the council developed a review process with technical assistance from the Department of Education to support each school district's development of a required English learner school plan.

With respect to our future work, we plan to conduct annual reviews of each district's plan to address potential obstacles and challenges in the way of effective instruction for ELL students. We plan to continue the dissemination of information to stakeholders around the instructional needs of our growing ELL population in both our rural and our urban counties around the state.

Finally, with respect to our work on standards and curriculum, we were involved in the work to support the development of an English language development (ELD) framework which the Department of Education is currently implementing.

As part of our future work, we intend to support the launch of a pilot of the ELD framework with a sample of teachers from around the state and across districts that will allow us to address any further revisions and modifications. We hope to support the development of a professional development model around the implementation of this ELD framework and hope to continue the dissemination of information related to the ELD framework to school administrators, instructional leaders, as well as the NSHE teacher preparation programs.

We acknowledge that this process of establishing the ELD framework and seeing it implemented with fidelity may require the oversight and support from our standards and curriculum committee here at the English Mastery Council.

**Bettye Haysbert, Member, Clark County Black Caucus**

Here is a little history to put this request in perspective for those serving in the Legislature after the 77th Session ([Exhibit E](#)). Leading up to the 77th Session, there were collaborative discussions driven by community coalitions to improve proficiency rates for students in English language and literacy. Zoom was introduced as a school-based program targeted to students struggling the most. At that time, several Prime 6 schools were included to serve the needs of free and reduced-price lunch students in the historical Westside of Las Vegas. However, to our disappointment, as the bill draft request was developed, those Prime 6 schools were removed and the focus changed to second language students inclusively. Currently Zoom schools serve 23,018 students in 38 schools in the Clark County School District. Of those students, 8,950 are ELL students. It is important to note that the Clark County Black Caucus continued to support that legislation. We believe that the English Mastery Council should serve all students who are at or below the 25th percentile.

We ask you to consider the following nationally accepted similarities of these students in your deliberations ([Exhibit E](#)):

- All subgroups require that educators possess specific knowledge and teaching skills that support academic success and social support.
- All subgroups have cultural differences, disconnection, and sometimes disparities between home, school, and educators that need to be bridged.
- All subgroups come to school feeling and believing that they are not "seen" or "valued" and in some cases are racially or socially isolated or disproportionately disciplined, creating more barriers to overcome.
- All subgroups experience school curriculum and instructional practices that are disconnected and reflect the experiences, knowledge, and methodology not conducive to socioeconomically to students being taught.
- All subgroups have similar language needs, such as limitations to vocabulary, convention of English, and speaking, hearing, reading, as most proficient learners.



- Often school sites do not specify literacy plans, qualified staff, or resources to address the unique needs of students testing at or below 25 percent in English arts.

Therefore, the Clark County Black Caucus makes the following recommendations:

In section 1, subsection 7, make recommendations to the State Board of Education to improve language and academic achievement of pupils who are not English learners, and who have scored at or below the 25th percentile in the subject area of English language arts in an examination administered pursuant to NRS 390.105; recommend standards, criteria, and regulations for policies concerning a curriculum for pupils who are identified in that lowest 25th percentile developed by the board of trustees of each school district, to the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction for consideration; review annually each policy to teach English to pupils who are least proficient that is developed by the board of trustees of each school district and make recommendations for improvement to the State Board of Education and the applicable board of trustees.

In section 1, subsection 8, English Mastery Council shall be inclusive and reflect those subgroups identified as least proficient in the membership roster, to include representation of ELL, African American, Native American, IEP, and any other subgroup identified as proficient at or below the 25th percentile in the subject area of English language arts in an examination administered pursuant to NRS 390.105.

We respectfully ask for your earnest consideration to our request for changes to Assembly Bill 92 so that all voices can be heard. We thank you for your work and your time.

**Chairman Thompson:**

We want to thank all of our presenters and at this time we will open for questions.

**Assemblywoman Torres:**

Can you clarify the benefits for educators to learn how to teach ELL students? I ask because it definitely goes outside and beyond just English language learners.

**Karl Wilson:**

As we take a look at the majority of instruction that English learners participate in on a daily basis, most of that time is spent in the curriculum content in the classroom. Teachers who are better prepared to understand the instructional needs and to design instruction that will help to build academic language really help to accelerate, not only the acquisition of the English language, but also the ability for the students to access the content, whether that is English language art, mathematics, science or social studies. It really helps to keep them moving and helps overcome the myth that English learners need to learn English first, content later. The classroom really needs to have the tools to help students to move ahead simultaneously in developing English language and the content area.

**Jonathan Moore:**

I would echo my colleague's sentiment. When we look at students and their education, we know that students learn through multiple modalities. When we focus instruction primarily toward English language learners, we look at how we enhance access to them through visuals, kinesthetic activities, and also through auditory because there is a language component that they need to improve upon. We know that those same structures and strategies and that same diversity in instructional strategies are good for all learners, including those with special needs.

**Assemblywoman Peters:**

This bill will sunset in 2022 after the next session, so we would have to see this again in the next session if we wanted to extend it. Was that purposeful because we have the development of the English language development framework coming up? Is that because we intend to move this program into that program?

**Karl Wilson:**

The Department of Education is rolling out the English language development standards framework—it is at this point being refined and prepared for input and for piloting. We do anticipate that it will take at least a few years to fully implement that with training, support, and complementary tools that will help the classroom teacher to implement that. The request for the extension of the English Mastery Council was because it was felt that three years of continued authorization would enable, not only in this area, but other areas for the English Mastery Council, especially in the recommendations for secondary teachers and their preparation which fully goes into effect in 2022.

**Assemblywoman Peters:**

Is the English language development standards framework for learners and those who are below that 25th percentile, or is it just for English language learners?

**Karl Wilson:**

The English language development standards framework is meant for educators. It is to help them as they design instruction to improve that for all English learners. As acting Superintendent Moore mentioned, many of the strategies benefit all students in terms of developing academic language, which helps them meet our new more rigorous content standards that we have in the state of Nevada. The framework itself is intended to help teachers build their skill set in meeting the needs of students and being able to align the core content standards with English language development standards and to be effective in doing that.

**Chairman Thompson:**

I would like clarification on the proposed amendments in the memo from the Clark County Black Caucus ([Exhibit E](#)). In section 1, subsection 7, I am looking at the bill and it contains the majority of the language on that list—are you asking to put that entire section into the bill?

**Bettye Haysbert:**

It can be. What we want to have happen is to make sure that the language is captured someplace that reflects what we really want to have done—if including or not including, we want to make sure that it demonstrates the results that we want.

**Chairman Thompson:**

We will get with our legal team and make sure that what you are trying to capture in your statement is captured in that section. Your proposed section 1, subsection 8, would be an addition that you are asking for, correct?

**Bettye Haysbert:**

Yes.

**Chairman Thompson:**

Can you give a little overview of that one more time, please? I know you read it into the record, but give us the gist of what you are trying to communicate in that section. Tell us the need.

**Bettye Haysbert:**

We are saying the English Mastery Council should be inclusive of all of the subgroups because of their needs. There will be opportunities to have special services directed toward those learners under that umbrella.

**Chairman Thompson:**

Lastly I have a question for Mr. Wilson. Can you explain the urgency of potentially doing a work session on February 21?

