

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

**Eighty-second Session  
March 24, 2023**

The joint meeting of the Subcommittees on K-12/Higher Education/CIP of the Senate Committee on Finance and the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means was called to order by Chair Marilyn Dondero Loop at 8:05 a.m. on Friday, March 24, 2023, in Room 3137 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.

**SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Chair  
Senator Nicole J. Cannizzaro  
Senator Dina Neal  
Senator Heidi Seevers Gansert  
Senator Robin L. Titus

**ASSEMBLY SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Assemblywoman Shea Backus, Chair  
Assemblywoman Sandra Jauregui, Vice Chair  
Assemblywoman Heidi Kasama  
Assemblyman C.H. Miller  
Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno  
Assemblyman P.K. O'Neill  
Assemblywoman Sarah Peters  
Assemblyman Steve Yeager

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

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Madison Ryan, Program Analyst  
Dee Chekowitz-Dykes, Committee Secretary  
Marie Bell, Committee Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Megan Peterson, Deputy Superintendent, Student Investment Division,  
Nevada Department of Education  
Jhone M. Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada Department of  
Education  
Craig Statucki, Interim Deputy Superintendent, Educator Effectiveness and  
Family Engagement, Nevada Department of Education  
Jeff Briske, Director, Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement,  
Nevada Department of Education  
Rene Cantu, Executive Director, Jobs for Nevada's Graduates  
Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association  
Rachel Drake  
Ryan Small  
Shaughn Richardson  
Melissa Rose  
Chyna Metz-Bannister  
Sarah Negrete, Director, Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional  
Development Program  
Chelli Smith, Director, Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development  
Program  
Matt Wiegand  
Rachel Stepina  
Silvina Jover

**CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:**

Today's presentation is from the Nevada Department of Education.

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MEGAN PETERSON (Deputy Superintendent, Student Investment Division,  
Nevada Department of Education):

Our Nevada Department of Education (NDE) budget presentation begins with details on budget account (B/A) 101-2710 found on page 4 of ([Exhibit C](#)). This is the budget account that provides the authority and expenditures for our COVID-19 relief funds.

## EDUCATION

### K-12 EDUCATION

NDE - COVID-19 Funding — Budget Page K-12 EDUCATION-35 (Volume I)  
Budget Account 101-2710

These COVID-19 relief funds include the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund; the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act of 2020; and the Education Stabilization Fund Program, which includes the federal Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER).

Decision unit E-490 in B/A 101-2710, as shown on page 5 of [Exhibit C](#), removes revenue and expenditure authority in fiscal year (FY) 2024-2025 for the expiring GEER II and ESSER II grants. This removes approximately \$261 million in revenue and expenditure authority for this budget account.

E-490 Expiring Grant/Program — Page K-12 EDUCATION-37

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JAUREGUI:

Can you give us an update on the Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching Grant Program (IPT) and its success or lack of success?

JHONE M. EBERT (Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada Department of Education):

We are very pleased with that program, and it has been successful.

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CRAIG STATUCKI (Interim Deputy Superintendent, Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement, Nevada Department of Education):

The IPT Grant Program for FY 2022-2023 has made tuition awards to 2,075 recipients of up to \$2,000 per person and stipend awards to 1,364 recipients of up to \$8,400 per person.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JAUREGUI:

During the Eighty-first Legislative Session, monies were approved to implement a uniform financial management system. Can you give us a status update?

MS. PETERSON:

The request for proposal phase has concluded, we have conducted the reviews and had a demonstration last week. We hope to be in contract with the vendor soon.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JAUREGUI:

Has a vendor been selected?

MS. PETERSON:

Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JAUREGUI:

Have any projects experienced delays in spending ESSER II dollars? Will you have to redirect any of that money?

MS. EBERT:

Yes, for example, we had intended to hire additional staff and could not find staff to hire. In those instances, a portion of the \$1.5 billion available to the State will be redirected to other projects that are in alignment with the federal requirements.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JAUREGUI:

Is staffing the only area where you have had to redirect dollars?

MS. EBERT:

That is not the only area. We are in the process of tracking all of the projects and have not officially asked or moved dollars to specific projects. We are in the

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process of identifying those pieces and will be moving the money as we move forward.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JAUREGUI:

Can you share that list when you have it ready? It would be helpful for us to see the projects where money could not be spent and had to be redirected.

MS. EBERT:

Yes. This would be for the 10 percent of the funds available to NDE. I will also include the 90 percent that went directly to schools. We have a website that shows the listing of all those expenditures as well.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PETERS:

Can you talk about the summer and after school program funding, including successes particularly related to learning loss, such as we experienced during the pandemic. How did those ESSER funds work for us?

MS. EBERT:

Washoe County School District did a nice job of providing transportation and food service, along with an educational environment for its summer program. Many of the school districts took the time last summer to engage in the academics required but also spent much time with students in project-based learning, the joy of learning and their social emotional health. That goes for the educators and staff as well, who used the time last summer to pick up on opportunities not afforded during the pandemic.

We provided a report for summer 2021, as required by statute. I would be happy to provide that to you. The school districts are well-positioned to answer any in-depth questions.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PETERS:

I was hoping we would have some accountability metrics or proof of concept that the ESSER III funds were successful in those counties. Do you foresee any issues with the completion of projects funded with ESSER III funding? Would any of those projects require this funding to be used for other purposes?

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MS. EBERT:

As we have moved forward with the pandemic, the first part we all needed was for health and safety, including masks, cleanliness, resources for social distancing and resources for the Department in teleworking. We saw the need shift then to direct support for our staff and our students. A wide range of needs has transpired and as we continue to move forward, I believe there will be new items identified in 2024 and 2025 as we come out of the pandemic.

Accelerating learning for all of our students has been a priority. Many of the funds used by the school districts were to extend the day or for specific tutoring resources and support beyond the regular classroom day. There will be a shift in needs as we project into the future, but we want to be flexible and adjust to the changing conditions. We are always making sure those projects will be in alignment with the requirements from the federal government for Title I, Title II and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PETERS:

Do you foresee that the ESSER III funding will be obligated in its entirety by the September 30, 2024, deadline? You mentioned 2024 and 2025 might lead to different needs, but that obligation funding deadline is there, and we want to make sure you are on track.

MS. EBERT:

I refuse to send one penny back to the federal government when we know how great the needs are in our State. We have been working collaboratively with your staff to make sure we can expend those funds in a timely manner as we see those needs shift. Tight communication, collaboration and transparency are critical to make sure we expend all of those funds on time by September 30, 2024.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BACKUS:

I would like to turn to the GEER II funding, which has to be expended by September 30, 2023. Do you see any hurdles since that date is right around the corner?

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MS. EBERT:

We are in the process of identifying those projects that need adjustments. Some of our projects are anywhere from 98 percent of planned expenditures being expended-to-date to some in the 40 percent range. For those in the 40 percent range, we are in constant contact to see if we are on track to expend those funds. If we are not on track, we will make sure they are allocated to projects that can expend the funds by the due date of September 30, 2023, so we do not revert any funds.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BACKUS:

It does not appear the Executive Budget reflects projected expenditures for all ESSER II, ESSER III and GEER II funds to projects for FY 2023-2024 and FY 2024-2025. Can you explain the issues the Department is facing when projecting the expenditures for these projects for the 2023-2025 biennium?

MS. PETERSON:

As the Department developed budgets for the COVID-19 relief funds, we were flexible in their implementation in terms of a plan or project that may have been identified for a three-year plan. Depending on the need, a project may not have started in the year originally anticipated. For example, if we had planned for FY 2020-2021, it may actually have been implemented in FY 2022-2023 or vice versa. As a result, we are continuing to work through and reconcile which projects will continue into FY 2023-2024, and we hope to have those projections in approximately two weeks.

