

**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Eightieth Session  
March 11, 2019**

The Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Vice Chair Joyce Woodhouse at 1:08 p.m. on Monday, March 11, 2019, in Room 2134 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412E 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 Joyce Woodhouse, Vice Chair  
Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop  
Senator Dallas Harris  
Senator Scott Hammond  
Senator Ira Hansen

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Senator Moises Denis, Chair (Excused)  
Senator Keith F. Pickard (Excused)

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Senator Joseph P. Hardy, Senatorial District No. 12  
Senator Heidi Seevers Gansert, Senatorial District No. 15

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Jen Sturm, Policy Analyst  
Asher Killian, Committee Counsel  
Steven Jamieson, Committee Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Michelle Kim, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Clark County Education Association

Senate Committee on Education  
March 11, 2019  
Page 2

Brad Keating, Clark County School District  
Linda Sinclair  
Ruben Murillo, President, Nevada State Education Association  
Gina Session, Director of Civil Rights Compliance, Washoe County School District  
Brenda Pearson, Director of Professional Learning, Clark County Education Association  
Stephen Augspurger, Executive Director, Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees  
Jason Lamberth  
Kevin Child  
Kenneth Belknap  
Sandy Kordi  
Jaclyn Ayers  
Alexander Bagrensky

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:  
I will open the hearing on Senate Bill (S.B.) 240.

**SENATE BILL 240**: Eliminates certain training required of teachers.  
(BDR 34-262)

SENATOR JOSEPH P. HARDY (Senatorial District No. 12):  
Every year I am frustrated to read that the Clark County School District (CCSD) has 800 unfilled teaching positions. I want to do something to remove impediments to filling those positions.

Senate Bill No. 20 of the 79th Session accomplished something similar to S.B. 240. However, instead of allowing a year for a teacher to become proficient in the *Constitution of the State of Nevada*, S.B. 240 eliminates that requirement completely.

Section 1, subsection 1 of the bill contains the current college requirement to receive instruction in "the essentials of the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Nevada, including the origin and history of the Constitutions". Section 1, subsection 2 essentially provides that a student who is enrolled in a Nevada System of Higher Education course of study to become a teacher would not have to be subject to section 1, subsection 1.

I spoke with a member of the Clark County Education Association (CCEA) who expressed support for the idea of the bill, but said that it did not go far enough. The person said that it would be good if the requirement was removed completely. I told them that I was okay with that idea, but the members of this Committee need to decide what they want to do.

Under the current requirement, school districts have the difficult task of tracking which teachers have completed their training within a year of being hired and which teachers have not. I want future teachers being trained and I want them teaching.

My goal is to have teachers from in and out of Nevada come to our schools and teach. I want to allow people who had not previously intended to be a teacher, but who decide that they like teaching and now want to teach, to get into the classroom and start teaching.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

I want teachers and I want doctors. We have a set of standards that we require from our doctors, and we have a set of standards that we require from teachers. Teachers who come from Nevada receive the courses in college. Teachers who come from other states have the ability to obtain a license in Nevada. Teachers are allowed to be in the classroom and then take this test later. If you are going to be teaching kids, following policy and being involved, it is not bad to have this requirement. As with most professions, there are things that we need to do in order to become teachers. I did it when I was a teacher. It is a good practice.

I need other information about why this bill is necessary. How many teachers have we lost because they did not have the class? How many teachers did we lose because they failed the test? Did they fail it once? Did they fail it twice? Did they never take it? How many teachers did we lose because they said, "I can't do that," and they never came to Nevada? How many teachers could not get into a class to prepare for this test? I need some additional information.

I appreciate the teachers' union being involved, but I have to draw a line somewhere. How many teachers have we lost in the past? How many teachers do we anticipate we lose now? How many teachers will we lose in the future?

SENATOR HARDY:

I will try to find that out.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

Prior to 2017, before you could get your teaching license you had to take a test on the U.S. Constitution, the Nevada Constitution and State law. In the 2017 Session, we agreed on a provision in which the teachers no longer had to take the test, but we had to make the information available, especially the State educational law information. We had to make it easily accessible by any teacher, at any time, from their computer. There are times when a teacher wants to do something in a classroom but might want to check the law before proceeding. We do not all have the information completely memorized.