**Karl Wilson:**

As we take a look at some of the recommendations that have come forward from the Clark County Black Caucus in the past few days, it was the request of the English Mastery Council for the opportunity for them to meet together and to meet with their representatives to look at language that they could develop together in terms of making any amendments to the revisions that are being proposed. The Department of Education, the Clark County Black Caucus, and the English Mastery Council have expressed a commitment to meet together to come back in one week with some jointly developed language.

**Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson:**

I know that traditionally when someone brings an amendment, they typically fall in to opposition as the bill is written, but I do want all amendments at this point to be considered friendly and knowing that there are additional conversations going on, and we are early in the process. It should still be continued as a work in progress, but friendly in spirit.

**Assemblywoman Torres:**

Earlier one of you had spoken about how the English Mastery Council is looking at how NSHE is developing resources for the TESL programming. Has the English Mastery Council

done any research on updating TESL education? They are still teaching SIOP [Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol], which is rather outdated for most ELL programs. Is that discussion taking place?

**Karl Wilson:**

I know that we have representatives on our TESL subcommittee under the English Mastery Council who have been reviewing the coursework offered at the institutions of higher education and have made specific recommendations in updating the coursework related to recent research on language acquisition. That is a part of the support to institutions of higher education in updating their coursework.

**Chairman Thompson:**

If anyone is in support of Assembly Bill 92, please come forth.

**Janeen Kelly, Director, Department of English Language Development, Washoe County School District:**

The divisions of English learners, Zoom, and Read by Grade 3 are underneath my department. The work that the English Mastery Council has done over the past six years is important because, truly, at the heart of the work is the child. Our second language learners are a gift to the state of Nevada. Nevada has had the foresight to really think about the needs of these children. How can we prepare our teachers and our administrators to provide the environment that is needed in that classroom for these children to accelerate their language? Being bilingual and biliterate will create citizens who are globally prepared and will help the state of Nevada to be a competitive state. Again, I support this bill because we need to support our second language learners.

**Ruben R. Murillo, Jr., President, Nevada State Education Association:**

I am also a special education teacher. We represent teachers and support professionals throughout the state of Nevada. We strongly believe that every student deserves a strong public education regardless of the ZIP code in which they reside. The Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) supports Assembly Bill 92 extending and expanding the scope of the English Mastery Council.

This is important, not only personally, but professionally. Growing up in Kansas, in a small pocket of Mexican-American communities, I spoke both English and Spanish, so I can relate to this bill; especially back when it was created in 2013. As a community of educators, NSEA has taken a strong interest in improving the quality of education for our English learners in Nevada. We have been engaged with the English Mastery Council since its inception in 2013 and support the extension of the work through 2022.

This work will be particularly important to Nevada as the Nevada Plan is transitioned to create more equity in education. Meanwhile, the inclusion of students struggling with English language arts who are not English learners is important to make the work of the Council more equitable and inclusive.

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

We are in support of Assembly Bill 92 and recognize the important work this English Mastery Council has done in the past, and it should continue.

**Pat Hickey, Executive Director, Charter School Association of Nevada:**

I was also a proud supporter of this bill in 2013. The Charter School Association of Nevada certainly embraces this. Public charter schools in Nevada have grown from 37 percent minority students in 2012 to almost 57 percent in the 2017-2018 school year. We want to be better communicators and better teachers of those students bestowed upon us in public charters. We wholeheartedly support this bill.

**Vikki Courtney, President, Clark County Education Association:**

I represent Clark County Education Association and the 18,000 folks who represent licensed educators. We did submit written testimony ([Exhibit F](#)), but I appreciated Assemblywoman Torres' question asking what it was that we taught.

As a kindergarten teacher, I do all of those things that help our students to learn. I present in all different modalities so that I get the skills across that they need. It is so important for all of us to have those skills as educators—no matter what grade we teach—because we need to impact students. I especially appreciate the revisions to this bill because it gives us a chance to make sure that all of our struggling students are getting the opportunities to be accounted for. With the removed weighted funding formula, it is important that we make sure that with all of our programs that are being put into place, lawmakers see that and make sure those programs are accounted for, and that we are spending our money wisely. It is important to have this bill and this language passed so we can support all of our struggling students.

**Chairman Thompson:**

Is there anyone in opposition? [There was no one.] Is there anyone neutral?

**Donald G.T. Gallimore, Sr., Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:**

I am also the Second Vice President of the Reno/Sparks branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and also a member of the Black Caucus for Washoe County.

We have not heard any of this in Washoe County. I am afraid we cannot give you any support at this time for a bill like this. Personally, I only see it being more money. I see that the students are going to be—I cannot say ostracized—but they are going to be segregated or categorized as inept at 25th percentile. I have questions about what good this bill will do in its present form. I kind of like the question Assemblywoman Peters asked, Is it going to be complementary to some of the things we are doing? Of course, that was paraphrased. I do have questions about what this bill can do for those students that it is supposed to impact.

**Chairman Thompson:**

You can feel free to reach out to the bill's sponsors and the many people who spoke today. Again, we have a lot of the exhibits that are loaded onto the Nevada Electronic Information System.

[([Exhibit G](#)), ([Exhibit H](#)), and ([Exhibit I](#)) were submitted but not discussed and included as exhibits for the meeting.]

**Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson:**

Thank you so much for your time in hearing Assembly Bill 92 today. As you heard, we will be reporting back and talking with you as conversations continue on the amendments. Between now and the work session, feel free to reach out to myself or to any members who sat on the interim Legislative Committee on Education to talk about the subject matter.

**Chairman Thompson:**

We will close the hearing for Assembly Bill 92. As I stated earlier, and as you noticed, we have students here with us. We love to have our students here. They have been walking the halls, meeting with legislators, and have been with us on the floor session. February marks Career and Technical Education Month. We want to hear from you. Dr. Moore will be introducing you and we will have a brief presentation.

**Jonathan P. Moore, Ed.D., Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education:**

One of the highlights of my work is that I get to showcase some of our most amazing students and their work. I am here to briefly introduce their presentation and to tell you a little about them.

The mission and purpose of career and technical student organizations is to enhance student learning through contextual instruction, leadership and personal development, applied learning, and real-world application. Career and technical student organizations work as an integral component of the classroom curriculum and instruction building upon employability and career skills, and concepts through the application and engagement of students in hands-on demonstrations and real-life and work experiences.

Presenting today, we have Hunter Drost from the Future Farmers of America. Mr. Drost currently attends the University of Nevada, Reno, but he was a student representative on the State Board of Education. Mr. Drost would like to attend law school and eventually run for political office.

Representing DECA, we have Raj Patel of West Career and Technical Academy. Mr. Patel is a junior at West Career and Technical Academy in the biomedical sciences program. He has been a member of DECA for three years and has attended various DECA conferences. After high school, he would like to pursue a dual degree in business and medicine.

From FBLA, we have Harrison Jones of Spring Creek High School. Mr. Jones is a senior at Spring Creek High School and is in his fifth year as a member of the FBLA. He has attended nationals in multiple events and has a deeply rooted love for FBLA and for business in general. After high school he intends to serve a LDS [Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints] mission and attend the University of Nevada, Las Vegas to obtain a degree in hospitality marketing. He hopes to work his way up in a major hospitality corporation, such as Marriott or Caesars Entertainment.

