

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Eightieth Session
March 4, 2019**

The Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Moises Denis at 1:05 p.m. on Monday, March 4, 2019, in Room 2134 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4404B of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Moises Denis, Chair
Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Vice Chair
Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop
Senator Dallas Harris
Senator Scott Hammond
Senator Ira Hansen
Senator Keith F. Pickard

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jen Sturm, Policy Analyst
Risa Lang, Committee Counsel
Steven Jamieson, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Akira Terry
Randall Hudson
Zach Conine, State Treasurer, Office of the State Treasurer
Michael Flores, Chief of Staff, Office of the Chancellor, Nevada System of
Higher Education
Connor Cain, Nevada Bankers Association
Kent Ervin, Legislative Liaison, Nevada Faculty Alliance
John Vellardita, Executive Director, Clark County Education Association
Vikki Courtney, President, Clark County Education Association

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Brenda Pearson, Director of Professional Learning, Clark County Education Association
Jesus Jara, Ed.D., Superintendent, Clark County School District
Thom Reilly, D.P.A., Chancellor, Nevada System of Higher Education
Rachel Holderread
Lex Coulter
Ray Bacon, Executive Director, Nevada Manufacturers Association

CHAIR DENIS:
We will open the meeting with public comment.

AKIRA TERRY:
I am a Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) freshman from Elko. I attend TMCC through the Nevada Promise Scholarship. Without the Nevada Promise Scholarship, I would not have been able to attend college. The Nevada Promise program is essential to the future of this Country because it provides the opportunity to attend college to people who would not have had the ability to do so. My two younger brothers hope that the Nevada Promise Scholarship is still available when they go to college.

RANDALL HUDSON:
I am a dual credit student at TMCC High School. I will earn my associate's degree and high school diploma at the same time. I have seen education do wonders for people's lives.

CHAIR DENIS:
We will open the hearing on Senate Bill (S.B.) 82.

SENATE BILL 82: Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR 31-479)

ZACH CONINE (State Treasurer, Office of the State Treasurer):
I have submitted a visual presentation ([Exhibit C](#)) which will illustrate the points I discuss during my presentation of S.B. 82.

Senate Bill 82 revises several changes made during the 2017 Legislative Session. These changes were an effort to increase educational opportunities for all Nevadans and to help families better prepare for their children's college future. These efforts are critical in our work to decrease or eliminate crushing student loan debt.

The Treasurer's Office is responsible for administering a number of college savings programs, including the Nevada Higher Education Prepaid Tuition Program, Nevada College Savings Plans and the Nevada College Kick Start Program. These programs are governed by *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 353B and overseen by the College Savings Board.

The Nevada Prepaid Tuition Program was created in 1997 and allows participants to lock in future college tuition at today's rates. The program currently has 12,328 active accounts and \$293 million in college savings.

The College Savings Plans of Nevada, often referred to as 529 plans because of their inclusion in *Internal Revenue Code* section 529, give families from across the Country the opportunity to save for college. Nevada's program is the largest in the Country with 851,056 accounts, approximately 18,656 of which belong to people in Nevada. These college savings plans hold approximately \$24.5 billion in assets.

Our office also administers the Nevada College Kick Start Program, which gives a \$50 college saving scholarship to every Nevada kindergartner enrolled in public school. College Kick Start was created in 2013 as a pilot program within the Treasurer's Office. The program was codified in NRS through Assembly Bill (A.B.) No. 475 of the 79th Session. With 172,695 accounts created, ours is the largest program of its kind in the Country. At the end of the 2017 school year, 27,695 accounts had been claimed.

The Treasurer's Office is responsible for the administration of these programs. The Office handles staffing needs, the investing and accounting of funds, interfacing with program participants, and marketing and community outreach.

The Office receives direction on these activities from the College Savings Board. The Board oversees the programs and establishes rules and regulations, enters into contracts, and may delegate the administration of the programs to the Treasurer. The Board is made up of the Treasurer and five voting members. The Treasurer had traditionally served as the Chair; however, following changes from 2017, the Treasurer now serves in an ex-officio capacity. The voting members are the Director of the Governor's Finance Office, the Chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) and three members appointed by the Governor.

The programs receive funding from fees paid by our 529 college savings partners, not the General Fund. These revenues cover all costs associated with administering these programs, funding College Kick Start scholarships and covering costs for administering the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship.

