

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Eighty-second Session
May 1, 2023**

The Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Roberta Lange at 1:08 p.m. on Monday, May 1, 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

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Brittney Miller, Assembly District No. 5
Assemblyman Duy Nguyen, Assembly District No. 8

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jen Sturm-Gahner, Policy Analyst
Linda Hiller, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Cevan Louie, Sophomore, Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas
Ethan Nguyen, Junior, Advanced Technologies Academy, Las Vegas
Christian Bishop
Nick Schneider, Vegas Chamber
Mia Nakamura
Patrick Dimasin

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Serena Kasama, Nevada Bankers Association
Donna Laffey, Nevada Credit Union League
Jamie Tadrzynski, Teacher, Canyon Springs High School, Clark County
School District
Hieu Le
Gyanna Perry
Jherylinn Gancenina
Hank Brown, Carson City Montessori Charter School
Mathilda Guerrero, Battle Born Progress
Erica Nungaray
Calen Evans, President, Washoe Education Association
Vicki Kreidel, President, National Education Association of Southern Nevada
Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association
Robert Munson
Nicolette Andrini, Washoe Education Association; Nevada State Education
Association
Jeff Horn, Executive Director, Clark County Association of School
Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees
Steven Horner, Nevada State Education Association
Lisa Guzman, Nevada State Education Association
Sara Comera
Pam Salazar, Ed.D., Chair, Teachers and Leaders Council
Mary Pierczynski, Nevada Association of School Superintendents
Patricia Haddad, Clark County School District

CHAIR LANGE:

I will open the meeting of the Senate Committee on Education with a hearing on
Assembly Bill (A.B.) 274.

ASSEMBLY BILL 274 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions governing required
instruction in financial literacy. (BDR 34-759)

ASSEMBLYMAN DUY NGUYEN (Assembly District No. 8):

Happy Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month
right here in our State capital, as well as across the U.S. I am very excited to
present A.B. 274, which aims to clarify the intent and importance of codifying
the words “financial literacy” in statute as well as ensuring that some basic
foundational steps are being taught in the curriculum and standardized by the
Nevada Department of Education (NDE).

Currently, section 1 of *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 389.018 states that the following subjects are designated as the core academic subjects that must be taught in our public schools—English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science and social studies. Section 2 states that people enrolled in a public high school must take the minimum of four units in ELA, four units in mathematics, three units in science and three units in social studies, including, without limitation, one-half unit in American government, two units of American history, world history or geography, and one-half unit of economics.

Economics is the reason I am here today. According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, economics is defined as a social science concerned chiefly with the description and analysis of the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services. Does that make sense to any of you? How does that help our young adults prepare for the real world when they are not learning the applicable ways to manage their finances? The focus should be on everyday financial literacy. That is what A.B. 274 is intending to do, adding the words “financial literacy” into the statute.

Last year, I spent six months talking to the constituents of Assembly District No. 8. Among concerns about health care, jobs, safety, and of course, education, most of the parents in my District were concerned about the lack of corroboration between what is being taught in school and what is reconfirmed at home around dinner tables on the subject of financial literacy.

Young adults are making financial decisions as they are leaving the care of their parents and doing this without any proper knowledge of basic household finances. For example, a first paycheck may earn them \$500 in gross wages. Most would think, “Hey, I have the entire \$500 to spend, yay.” No, there are taxes, food costs, healthcare costs, transportation costs and housing costs that they are now responsible for. As a result, that \$500 could turn into a negative balance and they may have to resort to credit cards and other predatory loan products that could set them back financially as they enter the world of debt and financial insecurity at the very beginning of adulthood.

In NRS 389.074, which covers instruction in financial literacy, the areas of instruction include the development of a personal financial plan, understanding and budgeting for the cost of housing, transportation and health care. These are the basics of adult life. When we explain the basics and require plans for the basics, we can then teach topics on economics, such as compound interest,

investment, stocks and bonds and things that require at least a basic knowledge before getting into a higher level of understanding.

I will just briefly go over the changes in the bill version coming from the Assembly. In section 1 of A.B. 274, we are moving the State Financial Literacy Advisory Council that is currently within the Office of the Governor to the NDE. This Council will be under the jurisdiction of the NDE, adding a high school student as a member so we can give a voice to our youth.

In section 1.5, we add the words “financial literacy” after economics, so the requirement becomes one-half unit of credit in economics and financial literacy to section 1.5, subsection 2, paragraph (d), subparagraph (3) as well as to the following paragraph.

On page 6 of the bill, under section 2, subsection 1, paragraph (b), subparagraph (3), which deals with developing a personal financial plan, it now includes “understanding and budgeting for the costs of housing, transportation and health care.” That is pretty much the gist of the bill.

CEVAN LOUIE (Sophomore, Coral Academy of Science Las Vegas):

I am an avid debater and a true lover of oranges. I am unbelievably happy to be here today to be able to present A.B. 274 with Assemblyman Nguyen and Ethan Nguyen. I want to talk about our backgrounds so you can understand our perspective, because Ethan and I are exactly who this bill is impacting.

I have a close relationship with my dad, Evan Louie, who taught me a lot about financial literacy. The benefits from that are immeasurable. Early on, he taught me about the benefits of being able to save for health care and being able to save up for food, as well as being able to save up for certain things over time. These are key things that are setting young people up for our future. We are creating a future that is doomed to fail if we are not able to understand the world of financial literacy.

Not all students grow up with financial literacy. I have learned that my cousin got her first job at a French bakery and when she got her first paycheck, she spent all \$800 in two days. Understandably, this is just a natural thing teenagers do. It is a thing that is preventable, though, and it is stopping our students from being able to be successful people and leaders in our future.

I also talked to college students about their experiences. They are stuck in this narrative where they have figured out their own lives and navigate college and life without their parents' financial support. If we do not teach our young students about financial literacy, we are setting up a future that they are unprepared for and yet is preventable. Even though I am growing up financially literate, I know that is not true of my fellow students.

ETHAN NGUYEN (Junior, Advanced Technologies Academy, Las Vegas):

I am active in debate and community work, and this is my first time testifying in Carson City. I wholeheartedly support A.B. 274. I am also fortunate to have parents who teach me financial literacy. However, I have many friends who are not as fortunate. When they got summer jobs, they got their paychecks and spent it all on things that were not properly budgeted for. They spent their entire paycheck on video games, shoes, eating out and cosmetics, as well as other commodities.

One of my friends spent \$3,000 on League of Legends skins over six months. Another friend graduated from high school, but did not budget the money earned from a high school job well enough and struggled to pay college tuition, telling me how much they regretted it after the fact. Another one of my friends spent \$4,000 of scholarship money on a gaming computer and other things. Many of these individuals are first- or second-generation immigrants whose parents are not as familiar with the financial systems in America.

These individuals are not as fortunate as I am, because they never received essential financial education and they do not have anybody to educate them properly on the subject. To combat this, I have noticed that some students create their own educational programs, such as financial literacy clubs or investment clubs within their own schools.

They also participate in career and technical education (CTE) competitions, such as Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) or Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA). I know from personal experience that these programs are very effective in promoting financial literacy and do a better job of preparing students for the real world than educational curriculums.

The only problem with this is that they are not applicable to every single student. Not every student in the Country or the State participates in these CTE programs, which means we do not have a wide enough reach to access all

students. If student-led clubs and competition-based education is effective at improving financial literacy, I see no reason why promoting financial literacy and education will not lead to more successful students and citizens. I wholeheartedly support this bill.

CHAIR LANGE:

Thank you. We always love it when students come here and participate in the process because you are our future and we enjoy having you here.

SENATOR FLORES:

Can you give me an idea what is happening in your schools on this subject now? How are your teachers actively engaging you in this financial literacy conversation?

MR. NGUYEN:

When it comes to students seeking financial help, or curriculums provided to students, I am afraid to say that not much is available. Again, students make their own financial literacy organizations, as well as participate in CTE programs such as DECA and FBLA, where students compete in real world issues including economics. But if these students are not proactively seeking out these opportunities for themselves and they do not know where to start when it comes to financial literacy, there is not really much available for them in school curriculums and formal education.

Teachers rarely come to students with advice about financial literacy. It is not a relevant experience in the classroom because there are no programs in financial literacy being taught in Nevada public schools today.

MS. LOUIE:

I wish it was not true, but programs in financial literacy do not exist in our State schools today. If we were to reach out to our teachers, they would be teaching us from their own personal experience. The programs that do address financial literacy are not fully developed or ingrained in our school systems. As I talked to college students who had financial literacy systems in school while they were growing up, they told me that it really did not prepare them for life in the real world.

Being able to pass A.B. 274 will push the development of these financial literacy programs. We now have students asking other students how to deal

with money, and neither of us know the answers. I am a 15-year-old high school sophomore and I do not know how to do that, so being able to learn from mentors and set a curriculum for this subject is exactly what we need.

MR. NGUYEN:

I go to Advanced Technologies Academy, which is a technical career and education school with programs for careers. The CTE programs such as business, which is one of the biggest programs at our school, push students into these student-led organizations and competition-based organizations to promote financial literacy.

However, in schools such as Coronado, Liberty and Green Valley that are not CTEs or technical-based educational schools, they do not have incentives for students to join these competition-based organizations or organizations providing financial literacy. I am fortunate to have parents that know financial literacy, and I am even more fortunate to go to a school that teaches financial literacy, instead of at a school where there are no programs designed for that. Most students have less access than I do.

SENATOR FLORES:

We are talking about legislation that helps adults better save money. Imagine you are parents who never got that training, and now you have to feed a family. You have to budget household issues and it becomes a thousand times worse when you are in charge of a household. I am a huge fan of what you are doing and I really do hope that we can get this through.

SENATOR NEAL:

I will ditto what Senator Flores said. I do like this bill. I noticed that in the existing law, they listed having instruction on stocks and bonds, but they did not have information on taxes, which I think would be important to include because it is one of the things you are going to deal with after you get your first job.

Sometimes the parents may not be around or able to help, so a young person may have to take that on themselves. We have foster children and children who are independently living, so I was wondering if you would think about including taxes in the curriculum.

