

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Eighty-first Session
February 3, 2021**

The Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Moises Denis at 1:07 p.m. on Wednesday, February 3, 2021, Online. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Moises Denis, Chair
Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Vice Chair
Senator Roberta Lange
Senator Joseph P. Hardy
Senator Scott Hammond
Senator Carrie A. Buck

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jen Sturm, Policy Analyst
Asher Killian, Counsel
Michael Guss, Committee Secretary
Ian Gahner, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Joel Moore, State Relations Strategist, Education Commission of the States
Zeke Perez, Policy Analyst, Education Commission of the States
Jhone Ebert, Superintendent, Department of Education
Tom Dunn, District Vice President, Professional Fire Fighters of Nevada
Hawah Ahmad, Clark County Education Association
Joelle Gutman Dodson, Washoe County Health District
Bradley Mayer, Southern Nevada Health District
Mary Pierczynski, Nevada Association of School Superintendents
Jonathan Moore, Ed.D, Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement,
Department of Education
Brian Rippet, President, Nevada State Education Association
Chris Daly, Deputy Director, Nevada State Education Association

CHAIR DENIS:

Before we begin, I will explain how virtual committee meetings will work. This is a new process for all of us. The Legislative Building is closed to the public. All committee meetings will be held virtually. Committee members, staff, and everyone else will participate through Zoom, videoconference, or telephone. The public can engage with the Committee in four ways. These ways include registering on Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS), which places you in line to testify on a bill or provide public comment, submitting written testimony through the Committee email address or fax number, sharing your opinion via the Legislator's opinion application on NELIS, or viewing committee meetings online via NELIS or the Legislature's YouTube channel.

To testify on a bill or provide public comment, members of the public must register for the meeting they wish to participate in. Committee meetings are listed in several places on NELIS. To register, click the participate button near the meeting date and time. Fill out the required information listed. Once your registration is submitted, you will see a confirmation screen and receive an email with the phone number and meeting identification number to call at the time of the meeting. While meeting registration is required to participate, it does not guarantee you will be able to speak. Testimony and public comment may be limited due to time constraints.

When you are on the phone line, pay attention to which bill is being considered and follow the verbal prompts provided by Broadcast and Production Services staff, so you know which keys are used to raise your hand or unmute yourself. Staff will call on you to speak by the last three digits of your phone number. Detailed instructions on how to participate are also available on the help page, which is linked in the banner at the top of every webpage on NELIS. If you need assistance on how to receive electronic notification of the agendas and minutes, please contact our Committee Manager at the Committee email listed on the agenda.

Please mute your microphones when not speaking. I will open up the public comment period at the end of the meeting. I will take testimony in support, opposition, or neutral for the bills on today's agenda. Public comment and testimony on bills are limited to two minutes per speaker.

We will now review and approve the Senate Committee on Education Rules for this Session ([Exhibit B](#)). In addition, I ask that members attend all meetings from

start to finish, unless you are excused in advance. If something occurs that prevents you from attending, please inform me. I want to ensure everyone is here for voting actions. Courtesy and mutual respect is important. I ask that everyone be kind and professional. We are public servants. I will do everything in my power to ensure a fair hearing for all parties and bills heard by this Committee.

SENATOR LANGE MOVED TO ADOPT THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION RULES FOR THE 2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION.

SENATOR HAMMOND SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DENIS:

Our Policy Analyst will provide an overview of our Senate Committee on Education Brief ([Exhibit C](#)). This is a tool to help us prepare and execute our duties as members of the Committee.

JEN STURM (Policy Analyst):

As nonpartisan legislative staff, I neither support nor oppose any legislation. Starting on page 1 of the Brief, you will note the Committee's jurisdiction. Except for the education finance chapter, the statutory jurisdiction in recent sessions includes most of Title 34 of *Nevada Revised Statutes* and several chapters in Title 33 concerning libraries. As noted on page 2, during the 2019 Session, this Committee considered a total of 81 measures; a similar number are expected in 2021. Of those, 66 measures, or 81 percent, were voted out of the Committee. Fifty-three measures, or 65 percent, were approved by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. The chart on page 2 is a breakdown of these measures. With a similar number of bills expected this Session, anticipate hearing an average of three bills at each meeting before the April 9 first house committee deadline.

On pages 2 and 3 of [Exhibit C](#), I listed a number of major bills passed during the 2019 Regular Session and the 31st Special Session in 2020. In addition to the appropriation bills, S.B. No. 555 of the 80th Session and A.B. No. 3 of the

31st Special Session, note legislation that addressed school safety and student well-being measures. The reporting includes information related to suicide and suicide prevention—including procedures for responding to a suicide, crisis, or emergency—conducting an interim study on safe and respectful learning environments, and establishing the Handle with Care Program. Several other school safety and student well-being measures were passed through S.B. No. 89 of the 80th Session, which passed unanimously in both Houses. The bill established a Statewide school safety committee, required school climate information in reporting, addressed restorative discipline practices, and required districts and charter schools to designate a school safety specialist.

Other bills addressed topics related to class size and the Statewide teacher performance evaluation system. S.B. No. 543 of the 80th Session replaced the current Nevada Plan funding formula and the majority of categorical funding for K-12 with the new Pupil-Centered Funding Plan. It also established the Commission on School Funding to support its implementation. This is not meant to be an all-inclusive list.

Page 4 lists national education topics. During the Interim, several education groups met on a wide range of topics, some of which may come before the Committee. I will start with the Interim Legislative Committee on Education (LCE). This Committee considered a number of topics related to K-12 and postsecondary education. The LCE received presentations on a variety of topics, starting on page 5 and continuing on page 6. The Committee reviewed topics including early learning programs, student assessments, career pathways, and financial aid for higher education programs. The LCE approved six proposals for legislation on topics including student assessments, charter schools, school buses, and others. Eighteen proposals were approved for correspondence on issues or inclusion in position statements. More details of the LCE's actions can be found in its final bulletin report, linked in the electronic version on page 6.

The Commission on School Funding is listed next in [Exhibit C](#). The implementation of S.B. No. 543 of the 80th Session was guided by the Commission. In July 2020, the Commission submitted its recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature to provide input on how best to support the successful implementation of the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan. The Commission has an ongoing role in monitoring the implementation of the new funding plan and make recommendations for its improvement. The Commission's recommendations are summarized on page 6.

The next item to review is the Working Group Studying the Provisions of a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment. Senate Bill No. 332 of the 80th Session required the LCE to study safe and respectful learning environments in consultation with various stakeholders. Due to interruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, staff of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) was directed to work with relevant stakeholders on this review, gather information, and report those findings to the LCE.

The final report is linked on page 7 of the electronic version. The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force met and provided several recommendations to the LCE. The recommendations included topics related to the recruitment to the teaching profession, the path from recruitment to employment, and retention matters. One recommendation offered by the Task Force and voted as a bill draft request (BDR) by the LCE directs the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) to develop, implement, and analyze the results of the statewide educator exit survey. Toward the bottom of page 7 is a review of the BDRs available on NELIS and the Governor's State of the State Address. This Committee's prefiled bills are listed on page 8; we are hearing 2 today.

Every session, the Legislature requires several reports be submitted. Pages 8 and 9 list reports that may be of interest to the Committee, including the Superintendent of Public Instruction's annual report of the state of public education, educational technology needs assessment, regional training programs evaluation, and Advisory Council for Family Engagement activities. Starting on page 9, the Research Division prepares research briefs and other publications for all major policy areas. These publications are available on the Legislative website. Additional publications concerning education are available from the Fiscal Analysis Division. Pages 9 and 10 list key policy bodies that consider education in the State. Finally, pages 11 and 12 list common acronyms used by this Committee and other education entities.

JOEL MOORE (State Relations Strategist, Education Commission of the States):
The Education Commission of the States (ECS) is a national nonpartisan education policy center. The ECS was created in law in all 50 state statutes, with the purpose of helping education policy leaders run the Country, whether it is governor's offices, state departments of education, boards of education, higher education, and legislators and their staff.

We create 6 to 8 policy briefs and 50 state comparisons each month. These items are available for free, and searchable on our website www.ecs.org. We also track all introduced educational legislation across the Country, with about 7,000 bills this past year. We summarize all the enacted and vetoed education legislation and executive orders. We share all of that information on our website. If something is related to state education policy that we do not have prepared information, we look into it. We usually respond to the requestor within 72 hours.

ZEKE PEREZ (Policy Analyst, Education Commission of the States):

We have dozens of ECS staff members who are tracking over 60 legislative issues. In 2020, we tracked over 8,600 bills that were introduced for education issues across the U.S. We analyzed over 900 bills that were inactive or vetoed by governors.

The Trending Topics in Education Policy List ([Exhibit D](#)) and Trending Topics in Education Policy Presentation ([Exhibit E](#)) pull training topics based on bill volume tracking from 2020 and early 2021, and questions we received from state leaders late last year or early this year. The numbers I am presenting are purely from 2020 data, but we project the trends will continue in 2021. Top 5 trends that we identify are teaching, K-12 funding, postsecondary affordability and finance, student health and wellness, and high school issues. We also saw a large number of bills introduced due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Rather than a separate issue, Covid-19 will be covered as a threat in all 5 trends.

For teaching in 2020, we tracked over 1,400 pieces of legislation addressing the teaching profession. Of the 1,400, 166 were enacted or vetoed. Of the 166, 28 were related directly to the Covid-19 pandemic. Teaching bills typically address three different trends. The first trend is preparation and professional development for teachers. In recent years, teachers requested more effective training experiences and support during pre-service and active service. Common items requested include more collaborative, personalized, and relevant training, and different personal development (PD) opportunities offered in multiple formats. States are also offering content-area-specific PD. For example, we have seen a number of states work on Pre-kindergarten through 3rd Grade alignment literacy systems and build up comprehensive systems. Some states have approached this from a teaching angle by examining teacher preparation and establishing new PD opportunities around literacy, and the identification of

dyslexia, to ensure teachers are better prepared to support all students in literacy.

The next trend we identify is teacher evaluations, specifically for the 2021 school year. We have received questions from a number of state leaders asking how they are handling evaluation requirements this year. The ECS has seen a few approaches to the topic. Some states waive all requirements for evaluations, others waive certain requirements, and others give flexibility or guidance to local districts on how to handle evaluations. Additionally, states or state boards of education have amended their provisions, stating during a public health emergency teachers can maintain the previous year's evaluation ratings. Other states have approved proposals to suspend strict compliance with personal evaluation requirements to give local districts more control.

The final trend we identify is teacher recruitment and retention. There are questions about teacher recruitment and maintaining a diverse workforce. We anticipate this trend will continue into 2021. A number of states have seen shortages of effective teachers. They are not only concerned with getting more teachers, but also with getting more teachers in the right subjects and schools. States have addressed this issue by focusing on teacher turnover or shortages in specific subject areas by providing supplemental health insurance to draw teachers to those areas. In the wake of the pandemic, it can be challenging for states to focus on recruitment and retention. States are finding new ways to be creative. We have seen states beginning to look at midcareer transitions. Typically, teacher recruitment efforts focus on individuals who are starting a teaching career. Incentives exist, such as loan forgiveness or bonuses, which are available to anyone pursuing teaching at different points in their career. More states are looking to create policies for individuals working outside of education. States are opening up licensure and certification requirements to pull people from other professions into teaching.

The second trend identified is K-12 funding. The ECS saw 684 bills relating to K-12 finance and funding in 2020. One hundred twenty-three of those bills were enacted or vetoed. Of the 123, 56 were related to the Covid-19 pandemic. States primarily draw revenue for public schools from state and local sources. As economic situations change, that puts a big financial strain on how states budget money towards education. Many states look to allocate various amounts to students with more need and do so when volatility is happening. Most K-12 bills look to change how funds are distributed at the state and local

level. Others look at how school funding formulas account for student populations, like foster youth, students in special education, English language users, or students from low-income families.

Recently, we have seen states put a priority on funding students with tiny student populations. States are funding these populations a number of ways, including increasing or decreasing allocations for certain populations, making adjustments to their funding formulas, or adopting new funding models. In response to the pandemic, states are investigating how to better allocate funds to mitigate the uneven effects of the pandemic on disadvantaged schools. States are identifying districts that may not have the cash reserves needed to provide staff development, provide resources to go remote, or other tools that facilitate the instruction needed during the pandemic. States are adding supplemental income when possible for low-wealth counties or communities as a remedy.

Another challenge this year is attendance-based funding. How do you provide funding based on students in classrooms when students are not physically in a classroom to be counted? States have two different approaches they use or introduce. First, states are altering their funding policies to encompass other methods of instruction, such as in-person, hybrid or remote. A number of states told districts they should expect to receive the full allocation of funds regardless of the attendance format they used. The second approach is states are suspending attendance counts this year, opting to fund schools based on last year's counts.

In postsecondary affordability and finance, we saw a lot of overlap with K-12 funding. We also saw a number of different approaches to handle the pandemic. There were 582 bills introduced, 82 of them were enacted or vetoed, and 31 of the 82 bills were related to the pandemic. One key area we have seen states take part in is funding workforce development. An example of this development is helping people who are unemployed adapt to a new degree or field and get back into the workforce. One way states are doing this is increasing funding or providing supplemental funding to career and technical institutions to provide retraining or recertification for individuals out of work due to the pandemic.

States have also explored ways to make postsecondary education more affordable and reduce student debt. States have altered in-state tuition for

specific student populations, such as military children or children of immigrants. The intent is to keep students in their home state for education. Similar to K-12, states have adjusted their funding formulas, grants and other sources of funding to reallocate money towards postsecondary systems.

In student health and wellness, we have seen an increase in students reporting high levels of stress, depression, and anxiety over the past few years. Youth suicide rates continue to rise. The effects of childhood trauma are showing up in classrooms across the Country. Policymakers have begun to explore their role in bettering student health, including mental and behavioral in the classroom. We saw 1,400 pieces of legislation introduced, 120 were enacted or vetoed in 2020, and 21 of those were directly related to the pandemic. Student mental and behavioral health is a key issue identified. States have directed their boards of education to review age-appropriate health standards and introduce concepts that address mental, emotional, and social health. States are outlining procedures in schools to provide school-based behavioral health referrals for their students. Maine, Colorado, and Virginia passed legislation in 2020 that allows students to take excused absences from school for mental or behavioral health reasons.

Another key area identified is raising awareness, providing support for mental and behavioral health, and suicide awareness and prevention. States have introduced this awareness directly into the student curriculum, and into the training of counselors, staff and teachers. States are requiring more teacher training and PD on suicide awareness and trauma-informed care.

The final issue identified for student health and wellness is providing health services. This issue was heavily driven by the pandemic. We anticipate seeing greater amounts of this issue in 2021. A number of states introduced telehealth delivery methods so their schools and districts can provide these services to students. A number of states have examined vaccination requirements for students. In particular, Connecticut has three pending bills. One bill introduces religious exemptions for religious or other claims. A second bill eliminates all exemptions that are nonmedical. The third bill requires a study on students who claim a religious exemption and introduces a contact trace on those students to identify any potential spread of Covid-19. In 2021, ECS anticipates more bills in relation to this issue.

The last trend we identify is in high school. In recent years, high school graduation is often assumed to signify college readiness. Recent federal data indicates that 68 percent of entering students at community colleges—and 40 percent of students entering public 4-year colleges—take at least 1 developmental course. State policymakers are approaching this by seeking the support of high schools by introducing early-credit opportunities. In 2020, 417 bills were introduced related to high school. Sixty-two of those bills were enacted or vetoed. Of the 62, 23 related to the pandemic.

States are looking at how to ensure equitable access to dual-enrollment courses. This occurs by reducing costs and barriers for students, or expanding student eligibility. For example, in California a bill was passed where a participating high school can submit a single parental consent form, a recommendation from their principal, and a single application which will remain valid for the entirety of their enrollment in dual-enrollment courses rather than submitting the paperwork every year. High schools have looked at expanding dual-enrollment eligibility more broadly. Some states reduced test scores as a barrier. Others increased funding to support for equitable access. Finally, we have seen a higher focus on competency-based education. The ECS does anticipate this trend will carry over into 2021. Examples of what we have seen are states shifting graduation requirements to allow for credit based on work opportunities or project-based capstones, and shifting away from reliance on seat time.

SENATOR HARDY:

The burning question I have is how do we get teachers back in the classroom and students back to school?

MR. PEREZ:

I do not have a silver bullet answer for you, but we do have lots of different approaches we are happy to pass on.

CHAIR DENIS:

We will now open the hearing on Senate Bill (S.B.) 36.

SENATE BILL 36: Revises provisions relating to plans for responses to crises, emergencies and suicides by schools. (BDR 34-296)

JHONE EBERT (Superintendent, Department of Education):

Senate Bill 36 was filed by the Office of the Governor on behalf of the NDE, our partners in Public Health and Safety who identified a gap in services, and our school district committees who create the crisis emergency or suicide response plans. The S.B. 36 Crises Management Executive Summary ([Exhibit F](#)) and the Crisis Management Presentation ([Exhibit G](#)) detail the changes listed in this bill.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

Can you give a brief explanation of the difference between a pandemic and an epidemic?

MS. EBERT:

A pandemic is worldwide, while an epidemic is confined to a specific area.

SENATOR LANGE:

In section 1, it says "The board of trustees of each school district shall establish a development committee to develop one plan." To me a development committee is something you do with money. What you are doing is creating a crisis committee to develop a plan. Can the language be cleaned up and made more concise? It is redundant to repeat the same terms. This bill establishes a crisis committee to create a plan for the public schools. It would be easier if the bill says, "The board of trustees of each school district shall establish a crisis committee to develop one plan." When you talk about charter schools, it is the same situation.

MS. EBERT:

I agree that change would add clarity.

CHAIR DENIS:

I have one suggestion. Section 1, subsection 2, paragraph (e) on line 22 talks about a parent or legal guardian. Generally, we have always tried in legislation to list it as a parent that is not an employee of the school district. It allows a different perspective.

MS. EBERT:

I agree with the proposed amendment. It does allow a different perspective.

SENATOR BUCK:

In section 1, subsection 1, on line 5, why does it say, "public schools other than the charter schools in the school district"? Why are charter schools not involved?

ASHER KILLIAN (Counsel):

The wording is a drafting construction to differentiate between the board of trustees of the school district developing the plan for the traditional schools. Later in that paragraph, the governing body of the charter schools is responsible for developing the plan that would apply to the charter school. They are both public schools, but have different governing institutions. To ensure both schools are appropriately provided for, they are bifurcated.

CHAIR DENIS:

Does that wording address the issue of charter schools under the school district versus the charter school authority?

MR. KILLIAN:

That is correct. For a charter school whose sponsor is the school district, that school district would be the governing body of that charter school.

SENATOR HARDY:

Can we clean up the language to state just "or" and remove "and"? Also, existing law requires that we create this plan. Have we not created this plan yet?

MR. KILLIAN:

In regards to the "and" clarification, the way the language of the section is constructed are two parallel tracks that are the same. Any public school that is not a charter school would follow the track where the board of trustees is responsible. Any public school that is a charter school would follow the track where its governing body is responsible. The same requirements apply, just a different entity responsible for executing.

MS. EBERT:

In response to Senator Hardy's second question, all school districts and charter schools have completed their annual requirements for these plans. These proposed changes would be for plans going forward.

CHAIR DENIS:

Before calling testifiers for support, opposition, or neutral, I want to define what neutral means. Neutral means you are not in support or opposition to the bill. Usually people that are neutral are from agencies or they want to give a comment. What I do not want is a testifier stating "I really like it, but I don't like this part, and this part, so I'm neutral." In other words, you do not like the bill so vote in opposition. As a reminder, you are limited to two minutes. In addition, testifiers have the ability to submit anything in writing to ensure it is included in the record.

TOM DUNN (District Vice President, Professional Fire Fighters of Nevada):

We are in support of S.B. 36. It brings public health to the table of emergency management at the school district level. We believe this bill addresses the current pandemic and will lead to good policy in the future.

HAWAH AHMAD (Clark County Education Association):

The pandemic has underscored our public school delivery systems lack of responsiveness. District leaders, representatives from the health department, educators, and parents must work together to respond to emergencies, crises, suicides, and epidemics. The Clark County School District has experienced a mental health crisis since the beginning of school closures that resulted in a high number of student suicides. Educators, administrators, and students need a plan to help prepare and manage future crises, emergencies, and epidemics as we return to in-person and hybridized learning to support the mental and behavioral health of all individuals in the education realm. The Clark County Education Association (CCEA) supports the creation of risk management mechanisms to support our educators and students through these difficult times. Senate Bill 36 is a crucial step.

JOELLE GUTMAN DODSON (Washoe County Health District):

We are in support of S.B. 36. We believe our emergency management division can help provide emergency response, planning, and public health expertise. The Washoe County Health District (WCHD) thinks S.B. 36 will serve the community well to have a coordinated emergency response. The WCHD does request an amendment. We ask for more clarity as to who the representative of the district board of health can be. We request that a qualified designee of the district board of health could be a member of the development committee. The language of the amendment is up to the LCB.

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BRADLEY MAYER (Southern Nevada Health District):

We are in support of S.B. 36. We also support the clarified language that Ms. Gutman Dodson has proposed.

MARY PIERCZYNSKI (Nevada Association of School Superintendents):

We are in support of S.B. 36. Safety and concerns about our children's health in school is very important to us.

VICE CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

We will now open the hearing on S.B. 83.

SENATE BILL 83: Revises provisions relating to certain assessments. (BDR 34-527)

SENATOR MOISES DENIS (Senatorial District No. 2):

The bill before you today comes as a recommendation from the Interim Legislative Committee on Education. Due to the shift to remote learning resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, on March 20, 2020, the United States Department of Education (DOED) announced it would allow states to submit a waiver from federally mandated testing and other requirements for school year (SY) 2019-2020. On the same day, NDE announced it had submitted the waiver request to the DOED and it was later approved.

In September 2020, the U.S. Secretary of Education indicated no additional waivers would be granted to states for SY 2020–2021. While the current administration has not yet given additional guidance in this regard, S.B. 83 allows the NDE to take action if the DOED allows for such a waiver or pause for SY 2020-2021. This bill authorizes the NDE to temporarily waive or pause the requirement to administer federally required examinations that measure the achievement and proficiency of pupils if the DOED allows for such a waiver or pause. The bill also makes conforming changes to other statutes related to the temporary waiver or pause to administer such assessments. After reaching out to relevant stakeholders, NDE proposed an amendment to further clarify certain reporting responsibilities if the waiver is granted as proposed in the bill.

JONATHAN MOORE, Ed.D. (Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement, Department of Education):

The NDE proposes language changes listed in a proposed S.B. 83 Amendment ([Exhibit H](#)).

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VICE CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:
This is a friendly amendment?

SENATOR DENIS:
Correct, the amendment allows the State to also pause the assessment. The amendment would clarify the national and the State waiver.

SENATOR HAMMOND:
Is the purpose of this bill to anticipate the opportunity for future waivers? Is there anything different in this bill from what occurred previously?

SENATOR DENIS:
Yes, what occurred last year was due to an emergency. This bill would prevent the Governor to go through last year's process. The requirements still need to be met, but this bill allows the State to be timelier with the process.

SENATOR BUCK:
How long will this bill apply?

SENATOR DENIS:
Senate Bill 83 will apply to any emergency situation in the future. That is my understanding.

MR. KILLIAN:
That is correct. The Statewide waiver is tied to the federal waiver. So long as the federal waiver is active, the State waiver would be.

MS. AHMAD:
Students across Nevada have experienced distance education for nearly a full year. Many of these students have experienced inconsistent engagement and learning. Nevada must be responsive to the needs of students to minimize the impact of educational inequities occurring due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A pause, or waiver, of standardized testing in accordance with federal guidelines may help our educators put students skill development at the forefront of their education. This ensures every student has an opportunity to enter the workforce or continue their education. With S.B 83, the NDE can help educators prioritize the needs of their students without being bound in measurements of achievement and proficiency, as proscribed by pre-pandemic times. The CCEA

legislation is responsive to the pandemic and are supporters of ensuring we do everything in our power to ensure students are given an opportunity to succeed.

BRIAN RIPPET (President, Nevada State Education Association):

I support S.B. 83. The pandemic has affected everything, including the education community. Students are experiencing their own difficulties and successes. They need a caring professional to welcome and guide them as we transition back to full-time in-person learning. The professional teachers in the classroom need trust, support, and time to evaluate and plan for the success of their students. Spring is on its way and is known as testing season in many schools. Testing season consumes weeks of class time. Machines scan the tests out of state and report vague results often many months after the tests are submitted. This is hardly what our kids need at this time.

CHRIS DALY (Deputy Director, Nevada State Education Association):

We support S.B. 83. Over testing has been a long-standing concern of classroom educators. Decades of standardized tests shifted the focus in education away from student learning toward a culture of high-stakes testing. Over the last two sessions, the Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) worked with this Committee to reduce the burden of standardized testing on our students and educators. This included helping pass a 2017 bill from Senator Woodhouse to audit and streamline the amount of time and resources spent on State tests.

While small changes have been made over the last several years, the current crisis calls for a more substantive overhaul of State testing requirements. The NSEA has consistently expressed its concern regarding existing policy on student assessments, teacher evaluations, and school star ratings that compromise the safe operation of schools during the Covid-19 crisis. These mechanisms have failed to foster the improvement in achievement or student engagement they were intended to deliver. With a continued reliance on old schemes, students and educators encounter incentives to come to school when sick, teach the test instead of teaching and reinforcing health and safety, and to maximize numbers and time in classrooms even when that may be outside of health and safety guidelines.

Drastic improvement in testing results during this school year presented to the NDE during their November meeting highlight how ridiculous it is to conduct these tests during a pandemic. This school year, educators across the State

have responded in a diversity of ways depending on their district and the status of the Covid-19 crisis in their community. Some are back at their school building offering in-person instruction. Others are working in hybrid models, juggling in-person learning with distance learning opportunities. Many others, including Clark County, are working to create meaningful education experiences through full-distance learning. With districts tailoring their responses to meet unique challenges in their own communities, the State's "one size fits all" approach to standardized tests misses the mark of this moment. Suspension of elaborate sorting and rating mechanisms, including federal, State, and district-mandated assessments, is the smart thing to do.

MS. PIERCZYNSKI:

We see S.B. 83 as a commonsense approach to dealing with this period of time. Many students are challenged with the distance education approach our State was forced to undertake. We support S.B. 83.

VICE CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 83.

CHAIR DENIS:

This is a timely issue. If the Committee is satisfied with S.B. 83, I would suggest we consider this bill today.

SENATOR HAMMOND MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
S.B. 83 WITH THE PROPOSED CHANGES LISTED IN [EXHIBIT H](#).

SENATOR LANGE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR DENIS:

Senator Lange, will you do the floor statement for S.B. 83?

SENATOR LANGE:

Yes.

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CHAIR DENIS:

With no further comment, the meeting is adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Ian Gahner,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Moises Denis, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit Letter	Begins on Page	Witness / Entity	Description
	A	1		Agenda
	B	1	Senator Moises Denis	Senate Committee Rules
	C	1	Jen Sturm	Senate Committee on Education Brief
	D	1	Joel Moore and Zeke Perez / Education Commission of the States	Trending Topics in Education Brief
	E	1	Joel Moore and Zeke Perez / Education Commission of the States	Trending Topics in Education Policy Presentation
S.B. 36	F	1	Jhone Ebert / Department of Education	S.B. 36 Crises Management Executive Summary
S.B. 36	G	1	Jhone Ebert / Department of Education	S.B. 36 Crisis Management Presentation
S.B. 83	H	1	Johnathan Moore / Department of Education	S.B. 83 Amendment