

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE  
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Eighty-Second Session  
June 1, 2023**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod at 2:35 p.m. on Thursday, June 1, 2023, in Room 3138 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4401 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda [[Exhibit A](#)], the Attendance Roster [[Exhibit B](#)], and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at [www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/82nd2023](http://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/82nd2023).

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Assemblywoman Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod, Chair  
Assemblywoman Angie Taylor, Vice Chair  
Assemblywoman Natha C. Anderson  
Assemblywoman Alexis Hansen  
Assemblywoman Melissa Hardy  
Assemblyman Gregory Koenig  
Assemblywoman Selena La Rue Hatch  
Assemblyman Richard McArthur  
Assemblywoman Erica Mosca  
Assemblywoman Clara Thomas  
Assemblywoman Selena Torres

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Assemblyman Reuben D'Silva (excused)

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Senator Roberta Lange, Senator District No. 7  
Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Senate District No. 8



**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Alex Drozdoff, Committee Policy Analyst  
Asher Killian, Committee Counsel  
Cameron Newton, Committee Counsel  
Judi Bishop, Committee Manager  
Funmi Sheddy, Committee Secretary  
Ashley Torres, Committee Assistant

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Jhone M. Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education  
Alexander Marks, Communications Specialist, Nevada State Education Association  
Patricia Haddad, Director, Government Relations, Clark County School District  
Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents  
Sheila Bray, Community Partnerships Coordinator, Clark County Extension,  
University of Nevada, Reno  
Sarah Adler, representing Charter School Association of Nevada  
Annette Dawson Owens, School Readiness Policy Director, Children's Advocacy  
Alliance  
Susan Proffitt, Director at Large, Nevada Republican Club

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

[Roll was called. Committee rules and protocol were explained.] We have three bills on the agenda today. We are going to start with Senate Bill 9. I will open the hearing for Senate Bill 9.

**Senate Bill 9: Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR 34-282)**

**Jhone M. Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education:**

This afternoon we are talking about Senate Bill 9, which streamlines many different aspects of our educational system. For a little bit of history, with the passage of Senate Bill 543 of the 80th Session, a new reporting requirement for schools and school districts was established in *Nevada Revised Statutes* 387.12468. That report is required to be distributed and posted online by October 1 of each year. In section 1 of S.B. 9, we are proposing it be posted by January 1 of each year. This is in alignment with many of the reports we do. It has to do with reporting of staff, so it aligns both with Nevada's Department of Education (NDE) as well as our school districts. They were asking us to move this forward, and that section is what you have before you this afternoon.

Section 2 of the bill proposes a change around the funding related to career and technical education (CTE). In each legislative session since 2015, the language allowing NDE to utilize state CTE funds to support leadership and training activities for pupil organizations for career and technical education has been disabled in our funding bill. For those of you who were in funding and watched that conversation at that moment in time, there is roughly

\$19 million that is provided for our school districts to support our CTE programs. Language within the legislation disables the ability for school organizations and leadership activities to be able to transfer. That bill has already passed through and it has been signed, but I am flagging that in the future it is something we would like to address so we can have school organizational teams receiving those funds.

Regarding sections 3 and 5, going back in time, in 2013 the Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 288 of the 77th Session, which eliminated the high school proficiency exam and required the State Board of Education to select a college and career readiness exam to be administered to our students during eleventh grade. At that moment in time, we as a state were moving off of the proficiency exam and we had started end-of-course exams. The federal Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 was signed into legislation requiring states to have a college and career readiness assessment. We as a state adopted the American College Testing (ACT) to be our college and career readiness assessment to show progress of our students at the high school level. With that, it is duplicative to have our end-of-course exams developed and distributed across our state to teachers. That data has always stayed at the local level; we have never collected at the state level. We are asking for a shift there as well.