ASSEMBLYMAN NGUYEN:

The taxes piece is a bigger piece; so we want to take it slowly by giving them the basics first. Taxes should be part of that basic conversation, but I feel like the budgeting part is very important. That used to be taught in a home economics class when I grew up, but that does not exist anymore. Now I am learning by making mistakes and then trying to prevent those mistakes from happening in the future.

Additionally, in terms of adding in the tax basics, our teachers or educators may not be equipped by the IRS, for example, to help teach that subject, because you have to be certified to be able to prepare taxes. We definitely want to look at ways of partnering with outside organizations to bring some of these skill sets in, and that includes tax preparation.

SENATOR NEAL:

There is a crossover here with the State Treasurer, who is doing some form of literacy program. I believe that during COVID-19, they did a financial literacy bee, kind of like a spelling bee. Last summer, I ran an adulting series to try and bring students and other neighbors out because I was on this adulting kick around financial literacy and realizing that the 18- and 19-year-olds leaving the nest did not know what is in this bill. So I appreciate it.

Maybe the crossover with the State Treasurer who has an outreach team, and then the NDE, will help cement that. Also, tagging Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), because they have some components of financial literacy, is a good idea. Not all students are in JAG, but if we do some targeted outreach within the school day and have JAG offer a session for all kids, maybe that could work. One thing I have learned in my service is that when you have a good relationship with the principal, it is better to do it during the school day and do a very specialized hour or 45 minutes to have the kids get the information.

ASSEMBLYMAN NGUYEN:

I do believe there are existing partnerships with various organizations like Junior Achievements, JAG and others. My intent with the bill is to make sure the details are being brought up so the basics are covered. Of course, programs like the financial literacy bee and what is happening with the Office of the State Treasurer could enhance this effort. Also, the fact that we are moving the Council from the Office of the Governor to the NDE will give us access to NDE

staff who will dedicate their resources to work with this Council. Also, adding a high school student to raise some of these topics, like these two young people have brought up today will ensure that we are doing things proactively and not reactively. That is the intent of this bill.

SENATOR NEAL:

People asked me to continue the adulting series. I had partnered with the Nevada Bankers Association and some community groups so we could teach and learn about credit. I brought them into Canyon Springs High School. We spent a whole day in all the sophomore and junior classes. We talked about the new online bank cards that I was super worried about. Traditional banking is not the same as it was.

ASSEMBLYMAN NGUYEN:

We grew up writing checks, but when we tell this generation about checks, they look at us funny. We have to make sure we evolve our education, not just with the daily things, but also the practical things that we are all experiencing with financial literacy.

SENATOR TITUS:

Assembly Bill 274 is a great idea that should have been thought of sooner. This is why it is good to have new folks and freshmen come in to the Legislature with new ideas. As I read the bill, you have totally reconstructed the State Financial Literacy Advisory Council and put it under the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Council members you identified in the bill include education and community members, but there is no definition of who exactly is being represented on this Council. Are both rural and urban members represented? Also, why did you move the responsible party for the Council from the legislative appointments to the Superintendent?

ASSEMBLYMAN NGUYEN:

The intent was not to change the makeup of the Council. This was the suggestion of current members who have been very active with the Council. They are staying on the Council while ensuring they get a new member who is reflective of the high school population. The intent is not to change the Council, just how members are appointed.

SENATOR TITUS:

I agree that it is critical to have a student on the Council. I do not know the schools in Las Vegas well enough to be able to say which are charter schools, magnet schools or at-risk schools. I assume the two students at the table are at magnet schools.

Ms. LOUIE:

I go to a charter school and Ethan goes to a public school with a CTE program, so it is a magnet school.

SENATOR TITUS:

You both have testified that you have friends who had no idea about financial literacy, but fortunately both of you, through your families and your experience and your own schools, have that financial literacy education available. Do you see a student on this Council being somebody like yourselves, or somebody like your friends who have little or no knowledge of financial literacy?

Ms. LOUIE:

It needs to be people who are directly impacted by this and are part of that marginalized community, so it does have to be a student in the public schools.

SENATOR BUCK:

I agree that this definitely needs to be taught in our schools. When I pull up the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NACS) and Instructional Support from 2017, the requirement is to provide a purview of financial decision-making, savings and spending, credit and debit, insurance, investing and college and career readiness.

When I go to third grade, I see the guideline is to distinguish between needs and wants, describe the differences between saving and spending, define personal information and what is appropriate to share or to keep private.

When I look at fourth grade, it is identifying methods of payments for goods and services, explaining the benefits and methods of saving including, but not limited to, financial institutions, piggy banks, determine the consequences of sharing personal information with others and examine job and career interests.

When I go to fifth grade, it is the importance of setting financial goals, credit and savings, identifying methods of how to protect one's identity and the relationship between quality of life and the standard of living.

When I go to sixth through eighth grade, the NACS guideline is personal budgeting, including income, planned spending, expenses, debit cards and how they differ from credit cards, individual rights and responsibilities as a consumer, the cost of borrowing money for different types of goods and services, including but not limited to, consumables, vehicles, education and housing. It also includes investigating ways to prevent and limit the consequences of identity theft and fraud, the differentiation between savings accounts and potential risks and returns and identifying college and career options.

My point is, how are you going to enforce this? This is in the NACS. We are supposed to be teaching this, much like reading, math and bringing kids up to level in those subjects. Unfortunately, some of our schools have fallen short. How do you enforce this?

SENATOR NGUYEN:

I agree that those things that you read out loud from third grade to sixth grade, may not be in practice anymore, whether we were talking about financial products and how it was when the curriculum was designed, to the current products that exist now. Even though in statute and in NACS it lists these steps that should start from third grade, I believe that the enforcement cannot happen if they do not come back to it. If you learn from third grade, fourth grade, and fifth grade, you can learn this subject. You may have understood it at that point.

But once you get to high school, with so much going on with all the things that you are doing to prepare for college or for being an adult, there needs to be a capstone that puts it together. I hope that moving the Council to NDE will give us a better enforcement mechanism than if it sits in the Office of the Governor, where they have a lot going on. Putting the Council inside the NDE, we can monitor the effort a lot better.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will take testimony in favor of A.B. 274.

CHRISTIAN BISHOP:

To give you some context about me, I majored in business and secured my MBA at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, my master's degree in government from Harvard University and my law degree at Syracuse University. The most effective course that made the biggest impact on my life was financial literacy in my boarding school in high school. That class had a direct return on investment that has paid dividends throughout my lifetime. That is why I am here to testify and why it is important to me.

I launched this program on the Twitch platform and on Amazon, which we extended to colleges supporting young people who needed to understand and learn about financial literacy. It had a direct impact on their earning potential as it pertains to taxes and other components.

So I have seen it not only in my own personal life, but at a corporate level where financial literacy has played a critical role. Senator Buck mentioned accountability, and it is also intentional that the individuals who are in charge have key roles. They come from places like the banking industry, economics and credit unions. These are intentional decisions of folks that are subject-matter experts.

To Senator Nguyen's comments earlier, the world changes, economics change, financial situations and circumstances change. We need to be intentional and constantly refresh our best practices. For example, we need to learn about how companies like Experian and Equifax are changing the way they report on credit. By having experts involved, we will get to a better place to be able to make a better impact, not just about money for young people and kids.

Senator Flores commented earlier that kids are going to go back to teach their parents about financial literacy, so it is going to cascade to these parents, making them less vulnerable and less desperate, and it is going to pay dividends.

NICK SCHNEIDER (Vegas Chamber):

The Vegas Chamber is in support of A.B. 274 because it presents an opportunity to prepare Nevada students with the necessary knowledge and skills to handle life's financial challenges. We believe this is critical in helping young Nevadans create a brighter and more stable financial future for themselves.

MIA NAKAMURA:

After hearing about this bill, I want to share a story about my mother, who I love, but she is terrible with money. She actually had to file for bankruptcy in 2019 which resulted in us losing our home. She immigrated from Korea, and English is her second language, so of course, I do not blame her for being financially illiterate.

I wish I had an opportunity to go back in time and learn about financial literacy in school so I could have taught her, and we could have prevented losing our home. That is why I am in support of A.B. 274, so not only young people get educated, but it will translate to those who are dependent on them.

PATRICK DIMASIN:

I am a senior at West Career & Technical Academy. I turned 18 yesterday and unfortunately, I am financially illiterate. I cannot begin to say how important this piece of Legislation is for first-generation, low-income communities like mine. We have thousands of immigrant families in Nevada, building generational wealth for the first time. Many of these people come from different economic contexts, like the Philippines, where my family grew up, where you can get along with just the Philippine peso and no bank account. In the U.S., the financial context is extremely difficult.

When our first-generation, low-income (FGLI) immigrant families have children, they do not know what financial literacy looks like in the U.S., especially in Nevada. It is important that we create programs to educate the children of these families so they can go back and help their parents and ensure that we stop financial illiteracy right at that doorstep.

Coming from FGLI communities, this Legislation is also important for our students applying for college. In section 2, subsection 1, paragraph (h), subparagraph 4, it talks about opportunities like the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), but in FGLI communities, we know nothing about FAFSA, much less how to apply for college. The financial aid process is so difficult. Our schools can definitely use our time better to educate our students. Education is a human right. We owe it to our youngest constituents to give them the ability to succeed and not worry about financial problems.

SERENA KASAMA (Nevada Bankers Association):

The Nevada Bankers Association supports A.B. 274, specifically the language that would create requirements for a personal financial plan, as well as understanding and budgeting costs surrounding health care, transportation and housing. We believe these are skills every student deserves and that they will benefit tremendously from in all stages of their life.

DONNA LAFFEY (Nevada Credit Union League):

The Nevada Credit Union League supports A.B. 274 and its efforts to expand financial literacy education. It will help students in Nevada gain a better understanding of their personal finances and better equip students with the necessary tools and resources for budgeting and navigating future financial decisions. Students who receive financial education early on will be provided the framework for a successful adulthood. Credit unions have proudly supported legislation over the years, working to improve the financial literacy of Nevadans and we are committed to providing financial education to communities across the State.