I would like to hear from our Legal Counsel on what we passed last Session, so I can understand the nuance of this bill and figure out how much further it goes.

I think you are just getting rid of the requirement altogether; the teachers do not have to take any class, and they do not have to have any background. If you graduate from a university, you will have to take a class on the U.S. Constitution. Almost every university requires a U.S. Constitution class. We wanted the Nevada Constitution portion to make sure people were aware of some of the differences.

What is the difference between what we did last time and what you are asking now?

SENATOR HARDY:

In essence, you are correct. Subsections 1 through 3 of section 1 of S.B. No. 20 of the 79th Session state:

1. A licensed teacher, except a teacher who is licensed only as a substitute teacher, must complete training in the laws of this State relating to schools and the provisions of the Nevada Constitution relating to schools within 1 year after being issued a license to teach and being initially hired by the board of trustees of a school district.
2. The Commission shall: (a) Establish by regulation the required contents of the training required by subsection 1; (b) Establish by regulation the standard of proficiency required for a teacher to

receive credit for completing the training required by subsection 1, which may include, without limitation, an examination to test the proficiency of a teacher in the laws of this State relating to schools and the provisions of the Nevada Constitution relating to schools; and (c) At least once each biennium, review the contents of the training required by subsection 1 and, if necessary, revise the content of the training.

3. The training required by subsection 1: (a) Must be tailored to the professional needs of teachers. (b) May be conducted in person or interactively through the use of communications technology by the school district that employs a teacher or by a vendor approved by such a school district.

Section 1.5 of S.B. No. 20 of the 79th Session struck from the examinations that are necessary: "1. the Laws of Nevada relating to schools; 2. The Constitution of the State of Nevada; and 3. The Constitution of the United States."

I do not want another requirement that would get in the way of a teacher coming and teaching. A math or physics teacher probably does not need to know much about the Nevada Constitution to do their job.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

Last Session, we concluded that teachers of different subjects and grades would need different levels of training about the Nevada Constitution. The bill that we passed allowed the school districts to come up with regulations for what was necessary for teachers of specific grades and subjects. They could make different regulations for a high school Spanish teacher or a middle school science teacher or a fourth grade teacher.

I would like to hear from the school districts on how they have implemented these changes. I want to know if this requirement has been a significant impediment to putting more teachers in the classroom.

Otherwise, the compromise that we reached last Session was: "There is certain information that should be available to them, according to the particular subject matter they are teaching." We concluded that anything related to Nevada school law needs to be available for reference.

To me, it never seemed very important to have a test they might forget seven years later; the information was the most important thing. It is important that the teachers know that the information is out there, and that they know how to access the information before they make a mistake. I want to know what the districts have done to implement the changes from 2017.

ASHER KILLIAN (Committee Counsel):

*Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 391.021 is the provision of existing law that requires teachers, before they are licensed, to take certain examinations to show their ability to teach and their expertise in certain subject areas.

Before 2017, one of the examinations they had to take also covered the Constitutions of the U.S. and Nevada, and Nevada school law. Senate Bill No. 20 of the 79th Session eliminated the requirement that examinations be taken in those areas. It was replaced with a requirement for teachers, within a year of being licensed, to receive training in the subject of the Nevada Constitution and school laws. Senate Bill No. 20 of the 79th Session empowered the Commission on Professional Standards in Education to develop regulations establishing what that training should be and how a teacher's proficiency should be graded. That proficiency may be determined by an examination, but does not have to be determined by an examination.

MICHELLE KIM (Director of Strategic Initiatives, Clark County Education Association):

In Clark County we struggle with vacancies every year. We compete to recruit and retain educators. This bill will eliminate an impediment for the school district's effort to recruit the best educators, while having no negative effect on the ability of those hired to teach our students. This training requirement for a newly hired licensed educator provides no added benefit, nor does it ensure that the educator can do the work of providing instruction in the classroom.

I have heard many discussions about putting more and more on educators' plates. I have heard this in discussions about various legislative bills. Newly hired educators have to participate in a considerable amount of professional development. They also have to learn about their new school environment and the students in their classrooms. This is simply an additional training, an examination that not only takes time but also costs money.

