

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
AND
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
SUBCOMMITTEES ON K-12/HIGHER EDUCATION/CIP**

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

The joint meeting of the Subcommittees on K-12/Higher Education/CIP of the Senate Committee on Finance and the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means was called to order by Chair Marilyn Dondero Loop at 8:07 a.m. on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, Online. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Chair
Senator Julia Ratti
Senator Nicole J. Cannizzaro
Senator Ben Kieckhefer
Senator Heidi Seevers Gansert

ASSEMBLY SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Maggie Carlton, Chair
Assemblywoman Sandra Jauregui, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Jason Frierson
Assemblywoman Michelle Gorelow
Assemblyman Gregory T. Hafen II
Assemblyman Glen Leavitt
Assemblyman Tom Roberts

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblywoman Teresa Benitez-Thompson (Excused)

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Wayne Thorley, Senate Fiscal Analyst
Sarah Coffman, Assembly Fiscal Analyst
Adam Drost, Senior Program Analyst

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Jaimarie Mangoba, Program Analyst
Sarah Sawyer, Committee Secretary
Tom Weber, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jhone Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education
Heidi Haartz, Deputy Superintendent for Business and Support Services,
Department of Education
Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association
Steven Cohen, Disability Self-Advocate

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

These Subcommittees will begin by hearing from the Nevada Department of Education (NDE).

JHONE EBERT (Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education):
The NDE's mission is to improve student achievement and educator effectiveness by ensuring opportunities, facilitating learning and promoting excellence.

The NDE models its initiatives around the six core values detailed on page 3 of the Nevada Department of Education Presentation ([Exhibit B](#)). The cornerstone of the NDE's work revolves around equity. The NDE's equity initiatives are not succinct or complete without access to quality, success, inclusivity, community and transparency.

The values of the NDE were informed by its Statewide listening tour, during which I visited all 17 school districts and the State Public Charter School Authority to showcase innovative work happening in Nevada communities. The NDE aligns work objectives around the six goals of its Statewide Plan for the Improvement of Pupils (STIP) as shown on page 4 of [Exhibit B](#). The NDE collaborates with State partners to ensure STIP goals support the approximately 500,000 students within Nevada's education system.

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HEIDI HAARTZ (Deputy Superintendent for Business and Support Services,
Department of Education):

The NDE's accountability programs are funded by budget account
(B/A) 101-2697 as described on pages 6 and 7 of [Exhibit B](#).

EDUCATION

K-12 EDUCATION

NDE - Assessments and Accountability — Budget Page K-12 EDUCATION-82
(Volume I)

Budget Account 101-2697

Budget account 101-2697 includes funding for administering student assessments required by *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 389 and 390 and the U.S. Department of Education. Budget account 101-2697 also supports costs related to the Nevada Council to Establish Academic Standards for Public Schools. Funding from B/A 101-2697 is used to maintain student accountability information utilized in the NDE's annual reports of accountability.

The Executive Budget requests funding for enhancement decision units E-275 and E-277 as shown on page 7 of [Exhibit B](#).

E-275 Elevating Education — Page K-12 EDUCATION-84

E-277 Elevating Education — Page K-12 EDUCATION-85

Decision unit E-275 restores funding for Northwest Evaluation Association, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments. Reductions to MAP assessment funding were previously approved during the Thirty-first Special Session to help the State meet its budgetary reduction targets. The U.S. Department of Education waived assessments during the spring of 2020 for all states.

With the support of the Office of the Governor, the NDE strives to continually utilize MAP assessments. These assessments provide critical data and appraise the early-literacy abilities and knowledge of students in kindergarten through Grade 3 (K-3). Educators are also provided with tools through MAP assessments

which enable them to determine strengths of students and set instruction goals. Educators can communicate important milestones regarding literacy proficiency to parents and families through MAP assessments. This enables educators to continue working with students inside and outside the classroom to support student growth and literacy.

During the Eightieth Legislative Session, the Legislature approved \$5,943 in funding for the Academic Standards Council in each year of the 2019-2021 biennium. Based on its experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, the NDE can continue supporting the Academic Standards Council with reduced funding. The NDE met virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic and continually strives to make its business practices more efficient.

