

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Eightieth Session
April 1, 2019**

The Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Moises Denis at 1:11 p.m. on Monday, April 1, 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 Moises Denis, Chair
Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Vice Chair
Senator Dallas Harris
Senator Marcia Washington
Senator Scott Hammond
Senator Ira Hansen
Senator Keith F. Pickard

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Senator Ben Kieckhefer, Senatorial District No. 16

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jen Sturm, Committee Policy Analyst
Risa Lang, Committee Counsel
Linda Hiller, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Zach Conine, State Treasurer, Office of the State Treasurer
Steve Guinn
Crystal Abba, Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs, Nevada System
of Higher Education
Carlos Fernandez, Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce
Beverly Schreiber, Nevada State Director, NextGen America

Senate Committee on Education
April 1, 2019
Page 2

Danielle Fitzgerald

Manuel Ayala

Miles Dickson, Chief of Staff, Office of the State Treasurer

Ruben Murillo, Jr., President, Nevada State Education Association

Brad Keating, Clark County School District

Lorna James-Cervantes, School Associate Superintendent, Clark County School District

Barry Bosacker, Principal, C.P. Squires Elementary School, Clark County School District

Mary Pierczynski, Nevada Association of School Superintendents

Lindsay Anderson, Washoe County School District

Paige Barnes, Nevada Association of School Boards

Sarah Popek, Principal, Myrtle Tate Elementary School, Clark County School District

Warren McKay, Principal, Helen C. Cannon Junior High School, Clark County School District

Sarah Adler, Charter School Association of Nevada

Autumn Tampa

Valerie Vargas

Yahaira Reyes

Giovanni Antonio Cervoni

Sylvia Lazos, Nevada Immigrant Coalition

Tami Hance, CEO, Communities in Schools of Nevada

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, Chief Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Officer, Clark County School District

Margarita Harris

Aaron Ibarra

Kelly Grondahl, Principal, Vegas Verdes Elementary School

Felicia Ortiz

Fernando Romero, President, Hispanics in Politics

Cecia Alvarado, State Director, Mi Familia Vota

Punam Mathur, Vice Chair, Communities in Schools

John Vellardita, Executive Director, Clark County Education Association

Susan Ulrey, Education Programs Professional, Department of Education

CHAIR DENIS:

I will open the meeting of the Senate Committee on Education with Senate Bill (S.B.) 414.

SENATE BILL 414: Increases the number of recipients of the Kenny C. Guinn Memorial Millennium Scholarship. (BDR 34-884)

SENATOR BEN KIECKHEFER (Senatorial District No. 16):

This bill is an expansion of a program I sponsored at the request of the Guinn family in 2011 during my first Legislative Session. It created a memorial scholarship specifically targeted for a Millennium Scholar who was pursuing a career as a teacher in Nevada. The existing program provides additional financial support for a Millennium Scholarship recipient in his or her senior year of college in Nevada.

Currently, one recipient from southern Nevada and one recipient from northern Nevada receives the scholarship. Senate Bill 414 doubles that to two recipients from the north and two from the south. It also expands the higher education schools that qualify and slightly enhances the amount of the scholarship; the funds coming from private donations and other contributions to the Kenny C. Guinn Memorial Millennium Scholarship Fund.

This program honors former Governor Guinn and the contributions he made to education in Nevada and it also honors the dedication his family has to education.

ZACH CONINE (State Treasurer, Office of the State Treasurer):

Former Governor Kenny Guinn was committed to finding ways to increase higher education opportunities for all Nevadans. Through the Millennium Scholarship, which has been one of the most successful merit-based scholarship programs in the Country, former Governor Guinn ultimately found a way to help 124,856 Nevadans go to college. We are proud the program continues to help students in what is now its twentieth anniversary.

Beginning in July 2010, at the request of former First Lady Dema Guinn, the Office of the State Treasurer worked closely with the Guinn family to create a separate account within the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship Trust Fund to accept donations in his honor. The Treasurer's Office then partnered with the late Senator Bill Raggio and Senator Kieckhefer during the 2011 Legislative Session to pass S.B. No. 220 of the 76th Session, which established the Kenny C. Guinn Memorial Millennium Scholarship to incentivize Nevada's best and brightest students to pursue careers in public education.

Today, the scholarship is awarded to two recipients—one in northern Nevada, and one in southern Nevada—who currently receive the Millennium Scholarship, are entering their senior year at a Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) institution and who are enrolled in a course study that would allow them to become a licensed educator. To receive the Memorial Scholarship, applicants also have to maintain a college grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.5, have a commendable record of community service and make a commitment to teaching in Nevada upon graduation.

The scholarship can be used to help students pay for costs incurred during their senior year of college that were not met through the Millennium Scholarship, such as registration fees, lab fees, textbooks or other required course materials. As of today, the Memorial Scholarship Trust Fund has a balance of \$162,192, which means that it will continue to be around for years to come.

