MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Eighty-third Session
June 1, 2025

The Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Angela D. Taylor at 2:50 p.m. on Sunday, June 1, 2025, in Room 2134 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 7 of the Nevada Legislature Hearing Rooms, 7120 Amigo Street, 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 Angela D. Taylor, Chair
Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Vice Chair
Senator Fabian Doñate
Senator Michelee Cruz-Crawford
Senator Carrie Ann Buck
Senator Robin L. Titus
Senator Lori Rogich

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblymember Heather Goulding, Assembly District No. 27

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jen Sturm-Gahner, Committee Policy Analyst
Alberto Quintero, Committee Policy Analyst
Cameron Newton, Committee Counsel
Sharon McCallen, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Dylan Shaver, Washoe County School District
Amelia Thibault, Management Analyst III Division Compliance, Nevada Department of Education
Steve Canavero, Interim Superintendent, Nevada Department of Education
Calen Evans, President, Washoe Education Association

Sarah Adler, Public Charter Coalition of Northern Nevada
Mary Pierczynski, Nevada Association of School Superintendents

CHAIR TAYLOR:
I will open the hearing on Assembly Bill (A.B.) 386.

ASSEMBLY BILL 386 (3rd Reprint): Revises provisions relating to assessments administered to pupils to assess reading proficiency. (BDR 34-828)

ASSEMBLYMEMBER HEATHER GOULDING (Assembly District No. 27):
Assembly Bill 386 gives school districts the ability to choose a K-3 reading assessment tool that works best for the students, families and schools in the district. I am sponsoring this bill because currently, students in Washoe County School District (WCSD) are taking two sets of assessments, one required by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) and the other that provides more actionable information for teachers and parents.

My personal goal is to reduce the amount of time that students are spending in assessments while still collecting information necessary for the schools. This bill will cut the testing time in half for WCSD students. My neighborhood's kids will be measurably affected by this bill.

DYLAN SHAVER (Washoe County School District):
As you know, our Read By Grade 3 (RBG3) laws require a form of common assessment for students across the district to make sure they are making progress in reading. This is a goal we all share. In 2021-2022, WCSD found that the standardized system under state law that NDE prescribes simply was not working for staff, administration and especially for the kiddos. So, they sent out a request for proposal (RFP) for an alternative method of assessment. That assessment came back, and we call it i-Ready Assessment (i-Ready) around the district. I am really trying not to get into the pros and cons of the various platforms of this. We simply found that the other platform worked better for our community.

The district went to NDE for a waiver to say, "We found an assessment that works a little better for us." The Department of Education said, "The law does not allow us to waive you from our current standard of assessment." In working with NDE to try and find other ways to make sure we are limiting the

instructional time that goes toward testing and test prep, we just could not get there without coming to this building.

What you have before you today is a law that changes the structure for the RBG3 assessment. It devolves the authority to select an assessment to the districts, while still requiring NDE to establish regulations and parameters for the data those assessments must collect and the bars those assessments have to clear. This simply says that NDE creates the regulations to say, "This is what you have to get from your assessments," rather than prescribing an individual assessment.

The bill goes further to say that NDE may still select a common form of assessment for those districts that do not want to opt in to their own. They are budgeting for this currently and are in negotiations over the bill. The Department of Education brought up that if districts are opting not to use the statewide assessment, there may be significant savings to the State. If there are savings to the State, they recommended the dollars saved end up being awarded back to the districts in support of their reading programs. We very much appreciate the NDE helping us get to this point on this measure. We could not have done it without their support. To recap, this has just devolved some authority to select the manner of assessment but must still meet the standards set by NDE, which we can then use to assess our kiddos.

SENATOR DOÑATE:
I just want to understand more as to why. Can you dive a little bit into the background? If I am understanding the bill correctly, it would allow the districts to determine what assessment fits their needs. Am I understanding the policy correctly?

MR. SHAVER:
That is correct.

