

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
AND THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

**Eighty-Second Session
March 31, 2023**

The joint meeting of the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Committee on Finance was called to order by Chair Daniele Monroe-Moreno at 4:25 p.m. on Friday, March 31, 2023, in Room 4100 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.

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno, Chair
Assemblywoman Shea Backus, Vice Chair
Assemblywoman Natha C. Anderson
Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May
Assemblywoman Jill Dickman
Assemblywoman Michelle Gorelow
Assemblyman Gregory T. Hafen II
Assemblywoman Sandra Jauregui
Assemblywoman Heidi Kasama
Assemblyman Cameron (C.H.) Miller
Assemblyman P.K. O'Neill
Assemblyman Howard Watts
Assemblyman Steve Yeager

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblywoman Sarah Peters



SENATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Chair
Senator Pete Goicoechea
Senator Dallas Harris
Senator Dina Neal
Senator Rochelle T. Nguyen
Senator Heidi Seevers Gansert
Senator Robin L. Titus

SENATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Senator Nicole J. Cannizzaro, Vice Chair

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sarah Coffman, Assembly Fiscal Analyst
Wayne Thorley, Senate Fiscal Analyst
Tyler Boyce, Committee Secretary
Janet Osalvo, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Melissa Mackedon, Chair, State Public Charter School Authority
Jennifer Bauer, Director of Finance and Operations, State Public Charter School Authority
Ryan Herrick, General Counsel, Executive Director's Office, State Public Charter School Authority
Susan Enfield, Superintendent, Washoe County School District
Elizabeth Smith, Trustee, District D, President, Board of Trustees, Washoe County School District
Jesus F. Jara, Superintendent, Clark County School District
Evelyn Garcia Morales, President, Board of Trustees, Clark County School District
Jason Goudie, Chief Financial Officer, Clark County School District
Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, Deputy Superintendent, Clark County School District
Mike Barton, Chief College, Career, Equity, and School Choice Officer, Clark County School District
Dustin Mancl, Chief Academic Officer, Clark County School District

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

[Roll was called and Committee protocol was discussed.] As I stated this past Saturday, when we began this conversation with 15 smaller rural and frontier county school districts, the superintendents' accountability meeting is where, in future legislative sessions, I hope our joint fiscal Committees will hear scheduled updates from each district on goals, plans, and challenges that they face. As legislators and leaders, we continually are asked questions from our constituents, who are also constituents of our superintendents. We receive questions concerning how they spent their COVID-19 dollars in each district; the policies they have in place or are being discussed concerning classroom size, educational resources in the classroom, extracurricular activities, repairs—and disrepairs—of our schools, staffing levels, vacancy numbers, and the compensation of our teachers and educational professionals, as well as their educational support staff, in every district. Most importantly, what are their plans for the historic amount of money districts will be receiving this legislative session? We understand that every district is unique in size, makeup, and the challenges that they face, but the best way to address that uniqueness is to ask questions directly to the district leaders.

Tonight, we will be hearing from three districts which include our State Public Charter School Authority, Washoe County School District, and Clark County School District. I encourage you, following the presentations, to ask questions. The first district on our agenda is the State Public Charter School Authority.

Melissa Mackedon, Chair, State Public Charter School Authority:

I am the Chair of the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) Board, and I have served on that Board since its inception in 2011. In my other job, I am the Chief Executive Officer of Oasis Academy charter school in Churchill County. With me at the table is Ryan Herrick, General Counsel for the SPCSA, and Jennifer Bauer, Director of Finance and Operations. Before we begin today, I want to provide a brief overview of charter schools sponsored by the State Public Charter School Authority.

There are currently 43 charter school contracts with charter school governing bodies [page 2, [Exhibit C](#)]. We often refer to these governing bodies as "charter holders." Some charter holders oversee a single campus and others oversee multiple campuses. Combined, these 43 charter holders have a total of 78 campuses. Our charter schools are located in five counties, the majority of which are located in Clark County. As of October 2022, the SPCSA-sponsored schools served just under 60,000 students, making up just over 12 percent of enrollment in state public schools.

We want to begin with some context about how state and federal funds flow to charter schools [page 4]. The majority of charter schools' funding flows directly from the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) to each charter school. This includes all the funding in the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan (PCFP), the adjusted base funding, the local special education funding, and the weighted funding. In addition, the state special education funding is distributed directly from the NDE to schools. Finally, while the major annual grants go through the State Public Charter School Authority, there are some state and federal grants

that go directly from the NDE to our schools, such as the 21st Century Grant. The charter school sponsor, the SPCSA, is responsible for administering certain state and federal grants. Only those funds flow through the SPCSA. The SPCSA allocates funds to schools, reviews their applications and budgets, and then submits a compiled application and budget to NDE. Once the SPCSA's application and budget is approved by the NDE, the SPCSA is then responsible for reimbursing schools for their expenditures under the grant and in alignment with their approved budget.

With regard to the charter school budgeting process, Chapter 388A of *Nevada Revised Statutes* dictates that the charter school must adopt its budget in accordance with NDE regulations [page 5]. The NDE regulations outline a timeline and process for budget adoption. First, by April 15th, charter schools must prepare a tentative budget and submit that tentative budget to the NDE for the upcoming school year. Then in May, the charter school must have a public hearing on the tentative budget. Finally, by June 8th, the charter school's governing body must adopt a final budget for the upcoming school year. That final budget must be submitted to the NDE, the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB), and the sponsor—in this case, the SPCSA. I think it is important to reiterate here that PCFP funding flows directly from the NDE to charter schools, and charter schools' budgets are adopted by charter school governing bodies. These budgets are not subject to any approval by the SPCSA. So, the information we are presenting today is information we have gathered from our charter holders, but ultimately, it is their governing bodies that will approve the school budgets.

In addition to the SPCSA, the NDE, and LCB receiving information about school budgets prior to the school year beginning, charter schools—like school districts—are required to report on their revenues and expenditures, as well as to have an independent financial audit conducted following the close of each fiscal year [page 6]. Charter school financial audits must be conducted by a certified public accountant (CPA) or accounting firm that has been approved by the committee to oversee charter school audits, and the audit must be conducted in accordance with government auditing standards. The fiscal year closes on July 1st and the audit must be completed by November 1st. Then the audit must be presented to the charter school's governing body within 30 days. Ultimately, the audit must be provided to the NDE, the LCB, and the sponsor—in this case, the SPCSA—by December 1st.

In addition to the audit, each charter school is required to submit an annual report on their budget following the close of the fiscal year, including actual revenues and expenditures from the prior year. The report is due by November 1st of each year, and is submitted to the NDE, the LCB, and the sponsor—in this case, the SPCSA. To recap, statutes and regulations outline the process by which charter schools' governing bodies adopt their budget in advance of an upcoming fiscal year and require charter schools to provide budget reports. Once a fiscal year ends, a financial audit must be conducted, and charter schools must submit a budget report. All this information goes to the NDE, the LCB, and the sponsor.

Finally, charter schools are funded similarly, but not the same, as school districts [page 7]. Charter schools receive either adjusted base or statewide base per pupil funding, depending on whether the schools are brick and mortar or virtual. Charter schools also receive local special education funding based on prior years, which varies by charter school. Charter schools receive weighted funding based on the school population. However, charter schools are excluded from auxiliary service funding. On the right side of this slide [\[Exhibit C\]](#) are numbers regarding the statewide base and adjusted base funding, according to the Governor's recommended budget. Note that other funding categories will vary by school because they are based on school level factors.

Next, we will shift to federal emergency funding that charter schools received [page 8]. Between Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act; Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act; and the American Rescue Plan Act; as well as Assembly Bill 495 of the 81st Session, charter schools received approximately \$95 million in federal emergency funding [page 9]. The SPCSA staff is working with schools to ensure they have the ability to obligate all Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund II (ESSER II) funds by September 30, 2023. Subawards for A.B. 495 of the 81st Session funding will be issued next week.

Across all emergency grant programs, charter schools have applied and received approval for over half the funding to support staff salaries and benefits [page 10]. Charter schools have also invested a significant amount of funding in technology and contracted services.

Regarding charter schools' plans for the use of additional funding [page 11], given that each charter school is responsible for its own budget, the SPCSA collected data from all schools to understand their plans and priorities for additional funding [page 12]. First, we ask each school how they plan to spend their funds. The graph shows how many schools indicated they would use additional funds for each category; many schools identified multiple priorities. For example, a school may have said we want to invest in additional teaching positions, professional development, and increasing pay for our current employees. We have 43 charter holders or charter school boards, and most schools are represented multiple times on the graph.

In addition to asking schools which categories they planned to invest in, we also asked schools what percentage of additional funds would be used for each category [page 13]. This graph shows the average percent of additional funding that SPCSA-sponsored schools plan to spend on each priority. To summarize, there are some clear trends showing where schools plan to invest additional funds. The majority of charter schools—more than half of the 43 charter holders—plan to use additional funds to increase pay for current staff or positions, as well as hiring additional staff, including teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors, or social workers and support staff.

I know a lot of nuance gets lost when we aggregate data across 43 charter holders. The next seven slides look at seven unique public charter schools, including a few large urban schools,

an approved alternate high school, a small urban elementary school, a rural school, and a virtual school [pages 15-21]. I will not take time to review each one, but we felt it was important to provide these examples because of each school's unique design, location, and individual governing bodies who will ultimately approve these planned expenses.

After watching last Saturday's hearing with rural superintendents, we heard questions regarding students and their social emotional health. The SPCSA, along with Carson and Washoe School Districts, is participating in Project AWARE [Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education]. The goals of Project AWARE include increasing awareness of mental health issues among school age youth; providing training for school personnel and other adults who interact with school age youth to detect and respond to mental health issues; connecting school age youth who have behavioral health issues—from serious emotional disturbance to serious mental illness—and their families to needed services; and finally, developing state and local infrastructure to expand and sustain an exemplar integrated multitier system of support in pilot schools. Additionally, each charter school has initiatives in place to meet the needs of their students.

Lastly, there were questions about student outcomes associated with past and future expenditures. We are proud that despite COVID-19, our schools continued to make academic gains—80 percent earned 50 or more points on the Nevada School Performance Framework, 55 percent rated 4-Stars or 5-Stars, and 22 of the 24 high schools exceeded the statewide graduation rates. These outcomes indicate that our schools have effectively used ESSER funds and give us confidence in their ability to make prudent decisions regarding proposed additional funding.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

Are there any questions from Committee members?

Assemblyman Yeager:

I appreciate the effort you went through to talk to the schools about where they would spend the funds. The graphs are helpful. I like that you broke out different schools to look at the context and what their funding priorities might be. Looking at the budgeting process—I understand that process and it looks like the final budget gets transmitted to the LCB and to the governing body as well—I wondered, would there be a way to go back, after those budgets are finalized, and match the budget with the responses to show what the schools' intentions are now compared to how the budgets are enacted? I want to see if there were changes in those proposals, and then match that to performance data that we have.

Melissa Mackedon:

I think that would be our plan, but those processes have not been fine-tuned yet. It is in line with the practice of what the SPCSA does with our schools right now.

Assemblyman Yeager:

That kind of data would be helpful. Every district is different, and you are different in how you manage. We would like to collaborate as we get closer to that process to see where the money was spent, if changes were made, and why changes were made that way.

Senator Seevers Gansert:

I think that is a great idea to provide the outcomes for how they use that money. Before you ended your presentation, you talked about some outcomes for schools' rank and graduation rates. Can you provide more information on this?

Melissa Mackedon:

We will get you that information.

Assemblywoman Backus:

I have a question on page 10 [[Exhibit C](#)] regarding approved use of funds from federal COVID-19 monies: whether the funds came from ESSER I, Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER), ESSER II, ESSER III, or A.B. 495 of the 81st Session. I noticed about 60 percent of the funds were used for salaries. Was that salary funding used to secure additional positions to help students, for summer school or after-school programs, or as retention bonuses or additional compensation?

Melissa Mackedon:

It is a combination of all those. For my school, we hired new positions and we used the money to retain positions. It is a combination of the things you said with the percent varying from school to school.

Assemblywoman Backus:

I was looking at each school and one thing I did not see—and this may have been related to the 60 percent of federal funds during this time—is anywhere where the charter schools were having high vacancy rates or difficulty filling those positions. What is the vacancy rate for educators and paraprofessionals and what are schools doing to recruit educators and paraprofessionals?

Melissa Mackedon:

I cannot address what schools are doing to recruit, but I can tell you that the total number of charter school teachers is 2,922 and on November 6, 2022, we had about 200 unfilled full-time equivalent (FTE) positions across all systems.

Assemblywoman Anderson:

For federal COVID-19 money awarded to different charter schools—what happens if that money is not spent by the end of the period? Does that money revert to the State Public Charter School Authority, or does it revert to another entity?

Jennifer Bauer, Director of Finance and Operations, State Public Charter School Authority:

All the emergency grants are on a reimbursement basis. No funds will revert, however there could be the opportunity for unspent funds and dollars to be left on the table. This is a sore subject for us. We do not want that to happen. We are undertaking an effort to reach out to every school and ensure they have a plan to spend their awarded dollars. If they do not have a plan, we can make an amendment so they can spend all their dollars and then, in a worst-case scenario, if they still cannot, we would reallocate to schools who can spend the funds.

Assemblywoman Anderson:

Regarding the 10 percent vacancy rate, I want to ensure that licensure of educators for charter schools is for core areas of education. Are some of your teachers unlicensed or is the license requirement one of the reasons why 10 percent of the FTE positions are unfilled?

Melissa Mackedon:

Statute requires at least 80 percent of teachers at each charter school to be licensed and requires teachers of core academic subjects, English Language Learners, and special education pupils to be licensed. Unlicensed teachers must undergo a background check, hold a degree license or certificate for the field in which they teach, and have at least two years of experience in that field. With that said, every one of our charter schools' licensed teacher rates exceeds 80 percent. Generally, unlicensed teachers teach tae kwon do, ballet, or something along those lines.

Senator Dondero Loop:

On page 10 [\[Exhibit C\]](#) we have approved uses of funds including web-based programs and software; books, supplies, equipment; textbooks; and supplies that are information technology-related—I see some crossover there. Are those all student-based? Are there some items that are not student-based? When I look at funding priorities like technology, I see it in the middle of the pack for what you are doing, yet a lot of these items are for technology services.

Melissa Mackedon:

The majority of that is 1:1 technology and keeping that cycle going for schools.

Senator Dondero Loop:

I think 1:1 technology would be books, supplies, and equipment. Is that correct?

Melissa Mackedon:

I cannot say how every charter school would answer that. I know we answered that our technology would be refurbished, including Chromebooks for students.

Senator Dondero Loop:

What would be included in purchased property services?

Melissa Mackedon:

Purchased property services frequently are contracts; for example, if your sanitation service workers are not employees but are third-party vendors.

Senator Dondero Loop:

It appeared that books were showing in two places, technology was showing in two places, and supplies were showing in two places.

Melissa Mackedon:

I apologize if that was confusing. My understanding is that the difference between books and textbooks is that there is a specific amount of money we need to spend on textbooks generally, so they get sorted out differently than other books might.

Senator Neal:

How often do you review school performance plans produced by the schools?

Melissa Mackedon:

Charter schools are on the same cycle as other schools. Under the new process at NDE—I believe this is the second or third year we have been using that process—there are multiple check-in times required throughout the year, and we submit that information, not only to our boards, but we upload the information to the SPCSA as well.

Senator Neal:

Regarding the Nevada Virtual Academy—I do not know if you have updated data, but I went into the NDE portal, and for the most recent data, there is about 14.9 percent of students who are proficient. I do not know if that percentage has grown, and their weakness is in math, not English language arts. When I looked at their target, they want to spend their money on a targeted intervention in reading, but really the weakness is in math. It looked like there were 63 percent who were below or approaching standard, unless you have updated data.

Melissa Mackedon:

I do not have any additional data, but we will include performance data—we can get you that.

Senator Neal:

How do you address whether their target is appropriate? If you look at their list of what they say their needs are, it is very generic.

Melissa Mackedon:

Ultimately, we do not approve their budgets. Their boards approve those budgets. We come into play if they were underperforming and not meeting expectations—through our academic performance framework, we would address those issues.