Changes last Session took away the examination; however, the part about creating some form of training never actually came to fruition. I have taught the Nevada Constitution and State law training course for CCEA members in the past. I feel confident saying that nothing being taught in that examination is a necessity for an educator. For example, how does knowing that the State Board of Education is made up of seven voting members and four non-voting members appointed by the Governor, benefit a fourth grade teacher? What is the importance of knowing the responsibility of the Commission on Professional Standards in Education, or statutes on collective bargaining, copyright, or school related torts? This information is necessary for me to do my work as a labor attorney, but it is not necessary for an educator.

SENATOR HANSEN:

Is there any evidence that this has actually been an impediment to people becoming teachers? If it has, as you mentioned in your testimony, how many are we talking?

Ms. KIM:

I do not want to speak on behalf of CCSD, but in the past I have spoken with the CCSD Human Resources Office. The recruitment period is very competitive. An educator licensed in another state has the option of going to many school districts in many states. When that educator realizes that in Nevada they have to do other training, they are likely to choose another option.

I do not have numbers, but I do know that every year we have hundreds of vacancies.

SENATOR HANSEN:

We are trying to get to a number. No one has presented any evidence that this has actually stopped anybody from becoming a teacher in Nevada.

BRAD KEATING (Clark County School District):

I can get the numbers from our Human Resources team.

When we introduced the bill in 2017, it was simply a look at eliminating the provisions of the Constitution knowledge requirement. The part which directs the Commission on Professional Standards in Education to create the regulations and policies moving forward was decided while working with stakeholders during the amendment process.

As we attempt to fill our 800 open teaching positions, the potential recruits also look at the requirements in school districts across the Country. We continue to add to the number of requirements we expect of teachers. To receive their full license they have to have the U.S. Constitution, the Nevada Constitution, State education law and a new family engagement course. As we continue to add more to their plates, they look at different areas outside of the State to see where they can be successful as a teacher and not have to complete all of the additional requirements.

The districts have worked to get the regulations from the Commission on Professional Standards in order to put something in place. We have talked about a testing requirement. Prior to passage of S.B. No. 20 of the 79th Session, the University of Nevada, Reno gave a test. After the bill passed, they no longer offered that test. We lost the opportunity for the students to choose between that test and the training offered by the Commission.

LINDA SINCLAIR:

I transferred from Colorado. I took the three tests. I am glad teachers do not have to take those tests now. I agree with Senator Hammond, if you do not study Nevada school law, you are headed for difficulties. Our school laws are different than Colorado school laws. Studying the law is a way of avoiding future problems. It was interesting and useful to study the school laws.

RUBEN MURILLO (President, Nevada State Education Association):

One of the biggest barriers to the recruitment and retention of teachers is our lack of reciprocity with other states. Reciprocity would keep them from leaving and hopefully keep them coming to Nevada.

SENATOR HARDY:

There are impediments to teacher recruitment. For example, Mr. Murillo just mentioned the challenge presented by a lack of reciprocity. This is a bill jacket I would be willing to donate to the Committee to make that amendment.

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

We will close the hearing on S.B. 240 and open the hearing on S.B. 239.

**SENATE BILL 239**: Revises provisions relating to bullying in schools.  
(BDR 34-641)



SENATOR HEIDI SEEVERS GANSERT (Senatorial District No. 15):

Senate Bill 239 mandates a victim-centered response to bullying. When school administrators act to stop reported bullying, they must immediately act to protect the victim. The needs of the victim must be prioritized. When action is taken to make sure that someone who has been bullied is safe, the response has to be victim-centered.

Cyber-bullying may involve many students, including students from different schools. Section 1, subsection 6 was added to address these complications: "The time for completing an investigation into a report of cyber-bullying may also be extended to not more than 10 school days after the report is received with the consent of each reported perpetrator and each reported victim".

In general, this bill prioritizes the victims of bullying. For instance, if someone has to change a class, it would not necessarily be the victim, but the perpetrator who would move. Some people are concerned about that part of the bill, because there can be false reports. Some students may feel like they are the victim, but the other party may feel like they are the victim. I am open to suggestions. How do you identify who is the victim and who is the perpetrator?

Bullying has been a huge issue. The SafeVoice tip line received over 1,500 tips in 2018.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

Does this extend to charter schools, private schools and other entities that provide schooling to children?

