

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Eighty-second Session
February 8, 2023**

The Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Roberta Lange at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 8, 2023 in Room 2134 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

Zeke Perez, Jr., Senior Policy Analyst, Education Commission of the States
Jesus Jara, President, Nevada Association of School Superintendents;
Superintendent, Clark County School District
Pam Teel, Superintendent, Lincoln County School District; Vice President,
Nevada Association of School Superintendents
Wayne Workman, Superintendent, Lyon County School District
Jhone Ebert, State Superintendent, Nevada Department of Education
Craig Statucki, Interim Deputy Superintendent, Educator Effectiveness and
Family Engagement, Nevada Department of Education
Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association

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Helen Foley, Stride K12
Ryan Olson, State Officer, Future Farmers of America
Mark Toney
Caitlin Willner
Jennifer Reyes
Mary Pierczynski, Nevada Association of School Superintendents

CHAIR LANGE:

I will open the first meeting of the Senate Committee on Education for the eighty-second Session of the Nevada State Legislature. We will examine the Committee Rules for this Session ([Exhibit C](#)).

SENATOR FLORES MOVED TO ADOPT THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION RULES FOR THE 2023 SESSION.

SENATOR DOÑATE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR LANGE:

I encourage Committee members and other interested people to read the Committee Brief ([Exhibit D](#)). We will now proceed with a presentation from the Education Commission of the States (ECS) ([Exhibit E](#)). They are covering national education issues and we are likely to hear some of these topics during this Session.

ZEKE PEREZ, JR. (Senior Policy Analyst, Education Commission of the States):

I represent ECS. We are a nonpartisan nonprofit organization based out of Denver, but we represent all 50 states, the District of Columbia (DC) and the U.S. territories. We provide services to states through convening councils, reports and research that we publish.

I will start with the trends we identified in 2022. You can search for the legislation that we follow using our State Education Policy Tracking tool. It will cover our enacted and vetoed bills over the last several legislative sessions and we will keep it updated during the 2023 Legislative Session.

In 2022, ECS tracked and summarized nearly 1,200 pieces of legislation. Every year, we track and read thousands of bills all across the education spectrum from early learning through the workforce.

The most popular bills, by volume, in the last Legislative Session relate to teaching, student health—including physical and mental health—and kindergarten through Grade 12 (K-12) funding. We know that legislation is not the only way that education policies are created, but we use it as a barometer to see where state policymakers are putting their time and money.

Teaching has been a longtime focus for state policymakers, and it continues to be a top-five trend that we identify year after year. In 2022, we identified 204 teaching bills enacted across 44 states and DC.

States continue to look for ways to strengthen the teacher pipeline as many districts struggle to keep positions filled. The sub-trends in that area are certification and licensure, recruitment and retention, and compensation. For example, with certification and licensure, state trends include: revising existing requirements for initial licensure, filling vacancies through licensing exemptions, creating new license types and limiting barriers for out-of-state teachers and retired teachers.

Unique to 2023, states are interested in the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact. At least eight states have introduced legislation related to joining the Compact—including Colorado, Hawaii, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Washington. The western region in particular is interested in the licensure compact.

For recruitment and retention, we are seeing states begin to consider hiring retired teachers through their legislative activity, creating scholarships, increasing funding for teacher candidates and establishing alternative routes to certification. States are looking to increase teachers' compensation through one-time bonuses or incentives, minimum salary increases and state funding for across-the-board raises.

Alaska enacted a bill that creates a process for out-of-state teachers who hold a teaching license in another state, as well as a bachelor's degree, to gain a preliminary teaching license. In California, there is legislation that allows the

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to issue and renew a one-year emergency specialist teaching permit in early childhood education.

We know what works in Alaska or California might not work in Nevada, but please reach out to us and we can provide additional context.

Student health includes a focus both on physical well-being as well as student mental health. In 2022, we saw 199 enacted pieces of legislation across 44 states and DC.

During the coronavirus pandemic, states have increasingly looked at policies to address student health issues that have risen in the past decade. There are various approaches related to student mental and behavioral health, such as raising awareness, providing support for physical and mental health and providing school-based health services.

Policymakers are increasingly invested in student mental health with some states requiring that students and teachers both have access to mental health days. States have created a Mental Health Coordinator position to better administer screenings using telehealth and teletherapy. We have also seen states look at more trauma-informed practices and policies, especially in their disciplinary protocols.

Some legislation is focused on educating and raising awareness around the importance of mental health, wellbeing and physical health. These bills emphasize more awareness of eating disorders, diabetes and other health issues students may face. Mental health services are also promoted to boost student participation.

Other legislation explores ways to provide school-based health services, which have been shown to increase student participation in mental health services and improve overall child wellness. The strategies implemented are increasing the number of school psychologists and mental health specialists available in schools as well as recruiting and retaining more health professionals across the workforce.

Colorado introduced legislation that would require a Local Education Agency (LEA) to adopt a policy detailing how students with prescriptions for medically necessary treatments receive those treatments in school. Oklahoma requires

LEAs to maintain a policy for assisting students undergoing a mental health crisis.

Regarding K-12 funding, policymakers may pass an annual or biennium budget. Some states create policies that affect the amount of funding available outside of the budgetary process.

In 2022, ECS tracked 227 bills related to K-12 funding and legislation across 40 states and DC. States have shown an interest in altering existing, or creating new funding formulas to provide more per pupil funding for specific student populations. They are also addressing issues related to counting attendance or enrollment for financial purposes.

Some states are making adjustments to their funding formulas by increasing their base funding amount in response to inflation in 2022. We have seen states move towards student-based funding models.

States are making adjustments to their per student population amounts with specific adjustments for English learners, students from low-income backgrounds, those receiving special education and students from rural populations. As enrollment declines, legislatures have considered bills centered towards student counts. Some states are moving away from measuring attendance as the basis of financial calculations. Instead, states are measuring student enrollment.

Some states continue to use hold-harmless provisions enacted during the pandemic to prevent larger funding decreases due to enrollment declines. Tennessee adjusted their funding formula with the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement Act that will begin in the next school year of 2023-2024. It provides an additional allocation per student comprised of a base funding amount, weighted allocations for students, direct allocations and outcome incentive dollars.

Legislation in Vermont changes the pupil weighting factors in the school aid formula. It increases the weights for students from low-income backgrounds, English learners, students from districts with low population densities and for small schools.