In 2017, A.B. No. 475 of the 79th Session, which made the College Kick Start Program permanent, made various changes to the College Savings and Prepaid Tuition programs. Notably, it removed the State Treasurer as a voting member of the College Savings Board and adjusted the process by which the Chair of the Board would be selected. Additionally, A.B. No. 475 of the 79th Session capped marketing expenses to 3 percent of the total amount deposited in the Endowment Account for the previous fiscal year.

To put this in context, in fiscal year (FY) 2014, total marketing spend was \$664,576. Following the application of the 3 percent marketing cap in A.B. No. 475 of the 79th Session, total marketing spend in FY 2018 was \$177,396, a decrease of 73 percent. An example of the negative impact of this spending decrease can be seen in new Prepaid Tuition enrollments, which fell 39 percent in 2018 compared to 2014. This equates to about 496 potential students.

Senate Bill 82 proposes several improvements to Nevada's college savings programs and their administration. Section 1 of the bill reinstates the Treasurer as a voting member on the College Savings Board. This will ensure that the office tasked with administering the programs has a vote. Section 2 of the bill provides that employee salaries are paid directly from the Endowment Account, not the Trust Fund. This change reflects the intent of the Interim Finance Committee by codifying its actions from the April 2010 Committee meeting and the practices of the Office since then. Section 5 of the bill allows for the acceptance of gifts and grants for additional administration and marketing expenses without those gifts or grants counting against the marketing cap.

Next, S.B. 82 addresses the accounting and fund management challenges created by the structure of College Kick Start. Specifically, section 3 requires the College Savings Board to choose an appropriate accounting method for the program.

At the beginning of every academic year, a College Kick Start account is fully funded for every public school kindergartener in Nevada. To date, approximately

16 percent of accounts have been claimed. A change in accounting would allow the Board to fund College Kick Start at a more realistic level of utilization. This would allow newly freed up funds to support the College Savings programs, Prepaid Tuition and the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship.

Finally, section 4 of S.B. 82 will provide a more adequate level of resources to pay for marketing to Nevada students and families. Section 4 increases the marketing cap for the programs from 3 percent to 10 percent of the money received in the Endowment Account in the first year of the immediately preceding biennium. The decrease in marketing spend is strongly correlated to the decrease in Nevada Prepaid Tuition accounts. We believe this is the case across the programs. The change created in S.B. 82 allows our Office to better reach more participants and target families and students with specific programs that will help offset the rising costs of higher education, alleviate student loan debt and make saving for the future a priority.

We can achieve this by adopting a new marketing strategy that focuses on understanding the needs of families and students; partnering with other college savings and scholarship programs; and meeting families and students where they are. For example, we envision getting input from students and families to stay informed on their needs. We can then develop market segments around common attributes and target marketing with specific programs.

We need more digital marketing with a mix of earned and paid media. We need to be communicating with Spanish-speaking families in their native language. Moreover, we see a huge opportunity to build and work through a network of trusted community leaders and influencers, such as faith leaders, business and labor groups, educational organizations and civic groups.

The Treasurer's Office will track the success of our efforts in terms of usage and usefulness. For usage, we will look at new enrollments and at existing account behaviors. These existing account behaviors include frequency of deposits, use of auto deposits, amount of total contributions and number of accounts per household. For usefulness, we will aim to maximize match fund opportunities, enroll participants at a younger age, and integrate other college savings and scholarships, such as the Silver State Opportunity Grant. We are going to make a priority of reaching and engaging historically underserved communities, including minorities and low-income households.

Why do these efforts matter? As an example, look at the 496 Prepaid Tuition accounts lost between 2014 and 2018. The NSHE estimates that Nevadans graduate with an average of \$23,462 in student loan debt. Assuming the loans have an average interest rate of 5 percent and are paid back by the student over 10 years, the average Nevada student graduating with student loan debt will pay an additional \$6,400 in interest alone; \$29,862 total.

If we apply those numbers to the 496 students who did not create a Prepaid Tuition account in the last 4 years, an additional \$3,174,400 in interest will be due on their student loans and they will have \$14,811,552 in total loan debt. Student loan debt limits social mobility and hurts our economy, job creation and entrepreneurship. Nevada currently has the third lowest annual student loan debt in the Country because of our College Savings programs. Marketing these programs, making sure that the communities who need them know about them, is essential to our continued success.

SENATOR PICKARD:

Section 1 moves the Treasurer to a voting status on the Board. In 2017, there was some discussion about the Treasurer's role as the administrator of the program, and whether having a vote could be a conflict of interest. We wanted the Treasurer to be nonvoting, but still able to provide information to the Board.