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

The bill is written to address bullying in general.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

I do not see any specification of schools.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

Many other bills have redundant sections applying the law to public schools, charter schools and private schools. I do not see that in the bill. I would ask the Committee Counsel for an opinion.

MR. KILLIAN:

This falls under NRS 388.127, where "'School' means a public school, including without limitation, a charter school," so these provisions would extend to any sort of public charter school.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

But this does not give any latitude over a private school?

MR. KILLIAN:

Correct.

SENATOR HARRIS:

Why might we extend the investigating period? You mentioned that sometimes students may go to separate schools, but this does not apply to just when students go to separate schools.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

The individuals who do the investigations informed me that cyber-bullying is really complex; there may be 40 students involved, and they may or may not be from different schools. The number of people involved in cyber-bullying incidents can be very significant, compared to one-on-one type bullying.

GINA SESSION (Director of Civil Rights Compliance, Washoe County School District):

I oversee all of the bullying investigations conducted by the Washoe County School District. The District has approximately 64,000 students in about 100 schools.

Two sets of laws apply to our investigations, federal and State. We must comply with Nevada laws concerning bullying. We also comply with federal law on matters such as sexual harassment or race discrimination. The federal laws come with their own investigative requirements. The requirements under the federal law and the State law do not always completely match.

Federal law and the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights direct a school district office of civil rights compliance to complete a prompt and effective investigation. Prompt is defined as a 30-day investigation. We are doing two-day investigations, so we hit that mark. The question is whether our investigations are effective according to the standards set by the Office for Civil

Rights. That is where, when we get into these more complex bullying circumstances, we might question whether we are always able to do a thorough and effective investigation in two days.

We are always going to ensure the safety of the student before we start an investigation. We are going to ensure that there is a safety plan and other measures in place to ensure safety during the course of the investigation.

Cyber-bullying situations spread like wildfire. We may need to talk to more than 50 students in order to get to the bottom of who posted what and whose comments belong to whom; we need to figure out screen names. These start to become really complex matters that are difficult to conclude in two days. When we are rushing to complete an investigation in two days, we sometimes end up not respecting the rights of either the alleged victim or the alleged defender.

SENATOR HARRIS:

I would suggest that the language currently written in the bill may not in fact address that issue, especially given that it requires the consent of each reported perpetrator and each reported victim. With so many potential perpetrators, it would potentially expand exponentially the consent required.

MS. SESSION:

I considered that when I was looking at the bill. Sometimes, at least when we start, we will have a small group of students involved. The language in the bill involves the "reported" alleged victim and the "reported" alleged offender. That may not be as big a number as we end up having once we start looking into a situation like this.

To the extent possible, we like to work with the parents. We sometimes get investigation requests from parents. We tell them that we want to do a thorough job and that we have a two-day timeline. The parents often express that they are more concerned that we do a thorough job than follow any kind of two-day timeline. They want us to get to the bottom of the issue and make sure we are handling these things properly.

SENATOR HARRIS:

More work may be required to get to where you are without some of the unintended consequences that I am worried about. More refining can be done.

Senate Committee on Education  
March 11, 2019  
Page 12

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

I am here to speak in support of S.B. 239.

Nevada legislators have taken considerable efforts over the last few legislative sessions to curb the number of students who experience bullying and cyber-bullying in our schools. Many daunting statistics about bullying and cyber-bullying have been shared in previous sessions. The intent of S.B. 239 is to ensure that the victims of this act are given priority. A direct link has been found between students who have been victims of bullying and cyber-bullying and mental health. This is illustrated by the statistic that 24 percent of those victims experience suicidal thoughts.

The CCEA believes that all individuals within the school deserve to feel safe and supported. We support S.B. 239 because we believe that these provisions will do just that.

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

I believe that this bill is a needed and reasonable adjustment to our current bullying legislation. I like that the provision for an extension of the time for the investigation to occur requires the permission of the perpetrator and the victim; if they are under 18, it requires the permission of parents. There are some safeguards built into this. I appreciate the concerns raised by Senator Harris. If there are adjustments that need to be made, we would be happy to work with the bill sponsor and others to make sure that we have a bill that meets the needs of kids and the staff members who work with them.