Senator Neal:

If 14.9 percent proficiency is not underperforming, then I must find another thought process around that.

Melissa Mackedon:

No, 14.9 percent is underperforming.

Assemblywoman Brown May:

For the record, I have a student teacher who is at a public charter school and she is growing into that role. I want to talk about our Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) students, and I did not see a lot of data here. If I pulled the student counts listed online for 2022-2023, it looks like enrollment for IEP students is 5,883 kids across all different schools. If I compare that data to how we break down some nationalities, we have 23,000 Hispanic kids in charter schools. We have 4,777 Asian students, 17,000 White students, 7,500 Black students, and we have 5,883 students on IEPs. For our special education students, especially as we look at weighted funding, do you have any data or plans relative to how our special education students are equitably treated in charter schools?

Melissa Mackedon:

I am not 100 percent sure I know what you mean by "equitably treated." I can tell you that the number of charter school students with disabilities data is consistently going up every year. Every subgroup, including IEP students, are outperforming proficiency in third through eighth grade Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) scores, as well as in the eleventh grade ACT [American College Testing] scores.

Assemblywoman Brown-May:

If you would include that data, it would be helpful.

Assemblyman Miller:

I would like the remaining districts to include your responses to these questions about the mental health of our students and of our staff within the system. You mentioned Project AWARE. You also mentioned that each one of your schools has additional supports in the schools. Could you describe what those supports look like and how much you are spending to address mental health issues?

Melissa Mackedon:

We can get more specific global charter school information. I can just talk about my own school—through ESSER dollars, we were able to bring on a third counselor, making our student-to-counselor ratio 250:1. Additionally, we were able to use ESSER dollars to bring Tier One mental health supports to our students who were the most in need, and we were doing this pre-COVID-19 using our General Funds. We contracted with a third-party vendor for mental health awareness to help staff individually, but also for professional development that they can use in their classrooms. Every classroom is required to do a mindfulness

exercise at least once a day. Those are a few things we do at Oasis Academy, and we will get you more specific information. Again, I am just talking about one 1 of 43 schools.

Assemblyman Miller:

That would be helpful. Can you provide a picture of what the mental health situation looks like? We heard about significant challenges from other districts and what those districts faced in trying to address those situations.

Melissa Mackedon:

I can address my school in Churchill County, Nevada, and I can tell you that the situation is dire. We have just over 700 students at our campus. The week before spring break, we had two students in a mental health facility who had attempted suicide. I dealt with a suicide situation on SafeVoice last night. This is a matter of grave concern. I felt every emotion those superintendents had in my very core. The situation is serious. We are looking for competitive grants similar to how we use ESSER money. We had a licensed clinical social worker who was providing Tier One supports, although we used those dollars quickly. We are doing everything we can as a school, and we will use these additional funds to help fund Tier One supports.

Assemblywoman Kasama:

I am looking at page 9 [[Exhibit C](#)] and I see where under ARPA funds, Somerset Academy has spent only 42 percent of \$7.8 million. That leaves about \$4 million in a limited time. Do you know what Somerset Academy's plan is to spend the remaining funds? I know these are all individual and different schools, but we want to ensure they spend it all, and \$4 million is a lot to spend. That will be a hard deadline to meet.

Jennifer Bauer:

I do not have all 43 schools memorized. However, I can tell you that the table on slide 9 [[Exhibit C](#)] is a compilation of many grants under the ESSER I, II, and III funding. When we look at ARPA and we look at ESSER III, that is technically a first round of funding because it was awarded to us from the Nevada Department of Education in two rounds—that was the first two-thirds of funding. Then there was another round with the final one-third of funding and there was some after-school grant funding, and other opportunities for homeless and neglected youth.

This amount is a compilation of many grants, some of which were only recently awarded. In all fairness to the schools, schools have not even had a chance to seek reimbursement. Just as with all the grants, our goal is to spend as much as possible. We have hired extra grants analysts to ensure we have that level of support to schools to provide outreach and to ensure that if the schools need to amend the details of their budget to spend more money or if it needs to be reallocated, we will do so. We will be doing the same thing next year for ARPA.

Melissa Mackedon:

I will add one thing to clarify: the September 30th deadline is only for ESSER II funds. Most of that money was ESSER III funds and is not subject to the September deadline.

Senator Dondero Loop:

Is there an actual number of students who can attend each charter?

Melissa Mackedon:

Yes, every charter holder in their contract specifies the number of students that they are allowed to have in their charter. They cannot go above or below 10 percent of that number without seeking a charter amendment from the State Public Charter School Authority Board.

Senator Dondero Loop:

It is an individual school in your case, but if it were a large charter comprised of several schools, would that cap be for the large school or specific to each school under the umbrella?

Ryan Herrick, General Counsel, Executive Director's Office, State Public Charter School Authority:

I believe that is by campus. I will get back to you to confirm that information. If I may elaborate, we have seen that issue—if you have a school with 100 kids, the 10 percent is 10 kids one way or the other. Somerset Academy has almost 10,000 kids spread across 9 campuses. So, 10 percent—we have looked at potentially adding a number factor in there somehow because again, the 10 percent differs depending on how many kids you have at the campus.

Senator Dondero Loop:

That is why I am asking. I would also like to know about the percentage of teachers who are not certified or licensed. You indicated that a lot of teachers who are not certificated may be ballet teachers or something similar. My concern is that in a public school, I may want a ballet teacher to come in, but that ballet teacher should still have a certification, or if I want a mariachi teacher, that mariachi teacher should still have a certificate. While I understand that—and I always say with all fairness—with public money comes public accountability, it is always a concern of mine because I am a certificated teacher, and I must keep my certification valid. I renewed my certification because I cannot teach without it. Even you said, our core subjects have certificated teachers. I am trying to justify why we would need to have people who did not have certificates.

Melissa Mackedon:

Let me be clear, and I should have shared this earlier, of the 2,922 teachers in the SPCSA, 43 of those are unlicensed teachers. I know you have heard about Career and Technical Education programs. We offer welding at our school. There is a master welder who has an endorsement in that area, but he may not have a teaching license. That is an example, and why we say they have to hold a degree license or certificate in the field in which they are working and have at least two years' experience in that field.

Senator Dondero Loop:

While I appreciate that because we are short on teachers, I would still say that in a public setting, teachers must have certificates. On another note, I was not clear about your mental health dollars, and how that process worked with so many different schools. I can only refer to my public school setting in a school district—in a large school district or a small school district, it would not matter whether it was White Pine County or Washoe County; they must have a plan, they must put money toward it, and they must have specific things they are doing. I am not seeing that here, and I have done quite a bit of mental health work with education and teens. I was wondering if you could address that?

Melissa Mackedon:

We can get that information for you. I do not know what every charter school is doing in that regard. I think it falls under charter school funding priorities and with additional counselors and social workers. You can see that 27 of the 43 charter school holders plan to use funds for this purpose. I think a lot of it also fell under professional development for many of those schools.

Ryan Herrick:

I believe Assemblyman Miller asked districts to pull that information. We are in the process of pulling that information school-by-school, charter-by-charter, to show where those mental health dollars are going—social workers, counselors, or psychiatrists. We should have that information to the Committee soon.

Assemblywoman Gorelow:

I want to talk about the lottery process for students to get into the charters. I know we have had conversations over the last few sessions about certain groups having weighted ability to be chosen. We talk about neighborhood schools: children who are in those neighborhoods get preference over students who live across town. Can you walk me through that lottery process?

Melissa Mackedon:

Each school administers their own lottery. We have had many schools opt into a weighted lottery system and some schools have a 2:1 ratio. For a 2:1 ratio, if you are a qualifying student, your name goes into the bucket twice. In some schools, it may be upward of four or five times. Schools implement lotteries in different ways. I believe the majority are computer-generated, but we will get you that information.

Ryan Herrick:

Remember with a lottery, if you have an enrollment cap of 750 kids at that school and only 720 kids apply for that school year, you do not run a lottery. Everybody gets in. The lottery is only needed when you have an enrollment cap of 750, and 751 kids apply. All 751 names go into that lottery. The process is usually computer-run—I do not think we have a single school that runs their lottery by hand.

If you have certain weights and most of the students—if it is an at-risk, or a free and reduced lunch rate, the weighted ratio may be 4:1 or 5:1—get extra weights, then those kids who are selected through that lottery are enrolled. There may be other nuances here; there may be open seats in second grade and fourth grade but kindergarten, first grade, and third grade may be full. Going back to my example of 751 kids, the one student who did not get in using the lottery would go on a waitlist, and the first seat that opens during that school year—for that grade level—would be available for the waitlisted student.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

Are there any other questions from Committee members? [There were none.] Several Committee members requested information. Please send that to our committee manager who will get that information out to all Committee members.

With that, we will close the presentation from our State Public Charter School Authority, and we will invite Washoe County School District to the table.

Susan Enfield, Superintendent, Washoe County School District:

I am joined by our trustee president who will introduce herself.

Elizabeth Smith, Trustee, District D, President, Board of Trustees, Washoe County School District:

I am the president of the Washoe County School District Board of Trustees.

Susan Enfield:

We are also joined by four members from our Washoe Education Association (WEA): Stacie Stosich, Robert Munson, Maggie Babb, and Liz Cadigan. We are grateful to them for being here and we are grateful for their partnership.

This is the last day of spring break in the Washoe County School District. Other staff cannot join us because I hope they are enjoying the last day of their well-deserved break.

I want to begin by providing some context for our district, and then I will go into specifics for how we will strategically invest the proposed state funds for the upcoming biennium [page 2, [Exhibit D](#)]. Our student population [page 3] is mostly Hispanic. Our diversity is expanding and this is a tremendous asset for our school district and our community.

We have roughly 9,000 students who come to us speaking a language other than English [page 4]. I want to make a note here that we do our best to use student-first language. We do not like to reduce our students to labels; I do not think any family wants their child reduced to a label. We will talk about students who come to us speaking other languages and experiencing homelessness. We have under 9,000 students who need special services, and roughly 34,000 who rely on us for some or all their meals during the day.

Our graduation rates were on a steady climb [page 5]. With the COVID-19 pandemic, we certainly hit a blip, but we are proud to say we are back on the climb and we continue to expect to see that rise continue in the years ahead.

We will talk about what our base per-pupil funding is right now [page 6]. You will see that our per-pupil funding is expected to increase from over \$7,300 to over \$8,800 in fiscal year 2024, which equates to over \$92 million in increased General Fund revenues for the Washoe County School District (WCSD). We, however, must consider specific costs that will be taken off the top of whatever that amount is—step increases and Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) rate increases. We are experiencing declining enrollment, as are other districts across the state and country, and there is a cost to that. We are also, at the same time, having to open a new school based on where our student population is concentrated now. The projected net surplus of funds we expect to receive is approximately \$76 million.

On page 7, for the weighted funding that is being proposed, you will see that we will see some increase in the funding for English learners and for our at-risk funding. The area of concern for us is funding for our students with special needs. About 13 percent of our total special education budget comes from the federal government. About 35 or 36 percent comes from the state and over 50 percent comes from the General Fund to meet the needs of students who come to us with special needs. I know that President Smith wants to speak to our at-risk funding as well.

Elizabeth Smith:

We want to bring attention to the proposed new formula for at-risk students. As it stands under the current formula, the WCSD has 18,000 students who qualify for additional funding to support them. Under the proposed new formula, that same 18,000 number would be reduced to only 5,000 students. All 18,000 of those students, however, will still need support and services. We want to raise this issue with you because under the new funding formula, the number of students who receive help will be reduced but the number of students or children who need that support will not be reduced.

Susan Enfield:

The proposed increase in funding for special education will not come close to the additional funding that we would need from the state. You have copies of our legislative platform. The trustees, our WEA, our other labor partners, and I agree that investing in staff is our top priority [page 8, [Exhibit D](#)]. It has been a few years since the last state-funded cost-of-living increase and that was only 3 percent. We have had compensation studies conducted and we know our staff in the WCSD falls somewhere between 20 to 30 percent below market value. I can tell you that goes across all levels of the organization from our teachers to our aides to our principals to our senior administration. We want to be clear that when we talk about investing in our staff and increased compensation, that is for every person who works in the Washoe County School District. It is not limited to teaching staff.

Elizabeth Smith:

In our legislative platform, the Board of Trustees took the unique position of including the value we have for our personnel's salary and compensation. Our staff should be compensated as the professionals that they are. I would also like to point out that the WCSD takes another unique approach in recognizing the demands our staff faces. We compensate our teachers, counselors, and other select staff when they are serving higher than average caseloads and higher than average class size ratios. I do believe that that is a unique approach.

Susan Enfield:

Before going to the next slide, point of privilege and pride, the picture on the top is of our Nevada State Teacher of the Year: Connie Hall, of whom we are immensely proud. You have an open invitation to visit classrooms in our district any time. All you need to do is let me know, and I can tell you, it would be a joy for you to see what happens, the magic that happens in her classroom.

Now let us talk about the fiscal impact these cost-of-living increases that we are looking at will have [page 9, [Exhibit D](#)]. A 10 percent cost-of-living increase would equate to approximately \$46 million, leaving us—with the actual \$76 million—with about \$29.7 million to spend. If we went with a 15 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), however, that would take us up to \$70 million, leaving us with roughly \$6 million for other priorities and expenses. It is worth noting here that even a 15 percent COLA will not bring my first-year teacher salaries up to \$50,000. A starting teacher in the WCSD makes \$41,000. The last I saw, the median home price in Reno was \$550,000. That math does not equate. I can tell you that is a point of continuous pain for those of us in the district.

As an aside, I was out to dinner a month or two ago. As I was leaving, a young woman followed me out calling to me. She was the host of the restaurant, and she told me she was a third-grade teacher. I asked her why she was working a second job. She told me that rather than be home lesson planning, resting, spending time with people she loves, she was working here not to save for a ski trip but to pay for her master's degree in education. I hugged her, I apologized, and I told her that we would do everything we could to make sure she does not have to continue to work two jobs. This is a priority that President Smith, the trustees, our bargaining associations, and I feel incredibly committed to, because our children are worthy and deserving of the highest quality and most competitively compensated staff that we can provide them.

To put this in context of our budget process, our coming to you right now is a bit premature, to say the least [page 10]. We are in the beginning stages of a participatory budget process that will go on for months. It is not just my decision—I do not get to decide where the money goes. It is not even just President Smith's decision. We go through a lengthy engagement process with staff, community members, and then of course, we will not know until June what the final decision is from the Legislature. We are doing this anticipating information in the months ahead.

Elizabeth Smith:

The only thing I will add is that we will also engage our collective bargaining units. The numbers we are showing and what we are suggesting are projections and ideas.

Susan Enfield:

The other factor is that we are also amid a strategic planning process [page 11, [Exhibit D](#)]. This is also a participatory process that is engaging stakeholders from across our community. We have approximately half a dozen different planning teams, consisting of staff, families, and community members, who are coming together to identify what our goals will be for the next 3 to 5 years, based on values we have as a school system. We intend for that to be adopted by the board in June 2023. By the end of June, when the Legislature has ended and with our strategic plan, we will have a clear road map of how we will be allocating the state funding that we will be receiving.

Regarding strategic investments we intend to make with these state funds [page 12], it is important to note there is a lot of discussion around how districts have been using their ESSER funds that we received during the pandemic. I want to show you what that looked like for Washoe County. The ESSER I funds were the first round that went to basic items for survival: personal protective equipment, sanitation, and other things from the early days. Those dollars have been expended.

Elizabeth Smith:

This information is not in your packet [\[Exhibit D\]](#), but it is in our updated presentation, and we will get you this information.

Susan Enfield:

We felt this was an important graphic for you and the public to see and we will get you a copy of this information. Our ESSER II dollars totaled \$34 million. We have expended over 80 percent, and we have obligated another 14.6 percent, which gives us about \$1 million remaining, as of January 2023. The last round of ESSER, ESSER III, is \$77 million. We have expended about 36 percent, and while it says only 12 percent is obligated, we have preliminary plans for a much higher percentage that we will be bringing forward to the trustees in the months ahead. I can guarantee that we will spend every penny of those ESSER dollars, and when I say spend them, I mean invest the dollars strategically and wisely in ways to benefit our children and our staff. We are on track to do that.