MR. CONINE:

We looked at the legislative history around that issue. We were not able to find any specific concerns about a conflict of interest. Functionally, the Treasurer's Office is the one with the surety bond; the Office is the fiduciary for these programs. To the extent we are responsible for implementation, it is important for that voice to have a vote on the Board.

SENATOR PICKARD:

You do not see any problem or possible conflict of interest? Will future State Treasurers have the opportunity to play with the data the Board receives, in a way not aligned with the best interest of the fund?

MR. CONINE:

I hope that anyone who runs for the Office would be above those dealings. To the extent they are not, there are four other members of the Board to keep them honest.

SENATOR PICKARD:

Section 1, subsection 3 describes the term of service for Board members. Section 1, subsection 3, paragraph (a) allows a member to serve "until his or her successor is appointed". Has there ever been a problem filling this Board?

MR. CONINE:

There has never been a problem filling this Board. However, in order to ensure that the Board seat stays filled, we want to allow a Board member to continue to serve until a replacement is appointed.

SENATOR PICKARD:

Section 3, subsection 1 states: "The Board shall determine the appropriate method for accounting for the money in such an account". How do we protect the money in this account, particularly if the Board decides to do something that is not in accordance with best practices?

MR. CONINE:

I am not an accountant. The intention is for the Board to be able to switch from a cash accounting method, in which we literally have \$50 in every account for every kindergartener, into an actuarial method, where we will have \$50 in an account for every kindergartener who we expect will take that money. The Treasurer's Office is conservative in its investments. Currently, about 16 percent of the dollars are claimed, which means we have 84 percent which is unused money. That money could be better used for other things. We want the opportunity for flexibility, with the caveat of making sure that we have plenty of cushion. When our marketing efforts are successful and we are able to increase that claim rate, we will know that the money is there.

SENATOR PICKARD:

I do not disagree with that notion, but that is not what the bill says. Could we amend the bill to say what you just said, instead of allowing the Board to do whatever they want, as the bill is currently written? This is not subject to Legislative Commission oversight, so no regulations will be brought before us to check the Board.

MR. CONINE:

The Board makes up the fiduciary for the Endowment Account, so they would be limited by reasonable decisions within their fiduciary responsibilities.

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SENATOR HAMMOND:

Section 1, subsection 4 strikes language regarding the term of office of the Board Chair. How long should the Chair be in that position?

MR. CONINE:

Prior to A.B. No. 475 of the 79th Session, the Treasurer served as the Chair. We think that the Chair should be determined by the members of the Board. Limiting the Chair to one year might be less effective than allowing for some continuation.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

I agree. Basically, the term is four years, until the end of the term of the Treasurer.

CHAIR DENIS:

Section 3, subsection 4 changes "shall" to "may". Is there an issue with transferring money to the Endowment Account?

MR. CONINE:

The "may" will allow us to not move \$50 into the Endowment Account when we adjust the accounting method, which will allow us to use unclaimed money for other purposes. If the "shall" is there, we have to move the \$50 into the Account, which defeats the purpose of using the actuarial model.

MICHAEL FLORES (Chief of Staff, Office of the Chancellor, Nevada System of Higher Education):

We support S.B. 82. The Board of Regents adopted the goal of improving access to higher education. The cost of attending is one of the biggest challenges for most of our students. We want people to be aware of all the scholarships available to Nevada students.

CONNOR CAIN (Nevada Bankers Association):

The Nevada Bankers Association supports the efforts to increase the ability of the Treasurer's Office to fund financial literacy outreach and training. The members of the Nevada Bankers Association are committed to facilitating financial security among Nevadans.

KENT ERVIN (Legislative Liaison, Nevada Faculty Alliance):

We support the efforts of these scholarship and savings programs. Anything that can be done to increase student access is good. This will allow the money to be stretched to serve more students. As long as these changes are fiscally conservative, we are in support.

CHAIR DENIS:

We will close the hearing on S.B. 82. We will now hear a presentation by the Clark County Education Association (CCEA).

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

Our presentation ([Exhibit D](#)) will highlight some of the things the CCEA has done, and is continuing to do, to improve the practice of teaching, ensure that we have accomplished educators in the classrooms and achieve great outcomes for students.

VIKKI COURTNEY (President, Clark County Education Association):

The CCEA is the recognized bargaining agent representing the 18,000 licensed educators and other licensed professionals (OLP) in the Clark County School District (CCSD). This includes all classroom teachers, assistive technology specialists, audiologists, counselors, nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, psychologists, social workers and speech pathologists.