Policymakers are especially interested in K-12 funding as they look for ways to spend dollars from the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds and other historic federal investments. Among the three federal relief packages from the pandemic, approximately \$190 billion in aid is going to states for education. The combined ESSER funds represent about 25 percent of total pre-pandemic dollars spent locally, Statewide and federally.

At ECS, we do not track ESSER spending specifically, but we analyze state ESSER spending and have identified a few key trends. Some states focus ESSER funds on learning recovery, addressing school staffing issues and student health and wellness. Other states use their funds to increase technology access, school building improvements and to improve student engagement. During the first round of ESSER funds, most states addressed broadband access.

We have also analyzed education-related trends and proposals in 33 State of the State addresses across the Country. As a result, we have identified the top 5 trending issues, which include K-12 finance and funding, mentioned by 25 governors, and workforce development and career and technical education, mentioned by 23 governors. The next issue is teacher staffing, mentioned by 21 governors, combining compensation and recruitment retention efforts. In 2022, there was a consensus that teachers should be paid more. In 2023, governors set specific amounts, budgets and bonuses with specific dollar amounts. Other topics were reading and literacy, post-secondary education and school choice. Combined early learning and early childcare access and opportunities, were mentioned by 20 governors and physical and mental health, mentioned by 17 governors.

Nevada has mirrored some of the national trends including K-12 finance, teacher staffing, career and technical education (CTE) and early learning. In Governor Lombardo's State of the State address, he drew attention to school safety, reading and literacy, school choice through expanding vouchers and postsecondary financial aid through expanding scholarship opportunities.

We have also submitted the key education issues document ([Exhibit F](#)).

SENATOR DOÑATE:

Are you seeing a national trend of schools billing Medicaid?

MR. PEREZ:

Yes, schools are getting creative with the funds used to support students' physical and mental health and Medicaid is included.

SENATOR DOÑATE:

Are there other states that are starting to incorporate health centers as part of the school infrastructure?

MR. PEREZ:

Yes, some states are building out more school-based health centers.

SENATOR NEAL:

Are there any states enacting policy on restorative justice? Nevada has a high rate of suspension for kids of color. There needs to be a balance between managing negative behavior and preventing unnecessary suspensions.

MR. PEREZ:

We recently released a 50-state comparison on school discipline. One new data point we added this year was the reporting of discipline, suspension and expulsion—specifically looking at students from racial and ethnic minorities, low-income students and other student groups. We looked at which states are requiring reporting. We have also looked at some restorative justice practices. We do not currently have a separate restorative justice report.

SENATOR FLORES:

First, is there a state that is consistently creating the trends for the Country? Second, is there a trend that is not in place but should be? We are constantly thinking of what we should be working on, and I am trying to direct our focus and attention to the states that are doing it right.

MR. PEREZ:

I cannot point to one or more states that are leading the conversation. It varies depending on the topic area. Some states are regionally leading in a particular topic. The ECS tracks a variety of areas. I personally track our school safety work. In the last few years, it has been interesting to see differing approaches related to school resource officers.

I also research emergency preparedness. States are getting creative with their funding for areas such as emergency preparedness. Schools realize the need for

safety and are asking important questions about how to support and fund these areas.

CHAIR LANGE:

Our next presenter is from the Nevada Association of School Superintendents.

JESUS JARA (President, Nevada Association of School Superintendents; Superintendent, Clark County School District):

I am the President of the Nevada Association of School Superintendents (NASS) as well as the Superintendent for the Clark County School District. It is very important for all superintendents to be unified for optimal funding in the K-12 education system. In 2022, the Nevada Commission on School Funding (CSF) identified the abysmal funding levels for our State. Reports by the CSF declared that funding was willfully inadequate. I want to make it very clear that the State is failing our children.

Historically, underfunding education has led to chronic poor performance in state and national assessments. If we, as a state, are to improve our student performance, we must invest optimal funding to get optimal results. We must pay our teachers according to their worth and value. This will improve academic outcomes for our children.

We want to initiate a conversation about accountability throughout the entire system. To achieve the academic results that we expect, we must restore the respect that our profession deserves with optimal funding for our students.

Education is a great equalizer. Nevada must optimally fund education if our students are to succeed academically and follow whatever path they choose beyond graduation. Nevada education funds are below average.

If we are going to continue to make improvements and rebound from the pandemic, then we must fund and invest in our students. If we do not fund education optimally, we must ask ourselves, what outcomes are we prepared to accept.

If our children are to achieve better outcomes, then we must focus on supporting them with optimal funding. I was not a math teacher; I was a science teacher. I can tell you that chasing a maximum result from a minimal investment is a gamble that our children in this State can no longer afford.

The State has updated the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan (PCFP). It is time to invest optimally, so our children and the future of this great State are successful. We are talking about average funding in ten years. If we think about our current second graders, we will have average funding when they graduate from high school, so we must do the work now on behalf of our children.

PAM TEEL (Superintendent, Lincoln County School District; Vice President, Nevada Association of School Superintendents):

We need to look at optimal funding and revising statutes. It is paramount that we start making those decisions. We need to do it so that students get what they need now rather than ten years from now. We also need to modernize statutes and shift towards competency-based education. That takes funding.

Lincoln County used ESSER funds to almost meet the required standard for technology. However, those funds are no longer available. Technologically speaking, we must keep the broadband going and maintain the Smart Digital classroom boards. Those pieces of equipment are pivotal to ensure that students have access to materials wherever they are. Optimal funding allows us to educate all students in the way that they deserve.

WAYNE WORKMAN (Superintendent, Lyon County School District):

I am the former president of NASS. I have provided an iNVEST document, "iNVEST in Education" ([Exhibit G](#)). I want to bring to light the truth regarding school safety. I refuse to call them school shootings like the media does. These individuals are not causing harm to our schools. They are murdering and massacring individual students and staff, and it is a crime that we call them school shootings. We need to call them what they are and individualize them so that we protect our most valuable assets, our children.

We are calling for a greater level of funding for school safety. The past and current model—including the PCFP—was not designed to account for school safety. It was not designed for physical safety measures at school buildings, nor was it designed to account for the great need for social workers, school psychologists, safety resource officers and other safety personnel. All of them are absolutely crucial to our system.

Every superintendent in this room has worked diligently with existing funding to create some type of single point-of-entry or physical barriers; however, the funding is inadequate and cuts into classroom budgets. We are asking for

support for school safety and the funding related to the necessary infrastructure.