Regarding section 4 of the bill, we are going back a little more in history to 2005. In that session, we established the requirement for NDE to prescribe a form for an educational involvement accord that also aligns with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. Along with streamlining, what we are asking is for removal of that accord, but we continue as a Department to have the work that our team does. In that work, we do have communication, making sure teachers are communicating with parents in that way.

Section 5 of the bill is part of Senate Bill 143 of the 74th Session, which established the requirement for NDE to prescribe a form for use by teachers in elementary schools. The form provided a report to parents and legal guardians concerning parental involvement and student compliance with school policies and procedures. The proposed removal of this language in section 5 seeks to encourage a more effective means of communication with our families, and the information and the form can be communicated. The other common forms school districts have are report cards, progress reports, and conversations that happen quite frequently between our educators and families.

With that, thank you for allowing me to present this bill.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Are there any questions from members?

**Assemblywoman Anderson:**

My question has to do with page 4, line 6 of section 2, which is the change from 7.5 percent of the state money appropriated to 20 percent. I did not hear the reasoning behind that. It is a significant jump. I realize this is not the money committee, but I am wondering what the reasoning was behind it for the policy.

**Jhone Ebert:**

Our goal as a state has been to expand our CTE programs. With that, we have realized regarding leadership for our students, we have a lot of educators coming in from other professions. Not only people coming in from the traditional routes, but alternative routes to licensure that are Department of Business and Industry-certified, plus developing our students in the leadership capacity. During the session six weeks ago, we had over 600 students in Reno who were participating in HOSA [Health Occupations Students of America], SkillsUSA, and all of those pieces—students gathering. We are asking to build a system path for educators and our students to be able to participate successfully in those programs.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Seeing no other questions from members, I will open the hearing for support testimony in Carson City and Las Vegas.

**Alexander Marks, Communications Specialist, Nevada State Education Association:**

In the interest of time, we support S.B. 9 and urge your support.

**Patricia Haddad, Director, Government Relations, Clark County School District:**

We support this legislation.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Seeing no one else in person, is there anyone waiting on the phone to provide support testimony? [There was no one.] I will close support testimony and open opposition testimony. Is there anyone in Carson City, Las Vegas, or on the phone wishing to provide opposition testimony? [There was no one.] I will close opposition testimony and open neutral testimony. Is there anyone in Carson City, Las Vegas, or on the phone wishing to provide neutral testimony? [There was no one.] Are there any closing remarks? [There were none.]

I believe the intent is to work session S.B. 9 at the end of the meeting. I will close the hearing on Senate Bill 9. I will open the hearing on Senate Bill 72 (1st Reprint).

**Senate Bill 72 (1st Reprint): Directs the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education to conduct certain studies during the 2023-2024 interim. (BDR S-441)**

**Senator Roberta Lange, Senate District No. 7:**

I am going to talk today about Senate Bill 72 (1st Reprint), which directs the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education to conduct five studies during the 2023-2024 interim. I am not going to go into detail on the bill today because you are all in education and I do not feel like I need to explain it. The bill before you today is a recommendation from the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education from last session. On that committee, Chair Bilbray-Axelrod, Assemblywomen Hansen, Hardy, and Thomas all served. As you know, the landscape for education is continually changing, and we need to change with it and help create great policy to move forward.

That committee met 11 times during the interim. During those 11 times, they did lots and lots of work. At the end of the interim session, they found they did not finish some of the work they needed to finish and felt it was necessary to direct the next interim committee to continue the work they did on the studies. They are asking for five studies. I will tell you what the five studies are, and then I will conclude my remarks.

The first is a study on mental health and wellness of students. The second is teacher workload, including reviewing the relevant requirements as statutes and regulations. The third is teacher licensing requirements, including a review of the impact of those requirements on teacher diversity, effectiveness, and recruitment. The fourth is high school student achievement and graduation trends. The fifth is policies and strategies to address the needs of and provide intervention for students requiring additional resources.