Representing the future health professionals, or HOSA, we have Shealyn Kelley of Hug High School. Ms. Kelley currently is a senior at Hug High School in Reno. She has been a HOSA member for four years. After high school, she plans to live abroad in Switzerland for one year and then attend the University of Nevada, Reno to double major in law and political science with a minor in international affairs. She hopes to pursue a career as a public servant and feels that her experiences through HOSA have led her to this path.

Representing Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, we have Shania Taylor, Vice President at Damonte Ranch High School. Ms. Taylor is a senior at Damonte Ranch High School. She has been an affiliate member for two years. This past year, Ms. Taylor competed in the entrepreneurship STAR [Students Taking Action with Recognition] event and the Pep Event in graphic design. She plans to go to college and explore robotics engineering. She also plans to travel the world using her knowledge to help people in need.

Last, and certainly not least, representing SkillsUSA, we have Madeline Martinez, treasurer from the Academy of Arts, Careers and Technology. Ms. Martinez is currently a senior at the Academy of Arts, Careers and Technology in its business program. She serves as the SkillsUSA treasurer on its state officer team. She became involved with the SkillsUSA because of the diverse student members who come from a variety of career and technical education programs. After graduating, she plans on attending the University of Nevada, Reno, majoring in business and minoring in entrepreneur leadership.

**Chairman Thompson:**

Welcome to our Committee, and whenever you are ready please be sure to state your name every time you speak back and forth.

**Madeline Martinez, Treasurer, Nevada Association of SkillsUSA:**

I am the Treasurer for the Nevada Association of SkillsUSA. On behalf of all of the state officers, we would like to say thank you for letting us present to you today. We are excited to inform you about the works of the state-level career and technical student organizations (CTSOs). First, we thought a brief overview would be helpful. On page 2 ([Exhibit J](#)) you can see that there are six programs of study within career and technical education (CTE). There are one to two CTSOs per CTE program.

We have found that students who are active in CTE, as well as CTSOs on a local level, are able to gain workforce skills, learn leadership skills, and are active members in their communities.

The visual on page 4 shows that active students are more career- and college-ready upon graduation. It also shows that involvement in these state-level CTSOs help students to be more prepared to enter the workforce or higher education. We would like to focus on how involvement at state career and technical CTSO levels further prepares these students. We have narrowed it down into three areas shown on page 5: Strengthen Nevada's future skilled workforce, grows leaders, and build communities.

My fellow state officers will explain a bit more about each of these areas.

**Shealyn Kelley, State Secretary, Nevada HOSA:**

I currently serve as the State Secretary for Nevada HOSA (HOSA), an organization for future health professionals. As you can see on page 6 ([Exhibit J](#)), there are just a few examples of all of the amazing things that CTSOs can provide to students in Nevada.

To begin, industry skills are a huge component in CTSOs. Students are offered opportunities to further develop and gain new career skills. Career and technical student organizations in current CTE are also extremely relevant right now in the state of Nevada. Students have the opportunity to participate in career-based events which simulate real-life scenarios which overall result in students being completely prepared to enter college or the workforce right after high school.

Finally, networking opportunities are always available through CTSOs. Training and events give students opportunities to meet with adults and peers with similar career interests as they have. For me personally, Nevada HOSA and CTSOs have a lot of niche networking with adults like all of you and fellow students who are also interested in careers in public service and student advocacy. I have had the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., to meet with senators and discuss Perkins funding for CTSOs. This has all led me to the path that I have taken today.

**Harrison Jones, President, Nevada FBLA:**

I currently serve as the President of Nevada FBLA, an organization for the future business leaders of America. I will be speaking in reference to page 8 ([Exhibit J](#)). This page contains a few facts that demonstrate the various ways in which involvement in state-level CTSOs can help today's students and help them grow into the leaders of tomorrow.

Leadership skills mentioned on page 8 include public speaking, teamwork, growth and leadership, personal success, and positive role models. Career and technical state organization trainings have helped me over the past five years, as well as being involved in two state officer teams over the past two years. They have helped teach me numerous leadership and teamwork skills that I know I will continue to use in my future. Examples of these would be working with others in general, helping to solve conflicts and make compromises, and also leading a team to help things move smoothly to accomplish the overall goal.



I am just one student with one story, and I know that there are many other students across Nevada and across the United States who can attest to the benefits of being involved in a CTSO and a CTE program of study. Thank you for allowing the three of us to speak, and three of our colleagues will now complete the presentation.

**Chairman Thompson:**  
Thank you and great job.

**Shania Taylor, Vice President of Community Service, Nevada Family, Career and Community Leaders of America:**

I am one of the student officers for Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), and I am the Vice President of Community Service. I would like to reference page 7 ([Exhibit J](#)). All CTSOs have student officers, and student officers, like the government, have to go through a process. This process includes being qualified and voted on by the members. I personally experienced this during my speech. My speech included a lot of cheers and at the end of the speech I received positive feedback. This is how CTSO members voice their opinions.

**Hunter Drost, Secretary, Nevada State Future Farmers of America:**

I am a former member of the State Board of Education and a current Nevada Future Farmers of America (FFA) state officer. Today I have the honor of walking you through some more of the facts relating to state-level career and technical student organizations.

On page 9 ([Exhibit J](#)) you will notice that our membership has increased steadily over the past few years. This means that we have more students getting involved in their local chapters and organizations and ultimately taking advantage of the opportunities to grow both personally and to develop professional skills. This ultimately helps our organizations achieve their goal of ensuring that our members are college- and career-ready.

We would also like to direct your attention to page 10 ([Exhibit J](#)), which covers the funding formula. While CTE funding for local schools and districts has increased, we have sadly seen a decrease in funding for these state-level CTSOs, despite our increase in membership.

We hope the information that we have covered in this presentation allows you to act in your roles to support us through policy, budgeting, and awareness at the state level.

We would also like to take a moment to invite you to our largest organization events throughout the year [page 11 ([Exhibit J](#))]. This spring each one of our six organizations will be hosting its state leadership conference. This is where you can have the opportunity to see everything that we have talked about and all of the incredible stories put into practice. We hope that we see you there.

**Raj Patel, Acting President, Nevada DECA:**

I am the current acting President of Nevada DECA. Today I hope each and every one of you will learn something special about each and every one of our CTSOs and how they affect so

many students on a state level. They help us build future skilled workforces, world leaders, and to build our communities. We are all passionate about our organizations and believe that these state-level CTSOs are vital in making us college- and career-ready, with impacts ranging from developing collaborative skills, to increasing public speaking rhetoric, and to providing leadership training and networking opportunities for all.

We would love to answer any questions that you might have, and we would like to thank you for your time and consideration of Nevada CTE and CTSOs.

**Chairman Thompson:**

Thank you all so much. I just want to say, you cannot come into our Committee and raise the bar on presentations. You did an amazing job. I can tell that you took your time, you practiced, and wow! We will open for any questions that we may have.

**Assemblywoman Miller:**

As the Chairman said, thank you for sharing your experience and thoughts, especially on some deeper political issues like funding. Can you share with us what this has done for you personally, and when you were deciding to go into a magnet school or a high school, why you would choose this type of educational setting?

**Hunter Drost:**

Throughout my high school experience, I was always looking for something to get involved in—idle hands are the devil's work—so I tried to stay busy as much as I could. Speaking personally, through the Future Farmers of America and a noble pursuit of ensuring that the world has enough food to go around and we all do not go hungry, being able to apply whatever I am learning through hands-on instruction or classroom knowledge, being able to apply that and trying to find solutions to the issues that are facing our generation and future generations is something that really interested me.