SENATOR DOÑATE:
One could argue, if that is the case, it would make it difficult to track performance from district-to-district because you are using different standards. How do you defend against that argument? If there's a standard in place that all the districts follow, then you can track performance. But if there are different assessments being made, it makes that even more difficult. How would you defend that scenario?

MR. SHAVER:
There are two responses to that. The first one is that there are not 1,000 vendors in this space. There are a handful that do these assessments nationally and conversion factors already exist from one test score to another. This makes sure that when you compare students, you are getting a comparison of apples-to-apples. That said, this particular data is not used in that manner. These are typically used insularly to track individual kids within a district to measure their progress on reading, rather than to compare them to districts across county lines. We believe, and we have worked with the NDE who believe, that there is a conversion measure that can be implemented via regulation. At the same time, we do not believe that there will be data lost in the manner that you describe.

CHAIR TAYLOR:
The NDE is here. Come on up because that is a part of the concern shared by others—the consistency across districts.

AMELIA THIBAULT (Management Analyst III Division Compliance, Nevada Department of Education):
The language proposed in the bill is that the State Board of Education (SBE) would develop a list of eligible assessments that districts could then opt in to. This bill goes into effect July 1, 2025, but we would not necessarily be [ready by] the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year. Schools selecting other assessments [means] we have to set up the regulations that [set] the standards any literacy assessment needs to meet. We would then need to interrogate and identify which of those assessments are going to meet our standards. Then the NDE has to set, by regulation and in policy, the cut score for each of those assessments.

I think there was the intention for an implementation and comparison study. I believe we do have some data about the relationship between the current RBG3 assessment, called Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), and the assessment that Washoe uses. The purpose is really for us as an agency to set those [scores] that will meet the same standards. Then we do extensive research in order to set the cut scores for each of those. We set regulations that determine how that reporting is provided to us so that we can ensure comparability.

SENATOR CRUZ-CRAWFORD:
Right now, we use MAP. I appreciate that the intent of the bill is to reduce the load of [test] taking. We do not want our kids to test indefinitely. For RBG3, our students take their MAP test in the fall, winter and spring. I did look to see what the conversion charts were from i-Ready. I think that would be an easy conversion. My concern is, when we have different assessments, that we're making sure that there's no curve in that and that our kids are really hitting those benchmarks, and we are able to compare. What kind of data do you have in that curve between those conversions?

MS. THIBAULT:
I believe we are still gathering some of that data. It will be going into both the implementation study and as we go through the process of setting cut scores. This is something that we collaborated on rather late in session, but I think very productively. We do believe that there is comparability to be had. Some other states … I want to say Mississippi has something similar in that you can choose your literacy assessments, and they have a validated list which you can select from. They have a relationship set up between each of those for comparability. Unfortunately, the answer is that we are still gathering that data. I think, as we move forward into developing a list of qualified assessments, that could be used for what the cut scores would be. We would have to have strong evidence and data to support any metrics that we set.

SENATOR CRUZ-CRAWFORD:
I know we already have our statewide assessment, which is the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). Even though it is not a growth assessment, because we do not have it three times a year, it could fill in some of those gaps.

I think this sounds really great for districts, but is it really good for the State? How do we make sure that we are able to compare districts to districts? I just want to get my concern on the record. I am pretty sure you are going to talk about how we do have that state yearly assessment. I really do not want to over-test my kids; my students do dual language, so they are tested in English MAP and Spanish MAP. If we had a different assessment that we went to, it would be an additional assessment. I get the intent. I really appreciate it. I hope we can get to a place that meets both the district needs and the State needs to make sure that our students are meeting those growth goals.

MR. SHAVER:
From the district perspective, the value in the RBG3 assessments happening three times per year, and in that MAP Assessment—as you know, I do not want to say better than anybody else on this committee because we have many educators here—is that it allows the teacher to respond to what is happening in their own classroom. From the district's perspective, [there is] value in the multiple touches throughout the year. The statewide empirical data is not going to do much for intervention between fall and winter. When looking at how to approach this particular exam at the Washoe level, the district evaluated what was the most useful feedback to those kids' instructors and to their families.