For each of these five studies, the Joint Interim Committee would require an individual report on each of those five findings for recommendations for legislation in the 2025 Legislative Session. With that, I will conclude my remarks.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

I served as vice chair on the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education and just to show how things have changed, I am going to have some members discuss a couple of changes we are going to make to the study. I think you are aware of them, but I will start with Assemblywoman Anderson.

**Assemblywoman Anderson:**

I sent an email earlier today, and I am so sorry about how late that was, but I appreciated Chair Bilbray-Axelrod's discussion with that as well as some others who are involved in education. During this session, we have had more than a few bills that had to do with the Nevada System of Higher Education fee waiver. I am wondering if there is a possibility of adding that as an item to be discussed because these continue to grow, as they should, and we want to make sure it is clean. Right now, the whole chapter feels, for lack of a better term, a quilt of different ideas. Is that something that would be agreeable to you as well as to this Committee?

**Senator Lange:**

I think Chair Bilbray-Axelrod will probably chair the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education, and she gets to decide on the topics the committee will address. If this is something that is important to her and something she wants to address, it is important to me as well. I am happy to add that.

**Assemblywoman Mosca:**

I want to say for the record under section 1, subsection 1(c), it is important for teacher diversity and recruitment. The number one issue I get lobbied on and everyone here knows is J-1 teachers [J-1 Teacher Program] and making sure they can get here, that they have access, and that we are treating them equitably. I would love it if that could be added, if you feel okay with it.

**Senator Lange:**

Absolutely.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Just to be fair, we are going to be taking something out we do not believe is necessary.

**Assemblywoman Torres:**

Thank you for your presentation, Senator Lange. I hope to be before your committee in a couple of days with a piece of legislation that has to do specifically with the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators. I was following very closely during the interim that NDE did have a taskforce on the Praxis Core. They did an extensive study that was prepared and facilitated with WestEd regarding the Praxis. It is duplicative for us to continue to study the Praxis Core because we have strong recommendations for that. We can probably just eliminate the language "must pass the 'Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators'" in section 1, subsection 1(c) for now. If the Committee wants to, we can look at the Praxis II. I have a piece of legislation that just passed out of the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means that will hopefully allow us to look at those requirements and the effect it has on teachers. I do not know if we would want to change it. That is a good question for you, if you want to change it to Praxis II and the Pedagogical Praxis, or if we would like to eliminate the language. It is clear on the record and it would be at the leisure of the Joint Interim Committee chair that it could be either of those.

**Senator Lange:**

I think we should just eliminate it, and then leave it up to the chair.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

I think that is a good idea. Assemblywoman Hansen has a comment.

**Assemblywoman Hansen:**

Section 1, subsection 1, paragraph (d), subparagraph (1), regarding the idea that we are going to approach the trends in graduation rates, the types of diplomas awarded to pupils in high school in the state, and also the trends in achievement. That was the question I asked, and I appreciate Senator Moises (Mo) Denis including this as a promise at the end of the interim to do a study. I was asked many times about our graduation rate seeming to rise but our proficiency rates not being congruent, so we are going to study it. I appreciate it being spelled out in the bill and then going into specifics, such as students requiring additional resources. With a lot of the things that happen in this building, we do not always say thank you and show appreciation. I am grateful for your being here and grateful for former chair Senator Mo Denis in the Senate taking this on at my request.

**Assemblywoman Thomas:**

For clarification, because as you stated earlier, I did serve on the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education. My concern right now is with all the input I am hearing, is this coming into this bill at this late date, or are we just giving it to the next chair of the Interim Committee and they can implement what they feel is necessary?

**Senator Lange:**

We can ask Mr. Killian about that.

**Asher Killian, Committee Counsel:**

The topics included in this bill would be mandatory topics for the Interim Committee to study. The chair still has the discretion under the new Joint Interim Standing Committee structure to put forward a work plan to the Legislative Commission for approval that would detail any other items the chair wishes to structure, as well as putting together the budget for the committee to perform these studies in the interim. While the topics in the bill would be mandatory topics, the chair would have discretion to add any other topics that he or she wishes.