Anyone who has visited this State's schools has seen how old they are. There are stories of how great-grandparents attended the same schools many years ago. Those same buildings are where our current children are educated. Unfortunately, it is nearly impossible to retrofit some of these buildings with the technology needed to prepare children to work in today's world.

We are asking separately for funding for new schools. The PCFP does not include funding for new schools; it comes from another source. Many new schools have come from taxpayers. As an individual, I love the amount I pay for property taxes, but as a person leading multiple schools, it is impossible to renovate and build new schools with limited funding. The property tax abatements are devastating to school districts. We ask for relief from those abatements.

Some school districts do not have the capacity to issue bonds for new schools. One school district even had to propose, in a separate line item to the Legislature, to build a new elementary school because of their inability to issue bonds.

We are asking for funding for new schools to give our children a world-class education.

SENATOR NEAL:

The ESSER dashboard is great. There is still roughly \$611 million left from the third round of ESSER funding that was provided through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act. That money is set to expire. There is \$131 million remaining in ESSER II. The majority of ESSER funds were intended to be used for academic losses. What are you currently doing to engage in the work of these losses? There is a lot of unspent money, but there are still significant academic losses that need to be recovered.

MR. JARA:

I can only speak for Clark County, but all the counties are facing similar challenges. In Clark County, we have our Summer Acceleration program, which we have done for three years. We have allocated \$23 million to elementary

schools strategic budgets. We have also spent significant resources providing mental health for our staff and students.

As was mentioned by my colleague, we want to provide Tier 1 instruction. For ten years, Clark County has not invested in resources for educators because of lack of funding. Using ESSER funds, we purchased math and science curriculum. We are waiting on the State to fund our purchase of a basic English language arts curriculum. We are also using ESSER funds to provide resources for our educators. We have spent 48.66 percent of the ARP ESSER funds. We continue to work with the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) to reallocate resources. We had a significant amount of money allocated for staffing and upgrading our technology.

In Lincoln County, we have 366 schools. Despite our County being larger than Lyon and Nye, we all have similar problems with what we call technology deserts—a place where households lack reliable computer and Internet access. We are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on Wi-Fi connectivity and upgrading presentations in schools that are 20 years or older. We can give you a more detailed report on what we have done. My biggest concern is what is going to happen with all this technology that we have invested in so our kids have access to a 21st century education when ESSER funds end in September 2024.

MS. TEEL:

We are a smaller ecosystem of Clark County and serve 875 students. Tier 1 instruction is vital to ensure that we can do the rest of our work. The ESSER funds have provided a systematic way for us to ensure that we have the proper curriculum materials. We have not been able to purchase those materials with State funding. We have upped the ante in all those areas as well as in training to ensure that we are providing Tier 1 instruction. There are supplemental supports that go into Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction. It is vital that we have a very secure base of Tier 1 instruction across the board.

MR. WORKMAN:

We are thankful for ESSER. The issue that we have with the ESSER dashboard is that it always lags behind reality. I hope that makes sense. The other thing that I wish the dashboard included was plans that districts have in place that still have to be approved. For example, NDE has to approve some plans before funds can be released. If you include those plans, I think you would find that the

majority of districts will have spent nearly 100 percent of that money, but that will not be reflected in the dashboard.

For a majority of our districts, ESSER funding is going towards targeted interventions such as tutoring, after-school programs and summer school. We are trying to account for the loss of learning. A great deal of ESSER funding is also going towards whatever we can do for the mental health of our students and staff.

I do not believe Lyon County is unique in the issue of teacher burn-out. It is difficult for teachers to tutor after school or before school outside of their duties in the regular classroom. We are having to use creative and unique ways to meet the needs of individual students who have learning loss.

After the coronavirus pandemic, we are honing in on new ways that families and children are viewing schools. They are not viewing it as important to attend in person anymore. Getting students to be present for tutoring, intervention and remediation is a new challenge we are working through.

SENATOR NEAL:

You used the terms accountability and transparency in the presentation. How exactly do you define those terms for yourself and in application?

MR. JARA:

I do not want to speak for my colleagues and how they view accountability, but I am accountable to provide a high-quality education to the 300,000 lives that I serve. I am also accountable to the board of trustees. We have a strategic plan that we set in motion. My board is in the process of revising and looking at the goals.

I hold my team accountable to make sure that the children that come to school are educated. We hold the classroom accountable for teaching and monitoring classroom instruction. We hold principals accountable to provide and spend the resources in their strategic budget.

Everyone is held accountable to the 2024 goals set forth by my board. We are currently in the process of reviewing and revising those goals to make sure that every dollar—federal or state—is going towards academic outcomes that we are proud of. That is my definition of accountability.

SENATOR DOÑATE:

I want to touch on violence in schools and mental health outcomes. It is important for legislators to recognize that there are social determinants that lead to poor mental health outcomes in schools. It is not necessarily the school's fault. The document you provided, [Exhibit G](#), seems to point towards investing in the workforce. In terms of investing in school safety, is there physical infrastructure that you will be requesting? Are you looking for more metal detectors and cameras in schools? Are you more focused on providing the workforce for students with mental health needs?

MR. WORKMAN:

The reason [Exhibit G](#) document is oriented towards human capital is because we recognize that the threats to our schools come from within. If you research the violence that takes place in schools, oftentimes it is from a teacher, student or another staff member that has a connection to the institution.

We will take whatever funds we can get to physically harden our schools against those outside threats—whether that is with detectors or physical fencing. We are finding that without perimeter fencing there is a danger of little children running into the street.

SENATOR DOÑATE:

My preference would be to invest in human capital first.

CHAIR LANGE:

You talked a lot about not having the staff you need to be able to do some things you need to do within your schools. Are you partnering with outside groups like the Boys & Girls Clubs, local communities and schools to fill some of those gaps? How is that going?

MR. JARA:

We have various partners including communities, schools, Boys & Girls Clubs and Boys Town. They provide an extra wraparound service for our students who are experiencing challenges at home. They are key partners that provide assistance.

We also partner with some mental health providers that support our students. That is a part of our infrastructure. We also use Hazel Health, a telehealth provider. My concern is funding mental health when the ESSER funds go away.

We are providing various technological resources that are funded by the federal government. As far as we have seen, there is a great support system for our educators in our schools.

CHAIR LANGE:

Have you noticed a change in student achievement because you have those partners?