While the Memorial Scholarship has been successful in helping students stay and teach in Nevada, the lack of flexibility contained within the current statute makes it difficult to find qualified applicants for the scholarship. Broadly speaking, S.B. 414 is seeking to expand the potential applicant pool for the scholarship, while also increasing the number of awards to students as well as the total dollar amount of the scholarship.

Our office has worked with Senator Kieckhefer on an amendment ([Exhibit C](#)) to S.B. 414, increasing the total number of awards to two students in northern Nevada and two students from southern Nevada. Additionally, the bill would allow students who attend other nonprofit educational institutions such as Western Governor's University (WGU) or Grand Canyon University, both of which specialize in education-focused courses of study, to apply for the Memorial Scholarship assuming they also were eligible to receive the Millennium Scholarship.

The amendment also allows for the students who attend a university that does not grade with a traditional GPA scale, such as WGU, to be eligible for the scholarship if they are able to provide the College Savings Board with documentation showing their exceptional academic performance. Finally, the bill would increase the total size of the scholarship award from \$4,500 to \$5,000, which will help students defray the costs associated with their senior year of college, to stay and teach the next generation of Nevadans to succeed.

STEVE GUINN:

We put a lot of effort and work into this Memorial Millennium Scholarship. We have been rewarding one recipient to the north and one to the south. Due to the generosity of donations that continue to go into this effort, we felt it necessary to expand it to two from the north and two from the south. We also wanted to open it to different universities than we had initially. The \$4,500 amount is per scholarship and we are expanding it to \$5,000 which would total \$20,000 each year.

We want to drive the participation in the scholarship and, most importantly, we want to keep our best and brightest here as teachers in Nevada. We tend to lose a lot of those teachers, but we want to have them take an interest in Nevada education. It has worked out great over the past near decade of this program, so we want to keep it going into the future. We appreciate your support on S.B. 414.

CHAIR DENIS:

Seeing no one wanting to speak in support, opposition or neutral on this bill, I will close the hearing on S.B. 414. I will open our work session since all our Committee members are present. I will open work session on S.B. 126.

SENATE BILL 126: Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR 34-906)

JEN STURM (Committee Policy Analyst):

This bill was heard on February 13 in Committee, repealing provisions requiring a postprobationary administrator to apply every 5 years for reappointment to his or her position. The measure also removes provisions enabling an administrator not reappointed, who was previously employed by the district, to be assigned to his or her former position. I have submitted a work session document ([Exhibit D](#)).

CHAIR DENIS:

We had one amendment, but it did not address the issue I was trying to get at. What we are trying to do with this bill is to not make a postprobationary administrator have to reapply every five years if that administrator is doing a good job. There is already a yearly opportunity to see how they are doing. The amendment switched to allow a school district to be able to decide if it wanted to participate or not. My thought was, if the principal is doing a great job, why do we want to force them to have to go through a process? If the principal is

doing a terrible job, that impacts our kids and we need to do something about that.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE MOVED TO DO PASS S.B. 126.

SENATOR WASHINGTON SECONDED THE MOTION.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

I am grateful for the bill so we can have another chance to look at this issue. I would like to see the amendment. This is something we passed in 2015 with the idea that as we are asking teachers to be evaluated over and over again, we also wanted to ensure we were getting a chance to review the work being done by administrators. I understand your point that if they are doing a great job, maybe they do not need to go through that. I do not believe we have seen this go into action. I will vote no now, but I would like to see the amendment and discuss it and reserve my right to change my mind on the Senate Floor.

SENATOR PICKARD:

I hesitate to pass on any amendment I have not seen. I am a little concerned and want to ensure that the review process is shored up.

CHAIR DENIS:

I was mentioning that there was an amendment suggested, but I did not accept it as an amendment, so currently, there is no amendment.

THE MOTION CARRIED (SENATORS HAMMOND AND PICKARD VOTED NO.)

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CHAIR DENIS:

I will open S.B. 453 and turn the gavel over to Vice Chair Woodhouse.

SENATE BILL 453: Revises the eligibility requirements for the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship Program. (BDR 34-383)

SENATOR MOISES DENIS (Senatorial District No. 2):

I am here to present S.B. 453, which revises the eligibility requirements for the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship Program. This was approved by the

1999 Legislature to increase the number of Nevada students who attend and graduate from Nevada institutions of higher education. The scholarship pays up to \$10,000 of eligible tuition costs.

This program has been historically funded from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement funds and from proceeds from Nevada's Abandoned Property Trust Account. Assembly Bill (A.B.) No. 511 of the 79th Session appropriated \$20 million in State General Funds to the Millennium Scholarship Trust Fund. With this appropriation, it was projected to keep the program financially viable through the current fiscal year 2018-2019. For the upcoming biennium, the Governor is recommending funding support for the program through the 10 percent retail excise tax on the sale of recreational marijuana.