ASSEMBLYMAN YEAGER:

Can you provide an update on the emergency assistance to nonpublic schools, including any successes or challenges you may have had in administering the program?

MS. EBERT:

I had a meeting with all of the nonpublic schools, specifically those schools that were below 70 percent of their spend. The meeting was to do three things.

One reason was to make sure we have tight communication on where they are with their percentages. We are now corresponding weekly on that status. Second, this is our first time working with nonpublic schools, and it was

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a learning curve for both the Department and the nonpublic schools. They were not used to having to provide all of the details we provide you and the federal government. We also needed to establish a way to provide payment to them, with all of the layers of checks and balances, as that did not exist.

Another reason for the meeting was to see if they had any additional questions or if they were running into problems with expenditures.

We wanted to reassure everyone if they are not on track to spend and they realize they will not expend the dollars by September 30, 2023, it is okay. They need to let us know now. If they need to make adjustments to the budget, they need to provide them to us no later than July 2023. I requested they have adjustments in tomorrow if possible, but we gave them a deadline. If they cannot expend the dollars, let us know now so we could reallocate those funds to other nonpublic schools.

That is the first tier, because we have some nonpublic schools that are almost at 100 percent spend. They have expended all the funds they have been allocated. If we find there is \$50,000 available, we will ask those nonpublic schools that have already expended funds if there are projects they have that align with the requirements, and we will reallocate. If the nonpublic schools cannot expend all those funds, we will offer those funds to the public schools, which is allowed under the federal guidance we have.

ASSEMBLYMAN YEAGER:

Please keep us updated because we do not want to give any of this money back either. We want to make sure we are spending it. In my reading of the Executive Budget, it only reflects funding of \$1.9 million in federal emergency assistance to nonpublic schools in FY 2023-2024. Are there adjustments that need to be made? It does not look like all the remaining money is actually included in the Executive Budget for the 2023-2025 biennium unless I am reading it incorrectly.

MS. EBERT:

We will need to research that.

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ASSEMBLYMAN YEAGER:

Please research that. We want to make sure the budget will reflect the actual expenditures and see if there are corrections that need to be made. Work with our Fiscal staff to make sure we get all that money we need to get in there.

SENATOR NEAL:

Can you please provide an overview of the projects identified to be funded by the \$200 million provided in A.B. No. 495 of the 81st Session?

MS. EBERT:

I do not have that with me this morning. I will provide it to you.

SENATOR NEAL:

Do you have any information associated with why only \$1.6 million has been expended out of the \$200 million?

MS. PETERSON:

Part of the reason only approximately \$1.6 million has been requested is the budgets were only initially approved in November 2022. Many of our subrecipients are on a quarterly reimbursement schedule, and we have not received their reimbursement requests.

SENATOR NEAL:

Can you explain the delay? What happened between the end of the Eighty-first Legislative Session and November 2022?

MS. EBERT:

The Legislature made these funds available as the last dollars to spend. Funds made available by the federal government had to be expended first. Plans needed to be in place first. Then, as the money and requirements kept coming in, the schools had to plan and expend the \$1.5 billion from the federal government before they could use the funds from A.B. No. 495 of the 81st Session. It was at the November 2022 meeting that we received authority.

SENATOR NEAL:

In our meeting the other day, there were many requests for General Fund monies. Why have we not tried to plug some of the needs with the federal

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money, use the funds from A.B. No. 495 of the 81st Session, then request General Fund monies? To me that should be last on the list. Can you please explain?

MS. EBERT:

We are asking for General Fund monies for the Department. The Department did not receive any of the funds from A.B. No. 495 of the 81st Session. We always use federal dollars first within those allowable expenses and then ask for General Fund monies.

SENATOR NEAL:

Some contract positions were requested to support programs, the Infinite Campus System and ePage Grant reporting modifications. I do not know if that money has already been expended, but it was approximately \$5.5 million. I was trying to look at what was being asked for in General Fund monies. It was a 90/10 split; you got 10 percent and then 90 percent had to go out to the schools. Is there an overlay? It seems some contract positions would carry over in some of the work you are trying to do with federal funds.

MS. EBERT:

Yes, we expend the federal funds within allowable categories as much as we can. We receive annual federal fund allocations, and we have the additional funds that came via the COVID-19 relief dollars. Pairing those with our General Fund monies, and the work we have needed to do, and then moving forward with the General Fund monies request is the thought process we use as we go through our projects to provide services to the school districts.

MS. PETERSON:

Our Other State Education Programs account on page 7 of [Exhibit C](#) is B/A 101-2699. This includes programs such as Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, Education Leadership, Jobs for America's Graduates, Public Broadcasting and Adult Education.

NDE - Other State Education Programs — Budget Page K-12 EDUCATION-16  
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Decision unit E-281 in B/A 101-2699 on page 8 of [Exhibit C](#) is to fund a dual language pilot program which is new to the department.

#### E-281 Elevating Education — Page K-12 EDUCATION-17

This request was for \$5.2 million in each fiscal year. During the budget review process, it was determined this was entered incorrectly and duplicated for each fiscal year. Budget amendment No. A232542699 ([Exhibit D](#)) has been submitted to reduce each fiscal year by approximately half, or \$5.2 million for the biennium.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER:

Regarding this dual language immersion, what type of feedback has the Department received from schools currently operating the dual language program relating to costs to fund the program and student outcomes?

MS. EBERT:

We have six dual language programs. Several of them are new, and some are well established. It is an area that we have not, as a State and as the NDE, moved in a strategic way to make sure we have lighthouse schools that can accelerate that learning. The data we have in our State includes Mount Rose Elementary School, which is a kindergarten through Grade 8 (K-8) dual language school. The eighth graders at Mount Rose take the advanced placement Spanish course. They receive credit and earn threes, fours and fives on the national exam. We have a great model in that school in the work the students are doing.

The three schools in Clark County are new, and they would tell you they are in the pilot phase. It is too early to share their outcomes.

We also have Jesse Beck Elementary in Washoe County, and in the State Public Charter School Authority, the City of Las Vegas started the Strong Start program which is kindergarten through Grade 2. I was looking at their data on the Measure of Academic Progress assessment, which we use for Read by Grade 3, and they are accelerating at a great rate compared to their peers who are not participating in a dual language program.

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Those are the six programs we have in the State. We are requesting the additional funds to help lift and create models, so we can expand the program. We have over 100 languages here in Nevada. Most of us in this room were required to take a language in high school, and research has shown that is not the time to learn a second language. It is actually when you are a young person and growing. At ages one, two, three, four and five is when you need to be learning multiple languages. We would like to see this pilot project start with elementary schools.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER:

Regarding the different programs you mentioned, do you have a breakdown of how many students you have in these programs in the different districts?

MS. EBERT:

I do not have the number of students in each of these schools. I will get that for you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER:

There is a program for Seal of Biliteracy, and some of our districts are prevented from being able to provide that. How would this dual language pilot program enable these districts to offer the Seal of Biliteracy program?

MS. EBERT:

The program we are starting with is at elementary schools. The Seal of Biliteracy is at high schools. If you choose to make that investment now in the elementary schools, it would be a moment to see that reflected in the Seal of Biliteracy at the high schools.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JAUREGUI:

You are asking for two positions under decision unit E-275 in B/A 101-2675 to administer this program. Can you talk about the Department's plan for implementing this Statewide? How long will it take to award these grant dollars to the agencies?

NDE - Standards and Instructional Support — Budget Page K-12 EDUCATION-46  
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Budget Account 101-2675

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E-275 Elevating Education — Page K-12 EDUCATION-49

MS. EBERT:

The positions will be working collaboratively with a consultant, and we would like to hire a consultant out of the \$5.2 million requested. The consultant would be used during the pilot period, and the work would transfer over to the other position.