MR. JARA:

We are doing a deep dive into evaluating the services. In elementary schools, we are seeing Tier 1 instruction materials and teachers focus because they have the proper resources. We have seen some academic gains in professional development. We have noticed the biggest difference with our teachers.

CHAIR LANGE:

You talked about building schools. I know in the last Legislative Session, we received information on your school building program and how you are replacing and modernizing schools. Do you have an update on how that is going? I am hearing different kinds of issues coming out of rural Nevada. The Lyon County teachers have been emailing me.

MR. JARA:

We are experiencing some delays due to supply chain issues. One of our middle schools in Fremont is delayed by almost a year in opening because of challenges with the land. We are on track for 13 new schools in District 33.

I want to follow-up on what was mentioned about bonding. I know the Legislature is involved. In Clark County, we did an analysis that we need \$6 billion for construction. We have a dire need. The heating, ventilation and air conditioning costs \$2.1 billion across the District.

CHAIR LANGE:

When you finish building these schools, will they meet your technology needs? How are you meeting your technology needs without having the ability to get technology in all your schools?

MR. WORKMAN:

I wish I could say that we are meeting our technology needs. At best, it is patchwork in some of our schools. For example, students can have a laptop in

the classroom, but that laptop requires Wi-Fi infrastructure, which is only as good as the bandwidth. Lyon County School District is between U.S. Route 95 and Interstate 80. Our opportunities are greater than some of our colleagues in the rural districts. I cannot say that we are adequately meeting the technology needs of our students in all of our school districts.

MS. TEEL:

We are doing the best we can with what we have. Across the board, because of the federal E-Rate program, we are able to do a decent job of keeping up with bandwidth. If I had any more students who wanted Internet service at home, I would struggle. We have provided hotspots to support home use or distance education. There are some remote areas where hotspots do not work. It is a struggle in those areas to ensure that there is bandwidth at all.

School buses do not have Wi-Fi. If you have traveled through rural Nevada, you know that there are dead zones without service. Wi-Fi would not benefit the students in those places. Some students travel an hour in each direction within my County—either from the Alamo-Hiko area or from Pioche and Ely areas. That is a lot of homework time that could be done on the bus. Homework using Wi-Fi does not work for my District. That is where we are experiencing technology gaps.

Building-wise, we have done a phenomenal job. It costs the District a little more to retrofit an older building that was built in the sixties. It might not have a solid roof structure, wires are outside, and it needs more than one router because the router does not run from one room to the next. We do the best we can to cover those issues. It costs more to make sure that those buildings are supported.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

You talked about optimal funding. I have worked at the Legislature for many years, and I assumed you would ask for more money, but the question comes back to accountability. I think we all have to agree about what should be the accountability measures that we would expect if you were given what you deem as optimal funding.

When talking about accountability, would we talk about attendance and graduation rates improving? What other accountability measures would you offer up that would be able to point to the money being used properly? Would you point to reading levels and math levels? I know that the coronavirus

pandemic caused many students to fall behind in both reading and math. How do we make that up? Is that part of the optimal funding?

MR. JARA:

As a superintendent who worked in two states—Florida and Massachusetts, where I was a high school principal—there was a strong sense of accountability. Those were the early years of accountability, but we have to evolve. The reality is that we do not currently have any specific metrics for students to graduate from high school. That is a conversation that we need to have.

We could also focus on where resources are going into the budget. How do we hold the adults accountable? That is where I would start the conversation about accountability. Another question is how do we hold adults accountable—from the superintendent down to the classroom teacher? What does that accountability system look like? That is a great conversation that we all need to have across the State.

We should not just focus on reading and writing. Our kids are growing in ways outside of the classroom. Wayne Workman will share about his experience with the kids in his district. We are all in awe of students developing skills that help them become successful citizens when they leave the classroom. The tasks that our students have to perform go beyond reading and writing. The students will go into the workforce and into college.

MR. WORKMAN:

I would answer yes to everything that Senator Hammond suggested. I would also add a metric of student satisfaction. We want our students reporting to you, as legislators, to their parents and to their school system that they are completely satisfied with the education that they are getting.

Superintendent Jara referred to our wonderful little K-12 school down in Smith Valley which is in Senator Titus' district. Smith Valley has 200 students and it boasts a robust CTE program that includes many student enterprises. They are actual businesses that students run at that school. One of them is raising and harvesting turkeys for Thanksgiving. A young lady in eighth grade has been running that program which includes ordering the turkeys, feeding, raising, performing scientific measures and processing the turkeys. It showcases real-life learning and the importance of providing all kinds of opportunities for our students outside of the regular classroom.

MS. TEEL:

My accountability comes through an assessment that does not necessarily measure what a student can really do. This is true for all grades whether its third, sixth, eighth or in high school where we use the American College Test. I would like to see accountability for student attendance increases that happen when students have things to do that actually interest them. Our matrix needs to reflect increased graduation rates that provide students access to what they need—not what we think they needed ten years ago.

There is a shift in the conversation about what accountability looks like. It is going to look different if we are looking at the right things to ensure that our students are leaving the system now with what they need. The conversation we need to have is what does that accountability look like? In terms of student satisfaction, they have to want to come and be in class.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

There was talk about college and career readiness, which seems like a matrix that we could be using for accountability. Are we making sure that, upon graduation, every student is either going someplace to further their career academically or getting a job? Are we aligning them with the communities where they are getting jobs? We have to find out what optimal funding is for the counties. We need to have more conversations with community partners. I am very passionate about the certificate program. This is a starter discussion that will continue over the next few months.

SENATOR BUCK:

I am optimistic about the Governor's proposed budget. If all things go well, we will fund education to a greater level. Are you looking at the Governor's proposed budget in terms of educators receiving much needed raises so that we can keep the pipeline going?

We all know that in some of your most disadvantaged areas, there are schools that are performing excellently; there are some that are not. Do you have plans to highlight the ones that are performing well so that we can replicate them?

We need to look at things from the standpoint of what colleges and businesses need from our students. What they can do is what we are teaching them in school. We may need to raise the level of rigor.

MR. JARA:

I will start with the question about highlighting successful schools in underserved- and under-resourced areas. I am very proud of the work that our team has done. Last year, we identified 60 schools that needed intensive support for our educators and leaders. Those schools were well monitored and, out of those 60 schools, 50 percent of them made gains and 25 percent made double-digit gains in their index scores. We are even doubling-down on gains this year in 23 elementary schools. We are calling it a transformation network where there is intensive support that we are providing to build leaders in our schools.