To qualify for the program, a Nevada high school graduate must have lived in Nevada for at least 2 years of his or her high school years and achieved an overall GPA of 3.25 or a qualified American College Testing (ACT)/Scholastic Assessment Test score. Recipients must also have graduated from a Nevada high school and completed the minimum core curriculum requirements.

To maintain the scholarship, a Nevada college student must pursue a recognized undergraduate degree or certification, enroll in 9 credits at an eligible community college or 12 credits at all other eligible institutions per semester and maintain a 2.6 GPA for the first 29 credits and a 2.75 GPA for all credits thereafter.

This program is administered through the Office of the State Treasurer. To date, the Office reports that nearly 125,000 Nevada students have accessed the Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship.

When looking at the demographics of the students accessing the scholarships, we see diversity. For example, the 2017 recipients are reported as 34 percent white; 34 percent Hispanic; 4 percent black; 3 percent Asian; Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; 8 percent with two or more ethnicities and 6 percent unknown.

The recipients are also from economically diverse backgrounds. For example, among the 2017 class, dependent students who completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, reported 32 percent with a household income less than \$40,000, 31 percent with a household income of \$40,000 to \$79,999 and 37 percent with a household income of \$80,000 or more. Additionally, in the

past 5 years, 36 percent of recipients graduated from Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act schools.

Senate Bill 453 increases the GPA to retain eligibility for a scholarship and makes provisions for a recipient who fails to maintain the required GPA during a semester.

CRYSTAL ABBA (Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs, Nevada System of Higher Education):

The Governor Guinn Millennium Scholarship is a stalwart in Nevada and is the scholarship most parents look to. The challenge is that over time the eligibility criteria have changed to the point where some families have different criteria for each of their children. It has been a long time since we have made significant changes, and we are grateful for the opportunity to make what we believe are technical changes that will support students and offer clarity and consistency.

Section 1, subsection 3, paragraph (b) at the bottom of page 2 of S.B. 453 is where we made the first change. Currently, under the requirements for continuing eligibility, a student must maintain a 2.6 GPA for the first year of enrollment and a 2.75 GPA thereafter. That is a communication challenge for advisors. We believe the higher bar is better and that consistency over the terms is better for the student to understand what is required. The change we are proposing is to raise the GPA requirement for continuing eligibility to 2.75 regardless of what term the student is in. This is much simpler.

The second change to S.B. 453 is in section 1, subsection 5 where you will see a lot of stricken language along with some new language. I recommend that you do not read this because it is confusing. To clarify that part of the bill, we have a proposed revision ([Exhibit E](#)) that should help explain the "Two Strikes Rule" which was implemented about ten years ago during a time the GPA requirement for both initial eligibility and continuing eligibility was being ratcheted up in an effort to keep the fund solvent. To mitigate the changes in the GPA, the "Two Strikes Rule" was implemented.

Looking at the current practice table on [Exhibit E](#), the first semester, the scholarship recipient is funded, but lost eligibility due to a GPA below the requirement. In the second semester, the student had the opportunity to regain eligibility by meeting the GPA requirement and taking the minimum credits required, which is 9 credits at a community college or 12 credits at a university.

If the student succeeds and meets the requirements, he or she is reinstated in the third semester. If the student fails to meet the requirements in that semester, he or she loses the Millennium Scholarship permanently.

What we hear from students is that during the second semester, because of the loss of funding, they cannot meet the credit requirement because they have to work to replace the funds they initially received from the scholarship.

Looking at the proposed practice in the second table of [Exhibit E](#), our proposed revision, the two strikes are crunched into two consecutive semesters or terms. If the student loses eligibility the first term in which he or she was funded, that is strike one. In the second term, the funding is still received by the student while he or she endeavors to meet the GPA and credit requirements to continue receiving the Scholarship. If they meet the requirements in the second term, they continue to the third. If they do not meet the requirements, that is their strike two and they become permanently ineligible. We feel the impact will not be as negative on the students with this configuration.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

Looking at the bottom box [Exhibit E](#), if a student loses eligibility in semester one, then regains it in semester two after having been funded for both of those semesters, and then they lose it again in semester three, how would that work?

MS. ABBA:

The student would be out after losing it in semester three because they had strike two in their second semester. After the second strike, they cannot reinstate.

In section 2 of [S.B. 453](#), it references the effective date of this legislation, which is July 2020. We received a question from the Office of the State Treasurer asking if current students who have lost eligibility will then regain eligibility. The answer is no; this will be applied prospectively. It will impact students who lose eligibility after July 1, 2020. If you lost eligibility before that date, it does not apply. It only applies going forward, not retrospectively.