The Richard Myles Johnson (RMJ) Foundation is the credit union foundation in Nevada with a mission to provide financial education resources that credit unions can easily deliver to communities. The RMJ Foundation's program called Bite of Reality is a hands-on, app-based simulation that appeals to teens while giving them a taste of real world financial realities. The Bite of Reality program teaches students how to budget by assigning them an identity and showing them how to navigate adulthood and properly manage their expenses. After completing the program, students expressed an overwhelming intent to create and follow a budget, set a savings goal and track their spending.

JAMIE TADRZYNSKI (Teacher, Canyon Springs High School, Clark County School District):

I previously taught financial literacy, which was an elective course that many schools have since removed from their course guides. Because it was an elective, it was kind of a toss-up of who could teach it. Many schools ended up having math teachers teach it because there are numbers involved. Other schools had social studies teachers teaching it because it deals directly with economics. That is how it kind of fell into my lap.

Our school needed an extra class, and because I was not really an expert on the subject, I started the year by telling my students, "I am going to tell you every

financial mistake I made between the ages of 18 and 30 so that you do not do the same thing.” They kind of laughed at first, but it worked. I graduated high school and moved out at age 17, and I thought because I was a “big ol’ high school graduate,” I knew what life was going to hand me. I did not. When I went to college, my dad had to sign a parent assistance loan for me because, as a minor, I could not sign for my own loans. He did not know what he was signing and neither did I.

I have been a teacher for 11 years and I am still dealing with the repercussions of signing a loan that we did not understand because there was not financial literacy provided to me. I work and live in North Las Vegas. A lot of my students are going to graduate straight into a workforce they are not prepared to understand. If we do not teach them financial literacy skills while they are in high school and while we have that opportunity to teach them, we are setting them up for failure and we are going to graduate them into a world that will kick them over and over again. I am in full support of A.B. 274 and of it being moved under the NDE, putting educators in control of how we teach this important course.

HIEU LE:

This is a great bill that will help, not only people like me, but students who want to predict how they want their future to be. It is them keeping themselves accountable, and that is something that makes me proud and makes all the students willing to learn. Please support A.B. 274.

GYANNA PERRY:

I am in full support of A.B. 274 and I am a first-generation student, the child of an immigrant. Growing up, I have seen that immigrants have fallen victim to financial illiteracy. To echo what Patrick said, growing up in the Philippines, you can survive without knowing how to do taxes or how to invest in your home or get reliable health care, which is what many immigrants do not have when they come here.

When I talk with my peers, we realize that we lack the ability to know where we need to put our money when we get older. I work with K-12 girls of color, who have fallen victim to the school-to-prison pipeline, and I have seen that they lack the resources that would enable them to know how to adapt and thrive as an adult. This is why programs that this bill is implementing are important for us as youth and as a collective.

JHERYLINN GANCENIA:

I am advocating for A.B. 274. I am also a child of immigrants. My parents came from the Philippines. My mother actually came here when she was younger and without schools teaching about financial literacy, she did not really know what to do. This is kind of a downfall for me, because I am not even sure how to work with my money. I am barely learning about FAFSA and needing to get money and put it into college. I also have siblings and I cannot really teach them and neither can my parents because we do not know about those things. This bill will make it possible to teach students how to properly save and wisely use their money.

HANK BROWN (Carson City Montessori Charter School):

I am speaking today on behalf of our entire Carson City Montessori Student Legislative Team in support of A.B. 274. There is no question that financial literacy is a must. No one can survive in this super-fast computerized world without knowing basic financial literacy such as interest rates, withholdings on your paycheck, auto loans, insurance, mortgages, credit cards, taxes, student loans, budgets and even how to avoid getting scammed. These are just the basic skills of living.

Thank you, Assemblyman Nguyen, for the addition of the student voice, not only to the Council, but today as well. It is essential that this piece of legislation is moved forward, because financial literacy is addressed in session after session and at many school sites, but it is not getting implemented. Our Student Legislative Team has worked on financial literacy bills from the start with former Senator Joyce Woodhouse, who introduced S.B. No. 220 of the 78th Session. I am a sibling of one of those students who worked on that bill. I worked last Session on A.B. No. 19 of the 81st Session, which lumped three curriculum areas—civics, financial literacy and multicultural studies—into one bill.

I am lucky to be at a school with an outstanding financial literacy curriculum. Our simulations have jobs where we get paychecks and we even file taxes. It is real-world hands-on training that is wrapped into everyday classroom lessons. Please do not let financial literacy miss another opportunity to be launched. You have student voices on it now, which is critical. Now, please get it out and into the hands of educators immediately. We encourage you to be in favor of this bill.

MATHILDA GUERRERO (Battle Born Progress):

We are in strong support of A.B. 274 because it is imperative that our children, who are the future of the Silver State and will one day be sitting in your seats, have access to financial literacy in our schools. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit C](#)).

ERICA NUNGARAY:

As an employee support professional in the Clark County School District (CCSD) and a parent of students in Nevada public education, I support this bill. Our students need financial literacy. Many of the students, especially in my zone, have no means to learn a subject that will affect their future. Is the reason that financial literacy is not mandatory in Nevada a shortfall of our schools, part of the curriculum or a lack of State funding?

ASSEMBLYMAN NGUYEN:

As Legislators, it is our duty to set our young people up for financial prosperity so they can go on to lead healthy and successful lives here in Nevada. This bill will set them on a better path toward that aim. I want to thank all the young people who joined me to support A.B. 274.

CHAIR LANGE:

I, too, want to thank the students who testified today. We appreciate you being here and being a part of our process. I will close the hearing on A.B. 274 and open the hearing on A.B. 269. We have passed out the conceptual amendment that we just received to everyone ([Exhibit D](#)).

ASSEMBLY BILL 269 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions governing education.
(BDR 34-123)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BRITTNEY MILLER (Assembly District No. 5):

Thank you, and apologies for those last-minute amendments. I appreciate your flexibility and understanding.

We routinely ask a tremendous amount of our teachers. This does not include all the work that goes into actual classroom operations and learning, lesson planning that can take 8 to 12 hours a week, grading, instruction, and helping students socially, physically and emotionally, as well as academically. There are also parent meetings, staff development, reports, reports, and more reports.

Often it feels like we spend more time writing about teaching than actually teaching. This Committee has probably heard an earful already this Session.

We also pack teachers' workloads full of statutory, regulatory and policy requirements that take up much of their time and attention, not to mention the extensive amount of standardized testing we expect teachers to administer regularly throughout the year.

Often, we do not take the opportunity to reward teachers for the work they are doing, or have our actions speak louder than our words when it comes to supporting and trusting teachers, especially those who go above and beyond. Even then, sometimes, the "reward" comes in the form of more work. Much of this work is done during non-contract, non-paid time, meaning that when a teacher leaves after contract time, the hours they put in, whether in the building or out of the building is unpaid labor. Imagine if we simply pay teachers for the hours they work. It is critical that we examine the current work we expect our teachers to shoulder, and to discuss options for making that workload more manageable.

I will never forget a few summers ago, when I was with the Council of State Governments West at an out-of-state conference for legislators. In the middle of a heated discussion, the Senate Chair of Education from Wyoming said the problem is that we legislators get together every year and talk about how we have to take things off teachers' plates, and then we all go into session and put more stuff on teachers' plates.

The intent of A.B. 269 is to focus on one aspect of that plate, just teacher evaluations, and make changes to the current evaluation structure to better support and benefit teachers, especially our experienced, productive veteran teachers. This bill makes several changes to the teacher evaluation process. We have been discussing the challenges with this evaluation process for almost a decade, especially the inconsistency in administrators holding teachers accountable in their evaluations for many things that are out of their control.

This is not teachers pushing back on accountability. In fact, teachers hold themselves more accountable than you can imagine, and they beat themselves up for things they have absolutely no control over. Teachers take home every student and every decision they made that day, often at the sacrifice of their own family, and their own personal, physical, emotional and financial

well-being. A huge part of the frustration comes from the actual amount of time it takes to administer the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF), which takes a lot of time on the part of both the teacher and the administrator who is administering the NEPF.

Assembly Bill 269 first specifies that if post-probationary teachers, meaning those who have already completed their first three years of licensed teaching, receive an evaluation designating an overall performance of “effective” or “highly effective” for two consecutive evaluations or years, those teachers are given the option to request, rather than to be required, to participate in an observation and evaluation cycle during the following year. So they get one year off.

If a teacher makes such a request, that teacher may receive one evaluation upon the teacher’s request, based in part upon that evaluation cycle. Additionally, this legislation seeks to remove the administration or use of Student Learning Goals (SLG), or Student Learning Objectives (SLO) as they are called up here in Washoe County School District (WCSD), from teacher evaluations. Such metrics are not to be conducted or counted in evaluations. While this measure takes effect July 1, 2023, it is also retroactive to the past two years for every post-probationary teacher who has been employed for the last two years in a Nevada public school.

Additionally, I have submitted a friendly amendment from the Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees (CCASAPE) to “exclude any employee who receives more than one score of one or two in the instructional domain.” The evaluation is broken into 2 main components, which consists of around 34 different indicators that teachers are evaluated on.

The first half is instructional, which is what pertains to the actual teaching, lesson planning and things that go on within the classroom. The second half of the evaluation is the professional half, which includes more of the professional standards that happen outside of the classroom. Although the professional half is weighted less than the instructional half, there is a possibility that someone could be scoring threes and fours in the professional half and scoring ones and twos in the instructional half. That does not align with the idea of an effective teacher, because the instructional domain is the priority.

The second part of the friendly conceptual amendment applies to school administrators. This evaluation process is taxing on administrators because of the amount of time they have to spend doing observations, collecting evidence, and writing the evaluations. They are also subject to being evaluated as site-based administrators. This bill would bring our site-based administrators into the same program where they could have two successful evaluations and then one reprieve if they choose.

Furthermore, A.B. 269 makes it clear that an administrator may not directly or indirectly threaten, intimidate, coerce, compel or take similar action to require a post-probationary teacher to participate or not participate in an observation or evaluation in such circumstances. Administrators also may not perform an observation or evaluation without the consent of the teacher.

Finally, the bill specifies that such a teacher must receive one evaluation in the second year following the consecutive designation of “effective” or “highly effective.” This bill offers an opportunity to reward our hardworking teachers for positive evaluations. Such an approach not only helps to mitigate their substantial workloads, it also shows our teachers that we value and appreciate the good work they are doing in their classrooms, often within the most counterproductive environments and working conditions. It shows them we understand the immense load they carry, and that we are listening to them.