I want to share with you where those dollars have gone. Regarding strategic use of our ESSER dollars in learning acceleration and recovery [page 13, [Exhibit D](#)], we are in the beginning stages of recovery from the effects of the pandemic. We have used these dollars to invest in high-quality curricular materials that our students need. We have invested in 24/7 on-demand tutoring for our students. Students can log on at 11:00 p.m. at night and get someone from a company we contracted with to chat and help the student with their calculus homework. If you have teenagers at home, I am sure you would appreciate having someone

available at 11:00 p.m. at night to help with calculus homework. We are investing in those things we know will help our students catch up and continue to excel.

We have also used these dollars to invest in a districtwide growth measurement so that in the coming years, we will be able to share data on where our students began the year and where they ended the year. We think this is important. The reality is that the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) assessment does not give us useful information. At the end of the day, what every parent wants to know, is where my student started the year here and where my student finished the year. If my student started fourth grade reading at a second-grade level and finished the year reading at almost a fourth-grade level, they have made a lot of growth, but will not pass that SBAC test. We need to be able to show that. Similarly, if your fourth grader comes in reading at a fifth-grade level, you should expect at year end that they will be reading at sixth-grade or seventh-grade level. This is about measuring our students' growth wherever they are in the learning continuum. We felt that this was an important investment for us to make as a system.

Elizabeth Smith:

What I would like to add here is that the WCSD is a faithful steward of our taxpayer dollars. As an example, we recently received five commendations from the Nevada Department of Education specifically for our use of these ESSER funds all related to student outcomes and successes.

Susan Enfield:

One thing I will point out is that working towards class size reduction in lower grades has also been an important use of these funds.

Our second strategic use of ESSER funds is on student well-being and family supports [page 14, [Exhibit D](#)]. I know that questions about mental health have been asked. I will try to weave specifics into this, even though they are not necessarily ESSER-funded, to get to some of those answers. We have invested in a CENTEGIX security system, which is a crisis alert button that all our staff can access. If something is happening in a classroom or a building, they press a button, and it goes automatically to the front office. If they press the button multiple times, it goes to the central office and law enforcement. That is not prevention, but it will provide our staff with a higher sense of security, in that they know if something happens that we can get help quickly. That means a lot. Our staff is telling us they need to feel safe and it is our responsibility to provide that in our schools.

Additionally, while we have not wanted to use our one-time dollars for ongoing salary costs, we certainly have invested them in high-needs positions. Looking at substance abuse counselors, more mental health administrators, family resource center specialists: what are ways we can help with these dollars to provide additional highly qualified staff to meet the needs of our students? I will also say this: we have recently—not using ESSER dollars—partnered with an organization called Care Solace where a student, family member, or staff member can log on and identify their need. If it is substance abuse or suicidal ideation, they

will be connected with someone from Care Solace, who within three days, will have connected them with local providers that will accept their insurance. This removes the barrier for our staff, students, and families to be able to access the support they need. We are doing this in partnership with our community, and our community partners across the county are going to see how together we can make this available to everybody across the Washoe County area, not just our school district.

The other thing I want to say about mental health is that it is not just about our students, it is about our staff. As I said, I know it feels like we are back to prepandemic normal when we go out in the world, but not in our schools. Every day our schools are feeling the effects of the pandemic. We see it in escalated behaviors of our students, and we see it in the fatigue and frustration of our staff who do not have the tools they need and want to meet the needs of those students. As we invest in mental health supports for our students and making those resources more readily available, we are also partnering with organizations. We will be surveying our staff to determine their biggest mental health needs.

We have secured support from the Pure Edge foundation and Marc A. Brackett, Ph.D., Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, to collaborate with our staff on the neuroscience effects of stress on the body. We are not talking about self-care anymore and we are not talking about social emotional learning. We are talking about the effects of stress on the body, because when we have students with escalated behaviors, adults cannot deescalate if they cannot self-regulate. I say that because we need to invest in the mental health and well-being of our staff and teachers, as well as our students, and we are doing that.

Finally, regarding strategic use of ESSER dollars for educator supports, we have used these dollars to strengthen our leadership pathway [page 8, [Exhibit D](#)]. We want our staff to see opportunities for advancement in the system. We were already investing in professional learning communities, allowing time for staff to collaborate in the building, and looking at student data to improve outcomes for students. We have provided scholarships for aspiring special education teachers, and incentive programs for substitute teachers. We have talked with staff to determine how we could provide these supports. While we did not use our ESSER dollars for a tremendous amount of ongoing salary support, we did use some of those dollars for incentives.

Elizabeth Smith:

There were COVID-19 differentials, and we did compensate our staff for the additional work they did, which goes far beyond what we were able to give them, but we did recognize it was what they deserved, particularly at an unprecedented time. Compensating our staff with COVID-19 differentials was something we did a couple different times during the pandemic.

Susan Enfield:

Now, to address areas you identified in some questions you sent regarding how we will use our state funding to meet the needs of our students [page 16, [Exhibit D](#)]. Remember that if we determine, and the trustees approve—and in working with our bargaining units—a 15

percent COLA, that only leaves us with about \$6 million to put toward some of these things [page 17]. We are going to have to get creative in areas we feel would bring the highest level of return on investment in terms of student outcomes. For our low proficiency rates in reading, math, and science, we are looking at purchasing high quality curricular materials. I am sure some of you have heard about the science of reading and all the conversations about how we are teaching children to read. We know more than we knew a while ago, and we must act on that. We are making sure we are providing those materials, and training for our teachers and staff to do that.

We are also looking at providing additional on-site support in our highest-needs schools for our students with the greatest needs—providing them with additional opportunities. We have talked about tutoring. We also are looking at extended learning opportunities in the summer, as well as credit recovery opportunities for our students. For students who come to us speaking a language other than English—our English learning (EL) students—there is a tremendous appetite in the WCSD to look at expanding dual language programming. We have two schools right now and we would love to see more. That is something that we will be looking at. We also want to look at expanding the availability for prekindergarten (pre-K) for those students and families who want to access that. We will be looking at creating a preschool through third grade (P-3) leadership position because we believe we need to create a P-3 continuum—it is an investment in pre-K and kindergarten, so that when students get to third grade, they are where they need to be. That must be a continuum and it does not happen because we wish it.

Again, I want to tell you that with increased funding comes increased scrutiny. We are using this as an opportunity to investigate where we can improve as a system. We have completed an external human resources (HR) audit of how we can improve our HR systems to better support our people. We are also in the process of contracting for program analyses for our special education programs, our gifted and talented programs, our EL programs, and our alternative education programs. I want to make sure that as we have more money to spend in these areas, we are investing it in the most research-based, highest impact way possible, so that we see results for our students. We hope to have those reports in place by next fall, so we can act on that in the next school year.

In the at-risk category, we are looking at mentorship opportunities and extended learning opportunities [page 18]. Again, it comes back to additional tutoring and time for our teachers to work with students in small groups, and to work with one another, which leads to the need for additional staff I mentioned earlier. In special education—and again, a lot of this will come down to what the program analysis reveals to us about the biggest gaps in our service delivery models and what works that we want to amplify and spread across the board—that work will be continuing.

Finally, looking at our graduation rates, we are looking at expanding dual enrollment opportunities. We have a new partnership with the University of Nevada, Reno and next year we will be hiring for a position to liaison between the district and the business

community so we can increase student industry certifications and internships. Our goal is that, over time, every student in the WCSD who wants an internship in our community can have one. That is important to us.

With staffing, it comes down to what we can do to compensate our staff, but I want to be clear, it is not just about compensation [page 19, [Exhibit D](#)]. Compensation is the biggest piece of the puzzle, but we have a role to play in reviewing how our HR systems are structured so we can better support staff. As of July 2023, there will no longer be a 90-day waiting period for health care. Now, when anyone is hired into the WCSD, everyone including the superintendent must wait 90 days for health care. This is at a time when we are struggling to hire people, and especially at a time when COVID-19 taught us that health is paramount. We are taking on that cost to make sure staff has health care on day one. We will also be eliminating one-year-only contracts for our teachers, because we think there are things in addition to much-needed compensation that we can do to attract and retain the highest quality personnel, and signal to our staff that they matter to us and we will invest in them.

I will leave you with this promise to our students, to our families, and to our community: every student in the WCSD will be known by name and the name will be pronounced correctly with respect and affection. Each student will be known by their strength—what they are good at and what they bring to us—by their need, and each student will graduate prepared for whatever career or whatever path they choose for themselves. That is our job [page 20].

With that, our contact information is on page 21. You know where to find us, but just in case, we thought we would make it easy for you.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

Are there any questions from Committee members?

Assemblyman Yeager:

Given the vision you laid out, I think this is the reason we put this presentation together—to talk about what the vision is, where we are, where we want to be, and how we are going to get there, collaboratively. I realize you are at the start of the budgeting process. I have some broader questions, but in my mind, and hopefully in Committee members' minds, this is the beginning of a conversation we will continue to have on a regular basis, to hear how things are going.

We talked about COLAs and, of course, those adjustments are important for educators. How in your mind—and realizing there is a whole bargaining negotiation that must happen—but how in your mind, do you make those determinations about how much goes to the COLA versus how much goes into direct programming? If you can, and I am not asking for specific numbers, please discuss how you make these tough decisions. I will readily admit this is a large injection of funding, but it does not get us to the point where the Commission on

School Funding recommends we should be. It is way more than we thought we would have this biennium, but we have a way to go. How do you analyze that decision making process?

Elizabeth Smith:

It is a complicated process which is why I brought up that the Board of Trustees did include our signaling around the value of our staff, and we did include that in our legislative platform. Again, this is not intended to be a commitment because we still need to bargain with our groups. We recognize that our staff deserves more than what they are earning right now, and we have discussed the need to be more than 20 percent. That is not to suggest we can get there in a single step, but this is a pathway. As mentioned earlier, it is not acceptable that our first-year teachers are making \$41,000 a year. Even with a 15 percent COLA, they would be earning less than \$50,000. I will say we considered this carefully, but we are going to take a people-first approach to this funding. We recognize where we want to be, but we will not be able to get there in this first step.

Susan Enfield:

I would add that we made it clear in our legislative platform that this had to be our top priority. I said this at the start, and I will say it again—I am concerned about my ability to hire staff in my district unless we make a serious investment. I will say, to reiterate what President Smith said, that this is the beginning of the catch-up. Even if we get to 15 percent or 20 percent, we will not be where we need to be. It is the beginning of an ongoing investment to bring our educators, and our education system in Nevada, up to what our children need from us. It is priority one because we will not be able to hire staff. A starting teacher in Washoe makes \$41,000; a starting teacher in my former district makes \$65,000. That salary is the starting levels for some of my principals. We must do something.

Assemblyman Yeager:

On page 16 [[Exhibit D](#)]; your potential use of state funding, the small print says, "The district is currently conducting assessments to strengthen programming for SPED, EL, GATE and alternative education." Can you talk about those assessments?

Susan Enfield:

I had mentioned that if we are going to have new money, this is an opportunity to look at what we are doing, what is working, and what is not working. We are already talking with different organizations and will be issuing a request for proposal (RFP) for program reviews. It will take several weeks to get their recommendations. These recommendations will allow us to share the progress we have made and to know how we can do that.

Assemblyman Yeager:

How will you judge whether these programs were effective? What will that look like for you—maybe not in six months—but if we are back in two years what will success look like for you?

Susan Enfield:

I do not have a satisfying answer for you because I know that you would like to see results quickly. Having a solid growth measure will help because that will give you a more accurate picture of the progress our students are making, not just one end of your test score. I will tell you one of the mistakes we make in public education is that we do not stick with something long enough to see a change. I also want to be clear: I have also made the mistake of sticking with something too long when it did not work. We are going to need annual checkpoints to see what is working, and to talk with our staff. The results will be in the outcomes we see in our students.

Assemblywoman Jauregui:

I appreciate that you have given thought to ensuring that teachers are earning a livable wage and that your district is fully staffed. Assuming you go with 15 percent, and you have \$6 million left, what are the potential uses for the remaining state funding [slides 17 through 19, [Exhibit D](#)]? Have you given thought to how you would prioritize these needs—and they are all great needs—as a district, because \$6 million will not go far?

Susan Enfield:

It would be premature for me to prioritize because that is not for me to do alone. I will collaborate with my team and we will collaborate with our community to produce a proposal for the board that we feel will provide the greatest return on investment. I can tell you it will be a mix of the general categories including more learning time—whether that is after-school tutoring, or extended summer school—and additional people in the building to support students, including social workers and counselors.

Elizabeth Smith:

We are also working on our strategic plan as well. That plan involves community engagement—our families, community members, and students will be telling us what they need and how they would like our district to grow. Our Board of Trustees will be looking at the feedback to make these decisions.

Assemblywoman Gorelow:

Regarding district-sponsored charter schools, can you tell me about your relationship to them and what their performance is?

Susan Enfield:

We did our annual approval review of our district-sponsored charters, and all were approved. My deputy superintendent, Dr. Keo, and I have scheduled a meeting with all our district-sponsored charter schools to talk about what is working in their relationships with the district and to identify areas for improvement. When I hear from one of our district-sponsored charter principals or staff members who is pointing out an area of concern, we get back to them right away. My personal and professional philosophy is that we need to provide as broad a menu for our children as possible and that it is not for me to make a choice for a family based on what I think is best for their child. You know what is best for

your child better than I do, but it is my job to make sure that your public school is a viable option. If you choose something else, that is fine. These are all our children—how can we make this a menu of options, not a zero-sum game?

Elizabeth Smith:

I would describe our relationship with district-sponsored charter schools as warm and collaborative. For example, our Board of Trustees recently approved an additional Coral Academy of Science Elementary School. We recognize and support that school choice comes in many different forms, and we offer choices in the district with our district-sponsored charters.

Assemblywoman Gorelow:

How many district-sponsored charter schools do you have?

Susan Enfield:

Roughly a dozen.

Senator Dondero Loop:

As you know, I have family in your district. I am acutely aware of some things that are going on. As a plug for Monday, April 3, 2023, I am excited about your extended learning opportunities, and stay tuned because we will be talking summer school. I know in my family, believe it or not, the little people were very excited for summer school. As a teacher, summer school allows an educator to interact with kids at a different level, build important relationships, and give students increased knowledge. Can you talk about pre-K seats that might be used with your state funds after COLA?

Susan Enfield:

I am glad to hear they are excited about summer school: that warms a superintendent's heart. With respect to pre-K, we are in the beginning stages of looking at what our pre-K landscape is like. What are the seats that are currently available? What is our capacity to expand those seats? We also look at not just pre-K that we provide as a district—which will never be all-inclusive in meeting the needs of our children—but who are local providers in the area with which we can partner?

For example, when I talked about creating a P-3 continuum, in my former district, we partnered with our local pre-K providers including family, friends, neighbors, and Head Start Services. We arranged trainings on Saturdays because the others cannot meet in the middle of the week to discuss how we were preparing students and what our incoming kindergartners needed to know. We want to look at building out models that are inclusive of our local providers. Once we hire this person, we can assess how many seats we have and how many seats we can provide with quality. I will get back to you with more details.

Senator Dondero Loop:

I noticed under the Special Education (SPED) category [page 18, [Exhibit D](#)], you included, "Expand social, emotional, mental and behavioral supports." I struggled at first because I thought maybe this belonged under the at-risk category, or I was really plugging it in several places. Can you talk a little bit about what you are doing to support staff because we know the staff needs help. Our kids are desperate, and we know that, but we also have staff that are working with them, and they need help too. Can you just talk a little bit about that whole piece and how that puzzle fits together? How do you partner with the teachers, the parents, and the students?

Susan Enfield:

The need for social, emotional, and mental health supports spans every category of child, and adults as well. It is fair to say that we know many children experienced setbacks during the pandemic, especially for students with profound special needs—their time away from school was detrimental. We need to do what we can to get them back to where they were before they left.

The biggest challenge right now is getting staff: it is not even supporting staff, it is getting the staff. We are starting to look at additional compensation models when it comes to SPED staff. We simply do not have the number of bodies we need to meet the needs of our children.