SENATOR PICKARD:

Looking again at the bottom box in [Exhibit E](#), if a student loses eligibility in the first semester which is strike one, and then recovers in the second semester, what happens if they lose eligibility in the third semester?

MS. ABBA:

They still only get two strikes. They would be out of the scholarship program in the fourth semester and ineligible to reinstate.

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

I will take testimony in support of S.B. 453.

CARLOS FERNANDEZ (Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce):

We support S.B. 453 because of the added clarity. We want counselors and advisors to accurately advise the students on what to do to maintain the Millennium Scholarship. I served as Student Body President at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and we had complaints from students about this. Having the second semester funded after the semester where the student lost eligibility will help because things happen. We want students to be able to achieve success.

BEVERLY SCHREIBER (Nevada State Director, NextGen America):

I am the Nevada State Director of NextGen America, which is the largest youth vote organization in the Country. I support S.B. 453, which will in essence provide a grace period for students who have lost eligibility for the Millennium Scholarship, allowing them to keep their financial aid while trying to become eligible again. As the cost of college continues to rise, many students have to balance multiple priorities to complete their education. I had some issues when I transferred to UNLV in my junior year of college. At that time, I was facing a major health issue. On top of working, taking care of my health, continue my degree and my medical bills, I almost lost my scholarship. This will hopefully allow students to get their lives back together without having to drop out of school.

DANIELLE FITZGERALD:

I am an organizer with NextGen Nevada representing the youth vote in our State. I am a Nevada native and UNLV graduate who received the Millennium Scholarship; I support S.B. 453. The Scholarship made me choose to attend college here in Nevada and escape my undergraduate career without student loans as well as allowing me to finish my degree in nine semesters.

Coming from a low-income family, huge financial decisions like college terrified me because the cost is unattainable for so many young people. The support of the Millennium enabled me to overcome that worry and get my degree.

I talked to thousands of students at UNLV last semester and mentored dozens of women in my sorority, and I know that almost every student struggles with balancing finances, academics, work and trying to take advantage of opportunities to enrich themselves and grow. Students often consider taking time off of school to handle the load and to afford the life of a college student. The changes in this bill will help students.

MANUEL AYALA:

I am a student at the College of Southern Nevada and currently have the Millennium Scholarship. I also have to work three jobs while my mom and my brother both work two jobs and my sister is looking for a job; all to maintain our household. As students, we are often not able to financially support ourselves and go to school. It would be one or the other if we did not have the help from the Scholarship. Although I do not agree with the 2.75 GPA, I do love the idea of having this grace period to requalify for the scholarship without having to go without it for a semester. Balancing school and work is hard and that financial stability from the scholarship is greatly appreciated and needed. I see this in the Latino community; that many who want to go to college cannot afford it but these scholarships help us. I support S.B. 453.

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

I will take testimony in opposition or neutral to S.B. 453.

MILES DICKSON (Chief of Staff, Office of the State Treasurer):

Making these programs as easy to understand and navigate is a goal we all share. We look forward to working NSHE to model any of the potential financial or fiscal impacts of the bill.

SENATOR DENIS:

This program has helped a lot of people. We have changed the requirements several times and I can testify that the requirements were different for all four of my older kids. Two of my kids got the Millennium Scholarship and two missed out by 0.10 of the required GPA. Now we have changed the requirements so students can use their ACT scores, so that might provide some hope for my youngest son. By adding some consistency and enabling the students to keep going in college if they have a bad semester will help all our students.

Senate Committee on Education
April 1, 2019
Page 12

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 453 and invite the Chair to come back up to the dais and take over.

CHAIR DENIS:

I want to go back to work session with S.B. 184.

SENATE BILL 184: Revises provisions relating to the protection of children.
(BDR 34-668)

Ms. STURM:

This bill was heard in Committee on February 27 and has one amendment. During the hearing, the requestor of the amendment stated that amendments to section 3 are not needed and should not be considered. I have submitted the work session documents ([Exhibit F](#)).

SENATOR PICKARD MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
S.B. 184 WITHOUT SECTION 3.

SENATOR HARRIS SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DENIS:

I would be glad to go on as a sponsor. I will open S.B. 414.

SENATOR HARRIS MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
S.B. 414.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DENIS:

I will close S.B. 414 and open S.B. 453.

SENATOR WOODHOUSE MOVED TO DO PASS S.B. 453.

SENATOR HAMMOND SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DENIS:

I will pass the gavel back to my Vice Chair so I can present the next bill.

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

I will open the hearing on S.B. 467.

SENATE BILL 467: Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR S-820)

SENATOR DENIS:

Senate Bill 467 extends the duration of two critical education programs in our state—the Zoom and Victory Schools Programs. In the Governor's budget, we had allocated money for these programs, but we realized there needed to be a bill to extend it, which is something we have been doing every two years.