At some point, we have to truly start listening to and trusting teachers. We have to know that teachers reflect on their practice daily, often between periods, hour to hour. Teachers hold themselves to high levels of accountability, often blaming themselves for things that are not in their control. Most importantly, teachers are professionals and do not need this evaluation to stay on top of their game or to deliver the best instruction they possibly can. No, teachers will not start slipping, or look at it as a year off where they can just do nothing for a year without having the burdensome evaluation.

My hope for this bill is that it removes one last issue and burden on a teacher’s plate for that year where more time can be spent with students, planning instruction, delivering instruction, and helping students develop and grow socially and emotionally. It also gives our administrators more time to work with those teachers who are not effective and who actually do need more coaching, or, in some cases, to be coached out the door.

It also gives our students a break because they will not be required to take yet another test at least three times a year. I know you have also heard about the extensive testing that our students are subject to, and that our teachers are required to administer each year. So SLOs and SLGs can be framed as a goal the teacher sets, but that is not how it is administered. It is just one more test that students are stuck taking.

SENATOR NEAL:

Can you explain the inclusion of the site-based administrators in the amendment? What does that mean?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

Site-based administrators would include principals, vice principals, and anyone who is considered a supervisor. If you go on the NDE website, you will be surprised at just how much information there is pertaining to these evaluations. Site-based administrators are evaluated in a similar framework as teachers. They would be included in the same process; after having two years of "effective" or "highly effective" ratings, they could choose to have that one year off.

SENATOR NEAL:

My immediate thought is that it seems counter to a bill that moved out of this side of this House into your side of the House this Session, dealing with evaluations of administrators. That is going to have to be reconciled.

The second thing I am processing is that the repealed section, NRS 391.480, is not even going to be effective until July 1, 2023, so you are stripping it out of law before it becomes effective at the end of the Session.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

What that means is that it will be retroactive. As this becomes law on July 1, 2023, it is not for teachers to have to take two more years of evaluations before it becomes effective. The amendment I submitted makes it retroactive, so it is already existing. If you have already worked in a Nevada public school and you have already received two evaluations, your year to exercise your one year of relief will be starting in this 2023-2024 school year.

SENATOR NEAL:

I get where you are going, but when I look at the text of the repealed section on page 8 of the bill, which takes subsections 1 through 5 out of statute, and deals

with each principal and SLG, it makes me wonder what the alternative is. I did not see anything in the bill on who is going to be evaluating the SLGs and what determines what the basis is for effective or highly effective evaluations? Who is now creating the SLG and trying to get an alignment for what the teachers will be examining?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

This would be an elimination of the SLGs because we hold teachers accountable for things they have no control over. In this Legislative Body, we have changed the number of SLGs on a teacher's evaluation pretty much every session.

At the end of the day, I know it seems like this is a good thing for teachers to set an individual goal for their students and then measure that progress. In reality, that is not at all what happens. In reality, what happens is that teachers are told what their goals will be. They are told what their standards will be, and they are told what measurement tools they will use. In reality, it becomes one more test our students have to take.

I would assume you have already heard this Session about the enormous amount of testing our students are subject to every year and how much money and instructional time that is costing. With all the other standardized tests our students take, there is no need for this test.

SENATOR NEAL:

I am trying to process this. We still have assessments, and we are still going to assess kids, and now were stripping out SLGs. On top of that, especially for the large district, the academic curriculum is not updated. I asked this question in the Senate Committee on Finance, and I got the answer that it was true.

In the absence of this legislation that you are repealing, what will be the reality of the SLGs or the measurement for students and who is going to do the measuring? If teachers are out of it, who will do the work of figuring out what the kids are learning?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

I would ask you, what else are you looking for that is not demonstrated on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), the i-Ready math assessments or aimsweb reading tests, or any of the number of tests that the students are already taking?

What they are doing is taking current standards and aligning it with the standards that students are already being evaluated on using all these other tests. The SLG is just one more test. Why do we have it? If we are seriously talking about reducing the amount of tests, the SLGs are not delivered as they were originally intended to be delivered. It is not teacher-run or teacher-decided; it is what your administrator is telling you what you are going to do.

Let us not forget that last Session, this body believed the SLGs and SLOs were so cumbersome that we actually passed a bill saying you could go an entire year without doing them. Yet, the larger district continued to implement SLGs, making our students and teachers succumb to it.

SENATOR BUCK:

I am along the same thought pattern. Teachers create the SLGs, correct?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

That is what it says, but in reality, teachers are told by their administrators what their SLGs will be.

SENATOR BUCK:

I have sat in the teacher's seat and I have sat in the administrator's seat, and when I sat in the administrator's seat, I would observe one grade level a day and give five positives to every "opportunity for growth." When we met for our yearly evaluation time, it was really just me spending time coaching and being a cheerleader for those teachers.

Even veteran teachers like to have that positive feedback and those opportunities for growth. I do not understand why we are stripping SLGs and all of that away, when every other profession has an evaluation at least once a year. In many other professions, it is a mid-course evaluation and then a final evaluation. Could you address that?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

I remember other professions before I became a teacher and those evaluations were "Come in my office, sit down. Oh yeah, by the way, you got all fours because you met all your goals. Here you go, sign this." It was not the cumbersome task of trying to prove myself over and over and offer evidence for what has been done multiple times whether the administrator saw it or not. It was not 34 indicators; it was my boss just knowing that I had met my goals.

Going back to 2017, this Body examined the differences in the evaluations between teachers, police officers and nurses. I remember the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department was evaluated on one page, just the front. I have compared our evaluations to even those in the military, and ours is still the most extensive evaluation we see.

For your other remarks and questions, I can appreciate if your experience while delivering your evaluation was different, but evaluations have changed and we have to look at this specific evaluation, the NEPF. I know that not everyone uses the NEPF because charter schools do not have to. So charter schools may be opting to use it, or they may be using similar things, and some are still using portfolios. We also know the NEPF is not what our full-time substitute teachers have to take. If we look at data and we are so focused on student achievement, since the conception of the NEPF or our SLGs, student achievement has not only gone down, we have also lost many teachers.

SENATOR BUCK:

The Student Growth Percentile (SGP) is typically what we use in charter schools. I did work in the school district for 18 years, so the majority of my career was in the big district, or CCSD. The SGP tended to be the most predictable test, because it compared how a teacher takes a student from point A to point B over a year. It measured how much the student grew cross-referenced across the entire State from teachers in that particular grade level.

To me, it seems like that would be the most valuable data, because I do believe that teachers are knocking it out of the park. The SGP is just a mathematical formula with all the students in your class and how much you grew them in a year. It seems to be the most valuable and the most equitable assessment. It measures how you can grow a student from point A, when you first get them in the fall, to point B in the springtime, when they are assessed again and see how much that teacher grew them. We have some teachers that are growing SGPs at the ninetieth percentile across the entire State.

In a State that wants to move the needle on student achievement, you need an evaluation system that identifies the teachers who are getting student achievement scores in the eightieth percentile and ninetieth percentile in SGPs for their grade level. Is there a way to build in the SGP? Because to me, that should be weighted more than any sort of observation.

To address the second part of the bill, when we talk about the highly effective and effective teachers, how many are we talking about, 96 percent? When I as a new principal walk into a building, and 96 percent of my teachers are proficient or highly effective and effective, then do I have to ask permission to observe them? I was in classrooms every single day, spreading the love, so I cannot imagine being responsible for results and then not being able to go observe and provide feedback to my staff. Those are challenges that I have with this bill.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

I know that you spent many years in the big district, but I also know that even in my own 12-year teaching career, the NEPF was not always there. The evaluation system I was evaluated with, going through my first probationary years, was more streamlined. As to student growth, my question is, what are we measuring that is not measured by all the other tests?

What SLGs do not measure is how much sleep or food the students got, any mental illness or addiction in the home, or homelessness. It does not measure student effort, work completion, attendance, parental engagement, or the student's behavior. It does not measure many of the things that we know impact learning.

I could bring in Michael Jordan right now and have him teach every one of us in this room how to play basketball. What would the results be? Would we all perform and play at the level of Michael Jordan? No. Would we accept that there are many differences among all of us that determine whether or not we are going to play at his level? Are we going to blame Michael Jordan? No. We would not say, "Well, he clearly does not know about basketball."

Do we measure doctors for their patients? They tell their patients, "Here is what you need to stop eating, here is how much you need to exercise every day, these are basic things you need to do to lower your cholesterol and blood pressure." If the patient does not do those things, do we then go back and blame the doctor?

I agree there are a lot of things we do not measure with that SLG assessment. The other thing we do not measure is who is in the classroom. In a typical school, the administrators create the classrooms. It is not just, "Here is a mixed bag, here is a lottery, or we just pulled names out of a hat." What often

happens is that principals will intentionally put students who need more with the teachers who can give more. But if you are that teacher, and I have been the one with all the students with extra needs, and then they put all the gifted and talented students next door to you, those two classrooms are not going to see the same growth through their SLGs.

Last Session, WCSD came forward with A.B. No. 57 of the 81st Session, which "Temporarily suspends certain requirements relating to certain teacher and administrator evaluations." This Body agreed.

SENATOR BUCK:

Just to note, there are many teachers growing those children with the same excuses.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

Absolutely, and I do not need the SLGs to be that teacher.

SENATOR FLORES:

I agree that if a fourth grade teacher gets a student with a first grade education, it is not the fourth grade teacher's fault. I also agree that there are a thousand external factors that will dictate how quickly a student can grasp a subject. Some students are doing their homework every night and learning faster, and some students do not have a quiet place at home to work, or even a stable home. I agree we cannot hold teachers accountable for what they are not in control of, but at the same time, there is going to be some growth, and we want the teachers to get credit for that growth.

If the student in fourth grade came in at a first grade reading level, and he is now at a second grade reading level, there has been some growth there, and that teacher should be acknowledged for that.

Is there a way to emphasize the specific factors the student is going through and take that into consideration so we do not move away from wanting to measure their progress and growth? I do not want people to say, "Oh, we do not want to measure growth for students, we do not care about that." Obviously, that is not what you are saying, and I am not suggesting that is what this bill does.