Our goal in the Clark County School District is that we continue to highlight some of the success of what leaders are doing. We have some Title I schools that received five stars. We are looking at what is happening there and replicating it.

To your question about raises, our educators absolutely need to be compensated. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, I am looking forward to having that conversation. With the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan (PCFP) formula, collective bargaining happens locally. As a district, we have done the best that we can for our educators, but my goal is to be more competitive across the western states and the Nation. We want to bring in more teachers. That is our No. 1 priority. As a District, when you look at the number of buyout teachers, our teachers are tired. It is not because they do not want to continue supporting our kids. They are tired because they are covering other classrooms. They need their prep so that they can provide the Tier 1 instruction that we all want in our classrooms.

As to your last question, we have a strong partnership with higher education institutions, and we are building our Career Technical Education (CTE). Specifically, in Clark County, we follow the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance workforce blueprint and the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce's blueprint 2.0. We will continue to follow it when the Chamber releases their 3.0 blueprint. Whatever they need is what we are trying to do. We are reallocating our resources so that we can meet the demands of our community.

CHAIR LANGE:

Seeing no further questions, I will move onto our next presentation from the Nevada Department of Education (NDE).

JHONE EBERT (State Superintendent, Nevada Department of Education):

I found my love of teaching on the ski slopes in Yosemite National Park. It was wonderful to see children from two- to eight-years old who may have feared skiing down the slope. When they realized that the ground was the same distance, whether standing down by the lodge or up on the top of the mountain, they realized that was okay; they could do this.

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

My first day with NDE was the day that school buildings closed down for the pandemic. It was an experience that I wish I could have passed up, but I have enjoyed it. I support the 17 superintendents and the 500,000 students that we have in this State.

MS. EBERT:

I am honored to serve as the State Superintendent of Public Instruction on the Governor's team as well as the Secretary for the State Board of Education. The work of NDE is centered around our values of equity, access, quality, success, inclusivity, community and transparency. These values inform all of our work as we focus our efforts to support and engage our districts, schools, families and communities to make sure that our students are achieving academically and have social emotional support. The values are non-negotiable and are essential and present in everything we do. We are delighted to share with you today some highlights and then also what we consider opportunities in the state of education in Nevada.

The state of education is not just about outcomes and funding. At the heart of it all, the entire education system is about every single Nevadan and who we are and who we want to be as a State. In one way or another, we touch every single life of every Nevada citizen.

First, we need to make sure that our students, when they exit, are equipped to create a home, a life and a future. Second, our schools provide the common experience that is the foundation of a free, just and prosperous society. At their best, our schools are Nevada's pathway to a healthy workforce. They are the engine to our economy. Finally, minimizing Pre-K and K-12 costs is a surefire way to hinder that economic vitality.

The Nevada education system serves almost 500,000 students and their families. We have 763 schools managed by 27,000 educators and staff. The NDE is home to 17 school districts as well as the State Public Charter School Authority. Our largest school district, Clark County School District, serves almost 300,000 students. The next largest entity is the Charter School Authority that serves 67,000 students; followed by the Washoe County School District serving about 60,000 students. Our private schools serve 22,000 students.

The needs of each of our schools and districts are extremely unique. Every district, no matter how large or small, is unique as to where they are going and how they are going to meet their individual student's needs.

We pride ourselves on partnering with our stakeholders to achieve our mission to improve student achievement and educator effectiveness by ensuring opportunities, facilitating learning and promoting excellence.

I would like to propose a formula: the results of Nevada's education system depend upon the collaboration of three different pieces. First is the retention and recruitment of effective and supported educators. Second is innovative approaches to learning. Third is the State's financial investment in our students. We believe that each component amplifies the other to increase success substantially. Therefore, the formula multiplies as these inputs come together.

I would like to share some of our successes over the last year and the challenges that we are currently facing in education. The first part of the equation is about having effective and supported educators. Our educators are at the heart of our educational system. The hard work and dedication of these individuals who make a difference in the lives of our students every single day should be amplified. I continually share with our businesses, government, community partners and anyone who will listen that I would put Nevada's educators head-to-head against any other educators in this Nation knowing that they will outperform all others.

Code.Org is an organization that recognizes educators for programs related to computer science, as shown on page 6 of the presentation ([Exhibit H](#)). Recently, Nevada had three groups of individual educators, as well as a team in Carlin, that were recognized. Each of those groups received \$10,000 awards for exceptional work. I would like to point out that Code.org typically only awards

two awards to each state. Nevada received three. They could not ignore all of the great work that the teachers are doing.

I am proud to share with you that over the last two days, three Nevada educators were identified as Milken Educator Award honorees, [Exhibit H](#), page 7. The Milken Educator Award honors early-to-mid-career education professionals for their impressive achievements at such a young age. They are each awarded \$25,000 as a gift for the promise of what they will accomplish in the future. Two of the awards went to exceptional educators in the Washoe County School District, including Dr. Susan Enfield. In West Wendover, Superintendent Anderson was recognized. Those are some educator highlights, but we have thousands that need to be recognized. I want to give a shout-out to Senator Buck, an awardee of the Milken award. Usually, there are approximately 40 awards across the U.S.; we have three this year. We had two in 2020. Our teachers are amazing.

I would like to recognize our Nevada Teacher of the Year and our Teacher of the Year finalists. These educators are selected through a rigorous process and recognized by the Nevada State Board of Education and me for their impressive work with students. The relationships that they build and the passion they demonstrate can only be echoed throughout many of their successful classrooms in this State. Recognitions like Code.org and Milken, and Teacher of the Year are just a few. Superintendent Stephens was Nevada's State Superintendent of the Year. Her peers said that she is the one, at this moment in time, that we would like to recognize and cherish. We are a system and celebrating everyone in the system is very important.

The NDE is dedicated to growing our current and future educator workforce, and we are taking a multipronged approach to all of this. We start in Pre-K schools. We have high school CTE courses which are called teaching and training. This year, we have over 4,200 students enrolled in the teaching and training throughout our State. There are 45 schools in 8 of our school districts and charter schools. There are 336 students enrolled in dual credit courses. By developing our future teachers at this age, we are showing them they have a future in education, and they can become educators. That is one of the ways that we are tackling the shortage.