Studies have shown that early literacy is key to academic success, regardless of a student's socioeconomic status. These programs continue improving literacy among our youngest and most at-risk students. Six years ago, I brought forth and testified in support of S.B. No. 504 of the 77th Session, which first enacted the Zoom Schools Program. Building upon the success resulting from that legislation, in the 2015 Session we passed S.B. No. 405 of the 78th Session and then S.B. No. 390 of the 79th Session in 2017, which expanded the program and related supports available to our English Learners (EL), or students whose primary language is not English. This program funds the lowest performing schools with the highest percentage of ELs in Nevada.

In addition to the Zoom Schools Program, the Legislature also established the Victory Schools Program in 2015 through S.B. No. 432 of the 78th Session. In 2017, we expanded the program through the passage of A.B. No. 447 of the 79th Session. This program funds schools that are identified as the lowest performing schools in the highest poverty zip codes within certain districts.

Senate Bill 467 extends both of these programs for the 2019-2021 biennium. Toward the beginning of the current Session, our Committee heard from an external evaluation team regarding certain education programs established by the Legislature. As a result of increased academic achievement, the evaluation recommended continued funding and support for both the Zoom and Victory Schools Programs.

The Zoom Schools Program serves Nevada's EL students, which account for 20 percent of students in our State, two-thirds of which speak Spanish. More than 75 percent of these students are enrolled in the Clark County School District (CCSD). While many EL children speak enough English for daily interactions, they have not mastered academic English. However, in 2014, after just the first 7 months of operation, 40 percent of the participating students were reading at grade level in English

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

Chad Buckendahl, who spoke to the Committee on February 11 about the findings and recommendations of the Nevada External Outcomes Evaluation, noted that in 2017, CCSD and Washoe County School District (WCSD) each had 10 Zoom schools that were at or below the lowest quartile. By the next year, five of those schools in CCSD and seven of those schools in WCSD achieved a higher quartile.

The Victory Schools Program, which also supports early literacy, saw similar improvements. Mr. Buckendahl noted an increase in the achievement of students in Victory schools on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium summative assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics between 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. He added that some of these increases were higher than the average overall increase across the State. Further, the evaluation saw an increase in the percentage of participating students proficient at Levels 3 and 4 for both ELA and math.

Based on the success of these programs to date, we have continued to support these programs through multiple legislative sessions. The most important thing

accomplished by S.B. 467 is the continuation of both the Zoom and Victory Schools Programs, including their records of success, for another two years.

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

SENATOR PICKARD:

On the last page of S.B. 467 in section 3, it begins, "Section 3 of chapter 390, Statutes of Nevada 2015, at page 2203", and then purports to read, "This act becomes effective on July 1, 2015". Further down, in section 5, it actually states, "This act becomes effective upon passage and approval". This makes me wonder if we have cited the wrong section. I am really confused because I have chased this thing through to the original source and what we are amending is not that language. I am wondering if this is the 2017 language. I think we may have a technical problem. It may be a question for our Legal Counsel.

RISA LANG (Committee Counsel):

I believe the section was added because Victory and Zoom used to be in two separate bills and they had different effective dates, although they both were intended to last two years. I believe we were trying to make them have the same effective date, essentially. I will go back and take a look at it and see if there is something we need to do with that.

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

I will take testimony in support of S.B. 467.

MR. FERNANDEZ:

We support S.B. 467.

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

We support S.B. 467. When Zoom and Victory schools were created, we were excited because we had been looking for something that would be different. Both programs have proven to be successful and we are happy about the impact they have had on our students. I have submitted a letter of support ([Exhibit G](#)).

BRAD KEATING (Clark County School District):

We support S.B. 467 because these two programs have been very successful for us at CCSD. As we move forward with the weighted funding formula for our State, we hope these programs will still help CCSD move forward as a District.

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

I have worked with the Zoom schools in CCSD for the past five years. I support S.B. 467 on behalf of the CCSD because the opportunities provided to the students at Zoom schools during the past six years have been invaluable. I have submitted my written testimony that includes a report with current data on our Zoom schools and their progress at CCSD ([Exhibit H](#)).

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

I support S.B. 467 because in my four years as Principal at C.P. Squires Elementary School I have seen tremendous school-wide gains in English language development and reading proficiency. The Zoom initiative provided us with the resources we needed to increase student achievement and to continually improve teacher practice. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit I](#)).

MARY PIERCZYNSKI (Nevada Association of School Superintendents):

We support S.B. 467 and are happy to see this program continue because consistency is such a key issue.

LINDSAY ANDERSON (Washoe County School District):

We support S.B. 467 and appreciate the consistency. We have avoided some of the pitfalls in these programs by doing things like having direct appropriations to school districts in the bill so they are not waiting for the money and can plan ahead. We have made small modifications along the way to meet the needs of our families and schools, like adding extended learning day instead of summer school. We are hoping that with weighted funding, we can serve all of our EL students.