**Assemblywoman La Rue Hatch:**

I believe these are critical issues, and as a fellow teacher I know we need to look at these things. One thing I would like to see is we have to look at our class sizes. We have the largest in the nation, and it is a massive, complex issue to tackle. If our Chair is open and if you are open, I would like to add that as a topic we are looking at.

**Senator Lange:**

Based on what we just heard from Mr. Killian, the chair would have the opportunity to add that as she prepared her itinerary for the kinds of issues she wants to address in the interim.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

We will figure it out. Seeing no other questions, I will open the hearing for testimony in support. Is there anyone in Carson City or Las Vegas wishing to provide support testimony?

**Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents:**

The Interim Committee is an important committee. We do look at many different things and it gives the superintendents and school districts an opportunity to talk about what is going on and to look into several issues. We are in support of the bill.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Seeing no one else in person, is there anyone waiting on the phone to provide support testimony? [There was no one.] Is there anyone wishing to provide opposition testimony in Carson City, Las Vegas, or on the phone? [There was no one.] Is there anyone wishing to provide neutral testimony in Carson City, Las Vegas, or on the phone? [There was no one.] Are there any closing comments? [There were none.]

I will close the hearing on Senate Bill 72 (1st Reprint). We will be in recess for a moment while we wait for our next presenter.

[The meeting was recessed at 2:56 p.m. The meeting was reconvened at 2:57 p.m.]

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

We are going to work session the two bills we just heard, starting with Senate Bill 72 (1st Reprint).

**Senate Bill 72 (1st Reprint):** Directs the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education to conduct certain studies during the 2023-2024 interim. (BDR S-441)

**Alex Drozdoff, Committee Policy Analyst:**

As nonpartisan legislative staff, I can neither support nor oppose any measure.

The first bill on work session is Senate Bill 72 (1st Reprint). Members just heard this bill so I will summarize the proposed amendments. An amendment was proposed to make the following changes:

- Require the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education to conduct a study of fee waiver provisions related to the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE);
- Add a study of certain J-1 Visa provisions; and
- Remove the study relating to the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Members, are there any questions?

**Assemblywoman Taylor:**

For clarity, the amendment is to include a study of the fee waivers for NSHE and to remove the part about the Praxis.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

That is correct, but also to add the J-1 Visa provisions.

**Assemblywoman Taylor:**

When we were having the discussion, I thought you said we were removing some other studies.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Just the language on the Praxis because the other bill takes care of that.

**Alex Drozdoff:**

The proposed amendments as I understand them are: (1) Require the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education to conduct a study of fee waiver provisions relating to NSHE; (2) Require the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education to conduct a study of certain J-1 Visa provisions; and (3) Remove the requirement of a study related to the Praxis examination.



**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

I will take a motion to amend and do pass Senate Bill 72 (1st Reprint).

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TORRES MADE A MOTION TO AMEND AND DO  
PASS SENATE BILL 72 (1ST REPRINT).

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON SECONDED THE MOTION.

Is there any discussion on the motion?

**Assemblywoman La Rue Hatch:**

I do think these topics are critical, but I also think with the largest class sizes in the nation and classrooms with 45 to 50 kids, we cannot go without studying those. I am going to be voting no today, but hopefully we can talk about it and make that a goal to study during the interim.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Are there any other comments? [There were none.]

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYWOMAN LA RUE HATCH  
VOTED NO. ASSEMBLYMAN D'SILVA WAS ABSENT FOR THE  
VOTE.)

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

I will give the floor statement to Assemblyman McArthur. The next bill on work session is Senate Bill 9.