The Clark County Classroom Teachers Association (CCCTA) was established in 1957. In 1966, CCCTA filed with the Nevada Secretary of State to incorporate, and was recognized by the State as a viable entity. In 1999, we became the CCEA to be inclusive of the OLP. In April 2018, members voted to become the largest independent local in the Country. This move reflects the growing desire of membership to have local control over resources and politics.

The mission of the CCEA is to elevate the education profession, to ensure safe and just teaching and learning conditions and to guarantee economic security for all of our public school educators. We believe in free, universal, quality public education.

Those are the same ideals our predecessors had in 1969, when CCCTA President Rita Scheiner and her colleagues chose to strike for collective bargaining rights. That strike closed down the schools, and educators marched down the Las Vegas Strip. By the end of April 1969, a bill was passed that

gave educators the right to collectively bargain. The law codified as NRS 288 was conceived out of that struggle.

Across this Country, our colleagues in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Colorado and California have risen up in frustration with the lack of respect for not only our educators and the education profession, but for our students who deserve the opportunity to be given an education by a highly qualified educator, in a classroom that is not overcrowded, with the necessary resources to facilitate that education. It should not matter that they live in the northern or southern half of Nevada, or whether they live in the 89144 zip code or 89115.

Education is a joint effort. It should matter that as Nevadans we are proud of our communities and State, and that we want to ensure that we leave it better than we found it.

BRENDA PEARSON (Director of Professional Learning, Clark County Education Association):

The CCEA has a robust professional learning program, which offers opportunities for educators to improve their practice. We understand that to improve student achievement, we must invest in and be committed to educator practice.

Our Professional Learning Program (PLP) was created five years ago, with only a few courses. We have expanded to 30 courses contained within 7 series. Over the last 3 years, we have worked with nearly 6,500 educators. The CCEA has invested close to \$2 million in our PLP in the past 5 years. Our professional learning courses are offered year-round, and two-thirds of educators who complete our courses serve in Title I schools.

The CCEA recognizes the need for educational leadership. Our Learn to Lead program has helped educators identify and strengthen their leadership skills. Learn to Lead then challenges the teacher to identify an issue within the profession and create a means to help solve it. Learn to Lead has supported over 700 educators who want to lead from the classroom while remaining in the classroom.

The CCEA has been vital in bringing to Clark County the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification program, referred to as the gold standard. In 2012, the National Board program was limited to individual

teachers. The CCEA believed in the potential of this program, and knew that if we found a way to support it, more students would be taught by an accomplished teacher. In the past several years, the CCEA has invested over \$1 million in this program. There are currently two tracks through which teachers may earn their National Board Certification. The first is an individual route where educators can work in regional cohorts. The second is a school-based route, allowing for the designation of a National Board Professional Development School. In this program, educators work with colleagues in their own schools. In Clark County, 58 schools have joined the Professional Development School program. Of these schools, 39 are Title I schools. An estimated 800 educators across Clark County have been part of CCEA's program for the National Board, and two-thirds of those serve in Title I schools.

The number of National Board certified candidates in Clark County has increased by 67 percent over the last 4 years. Over 20,000 students are being taught by National Board certified teachers across Clark County today.

The CCEA also initiated the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) program to support new teachers serving in the CCSD's most at-risk schools. The PAR program began in 2015, with legislation passed to ensure that new educators received the support they needed to be successful. It is a collaboration between the CCSD, the CCEA and the Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees. Over 1,000 new educators have been mentored through PAR, and 79 percent of these educators are retained within the at-risk buildings. Schools in the PAR program have decreased their teacher transiency rates by 14 percent compared to non-PAR schools with similar demographics.

We offer School Organizational Team (SOT) trainings in collaboration with the CCSD. We work with educators, parents, support staff and community members. One dozen trainings are offered annually, with an estimated 850 attendees. This spring, we have expanded our support for SOT members with a micro-credential program.

Schools in the CCSD contact our PLP to be part of the National Board Professional Development Schools model. Schools also request professional learning courses that meet the needs of their educators. The CCEA ensures that professional learning and growth are accessible to all. We offer National Board component scholarships to ease the financial burden of participating in that

program. We offer course scholarships that annually impact 150 educators. We allocate over \$30,000 to school-based programs that impact approximately 75 schools. Each year, we offer interest-free loans to support 150 first-year teachers with economic needs. The CCEA believes in investing in and being committed to improving educator practice. Our programs are evidence and research-based. Ongoing work at the CCEA focuses on growing research and policy to address the current issues in Nevada's educational system. Some of these issues include school funding, class size reduction and expanding National Board certification programs to serve at-risk populations. We should apply the models presented by successful schools that are improving educator retention and increasing student outcomes.