It all comes back to that compensation model; how can we make this a more attractive place of employment? Salary is not the only issue, but the notion is that if I am a teacher in a self-contained classroom with a group of high-needs students, and I have three aides, but the district can only hire one or two of those aides—this is where we hear horrible stories—where somebody gets hurt or where people are frustrated and cannot take it anymore. It comes back to our ability to staff these programs. Compensation is a big piece—we need to be looking at other modifications we can make to our SPED service delivery models. We have provided very strong, dedicated leadership for our SPED programs, which we did not have before. We are forming a Superintendent SPED Family Advisory Council so that I can meet regularly with families of children with special needs to find out what their experience is and look for improvements. Other than compensation, we are looking for things we can do as a district to make this a place where people feel valued, safe, and successful in coming to work.

Senator Dondero Loop:

I always said that when you have happy teachers and happy students, you get the love of learning and then you get happy schools. It seems silly, but you must have all those things to help with burnout our teachers are facing from large class sizes, behavior issues, and increased requirements from teachers. How are we assisting teachers with that so we can retain teachers and keep kids learning and loving school?

Susan Enfield:

It comes down to our ability to staff. That is the best way that we are going to provide teachers with the support and classroom environment that our children need and deserve. That is a challenge for us right now. We are looking at other things we can do—creative models that some of our schools use to create teams and pods for collaboration, where they can have teachers helping other teachers. Our teachers are exhausted and it is not just because it is March—every teacher is exhausted in March, even under the best circumstances. I know as a former teacher. They were "March-exhausted" last October. We are keenly aware. That is why we are going to be surveying our staff to see what their biggest needs and wishes are when it comes to their own well-being.

As I mentioned previously, we have external professionals coming in to help with trainings, so we can equip them with tools to deal with the impact from what is a very high stress job. We think our jobs are high stress. For all our teachers, and our teachers who teach children with special needs—one of the hardest jobs there is—we need to determine how we can equip teachers with tools.

This is a softer part of support, but we must celebrate our teachers. We must, and we can do two things at once. We can acknowledge the hard reality that teachers are facing and the difficulties in the classroom, but we must still celebrate the extraordinary dedication these teachers show every day. I will say it again, we will come back to you with all the data you want, but what you really need to do is to be in our schools. You need to see for yourselves what these amazing people are doing every day with our children because as you said, it is magic. We must celebrate that and tell the good stories, because all teachers hear are the negative stories; that does not help.

Senator Dondero Loop:

It is easy to find all the things wrong and never remember the things that are right, but there is nothing like standing in front of kids and seeing their successes every day. I loved teaching. When I think of my kids—and some of them wander the halls here—I know I have forgotten the silly things that happened. Teaching is an amazing profession, and I hope we can encourage more young people to pursue teaching careers.

Assemblyman Miller:

I appreciate the thoughtfulness in what you are doing and what you are planning to do. Regarding mental health supports, I know you mentioned what you have done with mental health, that was a part of ESSER and additional funding. I would like to know what that looks like from a financial perspective. Additionally, can you address the declining enrollment piece?

Elizabeth Smith:

Susan Enfield will talk about the numbers for mental wellness, but declining enrollment has to do with birth rates. Years ago, it was roughly half a child for every door in Washoe County. I believe that number is a bit over 0.3. We can see based on the enrollment

from kindergarten through 12th grade, we know we are in the middle of a bubble right now. We know that there was a large cohort of kindergartners roughly 10 years ago. As they start to graduate, those numbers are coming down; and we also have to look at housing affordability. For a young family to buy a home in Washoe County—where the average house price is \$500,000 and rent for a one-bedroom apartment is around \$1,800—it is extremely difficult. It is a mix of factors, but the current bubble we are in with graduating groups is something we anticipated.

Susan Enfield:

We saw, particularly during the pandemic, parents and families making choices based on the reality they were living—especially with our youngest learners, where we have seen some of the biggest drops. It is not just locally, it is nationally—in the kindergarten years parents and families are deciding to keep their children home. There are lots of distinct reasons why we are seeing a declining enrollment. With respect to investments in mental health, we are all pulling that information together to share with you, and that will be forthcoming.

Assemblyman Miller:

You mentioned that with the new definition, the at-risk population will go from 18,000 to 5,000, but you stated that you still needed support for the remaining 13,000. I know the qualifier was previously free and reduced lunches. What metrics are you using that indicate those students still need at-risk funding and how they are missed?

Elizabeth Smith:

Both formulas are not of our own choosing; they are set by the state. If we were really looking at free and reduced lunches—which used to be and still is the metric in many states—that count would be much higher than 18,000. Under the state's current formula, we have 18,000 students that qualify. Under the new proposed formula, only 5,000 students will qualify. That leaves a delta of 13,000 students that on one day qualify as at-risk students, and then once the new formula goes into effect, they no longer qualify. We must recognize that those students still absolutely need that same support. The district would have previously received additional weighted funding—again, one day earlier—but not under the new formula. That will create a reduction in services we can provide and what needs to be pulled from the General Fund to meet those needs.

Susan Enfield:

That is correct, but another challenge is the way the weights work for students. For a student who would qualify for multiple weights, that student would only get funding for the highest weight they could receive. For example, a student who arrived speaking no English and from a low-income household, is not going to receive weighted funding for both those characteristics, even though funding is needed for both those characteristics. When we talk about the whole child, the way we will be looking at weights is challenging.

Assemblyman Miller:

That student would get funding for the higher weighted characteristic—is that correct?

Susan Enfield:

That student would not receive total funding for all the characteristics that they have.

Assemblyman Miller:

In your district, do you still identify those students that need help? Have you thought about what you are going to do and how you will manage that?

Elizabeth Smith:

This will go back to weighted funding. Going back to our example of a student who arrives not speaking English and needs English language supports, but who may also be gifted and talented, that student will only receive one of those fundings. The district is still required, and federally mandated, to provide those supports. That is where we must draw from the General Fund—we will still meet those needs, but the funding will come from General Fund, and that is what we do right now. In the example of a student who is an English Language Learning (ELL) student, and may also come from an at-risk situation, the district provides those services today. It comes out of our General Fund allotment because we are not receiving full weight for both of those categories from the state.

Assemblywoman Backus:

We have heard a lot of presentations this session about at-risk students, and what that is going to look like with respect to free and reduced lunches versus the metrics provided by Infinite Campus for graduation rates. It has been a struggle. On the other side, I want to make sure you recognize that the weighted formula was 0.03 in the last biennium for at-risk students, which yielded less than \$250 a student for at-risk situations. In looking at free and reduced lunch, we have issues with community schools. Today, in our K-12 Subcommittees, it was recommended that the weight be 0.35. Whether that is going to end up at the end of the session or not, that was what we were looking at. It is an enormous difference, and I know my colleagues and myself are hoping those larger dollars go to schools and that you can rest assured that at-risk students are being addressed.

Senator Neal:

I want to follow up on the ELL funding. For your Latino/Latina population—which is your highest number and how many of them are ELL?

Susan Enfield:

May I get back to you with that? I want to make sure I get the right percentage.

Senator Neal:

Of course. Regarding the slide on page 13 [\[Exhibit D\]](#), do you have data to show the gains you made from the comprehensive tutoring that you engaged in?

Susan Enfield:

We are beginning to compile that, but it has only been a year or two. Our research and evaluation teams are beginning to pull that together and we will provide that to you shortly.

Senator Neal:

You listed targeted instructional supports and intervention for your multilingual students. I wanted to see the data at the beginning point and the end point because for me, I am always interested in how the money performed for the child.

Susan Enfield:

We can provide that for you.

Senator Neal:

This morning in our Senate Committee on Finance meeting for K-12, a Nevada Department of Education representative mentioned that there is—I do not know if it is prior training, current training, or future training—the ability for Infinite Campus to pull graduate data to get information to help drive interventions. If you know how your students are performing in the middle or at the end and how Infinite Campus data can be pulled to understand what is going on in your schools, then how many Infinite Campus trained people do you have to pull that graduation data?

Susan Enfield:

I would have to find that for you. I have not been a part of that conversation, but I will talk with my team when I get back and get those numbers.

Senator Seevers Gansert:

I appreciate the value you are placing on our professionals, and the work you are doing to raise their pay and to provide the supports they need. Regarding special education (SPED); you have charters sponsored by school districts and state-sponsored charter schools. Sometimes charter schools do not get equivalent funding for SPED. In your school district, do you fund SPED at the same dollars per student rate as district schools?

Susan Enfield:

We are looking at this because we have had some questions about how various funding sources are going to our district-sponsored charter schools. That is a conversation my deputy and I are having tomorrow and we are not looking just at SPED, but other title programs as well.

Senator Seevers Gansert:

I wanted to follow up on Assemblywoman Backus' question. We did change the formula number for at-risk students, but as she mentioned, the weight went from 0.03 to 0.3 so, 10 times, and we may end up at 0.35. If you look at the total pool of funds, we had \$60 million in the bucket and now it is \$163 million. I pulled it up today—instead of receiving \$244 per student, you are going to receive \$2,578 or more per student. I think sometimes you have to look at the total amount that you are getting because you are getting plussed up on that front.

Lastly, when I first spoke with you, Dr. Enfield, you said one thing that has stuck with me and that was: we tend to move slowly in education. We want our students to learn. A year or two for a child in an underperforming school, where class size is too big, or the school is understaffed, is a big deal. You said that you move at the speed of the kids, so you recognize the need to change now and not go through processes for years and years to try to change outcomes. I appreciate that you recognize this.

Susan Enfield:

I get criticized for going too fast. My answer is that I am only going as fast as our children need me to go, which means I am never going fast enough.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

In 2021, a new funding formula went into effect. In that legislative session, we were able to put an unprecedented amount of funding into education. Then we came to 2023, and it is the first time I have been in this building that we had money. Not just money, but money that we could put into education in historical numbers for Nevada. While it may not be the ultimate amount we would like to put in—we have this small pie to divide for many unmet needs that we have had for so long—I want to commend you for what you did. Looking at your presentation regarding the strategic uses of ESSER dollars [page 13, [Exhibit D](#)], you mentioned class size reductions, but can you tell me what you did to help with class size reductions? How did you assist teachers when their classes exceeded those caps?

Susan Enfield:

We used some of those dollars to hire additional staff to bring class sizes down, but I believe we also worked with our associations to provide additional compensation for staff when their class size went above a certain number. This was something that I was familiar with: we did it in my prior district. Your class size is capped: if you go over that, you should be compensated. That does not make it easier, but it is an acknowledgement that we understand your workload has increased because you have more students running around your room than you did before. We are looking at ways to acknowledge and compensate our staff while at the same time reducing class size. Our Washoe Education Association (WEA) partners, our trustees, and I all feel strongly that class size reduction is one of our top priorities.

Elizabeth Smith:

In addition to teachers, we did this for caseload size for our counselors, who are also dealing with unprecedented demands.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

Regarding your slide on educator supports [page 15, [Exhibit D](#)], you mentioned substitute incentives. Can you provide more information on that?

Susan Enfield:

We increased substitute pay to be more competitive. Our substitute pay was too low, and when a substitute can choose to drive 20 minutes to another school to make more, that was a problem.

Elizabeth Smith:

Before we increased pay, we started with bonuses for substitute teachers based on the number of days they were working in the district. We first started with a bonus program that recognized the number of days that they were working and then we took the second step to raise their pay.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

We can fund historic numbers this year, and I hope that every legislative body going forward is able to do the same. I look forward to being in this seat in two years to hear what you have done with those dollars. I am impressed as a legislator to hear the struggles and how you thought outside the box, pinching every penny, to put that money in schools and areas around schools to support your educators, your staff, but more importantly, our kids in the class. I look forward to what you will bring back to us in two years.

Susan Enfield:

We look forward to being here in two years as well. It will be the end of a chapter that is part of an ongoing story. What we will have to tell you in two years will be positive and we will still have work to do, but we will have a plan to do it.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

Any other questions from Committee members? [There were none.] We will close the presentation for Washoe County. We will take a brief recess [at 6:17 p.m.].

The meeting was reconvened [at 6:48 p.m.]. Next, we will hear from the Clark County School District.

Jesus F. Jara, Superintendent, Clark County School District:

Before I get started, I would like to introduce my team. I have my Board president, Trustee Evelyn Garcia Morales; my Chief Finance Officer, Jason Goudie, who is a member of the Commission on School Funding; and Dr. Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, my Deputy Superintendent of Instruction, Teaching, and Learning. I have a team in Las Vegas as well, ready to answer questions. I will turn this over to my Board president for some welcoming remarks.

Evelyn Garcia Morales, President, Board of Trustees, Clark County School District:

This week, the school board and the Superintendent hosted three community conversations where we collected feedback from parents and community members who were excited about envisioning the future of our district. Many participants envisioned manageable class sizes and much needed wraparound services including mental health support. One community

member was a graduate of our school district many years ago. He said that the school district opened the doors for him to access the American Dream. He is a business owner and has 36 employees in our community. Another participant shared that they moved to Las Vegas 3 years ago. They had no children, however, they wanted to be there to support our school district. We heard loud and clear that there are more needs than funding allocated from the state. Our parents are asking us in frustration about what happened to the marijuana money and what we have learned is that we must continue to inform and educate our families on the new funding formula.

Thank you for inviting us here today as we continue addressing decades of underfunding in education from our state and what is proposed now as a historic investment. Our children depend on us for funding to support their academic success. Our community conversations are part of the equation. At our work session next Wednesday, our Board will be discussing community priorities discussed during community conversations and will present the goals for the 2023-2024 school year. Finally, as part of our commitment to our community priorities, they will also hear the district's future budget, depending, of course, on the historic investment from the state. We have one more community meeting tomorrow at 2:00 p.m. This is an open invitation, and we hope that if you are in town, you will be present.

Jesus F. Jara:

I would like to share my gratitude to you for listening to us. This is the first time I have been invited to share the ongoing work that has been ongoing in the Clark County School District (CCSD) in spite of what you hear.

There is a lot of presentation; there is a lot of data, but I think it is important because there are hardworking educators who come to school every single day—classroom teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria support staff, administrators, and central office staff—40,000 employees in the CCSD that have devoted their lives. I know, and we all know, that there is a level of frustration in all of us because we could be doing better, and I think we as a school district in a lot of cases are improving, but you cannot see it yet. I know you are in tough seats as well. Chair Monroe-Moreno mentioned the historic funding that is coming, and others have mentioned that it is not enough, but it is the best. I will tell you that accountability has been a big topic for my board and for me. I am accountable for every penny we get and we are going to stretch it and do what we can because there are 300,000 lives that come to work and to school, every single day.

I want to give you a picture of some things. I have a seven-member Board, and we have divided and broken up the district. I should not have said "broken up" because it is not really popular, but we have divided the district into three different regions [page 3, [Exhibit E](#)]. It is a little bit of us managing and addressing the needs of our entire communities into three regions by a region superintendent, and then we have school associates, and we have divided our entire district.

The slide [page 4] describes where we are with our student diversity. I want to start by telling you about the challenges we face every day—almost 75 percent of our children are economically disadvantaged. We have 16 percent who are English Language Learners and 12.4 percent who receive Special Education services. We have children who speak 93 different languages from 140 countries; 17.6 percent of our kids and our families are undocumented. This year, we opened a service in the Family Support Center and have our first-ever division to provide services, because they are Americans. They are here, we will educate them, and we will provide services for families that are undocumented. There are 3.6 percent of our students who are experiencing homelessness. I say all this because it is a beautiful tapestry of children who we serve every single day, we do not make any excuses, and we support them: 304,000 students. We have 42 magnet schools; we have the most robust magnet program. We have Southeast Technical Academy that is recognized nationally as the number one magnet school in the nation. We have outstanding magnet programs and are excited about how we will continue to expand our choice options.

Federal relief funds are shown on page 5 [[Exhibit E](#)]. I will start with the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA); \$777 million that we received and for which we have until September 2024 to spend. Funding is directed to learning acceleration and interventions to address disproportional impacts to diverse students. We have spent about 49 percent of that money. We have been careful. We have been monitoring; we have been making amendments to that spending. If you spend it all at once I think that is wasteful spending and if you spend it all at the end, you are spending it just to spend it. We have been strategic about how we do that. For our Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act ESSER II dollars, we still have until September 2023 to spend. This is money that came from the federal government to reopen schools and accelerate learning. To date, 85.7 percent of that money has been spent. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act funding was from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and have spent 99.2 percent of that money.