This last year, over 2,000 future teachers benefited from over \$10.5 million in stipends and tuition assistance granted by the NDE through federal funding.

Another \$9 million was granted to provide professional development through the Nevada Education Preparation Institute & Collaborative, which we refer to as NVEPIC. Another \$1 million went towards literacy professional development through incentives such as the Path to Reading Excellence in School Sites called PRESS; the literacy lifeline, which is a middle school literacy piece; and our biannual literacy summit showcasing local and national keynote speakers and presenters.

We have also secured a \$10 million grant through the U.S. Department of Education for school-based mental health services. We will receive \$2 million per year until 2025 with the objective to recruit and retain specialized school counselors, psychologists and social workers to increase mental health services and reduce the student-to-support personnel ratios.

We are collaborating with the Nevada System of Higher Education to bring this work to fruition at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, University of Nevada, Reno and the Nevada State College in Henderson. This is National School Counselors Week. I want to recognize every single school counselor and our interns in Nevada.

I want to remind people that the NDE supports students and adults in our system. That includes parents and families in collaboration with stakeholders such as the Nevada Parent Teacher Association. We are supporting families through initiatives such as the Family Engagement Framework. This Framework provides a Statewide approach to family engagement that is based on research and evidence. It was developed locally in collaboration with families, educators and community members.

The biennial Statewide family summit is another opportunity for families, educators and community members to come together. We had over 700 families participate over the last 2 years.

The second part of the equation is our innovative approaches to learning. Superintendent Workman spoke about projects, including some where students produce wonderful honey that can go with a turkey dinner. Our State is leading the way in unique learning experiences. We know that skill sets such as robotics, engineering and coding are all part of the future workforce. We have made impressive growth in that area. We received subgrants that equate to \$4 million. One of those grants was from FIRST Nevada Robotics, [Exhibit H](#),

page 12. We have over 269 schools and 2,000 students participating in the program, which provides hands-on learning opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

For 40 years, Nevada Reading Week has highlighted the importance of literacy in our lives. This past year, Nevada Reading Week hosted 13 nationally recognized local authors in the Author LIVE Event. The Event allowed more than 20,000 students the opportunity to meet local authors, promoting literacy and encouraging students to pursue their love of reading.

We have a commitment to digital learning, [Exhibit H](#), page 12. We are an absolute leader in computer science. Nevada is among the top five states leading the Nation in computer science education, meeting all nine criteria identified by national stakeholders as essential for high-quality computer science education.

We cannot do this work alone. I would like to quote a recent article from Tammy Hance-Lehr and Alex Bybee: "Here's one thing we know for sure: our schools cannot develop our children into prepared adults alone. It will take more than public education to get Nevada to a 100 percent graduation rate."

The public-private partnerships that we have developed since the pandemic are essential. We have grown in that area, and I want to ensure that we do not rubber-band and continue to have strong public-private partnerships as we move forward.

Nevada is one of the few states that does not fund summer school. During the coronavirus pandemic, students were not afforded the opportunity for face-to-face instruction. There was \$15 million allocated out of the federal funds for that programming to be developed. We are committed to giving students additional learning time to close those opportunity gaps and engaging students in alternative experiences.

Thinking about the future, we have launched the Nevada Future of Learning Network and Portrait of a Nevada Learner initiative. It is a creative opportunity for students to demonstrate their mastery of a subject at a pace that suits the students. This funding puts students in the driver's seat to explore their interests and incorporate an understanding of foundational skills meaningfully.

To Senator Flores' earlier question, I think one of the things that we all should be keeping an eye on is not just how much time students spend with their bottoms in a chair but what it is that they are truly learning and how they can demonstrate those skills through multiple methods—not just through one single assessment. We look forward to leading the way. I know the superintendents are diving in with both feet. We are very excited to see them move their work forward.

The third part of our equation is investing in our students. We know that the common threat to our work is funding. We need to make this happen. Supporting our educators and their families and putting together all of these programs is an investment made to help our children. It is much more complicated than just giving money.

One of the most notable advancements for education in Nevada has been the PCFP. The PCFP was created with the leadership of this Legislature, the efforts of the Commission on School Funding and many other staff. The opportunity to revisit the oldest funding formula in the Nation, with a focus on equity, was a big part of the reason I came home to Nevada four years ago. We should all be very proud of this tremendous accomplishment.

Our new formula combines 20 different revenue sources to provide all students with a base-level of funding while also giving greater support to those who need it, no matter where they attend school. The PCFP is flexible, allowing schools to make funding decisions based on their changing demographics and needs. This replaces the 54-year-old Nevada Plan and adjusts costs for urban, suburban and rural settings. As it stands today, the PCFP was implemented this school year and it is working. I am grateful for Governor Lombardo's \$2 billion Executive Budget proposal and the support of fully funding the weights.

In addition to ensuring that funding is distributed equitably, we are also investing in our staff and students mental and physical health. Having trained mental health professionals on our campuses is of the utmost importance to ensure that we are building relationships and supporting our children and staff. That means the work of educating our students can happen in a safe and respectful learning environment. To this end, the NDE has allocated \$7.5 million on top of the \$4 million secured through the ARP act. This was used to increase the presence and capacity of mental health professionals on our campuses. We

have also allocated another \$1 million to providers to address the trauma for students who are minimally insured or not insured at all.

What about our youngest students? We know that our students need to be supported and prepared for school. The Department continues its efforts to support more seats in Pre-K classes throughout the entire State. Over \$3 million in federal funding was utilized to expand Pre-K access. To put that in perspective, that only added about 300 seats. That is why we are encouraged by the Governor's commitment to dedicate \$60 million to Pre-K access.

There have been some amazing programs, initiatives and opportunities that have come out of this funding. Unfortunately, it is not enough. National reports show that Nevada is still last in the Country for per pupil funding; yet, our educators and students continue to perform. Imagine the lengths that we could go to for children with a stronger investment in learning. Think of it this way, our future workforce is sitting in our classrooms across our State right now and that workforce will only be successful in the future if we invest in them today.

I have shared many of our successes and opportunities for improvement. There may be some of you saying that there are reports out there that put us last in the Nation for our schools and students. The truth is, we know that there are great opportunities for us to improve on what is happening in our State.

The reports put us dead last in school funding. Federal relief funds helped expand some of the opportunities, but the reality is that we are still below the national average in per pupil funding. In the State of the State Address, Governor Lombardo announced his commitment to increase the per pupil funding amount from \$9,185 to \$11,668, [Exhibit H](#), page 17. That gets us close to the national average of \$13,489, but I want to make sure that everyone is aware that it is still nearly \$2,700 short of the national average of \$14,337.