JASON LAMBERTH:

In December 2013, my daughter Hailee died by suicide. She had been bullied at school. Since her death, I have taken up advocacy in suicide prevention and bullying. I can appreciate the intent of this bill, but I have a problem with the way that the language is written.

What does "priority" mean in these instances? What does it look like? Unfortunately, there are many false reports, where the actual perpetrators of bullying will make themselves out to be the victims. The way that this priority is written in the bill is dangerous, because it could exacerbate a situation which is potentially already delicate.

I also have concerns with the ten-day extension into reports of cyber-bullying. Some cyber-bullying is a criminal offense, and therefore must be investigated by law enforcement. When an incident involves potential criminal implications, the school administrators' or school safety teams' investigative responsibilities are deferred until after the law enforcement investigation is concluded. That is ample time. When you are talking about the life of a young person and the potential ramifications of bullying, especially cyber-bullying, even one day can make the difference. I see no need to extend it to ten days. If anything, I would offer that the Department of Public Safety needs to work with the Office of Safe and Respectful Learning Environment for the Nevada Department of Education to train school safety teams and school administrators on how to properly conduct investigations. School administrators are professional educators, not investigators.

Language for immediately implementing safety plans already exists in statute. I would also like to echo Senator Harris' concerns.

KEVIN CHILD:

We have a problem with bullying. But we also have a problem with families, because that is where it comes from. I would like to see teeth added to this bill. The parents would be held accountable to take a three-hour parenting class. The child would have to take a three-hour behavioral class. The parent and the student would have to take a three-hour behavioral family class together. If there are no teeth to this, bullying is not going to stop.

I urge the Committee to change the provisions in this bill. Our students matter to us.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

We will work on the language. I appreciate the consideration.

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

We will close the hearing on S.B. 239. Our next order of business is a presentation on a student assignment concerning school budgeting priorities.

MR. KEATING:

We had an opportunity through Teach Plus for students and teachers to get together with Dr. Jesus Jara, our new CCSD Superintendent, to talk about what is happening in schools and the budget issues that are occurring. It was an

opportunity to have him hear from the boots on the ground, from teachers and students. Dr. Jara was new to Las Vegas and we decided that this was a great idea. About a month and a half ago, we had the opportunity to go to Del Sol Academy to meet with some students. They are here today.

KENNETH BELKNAP:

I am a Teach Plus Teaching Policy Fellow and a Government teacher at Del Sol Academy in Las Vegas. I am here to introduce three students in my Advanced Placement U.S. Government class who have been discussing school funding with their classmates and school superintendent. A visual presentation ([Exhibit C](#)) will accompany our remarks.

This started with an op-ed that I wrote in May 2018, calling on CCSD's new superintendent to have a bold vision for CCSD and to listen to key stakeholders while he crafts his plan. I ended that op-ed with an open invitation for him to come visit my classroom and my students. Two months later, I was volunteering with CCEA and had the chance to meet Dr. Jara. He recognized my name and said that he owed my classroom a visit. He scheduled time to visit with us in January 2019.

In crafting a lesson for my students, I decided to use this time to elevate student voices around the biggest issue impacting their education, particularly a lack of resources that are available to run their school. This was not just an opportunity for these students to share their thoughts on the issue, it was also a chance for them to apply the skills they have learned in my class under sections SS.9-12.CE.18 and SS.9-12.CE.19 of the Nevada Academic Content Standards for Social Studies. The students shared their findings in a roundtable discussion with Dr. Jara. He mentioned that we needed to continue this conversation at the State level. The students elected representatives to come and have this conversation with the Committee.

We first learned about the Nevada funding formula for public schools and how it allocates funds for the school districts to build their budgets. We then learned how our district and School Organization Teams (SOT) make budget decisions in accordance with the framework established in Assembly Bill No. 469 of the 79th Session.

Students were put into three SOTs and given unique budget decisions to make based on a scarcity of resources. Students were not just given the decision

between what to cut and what to keep. They were provided with relevant school data to help them make informed decisions. Once they made their decision as a team, they were lobbied with relevant articles to try to persuade them to change their original decision. The groups then had to reconsider their decision and build talking points to share with the school community. Through this process, the students have surprised me with the amount of empathy they displayed for the individuals leading our district and the box they are put in when making decisions to allocate scarce resources.