MR. VELLARDITA:

Our primary legislative priority is funding. The CCEA has devoted many resources to try to improve the practice of teaching so that good education occurs in the classrooms. The school districts can testify that we need more resources in these schools. Funding is critical this session.

Senate Bill No. 178 of the 79th Session was an attempt to move to a weighted school funding formula with a potential price tag of over \$1 billion. We would like to move to a weighted funding formula, but we also know Nevada politics. No one is introducing any kind of billion dollar revenue solution. Because no new revenue has been introduced, we are looking at the revenue that currently exists in the proposed budget. We would ask that the Legislature look at the funding issues in a realistic way.

Annually, over \$200 million goes out of the Distributive School Account (DSA) and into 38 grants of various types. Many of these are good programs. Six years ago, 90 percent of that money was not outside of the DSA, because those programs did not exist. This is a dangerous trend. This money is leaving and depleting what should be going into the DSA. We ask you to start making progress in moving from the current funding plan to a weighted model. There is no easy way to go from the existing funding formula to a \$1 billion or \$3 billion solution. However, there is a compelling argument to develop a transition plan in moving from categorical funding to weighted funding. We need to make some incremental progress, not over one legislative session, but possibly over two or three sessions.

We do not think that in this Session alone, State funding is going to be the cure-all to the needs that our classrooms have. We would ask you to look at alternative revenue streams, particularly at the local level. There can be additional money that goes into a school district and follows the child into the school. This money can be very prescriptive and come with accountability attached to student outcomes; the money can be excluded from collective bargaining. We need additional resources in the schools. Alternative revenue streams do not relieve the State of its obligation to adequately fund public education, but they are an attempt to think out of the box.

Our society has never made a priority of paying teachers as the professionals they are. This year is different. We support Governor Steve Sisolak putting additional compensation for teachers into his budget recommendations. In the CCSD, 1,700 teachers leave the District every year. The CCSD hired 1,500 teachers at the start of the school year. By December, 450 of those newly hired staff members had left. Also in the CCSD, 450 classes started without a full-time licensed professional. We will end this school year with 450 vacancies; 78 percent of the vacancies are in at-risk buildings. Educators need to be paid as professionals. Better pay helps in recruitment and retention.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

The PAR program has led to a 14 percent increase in retention at some of the more difficult schools. Do you anticipate that 14 percent is a base retention number that will increase as PAR continues?

MS. PEARSON:

The schools that work within the PAR model are able to join together and form cohorts where they can meet the needs of their peers. They are learning to progress as educators and be successful.

Whenever folks are successful and moving through that process, they are able to be retained within the building. The transformation for PAR schools is really that an educator feels like they have a mentor who cares about them and knows that they are going to be successful.

I do believe the increase in retention will follow.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

We do not have the exact same program as other states. However, it would be good to look at the data from other states and realize that while 14 percent is good, it can get better.

CHAIR DENIS:

We will now hear a presentation from the CCSD and NSHE on their joint Pre-K through 20 Initiative. This partnership has been developed to help kids on the journey from prekindergarten (Pre-K) through a degree in college.

JESUS JARA, Ed.D. (Superintendent, Clark County School District):

The CCSD and NSHE have discussed how to change the trajectory of our children as they start in Pre-K, graduate high school and go on to NSHE institutions. Please refer to our visual presentation ([Exhibit E](#)) as we discuss these issues.

The CCSD Board of Trustees and the NSHE Board of Regents approved a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to partner together in increasing dual credit, providing more college and advanced options, developing the workforce and addressing the issue of remediation.

We have huge gaps in the demographics of children who have the opportunity to take dual credit options. Similar gaps occur in the demographics of participants in Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) options. This disparity is about more than just an access issue, it is about a financial barrier as well. We want to address the cost of the courses, where the classes are offered and associated issues with transportation. We also need to look at the certification teachers need in order to be able to offer the courses.

THOM REILLY, D.P.A. (Chancellor, Nevada System of Higher Education):

We also want to look at exploring some dual credit academies or different pathways. The students at TMCC High School have pathways similar to what we are discussing. Specifically, we want to create pathways around the topics of heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) technicians, manufacturing, cybersecurity, health care, hospitality and tourism. These courses are aligned to industry and developed to ensure broad access across the CCSD, not just in certain geographic areas.

DR. JARA:

We held a summit with labor unions on January 30. We talked about how to create some pre-apprenticeship programs for the students, so that they can go into the workforce after graduation. Many well-paying jobs are available in these areas. The business partners help us alleviate some of the issues and challenges we face.