I want you to know that we have been good stewards of taxpayer money [page 6]. Where has the money gone? Of the \$777 million in ARPA ESSER funds, \$616.5 million went to student support and student success and we have upgraded our technology. We have heard a lot about Tier One instructional materials; that is what we use. We have adopted curriculum. When I got to the CCSD five years ago, what I heard was that our principals, our staff, and our teachers did not have materials and they had not been able to purchase instructional materials for over 10 years. Our teachers were teaching with resources they were buying on Teachers Pay Teachers and not aligned to standards. We have been able to use federal dollars so our teachers have resources that are aligned in math and science. The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) just adopted our English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum so we are looking forward to making that purchase.

When you hear from my colleagues that our teachers are tired; our teachers are tired because of all the challenges. Teaching is complex, and we have added critical development to support them, to make sure that they provide instruction to our kids. We have also purchased

supplemental materials, which is our Tier Two, for kids who need intervention. We also adopted social emotional learning (SEL) curriculum using ESSER dollars. For our summer learning program and community partnerships, we created a partnership for our community so the community can provide services for our kids. We provided \$2 million to Nevada Partners, and we provided funds to Girls on the Run. We have funded our community partners for after school and weekend programs using our ESSER dollars. It is not just the CCSD, it is not just the 40,000 employees; it is all our partners.

Mental health services are important. We provided direct allocations for our elementary schools because our elementary school budgets are not as robust as our secondary school budgets. Our direct allocation of \$23 million went to our elementary schools. We also provided funding for online curriculum and instruction tutoring services, ELL endorsements for our teachers, and crisis response team. What does that mean? That provides a resource for our response team when we have crises in our schools.

I will give you some facts. On March 1, 2020, in the first year of COVID-19, our crisis response team responded to 958 crises in the CCSD. In the 2021-2022 school year, there were 1,474 crises, and this year to date there are over 1,000 crises. So, we allocated resources to provide support to our crisis team: teachers, principals and staff. That is what we provided. We also offered an incentive recruitment and retention bonus for support staff, our principals, and our educators. We provided \$36 million in continuing professional learning. We invested in the science of reading. Regarding the educator pipeline, our support staff are going to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), to become teachers. For strategic planning relative to our ESSER accountability—and we take this seriously—we are continuing to monitor our implementation. We do this on a quarterly basis, and then we make adjustments as we go.

Our spending is outlined on page 7 [\[Exhibit E\]](#). We calculated it out until September 2024, so we are ahead of schedule. We also just received commendations from the NDE on our spending. We reported our ESSER plan and our accountability roughly two weeks ago, in Washington at the Council of the Great City Schools with 78 urban superintendents, as a model in accountability and implementation of ESSER spending.

One of the things I am proud of is that when we selected our priorities [page 8], we involved the community and had 13,000 responses. I turned this over to partners and asked them to tell me what our community needs were and where we should spend our money. They came back, and we compiled the responses, our board approved our work, aligned it to the strategic plan, and we sent it to the NDE.

One of my biggest concerns is what happens when the money runs out? When you have 1:1 technology, that means Chromebooks, projectors, and interactive flat panels that we are buying. What do we do with those? How do we continue to upgrade that equipment? We have our curriculum: \$99 million in science curriculum as a district, \$60 million in mathematics, and \$48 million in social studies. We have \$36 million in professional

learning, the Science of Reading. We have \$25 million for Our Tier Two instructional materials, and we have our community partners, tutoring, and our summer learning. This is part of the work that my board president talked about when you go into the community and ask what are we doing this week and continuing tomorrow? They are helping me because it is not me and it is not the superintendent himself. It is the community; it is the team. How do we prioritize and what do we keep? Do we want to continue with Chromebooks, do we want to have curriculum, or do we want to put more money in for educators? When the funding for one-time spending from the federal government goes away, we have to own it in our state general budget.

When you look at our mental health spending, we have \$77 million. If you recall our COVID-19 response—we were experiencing isolation and dealing with a health crisis and an academic crisis, but also a mental health crisis for which we had no idea how deep the scars for our children and for our staff would go. I believe it was after the 12th suicide, when a 9-year-old committed suicide, I said to the team, "we cannot have this, what do we do?" We create. We put a multi-leadership team in every single school while we were still using distance education. Our staff came in because of the crisis—the mental health crisis—that we were dealing with in October 2020. We acted with urgency and worked with our union partners to ask what we needed to do, because we need our children in school. I am proud that when we opened our schools, five bargaining units that I work with were behind us to say, "We need our schools open."

So, we created a multileadership team to look at data, look at attendance, look at grades, and then we purchased Panorama, which is a universal screener for our kids. We provided the opportunity to say, "I need help," and then our staff would make contact and provide support. We partnered with Hazel Health for telehealth, not only for students, but also for staff. We also have Care Solace; we call it a concierge program because it is a warm handoff from our educators to our families to help them connect to resources. We work with The Harbor, which is our county support, and we have five Harbors. Some are with the county, which the Legislature funded last session.

One other thing that I am proud of is the work in partnership and community. We allocated ESSER dollars to Nevada State College (NSC)—soon to be "University". In a conversation I had with NSC President Pollard, I was talking about the crisis we were dealing with, and she said "Well, how can I help you? I can help you; and create a program; I just do not have the resources." So, my board approved a memorandum of agreement with NSC, and we gave them resources so they could provide psychologists. It is all hands on deck in this community, and there is a lot of work going on in the CCSD. So, the question then becomes, what happens after ESSER goes away? We need to prioritize the needs of our kids.

I know there was discussion on the National Assessment of Educational Progress—the Nation's Report Card—and when you look at the CCSD [page 9], I am not satisfied with where we are. However, when you look at urban America, when you look at the Trial Urban District Assessment—a partnership we have with 25 other urban districts in the

United States of America—the CCSD performs the same or higher than 92 percent of other large urban districts in eighth-grade reading; the same or higher than 72 percent of other large urban districts in fourth grade reading; the same or higher than 84 percent of other large urban districts in eighth grade math; and the same or higher than 72 percent of other large urban districts in fourth grade math. Are we happy? Absolutely not. Are we satisfied? Absolutely not. When you look at the student demographics and see kids who need higher intervention, that creates a sense of urgency for all of us in this district. Our Chief Finance Officer will briefly go through some of the funding.

Jason Goudie, Chief Financial Officer, Clark County School District:

Governor Lombardo's proposed budget provides a \$2 billion investment in K-12 education over the biennium [page 11, [Exhibit E](#)]. Along with money, key priorities include literacy, early childhood services, teacher pipeline, school safety, class size, and accountability. We appreciate the significant step toward adequate and optimal funding proposed for the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan. Additionally, the Legislature proposed funding of an additional \$250 million through Senate Bill 231. I would like to provide a high-level summary of the Governor's proposed budget for the CCSD, as outlined on the slide.

I am not going to go through each line, but I wanted to provide the information and touch on key numbers. The total increase in operating fund revenues in fiscal year (FY) 2024 over FY 2023 is estimated at \$397 million. The increase forecasted in FY 2025 over FY 2024 is approximately \$126 million. The funding for weighted programs, for English learners, at-risk, and gifted and talented students also increased significantly. Total weighted funding in FY 2024 is forecasted to increase over FY 2023 by \$184 million and another \$15 million increase in FY 2025.

Two key points on the weighted funding: first, this money must be spent on the specific options listed in *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS), Chapter 387. Also, this funding is not part of the collective bargaining process per NRS 387.1214, subsection 7.

The slide on page 12 [[Exhibit E](#)] summarizes additional funding the district is forecasted to receive based on the Governor's proposed budget and identifies specific expenditures that have already been made or will need to be made during FY 2024. We mentioned that the total projected increase in revenues is \$397 million. During the 2022-2023 school year, the district worked with our bargaining groups to increase pay for employees utilizing one-time reserves, which will need to be covered by sustained revenues in the future. As you can see, we increased the starting pay of teachers; changed all principals to 12-month contracts; changed certain office staff to 12-month positions; reclassified transportation positions, which increased pay for bus drivers and other transportation employees; and we fulfilled our prior commitment to our support professionals for a step increase. These increases totaled approximately \$44.4 million.

Several operational increases are either legally mandated because of factors outside our control or due to additional schools for our students. Due to a change in the Public

Employees' Retirement System (PERS) contribution rate, the district will incur approximately \$32.4 million in additional PERS contributions. The district will add two schools, and additional funding for the schools is approximately \$6.6 million. Based on significant increases in energy and natural gas prices, we are forecasting increases of approximately \$24.4 million in our utilities. There are some reductions in one-time costs that benefit the district in FY 2024 of approximately \$29 million. The majority of this additional resource is the reduction in Hold Harmless funding for previously designated Zoom and Victory schools in Senate Bill 178 of the 79th Session. As you can see, after the reduction of known or forecasted increases in expenditures, CCSD has approximately \$311.7 million in incremental funding for FY 2024 to address our operational needs and needs from the bargaining process.

Page 13 describes scenarios with some of the most common pay and benefit increases built in along with other components for your review. Scenario 1 is based on a 5 percent increase in pay, including benefits, and a 5 percent increase in the CCSD's contribution to the employees' medical insurance plans. Scenario 2 is based on a 10 percent increase in pay, including benefits, and a 10 percent increase in contribution to the employees' medical insurance plans. Steps are essentially the standard movement on our pay schedules, ranging from a set dollar amount of \$1,420 up to about a 5 percent increase in pay. To be clear, we have neither negotiated nor proposed these increases with our bargaining groups; they are to provide context, as there is a lot of public discussion around 10 percent pay increases and available funding. All other assumptions are the same in both Scenario 1 and Scenario 2.

While we do have a \$50 million placeholder for additional maintenance costs noted in this presentation, this will not meet any industry guidelines on required maintenance spending, as incremental funding needs to be at least \$150 million more than we have at this point. However, we need to start to increase our maintenance spending to ensure our facilities operate well enough to keep students in classrooms all day, every day. Consistent with the Governor and our priorities, we will be working with bargaining groups on increased accountability at all levels when we discuss increases in pay and benefits. The last component of the scenarios is based on feedback from classroom personnel, citing the need for additional time for preparation and other tasks during the day without students in class. This is an example of the types of additional options the district will be considering and again is only included to provide context as to estimated funding for an option of this type.

As you can see, with a 5 percent increase in pay and medical insurance contributions, as well as other spending options, there is approximately \$48 million left to address other program impacts on student achievement. However, with a change to a 10 percent increase in pay and medical contributions, the district would end up with an \$84 million deficit. Additionally, the district is forecasting an increase of \$126 million in FY 2025, and with similar increases required, there will not be sufficient funding to make up for any deficit created during the 2023-2024 school year.

As a final comment on the slide [page 13, [Exhibit E](#)], I wanted to anticipate questions on how [S.B. 231](#) could provide CCSD with additional funding to fill potential funding gaps. The district is always appreciative of additional funding to help meet the needs of our students, staff, and community. However, discussions of this one-time funding outside of the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan being used to pay for pay increases is a concern. To give some perspective for the CCSD, a 10 percent pay increase for our licensed personnel alone is approximately \$150 million. If one-time funding outside the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan is used in the first year of the biennium to pay those increases, during the second year of the biennium—as I mentioned, we only get \$126 million in incremental funding—we would be in a deficit of \$24 million to start, before we had any other increases. This would put the district's financial strength at significant risk.

Now we will turn it over to the Deputy Superintendent.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, Deputy Superintendent, Clark County School District:

I am going to share some snapshots of our student achievement data, but please know that live and center on CCSD.net is our data dashboard we released last week, where we have transparent student achievement data for the district, regions, and individual schools. The slide on page 15 [\[Exhibit E\]](#) represents student achievement data in elementary school English language arts (ELA) for students in grades three through five. The dotted horizontal line represents district proficiency in ELA in grades three through five prior to COVID-19, at about 50 percent proficiency. Essentially half of our students were nonproficient in ELA in grades three through five. The solid horizontal line represents district proficiency in ELA in grades three through five for the 2021-2022 school year. As a district, approximately 40 percent of our students in grades three through five are proficient in ELA. Please look at our student group proficiency levels. We have extreme proficiency gaps: 25 percent of our Black/African American students are proficient; 35 percent of our Hispanic students are proficient; 18 percent of our English Language Learners, and 15 percent of our students with disabilities are proficient. Here, we observe improvement for the district and all student groups in the results from the 2020-2021 school year to the 2021-2022 school year. While our students are rebounding, we have additional improvement to gain before we see a return to our 2018-2019 student outcome levels; achievement gaps are still present as we look at results across our student groups.

Page 16 shows student achievement in middle school mathematics for students in grades six through eight. In the 2018-2019 school year, 31 percent of our students were proficient in middle school mathematics. Based on 2021-2022 Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium data, approximately 22 percent of our students in grades six through eight are proficient in mathematics. For our student group proficiency levels in middle school math, we again have proficiency gaps: 14 percent of our American Indian/Alaska Native students are proficient; 8 percent of our Black/African American students are proficient; 15.4 percent of our Hispanic students are proficient; 2 percent of our English Language Learners and 5 percent of our students with disabilities are proficient. Students in grades six through grade eight did

not rebound at the same rates as our elementary students, but we still observe improved rates across all student groups.

On page 17 is an overview of the grade 10 science proficiency rate, measured by the Criterion-Referenced Test. As a district, in school year 2021-2022, 19 percent of our students were proficient in science. Taking a moment to look at our student group proficiency levels in high school science, again, we have proficiency gaps: 8 percent of our Black/African American students are proficient; 13 percent of our Hispanic students are proficient; 2 percent of our English Language Learners, and 5 percent of our students with disabilities are proficient. We also observe a decline in proficiency across all student groups.

In school year 2016-2017, approximately 50 percent of our students in third grade were proficient. We also need to take a look at our student achievement data over time [page 18]. Out of those 50 percent of students in grade three in 2016-2017 who were not proficient, 8.9 percent were at meets or exceeds standards in grade eight. We made movement with 8.9 percent of our students from grade three to grade eight.

Look at student proficiency levels over time in mathematics [page 19]. Here we see that 1.4 percent of grade three students in 2016-2017 who were not proficient in mathematics increased to at or above standards in grade eight during the 2021-2022 school year. This data is a call to action. It becomes clear that we need to make high-impact decisions, focusing on teaching and learning to impact student learning. We must focus on the right work to impact every student. The most important place in the CCSD is the classroom; teaching is hard; it is complex work, and we must support our educators by focusing on the right work. This data demonstrates an intense need to improve Tier One and Tier Two instruction.

Where did we start? We started with expectations. During the first face-to-face meeting with our educational leaders following the pandemic, we shared the district's leadership expectations [page 20]. This was a first: clear expectations for us to focus on students. These leadership expectations established the way of the work. We worked together as one team; we led with students at the center of the work, making the right decision for every child. We must demonstrate instructional leadership with high expectations for all students and all adults with the support they need. We have to be solution oriented and engage and collaborate with integrity and respect.

As a district, we are focusing on the right work [page 21]. We are focusing on the instructional capacity of our educators. I have served at the CCSD since 1994 and, with Dr. Jara's leadership, we are focused on the right work. Our educators want to do their very best to support our students. They work extremely hard and are very dedicated. As a district, we must support teachers by implementing high quality instruction and providing instructional materials and resources and professional learning necessary to improve student outcomes. For example, we did not have a common formative interim assessment in grades K-8 in math, English language arts, and science, until 2019. We now have Measures of Academic Progress Growth, which provide us with three checkpoints during the school year

to know where our students are in their learning in math, English language arts, and science. We did not have this information, which is essential for student success, before. We have to know where our students are in their learning to guide and inform instruction. We now have Tier One instructional materials in math, science, and soon ELA; our teachers have not had these resources in approximately 10 years. Because of ESSER money, we are now able to purchase instructional materials that are aligned to the Nevada Academic Content Standards for educators.