PAIGE BARNES (Nevada Association of School Boards):

We support S.B. 467.

SARAH POPEK (Principal, Myrtle Tate Elementary School, Clark County School District):

I support S.B. 467 because at my school, Myrtle Tate Elementary School, which is one of in CCSD's original Zoom schools, the program has positively impacted staff, students and community alike for the last six years. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit J](#)).

WARREN MCKAY (Principal, Helen C. Cannon Junior High School, Clark County School District):

With the Zoom dollars given to our school, we were able to enact class size reduction that allowed us to reduce class sizes from 36-40 students per class down to 28-32 students per class on average. This allows our teachers to be able to reach those students in ways they could not even imagine with bigger classes. The funding also allows for increased instruction time, which amounts to 19 extra minutes of instruction time per day. This allows all of our students, not just the EL students, to work more closely with all the skills that are so important—reading, writing, speaking and listening.

The Zoom funding also provides programming supports, so we can implement programs across curriculums, not just within ELA, but within our math and science departments, all of which helps our EL population. I support S.B. 467.

SARAH ADLER (Charter School Association of Nevada):

The Charter School Association of Nevada supports S.B. 467 because we think students who are English language learners need that extra support, no matter where they are enrolled in school.

There are a couple of charter schools already designated as Zoom schools, and our principals mirror the excitement of the CCSD principals who just spoke. Mariposa Dual Language Academy Charter School has received enough Zoom funds to hire a learning strategist and two teaching assistants. That school reports above average growth with their EL students and attributes that gain to Zoom.

AUTUMN TAMPA:

I support S.B. 467 because it is important for the children of Nevada and of Clark County, where I work and live. It is important to those currently struggling and it has caused so many of the EL students to flourish. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit K](#)).

VALERIE VARGAS:

I am a junior at Valley High School (VHS) in CCSD and I support S.B. 467 because the Victory school support my school gets is crucial to the lives of every student. Among other things, it helped pay for personnel that included 13 teachers, 1 counselor and 1 social worker. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit L](#)).

YAHAIIRA REYES:

I am a senior at VHS and I support S.B. 467 because the Victory grant resources benefit all our students, especially our low-income students through our amazing wraparound services. Your hard work on this bill will help me achieve my goal to become an international businesswoman. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit M](#)).

GIOVANNI ANTONIO CERVONI:

I am a junior at VHS and I will be the first generation in my family to graduate from college. I support S.B. 467 because the Victory grant has enhanced my school in many ways. Our graduation rate 6 years ago was less than 50 percent and last year's rate was 86 percent. Victory resources not only improves our academic programs, it changes the climate and culture at VHS every day. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit N](#)).

SYLVIA LAZOS (Nevada Immigrant Coalition):

I remember when we had our first town hall meeting on the English Language Learners (ELL) program at the East Las Vegas Community Center in 2015. I remember Senator Denis saying, "We are going to do something about it this biennium," and we sure did. These programs are an example of success and return on investment, and that success puts us in a place where we can ask community partners to increase funding for education because it makes a difference.

This program supporting Victory and Zoom schools is smart because it focuses on equity and system change. In a place like Las Vegas where we have such unevenness in income, equity in education is important to lift CCSD and WCSD from the bottom of the barrel. We are addressing the poorest zip codes, where data shows that kids have a chance of less than 50 percent to make it to the middle class. These zip codes are full of gangs and have social behavior issues that need to be addressed. This is where we are putting our money one school at a time. Before the Zoom program, there was no strategy. Now, 60 percent of

teachers feel confident in high ELL classrooms. I support S.B. 467. I have submitted a letter of support from the Nevada Immigration Coalition ([Exhibit O](#)).

TAMI HANCE (CEO, Communities in Schools of Nevada):

The Nevada branch of Communities in Schools (CIS) is one of the largest State operations of our Nation's latest dropout prevention organization. We used an evidence-based model implemented by trained site coordinators to play directly into low-income kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) schools. Because of your past investment with Victory funds in critical neighborhoods, we are able to place a full-time CIS program in 11 CCSD Victory schools, 3 WCSD Victory schools and 1 Victory school in the Elko School District. This positively affects 11,352 students living in poverty. These students are receiving direct community support including mentoring, attendance incentive plans, emergent food, school supplies, hygiene items, eyeglasses, tutoring and more.

Not only do Victory funds eliminate these obstacles, they relieve stress on teachers and give our children a positive relationship with our CIS site coordinator. In many cases, this is a child's only advocate. Because of your investment, we get results. Last year, we had a 90 percent graduation rate for our case-managed students, 85 percent improvement in behavior, 81 percent improvement in coursework and 73 percent improvement in attendance. Our mission is to surround students with a community of support while empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. We support S.B. 467.