I am just trying to move away from the conversation that says we are not looking at that growth of the child because, ultimately, that is the most important thing in that classroom. It is normal for there to be differences in how people learn and at what pace. I am wondering if we can engage in that conversation a little bit because I think it will also help with this idea that we are trying to move away from measuring student growth.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

You are correct that even if all things are the same, all students are still different. We can all go to music class and practice the same amount, but everyone is going to perform differently because we are at different levels or sometimes we just need a little more time to catch up.

This conversation is not taking away from measuring SLGs because, again, why are we doing SBAC and MAP and all of these other tests? Those assessments measure the growth of the student. The SLG is literally just one standard. In fact, everyone in the school, whether you are teaching physical education or choir, has to align and also get told what the SLGs will be. This occurs even if the teacher has no control over what is going on in math, science or English. This is not an elimination of testing.

SENATOR FLORES:

In all the other forms of testing you mentioned, how many of those will go into a teacher's evaluation?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

None of those.

SENATOR FLORES:

I do not want the fourth grade teacher to be penalized because of a student that comes into their classroom at a first grade reading level. That is not fair. I think we all agree with that.

But I do want the fourth grade teacher, at one point during the course of the school year, to say, "Look, there is growth in this student, and here is where it was measured and here is how it is being considered in the evaluation." Even if the growth is minimal. Here is the point where the teacher gets credit for that, and here is the point where the teacher may be penalized for it. Will there be any other place for that?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

Yes, when I administer the MAP test multiple times throughout the year, we are able to see the growth on all of the standards in that subject. No test is perfect because it does not measure all the different components that go into being successful. Sometimes, students even decrease their score when taking one of the tests because they will come in and just go straight to sleep; they will not even try.

All the students are already being measured and we are able to track that growth throughout the school year. I appreciate what another Senator said about enjoying that time observing and coaching, but we have to look at the reality that there is often not enough time coaching.

We also have to acknowledge the reality of how this has been weaponized against our educators. If we look at the past decade, where is our student achievement? Why are we spending more time doing something that has not given us good results? If this was directly linked or tied or had any positive impact, then student achievement should have increased over the past ten years.

SENATOR NEAL:

I am trying to wrap my mind around the fact that this reverses us. If this bill passes, we go back to whatever was in law in 2017 or prior to 2017, right?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

If we are going back to the beginning of the NEPF, it is prior to 2000.

SENATOR NEAL:

In 2014-2015, we did a study of the NEPF. The study said that Nevada educators generally believed the study in terms of identifying practices and duties that represent strong instruction and professionalism in the field.

So, well before 2017, there was a codification of a study in A.B. No. 447 of the 78th Session, which "Revises provisions relating to the statewide performance evaluation system." I am struggling with this because I am trying to figure out what the reversals are that we are doing.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

I believe you are asking to just give you what this looks like. First of all, if we take out the current 15 percent for SLOs and SLGS, that 15 percent can be recalibrated between the existing instructional and professional domain. Other than that removal, this bill does not seek to change anything else with the existing evaluation.

Current and existing law already says that someone who scores “highly effective” can bypass a year. This bill is just bringing in those who are “effective.” It is not changing the evaluation process or cycle. It is just saying that those who are effective or highly effective can skip a year. It is just saying that if you get two good evaluations, you get to skip a year.

Before this even triggers for an educator, they will have already taught for a minimum of five years, because it does not impact your first three years of probation, so that is completely out. Then you must have two successive good evaluation years, so that amounts to a minimum of five years of teaching before you can potentially get that year off. I cannot believe that any teacher or administrator would not already know what your performance and your abilities are after five years. Five years is a significant amount of time in a profession.

Teachers can still request an evaluation, just like an administrator can request one if they are seeking a promotion or some type of movement or transfer. The intent with A.B. 269, though, is that it will not be automatic and cannot be forced upon you.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will take testimony in support of A.B. 269.

CALEN EVANS (President, Washoe Education Association):

I represent the certified professionals at WCSD through the Washoe Education Association. There was some discussion about the bill that WCSD put in last Session around SLOs and SLGs. To clarify, the original bill was a reprieve for three years. It was amended down to one year and the reason was because our school district understood how universally useless the SLOs and SLGs were for our teachers. I mean that with all respect, and I know there was a lot of work that went into those metrics, but they do not show the effectiveness of a teacher. I can promise you that.

I can march thousands of teachers into this room and they will tell you the same exact thing. We keep talking about how impacted educators are in our State. We would all agree with that across the aisle. Every Legislator I have spoken to, both Republican and Democrat, continues to say they understand how pressing the issues are with our educators. We talk about ways that we can support schools and educators, and we talk about things we can take off their plate.

Just as Assemblywoman Miller alluded to, we keep adding things for teachers to do. This is something that does not benefit student learning outcomes. It does not benefit our teachers' abilities to instruct, and it is a burden and cumbersome.

VICKI KREIDEL (President, National Education Association of Southern Nevada):
I am a 20-year educator and I have been in Clark County for 10 years. I know you are all aware of how rough things are for educators right now. In my 20 years of teaching, I have never seen it this bad. To be honest, last year I came very close to leaving education myself.

Watching educators around me leave is breaking my heart. I had lost hope for public education in this State. The ship was sinking, and I was considering getting on a lifeboat myself. When I saw this bill, it gave me hope. I am in the trenches with all the other educators in Clark County. I know how rough things are. Educators care very much about our evaluations. A few years ago, when SLGs were added to our evaluation, that added a huge piece to our teacher plate.

The SLG process has never been done correctly in CCSD. Administrators often choose one SLG for the entire school in elementary school. Physical education and music teachers are having to assess their students in writing instead of their subject matter. One test is not an indicator of how I am doing with my teaching. I have had students taking an SLG assessment from me who refused to even try. They got a zero, and that went on my evaluation.

When you have a student who did not sleep last night or had a fight with their parents on the way to school, they do not show what they know when they are tested. Educators have no control over that. The SLG game is often a losing one for educators. It becomes a source of stress for all of us.

There is a lot in this bill that is amazing. Just the SLG piece would literally keep some educators in Nevada right now. When you are under so much stress, even removing one thing can give you room to breathe. We desperately need educators to stay in our State. Passing this bill gives us a tangible way to lessen the educator burden. It is a way for you to help educator retention that costs nothing. Also, it comes down to whether you trust your educators. We assess constantly. I share data with my administrator. So please vote yes on this bill.

CHRIS DALY (Nevada State Education Association):

The Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) supports A.B. 269, as amended, because it will ease the workload of Nevada teachers while ensuring teacher evaluations are fair measures of their performance. Along with pay, class size, and over testing, teacher evaluations are always in the top four, sometimes top one or two on the list of teacher concerns in Nevada.

As the husband of a teacher, I can tell you that the amount of time teachers dedicate to the profession, not just during their contract hours at school, but at home, too, is rough on teachers, and it is rough on their families. My wife teaches in California and when I talked to her about this issue, she was in disbelief that there would actually be student data on a teacher evaluation. Not that Nevada should be California, but we want to recruit teachers from California, and this bill will help overcome that obstacle. I have submitted my support testimony ([Exhibit E](#)).

MS. TADRZYNSKI:

I support A.B. 269 and I want to give you some examples why. A friend of mine is a middle school orchestra teacher. His SLG is on student reading and writing goals because his entire middle school is doing that. There is nothing about music on the SLG. He has sold his prep time almost every single day to cover math vacancies because his school is not fully staffed. As a result, he does not have the prep time that is built into our contracts to serve his students in his profession, which is music, because he is teaching kids reading and math because there are not enough educators to teach all the classes.

One of my friends is a middle school Spanish teacher and one of the most phenomenal educators I have ever met. She was given a score of two on her evaluation, and when she asked why, she was told that it was conveyed to administrators that they should give teachers twos to have them aspire to something for the next year. That does not make her aspire to anything. That

makes her look at jobs in other states because she is an incredible teacher and does not deserve a two on her evaluation.

We test our kids an insane amount. I proctor the American College Test (ACT), and I have kids who fall asleep during the ACT because they are required to be in the room; they are not required to pass it. I have kids who take the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) exam who come back 20 minutes later because they just clicked any button to get through the test.

Now their WIDA scores are saying that they are not an emergent linguist, even when they are, because they do not care about the test. That follows them into our classrooms. Our kids do not care about the tests, especially when we have that minimum "F" in effect. They can just fail their way through to graduation.

That is what is happening, and it has a direct impact on us as teachers. When you ask whether these tests impact us, yes, they do. I am required to give all my kids a 50, regardless of what they do. And then we have the minimum F. If I have a kid who gets a 12 percent on something and then a 60 percent a couple months later, I can see that growth, but I am not seeing that growth when I am required to give them a 50, and then they get a 60 because I do not know what is actual student growth and what is just what I am being told to do to get these kids through to graduation.

This is an unfair system to the educators and the kids. We are bleeding educators and we have over 1,400 positions open in Clark County right now. Part of that is because we do not want to work under this system that is setting us and our students up for failure.

ROBERT MUNSON:

I am currently in my twenty-fifth year of teaching and have been creating and implementing SLOs since they were first instituted. I want to thank you for your time today and for listening to educators on this important bill. Many experiences in my professional development and my career have given me opportunities to improve as a teacher. Much of that has come from feedback from my administrators who come into my classroom regularly, especially in my first years of teaching.

I still invite them into my classroom on a daily basis. They say, "When do you want me to come in and observe you?" And I say, "Any time you want to show up, please show up. If you want a lesson plan, I will send it to you afterwards."

But SLOs have done nothing for me as a teacher. They have not helped me become better at my craft and they are just a hoop that my students and I jump through every single year. I have been encouraged to do them early in the year when I really do not even know my students and can make predictions about how they are going to do on a follow-up test. The reason they want me to do it early is because, if it does not go well, I can do it again in the spring and make sure that I game the system so that I can get my highly effective evaluation.