The Board of School Trustees passed the district's first multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) policy in December 2021, which requires every school to implement MTSS, which is a framework for all students focusing on academics, social emotional learning, and behavior. With Dr. Jara's leadership, we developed and implemented a professional learning division, which is solely dedicated to professional learning for our educators. This division has developed pathways for new teachers, teacher leaders, entry-level administrators, and aspiring principals. The work is focused on building strong positive climate and culture, while building instructional systems and structures focusing on the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Last summer, we required professional learning for all principals in which we rolled out common clear expectations for high quality Tier One instruction; principals then replicated this professional learning for educators at their schools. We also developed and implemented a teaching and learning cycle with consistent expectations and a framework for professional learning communities. We are monitoring the work and holding each other accountable.

Over the last 18 months, the teaching and learning unit developed a data-driven instructionally focused systemic monitoring cycle [page 22] in which principal supervisors meet with principals to observe instruction, discuss timely student achievement data, and formulate next steps. Principal supervisors and principals work together to monitor work and hold each other accountable for improving instruction to improve student outcomes. This comprehensive systemic monitoring cycle is a first in the CCSD supported by research. I am proud to work alongside our principal supervisors and principals focusing on the right work for our students.

Coming out of the pandemic, we developed a differentiated school support framework [page 23, [Exhibit E](#)]. We analyzed school student achievement data, and identified schools that were low performing, chronically low performing, and downward trending. We provided differentiated support to schools, including frequent monitoring and development of a supplemental school performance plan. Based on school participation in this framework, in the 2021-2022 school year, 59 percent of schools had academic point increases from the 2018-2019 to the 2021-2022 Nevada school performance framework. Of the same set of schools, 31 percent increased by 10 or more academic points; double digits. The focus on students and schools most in need demonstrates early success as we work alongside educators to develop systems and structures to improve student outcomes.

In January 2023, we implemented the transformation network [page 24]. The network includes 23 elementary schools serving students who need intensive support. The transformation network is served by one region superintendent and one school associate superintendent who directly serve approximately 12 schools each to provide weekly touchpoints with schools. The transformation network is also served with instructional coaches with strong expertise in English language arts, mathematics, and high-quality instruction. The transformation network includes enhanced resources, increased support, and a dedicated and responsive team to improve student outcomes for all students.

Jesus F. Jara:

In closing, as we start wrapping up, I want to go back to research [page 26, [Exhibit E](#)]. The research is clear; the number one indicator for student success is the classroom teacher. The second is a building principal supporting a classroom teacher.

When you look at our workforce and our priorities, consider that our educators are the number one predictor of student success [page 27]. I want to go back into data points: 1994 was the last school year that the CCSD opened with full staffing. The inability to hire did not just happen in the last few years. Two weeks ago, we were at a conference, and our secretary mentioned that we are at the doorstep of a teacher shortage. As a nation, as a state, and as a community, we are faced with a lack of teacher respect. One of our priorities is updating and addressing our educator salary schedule. We were able to increase starting teacher pay by working with our partners, but that is not enough. In addition to starting teacher salary, retention is also an issue. How do we keep our hardworking teachers in the classroom? Here are some data points: it costs \$24 million per 1 percent increase in the cost of living. Step increases cost \$36 million. When you look at our planning time, it is \$3 million per minute for the CCSD. This is the exercise we are going through with our community now. You are going to help me to help the Board as we move forward, when 83 percent of our budget is salary and benefits at CCSD.

I was here last week with my chief of police, and when we went back to work, he asked what I needed. Since Wednesday of last week, we confiscated another gun—28 guns so far this year—and we lost 2 beautiful lives in the CCSD to gun violence, 2 lives too many. We are expanding our police force [page 28]. Our teachers cannot teach, and our children do not feel safe. Adding an officer in our middle schools, in our career/technical academies, and in our specialty schools, and rotating our police officers one for every five elementary schools, is estimated to cost \$21 million.

I love my job and I love the work we are doing. I have been outside; I worked in multiple states before I came here, and I am here because I believe in children. I believe in the 40,000 employees and the Board as we move forward. I have seen the work, and I have seen the needle move if you focus on the instructional core—and our teachers, supporting our teachers. We are going to expand our differentiated school support [page 29]. We have seen improvements; when you look at 97 1-star schools, money is not the only answer. The answers include adding support for our educators, adding intentional monitoring systems,

and looking at data. When anyone says that I focus too much on data, I reply that it is because behind every single number there is a face and a child attached to that number.

I am the product of a public school system that gave me an opportunity. When I came to this country, I did not speak English in the fourth grade. I was raised by a single mother who believed in education. I am telling you that this work can be done but I cannot do it alone. I am not a superhero—it is all of us in this room. I appreciate that you have given us space to share this instead of reading headlines. Here is the work—we need to find ways to add more planning time for our educators, and we need leadership selection in our neediest schools. We cannot continue to say it is a popularity contest. I need staff that is supported and can focus on children. Monitor what you expect. I know you have a lot of pressure for resources as a Legislature and as an Executive Branch from those of us in this community. We are here; this has been done in other places in urban America, and it can be done in the CCSD.

We need performance metrics on the Science of Reading [page 31]. We need to continue to invest in our teachers. We need to set minimum requirements and objectives for kindergarten readiness and Read by Grade 3. The issue is not just retention; research does not support retention, but advancing kids prematurely does not help either. What support systems do we put in place for third graders who are not proficient? We can work together to address some of those gaps. Regarding our high school preparation: we are working with our principals and setting goals for advanced placement, dual credit, middle school mathematics, and high school courses in middle school. Our children can do it because we have seen it, and research supports it.

What are the graduation requirements? How do we hold our young people, our children, accountable to set metrics? We know they are ready but that is for somebody else to decide. We want to be part of that conversation and have an evaluation system conducive to teaching and learning and professional growth. When you look at data we just shared with you, 98 to 99 percent of our educators in the CCSD are effective or highly effective, but our children are not performing. Something is wrong. How do we address that together?

We will continue to add school supervisors. Our current school associate superintendents have oversight of 20 to 25 schools each. Our research by the Wallace Foundation, the premier organization on principals, suggests the supervisor to principal ratio should be 1:12 [page 32]. We will have to add school associate superintendents for that coaching and that ongoing conversation.

In closing, this is where our North Star is: instructional capacity; high quality instruction; professional learning; monitoring; and accountability from the classroom to the superintendent's office to the state [page 33]. I am going to tell you there could be another superintendent here tomorrow with a hybrid board, an appointed board, or an advisory board. If we do not change an entire system, we will be here having the same conversations two years from now.

We continue to get updates from our community; our last community input meeting is tomorrow, April 1, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. [page 34]. What we are learning is that we need to do more. We need to speak to our community, educate them about what is happening. We started bargaining conversations. Yesterday was our first bargaining conversation with the Clark County Education Association. Support staff and our administrator's union will be involved as those groups are also negotiated. We will prioritize our budget and bring that to the Board on April 5, 2023, and present a tentative budget to the Board of Trustees on April 13, 2023.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this information.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

My children attended school in the CCSD, and I have family members who are educators in the CCSD. My district is in Clark County, and I have several questions from constituents. I am going to go through every question sent to me by constituents, but as a Black mama in Clark County, I would like to start on pages 15 through 17 [[Exhibit E](#)].

My children fit in both the Black/African American and Hispanic classifications; they are "two or more races." When I look at pages 15 through 17, you are failing my children and it did not start this school year. You stated that we were at a critical point—a call for action. When I look at the graphs, why was it not a call for action in 2018, because the numbers on every graph have Black and English Language Learner students at the bottom. Why was it not a call for action 5 years ago, when these children—these numbers—did not improve? Why now? What took this long?

Additionally, when you look at educators in the classroom; how many Black and Brown educators are there so that those Black and Brown children have someone who looks like them, who is educating them, who comes from the same shared life experiences? My career was in law enforcement. For my job, I did not need to be in a classroom. Maybe there would be less police in schools, or you would feel you need less police in schools, if you had people who understood the shared life experiences these children are going through. That is not a behavioral issue.

Jesus F. Jara:

I can speak about my arrival. I came in June 19, 2018, and that was when I walked into the school district, and I interviewed for the job. I applied and interviewed. When I looked at the data then, there was a call to action in my set of expectations, because I have seen Black children, I have seen Latino children, and I have seen children perform at the highest level when given the resources. It has been documented because it has been public. There has been an adult-driven expectation and support in protecting adults versus protecting children in the Clark County School District in the past. No more. That is why when we looked at the expectations that we set when coming out of COVID-19; we did not have any of these systems. There was an adult-driven culture to protect adults, to protect special interests, versus protecting our children.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

I am going to stop you because it is getting late. I need you to answer the question.

Jesus F. Jara:

I did.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

No, you did not. What are you doing? What is the plan to help increase the outcomes for all children in Clark County, but specifically, for those whom we are failing? What is that plan? I understand that there has been an adult-driven culture, but education is about the kids. It is having educators in the classrooms, taking care of those educators, and taking care of support staff who take care of the kids. In short, what is the plan?

Jesus F. Jara:

It is right here: progress monitoring, holding adults accountable to make sure that they are serving children, providing them the resources to make sure that children and educators have resources so they can learn.

Assemblyman Yeager:

I would be lying if I did not say that performance metrics are extraordinarily depressing. Worse than I thought when I saw those graphs, and I share the concerns of the Chair. Before I ask questions, I want to note, I did pull up the iNVEST in education document put together by the Nevada Association of School Superintendents. I will note this obviously came out before the budget, but it refers to an increase of \$271 million in the next fiscal year for education funding. Obviously, we are at four times that amount with the Governor's recommended budget. The document discussed fully funding the weights and how we need to do that. We are at a point where we are going to do that. I found this document to be hopeful, based on an amount of funding that we are quadrupling. I certainly understand the challenges and the numbers you presented.

I know you are still in this budgeting process, but I was looking for specific things you are going to do to increase achievement. On page 13 [\[Exhibit E\]](#) was the fiscal year breakdown. I want to ask about the additional 15 minutes for classroom personnel per day—you said it is about \$3 million per minute. Is this something from which we would expect to see improved achievement and proficiency in our students and can you provide more information on this?

Jesus F. Jara:

What we are hearing from our educators is that they need 15 minutes. It would be an additional time for educators to plan their instruction without children.

Assemblyman Yeager:

I am assuming there is evidence to show that additional planning time for teachers will improve teacher effectiveness in the classroom, which will lead to improved proficiency for students?

Jesus F. Jara:

Yes.

Assemblyman Yeager:

How much money does the district spend annually on testing? There are a number of tests—Measures of Academic Progress, i-Ready, SBAC, science, and others. I do share concerns that—and I know the state is not blameless here—we do too much testing. To me, that is where we might be able to save some money. If you do not have the answer, please provide it after this meeting.

In the last year or so, perhaps with some ESSER funds, there was an increase in starting pay for teachers, but what I heard from my constituents was that veteran teachers did not feel the love because they did not see an increase. I understand the problem—you need to hire new people and you need to raise those salaries—but is there a plan to address veteran teacher pay so there is not a decreasing gap between starting and veteran pay?

Jesus F. Jara:

Great question. We used \$23 million from our reserves for starting teacher pay, and we used ESSER for incentive pay, which caused a challenge [page 27]. When you look at the salary schedule to address the issue of our veteran teachers—something we and our Board are hearing as well—it will cost about \$100 million to update that entire salary schedule.

Assemblyman Yeager:

Regarding your Title I designation, and I know there was an article about it, essentially schools that used to be Title I, are now not Title I. Maybe there are more, maybe there are less; but the concern I heard was that in making that decision, some schools are not going to receive as many resources as other schools. Can you explain the justification for making that determination and how do we explain what happened to our constituents?

Jesus F. Jara:

There were 47 schools that lost Title I money. When I came here, we were allocating to schools down to 40 percent. We brought it up to 60 percent to provide more resources where there were the greatest needs, and we planned to bring that funding to 75 percent in areas where we have generational poverty and challenges for schools. We did that, and when we looked at the 47 schools, they had carryover dollars in their strategic budget so they will not lose funding due to this change.

Senator Neal:

On the mental health services slide [page 8, [Exhibit E](#)], you had \$77 million, and you mentioned Hazel Health. How much of this funding went to Hazel Health?

Jesus F. Jara:

I do not have the exact dollar amount. I will get that information for you.

Senator Neal:

Was Hazel Health supposed to offer free services to students or was it for a fee?

Mike Barton, Chief College, Career, Equity, and School Choice Officer, Clark County School District:

Regarding the \$77 million investment, there are components Hazel Health is billing for Medicaid. I will get you the dollar amount for what the \$77 million entails, but that is part of the overall ecosystem of combining Hazel Health, which was just telehealth, with Care Solace. We will get you that information.

Senator Neal:

It is my understanding that Hazel Health was charging parents \$75 to be seen. Can you provide more information on that as well?

Mike Barton:

That is the first I have heard of that. I will look into that because I understand that this is an ESSER investment.

Senator Neal:

That was my understanding too, but I heard this from a counselor.

You talked about community programs, tutoring, and summer learning opportunities, but there is no data here to support that. Without funding, how many schools engaged in summer learning opportunities? Funding for summer programs was available during the 2020-2021 school year, but not the 2021-2022 school year. Schools indicated they were responsible for figuring that out with their own budget.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

We had summer acceleration at every school—elementary, middle, and high school—and we paid for it with ESSER funds.

Senator Neal:

I heard differently. One school that we worked on together—Matt Kelly Elementary School—did not have ESSER funding and had to pay for their own summer school.

What progress have you made in developing your comprehensive literacy plan for K-12?

Dustin Mancl, Chief Academic Officer, Clark County School District:

We have been working on our comprehensive literacy plan, and we worked alongside all our principals. We received feedback from teachers regarding the literacy frameworks for kindergarten through second grade, and again for second through third grades, and fourth through fifth grades. Within those frameworks, we have broken down direct instruction along with small group literacy blocks and differentiation. Those frameworks also scaffold the understanding of delivering high quality Tier One instruction. Our next step regarding

that framework or plan is the adoption of a Tier One ELA curriculum, which will be on Monday through Wednesday of next week. Once we have that curriculum adopted, and it goes to the Board for approval for purchase, then we can begin finalizing the plan to support teachers in the development and delivery of high quality Tier One instruction. This means the plan would be ready in time for the curriculum to roll out and to support our teachers in the fall of 2023.

Senator Neal:

My next question dovetails into the curriculum. You mentioned that you have purchased a lot of curricula. Can you provide a list to the Committees of what curriculum materials you purchased for ELA and math? It is my understanding that some online programs you purchased are not equivalent to an actual curriculum, but they are being used in schools to replace actual curriculum.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

Are you going to get an answer on this one or are you building a list?

Jesus F. Jara:

I am collecting the list.

Senator Neal:

Your FY 2023 amended budget states that you are expected to have a \$1 million decrease in special education. It was stated that the decrease was in state education funding; that you projected this decrease from aligning the NDE's revenue from the special education allocation. You receive a federal allocation for special education, is that correct? How do you expect to offset this \$1 million decrease?

Jesus F. Jara:

I am looking for where you see the \$1 million. Is that from page 11 [[Exhibit E](#)]?

Senator Neal:

It is on your "Revenue: State Projections and Assumptions" budget page. The document does not have page numbers. It is in your Open Book on the CCSD website.

Jesus F. Jara:

I am sorry, it is not in this presentation.

Senator Neal:

It is not in this presentation; it is on your Open Book website, where you have your 2022-2023 final budget presentation.

Jason Goudie:

I believe the question is how are we going to fund that deficit based off the change in funding for special education?

Senator Neal:
Correct.

Jason Goudie:

That will be funded out of our General Fund. We can transfer out of our General Fund to cover shortfalls in the special education fund, to ensure that the fund always balances and that we have funded all the individualized educational plan (IEP) required spending.

Assemblyman Hafen:

You sparked my interest. I had not read the report that Senator Neal was referring to.

My understanding is that one-time funding for the Transforming Opportunities for Toddlers and Students (TOTS) Grant Program that was going directly to special education children has gone away. That was \$5 million that is now lost to these students and I am hearing there is another \$1 million dollars that may be lost? Correct me if I am wrong, but these students probably need more money, not less money.

Jason Goudie:

I am not familiar with TOTS because that is handled in the grants piece. I will get more specifics on that. When we say we lose revenue, we are allocated from the state based on enrollment as well as what is available in the budget. We do not have control over losing or gaining those funds; we take what we do. Because special education is legally mandated through all IEPs, that means we have less money in our General Fund to serve other students and ensure we meet those obligations.