**Shealyn Kelley:**

I would like to add on to what Mr. Drost said. For me personally, one of the biggest reasons students should participate in CTE and CTSOs is, I feel I am 1,000 times more prepared than my peers who have not participated in these things to enter the workforce, go to college, and actually be successful in those fields. That preparation is one of the most valuable parts of the programs we participate in.

**Chairman Thompson:**

I am going to put a little twist on that question. How did you all first hear about this in your schools? Secondly, regarding those students who are not a part of these programs, can you give us a perspective and some of the reasons why students who are your peers may not be attracted to these programs?

**Shania Taylor:**

I thought of this during my first nutrition class. When I thought about it, I instantly got interested, and I am here now. I am so glad. It brings out the better in me. Personally, I had

a speech impediment and that allowed me to overcome it even more than I had. Some of the reasons students might be scared of the programs is that they take time, but it is not just time. I met with state officers and I have made friends. We have friends now, and we have that experience which is amazing.

**Raj Patel:**

To add to that question—many of the students may be turned off by these programs because there are a lot of commitments that many students have. Many students are prioritizing academics over extracurricular. Many students prioritize sports. Basically, we are offering student choice, equity, and opportunity for all in whatever we do. We want to have an opportunity for every student out there who asks for it.

**Harrison Jones:**

In reference to Chairman Thompson's question about how I first heard about FBLA, I have always had an incredible interest in business. When I was a toddler, I used to collect things like receipts and junk mail because that represented business to me. When I got into middle school and I heard on the announcements those words "future business leaders of America," I knew that I needed to be in that organization. It was not long before I found out what it was and began being deeply involved in it.

**Shealyn Kelley:**

I got involved with Nevada HOSA when I attended a gifted magnet middle school and they were really trying to push us to continue to be involved in these higher academic programs throughout high school, and they made every single student apply for some kind of CTE program. At first I did not want to do this. That is extra work. I just want to get out of high school and move on with my life. Now, looking back, I am extremely grateful that they made us apply for these programs because it has completely changed my life for the better. It opened so many opportunities and doors for me that I would have never had available to me otherwise.

**Madeline Martinez:**

I actually heard about CTE in middle school. My brother was attending the Academy of Arts, Careers and Technology in the Education and Training Academy, and in the eighth grade, I went on a tour of the school. The special thing, specifically, the Academy of Arts, Careers and Technology is made up of seven different career and technical education fields. I saw all of these amazing, different things. I saw a student who said he developed a passion for video production and decided that was what he wanted to do with his future. Another student had developed a passion for baking. I found it a unique experience and I remember hearing young adults constantly saying they wish they had learned about all of these different things in high school, for instance, taxes and budgeting. Going into the high school business program in my freshman year, I saw that I had already learned that through virtual business. I learned how to do taxes and budgets. I saw such an improvement in unique learning, education, and experience. I got involved in CTSOs because at my school, we do not have sports—but these are like our sports. We would all go to conferences and I would see

students come back saying, "You should join. You should join. You will learn leadership skills, or participate in different events and showcase the skills that you learned in school." That was a big part of why I joined CTE as well as CTSOs.

**Assemblywoman Hardy:**

I want to compliment all of these students on their presentation. I would think you are much older than you are. The program obviously works; your public speaking is amazing. You present with great confidence. As legislators and as a Committee, we need to focus on trying to get these types of programs into more schools to have students be aware of these opportunities. They are obviously so beneficial. It is a key to getting students involved in school. It will help with attendance, give them options, and help them to find their passions. This is something that I really hope for our education system, and the earlier that we can do this—in middle school—will go a long way. I am a big proponent of this. Thank you for coming here and sharing your experiences. Continue to do so in your communities and with your representatives. It is very impressive.

**Assemblyman Flores:**

I do not have a question for you. I want to thank and commend you for being here, and note that you are so confident in front of us. It is important that you have that confidence because we are here to serve you. This is yours. We are here temporarily and it is because we have an obligation to you, and I am so happy to see you here walking around these hallways like you own them, because you do. Be proud of them and invite your friends over. I know you are here now because your teachers invited you, but stay involved. Listen to the education hearings. Many of the lobbyists who are here, we talk to them and love working with them, but there is nobody we enjoy talking to more than you. You are the reason we signed up to be on this Committee. It means a lot to us when you are here.

**Assemblywoman Gorelow:**

Like my colleagues, I also want to mention what a fantastic job you all have done. I want to go back to high school now and participate. I have a ninth grader and I happened to look at her school and a couple of your organizations are not there. If students were interested in being a part of an organization that is not at their school, how would they go about getting one of these organizations started?

**Shealyn Kelley:**

There are certain organizations associated with certain types of CTE programs. A sports medicine program would have HOSA because that is for health career clusters. A business program would have FBLA because that is for business career clusters. The cool thing about CTSOs is that you do not necessarily need to have one of those specified CTE programs. Students can always reach out to any member of a CTSO to get a chapter started at their school, even if they do not have a CTE program that is directly related. Another great thing about CTSOs is that if students do not want to reach out to a state officer and do not want to get that chapter started, they can practice debate in the CTSO that they do have offered at their school and still have many great opportunities that maybe are not necessarily related. For instance, I am in HOSA, but I do not want to go into a health care field, but that is the

only thing offered at my school. However, I have had many great opportunities through HOSA that are not health-related but are related to my career goal of becoming a public servant.

**Hunter Drost:**

For the record, I started in a school with no CTSOs. We started from the ground up and it was, What do we want to make our schools? What opportunities do we want to give our students? Being from the small farm town of Fallon, FFA was just a natural choice. I started talking to my peers and eventually stormed into my principal's office and asked, How do we do this? We started the process, reached out to our wonderful state coordinators, got the paperwork rolling, and now I stand here before you.

**Shania Taylor:**

My Chapter was actually brand-new when I began running for Vice President of Community Service for FCCLA. For those teachers wanting to make a difference, you can start a CTSO chapter. If you have fashion, it would be for FCCLA. My computer science teacher started a FBLA. There are so many options.

**Assemblywoman Peters:**

One of the best parts of the work that I do as an engineer is getting to talk to students who are interested in engineering—specifically female students who wonder how you get there. How do you, as students, work with mentors?

**Madeline Martinez:**

At my school, I believe all CTE students are required to complete a capstone project. The main focus of a capstone project is to build the bridge between high school and whatever pathway you plan to continue on. Referring to the engineering field, I have a friend who last year received an internship with Helix Electric here in Reno. Everyone has a different option for their capstone project. Many times people will job shadow or do different internships and reach out to people in the community. My school invites different community members to watch the capstone projects, and from there we build out into the community. People come to us offering an internship or inviting you to come job shadow, if that is something you are interested in. Yes, it is very big component, and a lot of those opportunities for me and other state officers have been through the CTSOs.

**Shealyn Kelley:**

To add to that, at my school we do not do a capstone project or anything like that. We have a lot of great community partners who are constantly reaching out to ask if any of the students are interested in pursuing an internship or job shadowing for a day. Students who are also interested in finding mentors have the opportunity to reach out to people individually. We have a lot of great presenters to whom they can reach out. We also have amazing advisors who are ready and able to help us find those mentors that we need.