I have tried to link writing and critical thinking standards to these scores, but scoring this is really subjective. Am I being objective when I score my own SLOs based on subjective critical thinking and writing skills? After discussing that conundrum with my administrator, I was encouraged to maybe use a multiple-choice test instead. I am sorry, I teach English; I do not need to assess their ability to pick an A, B, C or D; that does not tell me what they are really thinking. I want to see what they can write down. The reality is, this is an exercise in futility and administrators recognize this as well. The best advice I get is from administrators, not SLOs.

NICOLETTE ANDRINI (Washoe Education Association; Nevada State Education Association):

I sit on my local Washoe Education Association Board; and my State Board, NSEA. I am a strong Republican, pro-education teacher, and I am speaking in favor of A.B. 269. I have taught in WCSD since 2000. The implementation of these SLOs and SLGs has done nothing for us in the classroom. I am at that 90 percent or higher achievement every single time I am evaluated, but it still does nothing for me. I deserve and want that one year of reprieve. If I get two years of highly effective, give me a break the next time.

With 20 or more years of experience, I know what I am doing in the classroom, and the SLOs are not effective. I am a middle school Spanish teacher and I have to give a test on whatever the school administration wants. It is not reflected in my practice at all.

We look to our administration mentors to give us effective evaluations and still be critical in areas where we can improve. But do not use this student data

against me. I can easily go to another state or find another career where I am not going to be assessed on these children. It is not fair. The SLO piece in this bill can actually lessen the educator burden. As you have heard, we have so much going on and this is one thing we can do at no cost that does matter because it does not reflect us as teachers.

JEFF HORN (Executive Director, Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees):

I am the Executive Director of the Clark County Association of Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees, also known as CCASAPE. We represent more than 1,400 CCSD administrators of which nearly 98 percent are members. We understand the time-consuming and exhausting mandates that are required of all teachers and we support less oversight and more professional freedom for our most talented and highly effective educators.

We are encouraged and value the recent dialogue with Assemblywoman Miller and we support the proposed changes that will allow effective teachers to focus more time on teaching and learning. At the same time, this will allow site-based administrators the needed time to mentor, coach and collaborate with educators who may be overwhelmed and struggling to provide impactful instruction. Based on these conceptual amendments, CCASAPE looks forward to continuing to work with Assemblywoman Miller on this bill, as well as future bills impacting education.

STEVEN HORNER (Nevada State Education Association):

I am a retired special education teacher and proud U.S. Army veteran. I cannot be more eloquent than the previous speakers, but I am a substitute teacher in CCSD, the big district, as you all want to call it. Every day when I am teaching, I hear the frustration from the teachers. We have teachers who have been in the District for ten or more years, and they are leaving because of the excessive testing and the overdependence on SLGs. I have grandchildren and great-grandchildren in this District and I do not want them to not have teachers. Please support A.B. 269. It is an extremely important bill, especially for our students.

LISA GUZMAN (Nevada State Education Association):

I am the Assistant Executive Director for the NSEA and I am speaking in favor of A.B. 269. I was listening to the questioning on this bill and I want you to know that I have yet to be in a district board meeting that uses SLGs to show

student growth. They use MAPs testing and other assessments to show student growth. Principals are also encouraged to give feedback to teachers and it does not need to be formal. It needs to be something that is a way for the principals and the educators to collaborate and make sure that they are doing what is best for the students.

When you take a look at the NEPF and how it is performed, giving five years is what is done through research. When we say that educators leave within five years, it is because they have not been given the supports outlined in the NEPF. So evaluating student performance through the testing and teacher performance is something that should not be aligned. We should take a look at student growth. We should take a look at the supports we are giving educators. We should take a look at how they were giving the NEPF and if there is reliability.

MS. NUNGARAY:

I support A.B. 269 because teachers are already practicing SLG data based on Nevada learning standards. The curriculum is based on Nevada standards and includes classroom-based assessment. We still need an updated curriculum. As the parent of four students in Nevada's public education system who loathe all the extra testing, I find it cynical that we require teachers to have SLGs and SLOs, but Nevada does not adequately fund education or provide the needed support and resources to educate our children. Yet, we require our teachers to get evaluated on SLGs and SLOs without being properly funded. Please make that make sense.

SARA COMERA:

I am a teacher with CCSD, and I do not know a single teacher within my District, or that I know, who actually uses the data we get from our Student Learning Goals (SLG). We make the data look really pretty and we give it to our supervisors, and they say, "Oh, that data is really pretty," and then they put a number on it and that is it.

It is an arbitrary thing that just gives us something else to do, another box to check, another spreadsheet to make. I already make a lot of spreadsheets and I would really, really like not to have to make this one. In the past couple of years, there have been times where legislation said that we did not have to do the SLGs, and still CCSD required that we do them. The reason that the Legislative Body decided that we did not need to do SLGs was because we

were in the middle of a global pandemic and there were things that were more important.

I am trying to figure out what is important about SLGs. What does it give us? I cannot think of anything. It was not missed by the districts that did not do it last year or the year before when it was not required. I do not think it will be missed if we just get rid of it now.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will now take testimony in opposition to A.B. 269.

PAM SALAZAR, ED.D. (Chair, Teachers and Leaders Council):

I am here today to represent the collective position of the Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) who met last Wednesday. In a roll call vote, the motion to oppose A.B. 269 as written and amended prior to today's conceptual amendment, carried unanimously. If we look at 2021-2022 teacher evaluation data, we know 1,128 exempt teachers were not evaluated. There were no summative evaluations, although they were observed because, under existing law, observations continued for those who were exempt after the two years.

We also know that 20,173 teachers were evaluated, including 15,444 teachers rated effective and 4,602 teachers rated highly effective. There were also 127 teachers rated ineffective and developing. We do not have the number of teachers out of that 20,046 who were probationary and not affected by this bill. Even after removing the probationary teachers from the 20,046 teachers who were evaluated and rated effective and highly effective, a substantial number of our students across the State would have teachers in their classrooms who are not observed or evaluated because there would have been, at most, 127 post-probationary teachers who would have been observed and evaluated had this bill been in place at that time.

The TLC also passed a second motion during our roll call vote, which was to state that we support including SLGs and observation cycles for all. We feel very strongly that SLGs have been established and that this process is not about growth and gain, but about the development of students.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

What is the percentage of the SLO and SLG in the evaluation of a teacher?

DR. SALAZAR:

Fifteen percent of the total evaluation of the teacher.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

And then we heard that data is not collected, yet you just spoke of the things you do with the data. Is it accurate that there is no data being collected and that you do not do anything with the data?

DR. SALAZAR:

The SLG process, as intended, was never about tests or about MAPs or about i-Ready. It was about teachers using designed assessment measures that they would already be using in their classrooms to demonstrate growth. The SLG process does not require teachers to do all for all students. Going back to Senator Flores' comment, we need to focus on students who need the support. So data is therefore informative in the SLG process to monitor that group of students and use self-designed assessments to see if growth has occurred.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

My spouse teaches in Nevada, and her comment on A.B. 269 the other day was, "I get the bill. I want to take away burdens from teachers. I would like to keep teachers here in the State of Nevada." She also added that one of the things we want to do as teachers is to make sure we are providing opportunities for student growth and to be able to evaluate that growth as much as possible.

DR. SALAZAR:

Two of my children are teachers in Clark County, so I am very aware of how the intent is not always implemented as it should have been. The TLC feels very strongly that teachers engaging in formative assessment for a group of students throughout the year will lend itself to more students being successful and that was always the goal of the NEPF.

MARY PIERCZYNSKI (Nevada Association of School Superintendents):

We want to thank Assemblywoman Miller who is always so diligent working on education issues and we generally are right behind her. Unfortunately, on this bill, we cannot support it because the evaluation system is very important in the whole realm of education. What we are looking for is to improve education and accountability, and everyone in the system is evaluated—the administrators, the teachers, the custodian, the bus driver—everybody is in an evaluation process. When the NEPF was put together, it was administrators and teachers who

designed it to help improve instruction in the classroom. We are supportive of evaluation of everyone involved to improve student achievement.

PATRICIA HADDAD (Clark County School District):

You have heard some information about the data and the rationale, so I will ditto those. We do need to be looking at our performance framework as a whole to ensure that it is aligned to our expectations for student outcomes and student learning. We oppose A.B. 269 and I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit F](#)).

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

I would like to address a few comments and concerns. The first one is that this does not stop a principal or administrator from coming to visit a classroom for those informal observations or coaching. In fact, I wish more administrators spent time in the classroom so the students were familiar with them and they could actually see the magic that is going on in the classroom.

These evaluations in A.B. 269 are scheduled, so anyone can put on a dog and pony show for an hour. There is nothing that keeps an administrator from managing staff or coaching them. It would be done in an informal way without requiring all the paperwork, the signatures and the legality of it.

I do disagree with one of the people who spoke in support of the bill, because the best feedback in coaching and techniques that I have ever received has absolutely not been from administrators, but from my fellow teachers. It has been from conversations in the hallway or while walking out the door, or at lunch. And now, as an experienced teacher myself, I am able to offer that same feedback to other teachers.

During the last Interim, I asked for input from staff about this issue, and I have a list of concerns and complaints regarding the evaluations and SLGs in the schools. One complaint I had never heard was that an administrator was giving the teachers twos so they would have something to strive for and improve. Imagine if, as teachers, we just decided to just give the students a low grade, so they would have something to shoot for.

What is also interesting is that TLC, who created this, is an advisory council to the State Board of Education (SBE) and the NDE. In my 12 years of teaching, the only time I have ever interacted with them is when I am in this building. So I

would not say they represent teachers and I would add that their vote was not unanimous. They also testified to the thousands and thousands of teachers who are effective or highly effective.

Our teachers are doing a tremendous job in some of the most difficult working conditions. But if we are doing all this with the evaluations, and the student achievement still is not increasing, that means it is about something else.

We can offer these thousands of teachers who we know are doing well more time to teach. Imagine if we took the time spent on the SLGs and SLOs off of the administrators' and teachers' plates, think of what they could do with that additional time and energy, not to mention, lessened anxiety.

Interestingly, I noticed that no one questioned, commented on, or opposed the option of adding administrators into this bill. No one said, "But administrators are responsible for an entire school building and community. Aren't our administrators the first ones who have to speak to parents and everyone else?"