SENATOR RATTI:

How would the administration of MAP assessments change during the 2021-2023 biennium if the funding for NDE's Read by Grade 3 program is transferred into the pupil-centered funding plan (PCFP)?

Ms. HAARTZ:

The measures of assessment will continue providing critical information to the NDE, school districts and charter schools for monitoring and tracking the progress of students. While Read by Grade 3 funding is recommended to transfer into B/A 101-2609, the statutory requirements ensuring students attain a literacy level by the end of the third grade will remain in place. The only thing that will change is the mechanism by which funding is allocated to school districts and charter schools.

NDE - State Education Funding Account — Budget Page K-12 EDUCATION-13
(Volume I)

Budget Account 101-2609

SENATOR RATTI:

How would the administration of MAP assessments change if school districts and charter schools choose to allocate base per-pupil funding (PPF) to other kindergarten through Grade 12 (K-12) areas? How can we ensure funding for MAP assessments is being used as intended?

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MS. HAARTZ:

Per NRS 388.157, school district and charter school boards of trustees are required to prepare a plan to improve the literacy of pupils enrolled in elementary school. Additionally, NRS 388.159 requires each elementary school principal to designate a licensed teacher to serve as a literacy specialist. These statutory requirements will not change even if the implementation of the PCFP will transform the distribution of funding to school districts.

SENATOR RATTI:

Will the literacy specialist be responsible for administering MAP assessments?

MS. HAARTZ:

The responsibilities of literacy specialists at each elementary school is identified in NRS 388.159. The literacy specialist will be responsible for ensuring teachers have access to information including professional development services to support literacy strategies and positive outcomes.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

Through the National Assessment of Educational Progress exam, the NDE found that the reading proficiency of Nevada's fourth grade students is comparable for the first time with those of fourth graders across the Nation. This is due to the success of Read by Grade 3 with the NDE setting aside funding to analyze the effectiveness of this program. A report was previously published detailing the reading proficiency of students across all of Nevada's school districts to determine growth in learning and gains in reading proficiency. Was the MAP assessment used for the report's findings, or was an external contractor hired to assess Read by Grade 3?

MS. EBERT:

Read by Grade 3 is required to undergo an assessment to measure gains in reading proficiency. The NDE has been using MAP assessments in this regard for K-3 grades across all of Nevada's school districts. The federal government also requires the NDE to use the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium assessment to assess student progress in third grade. The NDE has been required to evaluate the success of Read by Grade 3 since the program's inception and hires an external contractor to conduct the evaluation.

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SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

Reports have shown that Read by Grade 3 is very beneficial for students. The ability to read is key to everything a person does in life. I am concerned that funding Read by Grade 3 through the PCFP will make it difficult to track student progress in reading proficiency. Even though the NDE is statutorily required to assess Read by Grade 3 and designate teachers to serve as literacy specialists, I am concerned that school districts will use funding for other unintended purposes.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Please explain why the Governor is recommending the permanent elimination of NDE's end-of-course exams. What alternative exams are being recommended to replace the end-of-course exams?

MS. EBERT:

The NDE has submitted a proposed amendment to Senate Bill (S.B.) 76 to eliminate end-of-course exams.

SENATE BILL 76: Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR 34-297)

The federal government requires the NDE to administer a College and Career Readiness (CCR) assessment to students during their junior year of high school. The NDE chose the American College Testing (ACT) assessment as Nevada's CCR assessment. The NDE has worked with school districts, superintendents and testing directors in determining that the ACT meets federal requirements for measuring student progress. The NDE does not need to administer additional assessments other than the ACT to serve as an end-of-course exam.

MS. HAARTZ:

Budget account 101-2705 is described on pages 8 through 10 of Exhibit B and supports activities in the NDE Office of Educator Licensure.