**Assemblywoman Torres:**

You all did a phenomenal job. I appreciate your taking the time to speak to us about the importance of CTE and CTSOs. Can you differentiate the two? My understanding is that the CTE component is separate from our CTSOs. Focusing on those CTSOs individually, what is it that your organizations do? What is the product you create?

**Harrison Jones:**

Career and technical education is specifically referring to the programs of study offered in schools, the courses that students can take and earn college credits depending on that course requirements. Career and technical student organizations are meant to complement career and technical education. They are actually cocurricular now via recent laws.

**Assemblywoman Torres:**

I appreciate that response, but building off of that, those student organizations, what is it that you are doing at your conferences for example? I know that they are independent from your classwork.

**Madeline Martinez:**

I can speak on behalf of SkillsUSA. We have our fall leadership conference and all of the state officers actually teach workshops to the members of SkillsUSA. For example, I taught parliamentary procedures; a few other people taught communications and conflict-solving and resolution. With that we also present our opening and closing ceremony where we explain the emblem of SkillsUSA and different things such as that. At our state conference that happens in April, we have a day where students will compete in skilled-based competitions such as photography and all of these different technical-based skills. On a separate day they will also have leadership-based competition—public speaking, opening and closing ceremonies. We have a variety of different things at our conferences to make sure that our members are getting a well-rounded experience in both building their skills as well as showcasing their skills.

**Harrison Jones:**

A major component of a CTSO is the career-based events that students can participate in. Those events are based on curriculum and competencies that are directly related to their related CTE program of study. If you are in a business program of study, you can expect to find events in FBLA that have competencies and curriculum that correspond directly to what you have been learning in that business course.

**Shania Taylor:**

For FCCLA, our conference is in March and our state officers will hold a workshop which gives us pride on teaching what we know, which is really exciting. As Vice President of Community Service, the one thing I get to do is the outreach project, which is with Make-A-Wish Foundation, and I get to show the members to try to get them to donate. All of our CTSOs are based on leadership. It is mostly making students able to be leaders, which is amazing.

**Raj Patel:**

I want to add in the fact that the CTSOs are the only organizations that have state officers. The state officers program is a leadership program for students to become leaders of the state. For example, in DECA we have to take a DECA knowledge test, conduct an interview, and also go through a voting procedure in order to become a state officer. For that reason it develops a lot of leadership skills and it also ties in a public service aspect into the CTSOs that the CTE program does not have.

**Chairman Thompson:**

Thank you all so much. We really appreciate you. Safe travels, please. If you would like to continue to stay for our meeting, feel free. Best wishes in your endeavors. We will go to our final presentation on English learners.

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

I am honored to be here with you today. We have people in Las Vegas who will be testifying today as well.

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

We submitted a two-page form yesterday for your Committee to see, and I have Janeen Kelly here to reference that.

**Elena Fabunan, Principal, Global Community High School, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I currently have the privilege to serve as the principal of Global Community High School. I am here today to testify about the dire need to provide more resources, more time, and opportunities for recent newcomers and immigrants, as well as our large population of United States-born English language learner (ELL) students to learn academic English and the challenges they face. I would like to share a few facts to help you understand the scope of this issue.

Clark County School District (CCSD) is the second-largest ELL-enrolling district in the United States. Almost 55,000 English learners are currently in CCSD. That is 17 percent of all students. The CCSD currently enrolls approximately 1,400 newcomers a year. This is defined as students who have been in the country for the first time in a U.S. school.

Nevada is next to last in ELL graduation rates nationally. Sixteen percent of English language learners could have easily graduated with a fifth year. Although a majority of the ELL students are given a fifth year of high school to graduate, it is not reflected in the school's graduation rate. In fact, it negatively impacts our score.

In Tennessee and Boston, Massachusetts, a "zero year" allows ELLs an opportunity to acquire basic interpersonal communication skills in addition to content. It greatly impacts graduation rates when schools are held accountable for ELL students to meet graduation requirements of native speakers. As these students are expected to learn English at the same time they are held accountable to meeting the same graduation requirements as every other student who has been in the U.S. since birth, it is not realistic nor equitable with limited time

for acquiring language and content simultaneously. More time affords more of an equitable measure for them to catch up and helps reduce the enormous emotional pressure on the students. English proficiency takes five to seven years. The state needs to review a zero year policy, which gives students time to learn English in an emergent setting and time to acclimate to the high school culture of Clark County.

With resources like Zoom, Victory, Title III, and implementation of CCSD's ELL master plan, we are on our way to providing ELLs with differentiated and comprehensive services that address their particular language, literacy, and academic needs.

As a former assistant principal at Valley High School that was funded through the Victory Schools Act, I saw the benefits of the resources. We were able to revamp the ELL schedule, hire appropriate staff, and provide the professional development needed to assist teachers with extensive knowledge of first and second language acquisition, as well as explicitly teach about language. The percentage of our ELLs who reach proficiency more than doubled from 8.5 percent in 2015 to 20 percent in 2016.

As a sitting principal of Global Community High School, a Zoom school, our adequate growth percentile in 2017 was 5.3 percent. With the continued resources from Zoom, providing lower class sizes, offering an extended school year, having additional teaching positions, providing professional development, and quality teaching for English learners, our adequate growth percentage in 2018 rose to 17.65 percent. We have achieved our highest graduation rate to date of 69.81 percent.

Our biggest challenges continue to be more time for students and more resources, continuation of Zoom and Victory funding, and expanding newcomer academies. These schools, like Global Community High School, are better suited to the following:

- Accommodating students' unique linguistic and emotional needs;
- Accommodating students as they transition into the country;
- Allowing ELLs more time to acquire English to be college- and career-ready;
- Recruitment of the teacher pool for candidates for underrepresented communities;
- Assuring teachers and ELL students are prepared and able to demonstrate success; and
- Amending policies with the Department of Education to include fifth- and sixth-year seniors in the graduation rate.

Schools are not failing students because they are not graduating in two years. They should not be punished for giving them what they need to be successful because learning a new language simply takes more time and effort than doing the work in one's native language.

**Erika Merlos, Teacher, Global Community High School, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I currently have the pleasure and privilege to serve as an English language arts and ELL teacher, as well as an advisor for the Ladies of Legacy, a mentoring program for girls at Global Community High School.



I am here to testify about the challenges we face at our schools today and the need and value of the resources, additional time, and opportunities for recent newcomers and immigrants to learn academic English.

As an English learner and product of the CCSD myself, I am aware of the challenges that, if properly met, can become opportunities resulting in tremendous success for our students and our community.

In the past, I have served at a high school where I taught 54 English learners in a classroom with 40 desks. This is a complete disservice to our students. We are failing them. The CCSD schools currently lack the resources, personnel, and expertise to effectively assess and assist our newcomers to acclimate to a new culture and education system. When students are disserved, it harms not just them but the educational environment for all students.

At Global Community High School, the only Zoom high school in the state of Nevada, we create a home for students who come from all over the world, many of whom arrive with deficient academic background, and no schooling whatsoever.

Refugees, unaccompanied minors, foster kids, asylum seekers, students fleeing from the violence and chaos in their home countries—these are just a few of the faces who show up to our classrooms every morning, hungry for knowledge and opportunities. The resilience of these kids inspires all of us who have the privilege to interact, teach, and learn with them on a daily basis. Some of our students spend two hours each way commuting to and from school, in addition to having jobs to support their families and taking care of younger siblings. While the typical student sees high school as an obligation, our students uniquely appreciate and benefit from the community we have been able to create here at Global Community High School.