**Senate Bill 9: Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR 34-282)**

**Alex Drozdoff, Committee Policy Analyst:**

Senate Bill 9 revises various provisions related to education. Again, the Committee just heard this bill, so I will not be reading the summary.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Members, are there any questions on the bill we just heard? [There were none.] I will take a motion to do pass Senate Bill 9.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TORRES MOVED TO DO PASS SENATE BILL 9.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANDERSON SECONDED THE MOTION.

Is there any discussion on the motion?

**Assemblyman Koenig:**

I like the part about the current technical education. I am not sure about limiting the end-of-course final. I looked at the Senate vote and there was some heartache by my party members. I believe there may be some with my colleagues here. I need to look into what their concerns are. I am going to vote yes to pass it out of Committee, but I want to reserve my right to change my vote on the floor.

**Assemblywoman Thomas:**

I will be voting no on this bill.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Are there any other comments on the motion? [There were none.]

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYMEN HANSEN, HARDY, MCARTHUR, AND THOMAS VOTED NO. ASSEMBLYMAN D'SILVA WAS ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

I will give the floor statement to Assemblywoman Mosca. I will close the work session. I will open the hearing for Senate Bill 425.

**Senate Bill 425: Establishes the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education to develop a statewide vision and implementation plan to improve the public education system in this State. (BDR 34-1060)**

**Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Senate District No. 8:**

I am excited to be here today to present Senate Bill 425. I had the distinct pleasure to serve as a member on the National Conference of State Legislatures' 2020 and 2021 Legislative International Education Study Group, a bipartisan group of 20 legislators and legislative staff. This group studied the highest-performing education systems in an effort to take lessons from these education systems and apply what we learned to improve the education system in our own state.

Findings of the initial study group are detailed in "No Time To Lose: How to Build a World-Class Education System State by State." The most recent product was named "The Time is Now: Reimagining World-Class State Education Systems."

Looking at the specifics of the bill before you today, S.B. 425 creates the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education to develop a statewide vision and implementation plan to improve Nevada's education system. Twenty-four members would serve on the Commission as outlined in section 3, including three Senators and three Assembly members. Additionally, S.B. 425 requires the Commission to conduct a study to compare Nevada's education policies to those of high-performing, international, and domestic education systems; make recommendations on how to adapt the education policies of high-performing education systems into Nevada's system; make recommendations on improving student performance in Nevada to those of high-performing systems; incorporate any relevant

findings of previous or ongoing studies related to education funding; and develop an implementation plan for the recommendations made, including an analysis of the cost involved.

Finally, sections 5 and 6 appropriate funds for travel expenses of \$12,500 each year of the biennium and \$250,000 to allow the Commission to enter into a contract with an organization to support the Commission's work.

Thank you, Chair Bilbray-Axelrod and Committee members, for considering S.B. 425. I urge you to pass this bill.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

I want to get something on the record. When you say to enter into an agreement, could you explain what that would look like?

**Senator Dondero Loop:**

Oftentimes when we have these types of commissions, one of the things that happens is—and I am just using this as an example and it could be WestEd—someone who has a deep understanding of education and what systems are highly successful would lead the discussion.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Our next question is from Assemblywoman Thomas.

**Assemblywoman Thomas:**

I actually have a comment. It warms my heart to know that whether I come back or not, this is innovation in our education system, something that has been needed for years. We have to look at other countries and other states to see how they are moving along and why we are still rolling around in the mud.

**Senator Dondero Loop:**

Thank you for saying that. I can tell you one of the states very close to us that has done some interesting work is Montana. I have been in contact with Representative Llew Jones, and I believe Mr. Killian has met Mr. Jones along the way. I think it is time for us to do some deep digging and make some concrete suggestions and move forward.

**Assemblywoman La Rue Hatch:**

I do think it is important to look at best practices and look at what other places have done. I appreciate the detail you put into this study and the analysis. My question is on the makeup of the team. I know there are 20 members, which is quite a large team, but I notice of those 20 members, there are only two teachers and no education support professionals. I am wondering about the reasoning on that out of this whole massive team why we are only having those two actual folks on the ground on the team.