In the past, college credit for IB and AP courses was applied unevenly in the NSHE institutions. We have taken steps to make the process easier for students. Some kids do not take advanced courses because of financial barriers. We are partnering with the NSHE to address the cost barrier.

DR. REILLY:

We need to increase workforce and career preparation to look at career and technical education (CTE) programs for credit in high school, as well as healthcare and information technology programs. We must also address many of the soft skills needed by industry; we need to focus on the issues of teamwork and leadership. We need not only high school students to improve in these areas, but also university and college students.

Additionally, we are looking at career pathway discussions in middle school. Part of that comes as we involve the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension—we can have their staff start reaching out earlier. We need to start talking career pathways earlier in the child's education.

We have a teacher pipeline with Nevada State College (NSC) and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). The NSC dual credit program is now in four high schools and will be adding a fifth in the upcoming school year.

DR. JARA:

Decreasing the remediation rate is a key focus area. About 65 percent of our high school graduates have to remediate when they get to an institution of higher education. The impact is not only on the families, but the overall community as well. A higher education institution cannot be as efficient with their resources because they are remediating our students.

How do we find ways to address remediation while the student is still in high school? We do not want to add more assessments, but we want to effectively use the assessments we have. We want to see the standards our students are

missing during their junior year, so we can develop some transitional courses in their senior year. We want courses to not only count toward high school graduation, but to also address some of the deficiencies while they are still with us, at no extra cost.

Adjunct professors from higher education can work with our high school English and math teachers to find ways to develop some of the courses. We can use the Nevada Academic Standards, already linked to college readiness, to prepare them for credit bearing courses at an NSHE institution. That would alleviate some of the financial issues that they may find in remediation. We are looking at how to reappropriate some of the credit recovery dollars we currently spend to target support for our students.

One of the goals in the CCSD's *Focus: 2024* strategic plan is that by 2024, over 90 percent of our students who graduate are college and career ready. That means they are ready to not only work going into the workforce, but also going to college ready to take credit bearing courses.

DR. REILLY:

I appeared before this Committee on February 20. I mentioned the work we are doing about remedial education, moving toward a corequisite model. We made the first step forward at the last Board of Regents meeting. In June, we will be adopting a policy to implement our corequisite model.

A key to this is aligning the curriculum between our faculties. We need face-to-face meetings with the high school faculty to ensure that the curriculum being taught when they enter high school is the curriculum we need as they prepare to enter the NSHE. We are starting with Clark County as a pilot. If we can be successful in the largest school district, we look at expanding this to the other districts.

DR. JARA:

On page 8, [Exhibit E](#), we see the clear focus of where we are going in the next 5 years in *Focus: 2024*. The core is student success. We need to have sound fiscal management. We need to have a governing structure that is really hitting on our targets, bringing our parents and community around the entire support of our 320,000 children.

This MOU between the CCSD and the NSHE targets our college and career readiness efforts, increasing and diversifying our student enrollment. Our advanced courses, even those in middle school, have huge gaps for our subgroups. Our minority children and students in the Free and Reduced Lunch program are not participating in advanced courses—not because they are not capable, but because they do not currently have the option.

We are looking to increase our Level 1, 2 and 3 offerings in high-skill programs, such as some of our career courses, automotive classes and some of our information technology (IT) efforts as well. We want to increase the number of IB diplomas that we offer for our classrooms.

DR. REILLY:

This aligns with the goals we have talked about around access, student success and workforce development. This is an effort to move beyond the issue of talking about how we should work together. We should actually put pen to paper, develop specific strategies and develop metrics around them. That is what we are embarking on in the next few months.

CHAIR DENIS:

We have talked about trying to get folks to talk to each other and work together for our kids. This is a good first opportunity to do that. We have done it in small things, but this is a much bigger thing.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE:

You are looking at the numbers of Latino and African-American students in special courses such as IB and CTE. Could you provide us a report on those numbers? I would also like to see if there is a disparity between girls and boys in those kinds of courses.

DR. JARA:

I will be sharing my *Focus: 2024* plan with you. We have those numbers dissected. We have data for all the subgroups. We have 5-year targets of where we are going to make some significant changes.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE:

This issue keeps coming up. I was at a conference this weekend where we talked about the disparity and diversity issues in our demographics and

subpopulations. We want to make sure we address all of the students and provide them with opportunities to be more successful in school.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

You talked about senior year and having courses the students can take after they have been evaluated. I assume you were talking about after the student's junior year, when students are evaluated by taking the American College Testing (ACT) exam. The original intent for Statewide ACT implementation was to look at the students and evaluate their college or career readiness.