Despite the funding shortage, teachers, students and families persevere. Student literacy proficiency is showing that we are near the pre-pandemic numbers, [Exhibit H](#), page 19. Our students continue to close the gap between Nevada and national public school averages.

We still have gaps that must be closed to get all students to proficient levels. When looking at these averages, we want to not only succeed but exceed the

national average and to meet the level of proficiency in both reading and mathematics.

Our graduation rates are starting to climb again after experiencing a slight decline during the pandemic, [Exhibit H](#), page 20. Can we take a moment to acknowledge the graduation rate increase over the last 10 years? Additionally, we have seen an increase of 3 percent for students receiving the College and Career Readiness (CCR) diploma. The Nevada State Board of Education has a goal to have over 50 percent of our students receive a diploma by 2025.

The pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to education across the world. Nevada's education system has endured and is improving. We know the importance of education and we stand on the edge of an even greater opportunity to ensure Nevada's children have equitable access to high quality learning experiences.

When it comes to the equation for education, we can see the work being done, but we also can envision the work that must transpire to improve our outcomes. To have effective and supported educators, we must retain amazing educators in our schools. We must recruit top-notch candidates from around the globe and engage our families in the education process. Through innovative approaches to learning that engage, excite and empower our children, we demonstrate that our children are important to our future. Not only are we saying that we know our children deserve better, we are also saying that we are dedicated to building a greater future for all Nevadans.

Our students deserve the very best: the best educators, the best facilities, the best funding, the chance for success that the government and the NDE can provide. The work is in front of us, and the workers are here and ready to do the job.

It is my hope that you have heard things today that encourage your view of the state of education in Nevada. I also hope that you heard some of the challenges and have thought about how you can be part of the solution. I look forward to working with you this Session and to continue to have the opportunities grow for all of Nevada's children.

SENATOR NEAL:

Are you no longer under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) waiver from the coronavirus pandemic?

MS. EBERT:

That is correct.

SENATOR NEAL:

The ESSA funds required MAP testing, which is an elementary school assessment. The ESSA requires a series of assessments to take place. I am trying to understand how it is possible for us not to have an elementary school assessment. Will you clarify that? I was around when the Nevada Growth Model, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and Common Core were implemented. We had various proficiencies that were phased out. In high schools, we use the American College Test (ACT) to measure proficiency of students before they graduate. We are producing data, that means if a child is being tested or assessed—informally or formally—the data is submitted to determine gaps.

Help me understand what is going on in the assessment world for education that I am missing.

MS. EBERT:

First, we do have a Read by Grade 3 program. We have MAP testing for kindergarten through third grade. That is required for the State of Nevada, but not required by the federal government. Through the federal government, specifically ESSA, we have third grade through eighth grade assessments in English and math. They are assessed annually through Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. For highschoolers, we use the ACT. As mentioned earlier, there is no required score for the ACT, but it is an assessment that is required to receive a diploma. Along those lines, we also have a science assessment that is taken once in elementary school, once in middle school and once in high school that is required by the federal government.

SENATOR NEAL:

Are there three types of diplomas that you can receive upon graduation?

MS. EBERT:

Yes.

SENATOR NEAL:

If there are three types of diplomas and no cut score on the ACT, how are we setting the criteria for those diplomas?

MR. STATUCKI:

There are three diploma options at the high school level: a standard diploma, an advanced diploma and the CCR diploma. Each of those diplomas has different course requirements. When you get to the advanced diploma and CCR diploma, there are additional grade point average and course requirements. For example, the diploma may require a foreign language, Advanced Placement courses and Career Technical Education. We would be happy to provide you with documents about how each diploma works.

SENATOR NEAL:

I am trying to understand if there might be a missing metric or graduation assessment. To receive a diploma, a student must fit into one of the three diploma types and their various requirements. I will have to see a document or research paper to help me understand the process.

MS. EBERT:

Many of us Nevada graduates can remember taking high school proficiency exams. You had to attain a specific score before you were issued a diploma. With the reauthorization of ESSA dollars, we made the transition from a required score to the requirement of taking the ACT. There was a couple-year transition period.

We do not require a specific number for a student to earn a diploma, but we have expectations. We expect our students to receive a 17 or 18 score on the ACT. Our teachers and principals are looking for higher scores. The parents and families also want to see higher scores.

CHAIR LANGE:

I want to talk about summer school because we appropriated quite a bit of money for that and we are accountable. I am told by teachers in my District that few students went to summer school. I am wondering if it is unique to my District or if it is across the State. Did we not do a good enough job advertising? Did we not have transportation? How could we improve?

MS. EBERT:

My colleague had a phenomenal experience with summer school. Traditionally, summer schools do not include transportation or meals. I can provide you a 56-page report from all the superintendents. They provided us with that information, including the number of students, if they served meals and if they provided transportation.

CHAIR LANGE:

I would appreciate seeing that report.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

I want to recognize the students representing the Future Farmers of America (FFA). We talked earlier about all the different ways that you learn and how hands-on experiences help with the learning process. I am excited to hear about what is going on in other school districts. I will never forget how to milk a cow, grade an egg or test the pH balance of soil.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will now open the hearing on Senate Bill (S.B.) 9.

SENATE BILL 9: Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR 34-282)

MS. EBERT:

With the passage of S.B. No. 543 of the 80th Session, a new reporting requirement for schools and school districts was established. This report is required to be distributed and posted online by October 1 of each year. Section 1 of S.B. 9 proposes to change the posting date of the report to January 1.

Much of the staff enrollment and expenditure data identified in this report is already being collected through *Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 387.303* in a report provided by our school districts. The report from S.B. No. 543 of the 80th Session is burdensome and a duplication of effort for our school districts.

The October 1 due date poses a challenge because the information required is not audited and finalized until November. Reporting information before it is audited creates confusion in this reporting metric. Moving this report to January 1 will allow schools and districts to publish audited values with a more thorough analysis of the changes in expenditures.

Section 2 proposes a change to the funding for CTE. In every legislative session since 2015, we have been looking to change some of the training provided for our pupils and teachers. In the proposed language in S.B. 9, the NDE is increasing the percentage of funds and including new allowable activities for leadership and training. The language also creates a new category of allowable activities under workforce development. New allowable leadership and training activities include support for pupils earning industry-recognized credentials and dual credits. These activities represent areas that school districts have identified as barriers to their schools and teachers.