NDE - Educator Licensure — Budget Page K-12 EDUCATION-92 (Volume I)
Budget Account 101-2705

Budget account 101-2705 provides funding for fingerprinting and background checks of those seeking educator licensure within Nevada and for the mandated tracking and reporting of disciplinary processes to the Nevada State Board of Education. Funding within B/A 101-2705 also supports the NDE Commission on Professional Standards in Education. This is a fully fee-funded budget and no General Fund appropriations are included in B/A 101-2705. When fee-funded budget accounts are reviewed, the Legislature is usually concerned with the amount of reserve funding being maintained. By the end of the 2021-2023 biennium, the NDE anticipates intentionally having a reserve funding level of approximately \$1.3 million within B/A 101-2705.

The NDE's Online Processing of Applications for Licensure (OPAL) system will need to be updated or renewed as it is approaching the end of its projected service contract. Based on information gathered the last time the OPAL system entered a solicitation process, it appeared replacement of the system would cost approximately \$1 million. The NDE is setting aside funds within B/A 101-2705 so this investment can be made at the appropriate time with no additional resources.

Decision units E-500 and E-900 within B/A 101-2705 are described on page 9 of [Exhibit B](#). Both of these decision units pertain to personnel.

E-500 Adjustments To Transfer E900 — Page K-12 EDUCATION-94
E-900 Transfer Epp To Educator Licensure Acct — Page K-12 EDUCATION-95

Decision unit E-900 requests the transfer of one NDE education programs professional (EPP) and position-related operating costs from B/A 101-2612 to B/A 101-2705.

NDE - Educator Effectiveness — Budget Page K-12 EDUCATION-98 (Volume I)
Budget Account 101-2612

E-900 Transfer Epp To Educator Licensure Acct — Page K-12 EDUCATION-101

The transfer within E-900 is recommended because the duties of the EPP are focused on the educator-licensure continuum. Once the EPP is transferred into B/A 101-2705, it is recommended that the funding sources for the position be

changed as reflected in E-500. The duties of the EPP will not change because of the transfer from B/A 101-2612 into B/A 101-2705. The transfer allows the position to be aligned within B/A 101-2705 and the work unit that best mirrors the focus and intent of the EPP.

Decision unit E-805 within B/A 101-2705 is described on page 10 of [Exhibit B](#).

E-805 Classified Position Changes — Page K-12 EDUCATION-95

The reclassification of the program officer III position does not result in additional costs to the State. The request to reclassify positions through E-805 is to create more capacity within the position type to better support the mission of staff funded through B/A 101-2705. Reclassifying the administrative assistant (AA) position will allow it to have more independent ability to conduct background investigations and community outreach due to the greater role of independent decision-making authority associated with this position type.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JAUREGUI:

How will the reclassification of the AA position to a compliance investigator I improve the daily activities of the Office of Educator Licensure's background investigations unit?

Ms. HAARTZ:

The majority of the work allocated to the AA position is focused on background investigations and community outreach. The reclassification of this position will support workload and allow the position to focus more time and effort on conducting background reviews. This will expedite the licensing process for Nevada educators. There are currently six AA II positions and one AA III position funded through B/A 101-2705.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JAUREGUI:

Would the reclassified compliance investigator position only participate in specific NDE Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment SafeVoice program investigations?

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MS. HAARTZ:

A portion of the responsibilities for both of the positions contained in E-805 are allocated to SafeVoice activities. This is a way of sharing capacity across the NDE as SafeVoice does not have investigative staff to examine and consider complaints received regarding Nevada educators. The two positions will have the capacity to conduct necessary investigations in support of SafeVoice.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CARLTON:

The positions contained in E-805 conduct background investigations on people applying for educator licensure in Nevada while also reviewing the criminal histories of unlicensed charter school employees. How many background investigations were completed regarding educator licensure, and how many were completed for unlicensed charter school employees?

MS. HAARTZ:

I will provide this information to these Subcommittees shortly.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CARLTON:

Can you provide a general estimate of the workload dedicated to conducting background investigations for licensed personnel versus the workload of reviewing the criminal history of unlicensed personnel? Knowing the criminal histories of Nevada's educators is very important.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

It is very important to have background information regarding Nevada's educators as our children's lives are at stake. It is not easy for the State to provide educator licensure as many steps are involved in this process.