If we had more time, I would walk you through the MAP results paper. In the experience of the district, I do not want to necessarily throw any vendor under the bus, but the i-Ready Assessments were simply more valuable for the teachers. They provide a clearer course of action based on what students results were and, frankly, as a parent, the feedback is clearer and more usable for us as well. That was the experience of WCSD. We believed that in our time working with NDE and getting to this place that we can still uphold those standards set by the State, while providing that flexibility to our personnel and their families.

MS. THIBAULT:
I just want to get it on the record. We do still have the RBG3 assessment that is for federal reporting. That is our SBAC that hits a bunch of grades; I can't remember them all right now. In terms of meeting the federal standards for comparability, in terms of our assessments and our reporting and our accountability system, we would still be meeting those. This is a change in terms of additional state [testing] for the Nevada RBG3.

SENATOR CRUZ-CRAWFORD:
That just sparked another question. The reason why I am pressing is I want to get this right. With MAP, we use that for kindergarten and Grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. I am just thinking about elementary school here and staying in my wheelhouse. We do not actually have statewide comparable data until Grades 3, 4 and 5, as SBAC is required. Just flagging that for your information because it is RBG3; where growth starts getting monitored in kindergarten.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:
One of the things that I am worried about is first, the Department shall in section 1, adopt regulations. There was a "shall" there and then you put a "shall" in subsection 3, paragraph (a). I was trying to figure out why you changed that. Can you explain that? What I am talking about is on lines 6 and 7 on page 3.

MR. SHAVER:
That is not a new shall, you can see that we just moved it down a line and that is because we are creating a list. The net effect is that the NDE always had to adopt regulations and that remains the same. In subsection 3, paragraphs (b) and (c), which are optional things, each school district can essentially opt out and then establish regulations about what those tests are.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:
When I see "may prescribe one or more valid and reliable standards-based statewide assessments," I agree. I do not want kids being tested more, but I wonder if this would be better as a one-year pilot until the NDE sets the standards and regulations since the effective date is July 1. Rather than codifying the whole thing, do a one-year pilot? I was just trying to process a compromise possibly.

MS. THIBAULT:
I think the way we have it set up right now is that no school … for example, Washoe in the fall, assuming that the SBE put it into regulation, that would make it rather quickly after session. Throughout the fall, we would develop that list of assessments, develop cut scores and then we would begin doing our implementation studies. The earliest, if we managed to move quickly with the State Board, would probably [mean] that, if Washoe is currently doing two reading assessments, that in the spring, they might be able to do only the assessment of their choice after we have set those standards. That would mean that, as we move into the following year, and especially in the 2026-2027 school year, the SBE is resoliciting for the RBG3 assessment contract that was put out for another year.

Through the 2025-2026 school year, we still have MAP as our state assessment. They could then opt in or opt out of that. I think 2026-2027 is really going to be the first year when we have more widespread use or opt in. I would like to think that we would be able [to begin] in the spring. As Washoe

moves to providing only the one assessment, we would be able to start getting good preliminary data on what those differences are in order for us to be informed for the 2026-2027 school year. I think there is a delay and kind of an on ramp to the process.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:
I was thinking that we are waiting for the SBE to make those decisions. Maybe a one-year pilot of this could be done and by then, the SBE would choose their test and then you could move forward from there. By then, we are probably back here [in session], and we could revisit this conversation, as opposed to just kind of throwing the baby out with the bathwater right now.

MS. THIBAULT:
Just to confirm, you are looking at the 2026-2027 school year when we would have certain schools opt in or opt out? That would be a pilot year before it goes permanently into a statute?

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:
When is the SBE going to choose the test?

MS. THIBAULT:
They will likely choose it in the fall or spring to be effective for the 2026-2027 school year.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:
That is what I was thinking. If they are going to choose it for the 2026-2027 school year, then between now and then, that is a whole school year. They would have the option if it was a pilot to try it. Then when they come back in the 2026-2027 school year, the SBE would have made that decision and then we would all have to move forward so that we have some consistency, but also some flexibility.