The investment is worth it. Through Zoom funding, Global Community High School will continue to accept students throughout the year regardless of credit sufficiency. Zoom funding allows us to assist students with the transition to American culture as well as enhance their language acquisition by providing a small-school environment with ongoing assessment and staff support. Global Community High School further provides a laboratory of results working with ELL students that we are able to disseminate, share, and use to train teachers throughout the school district.

If we can provide a little extra attention now in an increasingly diverse country, the success of our students as fully bilingual graduates can be the pride of the Clark County School District as they enter Nevada's workforce and higher education system. These are our future doctors, engineers, teachers, and legislators.

**Mariana Colin, Student, Global Community High School, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I am a senior at Global Community High School. I was born and raised in Mexico. Although I had the opportunity to learn English in my country, many of my classmates did not. Just like me, my peers arrived to America thirsty for education and dreaming of a better future.

I spent my entire life without my mother due to her illegal status here in America. She wanted better opportunities for me. At the age of 17, I decided to come to this country to reunite with my mother. The road to this country was not easy. It was, in fact, very traumatic. When I arrived to the border in Arizona, I was arrested by immigration patrols. I spent night and day in a cage in a detention center in which the conditions were inhumane. Just when I thought it could not get any worse, I was sent to a shelter in New York where I was left for three months without any contact with my family. During that time I was miserable. I was scared. I was depressed. Every day I asked myself so many questions. What is going to happen to me? How long will I be here? Will I see my family again?

By the grace of God, I was released after three months to reunite with my mother in Las Vegas, after 16 long years. Unfortunately, when I arrived in that city, I did not have the support to continue my education. I searched and searched for public high schools in the Las Vegas area that would accept me and let me finish my education. I was let down and denied from every public school here in Las Vegas because I was 17 years old. I was broken and desperate to find a school that would give me the opportunity to graduate. Education is very important to me. Just when I was going to give up, because it seemed like immigrant students were not welcome, I arrived at Global Community High School. As soon as I entered the building, the teachers and staff showed me that I am not alone. Global Community High School has taught me that being an immigrant to this country does not make me more or less, and if I work hard I can achieve my dreams. Global Community High School has taught me that I never have to be afraid to ask for help when I am stuck in a situation. No matter what my race or ethnicity is, I am welcome here. I am a person, I am important, and I have a voice. Without the help of my teachers and staff, I would not be the person that I am today. I would not be up here speaking and advocating for myself and for the students just like me.

It is difficult for me to share about my life outside of school, but I think it is important because my story is not unique. My mom is a single parent and employed and has to take care of and provide for me and my two siblings who have severe autism. Though she works hard, she still struggles to pay bills. There have been days when we do not have electricity or running water at home, and I have to use the school bathroom to at least wash my face. These obstacles do not end at home. Many times I have cried out in frustration while applying to universities because of my illegal status. My grades qualify me for financial aid, but my undocumented status says otherwise.

Once again, my story is not unique. I am representing all English learners in the district. I am forever grateful that Global Community High School has put me on track to graduate

this year. I know that they will stand by me as I continue to fight for my dreams of one day having a bachelor's degree and being able to help my family and give back to the community. Global Community High School will impact all of us long after I graduate.

**Chairman Thompson:**

Thank you for your testimony and being a voice for others. We appreciate that.

**Ignacio Ruiz, Superintendente Auxiliar, English Language Learner Division, Clark County School District:**

First of all, I want to thank Elena Fabunan, Erika Merlos, and Mariana Colin. Just as you stated, Chairman Thompson, I want to thank Ms. Colin for sharing her story. We have many Marianas in our school district who come from similar backgrounds and have similar experiences.

We provided a handout which is an overview of the success of our English language learners ([Exhibit K](#)), and it has been entered into the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System. As you have heard from our teacher, our student, and our principal, there are similar situations across the district. As a district, we have created this master plan for English language learner success as a systemic approach and as a system of support for all of our educators and our students.

Our goal is to build the capacity of being able to ensure that our educators are well-equipped with the right skills, and research-based programmatic strategies to be able to ensure that our students are being successful. We have five strategic objectives driving our plan to ensure that we are advancing the quality teaching of our English language learners. We are diversifying our instructional program options for our English language learners because they come with different needs—even within the ELL realm and the different ELL subgroups. We need to make sure we are diversifying our instructional programs, that we continue to support our educators, and that we are valuing the diverse needs of our English language learners. We also need to make sure that we are engaging their families, which is very important.

The other piece is to see that our policies, structures, and our practices across our schools and departments are affording those equitable learning opportunities for English language learners. For a language development approach, we adopted the six principles of effective ELL instruction which are grounded in the research that comes out of Stanford University in understanding language. Those six principles are what we have adopted as our language development approach. We have also created instructional models to ensure that we are meeting the needs and the diversities of our English language learners.

Our main baseline model in the district is our academic language and content achievement model. In this model, we are developing language and content simultaneously. We are training teachers in a cohort model to use across the district. We are into our third year of professional learning using this model for our teachers. This model is where strength and current grade-level standards-based instruction in the core content areas lies.

We have also created additional models to differentiate supports based on our ELL subgroups and the data at each school. Again, every school is different. We do a deep dive into data to make sure that we are differentiating supports within the ELL subgroups, such as our newcomers from Global Community High School. As for our long-term ELLs in CCSD, 70 percent of our ELL at the secondary level are long-term ELL by definition because they have been identified as an ELL for at least six years. Seventy percent is a huge number. More than 20,000 of our ELLs at the secondary level who identify as long-term ELL need a different approach to what they have been receiving in addition to the language model.

**Janeen Kelly, Director, Department of English Language Development, Washoe County School District:**

I want to commend CCSD's presentation today. We echo many of the same issues, challenges, and successes as CCSD. English language learners are a national phenomenon, and we really need to look carefully at how we are structuring the educational opportunities for these students to accelerate the language necessary for them to understand and show us what they are learning—because they are.

We took a different approach today. I am not going to repeat any of the statistics that CCSD cited because we are very close to what they shared. Our handout ([Exhibit L](#)) has been developed because of the resources that the state has given us through Zoom and the changes we have been able to put into place. Those resources helped design the educational classrooms preparing our teachers and administrators in what success criteria looks like for an ELL and how we help our students reach that criteria in order to become proficient in English.

The handout we provided for you explains the core values that we feel for our students in that instruction. Right off the top is that all students can learn. It is the responsibility of schools, teachers, and administrators to provide those opportunities and hold students to high expectations but also give them the exposure to the standards that they need to learn.

Through our core values and our policy, we were able to develop what this system would look like for our students. We were able to develop courses for our newcomer students. It is interesting that we have had an influx of newcomers in the past two years, particularly refugee families. Many are coming into the middle school and high school realms. We designed courses that accelerated their social and academic language. Of course, this was very important to help the transition into the culture they are going to now be living in—which is just as important as learning the language ([Exhibit M](#)).

We provided ELLs with structured immersion elective courses in which they are supported in those classrooms and activities. Strategies and scaffolds are in place for them to have an exposure to the content and an opportunity to show their learning.