This experience has strengthened my belief in the importance of student voices in these conversations. It is their education. We do them a disservice if we fail to include them while we make decisions about their education.

SANDY KORDI:

In the face of school budget cuts, our SOT had the challenge of deciding to keep our great teachers and let class sizes grow, or lose those great teachers and keep class sizes down. We decided that great teachers would be the most impactful for the students in our school. Great teachers will engage the classroom and create the individualized focus we students need. Every student is different, so learning is about much more than what the curriculum can offer. School occupies half of our day and it will impact our lives forever. We need guidance from great teachers. We need to learn.

Our post-lobbying decision remained the same. We understood that greater teachers would result in a larger financial investment, but a larger financial investment is needed in order to seek change. These decisions are difficult to make, because the Nevada Plan is outdated and not delivering enough funding to serve students. This funding formula has not benefited all of the students in the Nevada educational system. It has not presented change that we should see if we want to develop further.

We want a future for us, and that means a future for Nevada. We want to feel a part of our community, which requires an investment that, if given the opportunity, I would be proud and happy to return. Under the current situation, we have to make decisions like the ones we faced. Considering our class sizes would only increase by approximately two students, we knew that great teachers would be the better option. The benefits of slightly smaller classes do not outweigh the impact of a great teacher.

I was struck to see the Del Sol Academy statistics. Everything became more real. I understand that different schools have different needs. I had begun to think like I was not a part of the school, but I started thinking like a student again. I questioned why I had ever felt different. Why would it matter, especially if we collectively share the passion for improving education?

The greatest lesson I learned was the power of communication. We cannot be divided between adults and students. We want to participate in our community as much as our education does. Each of us can make a difference.

I am in awe as I recall the experiences and voices shared by each student that day with Dr. Jara. I saw students wanting to communicate to better their experiences within school. I want an education where I can feel proud because I am a contributing factor. While discussing, we acknowledged the variety of concerns based on various factors. In order to make us the best we can be, we want to be able to make choices based on our school's individualized needs.

The Nevada Plan is not effective for an advanced society like ours. I do not want to be restricted by a plan we have outgrown. No student should have to. I want to see change based on the needs of the people. Every individual shares a unique experience. We should love our people dearly. We should listen to our people closely. Every voice matters. I have faith in advocating for the cause of change.

JACLYN AYERS:

I represent the group which had to decide between mental health and physical safety for our high school campus. This decision was framed as a choice between keeping a School Resource Officer (SRO) on campus and keeping a school counselor who was there to work with students on their mental health.

My peers and I decided to keep the SRO over the mental health counselor. Even though we would also like to have more school counselors, we found it more valuable to feel physically safe within our school. We would rather feel safe in school due to the high number of fights and altercations that occur on campus. We need to physically feel safe to be able to learn before we focus on mental health. To be able to learn, it is key that we can walk on our campus and feel safe knowing that a SRO is there to ensure our safety in case a fight or other violent incident breaks out.



Our post-lobbying decision was to keep the SRO. We determined that SROs are necessary to school processes and student safety. A peaceful and welcoming atmosphere is a top priority for students. This happens through de-escalation of situations and ensuring the safety of students. There is a need for direct preventative measures against violence among students. By contrast, mental health funding is an indirect preventative measure. Teaching crime prevention programs and methods to staff and students allows for a decrease in violence among students. School Resource Officers protect the security of the school, patrol the campus and manage traffic issues; SROs are invaluable to the processes of CCSD and Del Sol Academy.

My group decided to cut the mental health counselor and keep our SRO. We feel that school safety creates more effective and engaged classrooms, which could reduce the number of violent incidents. We had 110 suspensions or expulsions and 53 violent incidents in the 2017-2018 school year.

It has been an eye-opening experience to realize the importance of the decisions that affect our education in such a big way. These decisions will continue to be made, not just for our future, but for all students' futures. Because of a lack of funding in our schools, if we continue to be in this bubble, we have to continue to make decisions on what to keep and what to cut. As a State, our focus around school funding should be about the fundamental needs for each school and student, not just a headcount of the kids in school. We are young minds trying to expand and develop. We should not have to worry about what will be cut from year to year.