Regarding the time frame, we would immediately start the grant process for school districts to apply. We have been in contact with our colleagues in Texas who have begun the program in almost 100 schools. They are moving quickly, and they have made a big investment in dual language programs in their state. We will borrow from much of the work they have done. The program would not start during the 2023-2024 school year. However, professional development and purchasing dual language materials would happen this school year. Training and implementation with students would occur during the 2024-2025 school year.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN JAUREGUI:

How will you measure success for this program?

MS. EBERT:

We will be using our same assessments, such as our Read by Grade 3 program and our federal requirements. We also have the opportunity to administer some of those formative assessments in both languages. That would be new data for us to look at as we move forward.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

How much would it cost per school to be able to lift them and enable them to have a dual language program?

MS. EBERT:

It will depend on the size of the school. Some of our elementary schools have 200 to 300 students, and some have 800 students. We are projecting costs anywhere between \$400,000 to \$500,000 per school. We think maybe four to six elementary schools will be set up depending on their size.

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SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

The schools in Reno are K-8. Are there other K-8 schools available, or is it important to convert it so that you have that longer duration of exposure or immersion?

MS. EBERT:

There are very few K-8 schools. We had a conversation about possibly delving into the middle school, but decided to start with our youngest learners and then grow out. This is seed money, proof of concept, and then we can see how the school districts move forward as the students age.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BACKUS:

When reviewing the budget, it captured \$5.3 million in both fiscal years. I understand it was one half that cost. Have you submitted an amendment?

MS. PETERSON:

Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BACKUS:

You said, in the first fiscal year, the program will acquire materials, and do training. Then, the following year, it will be implemented. How did you determine it would be \$2.6 million in each year?

MS. EBERT:

The first year is professional development and acquiring materials. Travel was included to visit other schools. In the second year, we see allowable expenses including if schools would like to extend the school day or the school year. The dollars go rather quickly when you start investing in the human capital and the time with students.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BACKUS:

If the program were to continue into a future biennium, do you anticipate the cost to be the same? Is it really that first and second year that will be a gauge of what the costs will be in the future?

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MS. EBERT:

This is a proof of concept for us. We will collect data and share it with the school districts. They will be able to make a determination within their budgets regarding in which schools and areas they can implement these programs moving forward.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BACKUS:

We moved away from categorical funding to the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan (PCFP), and it seems like we are almost going back to categorical funding. Why is the Governor recommending establishing this new categorical kindergarten through Grade 12 education program?

MS. EBERT:

This is one example of what can be. Over time, as we move forward with education and make sure our students receive the best, if this Legislative Body makes a determination there is a specific need, you may decide you want to have a categorical fund again in a specific area. The PCFP funding plan does not prohibit identifying specific target areas to either pilot or enhance to make sure our students are successful. As we move forward, we will see ebbs and flows depending on the needs of the State.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BACKUS:

During COVID-19, there was reliance on the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) for educational programming. When was the last time they had any enhancement in their budget?

MS. EBERT:

It has been over a decade since that budget has received additional funds beyond what has been allocated.

SENATOR TITUS:

Regarding dual language learning, is it mostly focused on Spanish and people who already speak Spanish get the dual language certificate, or is it schools actually teaching Spanish, so the students are learning Spanish and English at the same time? According to our documents, there was a Chinese dual language program. It was not sustainable, and apparently it failed.

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MS. EBERT:

We would like to see at least half of the student population identified within the schools are English language learners (ELL) and the other half do not speak another language. According to my colleagues from across the Nation, when you have that mix, they have found there is greater acceleration for both groups of children when you have that percentage of 50/50. Other states have lifted programs based on the community. We know there may be a community in Nevada where a majority of students speak both English and Tagalog, and a District may apply for Tagalog based on the student population. We are not restricting at this time, but we will be reviewing the applications as they come in, using indicators of success from other models to be able to move forward.

SENATOR TITUS:

I represent six rural counties. The Shoshone and Paiute communities are there. It is important to make sure they do not lose their language. To start these young children learning two languages is an idea I support. I would love to see any thoughts about moving forward on some other concepts, especially for my rural areas.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MONROE-MORENO:

Does becoming a dual language school start with the principal making the request of NDE, saying they have this population and want to have their school designated as a dual language school? What is the process?

MS. EBERT:

Our applications come from both the principal and the superintendent within the school district. Making sure of that alignment within leadership is critical, so everyone can be successful.

SENATOR NEAL:

You said it would be great for 50 percent of the children to be ELL. Funding concerns me. I am not against children learning other languages. I think it is a good idea, to be globally prepared; however, I am interested in the demographics and the students that are receiving that dual language now.

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MS. EBERT:

That number was an example in another state, and that may not be what transpires here. The demographics of Mount Rose Elementary school are that at least 1/3 are ELL. City of Las Vegas Strong Start charter school, kindergarten through Grade 2, is about 1/3 as well.

SENATOR NEAL:

I have been thinking about the former Victory Schools and also about how a dual language program would change the dynamic in shared schools, where Black and brown students share an educational system that is common in much of Las Vegas. Shared language could change the community, the dynamic, the respect, the learning, the peer to peer relationships. Are we trying to advance that as one of the initiatives? Could any of the funds from ESSER, GEER or the \$200 million unspent from A.B. No. 495 of the 81st Session apply to any of these?

MS. EBERT:

The initial request from the team used federal dollars, but we had other needs such as the IPT Grant Program. We needed to get teachers in the classroom and at the time it did not fit within the federal budget we were allocated.

I like where you are going. That definitely is something we could look at as we move forward. If this Committee chooses to add additional funds to the request, I am sure we could accommodate that.

SENATOR NEAL:

I doubt that is going to happen, but from the existing unspent funds, money is sitting on the table. Is there room to move money towards those goals without tapping into the existing General Fund monies? Can you spend the extra but not tap into what you have until you take care of all of the other money that is out there?

SENATOR CANNIZZARO:

I want to go back to the question Chair Backus asked about the categorical funding, because it was very intentional. I know we can always establish categoricals, but the purpose of the PCFP was to not have those categoricals, so we are not in the position of just approving new categoricals over and over

again. It is good to start from that premise, certainly you could do that, just like we could do almost anything, but that was very purposeful with respect to the PCFP. Is there any reason we could not put that money for the pilot program for the dual language program into the PCFP and then allow for the Department and your staff to make sure those programs are happening in schools instead of setting it up as a separate categorical outside of the formula?

MS. EBERT:

Yes. I want to validate everything you said regarding the intent. I am processing the mechanism to do that. It would require a change in the funding formula itself. You would need to change the legislation, because we specifically have the base and the tiers. I cannot figure out how that would fit without your action on the flow of those dollars.

SENATOR CANNIZZARO:

When schools get money, they can implement these programs. That is one of the things about the PCFP. This does not prohibit schools from having a dual language program, another program to help different at risk students, literacy programs, tutoring programs or anything that might help with student achievement. It is just the mechanism to fund it; whether it is a cornered off section of funding that is a categorical that lives outside the formula or it is additional money into the formula. Then we are working with districts to make sure they are implementing programs, or different schools that have those particular needs can implement those programs. If there were additional monies that flowed into the formula, and we are able to set up supports for districts or for schools to actually implement this program, that is a mechanism that seems to fit more within the purpose and the intent of the PCFP.

I do not see it as something that would require a change to the PCFP. There is support, and dual language is incredibly important. I am just concerned that if we start setting up all these categoricals, then we are just going down the same path of everything we have worked hard to change regarding how we are making sure money gets to schools.

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MS. EBERT:

Thinking about the Read by Grade 3 program, they must have literacy strategists identified at each school. The requirements for the program are still in State law, but it is no longer categorical.

SENATOR CANNIZZARO:

I would be happy to discuss that, so we can achieve the goals with this particular type of program, but also within the changed funding structure for education.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Regarding the categoricals, we need to remember one of the reasons we redefined what they were is because we could have three or four ELL and English as a Second Language (ESL) children who need assistance in a school that is not getting that categorical funding. We wanted to make sure those children were served even though they may be in a school that is not 80 percent ESL. We have tried dual language programs before, specifically in Henderson, Nevada. What is going to make this program successful?

MS. EBERT:

Generations ago, it was a specific program with a shift in support from the school district. We do not have a State model. Individual school districts have made the determination to have a dual language program. We would like to lift it to the State level to create those lighthouse schools. Then, we make sure the school districts are not individual in the work, but they stimulate the exchange of ideas with their learning the cultural aspect of language. Bringing that at the State level and making sure we have the competitive grant piece and the oversight, we will be much more successful moving forward.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

I want to point out this is not a new idea. This has been around. It has just been delivered differently in the big scheme of things.

SENATOR SEEVERS GANSERT:

Regarding the funding, we put about \$4,400 more dollars per ELL into one of the tiers. I am wondering about using those dollars and flipping the scenario. For those students in the ELL schools, we are trying to get them to

learn English, but there might be an opportunity to have this dual language program for whoever is attending, whether they are ELL or not. We are pushing towards English all the time versus maybe accepting another language, creating the dual language around that and using some of the money we have. Have we tried to do that?

Do you know how much more we are spending per child at schools like Mount Rose and Jessie Beck elementary schools, who already have these immersion programs? Is it costing them less, or because they have so many students who are ELL, are they able to do that for the same cost?

MS. EBERT:

The funding formula is finishing its first biennium. The \$4,400 is moving forward; current funding was just under \$2,000. It would not be comparable looking at the funding, but I will check with the school district on additional funds that have or have not been invested in these schools.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

We touched on PBS a bit. You had said it had been over a decade without enhancements; is this correct? Can you touch on some of the other programs in this budget, such as Jobs for Nevada Graduates and Adult Education?

MS. EBERT:

In the Jobs for America's Graduates, Public Broadcasting, CTE, Adult Education and Education Leadership programs, all of those funds are mainly flat, except for an additional few dollars moving forward.

MS. PETERSON:

Funding for our Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDP) is B/A 101-2618 on page 10 of [Exhibit C](#), which specifically includes the Statewide Council for Coordination of Regional Training Programs. This program serves three regional areas and provides professional development opportunities for school districts.

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We have one decision unit on page 11 of [Exhibit C](#). Decision unit E-276 in B/A 101-2618 increases funding for this program by approximately 3 percent, totaling \$223,000 in each year of the 2023-2025 biennium.

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ASSEMBLYMAN YEAGER:

What is driving that increased cost of the RPDPs?

MS. EBERT:

The budget requests were submitted in the fall, and we are looking at just the wages. The RPDPs are funded at the wages of the local school districts. Looking at what has transpired at that moment in time and looking at inflation, a 3 percent increase was requested. Inflation is at 4.5 percent, so there has been movement from when the budget was submitted to today, but the budget request at the time was 3 percent.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MONROE-MORENO:

The methodology for the RPDPs in the Eightieth Legislative Session was that increases to the programs would be based on the cost of living adjustment for salaries only. Has the methodology changed in this budget? Also, we had to make some cuts in the Thirty-first Special Session, and it does not appear that we are restoring that funding in the Executive Budget. Do you know why?

MS. EBERT:

We come before you with all of our requests and with the Executive Budget making sure we understand the context that we have here in Nevada. We balance where we were prior to the pandemic, where we are today and the other requests the Department itself has asked for. This particular budget request in the Executive Budget did not include the restoration to spending levels prior to the pandemic.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MONROE-MORENO:

It appears the 3 percent increase was for the overall cost, not just the cost of living. Why was that decision made to change the methodology?

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MS. EBERT:

During conversations with the RPDPs and the Office of the Governor and what made sense at that moment, the methodology was the overall cost. It was not just the personnel increase; it was the overall cost of the program.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

In general, how do we know instruction is improving from that professional development? What kind of follow-up documentation is provided to support that implementation?

MS. EBERT:

Just for clarity, the RPDPs do not report to the NDE. We work collaboratively to make sure State initiatives drive data and that the RPDPs are providing those supports. At the local level, superintendents may make the determination that they want to see professional development in another way. The RPDPs provide annual reports to the NDE on the professional development that has been requested by the local superintendents.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

That is why I had the question, because we are funding this, but we are not receiving reports on the follow up. Is that correct?

MS. EBERT:

We have the reports from the RPDPs on the professional development they have provided.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Most of the trainings are two days or less. From my training days, there was always the thought that extended professional development is more effective; it was always four days or more. Where did the two-day mark come from?

MS. EBERT:

I am not sure on the two-day piece. We have representatives of the RPDP here in the audience if you would like them to answer. We have asked them to join us in Read by Grade 3 and Science of Reading. Professional development is over an extended period of time, and it is not just two days because that is best practice.

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CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

We are not all educators, and I think it is important we understand what RPDP does and make sure we are following best practices within the system.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BACKUS:

I am probably not as familiar with this area, but how are the RPDPs specifically supporting the State initiatives?

MS. EBERT:

We have a collaborative relationship. We do not have a direct report relationship with RPDPs. A staff member sits as a nonvoting member on the Council. We make recommendations as a Department, but the RPDP local governing board makes a determination on the final professional development.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BACKUS:

Can you provide the names of the trainings provided that directly train teachers in teaching the standards in each content area?

MS. EBERT:

Yes, we have those reports, and we can provide them to you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BACKUS:

How are you supporting the retention of teachers?

MS. EBERT:

I would need to ask the RPDPs directly on the professional development for teacher retention.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Please provide those to us.

SENATOR NEAL:

Looking at the ESSER III fund approved expenditures around professional development, there was \$3 million that went to a partnership with three Statewide education leadership networks to develop and deliver evidence-based training and professional development. How does that roll into the requests?

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There was also \$3 million for technical assistance to support local education agencies with a strategic planning process for the State's lowest performing schools. There was another \$3.9 million to assess instructional materials to address learning loss in reading and help students transition from elementary arithmetic to algebra. Then there was \$6 million for development of a portrait of a Nevada graduate to determine future-ready skills, dispositions, and pupils to be college, career and life ready. To me, that rolls into professional development. There was an additional \$15 million for teacher recruitment and retention, which has micro-credentialing and professional development in the description. How do these ESSER III funds roll into this budget request?

MS. EBERT:

With regard to our lowest performing schools, that is our contract with WestEd, building the capacity with our Comprehensive Support and Improvement schools, Targeted Support and Improvement Schools and one-star schools that is the professional development.

Overall, when you add those together, they braid an entire system. We definitely are cognizant to make sure there is no overlap in the professional development provided and that it is targeted. You will not see in those specific professional development areas that we are using ESSER funds. There is not an overlap with the RPDP work that is transpiring. They are all needed within our State.

SENATOR NEAL:

Should there be an overlap? They are speaking to the same issue and are going down to the schools, and the work is to prepare a teacher and make sure a teacher knows how to do a particular thing with a child.

MS. EBERT:

I think there could be a more strategic alignment between the State work and the RPDPs. That is not currently how it is structured. We work collaboratively, and it is not a direct piece.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MONROE-MORENO:

Is there specialized training for special education teachers, when we look at the RPDPs? I want to make sure they are up to date on what they should be doing

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with their children on Individual Education Plans and that, if they have to assist in a classroom that is not their traditional classroom, they have the training for that as well.

MS. EBERT:

Yes, RPDPs provide professional development for special education. We have many new educators in our State, current licensed teachers and classroom substitutes to support in our State. There is a massive support need in our State. The RPDPs play a critical role in this support. If we can have the strategic alignment and make sure the funds are allocated appropriately, we will see greater student success moving forward.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER:

Regarding the \$20,000 University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) study or evaluation and assessment for the achievement of Black pupils, do you have any context you could share around that program?

MS. EBERT:

That work has just been completed by UNLV. We have the report and will share it with the Committee. The study identified schools within our State that are having the highest gains with Black students. What was interesting is, there had to be at least 30 Black students in the school to be considered for the study. They were all in southern Nevada.

MS. PETERSON:

Detailed on page 13 of [Exhibit C](#), the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program is B/A 101-2718. Decision unit E-275 on page 14 of [Exhibit C](#) is split between two programs. It provides \$10 million in each year of the biennium; \$3.2 million to fund the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program and \$6.7 million to fund the IPT Grant Program.

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The Teach Nevada Scholarship Program provides students who are awarded scholarships by their teacher preparation program with 75 percent of the scholarship for reimbursement towards tuition, books, and fees, and the remaining 25 percent of the scholarship is retained by NDE. The portion retained by NDE is awarded to the student after five consecutive years of successful teaching in a Nevada public school, as well as meeting the other requirements identified by the State Board of Education. In comparison, the IPT Grant Program has been created for financial support to ensure qualified educator candidates have the resources they need to complete their education preparation programs on time.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PETERS:

Can you talk about how the additional funding for the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program would address the educator shortage?

MR. STATUCKI:

Specific to the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program, we are desperately short educators in Nevada. When we look at providing scholarships for those educators, we help them get through their college experiences. In our career and technical education teaching and training programs, we are expanding those rapidly. We are developing a long-term pipeline. With the Teach Nevada Scholarship, it will eventually help those students who are finishing their high school programs go into our public institutions and alternative licensure programs and be able to complete those programs timely.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PETERS:

My question was specifically to the additional funding for that program and how that enhances the education shortage efforts. I am not sure I heard that in the response.

MR. STATUCKI:

As we see the increased funding, we are seeing an increased pipeline that means we have more students who will need those scholarships going forward. We are being proactive and able to fund those. From FY 2015-2016 through FY 2022-2023, we had 430 people complete the program, and there are 759 students receiving scholarships currently.

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ASSEMBLYWOMAN PETERS:

How many of the recipients who completed the program are still actively teaching in public schools here in Nevada?

MR. STATUCKI:

We do not get direct information from the postsecondary institutions, but we are able to use the way school districts upload their teacher positions into our licensure system. We believe we have 291 educators who are currently employed who received Teach Nevada Scholarships. To clarify, that number could include educators who are substitute teachers. We pull license numbers. They may be substitutes who are working as a substitute, going to school, and earning the Teach Nevada Scholarship, so that is not necessarily 291 full-time teachers.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PETERS:

Regarding longevity, do you have any numbers on how long, on average, Teach Nevada Scholarship recipients stay teaching in Nevada? Is that data you could provide?

MR. STATUCKI:

That is not data we have readily available. Part of the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program is there are certain requirements in which educators can collect an extra 25 percent if they teach within the State for five years, along with some other additional criteria. We have had 35 educators collect that 25 percent.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

That actively teaching part would help us. Please provide that information.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER:

How is the Department tracking and reconciling its grant awards to ensure funding from scholarship recipients who dropped out of the program are reallocated to new recipients?

JEFF BRISKE (Director, Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement, Nevada Department of Education):

Funds for those students who either complete the program or separate from the program are reverted to the State, and that is tracked on an individual student

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basis. When those funds come back, we are able to recoup and reissue those as scholarships in the next fiscal year.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILLER:

How much funding is available that has been or could be reallocated into new scholarships; how much money are we talking about?

MR. BRISKE:

I do not have that information for this fiscal year, but I will get that to you. The total from when the scholarship started in FY 2015-2016 to current is \$3.3 million in reverted unused tuition from those who either completed or separated.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Since the Executive Budget initially included the additional positions, such as social workers, nurses, mental health professionals, counselors and school psychologists for the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program, which is now not being recommended, should the enhancement funding amount of \$3.2 million be reduced?

MS. EBERT:

With the educator shortage, I would not recommend reducing this. Even though there is still a need in those areas, at the beginning of the school year we had 1,976 long-term substitutes. We need to fill those classrooms with licensed educators.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

My concern is that while I absolutely agree we need to have the licensed educators in the classrooms, I worry about deleting the mental health professionals. I am saying that in a very broad category, so I am not listing them all.

SENATOR CANNIZZARO:

Regarding the \$20.7 million in federal funding for the IPT Grant Program, do you anticipate fully expending that funding prior to the expiration of the grant funds?

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MS. EBERT:

We believe there is probably \$1.5 million that will not be expended by the September 30, 2023, timeframe. We are in the process of reallocating those dollars to projects that will be able to expend the funds by September 30, 2023.

SENATOR CANNIZZARO:

Can that money go to additional programs and be within the obligation spending deadlines for those other programs?

MS. EBERT:

Yes.

SENATOR CANNIZZARO:

Do you have any idea what those other programs are or might be?

MS. EBERT:

We are exploring several different things. We have an Interim Finance Committee request for the April 6, 2023, meeting and if approved, that is one of the areas where those dollars would go.

SENATOR CANNIZZARO:

How does the Department ensure the recipients of the IPT Grant Program obtain their teaching licenses and obtain employment in a public school in Nevada?

MS. EBERT:

Part of the acceptance of the funds is that they do attain their license and teach in a Nevada school for two years.

SENATOR CANNIZZARO:

What is the Department doing to make sure that actually happens for the licensing and then getting that subsequent employment?

MS. EBERT:

We have a process in place. We are following the same process for the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program, as it aligned with this program.

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SENATOR CANNIZZARO:

How does the IPT Grant Program differ from the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program, either in application or in administration? Where are you seeing differences?

MS. EBERT:

I will start with the IPT Grant Program and then I will have my team go into the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program. When we looked at the data for persons who complete the program in the education pipeline, working with higher education institutions, we saw students get to their third year and many of them were not completing. The reason is, in the teaching profession, people quit their jobs for 12 weeks and do their internship with no pay. People cannot afford to do that, especially in this environment. We made the scholarships, up to \$8,400, available for those most in need through the IPT Grant Program. We worked with higher education institutions to identify those students and then those dollars specifically were for the last year, for those who are almost across the finish line, but for one reason or another could not make it because of funds. They are here in our State. That is how that program came about because the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program is a longer term scholarship.

MR. STATUCKI:

The Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching Grant Program tuition awards are focused on students who are in traditional programs and are enrolled in their final three semesters within their traditional licensure pathway. The Teach Nevada Scholarship Program is open to not only students in the traditional pathway but also through alternative routes to licensure. Funds from the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program and the IPT Grant Program can be braided by students in some programs to help maximize the support for students.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Has there been any discussion about requiring those students to teach more than two years? When we talk about the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), it is usually a five-year piece. Those of us who have been in education know it truly takes more than two years to craft our skill. I worry about the two-year period being just short enough for someone to think, they will do this and then if they do not like it, they will move on and not give

themselves enough time to know that piece. Has there been any discussion about increasing that timeline?

MS. EBERT:

When the program first started, to quickly get the money out the door for the first set of students, we did not have that requirement. Even though we spoke about the requirement, it did not make it into the contract with the higher education institutions. When we added that requirement into the allocation of those funds, we actually lost two institutions who made the determination not to participate. The discussion beyond two years has not happened.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

I will go back to WICHE. We are giving funding. I know that we desperately need teachers, but we are also giving out money. I would like to see if there is a timeline that works, and if it is two years, it is two years. When you award scholarships, there is always something, whether it is grades, playing basketball, teaching for two years, or being a veterinarian for four or five years, there is always some stipulation with funding.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BACKUS:

Regarding the IPT Grant Program, there was one contract position equivalent to an education programs professional to manage that program, but that funding expires in September 2023. What staff is going to administer the IPT Grant Program? Are you considering having existing staff who administer the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program assume this work?

MR. BRISKE:

For the staff member funded using the ESSER dollars, most of her duties are setting up a Statewide coordinating system for teacher recruitment and retention. She formed the Nevada Coalition for Educator Recruitment and Retention using human resource directors from the districts, and that coalition reports directly to the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force.

Staff currently running the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program also assist with the day to day effort on the IPT Grant Program. That also includes the management analyst that we have in our office.

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ASSEMBLYWOMAN BACKUS:

Will the work being done by the staff member funded with ESSER funds have to be carried out by someone else? Is that what you are saying?

MR. BRISKE:

We would like to continue that work on teacher recruitment and retention. We do that work through other areas in our office. The work will continue but probably not at its current level.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BACKUS:

Are any statutory changes needed to carry out the IPT Grant Program? How does the Department or the Office of the Governor, Office of Finance plan to request those statutory changes?

MS. EBERT:

I am not aware of any changes needed at this time.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BACKUS:

According to my documentation, the Department indicated statutory changes to *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 391A would be needed to implement the recommendation including allowing funding from the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program account to be used for stipends, in addition to scholarships.

MS. EBERT:

I will research that and provide you an answer.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN BACKUS:

How were the recommended amounts for the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program and the IPT Grant Program determined for each year of the 2023-2025 biennium?

MS. EBERT:

We have the Teach Nevada Scholarship Program and IPT Grant Program. Those dollars are directed at two different groups with two different needs. Understanding context, what seems reasonable, and what everyone would agree to, we needed to find the balance between the two. That is how the \$10 million per fiscal year request came about.

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CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

Do any of our foundation or other members of our communities Statewide, not just Clark County, assist or help with this?

MS. EBERT:

We are very fortunate that during the entire pandemic nonprofits have stepped up to help in many different ways. Specifically, the Public Education Foundation has stepped up, helping with UNLV and the Paraprofessional Program. They have dedicated time, money, and resources in that area. That is a program we work with.

I was speaking most recently with NASA and its groups bringing in additional resources. You have Teach for America, and there is a plethora of nonprofits stepping up to help close the gap. We had a conversation with another nonprofit that wants to come in that has helped in other states, specifically in Illinois and New Mexico. There are many people here that call Nevada home now who want to help in this area.

CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

We have community partnerships. We will close our budget hearing and move into public comment.

RENE CANTU (Executive Director, Jobs for Nevada's Graduates):

With your help, we have helped 19,676 students to graduate and find a career pathway since we started. I am here this morning simply to request a budget amendment for restoration of our 14 percent COVID-19 budget cut and a small inflationary adjustment to preserve existing programs. That is our need in order to move forward.

CHRIS DALY (Nevada State Education Association):

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, educators left their jobs in record numbers due to low pay and severely low morale. With only a few months left in the school year, there are still thousands of school vacancies, with many more positions being covered by long-term substitutes or in some of our rural areas, privately contracted virtual teachers. The educator shortage will only get worse this summer.

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This is why Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) consistently articulates what Nevada must do to address this crisis as Time for 20. That means a 20 percent educator raise, a \$20 minimum wage for those who make schools run and reaching an average class size of 20 students.

The COVID-19 pandemic clearly worsened Nevada's crisis in educator vacancies. In response to these impacts, our national union was the loudest voice for significant federal investment in public education. We wrote hundreds of thousands of messages and placed thousands of calls to representatives advocating for Congress to pass this largest ever investment in Nevada schools. The National Education Association also made sure language was included in the federal law so school districts could prioritize educator pay and NSEA advocated for this use in the Nevada State plan.

Only about 40 percent of all federal relief dollars have been budgeted for staff, despite staff being the most significant line item in every school budget. Most federal funds for staff have paid for supplementing education like paying for summer school or adding positions. Expenditures on retention efforts have largely been limited to one-time or two-time retention incentives. While these bonuses are nice, they have proven largely ineffective at reducing our educator vacancies. Even though they control a small percentage of the overall federal dollars, the NDE has done little on the issue of retention. Accountability starts at the top.

The good news is there are resources available: \$700 million in unspent ESSER funds, \$733 million recommended for the Education Stabilization Account reserve, and \$1.6 billion is recommended for the Rainy Day Fund. We have the resources right now to deliver Time for 20. Tomorrow, you will be meeting to demand accountability from school districts. Today educators across the State demand the same of you.

RACHEL DRAKE:

I am a school counselor in Reno. In 2020, I was recognized for my work and named Nevada School Counselor of the Year. I am here to talk about our kids.

In my more than 25 years in education, I have watched our family struggles grow. In 2000, 33 percent of our Nevada children were eligible for the Free or

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Reduced-Price Lunch Program. In 2019, that number had ballooned to 65 percent of our school children and with the start of the pandemic, things have only become worse. We have continued to see increases in homelessness and evictions. I can tell you straight off my caseload, the number of children that I am seeing who have recently lost a primary caregiver has more than tripled.

Children are walking into our buildings with levels of anxiety and depression symptoms I have never seen. We take these kids and we push them into a school with a counselor who probably has 450 kids on their caseload. We throw them into a classroom with 35 other children and a teacher that has some training on how to support their anxiety and depression.

Honestly, let us be real, we are lucky right now if we have somebody in there who is certified to teach. Twenty percent of the teachers in my buildings are long-term substitutes. We are supporting our students with staff who are paid \$9.99 an hour with no benefits, or maybe they have been working for us for 10 years and they are now paid \$12.85 an hour, still with no benefits.

My colleagues and I need help. We need support, and I do not mean that we need millions to go into a Rainy Day Fund and millions to go into a fund to support school mental health. I mean that we need a dramatic and immediate increase in general funding, so school districts can reduce class sizes, create appropriate service loads and pay people a reasonable amount so they stay in education rather than walking away from years of training, including training from many of the initiatives you have discussed today. I love working in public education. I hate what we are doing to children in Nevada.

RYAN SMALL:

I am a high school English teacher in Washoe County for one of only two Title I high schools in Senator Seevers Gansert's district where I am also a voter. I am a member of the Washoe Education Association (WEA). I have a Bachelor of Arts in English literature from University of California, Berkeley; a teaching credential master's equivalency; and am a proud father of a student in this district. I am highly qualified and considered highly effective. Not only that, but I love what I do, because I believe in students, and I do so by providing them with opportunities.

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I come here today to speak on behalf of certified and classified colleagues across the State who believe in students. I came here today to speak about opportunities that many of you in this chamber have been given. Opportunities and education that without which would stymie innovation needed to put Nevada back on the map towards a robust economy.

I know that you do not need a reminder of the abysmal conditions students are attending school in, nor someone to rattle off figures about student performance, the largest class sizes in the Nation, among the lowest per pupil funding, program cuts, critical needs spread thin and a lack of funding given to teachers. Rather, I am here today to talk about the opportunities I provide my students with, so that they may secure a brighter future for all Nevadans.

I work in an inner-city school, because I, too, thrived in an inner-city high school where I grew up, and those teachers provided me with opportunities; teachers like Mr. Scott, a graphic designer who provided me with skills and job training so that I could get a job and support my education; teachers who believed in my potential and gave me opportunities to focus on language club, deterring me from joining a gang; or who spent 20 minutes every day discussing job fairs and scholarship opportunities, putting me on a path to do the same for others.

Without these teachers who believed in me and gave me opportunities, I would not be here today detailing why I lack the resources to support and provide for my students and why I cannot provide for my own family of three. I have to choose between food insecurity and my six-year-old daughter, or bringing a bag of fruit to work to provide my students with a healthy snack.

I am here today because I can no longer provide opportunities to my students who struggle as I did, who come from broken homes, who are going through a severe mental health crisis, and who look to me for a safe space. This is why I am here today, to implore all of you to make a decisive action towards providing economic stability and opportunities for your community members. Now is the Time for 20.

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SHAUGHN RICHARDSON:

I am a member of the WEA. This is my eleventh year teaching. I teach social studies at Reno High School. I have a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's in education from the University of Nevada, Reno.

I am here to implore you to make history and properly fund Nevada's education for the first time ever. My entire experience with education in this State has been one of overcrowded schools and classrooms. When I moved here in 1992, I went to the brand-new Marvin Moss Elementary School in Sparks that was overcrowded on the first day it opened. As an eighth-grader, three years later, I went to the brand-new Mendive Middle School in Sparks, which again was overcrowded by over 300 students the day it opened. By the time I reached my junior year of high school, things were so bad at Reed High that we had a split schedule with some students starting at 7:00 a.m. and other students starting at 9:30 a.m. and attending school until 3:30 p.m.

At the age of 28, I changed careers and went back to school to become a teacher. My first job while in graduate school was at my former school, Mendive Middle School. I spent part of the day teaching in a converted storage closet in the cafeteria. When I started working full-time, two years later at Traner Middle School, I was lucky enough to have my own classroom, unlike several of my coworkers who did not and had to go from class to class, teaching off a cart or sharing a room in a converted office that was meant for one person, teaching 10 to 15 students in such a small space. Last year, I moved to Reno High School, and my new classroom is a converted computer lab that barely fits the 32 desks in it because it is so small. Again, I consider myself lucky because we have teachers teaching in the cafeteria, the theater and in the hallways.

At no point in the 30 years I have been involved in education in this State has there been proper funding and support for education. What message are we sending to the students? I thought it was a joke when I was a 17-year-old in high school and now 25 years later, I find it pathetic and appalling. How are students supposed to feel that education is important sitting in a storage closet? How are we supposed to keep teachers when they cannot even have their own classroom, let alone afford to buy a home in the city in which they teach?

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Now is the time to invest in our students, our teachers, and our support staff and to let people know education is valued in Nevada. Now is the time to put actions to word, to stand up and meet this moment in history. We have the money. The question is, do you have the courage and the will? The stakes are too high to delay.

MELISSA ROSE:

I am the mother to two Washoe County students, and I am also a history teacher at Sparks High School and a WEA representative. Senator Seevers Gansert, I am also a member of your district. Since my time is limited, I will get right to the point, our public schools are failing. I see it from every angle as a mom, as a teacher and as a future school leader.

Our substitute teachers make \$19 per hour. For perspective, that is how much my 16-year-old daughter makes at Five Guys Burgers and Fries. That is insulting. This low pay is across the board. Maintenance workers start at \$22 per hour, bus drivers \$18 per hour, nutrition services and custodial staff make \$14 per hour. These are not competitive wages, and it is no wonder we have so many vacancies. What happens when these vacancies remain unfilled? The people who remain are tasked with more jobs for their low pay or jobs just do not get done. Our classes are not clean, buildings are barely maintained, and parents have to figure out rides back and forth to school for their children. Some of them do not have the means to do so.

As teachers, we get to substitute during our prep periods, or we can combine two classes together and have 60 kids in one class, or we can have a kid from every third grade class assigned to a different classroom in the building, and we all work quietly in the back of the room with a book and a computer. They barely have access to their curriculum. None of these are good options, but these are the choices that our school leaders are tasked with every day. These are impossible decisions, and they are piecemeal solutions to systemic problems. These school leaders are also constantly refreshing their email to see if anybody has applied to the jobs that they posted. There was a time, when I first started working in this district where teacher jobs were competitive, multiple people applied, and they were all qualified candidates. No one wants to teach here anymore.

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We start our teachers at \$41,000 a year. I want you all to think about what that actually means, what that looks like. That means \$2,960 a month after taxes. Imagine living in Reno on \$2,960 a month. Imagine what kind of apartment you can afford to rent for yourself. I do not think that if you look on Zillow, you will find anything under \$900. These people cannot afford to live on their own. They cannot afford to stick with the profession that they went to school for. There is a huge turnover among our young teachers.

The only people who can afford to teach got in when the getting was good, and they bought houses before our housing market went up. They were able to build a nest egg when teacher pay was fair and when it kept up with inflation. Those people are retiring soon. They are leaving, and what will happen when they are gone? This system will implode on itself. We will not be able to sustain it anymore, and teachers will have to strike because there will not be enough of us to do so. Please fund education; please fund educators. The Time for 20 is right now.

CHYNA METZ-BANNISTER:

I am a member of the WEA. I have taught algebra at Sparks High School for two years, and I have been tutoring in math for 13 years. Do not do the math on that. I have two bachelor's degrees from the University of Nevada, Reno, through the Nevada Teach Program, one in secondary education and one in mathematics with a specialization in statistics.

During school I worked as a waitress, making about \$25 an hour with tips and I had at least two jobs at any given time to pay my tuition, so I could eventually support myself with one job and be able to afford to travel. I always wanted to but never could; working so much to pay my tuition. With two degrees under my belt, I left waiting tables and took a pay cut to teach future generations making less than a manager at Panda Express, as my students have so graciously pointed out. I wish I was making as much as I was when I thought I was broke as a university student.

I would love for my kids to be able to walk into my classroom during the winter time without feeling the need to wrap up in blankets to learn comfortably. I would also love for them to be able to get new books so they could stop

asking why Barack Obama went from President to Junior Senator, since that is what his current position is, according to the books they are using right now.

Last year we ranked forty-eighth in spending and forty-ninth in educational attainment. I know correlation does not always equal causation, and I do not know much about statistics, but wait, yes I do, because that is what one of my multiple degrees is in. Take it from someone who has been studying statistics for years and is now a teacher. That correlation is definitely not coincidental. Education has a huge return on investment, just like mining and gaming. Please show up for the people who will be running things in 25 years like we do every day.

SARAH NEGRETE (Director, Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program):

I want to share briefly what RPDPs do and the impact we have across the State. There are three RPDPs: one in the northeast, one in the south and one in the northwest. We provide professional learning in three broad categories. I have submitted a letter ([Exhibit E](#)) on behalf of myself and the other RPDPs in the State.

Instructional training includes workshops, courses for endorsements and courses that teachers need for renewal of their license. We also provide observation and mentoring services. Those typically look like expert coaches in the classroom working with teachers to refine exactly what they are hoping to refine in their own situation and context. We do that both live, virtually and via email. Sometimes when a teacher just wants to have a just-in-time question, they will email us. We also do much consulting and collaboration that includes working with the NDE. It includes working alongside our district and school leaders to plan and prepare what they need most for their teachers in their schools and contexts. The impact we have and the accountability of our programs is evidenced through the in-depth reports we provide every year. Each of those reports is aligned directly to the NRS and to the professional learning standards.

To address a few questions that came up earlier about the RPDPs, the overwhelming majority of the work that we do is ongoing throughout the school year, and it is aligned to the Nevada Professional Learning Standards. In

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addition, each of the RPDPs is involved in teacher retention efforts based on the requests we receive from the districts we serve.

We work side-by-side with the NDE. The Department requires each school to supply a school performance plan annually. It is through that continuous improvement process that we really step in and support our schools, in direct partnership with leaders in preparing those in some cases. In all cases, we ensure that our professional learning opportunities provided in schools are actually aligned to those schools' performance plans. That is just one example of how we work side by side with the NDE to make sure the work is moving forward in a way that is beneficial to the NDE, the schools and the students that we serve.

CHELLI SMITH (Director, Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program):

A 3 percent increase to our budget was submitted on our behalf; however, in light of the increases proposed under Senate Bill 231, we would request an additional enhancement consistent with the proposed raises. We do not receive this money; it goes to the districts. Our budget is fixed. If that number lands at 10 percent, it will cost the RPDPs \$394,867 per year to fund the increases negotiated and Public Employees' Retirement System and health related costs. A question came up about the 3 percent increase in 2019 that was directly on the salary line and an increase just like this. At that time, the Governor proposed an increase of 3 percent, and the RPDPs do not get it. We have to come out of our pocket for that increase, and so our budget was increased to include those funds.

**SENATE BILL 231**: Makes an appropriation to the Interim Finance Committee for allocation to school districts that budget salary increases for certain employees. (BDR S-508)

MATT WIEGAND:

I teach at a Washoe County middle school.

Imagine for a second that you are a boat worker and you love working on boats so much that you went to school and went into debt to become the best boat worker that you could be. You graduate from boat college; you get assigned to

a boat and you realized pretty quickly that boat is sinking. It is taking on water, and you put in extra time, extra money, your own money to try to fix this boat. It does not work. You turn to your superiors and you say, "Hey guys, I need some help, I need some more funding, I need some more people to work on this boat." They say "Well, we will not give you that. What we will require is that you will help the boats' test scores and that you have a boat ready to sail by 3:00 p.m." That does not work. It does not address the problem at all. You go, because you are dedicated.

You go back to work as hard as you can on that boat. It still sinks, goes under the water, but you love working on this thing. You are not going to let it just sink. So you tie rope to the boat and the other end of the rope to yourself. You are going to pull this rope, and pull this boat back up. Of course it starts pulling you down and you are drowning, essentially. The water is up to your chin, you are sputtering, you are coughing, you are not going to make it. You have to cut this rope and then somebody comes up to you and they are holding a lifejacket in their hand and you say, "Hey, can you throw me that lifejacket? I am literally drowning in front of you." They look back and they say "Oh sorry, this life jacket is for a rainy day."

If you understand this, I am guessing you graduated or you passed seventh-grade English, so you understand metaphors. That is just how I feel right now, and it is how every one of my colleagues that I talked to feels; we are drowning. We need your help desperately. I implore you all to take up the Time for 20 movement and to pass the Respect for Teachers Act.

RACHEL STEPINA:

I work as a part-time bilingual interventionist and teacher aide at Jessie Beck Elementary School in Washoe County. I also work as the Preschool Development Grant Birth through 5 grant manager in the NDE Office of Early Learning and Development. However, I am calling today as a private citizen.

I would like to share important considerations surrounding dual language education in the State of Nevada in support of the pilot immersion funding as a specific set of funding that allows for the asset-based additive instruction models that differ from ESL and ELL models. I appreciate the many additive linguistic and cultural considerations that have come up during this conversation

today. Language is the core of all of our identities, impacting how we think, read, write, dream, communicate and build relationships with others. Our multilingual students deserve the opportunity to develop academically in both of their languages and graduate with the Seal of Biliteracy.

I received my master's in education and bilingual early childhood education, first through third grade, from an out-of-state institution because no such training program is available in Nevada. I have researched dual language education for more than a decade, including a recent culminating case study at Jessie Beck Elementary, Nevada's longest operating dual language education program, which began in the 2008 school year.

My two young children attend this immersion program at Jessie Beck Elementary, and I have a preschooler who will also attend. A group of parents from Jessie Beck Elementary formed four years ago with the mission to support and advocate for the development of biliterate, bilingual and culturally responsive school programs by promoting high levels of academic achievement and fostering diversity within the dual language program in our community.

Through our group's 14 years of experience, in both successes and supporting our students, we have found that our most consistent challenges stem from a lack of dedicated funding and policy that supports a well-developed infrastructure from the district and State level. Dual language education programs need specific funding because bilingual education is different than English only education. Funding for ELL with an English only approach is not sufficient. Simple examples of funding differences include resources such as ample access to library books written in the languages spoken by students at the school; funding specific intervention tools and strategies based in bilingual learning, not solely on English acquisition, and specific leadership and teacher training opportunities designed to support dual language teaching.

Our bilingual teachers do double the work, teaching in both languages, and never get additional pay for sharing this asset with our students. We need funding and dedicated allocations to retain highly qualified bilingual teachers who have been prepared to deliver instruction in two languages. Research by Thomas and Collier has proven dual language education to be the most effective evidence-based, long-term and structural approach to actually bridge and close

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the academic achievement gap for English learners to their monolingual peers, approaching more equitable access for all children in our State to graduate high school prepared for college or career.

There are many action-based education focus groups and individuals working to support increasing access to dual language education programs in our State, from higher education, support and family engagement. It always comes down to funding, policy and infrastructure or the lack thereof. I hope that my children can continue their bilingual academic education in our State in a well implemented continuum of vertically aligned elementary, middle and high schools adequately funded by our State.

SILVINA JOVER:

I am a dual language bilingual education social studies teacher at Desert Pines High School in Clark County. I currently teach International Relations to freshman and U.S. Government to seniors. I teach these classes in Spanish. I am also a PhD candidate at UNLV, and my research is in bilingualism and language policy. More notably, I am the product of bilingual education in Uruguay.

I am calling to speak about B/A 101-2699 which makes reference to the allocation of funding to pilot a dual language program. I have been working in dual language for nine years, since my beginning as an educator, first in the state of Mississippi and now in Nevada for the last seven years. Generally speaking, one of the biggest challenges of moving into a language acquisition program that is asset-based such as dual language, and moving away from subtractive programs, such as English as a Second Language, is precisely establishing the difference in frameworks and purposes of the various models of language acquisition.

I kindly ask the Committees to bear in mind that dual language is not the same as ESL, teaching a second language, ELL programs and similar. The money must be allocated to programs that honor the four pillars of bilingual education: critical consciousness, bilingualism and biliteracy, grade level achievement and socio-cultural competence.

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This dual language education model's intent is stated in its handbook, "In partnership with families and the community, the Clark County School District offers students within the dual language program opportunities to use the full linguistic and cultural repertoires to engage in constant rich multilingual and multicultural learning across the curriculum. Students receive high quality grade level content instruction in a supportive environment guided by research and from practices resulting in linguistic intercultural and academic proficiency." Let this serve as a guideline at the time of disbursing the money to the asking program.

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CHAIR DONDERO LOOP:

There is no additional public comment. We are adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Marie Bell,  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Chair

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

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Assemblywoman Shea Backus, Chair

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

<b>EXHIBIT SUMMARY</b>				
<b>Bill</b>	<b>Exhibit Letter</b>	<b>Introduced on Minute Report Page No.</b>	<b>Witness / Entity</b>	<b>Description</b>
	A	1		Agenda
	B	1		Attendance Roster
	C	3	Megan Peterson / Nevada Department of Education	Nevada Department of Education Budget Presentation
	D	11	Megan Peterson / Nevada Department of Education	Budget Amendment A232542699
	E	40	Sarah Negrete / Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program	Public Comment Regional Professional Development Program by Dr Sarah Negrete Director