Assemblyman Hafen:

I would encourage you to follow up on this because we are not just talking about the \$1 million mentioned by Senator Neal, but we are talking about \$6 million, potentially, that you will need from the General Fund to help special needs students.

Assemblywoman Backus:

I have one question for the deputy superintendent but I want to start with a preface that I am a proud graduate of the CCSD. I went to kindergarten through 12th grade but I am hearing about all the tests kids are taking, and we now added this growth measurement testing three times a year. I am not the greatest test taker, but I am one of your honors kids who graduated as a Distinguished Scholar, went on to college and law school, and I always frown upon standardized tests. I do not think standardized tests are a good measurement, but I had teachers in my classrooms who saw my ability to succeed. When my standardized testing—going into junior high at the time—was maybe not so great, my teachers were the ones who pushed me and put me in advanced placement classes. I get nervous when you rely heavily on this data. We do not have enough time in the classroom as it is. I wish we could shift back to teaching versus standardized testing. I know there was the No Child Left Behind, but that was after I graduated.

Regarding the educator pipeline, I know we have a need for teachers, and my problem was that I had friends who graduated in the 1990s, and left the field of teaching to do something else even back then. I want to hear more about the investment at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) [page 6, [Exhibit E](#)].

Jesus F. Jara:

We are funding opportunities for support staff—our build our own program—at UNLV. I know the state does this, and we are also investing in that as well. The other opportunity we are excited about and which the Board approved in December, is that we granted \$3 million to Nevada State College—soon to be Nevada State University—to pay tuition for students who graduated from CCSD teaching academies, in an effort to recruit them into our schools.

Assemblywoman Backus:

Have you seen the rate of return on those teachers? Have any graduates returned to teach at CCSD schools yet?

Jesus F. Jara:

We can get the exact numbers. I know that anecdotally it has been very popular, and I know that there is a huge need for more resources because there are more applicants than there are dollars at this point, not only from us, but also from the NDE.

Senator Dondero Loop:

You said you gave \$3 million to Nevada State College (NSC), and I know that program and I know there has been other output from the CCSD. I struggle because we are not a foundation, we have many needs, and we are giving money to these other entities. While I recognize there might be a return from this, I feel like we cannot be in that business. Can you tell me why we should be in the business of giving money away?

Jesus F. Jara:

When we partnered with NSC, it was for our children, our own kids, building our own, and it would help students hurry and graduate faster because we were paying their tuitions to take more classes. This could be an opportunity for others using resources from the federal government. It was to expedite; we have other pipeline efforts, but I need teachers today. This was an effort for us to expedite the process to get teachers in our classrooms.

Senator Dondero Loop:

Is there a requirement that they come back to us, like WICHE? Is there a requirement? Believe me, I would be the last one to say do not give money to UNLV, to NSC, or the Public Education Foundation—I do not care who it is—but if there is not a requirement that they come back to us like at WICHE. I am struggling with this. We are trying to find money for you, and yet you're giving it away on the street corner, so to speak.

Jesus F. Jara:

It is a great concern, but I see at it more as paying a student's tuition, and looking at the kids in our schools. That is how I saw it, but I see your point. I see it more as I am helping a student pay for the last two years of their education. I know we had conversations about a requirement to return to the area to teach.

Mike Barton:

There is no official legal document for these students to commit to return to teach for the CCSD. That commitment was not allowed under the grant from the federal government. However, in working with NSC, there is definitely a recruitment effort and ongoing meetings with those students every few weeks. We are seeing that with NSC students; they do tend to come back to the CCSD. So, we are going to heavily rely on that recruiting effort, that one-to-one interaction with our human resources personnel, to ensure those students return to CCSD without an official legal agreement.

Senator Dondero Loop:

It might not have been the money process, but I feel we are going to be giving away school district dollars, regardless of how the funds came in. I do not care whether the state gives the money to you or the federal government gives the money to you. That money should be used to service kids that we have in front of us. This is not lost on me. I support NSC in full and I think they have a great program. I can go on and on about the UNLV programs. If we cannot service our kids, if we are short millions of dollars for our kids, then we cannot do that business.

I have other questions, but I have to say one thing—it hurts my heart when I hear people say, "Well, when I got here." Many of us were here before you were here. While I appreciate everything you are trying to change strategically, I would not criticize anything that anybody did before you got here because I know the people who were here. I know we did everything we could for the CCSD. There is not a person in education who does not do this work for the right reason. You do not need to comment on that. It is a rub for me because I have been a Clark County supporter, student, mom, grandma, and a teacher. I have been there for the district and I hate to throw stones.

Assemblywoman Gorelow:

I am a Clark County mom as well, and I have two kids; one who graduated last year from the CCSD and the other one who is a junior at CCSD.

To touch on what Senator Dondero Loop was talking about regarding those grant funds, my thought is why not invest in our current teachers so we can retain them? We should help those who might have an alternative route to licensure become a fully licensed teacher, or earn a master's degree. Maybe a teacher in an elementary school wants to teach in a high school, but cannot do that because they need to go back to school.

Regarding teacher retention and overcrowding, many of these classrooms have more students than they are supposed to have for a student-to-teacher ratio. We have legislated and capped the number of students, but there are lots of approved waivers and these schools still have more kids—sometimes, 1.5 times more students. I know you were not here, but you are here now, so I am pointing the finger at you. My kids went to an elementary school that was built for 800 students, but it had almost 1,600 students. The middle school in my district had 2,400 kids in it. I have been promised a high school since my kids were toddlers. My daughter is in college and the high school is supposed to open in 2027. The high school project was bonded for in 2019 and again in 2021. I know it is not just my district; there are a lot of schools that need fixing, and they need new schools. When are we going to see this school?

Jesus F. Jara:

I understand, and I appreciate the feedback on my "when I got here comment." It has been duly noted and I get the sensitivity. Thank you for that reminder.

Assemblywoman Gorelow, what is your district?

Assemblywoman Gorelow:

It is Assembly District No. 35, which is Mountain's Edge and Southern Highlands. Desert Oasis High School and Sierra Vista High School are both in Southern Highlands, and both are overcrowded. Give our students a break and give our teachers a break. We have to do something and I understand it is not just my district's problem, it is all over Clark County.

Jesus F. Jara:

It is. I will have to get that for you. I think that is on the comprehensive timeline. In the last two years, we have invested \$10 million or \$15 million of our budgets in deferred maintenance. This is one area where we need to invest heavily. We have not taken care of our buildings, and we are looking at the \$50 million, which is not, in totality, what we need. That is one. I appreciate the Legislature's action last session on the bond, where we have 13 elementary schools slated and 33 renovation projects moving forward. These Committees, and whoever is watching, will be the first to know of conversations we are having about birth rates. Do we need elementary schools? We are really struggling with overcrowding in our high schools. That conversation is ongoing, but we will get that school information to you.

Assemblywoman Gorelow:

I would appreciate that because I have been asked to be on those emails previously, and nobody let me know when a meeting was or what is going on with it. It has been very frustrating to not know.

You mentioned you spent \$52 million in community programs and tutoring. Could you elaborate on what that tutoring looks like, because I know I received emails about a paper system? I contacted them personally three times, and they have not responded. What other

kinds of programs are you looking at, because my community, and probably others, have not seen anything.

Jesus F. Jara:

Yes, it is paper. That is one of the programs we have for all students—available online 24/7, and it is the same program we have in the CCSD. A few weeks ago, we had conversations with our principals about making sure communication goes out to parents about the resource we purchased. Regarding community partners, we allocated grants for nonprofits where we are tutoring or supporting kids in their jurisdictions.

Assemblywoman Gorelow:

For \$52 million, I should get an email back.

Jesus F. Jara:

We have noted that.

Assemblyman Miller:

Regarding mental health funding, you mentioned you spent \$77 million on mental health with different programs. You indicated you would provide information at a later date for Senator Neal's question regarding Hazel Health. I am taken aback by the number of people who are here to represent CCSD and the number of times you have responded that you will get back to us. I feel like you are here with a robust team, and should probably be able to get quicker answers. Nonetheless, I noticed that you have \$21 million for additional police officers to go to every school. I am curious to know; do we have mental health professionals in every school?

Mike Barton:

Hazel Health—to answer that question—is \$2.5 million annually for the contract, and to Senator Neal's point about having mental health professionals in every school, we have a multitude of professionals—counselors, social workers, and school psychologists. Do we have enough? No. So, to your point, Assemblyman Miller, I think we have representation at every campus, whether it is a counselor, a social worker, or a mixture of both; and if a school does not have a counselor, they have a plan to use a partnering school counselor for that resource.

Assemblyman Miller:

Do we know what type of program costs or what it would look like to have a psychologist more readily accessible for schools that need more support? I am asking because of the suggestion to put a CCSD police officer at every school. I realize that is to address safety, but I do not know if adding a police officer to every school will address safety. I do not know if it addresses the concern of a student or teacher feeling safe in a classroom. I would like to consider how much more could we invest in mental health resources to create a safer environment instead of more police officers. Can you discuss the decision to put a police officer in every school versus potentially expanding the mental health plan? I appreciate the

acknowledgment that you put \$77 million in mental health; that is significant. I would like to see a more detailed breakdown of that amount at some point.

Senator Nguyen:

On page 26 [[Exhibit E](#)], you said that it was important to show that the research indicates that teachers are the single most important school-based determinant of student success. Then when you were asked by the Chair what your solutions were, you blamed the adult-driven approach. I am assuming you are insinuating that it is a teacher-driven approach. Your additional solution—to the incredibly depressing statistics we saw—was that we need to hold adults accountable. When you talk about adults being held accountable, are you talking about parents, teachers, or you? That seems incredibly inconsistent.

That same slide further states that a teacher's success is linked to the effectiveness of the principal and their ability to create an environment where teachers can thrive. There is that direct correlation—the single most important thing is our teachers, our educators, and how they are supported.

What are you doing to support and coach these teachers? What are you doing to support the single most important determinant of student success? What are you doing to make sure that these adults are getting that? How is your administration being accountable for those teachers and their success?

Jesus F. Jara:

I will go back to the resources we are providing for professional delivery; the \$36 million for our educators. That is one. We are providing academic instructional materials for teachers to teach. That is two. I wish I could lower class size. That is a long-term issue that needs to be addressed. Our class sizes are too large. We added a professional learning division so we can invest and provide ongoing professional learning for our teachers and our building principals to support teachers. Those are the support strategies I am talking about, because that is what the research calls for. Maybe to help clarify on the adult, I meant the outside adult pressures that are not conducive to supporting this same research that is provided.

Senator Nguyen:

The tone of this presentation seems like we were blaming adults. I cannot get a straight answer. I am not sure; I am assuming you are talking about outside interests. It seems adult-centered, and you are not talking about parents. It seems like you are talking about teachers, and I do not see that. I see that you want additional money for more associate superintendents. You want more administrative and supervisory employees; it seems less teacher-centered and more administrative-centered.

Jesus F. Jara:

I apologize if it seems that way because it is not. It is really to provide support. I will take that—whether it is constructive criticism or not—I will take it as criticism or feedback. That is not what it is meant to be, because when you really look at the workforce, the number one

bullet is the salary schedule of the educator in a classroom. That is to me, the priority. If we do not have teachers in schools to support our children, we do not have a school system. I apologize for the tone; I did not mean for it to sound that way.

Senator Nguyen:

That is the way I took it because we kept talking about adult-centered, adult-driven, and holding adults accountable. Unless you are the adult we are holding accountable, or the administrators of the teachers, I am not sure who we are directing that attention toward. That is how it came across; that was the first answer for a solution on what to do about these horrible statistics we are facing. I would like to see more support going directly to teachers if they are the single most important school-based determinant of student success.

Assemblywoman Anderson:

On page 21 [[Exhibit E](#)], and as an educator myself, I am going to ask somebody else to answer this time. President Garcia Morales, could you explain the term "accountability" to me? What role did the Board play when Superintendent Jara decided to give large raises to executive positions in November 2021, that would have equaled some of our first-year teacher salaries? What role did the CCSD Board of Trustees have in that decision, and following conversations?

Evelyn Garcia Morales:

The Board has a huge responsibility when it comes to student outcomes. When we focus on student outcomes and have priorities that are clear—crystal clear when it comes to goals—it helps us measure the success of our district. Those are absolutely critical. When it comes to the increases you referenced, I have to share with you, I recognize the media and the attention associated with that decision. I think one thing missing from this conversation is that oftentimes we talk about wanting to increase salaries for employees across the district; that it is needed. We have to increase the salary schedule; there are bargaining units involved that require negotiations and the Board of Trustees hires the superintendent to make decisions that are difficult, to improve student outcomes. It is challenging, honestly; there are a lot of things missing. The conversations, this conversation, this moment that happened almost two years ago; there are pressing needs that exist in our community and across the entire school district. Traditionally, our education system has been underfunded and underresourced. It is not my intention to blame anyone. It is just a cold fact, and everybody deserves increases, across the board.

Assemblywoman Anderson:

As you can tell, I am upset about it because it happened two years ago. If I were to use the data; where exactly does that help high school achievement science scores, or mathematics scores, when the chief financial officer's raise was \$44,000. The information officer should be helping to make CCSD a source of pride and creating a positive culture for work. Where exactly is that employee helping with that? I am more than happy to have anybody answer that question as to how exactly the information officer is creating a positive culture in our

school districts, and more importantly, for the educators and support professionals who work at the CCSD.

Evelyn Garcia Morales:

I know Dr. Jara wants to answer that, but I think it is important that we have honest conversations about how our school systems have been funded and underfunded. I recognize that you want specific answers regarding the chief information officer, for example, who develops infrastructure for a school district. If you compare it to a private sector employer, everybody in education is underpaid, including your school Board of Trustees. I spent a significant amount of time and energy in this position to support outcomes for our students and to support my colleagues. I have a full-time job, and I appreciate the question when it comes to whether we are paying people enough. The answer is no. And this body has the power to increase budgets across the entire board. I recognize that it is not an easy decision, and it is not an easy conversation, but if we want to talk about money, we have to look at everything.

Assemblywoman Anderson:

I understand it is difficult, but frankly, you are not answering the question. I am speaking on behalf of educators, who I have spoken with from the CCSD—they do not feel supported. They are hearing—rumors or otherwise—about boxes of unopened and unused supplies. They are leaving schools; they are excellent educators, and they do not want to be in the school. I understand these are not easy answers, but at some point, you are going to have to answer them. At what point will you put the money into the classrooms and talk with your School Organizational Teams (SOTs)—which by the way, this is the only school district that has them—and you have yet to mention them. You have spent \$6.7 million on a new dashboard; and you spent how much on human capital resources? Yet these all feel like—from what I am seeing—outside contracts that are not helping people in the classroom, driving the buses, or helping our students. What is your plan?

Jesus F. Jara:

If I may answer the question on raises; I did work with the Board. I shared data with the Board when I did a compensation analysis. As a matter of fact, we are doing a comprehensive compensation analysis for all our employees. We raised teachers' salaries to \$50,000; we are looking at using our reserves because of the crisis we have in the classroom when it comes to supporting our educators.

I did not want to reference the SOTs because last time there was criticism about me complaining about Assembly Bill 469 of the 79th Session; there is \$91 million in school supplies, school carryover budget, and school budgets that I cannot touch. The message is clear—why are teachers buying materials when there is \$91 million in school supply money? The other one, and I think it is important as well, is when you talk about the boxes, when I walked around, I saw a bunch of boxes very similar for math curriculum. I sent a text to my deputy to ask why we had boxes. We purchased six years of curriculum in our schools. So, they have them, they just have minimal space to store them. I can add clarity to that, but

those are some of the decisions that we made. The materials not being used are for the next six years.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

Are there any other questions from Committee members?

Assemblyman O'Neill:

I do not really want to hear about what your trustees make or do not make. Just like we did—we volunteered for these jobs. We worked hard to get elected to these jobs. So, I appreciate your service, but I do not want to hear it. I appreciate your honesty in coming in with performance statistics that are miserable—I am amazed you can brag about this. I am happy I am not from Clark County. My children went to Carson City schools, did well, and have done well since then. They exceeded performance levels. But maybe it is because we have smaller school districts.