You want to make an effort to ensure that their senior year is not wasted. Money is already provided for them to be taking classes during that school year. Since the Legislature passed the ACT requirement a few years ago, what have you done thus far, or what has been done by your predecessors, to use that evaluation tool?

DR. JARA:

I can only speak to the data we have since June 19, 2018, because that is when I was appointed Superintendent. We need to look at making senior year meaningful for students. This MOU addresses just that. Within the *Focus: 2024* plan there are strategies to address that. We need to be looking at our use of the ACT and making some changes.

Unfortunately, when I first got here, students who met certain criteria could opt out of a full year of credits in their senior year. One of the things we are doing is making sure that senior year is meaningful, so our students are taking a full year and a full academic day with courses that prepare them for college. We have plans to create those courses and make them available, but I cannot speak to what was done in the past.

SENATOR HARRIS:

I am concerned that we are trying to fix the remediation problem in the junior and senior years of high school. We may want to start looking at getting kids college ready sooner, given that some of our entry level college math classes are really freshman and sophomore level high school math courses. We should be able to catch these kids and prepare them sooner, maybe getting a bit deeper at the source than trying to catch them when it might be too late. I would like to see that piece put into your efforts.

DR. JARA:

That is why this is a Pre-K through 20 partnership. High school reform starts in kindergarten, not in high school. If kids are not ready in 9th grade, there is a lot of catching up to do. This is a continuum. If you are not sitting in Algebra 1 in middle school, you are not going to get to calculus. We are talking about an entire agreement and conversation around Pre-K through 20.

I believe this is the first partnership of its type across the Country, where two institutions are addressing the remediation issue. Remediation, dual credit and workforce education start early on, even in 4th grade. We start targeting, identifying and asking how to accelerate the students when they are in elementary school. The purpose of remediation is to catch those who we have missed along the way.

DR. REILLY:

The other exciting component of this is targeting middle school and beginning those conversations early. The remediation needs to occur a lot earlier, but the idea of talking careers, and what is necessary to prepare for those careers, with young people helps inform the high school and helps inform us.

The exchange between our faculty and the teachers in the school district also addresses some of those issues. Remediation is not appropriate when they get to college, but it is also not necessarily appropriate in the senior year of high school. It needs to occur a lot earlier.

SENATOR PICKARD:

I echo Senator Harris' concern. It is critically important to move remediation issues to the middle school and before.

I am very excited that you are at the table together. This is probably the most important connection we can make, in anything we do here.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

I am also pleased to see you here.

I appreciate you using the words, "career ready," instead of "college ready." We know of many students who end up in professions that may need a different kind of path. It is important to value their decisions and the infrastructure we need to prepare them. How early are we going to start identifying or helping

kids push that way? How are we going to work on parent involvement? I think that is a big part of addressing remediation and helping those students move forward.

DR. JARA:

Communication with the parents has to start as early as possible.

We need to have a paradigm shift around the concept of career readiness. When you go to college, you are going for a career. It is okay to be an HVAC mechanic and make \$60,000 per year with a high school diploma.

We need to have that conversation as a community, while involving parents and finding the individual talents of the students. That is what we are doing. Within our *Focus: 2024* plan is an entire community engagement conversation, where we will be setting targets and goals around this work. It is a huge piece.

School counselors play a significant role in saying that these pathways are a good option for certain students. That comes in partnership with the College of Southern Nevada, NSC and UNLV.

DR. REILLY:

The academy or pathway model is very exciting. It builds certificates that are stackable towards degrees. A lot of what we do in community college is career ready, based around the workforce certificates, but with programs designed to get a certificate and also have the option to pursue a two-year degree. Advisement is key in high school as well as at the community college and university levels.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

I feel strongly about making sure that the gifts our students have are identified. I also feel strongly about helping them achieve the strongest level of whatever it is they are doing, whether HVAC or auto technician, teacher or doctor. Those gifts come through during their education.

SENATOR HANSEN:

I like what I am hearing. The only problem is that when I was on the Assembly Education Committee during my first Session, I had Dr. Dan Klaich sitting in the NSHE chair and a different superintendent in the CCSD chair, and the issue was also remediation—at that time it was 35 percent, and you mentioned 65 percent

today. While I understand that we cannot go back and redo things, and you cannot speak to what happened in the past, I am hoping that someone goes back and sees what they tried. Whatever they did in the past apparently did not work.