**Senator Dondero Loop:**

I would not say that is an exclusion. I would say these are people we want. We have one member who is a teacher and a member of the Clark County Education Association, appointed by the president of that association. We have one member appointed by the Nevada Association of School Administrators, one member who is a member of the board of trustees. As you can see, if you add all those entities that interact with education—there is one member, one member, one member—we have three members of the Assembly and the Senate, but we have to be the legislative representatives. I do not think that was an exclusion; I think it was because if we started doing three members with everyone, we could end up with a committee of 80 people and nothing would get done. In order to keep this committee in a concrete, concise group but representing everyone, that is how we did this. You could be a member because you are a teacher and I am a teacher—we could be on this committee. I do not think it excludes educators; it just does not include all the educators who may have a voice but through their representative on the committee just like we do with anything else.

**Assemblywoman La Rue Hatch:**

I appreciate that. I did not view it as meaning to exclude; I was just looking at the list and I see superintendents, a chief financial officer (CFO), and administration. I see a lot of administration and not a lot of folks on the ground.

**Senator Dondero Loop:**

I did not see it that way. Our Superintendent of Public Instruction may be an administrator at a very high level, but she is with Nevada's Department of Education. I see the Director of the Office of Finance, Office of the Governor, as someone we need there because we need to talk about funding education. I see the Chancellor from the Nevada System of Higher Education because I see someone who needs to be representative of our higher education because that is where we are headed. I see the State Board of Education and the Nevada State Education Association (NSEA), so there is a teacher from a bargaining unit. We have another bargaining unit who is another teacher. Then we have one member who is from the Nevada Association of School Administrators, which would most likely be one principal, maybe. One member is a member of the board of trustees, which is only one school district. We have one member who is a superintendent of schools. We have 17 superintendents and one would be a member. One member is a CFO. We need the CFO just like we need the Office of Finance from the Governor. We have one member from the Nevada Association of Counties, who is a county commissioner or someone who represents them. I could go through all of these, but it is just one member of all the interested bodies, if you will, and one member of all the people. Even though only one member is a teacher in an elementary school and one from a secondary school, those are two teachers. One member of a public school in an urban setting is a third teacher. One member who is a teacher in a public school in a rural setting is a fourth teacher. We have a lot of different people we have placed on the Commission. Yes, we could put different people on and someone else might say they want to be on the Commission. We had to come to an agreement on what we thought was important. Once again, I would not diminish the fact that I could be on that board and I am an educator.

**Assemblywoman La Rue Hatch:**

I appreciate that. My question was actually going to be on what you just mentioned on page 3, section 3, subsection 2, where it says one member who is in elementary, one in secondary, one is public, one is urban, and one is rural. Those apply to the one and two teachers, correct? They are not additional teachers; they are just different characteristics. Is that going to be a challenge? The bill says they have to alternate every term, so Clark County will one time have to appoint a rural educator and then the next time NSEA will have to appoint a rural educator. I just wondered if there are any logistical challenges with that.

**Senator Dondero Loop:**

I guess I trust in those teachers, and I do not have a question that we will be fine.

**Assemblywoman Hansen:**

I am on my grateful tour today. I want to say thank you, this is fabulous and I appreciate it. I also appreciate we have teachers here on the Assembly Committee on Education. Yes, it is vitally important, and I appreciate that you have included a lot of those in the trenches, whether it be at the organizational level or in the classroom. I think you covered it. Then to expand on all those others you mentioned, I know where I work, and with what I do, sometimes you need an outside perspective because you are so close to it. Yet, the feedback from those who are in the trenches—whether we worked on student discipline or whatever we worked on here—it is important to get the feedback from those who are dealing with the day-to-day. However, it is also important, especially for evaluating what works and what does not work, to have that outside perspective. I just want to thank you. I think it is very comprehensive and will help us dial in to different ideas and what works, what does not, and why it does not.