MR. SHAVER:
I think it is a meritorious idea. I do want to point out for the committee that, for more than a year now, the Department has had an RFP open to switch the manner of common assessment that we use. I do not want to throw anybody under the bus, but that RFP actually came back, and the committee recommended i-Ready, which is WSCD's current form of assessment. I am not qualified nor interested in getting into comparisons between vendors here, but I

can tell you that when that, rollout started to occur, not every district was on board or could do it. We are sort of in this position to force districts to retrain their staff; and as a WCSD representative, I am part of the Association of School Superintendents, and I can tell you that of the 17 superintendents, we had 17 different ways of handling that particular issue.

Lyon County, I believe, does i-Ready and they are stuck in the same situation here. The SBE, after getting that feedback from superintendents, decided to push out the process for another year and keep everybody in this holding pattern. We assume that after a year, there will be a result and they'll be done. I would caution you against connecting those things in that way because the SBE has already deferred its decision here and it is not very clear, at least on the district side, how that process resolves.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:
That would be my suggestion to have some consistency. Otherwise, I personally feel like—as somebody who does understand these products and has trained on these products within school districts, including Washoe and Clark [Counties]—that to throw the baby out with the bathwater and just move forward is a really hard decision. I think the one-year pilot could buy some time and allow some flexibility for your ask. Then when we are back here in 2027, if that is not working, we can revisit this. That is one of the things that is truly a good thing about us only meeting every other year. Sometimes we can try things in a pilot in a regulation without codifying something into law, so we can see what works best for kids and school districts.

SENATOR ROGICH:
I am trying to get an understanding about this opt out process. If I understand the law correctly, under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), there is a specific mandate that you must identify and assess students. If a district can opt out of this assessment that typically is used statewide, then who has the oversight? Who ensures that they are actually protecting the children? Because you are going to cut back on the number of times that you are assessing, am I correct on that?

MR. SHAVER:
A couple of points. One, this is an entirely separate beast than the assessments required by IDEA. This is strictly as it relates to Nevada's RBG3 laws. There's no alignment there. In terms of the opt out process, I perhaps misspoke when I

said that. Really what we are doing here is empowering the NDE to provide options to districts by way of a menu. There is still an assessment that has to occur, and NDE still has the role of collecting data and making sure that districts are doing what they are supposed to do.

SENATOR ROGICH:
If I am understanding you correctly, you are saying that there is no alignment with the federal civil rights laws that protect these children?

MR. SHAVER:
The prescription from federal law is to assess students. There are already tests that NDE requires us to do with SBAC and other forms of assessment that would still continue. This just changes the RBG3 assessment from one assessment to another.

SENATOR ROGICH:
Just to reconfirm, NDE, you will have the responsibility of oversight ensuring that they are assessing and finding these children?

MS. THIBAULT:
Yes, all of our federal assessment statutes and regulations will remain in place. When there is a diversity of choice in terms of the RBG3 assessment, it is still mandatory. It will meet certain standards, and it will have been set by the SBE in those terms. I do believe that, yes, we do not have any concerns over federal noncompliance with those provisions.

SENATOR BUCK:
Being a practitioner myself, I have yet to meet a teacher that sees value in the MAP assessment when you are doing the i-Ready. How does the department currently use the MAP assessments? We never really looked at them. I am [thinking] of interims so that teachers know what to teach after they assess and use them in a practical way. When MAP was thrown in the mix too, along with the WIDA [World Class Instructional Design and Assessment] Consortium for our ELL kids and all of that, it just becomes overassessment. What I was wondering is how does the Department currently use MAP scores?

STEVE CANAVERO (Interim Superintendent, Nevada Department of Education):
Currently, the state assessment is MAP, as you all have identified. It is used to identify the threshold by the State at which a student would qualify for

additional services under the RBG3 Act. We need to have a way of identifying students at the state level. Historically, that is been through one assessment, MAP, as it has been identified by the SBE.