ALEXANDER BAGRENSKY:

Our group was given the choice between a teacher coach and a student supporter or social worker. We all picked the student supporter because we felt that they would fit the needs of a student struggling through hard times in and outside of school. Our group was united in this decision because we saw the potential of what a student supporter could do. While a teacher coach could be beneficial in helping the teacher help the students, the social worker creates more benefits than the teacher coach. Teachers should have been trained properly beforehand. Even post lobbying, we were still very firm with our choice, because we felt the student supporter could help with students' well-being and education standards.

Using national data and statistics from our school, we decided the best decision was to cut the teacher coach. We concluded that students are facing tough challenges, including emotional, physical and mental problems in and outside the school. As they begin transitioning into early adulthood, being able to express concerns to a licensed and trained professional could ease a student's mind and help the student focus more on the task at hand.

When we met with Dr. Jara, I wondered if our voices would even matter. Once we started sharing our opinions, we could tell they were listening and were there to have a real conversation with us. They asked us questions, and when we answered, they listened to understand where we were coming from. They made me feel like I was more than just a number on a piece of paper.

I hope that we get rid of the old Nevada Plan because this State has so much potential to be great and on top of the Nation. Clark County is the fifth largest district in the Nation, yet one of the most underfunded. The Nevada Plan does not work anymore, as we can all clearly see. It does not provide proper equity between districts and schools. It is time to update it and start seeing actual results so that hopefully, in the future we do not have to cut anybody anymore.

MS. KORDI:

Our student voices are so important. Although I cannot speak for everybody, I speak for the want to be better. Every kid wants to get better. We want to get better as a district and do better in schools. We cannot do that if we are not listening to our people and understanding what they need. What I need is different from what everyone else needs. We have about 600 English Language Learners at our school. I do not feel we have enough budget to accommodate them. That is really sad. That should not happen. The Nevada Plan is not working for us. We are developing and we are being held back. We need to have our voices heard and work as one to have something efficient occur.

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

We have heard your voices. Your voices do matter. We are working on finishing changes that we will be recommending for the Nevada Plan. When we are able to roll out the recommendations I hope that you will all take a look at them and give us more feedback.

You found out that these decisions are not easy; they are tough. You understand what we are dealing with when we are not able to do some things

that we would like to do in the State budget. Your school board and school administrators have those same kinds of issues.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

I know how much preparation this takes. Thank you, Mr. Belknap, for being a teacher who knows the Nevada Constitution and State law. Thank you all for being involved in the legislative process. You are our future. You are the reason that we are here. We are here because we want it to be better for you. Stay in touch; do not hesitate to reach out.

SENATOR HARRIS:

I would like to note that choices are pretty "sticky." Each of your groups came up with a decision, and that decision was not changed in the face of new information or after being lobbied. You might want to talk about how interesting it is that all of you stuck with your original decision and got it right the first time.

MS. AYERS:

The members of my group did not all agree. I was the only one advocating for the school counselor because I believed that mental health was more important. However, we had to decide and make hard choices. It is problematic the budget we have forces us to make these decisions.

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

You found that it is sometimes difficult to come to a consensus when you have to have a final decision. It is part of the decision-making process.

MR. BAGRENSKY:

One source in opposition to our decision did make a good point. The point was that the teacher coach could improve how the teachers teach the material and possibly ease the students. When we looked at the student supporter, we saw that it would bring even more benefits.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

Ms. Ayers, I would have been on your side. I would have gone with the school counselor. It is hard to figure out where to allocate those resources. I have gained an appreciation of having a school counselor, having a professional in the school setting dealing with a lot of the issues that youth seem to be dealing with in today's society, so I tend to agree with you on that issue.

Senate Committee on Education  
March 11, 2019  
Page 20

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

Thank you again for sharing your project with us. We expect to see at least one of you, if not all three, sitting in our chairs making these decisions one day. Thank you as well, Mr. Bybee and Mr. Belknap.

The meeting is adjourned at 2:11 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

---

Steven Jamieson,  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

---

Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Vice Chair

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

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit / # of pages		Witness / Entity	Description
	A	2		Agenda
	B	8		Attendance Roster
	C	21	Kenneth Belknap	Visual Presentation