**Senator Dondero Loop:**

I appreciate your saying that. As we crafted this bill and as I worked with the National Conference of State Legislatures, it was quite eye-opening to see, for example, what they might do in Estonia versus Singapore versus someplace in Canada. I mentioned Montana. I have a colleague I have heard from in Arkansas. There are a lot of different things, and when you hear those people, they will say, Hey, we tried this and it did not work. All of those little pieces of information and input are so valuable. You are right, we need someone who has some finance background who says, Wait a minute, maybe that piece will work or that piece is a great idea. Putting all those good minds together, just like we do here at the Legislature, is very important.

**Assemblywoman Taylor:**

There is so much in this bill that is really going to help us, particularly the timing of it. We have made monumental historical investments in education, but we can certainly do more—you know that. This is a good time to say, Make sure we are putting this where it is going to get some results for our kids, for our teachers, and for our state. I want to applaud the timeliness. As we look at best practices—which is amazing and almost like, Duh, of course we should do that—I want to throw out there for consideration for the group that we want to make sure we are also doing some things that are comparative. We have different states and

different countries. We have a high transiency rate for example, maybe more homelessness among our children, the diversity in our state, the poverty levels—those create unique challenges, as you know because you are a teacher. As we look at other states and even other countries, considering some of those things and if those have any similarities or commonalities because that makes things a little different sometimes when you look at those unique things and others we have as a state.

**Senator Dondero Loop:**

One of the things I noticed, for example when we talked about Estonia—we know they are in another country and are probably in a very different setting—but what struck me is their size, everyone in the country they were educating, is almost the size of the Washoe County School District. Maybe some of the things they do as a whole might be valuable to what happens in Washoe. Looking at those things—just the insight and the innovation of what happens and how they do things—has been so enlightening. Of course, we did this during COVID-19, so we did it all online. To provide advice to states, policymakers, and educators to do this is so valuable. It was an extreme honor to be included in that leadership and be able to work with the National Conference of State Legislatures on this project.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Seeing no other questions from members, I will open the hearing for testimony in support of S.B. 425. Is there anyone in Carson City or Las Vegas wishing to provide support testimony?

**Sheila Bray, Community Partnerships Coordinator, Clark County Extension, University of Nevada, Reno:**

We would like to thank Senator Lange and Senator Dondero Loop for bringing forth this legislation. We think it is a good idea to take a look at a broader scale of what we are doing in education throughout, and we hope we can also learn some best practices for higher education and how we could also help in that pipeline.

**Sarah Adler, representing Charter School Association of Nevada:**

I am also representing some Washoe-sponsored independent charter schools. These schools are fired up about innovation and excellence. They are excited about this Commission. Personally, I am a huge fan of the Commission on School Funding, which I think has done important work for our state. I see a similar opportunity here.

We do have many high-performance schools in Nevada and public charters are proud to be among them. At the same time, we think it is great to have this range of Nevadans have a guided look at other potential approaches. We are in support and thank the sponsor.

**Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents:**

We supported this bill in the Senate, and we are in full support of it now. I believe, once again, Assemblywoman Thomas's points about innovation, you have to look and see what others are doing. That is the opportunity that this bill presents for this Committee.

I would also like to mention that a lot of the people who are on the Commission or will be on the Commission—the superintendents, Nevada Association of School Administrators, and some of the other groups represented—most of those people were teachers and then moved on to administration. They bring a lot to the Commission. The Nevada Association of School Superintendents appreciates being able to have a representative. We want to thank the bill sponsor for the bill.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Seeing no one else in person, is there anyone waiting on the phone to provide support testimony? [There was no one.] I will close support testimony and open opposition testimony. Is there anyone in Carson City or Las Vegas wishing to provide opposition testimony?