MS. HAARTZ:

Budget account 101-2612 is detailed on pages 11 through 13 of [Exhibit B](#) and funds the NDE Division of Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement. Decision unit E-275 is described on page 12 of [Exhibit B](#) and requests increases to federally funded travel expenditures related to teacher quality and leadership development activities.

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Both in-State and out-of-State travel for school district representatives and NDE staff is being requested through E-275. Out-of-State travel will allow NDE staff and school district representatives to participate in national federal-titles conferences. Attending these federal conferences will provide an opportunity for staff to gain information on emerging expectations for education and lessons learned.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

What percentage of the EPP position's time is spent supporting State programs such as the NDE Teach Nevada Scholarship program and the NDE Teacher Incentive program?

MS. HAARTZ:

I need to research the work-performance standards for the EPP position to identify any specific workload allocations. I will get back to these Subcommittees with this information.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Since the EPP position supports State programs, why should the position be funded entirely with reserve funding from B/A 101-2705 which is completely funded with educator-license fees?

MS. HAARTZ:

The recommendation to modify the allocation of funding for the EPP position is tied to the position's transfer into an entirely fee-funded budget account. Because the workload of the EPP position correlates to the educator-licensure continuum, it was believed that the transfer of the position into a fully fee-funded account better aligned the position with the work it does. The EPP supports educator licensure and the ongoing needs of Nevada's educators.

Budget account 101-2721 is described on pages 14 through 18 of [Exhibit B](#) and supports the Office.

NDE - Safe and Respectful Learning — Budget Page K-12 EDUCATION-118
(Volume I)

Budget Account 101-2721

Decision unit E-275 within B/A 101-2721 is detailed on pages 15 and 16 of [Exhibit B](#) and supports the ongoing provision of services for SafeVoice.

E-275 Elevating Education — Page K-12 EDUCATION-121

Direct funding for SafeVoice is paid by a third-party vendor and comes from a Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) grant. The PIRE grant will expire on December 31, 2021. The Executive Budget recommends continued funding of SafeVoice through fiscal year (FY) 2022-2023 to ensure continuity of services.

The NDE has submitted a request to the Governor's Office of Finance (GFO) to consider an amendment to E-275. In reviewing the cost estimate provided by the third-party vendor and the date on which the PIRE grant expires, it appears SafeVoice will need additional funds beginning in January 2022. In FY 2022-2023, SafeVoice will need additional funding of approximately \$4,000, as there is a 3 percent increase in the cost of the annual licensure agreement in each calendar year. The amendment that the NDE requested from the GFO is still awaiting consideration and asks for an additional \$63,654 in FY 2021-2022 and \$4,218 in FY 2022-2023.

Information regarding the number of tips received by SafeVoice and the NDE Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment's Handle with Care program is provided on page 16 of [Exhibit B](#). The table shown on page 16 summarizes the most common tips that have been received. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the most common tip received pertained to bullying, but during the pandemic the most common tip dealt with suicidal threats.

Decision unit E-276 within B/A 101-2721 is described on page 17 of [Exhibit B](#).

E-276 Elevating Education — Page K-12 EDUCATION-121

Decision unit E-276 requests the restoration of \$15,000 for competitive grants and \$5,332 for materials specific to bullying prevention in each year of the 2021-2023 biennium.

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Page 18 of [Exhibit B](#) details E-490, E-491 and E-492, all of which identify federal grants set to expire during FY 2021-2022.

E-490 Expiring Grant/Program — Page K-12 EDUCATION-122
E-491 Expiring Grant/Program — Page K-12 EDUCATION-122
E-492 Expiring Grant/Program — Page K-12 EDUCATION-122

Decision unit E-490 requests the elimination of revenue received from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Student, Teachers, and Officers Preventing School Violence Grant Program.

Decision unit E-491 requests the elimination of revenue received from the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Student Mental Health Training grant.

SENATOR RATTI:

Senator Debbie Smith started many antibullying initiatives. The Office is doing a phenomenal job carrying out her legacy. I am glad the Governor is recommending funding for B/A 101-2721 in the Executive Budget even though its federal grants are expiring in FY 2021-2022. The SafeVoice program has become even more critical during the COVID-19 pandemic. Did the NDE research any other funding sources or grants to use in paying for the annual licensing fee of the SafeVoice bullying reporting system?