Why is it that we have so much more respect for administrators and not our teachers who are actually educating our students? A few sessions ago, when I presented a bill, I ended it with the question, "If we do not act now, where will we be in ten years?" That was just four years ago. If we do not act now, where will we be in another four years?

CHAIR LANGE:

I have a letter of opposition ([Exhibit G](#)) and a letter of support ([Exhibit H](#)) that were sent in. I will close the hearing on A.B. 269 and open the hearing on A.B. 339.

ASSEMBLY BILL 339 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions governing accountability reports of public schools. (BDR 34-786)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BRITTNEY MILLER (Assembly District No. 5):

Each Legislative session, we work to develop laws and policies that we think will improve education in our State. Much of this revolves around the collection of student achievement data. As we know, student achievement is not one-dimensional. Anyone trained or experienced in evaluation methods understands that all data has variables that manipulate or dilute its reliability, particularly when it comes to learning.

The worst mantra ever was, “Children are a sponge,” meaning they can just soak up information without any effort. Learning is largely a participatory sport, one that requires participation, effort and engagement on the part of the learner—someone who is ready, prepared and willing to learn.

I always give the example to my students about trying to feed a baby that refuses to be fed. You are just not going to feed that baby, and it is likely there will be baby food everywhere. Sadly, everything has become about data and test scores in the past two decades, but there are many issues and considerations that impact this metric. In the last bill hearing, you heard about a few of those factors. Some factors that impact student achievement data are under the student’s control, and some are not. Some are under the parent’s control and some are not. Some are under the teacher’s control and some are not. We know that not all of it is under the teacher’s control or even the school or school district.

Classrooms are full of students with a variety of intellectual abilities, aptitudes, interests and home environments. This is the reality. All of these things, positive or negative, can impact a student’s ability to learn. Even the excessive testing has a negative impact of increased anxiety or apathy on the part of our students. We understand that data is prioritized and is driving our institutions, but can we quantify or measure everything that impacts student achievement?

There are two areas that impact student achievement that can actually be measured—student attendance and whether or not there is an actual teacher in the room. A Brookings Institution publication establishes links between absenteeism and student achievement, referring to absenteeism as a predictor for course failure and citing its association with lower achievement in reading and math. It is necessary that our student data collection methods take these factors into consideration so we can better understand the issues that impact achievement. This bill does not attempt to create or correct any attendance policy. Rather, the intent is to disaggregate the student achievement data to examine how attendance impacts student achievement.

Existing law requires that the board of trustees of school districts, the sponsors of charter schools and the SBE prepare and disseminate annual accountability reports that include information on student achievement. In some cases, that data is under the Nevada Report Card, looking at scores and how schools are ranked.

Assembly Bill 339 would require such reports to include information on pupils who accrued ten or more absences within the school year and pupils who received at least four weeks of consecutive instruction in core academic subjects by someone other than a certified teacher. This proposal includes any existing prohibitions and groups relating to the data.

In 2019, I wrote and the Legislature passed A.B. No. 266 of the 81st Session, which requires districts to post on their website the number of positions within the school district that are held by full-time substitutes and teachers licensed or working toward a license through an Alternate Routes to Licensure (ARL).

As a result, data showed that in the 2021-2022 school year, CCSD had 592 full-time substitutes. This school year, 2022-2023, the number almost doubled with CCSD reporting 1,064 full-time subs in August. The number of CCSD ARLs reported for the 2021-2022 school year was 963, and that number decreased for this school year to only 824. I am not sure why there is a reduction in individuals going through ARL. It could be that they are already achieving, so they have completed that program. It also could be a reflection of fewer people trying to enter the teaching profession.

I was not able to find the data on the other school districts and truthfully, CCSD just gave raw numbers and has not updated them, so we do not know where their numbers are now.

Also, in A.B. No. 266 of the 81st Session, it stated that the board of trustees of a school district shall determine the number of job vacancies based on the number of licensed teachers needed to achieve the recommended ratios of pupils per licensed teacher prescribed by the SBE, pursuant to NRS 388.890. That means a school district cannot just throw 50 kids in a classroom and say we only need this many positions filled. Instead, they must adhere to the recommended maximum class size per classroom to determine how many teachers they need and post that number on their website.

That same legislation stated that a position held by a full-time substitute shall be considered vacant for the purpose of determining vacancies. I am sure you all know that we have some of the largest class sizes in the U.S. Classes covered by full-time subs should still be included in vacancies.

Why is this important? These full-time subs may have met the standards for a substitute teacher license, and they may even have multiple degrees. However, they have not been trained in pedagogy, in actual teaching, or gone through the practicum or student teaching. There is nothing easy about being a substitute teacher, and we appreciate them stepping in when we need them, but we need to get real. There is no such thing as a substitute police officer, a substitute pilot or a substitute nurse. The only one who can cover a registered nurse shift is another registered nurse.

As I mentioned in the previous hearing, substitutes are not evaluated. The majority of full-time substitutes covering classes for more than four consecutive weeks is most likely because of a school district's inability to fill the position. A full-time sub can actually be the best-case scenario because there are also situations where there is a different sub in a classroom every few days or weeks. Obviously, consistency is important for students.

This discussion is not to disparage full-time subs, but it is looking at the difference in student achievement between students with a licensed teacher and students with a full-time sub. I have had my own students tell me they had five or six different teachers in the previous year. We know this can impact students academically as well as socially.

Another reason for bringing this Legislation forward is because I am sick and tired of the Nevada mantra that we are fiftieth out of 50 in the U.S. It seems no matter how much we try to explain that ranking and how it is measured, it does not matter to some folks that we have some of the largest class sizes in the Country or that we have the second highest number of English language learners, or that we have extreme transiency and issues related to poverty.

Do you know what does matter? Words matter and narrative matters. What do you think it does to our students when they come in hearing that they are the worst in the Country? I have had my sixth graders ask me if we have the worst schools in the Country, and I promise it is not encouraging to our kids nor does it motivate them. Do we think this builds trust in our parents when they only want to leave their children with someone who is the most qualified and capable? I cannot begin to tell you how demoralizing it is for teachers and educators who give so much of themselves every day for this profession and for the students of Nevada.

We act confused about why teachers are leaving and why no one wants to enter the profession. This bill is simply to disaggregate the information into two categories—those students who missed less than ten days in a school year compared to those who missed more than ten days, and to separate between students who had a certified teacher compared to those who did not. We will be able to see how our students and schools are performing by quantifying those factors that impact achievement and hopefully encourage increased student attendance.

I am also aware how this data can impact businesses. Nevada businesses always claim that while they bring new business into the State, one of the complaints they hear from prospective businesses is our failing education system. What if they were also able to use the data to suggest that yes, the test scores are low, but when you separate them out between students who were actually in school to those students who were not in school, look at the difference or between those students who had a certified teacher compared to those who did not.

In closing, this bill will demonstrate the effect of the factors that impact student achievement and will provide vital information as we continue to strive to improve education in Nevada. Too many of our students and teachers are working hard and this should be reflected, praised and documented.

SENATOR FLORES:

Obviously, data can be either a shield or a sword. In our schools, I think it is important to say that when we do not have a teacher who meets a minimum requirement, there are measurable consequences. Also, if students are not showing up for ten days or more, there are measurable consequences. I respect that. How can we ensure that this is not going to turn into a scenario where we are creating two different classifications or categories of data by playing with those absences? I wish we had an opportunity to focus on the 95 percent of students who want to learn, but then we have these disruptive 5 percent. I am not suggesting that somehow you are going to tell a student not to show up to school. That does not make sense. But I am concerned that in a model where everything is self-reported, we could be messing with numbers. That is not meant to be a "Gotcha," I promise.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

It is interesting that you are concerned that people would manipulate data in education. To get it on the record, this is not something that would be at the classroom level. In fact, this should be nowhere near the classroom teachers. This is something that can go through our system through Infinite Campus and at the site level. It is just reporting how many students missed more than ten days and how many students did not have a licensed teacher. We do not even need names, just the numbers.

I also want to get on the record that this is in no way creating any new or additional measures. It is just looking at the data that already exists to see patterns in student achievement.

SENATOR BUCK:

Chronic absenteeism is listed at 18 absences, I believe. Is there a way to move it to that number? I think that would be simpler, and that is what is tracked at the NDE level.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

My concern with raising the number is because research shows that missing ten or more days is what has an impact on student achievement. When I think about the 18 days, that is literally missing 10 percent of the school year. We can talk to many educators who have students missing 30, 40, and 50 school days a year and still being passed along. That is my discomfort with the 18 days.

SENATOR BUCK:

What is the goal of this? I can pretty much tell you from my experience that student achievement results are going to be dismal with ten or more absences. However, I have had some substitute teachers that have been amazing, but I know that if a substitute teacher is there, it is not going to be as good. What is the end all goal for this data?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

I agree with you that there are some amazing substitute teachers. I hope everyone agrees that we are sick of being fiftieth out of 50. It is not just due to funding, although that is one of the primary reasons for that score, and that is one of the primary issues that people will point to for our rank on the national list. There are so many things going on in our classroom that we have no

control over. But there are two areas where we should be making more efforts. I feel that every year—all the additional requirements, the push down, disrespect and lack of trust that comes on teachers is due to the scores. If we could demonstrate and say, “But of students who are in the classroom, students who are there regularly, yes, they do better.”

When we are looking at students with certified teachers, and their results go up, maybe that encourages school districts to work harder and do whatever it takes to hire licensed teachers. If, as a State, we can show the difference between students who are in school and those who are not, maybe that also encourages increased student attendance, which ultimately will result in better scores.

SENATOR NEAL:

When you were answering Senator Flores, I appreciate that you said it could be large classroom numbers. The bill does not say that, though. My first thought was that in the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), there are privacy disclosures. If you can easily identify a subgroup, then you are in violation of their privacy. So when you have this piece here on ten days of absences, it would be wise to specify that they have to be identified by a number or label other than their student number, because the student number is who they are and it tracks them throughout the entire school system.

I do not know if anyone brought up privacy disclosure and how that relates to segregating groups out. The ESSA wants you to disaggregate subgroups so you can get more accountability, but on the other hand, it does not want you to disaggregate to the point where the privacy of students is compromised. In that provision in section 1, subsection 1, paragraph (g), you might have some privacy concerns. How are you going to deal with that?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

We did not consider that it would go against anything already in statute and required. The intention is not to identify student names or numbers, just numbers of students.