We also design courses for our students who are short-term ELLs. Those are students who are in our county for fewer than five years. Those courses really help our students in middle school and high school because we look directly to the immersion program for structure with

beginning, intermediate, or advanced reading, writing, and English. Many ELLs come with no schooling at all, some come literate in their own language, and some come with a little schooling. Being able to differentiate for where they are helps accelerate learning. It is also important they are receiving support in their content classes, not only through their general education teachers but with the support of ELL teachers.

We also have many long-term students, mostly in our high schools and middle schools who have been in an ELL program for six years or more. One of the difficulties is that many of them are also "dual certified," meaning they have been identified as a special education student and as an ELL student. It takes a long time for us to be able to diagnose exactly what the need of that student is and then provide the supports necessary for them. We have designed long-term courses that help develop the academic language necessary for success in content classes and elective classes.

We are fortunate to have strands of dual language in three of our elementary schools. Dual language schools are a wonderful way for our ELL students to simultaneously learn English and to honor their native language, becoming biliterate and bilingual. Our very first group is entering high school next year, and they are already functioning at the level 5-6 in high school. They are ready to take Advanced Placement classes because of the level of Spanish that they are taking—both the ELLs and the non-ELL.

In our elementary schools, we focus on structured English immersion. We believe that across all levels, all teachers are teachers of ELLs. The professional learning that is provided for all teachers structures the time that they spend with their ELLs and how to scaffold for differentiated learning in their classrooms. We do that through coteaching; we do it through coaching and feedback; we do it through lesson planning and the understanding of the importance of language demands within the content and how ELLs can learn content through language.

We do not make decisions without looking at data. Data is important in that teachers understand what language data is explaining. This can be used to plan and implement the instruction needed for ELLs. Teachers also design formative assessments. We provide professional learning for all of our teachers in a variety of ways, but nothing in isolation. We do not do SIOP on its own. We take the components of SIOP and align it to the WIDA framework and the components and strategies of GLAD [guided language acquisition instruction]. This is so teachers begin to see how we are not asking them to do one more thing, but how critical it is that the present strategies make lessons comprehensible for students—so students are able to understand what it is they are learning and to show it.

Our philosophy is, we can do it, and we can do it through a variety of ways. However, the Zoom funds enabled Washoe County School District to look at a system by which we could provide personalized, systematic systems that would help our students accelerate their language and be successful.

**Assemblyman Flores:**

I want to say thank you to Global Community High School for all you do. I know that one Global is not enough in Nevada. It is obviously something we need to see replicated. You are leading the charge and I commend you for that, but we need more.

Personally, I practice immigration law. I have met students who are here as unaccompanied minors, who are fleeing violence, who are coming into our schools. I realize that you are doing more than just teaching math, science, English, and reading. You are teaching them to come into a completely different world, often without the comfort of having their families or parents with them. I understand how difficult that can be. You are doing so much more than teaching our kids the basics of academia.

Specifically, to Ms. Colin, thank you for being so brave in sharing your story. You are American. I need you to really embrace that. You are not just a regular student—you have had at least 14 barriers, and you are still standing on top of them—you are pursuing education. That makes you an incredibly powerful young woman. I cannot wait to see what you are going to do. I want to thank you. I am empowered by you. We represent you. Your story has every right to be in this building.

**Assemblywoman Miller:**

We have an Assembly member who is also a refugee who came to the United States at 18 years old. He is a refugee from Ethiopia who finished high school, finished college, gained a pilot's license, and was elected as an Assembly member. This is the America we are living in and the America we welcome you to.

At the beginning of the presentation when we were talking about newcomer ELL students and the impact on high school graduation, there was mention of a possibility for the introduction of a fourth and a fifth year for our students. Are there numbers on that? When students enter the United States in second or third grade, they have years of acclimation ahead of them. Therefore, the impact of graduation rates are not going to be as great for students who come at 16 or 17 years old in the tenth or eleventh grade. Is there data regarding how many students arrive at that age, and what their graduation rate is?

**Janeen Kelly:**

I do not have exact numbers for you. Three years ago we had three Congolese children arrive in our schools starting in tenth grade. Last year one of the students was valedictorian at the school. The school that houses one of our newcomer centers designed a personalized program for these students. Each one graduated with honors and has gone on to Truckee Meadows Community College. That is just in the past three years, and that was three students at one school. It is difficult when a student comes in as a junior or a senior to enable that student to graduate on time because of the lack of credits, but our schools have personalized instruction and can give them the personalized support that is needed. I agree with Clark County School District in that these students do need extra time in order to get there, and the schools should not be penalized for not having them graduate with their cohort.

**Ignacio Ruiz:**

We do not have exact numbers, but we can definitely give those to you with regard to how many of our students are coming in at that age—again, agreeing with what Washoe County School District is reporting. Also, throughout the master plan process, we visited successful programs in Boston and New York in which students are getting one or two additional years—they are called a "zero" or "zero plus." Boston, in particular, at an international school, had a 100 percent graduation rate where students were getting this opportunity to ensure they are getting that additional time. As far as the numbers, we can definitely get those to you.

**Assemblywoman Miller:**

At what age does it start to impact the high school graduation rate? At what age will it impact graduation? We know that a first or second grader has years ahead of acquisition and acclimation. Is there data regarding the specific age or grade that impacts graduation or academic success?

**Janeen Kelly:**

There are many factors. We can get you data, knowing that if a student entering our school is literate in their own language, those students will often graduate on time. Research shows that. Those who are coming in with interrupted schooling or no schooling at all are going to have a much more difficult time getting to graduation. It is not impossible, but they do need the time. The factors are what we have to look at. High school principals at our three newcomer schools tell me that if the student comes in at ninth or tenth grade, they can get that student to graduation. If the student comes later, it is hard to make all of the credits. Again, that student needs additional time.

**Jonathan Moore:**

If you could restate your last inquiry, I would like to capture it accurately as I think it could be a matter to present to the English Mastery Council for further study, or perhaps they may have data available.

**Assemblywoman Miller:**

For a student who arrives as a newcomer who does not speak English, at what age does that impact high school graduation? Anecdotally, we could say that if you come at 17 years old, you only have a year left. If you come at first grade, you have a lot of success. What is that age we really need to focus on and make sure we are providing services and support?

**Jonathan Moore:**

I will talk with internal staff, and I will also present this to the English Mastery Council to see what data and resources we can gather to respond to your inquiry.

**Chairman Thompson:**

Are there any further questions? [There were none.] We are closing the presentation. We will go to public comment.

**Karl Wilson, Education Programs Professional, Office of Student and School Support,  
Department of Education:**

I would like to provide some summary data related to our Nevada English learners ([Exhibit N](#)). First, I want to report to the Committee that we have approximately 76,000 English learners in the state of Nevada that are approximately 16.8 percent of our student population. Nevada is among the top states in the nation in terms of percent of students who are English learners. Across the nation the average is 9.5 percent.

I would also highlight that the state of Nevada is deeply grateful for the investment that our Legislature has made in serving English learners. Through the Zoom program, the Legislature provides significant funding to support schools and charter schools in providing services for English learners. The funding that has been in place over the past two years is approximately \$50 million a year, which is about seven times the amount that the federal government provides through federal Title III funding to also serve English learners.