We've heard quite a bit of consideration for other assessments. We appreciate the bill sponsor and her hard work in trying to find out how you create more than one assessment that could be established by the State and still maintain the continuity of a standard across different assessments used by districts so that we know the right students are receiving the additional supports for RBG3.

SENATOR BUCK:
Does MAP show growth and percentile growth like i-Ready would?

MR. CANAVERO:
My understanding is that it does. Presently, what we understand is that there are districts—and, in particular, one district—that want to utilize i-Ready. In the last five weeks, I have been talking to the superintendents about the decision that was recently made by the SBE. The rural districts were using MAP and really liked using it. The bill sponsor worked with us to try to figure out if we can still have economies of scale and supports for the rurals that they are currently getting through the State's contract with MAP. [That is, to continue] assessment in MAP while also providing another path for districts who wish to go in a different direction so long as that [new path] meets the criteria and the standards, which are rigorous, and the State is able to then establish that line, equivalent to the MAP line, for students around literacy interventions. To my understanding, MAP also does growth so you can track progress, not just nominal outcome on a particular scale.

CHAIR TAYLOR:
Walk us through how this would look based upon the second reprint. How would this look in terms of continuing to use i-Ready? Using i-Ready versus the other assessments from a state standpoint. What would this look like?

MR. SHAVER:
For the time being, if this bill were to pass today, it would look just how it looks now in Washoe County. We would continue to provide the measures of academic progress, the MAP exam and continue to use the i-Ready assessment, which the district prefers. Nothing changes for anybody right away; NDE would

have to go into a rulemaking process. They would have to determine what those cut scores are before they could start offering options to districts.

CHAIR TAYLOR:
I do not mean how does it look now. I mean, how would it look should the bill pass? What do you envision this being?

MR. CANAVERO:
The SBE would still have an assessment that they could contract for at the state level. We would like to have, and I think the bill allows for this, that the SBE can continue. This way we have scale, savings and supports for the majority of the school districts. The SBE would then take on the responsibility of identifying eligible assessments. What could another choice be other than the state contract? Let's pretend that that is i-Ready for today. We would have a state contract for MAP and then we would have an eligible i-Ready assessment. We would go into rule making and determine what the score would be on the i-Ready that is equivalent to the MAP score currently established by the SBE. Once that is established, then districts would be able to utilize the eligible assessment for the following school year rather than the state's assessment.

We have money to support the state contract. The bill also contemplates a means to provide districts, if they do not come on to the state contract, to have a proportional share of the balance that remains in that particular fund. [That is] as long as it is not more than the proportional share for the other districts who go on to the state's contract.

CHAIR TAYLOR:
I wanted to know what it would look like if this should be passed and that helped me very much. Then schools would get to choose. I am considering in my mind as well, if a pilot makes more sense from a timing standpoint? When do you think the SBE would be in a position to say, “Hey, you screened some other options, and there may be other vendors that are there.” There’s probably not a million of them, but there may be a handful of them and then be able to determine which scores are equivalent. How long of a process do you think the SBE may need for that?

MR. CANAVERO:
Maybe call this the neighbor’s provision. How quickly can this happen? We just went through a procurement process for the RBG3 assessment. Through that

process, state procurement identified an additional vendor besides the current vendor that the SBE is going with for this next year. They are waiting after this legislative session to then reconsider or look at the assessment decisions they have to make in the landscape of what has changed through this legislative session. The SBE is going to revisit it. Let's just say we have already done an RFP and i-Ready was one of those assessments that was included in the result. The SBE could identify that i-Ready is an eligible assessment. Then we would need the time to go through the number crunching and to get into a room and figure out what the right cut score is that matches the reading interventions. As soon as that is in the bill, and I believe it allows for it, as soon as that happens, both eligible and cut score-identified, then it could be used.