**Alexander Marks, Communications Specialist, Nevada State Education Association:**

We definitely think this Commission could do a lot of good work for our kids and our state. We do have a couple of concerns we will hopefully be able to address through an amendment if possible. It was noted by Assemblywoman La Rue Hatch that the Commission includes teachers and administrators, but not other educators. We are always doing our best to make sure our education support professionals are elevated in what they do and they are included in the process. Yes, they could be appointed, but we are always doing our best to make sure they are.

Also noted in the Committee is the process by the teacher appointments. We think that could be complicated, cumbersome, and potentially exclude half of educators at times based on the terms, so we do have some concerns there. We think this Commission could do well, but we want to make sure we can iron out some things we disagree with, and we will do our best.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Seeing no one else in person, is there anyone waiting on the phone to provide opposition testimony?

**Annette Dawson Owens, School Readiness Policy Director, Children's Advocacy Alliance:**

I am actually calling in support. My hand was not recognized during the support testimony. Is it okay if I testify in support now?

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Yes, go ahead.

**Annette Dawson Owens:**

We are in full support of S.B. 425 to establish the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education. We look forward to developing our statewide vision and implementation plans to improve our public education system here in Nevada. We concur with Assemblywoman Thomas that this is a wide and long-needed venture to study high-performing schools to innovate and bring these best practices here to Nevada. Thank you for this bill.

Chair Bilbray-Axelrod, I apologize, but the same thing happened for Senate Bill 72 (1st Reprint). I was just going to say that the Children's Advocacy Alliance is also in favor of that bill. If that could be noted, it would be greatly appreciated.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

I am looking at our Committee secretary who just nodded she would do that.

Going back to opposition, is there anyone on the phone waiting to provide testimony in opposition? [There was no one.] I will close opposition testimony and open neutral testimony. Is there anyone in Carson City or Las Vegas wishing to provide neutral testimony?

**Susan Proffitt, Director at Large, Nevada Republican Club:**

I oppose this bill, and I agree we need to have a bill. I suppose that is neutral, as neutral as I can get, because I do not understand why this Committee has not allowed Governor Lombardo's bill for education to even be heard on the floor. Would you please show the Governor some respect and bring Assembly Bill 405 to the floor?

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

That bill was actually in the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means and referred to the floor last night.

**Susan Proffitt:**

Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Is there anyone else wishing to provide neutral testimony in Carson City, Las Vegas, or over the phone? [There was no one.] I will close neutral testimony. Are there any closing remarks?

**Senator Dondero Loop:**

I just want to thank you for listening to S.B. 425 and thank Senator Lange for presenting Senate Bill 72 (1st Reprint) in my absence. We will work really hard on education. Thank you for what you do.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

I do not know if you want to stay, but we are going to work session the bill. I will close the hearing for Senate Bill 425. I will open the work session for Senate Bill 425.



**Senate Bill 425: Establishes the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education to develop a statewide vision and implementation plan to improve the public education system in this State. (BDR 34-1060)**

**Alex Drozdoff, Committee Policy Analyst:**

Senate Bill 425 relates to the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education. No amendments were proposed for this measure.

**Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:**

Are there any questions on the bill we just heard? [There were none.] I will take a motion to do pass Senate Bill 425.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN TAYLOR MADE A MOTION TO DO PASS  
SENATE BILL 425.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HANSEN SECONDED THE MOTION.

Is there any discussion on the motion? [There was none.]

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYMAN D'SILVA WAS ABSENT  
FOR THE VOTE.)

I will assign the floor statement to Assemblyman McArthur. That brings us to the last item on our agenda, which is public comment. Is there anyone in Carson City, Las Vegas, or on the phone who would like to provide public comment? [There was no one.] That concludes our meeting for the day. We do not know if we will be receiving any more bills, but we certainly might be. We might be meeting again before the end of session.

This meeting is adjourned [at 3:29 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Funmi Sheddy  
Recording Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Assemblywoman Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod, Chair

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

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Lori McCleary  
Transcribing Secretary

## **EXHIBITS**

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

[Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster.