

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Eighty-second Session
April 14, 2023**

The Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Roberta Lange at 12:40 p.m. on Friday, April 14, 2023, in Room 2134 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Roberta Lange, Chair
Senator Edgar Flores, Vice Chair
Senator Dina Neal
Senator Fabian Doñate
Senator Scott Hammond
Senator Carrie A. Buck
Senator Robin L. Titus

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jen Sturm-Gahner, Policy Analyst
Asher Killian, Counsel
Kirsten Oleson, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Patricia Haddad, Clark County School District
Kabrina Feser, Operations Officer, Public Employees' Retirement System

CHAIR LANGE:

We will open the work session with Senate Bill (S.B.) 148.

SENATE BILL 148: Revises provisions relating to local school precincts.
(BDR 34-160)

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JEN STURM-GAHNER (Policy Analyst):

As nonpartisan legislative staff, I cannot support nor oppose any measure. The work session documents are available on the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System.

Senate Bill 148 was sponsored by Senator Lange and heard on April 12, 2023. I have submitted the work session document ([Exhibit C](#)) which describes the bill and amendments.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will entertain a motion to amend and do pass as amended S.B. 148.

SENATOR DOÑATE MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
S.B. 148.

SENATOR FLORES SECONDED THE MOTION.

CHAIR LANGE:

Is there any discussion?

SENATOR TITUS:

I respect the intent of this bill, but I will be voting no.

SENATOR BUCK:

Are sections 2 and 4 removed?

CHAIR LANGE:

No, they are still in the bill.

SENATOR BUCK:

I will be voting no. Will this bill allow collective bargaining units to override the principal's authority to select staff during surplus?

CHAIR LANGE:

I do not think this bill talks about surplus at all. This bill says that schools will go through the collective bargaining process where an agreement is negotiated between the school district and the labor union. The labor union will make those decisions about the collective bargaining. This bill will not override a collective bargaining agreement.

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SENATOR BUCK:

I wanted to clarify that before I cast my vote. I am curious what the collective bargaining is from the Clark County Education Association to the district. I was told that this would not undo whatever was agreed upon with the Nevada Department of Education and that the agreement would not be overridden by the collective bargaining agreement.

PATRICIA HADDAD (Clark County School District):

I believe the initial question was about the impact of placement of people who are in the surplus. Placement is not through the sole discretion of the principal. It is aligned with the collective bargaining agreement.

SENATOR BUCK:

I will be voting no. I do not want to set a precedent for our Legislative Body for the Supreme Court of Nevada. How do you run a school without the autonomy to staff it?

CHAIR LANGE:

We will take a vote.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATORS BUCK, HAMMOND AND TITUS VOTED NO.)

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CHAIR LANGE:

I will now open the work session on S.B. 292.

SENATE BILL 292: Revises provisions relating to school administrators.
(BDR 34-554)

Ms. STURM-GAHNER:

Senate Bill 292 was sponsored by Senator Pazina and heard on April 10, 2023. I have submitted a work session document ([Exhibit D](#)) describing the bill and the amendments.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will accept a motion to amend and do pass as amended S.B. 292.

SENATOR NEAL MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
S.B. 292.

SENATOR DOÑATE SECONDED THE MOTION.

CHAIR LANGE:
Is there any discussion?

SENATOR TITUS:
I have really struggled with this bill. I have heard from both sides of the argument as well as administrators and staff. I have given my word to the school district members who came to visit me that I would support this bill. I am going to keep my word. I will be voting yes on this bill.

SENATOR BUCK:
I like section 2 of the bill, which includes three years of probation for newly appointed principals. However, I think that sections 2 through 4 need to be removed because there are unintended consequences for the students in low-income areas. Why would I, as a highly effective principal, ever go to work in those schools or move to that school if I knew that it would potentially impact my career or job? I think it disincentivizes the highly effective principals and educators to go to the areas where we need them most. I intended to vote yes on this because I liked the bill, aside from section 2, which needs to be removed before I can support it. I will vote no and reserve my right to change my vote on the Senate Floor.

SENATOR NEAL:
I am looking at the amendment. Does the amendment add language where if the school rating is reduced, the principal will receive mentoring instead of being dismissed?

CHAIR LANGE:
That is correct. We will now take a vote.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR BUCK VOTED NO.)

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CHAIR LANGE:

I will now open the work session on S.B. 308.

SENATE BILL 308: Revises provisions relating to educational personnel.
(BDR 23-1018)

Ms. STURM-GAHNER:

Senate Bill 308 was sponsored by Senator Flores and heard on April 7, 2023. I have submitted the work session document ([Exhibit E](#)) which describes the bill and the proposed amendments.

KABRINA FESER (Operations Officer, Public Employees' Retirement System):
As stated, public employees would include those in the Police & Firefighters' Retirement Fund. I would like confirmation that this would be employees in the regular fund.

ASHER KILLIAN (Counsel):

It is my understanding that the intent of this amendment is for all public employees, but only public employees in the regular fund. That might be a question for Senator Flores to make sure the intent is accurately captured; however, that is the way I would read it.

Ms. FESER:

Thank you for the confirmation.

SENATOR FLORES:

That reading is correct.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will accept a motion to amend and do pass as amended S.B. 308.

SENATOR FLORES MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
S.B. 308.

SENATOR DOÑATE SECONDED THE MOTION.

CHAIR LANGE:

Is there any discussion?

SENATOR TITUS:

Although I appreciate Senator Flores' intent of trying to get J-1 visa teachers in the pipeline and reward them for coming here to teach, I think this is an avenue that is unattainable and not supported. I would like a separate discussion regarding the support these teachers get to teach in the U.S. and some of their burdens. I cannot support this bill as written.

SENATOR BUCK:

Why change an entire system based on 375 State employees, who might stay 5 years? They could extend their visas two more years. I think 14,000 employees would be impacted, putting a fiscal burden on our State. It is an unfunded liability of 14,000 people who would qualify for benefits two years earlier. We need to vet the idea first. When I do the math, it seems there would be an unintended consequence. I will be voting no.

CHAIR LANGE:

We will now take a vote.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATORS BUCK AND TITUS VOTED NO.)

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CHAIR LANGE:

We will now open the work session on S.B. 344.

SENATE BILL 344: Revises provisions governing education. (BDR 34-4)

MS. STURM-GAHNER:

Senate Bill 344 was sponsored by Senator Neal and heard on April 10, 2023. I have submitted a work session document ([Exhibit F](#)) describing this bill and the proposed amendments.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will accept a motion to amend and do pass as amended S.B. 344.

SENATOR DOÑATE MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
S.B. 344.

SENATOR NEAL SECONDED THE MOTION.

CHAIR LANGE:

Is there any discussion?

SENATOR TITUS:

I appreciate this bill. The intent to increase the teacher pipeline is honorable. I cannot support this because of the economic burdens and other limitations it causes. I cannot support the bill as it is written.

SENATOR BUCK:

I see this as an attack on charter schools, like Matt Kelly Elementary School, and the children and parents who choose charter schools. Some Clark County School District charter schools have been 1-star schools for over a decade. Why would we want failing schools to hold students hostage when there is a viable and nearby option in the City of Las Vegas? Given that reason, I will be voting no.

SENATOR NEAL:

I want to clarify a couple of things. I allowed grants to continue, which were expected by the City of Henderson. I grandfathered in the current activities that are happening in Las Vegas, but I am not allowing them to expand beyond what is listed in *Nevada Revised Statutes 279*. They can still run their early childhood programs, but they cannot expand into a full-on school, where kindergarten through Grade 12 is provided. I wanted to clarify that on the record, so everybody is clear, in case you did not read my many amendments.

SENATOR BUCK:

We can increase viable options for children who have been stuck in 1-star schools for over a decade. We are failing our students in the areas they need the most help. I cannot see why anyone would be against providing a viable option.

CHAIR LANGE:

We will now take a vote.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATORS BUCK, HAMMOND AND TITUS
VOTED NO.)

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CHAIR LANGE:

I will now open the work session on S.B. 347.

SENATE BILL 347: Revises provisions relating to higher education.
(BDR 34-119)

Ms. STURM-GAHNER:

Senate Bill 347 was sponsored by Senator Doñate and heard on April 12, 2023. I have submitted the work session document ([Exhibit G](#)) which describes the bill and amendments.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will accept a motion to amend and do pass as amended S.B. 347.

SENATOR FLORES MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED
S.B. 347.

SENATOR DOÑATE SECONDED THE MOTION.

CHAIR LANGE:

Is there any discussion?

SENATOR DOÑATE:

I want to describe the conversations about this bill that happened post-hearing. Assemblyman Howard Watts and I have been carrying two bills. His deals more with the governance structure. My intent was to look at the funding formula and the division of the different institutions' missions. That is reflected in the amendment before you today. It would require the higher education funding model be revised for the deferring institutions. We heard the concerns from several of our colleagues as to how we can provide better support services for at-risk students. We wanted to make sure that was reflected.

There is one change that I did not catch until right now. I know how some Committee members feel about commissions. To help make this bill better, the proposed commission would sunset on July 1, 2025. Governor Joe Lombardo has already requested that we allocate funding to provide for a robust discussion as to what the cost analysis will be.

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This is a big moment to push the Nevada System of Higher Education forward. We have not had this discussion in a long time. That would be the only addition to the proposed commission.

SENATOR FLORES:

If it is the pleasure of this Committee, I will rescind my motion.

SENATOR FLORES RESCINDED THE MOTION TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED S.B. 347.

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SENATOR FLORES MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED S.B. 347 WITH THE ADDITION OF SENATE DOÑATE'S PROPOSED AMENDMENT ON THE PROPOSED COMMISSION SUNSETTING ON JULY 1, 2025.

SENATOR DOÑATE SECONDED THE MOTION.

CHAIR LANGE:

Is there any discussion?

SENATOR BUCK:

I will gladly support Senator Doñate's shortened version of this bill.

SENATOR TITUS:

I cannot vote yes. I love the fact that there are sunsets on some of these commissions. I think that is a great idea. I wish all of the commissions that have passed had sunsets on them.

I feel strongly about this bill. Can we do better with our higher education? Absolutely. Can we do better with other institutions? Absolutely. This bill does not get us there. I have heard from community colleges and universities. I feel this bill has not been vetted and I do not think a commission will get us to where we need to be.

CHAIR LANGE:

We will now take a vote.

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THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR TITUS VOTED NO.)

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CHAIR LANGE:

That finishes our work session. Is there anyone wishing to speak in public comment? Seeing no one, the meeting is adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Kirsten Oleson,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Roberta Lange, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit Letter	Introduced on Minute Report Page No.	Witness / Entity	Description
	A	1		Agenda
	B	1		Attendance Roster
S.B. 148	C	2	Jen Sturm-Gahner	Work Session Document
S.B. 292	D	3	Jen Sturm-Gahner	Work Session Document
S.B. 308	E	5	Jen Sturm-Gahner	Work Session Document
S.B. 344	F	6	Jen Sturm-Gahner	Work Session Document
S.B. 347	G	8	Jen Sturm-Gahner	Work Session Document