Theoretically, you could have it in this next school year—double testing the first quarter, maybe the first half of the year, for a district who's choosing to also do an assessment in addition to the state assessment. Then they could turn off the state assessment, let us say mid-year, and continue with the eligible and cut score that has been approved by the SBE. I would say it is the absolute fastest that could probably occur. More likely than not, we would probably stand this up in the second year of the biennium.

CHAIR TAYLOR:
That explains why there would be no fiscal note because they would utilize existing monies that are already there unless it exceeds that amount.

CALEN EVANS (President, Washoe Education Association):
To just touch on a couple of points that were brought up, Senator Rogich, the data that we use currently for special education is a platform called aimsweb. It is the assessments that we use for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students who could possibly be eligible for special education. It is a different platform. I would just like to say that we do progress monitoring for aimsweb for special education. We have MAP testing; we have i-Ready testing in Washoe County, we have SBAC testing. Then we do all the actual curriculum-based assessments for math and reading. Each of those have an end-of-the-unit assessment, a pre-assessment, plus a midpoint assessment. We are drastically overassessing our students holistically in education.

In terms of this bill specifically, we do know that we need to have a bill for state assessment. All of the educators I have spoken to, when they talk about the assessment portions of i-Ready versus something like MAP, the i-Ready data

is more tangible for them to make informed decisions in the classroom. That is what data is supposed to be about. It is supposed to be about using it to influence instruction, to provide targeted supports for students. That is really what we are looking at when we talk about our assessments.

SARAH ADLER (Public Charter Coalition of Northern Nevada):
These are mostly WCSD-sponsored charter schools; they are users of i-Ready. They are thrilled with i-Ready. What is great about i-Ready is that the interim assessment tells you where your child's weaknesses are and directs you to the type of instruction that is needed. For example, phonemic awareness [gives] the teacher access to the teaching guide to improve phonemic awareness in a first grader. The charters that I work with would be thrilled if these interim assessments could be aligned with the "it counts" assessment. What I think would be interesting in this pilot idea is if the proficiency scores really change when kids have had these thoroughly aligned assessments. It will be interesting to see if proficiency goes up with this deep alignment between instruction and assessment. The coalition is in strong support of the bill.

MARY PIERCZYNSKI (Nevada Association of School Superintendents):
We are in support of the bill. As we understand the situation, in 2025-2026, MAP is still the state-sponsored system. In 2026-2027, we break out into more choice. We are supportive of that. That was our understanding and, hopefully, that is your understanding as well.

CHAIR TAYLOR:
I will turn it over to our policy analyst because we are going to go into a work session on A.B. 386.

JEN STURM-GAHNER (Committee Policy Analyst):
The bill on work session, A.B. 386, revises provisions relating to assessments administered to pupils to assess reading proficiency. There was an amendment proposed, which rather than allowing the new provisions contained in section 1, the amendment would propose to authorize a one-year pilot program in WCSD. That allows the administration of an assessment that measures student reading skills and comprehension as approved by the NDE. Additionally, the district would report information on results to the NDE and the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education. The effective date would be July 2025.

CHAIR TAYLOR:
I will entertain a motion to amend and do pass.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED A.B. 386.

SENATOR CRUZ-CRAWFORD SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR TAYLOR:
I want to make sure we put this on the record. We had such a robust conversation because supporting and helping our students do better is essential for all of us. All of us are really interested in that. We want to do it in the way we heard NDE discuss.

We want you to have the time, but we do not want to miss this school year to have an opportunity to go ahead and do it. What this will allow Washoe to do is not to double test this year, which still gives you some relief. Because you already have a program that you've used, you can continue to do that and then [take] data from there. The NDE will be able to use that [data] as well as the Interim Committee on Education. Then we will be able to go from there.

Hearing no public comment, we are adjourned at 3:53 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

_____
Virginia Weitzel,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

_____
Senator Angela D. Taylor, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	**Exhibit Letter**	**Introduced on Minute Report Page No.**	**Witness / Entity**	**Description**
	A	1		Agenda
	B	1		Attendance Roster