BRENDA LARSEN-MITCHELL (Chief Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Officer, Clark County School District):

I support the Victory funding and S.B. 467. Funds to promote student achievement at Victory schools provide additional opportunities to implement evidence-based intervention programs and services to increase academic achievement. During both the 2017-2018 school year and the 2018-2019 school year, students in 20 schools in CCSD received additional supports, interventions and services to accelerate learning.

Students benefit from extended learning opportunities that target academic deficiencies. For example, before and/or after school tutoring was provided at nine elementary schools, three middle schools and one high school. At VHS, students are afforded credit-retrieval opportunities after school and on Saturdays. Additional staff, such as instructional coaches, strategists and certified temporary tutors support instructional programs to increase student

achievement. Targeted tiered interventions are provided to accelerate students reading proficiency. Reading skills centers are implemented at Jay W. Jeffers Elementary School, West Preparatory Academy Elementary School, Mario C. and Joanne Monaco Middle School and J.D. Smith Middle School.

Students also benefit from wraparound services including, but not limited to, social, psychological and health services. For example, community programs and services offered include CIS, ReInvent Schools through the City of Las Vegas and medical and health services. Several Victory schools funded a CIS site coordinator to provide access to healthcare and social services, food, clothing, attendance monitoring, parent meeting facilitation and assistance with after-school programs.

Extended opportunities are provided to engage parents and families. Kermit R. Booker, Sr. Innovative Elementary School, Howard E. Hollingsworth Elementary School, Matt Kelly Elementary School, West Preparatory Academy Elementary School and Wendell P. Williams Elementary School all have a partnership with the City of Las Vegas to focus on academic achievement, family and community engagement, expanded learning and wraparound services.

MARGARITA HARRIS:

As a former principal at Sunrise Acres Elementary School, a Victory school, I support S.B. 467. Through the Victory support, we were able to raise the bar, transitioning from a 1-Star school to a 4-Star school. Currently, Sunrise Acres has a 3-Star rating, but we know that is because of funding.

As a Victory school, we were able to access several important resources, including curriculum, books, professional development, additional staff to reduce class size and wraparound services. Extra funding also provided summer academy for our students and extra pay for our teachers. I used to tell our staff that we must "do what is necessary and not just what is required."

AARON IBARRA:

I was born in Las Vegas but I moved to Mexico when I was eight years old, living there for two years. When you are eight years old, two years seems like a long time. When I came back from Mexico, I was a little behind my former peers in school. I wish the Zoom program had been established when I was ten years old, having returned and struggling. I felt behind and alone. It is important to increase the funding and extend this program to as many schools as possible.

I work for the College of Education at UNLV where we are doing research implementing a curriculum in regular elementary schools, specifically in second grade, that is resulting in a big improvement in reading and English skills. The research is not published yet, but I do have video showing how the regular students interact with this curriculum. It is important to recognize that many CCSD students are starting to be bilingual and this curriculum is really helping a lot of students. Extending it to as many schools as possible would help all students and not just the EL students.

KELLY GRONDAHL (Principal, Vegas Verdes Elementary School):

I support S.B. 467 and appreciate the funding that comes with Victory schools. In the 2015-2016 school year, our school was one of the lowest performing schools in CCSD. We got the funding opportunity for Victory and we immediately jumped to an honorary Shining Stars School level. The next year, we were a Shining Stars School. The year after that, we dropped a little, but we allocated the money this year to help with curriculum.

We created a parent center and concentrated on our parent involvement to get our school families in step with how important education is for the students, especially when dealing with generational poverty, which we see consistently throughout the District.

Thank you for the assistance and aid for our kids. The gentleman who spoke before me represents all our kids. We want them all to be able to succeed and speak to how Victory helped them get to where they are today.

FELICIA ORTIZ:

In reading the bill, the change I see is that the expiration date is changing to May 31, 2019, which is the end of next month. I am assuming that is an error and it should be 2021 if it is to continue for the biennium. Under the assumption that it will be corrected, I support S.B. 467.

The Victory funding is positively impacting our schools. If some schools improve too much, they can lose that funding. Based on an equity study put out last year, if the money is put into the Distributive School Account, it follows the teacher's salary, not necessarily the students. We want to ensure that whatever money we are putting towards our students with the highest need is actually impacting them at the school they attend. The benefit of impacting all kids at

that school is wonderful. Imagine if we funded schools in a way where all kids could get the same services and achieve at the same level.

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

You may have missed the question we had earlier about the effective date of passage and how long the program would continue. Our staff is working on that so we will have that resolved.

MR. AYALA:

I am a community organizer and I work with students on behalf of education advocacy, but I am here representing myself. I went through Crestwood Elementary School and Rancho High School in Las Vegas; my brother went to VHS. These are heavily Latino areas. We saw a lot of progress after the Zoom and Victory programs came into effect. I support S.B. 467 since it has benefitted my community and the Nevada education system as a whole.

FERNANDO ROMERO (President, Hispanics in Politics):

I support S.B. 467. For Nevada's education equity, the Zoom and Victory programs have proven to be great investments, demonstrating that more funding definitely makes a difference. Schools that have achieved the 3-Star rating need continued funding to maintain and continue the progress they have achieved. I appreciated hearing from the VHS students and how Victory funding helped them.

CECIA ALVARADO (State Director, Mi Familia Vota):

I support S.B. 467 as a mother and a member of this community. I am a product of CCSD who moved to Las Vegas when I was 16. We did not have programs to help us learn English at that time, so I see these programs now and I see how much it benefits everyone.

PUNAM MATHUR (Vice Chair, Communities in Schools):

I support S.B. 467, and I appreciate what Senator Denis said at the beginning about how these programs are a symbol of hope. I see that hope in these VHS students who spoke, and in all the principals who have testified from all schools in the north and the south parts of our State. I know that programs do not change lives, but people do. These people who are doing the work need the resources to do it and that is what Zoom and Victory represent.

I am grateful that we are not just talking about symbols of hope in Zoom and Victory. Today we have proven strategies that work. It is ironic that we talk about pieces of legislation, hoping to pass them and then find the money. In this case, the Governor has recommended the money and now we need the catcher's mitt to catch it. Concentration of investment at a school site does matter. As we migrate to weighted-school funding, it is important we preserve concentration of funding around Zoom and Victory students in a way that principals can deliver programs and people to help these students.

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

I will take testimony in opposition or neutral to S.B. 467.

JOHN VELLARDITA (Executive Director, Clark County Education Association):
The Clark County Education Association supports S.B. 467. We eagerly await the new bill that will reform our funding system which is why we are speaking in neutral on this bill.

In 2013, we supported the introduction of this categorical program and we supported it again in 2015 and 2017. Three successive studies have essentially said that we need to move off the current funding to weighted-funding based on increasing the guaranteed support for per pupil as well as additional revenue for special needs. We are eagerly waiting to see how the categorical model fits into the new bill when it is introduced, because everything we just heard speaks to the fact that resources pay off, particularly if they are used in proven intervention strategies and programs that advance student education.

The current Zoom program only addresses 16 percent of EL students in 38 CCSD schools. There are 23,000 kids in those 38 schools and only 9,000 of those students are EL students. That is a school-based model; not a student-based model. It is not money that follows a student; it is money that goes to a particular zip code and a building. We want to move forward to something that is more equitable and, more importantly, addresses every student of need, whether it is an EL student, the bottom 25 percent, free and reduced price lunch students or gifted and talented students.

SUSAN ULREY (Education Programs Professional, Department of Education):

There were some comments made regarding schools that could lose money if they reached a high star status in the Victory program. The concern is there because there is bill language stating that Victory schools were chosen because

they were 1-Star and 2-Star schools. There is not anything in the language of the bill that states the funding would continue if those schools hit a 3-Star, 4-Star or 5-Star rating.

SENATOR DENIS:

This program is making a difference in the lives of children. I agree that when we put the needed resources into education, we see results. I hope we can continue to have this discussion on how we help all the kids with the limited amount of money we have. This bill provides hope for our kids.

VICE CHAIR WOODHOUSE:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 467.

CHAIR DENIS:

I will open public comment. Seeing no one wanting to testify, I adjourn the meeting of the Senate Committee on Education at 2:51 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Linda Hiller,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Moises Denis, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit / # of pages		Witness / Entity	Description
	A	2		Agenda
	B	7		Attendance Roster
S.B. 414	C	2	Senator Ben Kieckhefer,	Proposed Amendment
S.B. 126	D	1	Jen Sturm	Work Session Documents
S.B. 453	E	1	Crystal Abba / Nevada System of Higher Education	Summary
S.B. 184	F	6	Jen Sturm	Work Session Documents
S.B. 467	G	1	Ruben Murillo, Jr., / Nevada State Education Association	Letter of Support
S.B. 467	H	21	Lorna James-Cervantes / Clark County School District	Written Testimony and Zoom School Report
S.B. 467	I	2	Barry Bosacker / Clark County School District	Written Testimony
S.B. 467	J	1	Sarah Popek / Clark County School District	Written Testimony
S.B. 467	K	1	Autumn Tampa	Written Testimony
S.B. 467	L	1	Valerie Vargas	Written Testimony
S.B. 467	M	1	Yahaira Reyes	Written Testimony
S.B. 467	N	2	Giovanni Antonio Cervoni	Written Testimony
S.B. 467	O	2	Sylvia Lazos / Nevada Immigration Coalition	Letter of Support