I am not an educator. I am not from Clark County, but I retired as a division chief in law enforcement. One of the things I did in law enforcement with my division was that I always had to look at my resources. You have asked for \$21 million to put officers in schools, but yet you have your officers on I-215 and US-95 working traffic. Please explain where that is a good use of resources when you say you need more cops in your schools.

Jesus F. Jara:

I have to go back and understand the question around I-215 and why there?

Assemblyman O'Neill:

The question is simple. You have a certain number of police officers, and you want more officers in schools, but you have put officers working traffic detail on the interstates. How does that contribute to safety and security in your schools?

Jesus F. Jara:

So, I would have to understand the specifics as to the purpose: they could have been chasing a student but let me follow up, if I may?

Assemblyman O'Neill:

You are digging yourself a hole, sir.

I did a Google search two days ago on your local news station. I think it is KLAS, channel eight, showing pictures of your officers working on the interstate, doing traffic enforcement. That is all. It is a simple question. Explain to me, if you can, how that is a good use of resources?

Jesus F. Jara:

I cannot, I would have to check with the chief of police.

Assemblyman O'Neill:

I would appreciate that.

Assemblywoman Brown-May:

I would like to focus on Assembly District No. 42: Durango High School and Spring Valley High School. In your presentation you talked about 1,000 crisis responses to date this year. You just heard about \$21 million to fund officers in schools. My background is in disability services, and in that world, all behavior is communication. We are not listening to what our students and our teachers are saying if we are always in crisis response. I train my staff and I am trained in nonviolent crisis prevention and intervention. It is a thing, we do it, and I looked at statistics. My populations by race in Assembly District No. 42 is 12.4 percent Black or African American. That is it—12.4 percent. Of the children in school, 12 percent are kids with individualized education plans. Of the 74,400 people who live in Assembly District No. 42, 12.4 percent are Black or African American. Most of my population are Latino, Asian American, and Pacific Islander: I am a minority in my district.

Media is huge. My boss in my day job will tell you that the media helps us find the truth because they are watching; they are watching us right now. Everything we say is recorded. They are going to tell a story that is hard to tell. I hope they do, but the stories I see and hear in Assembly District No. 42 are the video of a young Black student with a knee on his back, face on the ground, in an immediate response. I have to wonder how we are policing and what the expectation is. Then I saw a newspaper article in the Las Vegas Review-Journal last week about a coach at Durango High School who resigned in February after filing a series of complaints to the administration. The coach alleged there was racist mistreatment of players, and what those players were being called by staff at that school. I have to wonder what is happening because I am going to go back to my earlier statement—all behavior is communication. If you feel like you are being discriminated against, are you going to act out? Please discuss policing and the policing standard in our schools so we can invest in healthy children and safe schools. I can only imagine being afraid to go to school because I know someone is going to mistreat me.

Jesus F. Jara:

I will go back to the \$21 million and the police officers. There was a request when we were at a hearing last week on police and de-escalation training that we presented to the committee on school policing. A question was asked about what was needed. We brought what we needed for school support and our police officers. There is a plethora of training on de-escalation and we have protocols in place that we presented. I do not have them memorized, but there is some training on that and how to handle students. I cannot talk specifically about the cases you mentioned because they are personnel matters, but we do extensive training with our police officers.

Assemblywoman Brown-May:

It feels like we are building prisons, not schools. It feels like we are building prisons with increased policing for how we handle behavioral actions in our students. Schools should be

safe and have security; metal detectors for guns and knives at schools, I get that, but it feels like we are building prisons and not a place where we are educating our young—that is what it feels like, even as a parent walking on school district grounds. Where are we funding behavioral schools? Why are they underfunded if we are having those issues? What does that look like and how do we correct that?

Jason Goudie:

Behavior schools are funded as essential programs rather than through the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan, per-pupil funding. I believe we have six designated behavior schools funded at an average of about \$20,000 per student versus a traditional comprehensive school. If you look at the entire district it is somewhere around \$4,500 to \$4,600 per student. The reason for that is there are less students and there is more need. We fund those based on need and have provided some funding from additional resources for social workers, as well as teachers and some of those schools for this year as well.

Assemblywoman Brown-May:

I would like to see statistics for who is involved in the crisis response incidents you are reporting. I understand that there were 6,000 violent incidents and 94 arrests made between August 2022 and February 2023. That is your own data. I want to understand the violence that is happening on our school campuses, and I support policing. I have a military police officer as a child, but I think we are moving in the wrong direction if we are going to continue to treat our schools like prisons.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

I promised constituents that I would ask their questions, but before I do that, you said you believe there are six behavioral schools. Did you say that you spend \$20,000 per student at those behavioral schools?

Jason Goudie:

Yes. I just had the data pulled. I am trying to find the exact numbers to make sure there are six schools, but I know that the cost is right around \$20,000 per student on a per-pupil basis for the amount of money required to run those schools.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

I would like you to get information back to this body on where that \$20,000 goes, because on opening day of this school year, I intentionally did not go to a school in my district that I usually visit on opening day. I make it to every school, but this school year, I went to a behavioral school in the Northwest Valley because the principal there said they needed help. They had a handful of educators dealing with multiple numbers of students who came through a metal detector and had to have everything taken off, with parents volunteering. In the last few weeks, we had a teacher with a broken arm because that teacher slipped going between classes, and students in a cafeteria because they did not have an educator. I would like to know where that \$20,000 per-pupil is being spent because I witnessed that it was not

being spent at that school—maybe at the other five behavioral schools, but not at that one. Please get that detailed information for us.

I am going to quickly go through my list of constituent questions. I do not need a dissertation, but I need answers to the questions. It appears that \$26 million was awarded for safety upgrades at one high school after a teacher's brutal attack there. What was spent at other middle and high schools to improve safety?

Jesus F. Jara:

The \$26 million was at Eldorado High School where we did a lot of infrastructure work to make sure that responding to a situation that we dealt with at that school for us to be able to do the—I would call it the incident—not the CENTEGIX, but the first one that we had, which was audio enhancement. There was a lot of infrastructure work that needed to be done to be functional. I do not have at the top of my head, how much we spent on all the others, but a total of \$85 million was spent on safety measures, including fencing and single points of entry. We can get that broken down by school and we do have a plan; we are not done yet. We are working on cameras and a lot of those different things. It is a multi-year plan to address what we can. We will get the detailed information to you.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

What is being done to help substitute teachers who have no health benefits? Is there any funding for that?

Jason Goudie:

Currently, we do not have any dedicated funding for substitute benefits. Those teachers are eligible through the Affordable Care Act based on the number of days worked or hours worked during certain periods. The net comes at a cost to those employees as well. At this point, we do not have anything built in. There have been discussions around looking at that option as well though.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

Why are different schools handling bullying incidents differently, especially when there is a racial profiling or discriminatory factor involved? Is there funding to train staff and administrators to be consistent in handling these situations?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

We did provide professional learning for all principals and secondary assistant principals last summer. We have built a robust bullying protocol and racially motivated incident (RMI) protocol that is literally step-by-step for our administrators to follow as they are working through those procedures. There should not be a difference in the steps they are taking.

Assemblyman Watts:

To build off the last question asked by the Chair, there was a question that the Committees asked many of the districts at our first meeting. You mentioned some of the programs or initiatives around social emotional learning. You mentioned what occurs at the

administrative level for bullying. What has been done for restorative justice implementation, both funding and training at the school site level?

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell:

We are in year two of the grant provided through the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) regarding restorative justice practices; every school has a five-person team, and we have trained 1,379 educators; we have 70 educators left, and we will be training them in May.

Assemblyman Watts:

I see that you have an outline that values the workforce for investments and educators. We have had the discussion about how educators are critical, but so are all our support staff. They play incredible roles: they are making sure that students get to school, they are making sure that students get fed, and they are providing a lot of additional supports that allow teachers to focus on teaching. Can you speak about what is envisioned for valuing education support professionals, in addition to the educators, with this investment?

Jesus F. Jara:

My board has prioritized the salary schedule as well and increases of their salaries. That is why we included transportation. Mr. Goudie will speak more on health care contributions that we made because it was going up, so we negotiated with our partners. It is a priority. We are currently looking at compensating security staff as well, and for our custodians, we will be looking at reclassifying those jobs. We did the office clerk position as well, and increasing their pay. Regarding specialized programs teacher assistants, which are our aides in our specialized classrooms, we partnered with our Education Support Employees Association (ESEA) as well to increase their salaries. So, it is a priority. It is one of those that we will have to negotiate with the ESEA.

Assemblyman Watts:

I appreciate some of those updates on what has happened. I look forward to getting additional information that helps contextualize the options for what happens moving forward because that was something that—at least I might have missed—in the presentation of the options of the investments that are needed to move forward.

Regarding investments towards school safety [page 8, [Exhibit E](#)], you talked about some of the investments that were made for mental health. When I talked to students, the number one thing they have brought up to me as a need for school safety is an investment in mental health and related supports. Could you help clarify what the additional investment will look like? I know there were questions about whether all schools have social workers. What are the ratios? I think we all know that those are not where they need to be—what is envisioned to bolster that?

Jesus F. Jara:

This is the piece that we are working on with our community and my superintendents advisory as well. I meet with them once a month, which is something that they wanted and needed. We have until 2024 to spend the \$77 million, so that needs to be a priority for us. As I mentioned in the presentation, something that we certainly have to find within the budget is funding for social workers, school psychologists, and counselors. This is a priority for me and this Board.

Assemblyman Watts:

Again, I know that there are a lot of needs and trying to refocus on the investment in the classroom and students supports. What is the investment in the workforce? What are the targeted initiatives to address learning loss and improve student achievement? The responses will be helpful to me and to other members of the community.

In the Title I discussion, carryover funds were mentioned. Schools that I visited and that I represent are Title I schools; most were Zoom or Victory Schools. One of the biggest concerns I have is that as we made the shift in the funding formula; was there going to be a hit as we moved from some of those programs to weights? What I heard when I served on the Valley SOT was concern about volatility in what they have to plan for to meet their needs from school year to school year. I would like to know, and I am sure you are working on this. Can you provide an initial analysis on additional resources coming in to show the changes that are proposed for weights, changes to the at-risk definition, and where schools are going to be? I am hopeful that with the historic investment in schools that is going to be made, that we are not looking at numerical losses. But again, I want to make sure that that schools have resources that they need to make the investments in the programs and initiatives, and continue to build upon those that they have started. As you are looking at compiling some of those estimates, the sooner you can get that to us, the better as it will help us in evaluating and making decisions.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

I have a question from a parent who says there used to be a fully staffed equity and diversity office. When they call that office, there is at least a 20-minute wait, and they have been told that if they do not get a recording, there are only two staff members working in that office now. Is there funding for more staff so parents can speak to someone about a concern or complaint?

Mike Barton:

There are vacancies currently in the CCSO Equity and Diversity Education Department. There are several coordinator vacancies that we are in the process of hiring. Some of the traffic on phone calls is related to helping schools with RMIs and other work in the field, but once those vacancies are filled, we anticipate those numbers going down.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

When you say a couple of vacancies, do you know the actual number of vacancies in that department?

Mike Barton:

We have two coordinator positions currently vacant.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

Special needs children do not have enough classroom aides to assist teachers. Many incidents have resulted in lawsuits and payouts when a student or staff member was harmed. Could federal funds have been used for better training instead of paying large settlements from district funds? What is the plan for added money coming to the school district for special education teachers and classroom aides?

Jesus F. Jara:

A few years ago, we started doing special education training for all of our administrators on the need to support students. Can you repeat the second part of the question?

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

The parents said that a lot of money had been paid out for lawsuits. Would those federal funds have been better spent on training? With the historical amount of funding for school districts in this next biennium, what is the plan for hiring more aides and special education teachers?

Jesus F. Jara:

As I mentioned, Chair, we looked at and increased the salary for our aides because of the need. The need we have to support our special education students is concerning and we look at student achievement as well. That is something we will prioritize in our budgeting process. As far as the situation you alluded to, when we did the review, we found that there was a lack of training for our administrators. We offer that ongoing training now.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

How many schools currently have a suicide prevention program, such as the Hope Squad?

Mike Barton:

Hope Squad is a site-based decision. We will have to get back to you on how many schools use Hope Squad as an intervention.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

Are there any other questions from Committee members?

Senator Dondero Loop:

What is the plan for ongoing support for additional technology made possible by the ESSER funds, which will be going away? Do you have a plan to keep that going and how is that going to work?

Jesus F. Jara:

That is part of the discussion. The number is around \$30 million to continue with Chromebooks for 1-to-1. That is a decision we have to make and prioritize. When you look at flat panels that we put in schools as a standard, we also have ESSER funded staffing allocated to that. That is a decision point we will have to make as a school district.

Senator Dondero Loop:

With so much technology in education, are you having trouble hiring staff or retaining staff to do those technology jobs?

Jesus F. Jara:

Yes. I think that goes back to the pay because they can go to the private sector versus coming in with those salaries that we pay as well.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

Are there any other questions from Committee members? [There were none.]

I thank you for answering our pointed questions and for those that you did not have answers to, my request is for you to get those answers to our committee manager, and the committee manager can get all that information to the members on these fiscal Committees.

Jesus F. Jara:

We will do that. Thank you.

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

We will close the presentation from CCSD, and we will move to the last item on our agenda, which is public comment.

[Public comment was heard. [Exhibit F](#) and [Exhibit G](#) were presented and submitted, and will become part of the record.]

Chair Monroe-Moreno:

Committee members, we started this conversation on Saturday, and at that time, I told you that Chair Dondero Loop and I—along with our legislative leadership—felt it important to hear directly from all our superintendents. This is the first time this has happened in this body, and we heard some wonderful stories. We have heard some heartbreaking stories about what is going on in our K-12 districts, but we had to hear the truth. I know it has been a long and lengthy night, but it has been enlightening and it has been very important. I think I can speak for all of us collectively; we all want to do what is best for our kids, and our

educational professionals inside and outside of the classroom, because each one plays an important role in the success of our education system. I want to remind people that the recommended amount of funding for the K-12 system it is in the budget because of the work that this legislative body did in the 81st Session. We are putting an historical amount of money in our funding system, but we have heard time and time again that amount may not address all the needs and everything we hope it can. I also heard at some point we are going to have to look at what those other revenue options are and address those, because we have one pie in this state, and we can only cut that pie so many times to address all the needs in the state, including education.

I know Assemblyman Yeager wants to thank our staff before we say good night. I will let him do that before we adjourn.

Assemblyman Yeager:

It has been a long week, and I am happy we are able to do this, and—as you know—we cannot do this without our staff. I am looking; we have Legislative Police outside who are here late; our staff who are in the room, and of course—as you know—they work hours before and hours after we are here in this building. We ran for these offices and we chose to be here, but they do not have a choice. I wanted to take a moment to recognize everyone in the building who made this hearing and the hearing last Saturday happen and let you know that we appreciate you and the sacrifice you are making for the state.

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Chair Monroe-Moreno:

With that, we are adjourned [at 9:38 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Tyler Boyce
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno, Chair

DATE: _____

Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

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

[Exhibit C](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "Plans for Additional Funding," dated March 31, 2023, presented by Melissa Mackedon, Chair, State Public Charter School Authority.

[Exhibit D](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "Strategic Budget Planning: Investing in our Students and Staff," dated March 31, 2023, presented by Susan Enfield, Superintendent, Washoe County School District, and Elizabeth Smith, Trustee, District D, President, Board of Trustees, Washoe County School District.

[Exhibit E](#) is a copy of a PowerPoint presentation titled "Joint Legislative Hearing, Clark County School District," dated March 31, 2023, presented by Jesus F. Jara, Superintendent, Clark County School District, Evelyn Garcia Morales, President, Board of Trustees, Clark County School District, Jason Goudie, Chief Financial Officer, Clark County School District, and Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, Deputy Superintendent, Clark County School District.

[Exhibit F](#) is public comment, presented and submitted by Elizabeth Cadigan, Vice President, Washoe Education Association.

[Exhibit G](#) is public comment, presented and submitted by Christopher Daly, Deputy Executive Director, Nevada State Education Association.