MS. HAARTZ:

Staff within the Office are innovative and are actively applying for federal grant funding. Due to the importance of maintaining the SafeVoice system to ensure continuity of services to students, families and educators, the Governor is requesting that General Fund appropriations be allocated specifically to SafeVoice. There is uncertainty regarding what federal funds may be available in the future for supporting SafeVoice, and the NDE does not want this program to go unfunded if applicable federal grants do not become available.

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ASSEMBLYWOMAN GORELOW:

Regarding page 16 of [Exhibit B](#), can you describe what the other 5,459 tips received by the SafeVoice program are? Could some tips falling into the "other" category not be considered as true tips?

MS. HAARTZ:

The tips received and tracked by SafeVoice and Handle with Care are categorized into 23 categories. The row in the table shown on page 16 of [Exhibit B](#) describing other tips received through SafeVoice represents tips that do not fall within the 23 categories. Staff within the Office often receive tips regarding many situations. For example, sometimes SafeVoice receives a tip from someone stating that a dog is crossing the street outside of a crosswalk. The Office still considers this a tip.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Do the school/employee complaints shown in the table on page 16 of [Exhibit B](#) represent complaints submitted against teachers, aids and principals by students and their families, or are these tips submitted by staff and other professionals?

MS. HAARTZ:

These complaints are submitted by students regarding staff.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

Staff working for the Office and school district teams are greatly supporting students through the SafeVoice program. The Office has also been able to incorporate text messaging into the SafeVoice platform. SafeVoice has gone from receiving approximately 6,000 tips per year to receiving close to 9,000 tips per year. The number of tips received through SafeVoice decreased slightly during the COVID-19 pandemic. There now being more tips regarding suicide threats than bullying during the pandemic shows how important this program continues to be.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

I agree with Senator Seevers Gansert.

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ASSEMBLYWOMAN CARLTON:

It is unclear how the Office plans to look for other funding streams to use in paying for SafeVoice. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act includes Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Grant funding known as ESSER I funding. The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act provided additional supplemental ESSER funding, known as ESSER II funding. Has the Office considered using ESSER funds to support SafeVoice? A component of ESSER funding is meant to be used in supporting mental health, social and emotional needs and programs such as SafeVoice.

Ms. EBERT:

Funding through the ESSER grants can be used for many different purposes including supporting mental health. The NDE has allocated ESSER funds across the State for many programs and to make resources available through the Office. Through the use of ESSER funding, the NDE has partnered with Nevada Digital Learning to offer the Canvas Learning Management System by Instructure. The NDE has identified the use of ESSER funding for several projects.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CARLTON:

Did the NDE consider using ESSER funding to support SafeVoice so that General Fund appropriations could be used to address other issues? There are certain projects that ESSER funding cannot be used for. The NDE should ensure eligible programs use ESSER funding.

Ms. HAARTZ:

The recommendations included through E-275 in B/A 101-2721 were to begin transitioning from federal grant funds to General Fund appropriations in supporting SafeVoice. This will ensure a consistent funding source is identified and used moving forward.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CARLTON:

General Fund appropriations are limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The NDE should consider using ESSER funds and other education funding sources available in Nevada to support SafeVoice. This will help save General Fund

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appropriations for use in supporting NDE programs that ESSER funding cannot be used for.

Ms. HAARTZ:

Budget account 101-2713 is described on pages 19 through 22 of [Exhibit B](#).

NDE - Literacy Programs — Budget Page K-12 EDUCATION-135 (Volume I)
Budget Account 101-2713

Literacy activities are funded from multiple NDE budget accounts. Costs associated with literacy-activity staff and operations are included in B/A 101-2713. Assessments supporting literacy activities are funded through B/A 101-2697. Grant funding allocated to school districts to support specific Read by Grade 3 activities is funded through B/A 101-2699, with this account being scheduled to be heard by the Legislature on March 19, 2021.

NDE - Other State Education Programs — Budget Page K-12 EDUCATION-33
(Volume I)
Budget Account 101-2699

Budget account 101-2699 was discussed with B/A 101-2609 as grant funds in B/A 101-2699 are recommended to be allocated through the PCFP. This is a result of the new funding methodology for K-12 education and requires a portion of the funding available in B/A 101-2699 to be transferred into B/A 101-2609.

Decision unit E-600 within B/A 101-2713 is detailed on page 20 of [Exhibit B](#).

E-600 Budget Reductions — Page K-12 EDUCATION-137

The elimination contained in E-600 is a mechanical adjustment and is due to the funding for Read by Grade 3 having been recommended for reduction in FY 2020-2021. This recommendation was made during the Thirty-first Special Session.

Page 21 provides an overview of restorations and reductions included in the Executive Budget for E-277, E-686 and E-947 within B/A 101-2699.

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Budget account 101-2699 includes funding for the State-funded Read by Grade 3 program.

E-277 Elevating Education — Page K-12 EDUCATION-34
E-686 Program Reserves — Page K-12 EDUCATION-38

Decision unit E-947 transfers funding from B/A 101-2699 into B/A 101-2609 to support the PCFP.

E-947 Transfer K-12 Prgrms To State Ed Funding Acct — Page K-12 EDUCATION-39

Because the allocation of funding used to support literacy activities has been restored in the Executive Budget, E-275 within B/A 101-2713 recommends that the personnel and operating expenses supporting literacy programs be restored during the 2021-2023 biennium. Decision unit E-275 is described on page 22 of [Exhibit B](#).

E-275 Elevating Education — Page K-12 EDUCATION-137

The statutory provisions specific to literacy programs in Nevada do not change due to the implementation of the PCFP or the proposed revision in the way the PCFP allocates funding. Principals will still be required to designate a teacher to serve as a literacy specialist within each Nevada elementary school. The EPP positions funded through B/A 101-2713 will no longer monitor subgrants for each school district and charter school. The EPPs will also no longer track how funds allocated to learning strategists are being invested.

Providing technical assistance and professional development services to learning strategists will instead be the focus of EPPs. The EPPs will also support other K-3 teachers and provide them with the resources necessary to ensure students are continually meeting established literacy and English-language arts goals. These goals were established by the State and are supported by the NDE.

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ASSEMBLYWOMAN JAUREGUI:

What are the anticipated changes in the duties and responsibilities of the three EPP positions if funding for Read by Grade 3 is transferred into B/A 101-2609?

Ms. HAARTZ:

The only anticipated change in duties for the EPP positions is that they will no longer be required to assist with the development and monitoring of subgrant agreements. Subgrant agreements are currently used to allocate funding to school districts for use in supporting learning strategist positions.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GORELOW:

Under the new education funding model, School districts and charter schools will be able to use PPF funding allocated through the PCFP for unrestricted purposes. How will the NDE require that funding still be provided for Read by Grade 3, therefore requiring the continuation of the three EPP positions?

Ms. HAARTZ:

During the 2019-2021 biennium, the NDE allocated funding to each elementary school in Nevada based on an average salary amount of approximately \$71,000 for every learning strategist. An additional \$2,000 was allocated toward professional development activities. These funds were allocated via a subgrant agreement with each school district and charter school. Based on the Governor's recommendation to implement the PCFP as outlined in S.B. No. 543 of the 80th Session, funding for Read by Grade 3 would be included in the allocation going to each school district and charter school through the PCFP. School districts will then decide how to allocate available funding for each school in their district.

Individual schools will be responsible for identifying how to invest available resources to best meet the needs of students. It is clearly indicated in NRS 388.159 that each elementary school principal must identify a learning strategist. The requirement stating a learning strategist must be identified for the continual provision of technical assistance, professional development and expertise within elementary schools will remain intact. This will ensure Nevada students will be able to read by the end of third grade. The only thing that will change is that rather than funding being distributed based on an average salary

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amount through a subgrant agreement, funds will be allocated through the Statewide base PPF amounts or the adjusted base PPF amounts through the PCFP.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN GORELOW:

Since funding for Read by Grade 3 will be provided through the PCFP and may not be used by school districts for the same literacy purposes, how will the workload decrease for the three EPP positions funded through B/A 101-2713?

MS. HAARTZ:

The workload will not decrease for the three EPP positions currently funded through B/A 101-2713. The only change is that the EPP positions will no longer have to allocate a portion of their time each year to developing subgrant agreements, monitoring subgrant agreements and processing reimbursements to school districts. This time can be reinvested in providing technical assistance and professional development support to learning strategists and other educators across the State. The EPP positions will have more time to identify best practices and help continually and aggressively advance the NDE's literacy standards.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

If everything is funded through B/A 101-2609, I am concerned that school districts and charter schools will be able to use PPF funding allocated through the PCFP for unrestricted purposes. I am also concerned funding will not be spent on literacy specialists within elementary schools. The State has made progress regarding student literacy, with the reading proficiency of Nevada's fourth grade students being comparable with those of fourth graders across the Nation.

There is a strong partnership between the NDE and school districts to ensure literacy specialists have the necessary resources and training to establish effective literacy frameworks. I am hesitant to cut the three EPP positions as they make sure training is available to literacy specialists at schools. I want to ensure licensed teachers are still designated as literacy specialists and that this funding is not used for other purposes. I do not want to weaken the Read by Grade 3 program and the successes it has made.

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ASSEMBLYWOMAN CARLTON:

The Legislative Counsel Bureau, Interim Finance Committee (IFC) approved the use of ESSER II funding in February 2021. Has the NDE finalized a plan to spend ESSER II funding? Can you share the NDE's plan with these Subcommittees so we can gauge how the NDE plans to distribute ESSER II funding?

MS. EBERT:

The NDE is currently finalizing its plan for the use of the ESSER II funds approved by the IFC.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN CARLTON:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, finding sustainable NDE funding will be difficult as circumstances stabilize over the next 18 to 24 months. If we can accomplish more through the use of ESSER II funding, additional General Fund appropriations can be used to address other issues in areas that do not receive federal support. It is unclear if certain educational programs will ever receive federal support. Times have been hard during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Legislature wants more conversations regarding how the NDE plans to allocate funding.

Can the NDE provide me with information regarding its plan for spending ESSER II funding? The NDE can email or call me, and I will share the information with these Subcommittees. I do not want the NDE to submit this information in a written memorandum two weeks from now that may get lost. I would also like information regarding how many background investigations the Office completed regarding educator licensure.

MS. EBERT:

We will provide this information to these Subcommittees shortly.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

These Subcommittees will now hear public comment.

CHRIS DALY (Nevada State Education Association):

The Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) takes a particular interest in B/A 101-2697 as described in the Nevada State Education Association's Public Comment ([Exhibit C](#)).

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During the Seventy-ninth and Eightieth Legislative Sessions, NSEA worked to reduce the burden of standardized testing on our students and educators. This included helping to pass S.B. No. 303 of the 79th Session. The NSEA supports S.B. 83.

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

STEVEN COHEN (Disability Self-Advocate):

I helped write an amendment for B/A 101-2721 during the Seventy-ninth Legislative Session regarding the training of Office staff working with students with disabilities. I want to ensure students with disabilities receive the maximum amount of benefits possible from B/A 101-2721 funding, while simultaneously protecting students and families with or without disabilities. All students and families should be involved in developing training curriculum for Office staff supporting those with disabilities.

The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month began on March 1, 2021. Today also marks "Spread the Word to End the Word" day, which is a collaboration between international and collaborative nonprofit organizations who have a presence in Nevada. Students need to be taught to be kind to each other, as not doing so could negatively impact a student for the rest of their life.

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CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Seeing no further public comment, this meeting is adjourned at 9:12 a.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Tom Weber,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Chair

DATE: _____

Assemblywoman Maggie Carlton, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit Letter	Begins on Page	Witness / Entity	Description
	A	1		Agenda
	B	3	Jhone Ebert / Nevada Department of Education	Nevada Department of Education Presentation
	B	6	Heidi Haartz / Nevada Department of Education	Nevada Department of Education Presentation
	C	1	Chris Daly / Nevada State Education Association	Nevada State Education Association Public Comment