We do recognize that it is a very diverse population and that some of our English learners do live in the catchment areas of Zoom schools, but there are English learners across the state in urban and rural centers. Some of the students reside in low-performing schools, and others reside in high-performing schools. The additional funding that has been available through the Victory Schools Act has impacted some of our English learners. The funding under Senate Bill 178 of the 79th Session provides additional support for English learners who are in the bottom quartile and do not attend either Victory or Zoom schools.

These investments are having a very positive effect on performance of English learners. As we look at the efforts of districts, schools, classroom teachers, parents, and students, we are seeing that the percent of English learners who are achieving adequate growth toward English proficiency is on the rise. The percentage of students who are achieving English language proficiency and qualify to exit English language status is on the rise. We are also seeing student performance for students who are current English learners and those who are former English learners is comparable to their English speaking peers. The investments pay off and students are achieving greater success.

**Brad Evans, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I am a 19-year veteran teacher who has taught in France, Canada, Memphis, and now fabulous Las Vegas. I would like to give some of my background to assist with answers to questions that have been posed. I have bachelor's degrees in English and Spanish, master's degrees in teaching English to speakers of other languages and applied linguistics, a Ph.D. in education, and I am working on my master's degree in educational policy and leadership.

Currently I have the honor and good fortune to serve as an ELL facilitator at historic Valley High School. I would like to give you numbers specific to Valley High School. Thanks to Victory funding, we have moved from a 50 percent graduation rate to an 88 percent graduation rate. We have doubled the English language learners who have exited on the



WIDA exam. We have increased from a 15 percent graduation rate to an 85 percent English language learner graduation rate. Victory funding literally lifted Valley High School out of desperation and gave us a promising future.

At our school, we have about 800 ELL students—300 of whom are newcomers—50 to 60 of them qualify under the Refugee School Impact Program grant for having asylum status. That does not mean their political situation is different than other students, they just have the designation. At Valley High School, we are looking at about 300 newcomers as being defined as less than three years in the country.

To the question regarding the age that it becomes critical, in language acquisition research, there is a lot of discussion about a critical window theory. I can tell you that in my 19 years of working with newcomer students at the high school level, when they get here at 16 years old, it is very difficult to graduate them. For context, imagine you are doing a bachelor's degree in Arabic. Do you think you could do it in two years if you do not already speak Arabic? I have left some statistics and research studies with your members to refer to for more information about language acquisition.

**Stan Willis, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I teach history at Valley High School, and I am also a faculty representative on the school's organization team, which is tasked with advising the principal regarding the budget. Money, namely funding for English language learners, is why I am here today.

In our most recent meeting our principal, Ms. Ramona Esparza, revealed the strategic budget allocation for our next school year. One number stood out in particular—we have 11 teaching positions that are funded by Victory. We have about 150 teachers on campus. I have come to talk about the students, not the teaching positions.

Out of around 2,700 students, ELL students comprise more than one-fourth of the student body. It is safe to say that these ELL students are more expensive to educate than students speaking English as a first language. They need teachers with specialized skills. They need classes with fewer students in them. The bottom line is that more money needs to be spent to educate them.

However, the current funding formula does not provide a school with more resources to meet the needs of ELLs. While a weighted funding formula passed last legislative session, a school cannot receive both weighted funding and Victory or Zoom. So far, the talk we have heard coming out of the Legislature is that Victory funding is going to be cut. This creates a lot of uncertainty for our school organizational team. It makes it very difficult for a school to budget for the future needs of its students. Past proposals have pegged the multiplier for the weighted funding formula to be at 1.5 per pupil funding. I do not think that is enough. Even if a weighted funding formula were passed, Valley High School would have to cut anywhere from 8 to 11 teaching positions. As I understand it, the math works out this way—our allocation, including the district and Title I funds, is \$14,397. Even with weighted funding, we would be short \$600,000. That translates into 8 to 11 teaching positions that are currently

allowing Valley High School to meet its increased graduation rate. If that money is taken away and not being given back with weighted funding, we are going to see Valley High School go back to what it was previously.

**Chairman Thompson:**

It was great to see our students speaking. We love that. We will close this meeting. The meeting is adjourned [at 3:44 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Sharon McCallen  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Chairman

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

## EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

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

[Exhibit C](#) is material submitted by John Eppolito, Private Citizen, Incline Village, Nevada, consisting of the following:

1. An informational sheet titled "Education Technologies: Data Collection and Unsecured Systems Could Pose Risks to Students."
2. An article titled "77 Million Edmodo Users Are Hacked as Widespread Cyberattacks Hit the Ed Tech World."
3. An article titled "What Happens to Student Data Privacy When Chinese Firms Acquire U.S. Edtech Companies?"
4. An article titled "Kids Shouldn't Have to Sacrifice Privacy for Education."
5. An article titled "You Deserve Privacy Online. Here's How You Could Actually Get It."
6. A transcript of Tucker Carlson interviewing Michelle Malkin on Fox News.

[Exhibit D](#) is a document titled "English Mastery Council provides legislative recommendations to support the education needs of English Learners in Nevada," submitted by Karl Wilson, Education Programs Professional, Office of Student and School Support, Department of Education.

[Exhibit E](#) is a memorandum, dated February 14, 2019, to Chairman Thompson and members of the Assembly Committee on Education, written by Yvette William, Chair, Clark County Black Caucus, presented by Bettye Haysbert, Member, Clark County Black Caucus, regarding [Assembly Bill 92](#).

[Exhibit F](#) is a letter to Chairman Thompson and the Assembly Committee on Education, dated February 11, 2019, written and submitted by Vikki Courtney, President, Clark County Education Association, in support of [Assembly Bill 92](#).

[Exhibit G](#) is a position statement dated February 12, 2019, written by Roxann McCoy, President, Branch 1111, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, in support of [Assembly Bill 92](#).

[Exhibit H](#) is a letter to Chairman Thompson and members of the Assembly Committee on Education, dated February 14, 2019, written and submitted by the Nevada Immigration Coalition, in opposition to [Assembly Bill 92](#).

[Exhibit I](#) is a letter written and submitted by Sharolyn D. Pollard-Durodola, Professor, English Language Learning Program, Department of Early Childhood, Multilingual, and Special Education, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in opposition to [Assembly Bill 92](#).

[Exhibit J](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "Nevada Career and Technical Student Organizations," dated February 2019, presented by Madeline Martinez, Treasurer, Nevada Association of SkillsUSA; Shealyn Kelley, State Secretary, Nevada HOSA; Harrison Jones, President, Nevada FBLA; Shania Taylor, Vice President of Community Service, Nevada Family, Career and Community Leaders of America; Hunter Drost, Secretary, Nevada State Future Farmers of America; Raj Patel, Acting President, Nevada DECA.

[Exhibit K](#) is a document titled "Clark County School District Master Plan for English Language Learner Success Overview presented by Ignacio Ruiz, Superintendente Auxiliar, English Language Learner Division, Clark County School District.

[Exhibit L](#) is an informational sheet dated 2019, presented by Janeen Kelly, Director, Department of English Language Development, Washoe County School District.

[Exhibit M](#) is a document titled "WCSD Instructional English Language Development Program Models," presented by Janeen Kelly, Director, Department of English Language Development, Washoe County School District.

[Exhibit N](#) is a document titled "Report to the Assembly Committee on Education: Nevada English Learner (EL) Update," dated February 14, 2019, presented by Karl Wilson, Education Programs Professional, Office of Student and School Support, Department of Education.