The remediation rate was 50 percent the other day when Dr. Reilly spoke, and you said that remediation is pushing 65 percent of all the kids who go to college. You have added 15 percent since our last hearing.

I like the partnership, but after having sat here for almost a decade, I am hearing a lot of what I heard in the past, but also seeing a declining trend. I hope we do a thorough review of what previous people have tried so that we do not do anything that is redundant, repetitive and unsuccessful.

I am the only blue collar person on this Committee. I am a plumber with a high school diploma. I have no problem with HVAC guys making \$65,000 a year right out of high school.

You have presented this like it is all a new idea, when, in fact, it is an old idea. I hope that we make sure that we go back and review prior practices, because whatever they were, they apparently did not work.

DR. JARA:

The MOU speaks to the partnership between our groups. We were able to analyze research from across the country and what we are doing in Clark County. The *Focus: 2024* plan contains all of the strategies and details resulting from that analysis. We will get with you to share more details of the strategic plan, as outlined within *Focus: 2024*.

SENATOR HANSEN:

I hope that the remediation rate drops back to at least the 35 percent that it was before.

DR. REILLY:

We will look at the remediation efforts of the past. The 65 percent is the remediation rate for Clark County alone, versus the Statewide data I shared previously. That is a big difference, but your point is well taken.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE:

The intent of the Read by Grade 3 program is to make sure that, by the time our students are in 3rd grade, we are looking at what is missing. We do this so that we can bring the resources that they need in order to not have to be retained, and to be on grade level or better as they move forward. The biggest thing for student achievement in school is that they are good readers. Everything comes down to being a good reader.

In the last three or more sessions, we have added funds to programs that will address the needs of children and keep them from needing remediation in the future. The funding in S.B. No. 178 of the 79th Session, as well as funding for Zoom and Victory Schools has been provided so that our children who are in these programs have the additional resources needed to prevent them from falling through the cracks and needing remediation further down the road.

When you start with a kindergartener, you do not always know at what point they may exhibit problems. We have to be ready as legislators, educators and parents to address those issues. We are making some of the right steps. We need to look at what else we need to do.

CHAIR DENIS:

I think this is an important piece of the educational puzzle that we need in order to help kids through their whole process. I appreciate you coming together. We look forward to seeing great results in the future.

RACHEL HOLDERREAD:

I am a Student Government Association (SGA) Senator and business major at TMCC. I am the president of our honor society, the Alpha Pi Gamma chapter of Phi Theta Kappa. I am also a nontraditional student.

I would like to commend you for your hard work towards funding education. There is a lot of growth occurring at TMCC because we are trying to catch up and reflect the extensive growth happening in northern Nevada. That spills over into the different career-oriented education and opportunities that we have been speaking about. Many students are talking about the need for coding programs at the high school and college level.

LEX COULTER:

I am an English major at TMCC, and will obtain a minor in geothermal energy upon transferring to the University of Nevada, Reno. I am a Senator in the SGA. At TMCC we promote awareness for higher education, including the diverse community which builds it. The SGA is committed to diversity. We have approved both gender neutral restrooms and an athletics department.

I am a nontraditional student at TMCC, I started college at the age of 24. I thank you for your support and love for higher education for nontraditional students.

RAY BACON (Executive Director, Nevada Manufacturers Association):

The growth rate for manufacturing jobs in the State is at 14 percent; number 1 in the Country. Reno alone is even higher than number 1, because there is a gap of about 4 percent over the rest of the Country. We had 6,800 new manufacturing jobs in 2017 and about 7,200 in 2018. We had only 100 to 300 jobs per year in the period after the Great Recession started. That is a dramatic change.

A lot of that growth is related to the Tesla Gigafactory, but a lot of it is not, because we have seen growth across the board. The Gigafactory deal stipulated that they had to hire 50 percent Nevadans. They are actually hiring about 93 percent Nevada residents.

However, we still have a problem—a shortage of CTE teachers. We need people with industry experience to get a teaching credential. Our higher education system has not been successful at making that bridge work. As you collaborate, the problem needs to be addressed.

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CHAIR DENIS:
The meeting is adjourned at 2:23 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Steven Jamieson,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Moises Denis, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit / # of pages		Witness / Entity	Description
	A	1		Agenda
	B	6		Attendance Roster
S.B. 82	C	15	Treasurer Zach Conine / Office of the State Treasurer	Visual Presentation
	D	10	John Vellardita / Clark County Education Association	Visual Presentation
	E	10	Jesus Jara / Clark County School District	Visual Presentation