SENATOR NEAL:

I get where you are going to obtain accurate numbers, but as Senator Buck was saying, what is the action you want to have on the data after we find it out? So the kids have been absent, we know they are not learning and it is not necessarily the teacher. What is the action plan that is supposed to happen at

CCSD, for example? We know that students are also not in school for various reasons, whether trauma, disinterest, or whatever it is, but what then is the action that is supposed to happen with that data? Is there an expectation that the school will then say, "Can we now get a waiver on our star?"

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

No, the expectation is not to get a waiver on the star rating. The expectation is to use that data to encourage school attendance. You bring up school attendance from the lens of trauma and other issues that cannot be controlled or avoided at home. However, as a classroom teacher, I see much more of Disney Hopper Passes being the reason our students are not in school. In cases we can control, it empowers the State and the school districts to enhance their own attendance policies. Because, at this point, I know the State says 18 days is the limit for absences, but 10 percent of the school year is a lot to miss.

SENATOR NEAL:

I get where you are going. I just feel like you are addressing a symptom and then we are assuming that CCSD is going to get this data and then actualize it into a plan. That is currently not happening.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

That is actually not my assumption, and it is not just against CCSD because attendance is relevant across the State. This will provide data and information so that State policymakers, school districts and educators have something to work with. We do use this Legislative Body as a fact-finding and data-finding body.

SENATOR NEAL:

But if the plan is that when the data comes back two years later, and then we drill down on the districts and say, "This is what you need to change because now we see that the truancy policies you have implemented and how you are engaging students is not working," by then we will have lost children. Kids will have graduated and left without what they needed.

The thing that worries me is that this has been going on in CCSD since 2003. Before that, where you had students who were missing school, the learning loss was carried over and multiplied over the years and there is no one who has a true plan for remediation. This has been a part of the State budget for a long

time, yet we are never really dialing in on whether or not there were effective strategies to remediate the students.

Now we want data on whether or not a student had a long-term substitute or a licensed teacher, but then what? We need some prescribed action to occur for the districts to act upon when they get this aggregated data so they can immediately spring into action on these children who have been identified by the data. If we are going to wait for the districts to do this, they will never do it. The house is burning now, and it has been burning since 2007 and there is no direction to take care of it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

If I hear you correctly, you are looking for an actual plan and a prescription on how to use that data. I am happy to do that. I would love to have attendance policies. I would love to reinstate some of the programs that existed here in the State in the past. It is very difficult for me personally and professionally to accept the fact that school attendance is optional here. I hear you when you say, "But what happens year after year after year?"

I am happy to work with you if you want to get more stringent policies and prescriptions for the school districts to take once they receive the data. The truth is, they already know about the chronic absences, and they know how often truancy is called. It is important to encourage parents, because in some cases, they just do not value or understand the impact of truancy or how important it is. I cannot say that any one district specifically has tried to reconcile with parents just how important it is to be in school.

SENATOR NEAL:

I am glad you brought that up because I know you went into an at-risk school recently. It is not that parents do not value education, but I think there are two factors. We have parents who have gone through the CCSD system or any other school system that did not serve them. The second factor is parents who are working and raising their children, putting food on the table and trying to manage how to engage their child within the school system.

There are schools where, year after year, there is a generational pattern from parent to child. Those are always schools in the impoverished at-risk neighborhoods, where you can guarantee that the parent either had a general education diploma after high school, or did not even complete school. Their

educational trajectory was usually very limited within the education system, so they never saw quality in education and so they do not value it. So how do you enforce a quality measure on a system that is still producing sub-quality education in their neighborhood generation after generation after generation?

I say that because that was what was going on at Kermit R. Booker Sr. Innovative Elementary School in CCSD. I honestly wondered if that neighborhood was cursed. It was formerly Gerson Park, a troubled neighborhood, that was developed into residential homes in the 1990s in an attempt to improve the area. Those homes ended up being rentals and I wondered why is the same type of child being produced out of this neighborhood? I have seen this at several schools in CCSD and I am asking myself, "Why are all of these neighborhoods producing the same barriers and challenges for children who are in those schools within that zip code and bussing pattern?"

There is something larger going on in that space. No matter what year it is, the same type of child is coming to these schools in these neighborhoods, and they are teachable but there are hurdles you have to overcome because the attitude they come in with does not respect education. It is not a failure of the children; it is what they have seen over and over and over again. To me, the responsibility is on the School District to create an environment that encourages respect for education. That was never ingrained in these parents because they never got treated well within the system. They were passed on.

There is just so much more to this story that you are bringing. I want action. I do not want to keep dealing with the symptoms of what is going on. I either want somebody to go to jail or somebody to just be removed entirely from running a district. At the end of the day, we cannot keep dealing with the symptoms when there is no action on how you are going to remedy the situation.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

First and foremost, my intention with this bill is not to separate out one group. Yes, I worked at an at-risk school, but the majority of my career was at one of the highest performing schools we have. Guess what? Attendance was the same way there. This is not just an attendance issue. There may be different reasons for it, but the attendance rates are still the same. That is why I brought up the Disney Hopper Pass, because that is what I heard all the time for

excuses: "We went to Disney; we had a birthday party; I was tired; I did not feel like it; it's my dad's birthday; it's my sister's birthday; we went shopping; or we're going to Paris for three weeks."

Yes, there are attendance issues everywhere for different reasons. I agree with you that when parents grow up in a school system where they did not get what they needed from school, that is what they pass on to their kids. I have taught kids living in 10,000-square-foot homes who, for the most part, have gotten what they needed from schools, and they still are not giving that respect or priority to attend school on a daily basis.

I would love to say we could control every factor, especially in certain impacted areas, but most of those factors outside the school building are what is causing these issues. But school attendance is poor throughout the State and it is poor regardless of community. I have worked in five-star to less than three-star schools and, in each of them, attendance is still an issue.

SENATOR TITUS:

Are there truancy officers in Las Vegas? How do you currently resolve truancy? When my kids were growing up, we missed a lot of days because we had a lot of activities, but my kids were all still straight-A students. There were many times they were not in the classroom because we were out at horse events, which was something that my kids were learning from. I always felt that you could learn both inside and outside of the classroom. The teachers were not happy when my kids were out of school and I would have to give an explanation on why I was taking them out.

Is there no accountability for these kids to be out of school? Do you have truancy officers? Is this absentee data already in the system?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

It is all about the test scores. That is why your child's teachers may have had some discomfort with outside or real-life learning experiences. Again, the intent of this bill is not to measure why students are absent; it is to show the difference in results in student achievement when students are present in school so that everybody in the State can use that data.

To your question about truancy, we do have truancy officers and they do visit the homes. If we can say anything about Nevada schools, it is the inconsistency

in the experience. Students, teachers and parents can have one experience in one school and you can go a mile down the road and it is a completely different experience. In some schools, they rely on the teacher to request that a truancy note or letter be sent out. In other schools, it is triggered by the system and they will automatically send a letter to the truant child's home.

There are truancy officers who go to a student's home and sometimes that is well received and sometimes it is not. I have been witness to many occasions where parents get upset and will yell at the school's office staff for sending them a truancy letter. The worst issue is when we see students missing 30, 40 and 50 days a year and still being passed on.

SENATOR BUCK:

I like some aspects of the bill. If students are not at grade level and they are passed on, I share that concern with you. Because there are no consequences for being absent, can we implement a retention policy or something like "If you are gone more than 18 days and you are below grade level, you have to repeat the grade level"? I can guarantee you that parents would be very cautious about keeping their kids out of school if we did that. If our goal is for this study to ensure that we promote proficient students to the next grade level, then we should stick a definitive consequence in there that would make it so parents want to keep their children in school.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

The intent of this bill is not a study; it is to disaggregate the information that we are already gathering. If I were to tell you what my attendance policy in high school was, you would be shocked. School was a priority and ultimately, it is the parents' responsibility. High school kids are going to be high school kids, right? The reason we cannot say that if a student misses more than 18 days, they are flunked, end of discussion, is because there are all kinds of circumstances and reasons why a student is not in school. Some excuses are valid, and some are not, but we cannot measure or judge, nor should we. What we can do, though, is measure how those absences affect a student's grade level performance.

That is why A.B. 339 is only aimed at disaggregating the information we already have so it can be used to encourage an increase in attendance. Sometimes parents wonder why their child's grades are low and it can be

because that child missed 15 assignments because they were absent 15 days. That is really the intention of the bill.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will take testimony supporting A.B. 339 now. Seeing none, I will take testimony from those opposed to the bill.

MS. PIERCZYNSKI:

We have some concern about the mechanics of collecting the information and disaggregating it. Even if it is already in the computer system, there are still staff members who will have to organize it to make a clear report. Most of us understand that kids have to show up for their education, and if they do not show up, they are probably not going to do very well.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER:

We really got focused on attendance in the last part of this discussion, but I want to remind you about the need to have certified, licensed teachers in our classrooms. Currently, districts have been getting away with not having those certified teachers. For decades, we have been talking about what it takes to retain teachers and attract new ones. Hopefully, this data would encourage everyone to deal with the working conditions, the pay, and the level of respect towards our teachers. No student in this State should have an untrained, unlicensed teacher. In my dreamworld, the only person who should be covering my classroom when I am out is another certified teacher.

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CHAIR LANGE:

I have received a neutral letter from the CCSD ([Exhibit I](#)). I will close the hearing on A.B. 339 and open public comment. Seeing none, I will close the hearing of the Senate Committee on Education at 4:02 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Linda Hiller,
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
A.B. 274	C	17	Mathilda Guerrero / Battle Born Progress	Support Testimony
A.B. 269	D	17	Assemblywoman Brittney Miller	Conceptual Amendment
A.B. 269	E	31	Chris Daly / NSEA	Support Testimony
A.B. 269	F	38	Patricia Haddad / CCSD	Opposition Letter
A.B. 269	G	39	Senator Roberta Lange	Opposition Letter
A.B. 269	H	39	Senator Roberta Lange	Support Letter
A.B. 339	I	52	Patricia Haddad / CCSD	Neutral Letter