Additionally, the proposed workforce development activities include supporting students participating in work-based learning, earning industry-recognized credentials and providing middle school CTE exploration options. Currently, these activities do not have a dedicated funding stream.

In 2013, A.B. No. 88 of the 78th Session was enacted. It eliminated the high school proficiency exam and required the State Board of Education to select a CCR exam to be administered to students during Grade 11. The bill also required the State Board to prescribe new criteria for receipt of a standard high school diploma, which does not include a student's performance on the CCR assessment and does include a requirement that students successfully pass at least four end-of-course (EOC) exams prior to receiving a standard high school diploma.

Assembly Bill No. 7 of the 79th Session repurposed the CCR assessment to the federal reporting level as Nevada's federal high school proficiency exam. It transitioned away from EOC exams towards end-of-course finals. The results of these EOC finals have never been transmitted to the State; they have always been held locally. It has never been a requirement to submit those assessment scores. Individual districts vary with how they grade. At this point, aggregating the data would not help us make an assessment on how the students are performing in those courses.

The Nevada State Board of Education has temporary regulations reducing these required exams from four to two. These tests are in the first year of mathematics—either in Algebra 1 or Math 1 and in the first year of English, which is English 1.

Section 4 addresses S.B. No. 214 of the 73rd Session. That bill required the NDE to prescribe a form for an Educational Involvement Accord that aligned with ESSA and requires all public schools in Nevada to use and distribute the form. The Accord is essentially an extension of the Title I school-parent compact and ESSA. It is an agreement that outlines how parents/legal guardians, school staff and students will share the responsibility for improved student outcomes.

The proposed language in section 4 removes the NDE from prescribing the Accord and allows schools and parents to jointly develop the form, which is the true intent and purpose of a school-parent compact. The NDE will still be responsible for ensuring that all public schools in Nevada are provided guidance and comply with the Accord and its requirements.

Section 5 is in response to part of S.B. No. 143 of the 74th Session that required the NDE to prescribe a form for use by teachers in elementary schools. This form provided a report to parents and legal guardians concerning parental involvement and student compliance with school policies and procedures. The proposed removal of this language in section 5 seeks to encourage a more effective means of communication with families. The information in the form can be communicated via other common school forms such as report cards, progress reports, conversations and meetings with parents and legal guardians.

SENATOR NEAL:

In section 3, lines 32 to 34 are stricken. I understand that this relates to an eighth grader's ability to take a high school credit. Am I correct in my interpretation?

MS. EBERT:

Are you specifically asking about the *United States Code of Laws* (USC)?

SENATOR NEAL:

Yes.

This particular federal law refers to 20 USC section 6311(b)(2). I think that is the reference to the ESSA provisions relating to the assessment requirements for pupils and eighth-grade math and science assessment requirement.

MS. EBERT:

The strike-out here is specifically for the EOC exam; it does not prevent students from taking that class and attaining credit. It is just the exam portion from the State instead of the local level.

SENATOR NEAL:

Thanks for the clarification. You also have the strike-out provisions for the repealed section of NRS 390.700. Why is this provision removed when we know that there are some EOC exam issues that need to be dealt with?

Is there another bill coming that deals with assessments and some of the issues that were brought up today? This appears to be the vehicle to amend to try to make some gains in that assessment area that we are saying has a gap.

MS. EBERT:

We do have the ACT in place. The EOC exam was implemented across our State without enforcing reporting. When ESSA required a CCR exam, we determined, as a state, to use the ACT as our CCR exam—which met federal guidelines.

As superintendents, we have had many discussions about high school assessments and about what it is we want our students to know and be able to do and how they demonstrate that knowledge. We have asked whether we just use the ACT or if we use multiple methods of assessment. Our staff was looking at this issue before the pandemic. We put it on the back burner during that time, but we are starting to look into it again. We do not have an upcoming bill outlining all of the components of a new assessment system.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

I wanted to give you an opportunity to highlight multiple ways of assessing. Again, what are some different assessments? If you have an EOC exam, it seems like it pins everything down to that particular test. Can you give us some ideas of other assessments across the State and why they are different?

MS. EBERT:

We have used the ACT as a college entrance exam. There are other ways to demonstrate knowledge. Work-based skills and performance-based demonstrations are all different assessments. In Nevada, we have not invested

in those. We have invested in the ACT. It would take additional investments to look at performance-based assessments and outcomes.

We take the approach to put socks on and then shoes—that is not to get ahead of ourselves. We look at what it is that we want when we are working with the business community and the Legislature. We also look at what we truly want our students to know and be able to do when they leave our classrooms. We need to identify that first before we choose an assessment. We need to establish what we want and then assess based on that. We are trying to think about assessments as well as an accountability system.

I had the opportunity to speak directly with the U.S. Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona. We have a unique moment in time where we can be creative in ways to accelerate learning and bring joy back.

We have a federal requirement that says we must have a CCR assessment. My colleagues across the U.S., like Nebraska and North Carolina, have multiple assessments. There is a fine line in having multiple assessments because they are following federal guidelines. They have a CCR assessment and performance-based assessments or mid-year assessments. They have built those assessments into their required testing. Some states are over-assessing their students. We want to continue to look to the future, lean in on the federal government and build out what is right for children in Nevada.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

For people in education, this is an exciting time for changing the way we assess. We are trying to understand what we should be looking at beyond those assessments. We have the ACT that we use to make apple-to-apple comparisons. We also have multiple other methods of assessing individual students. That is great.

If students want to go into a welding career, they would want to take an assessment to decide what classes they need to take in order to be hireable. I like that you are looking at other assessments and what other states are doing.

CHAIR LANGE:

We will now take testimony in support of S.B. 9.

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CHRIS DALY (Nevada State Education Association):

The Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) has been the voice of Nevada educators for over 120 years. I am in support of S.B. 9. Within the Senate Committee on Education we worked with Senator Woodhouse about streamlining student assessments. There have been multiple audits and regulations and EOC exams were part of the process.

We support streamlining student assessments. We believe, generally speaking, far too much time is spent in our school system on the various assessments. We support the NDE's continued work to streamline.

HELEN FOLEY (Stride K12):

The K12 charter school was traditionally a virtual school but they partnered with Stride. Stride K12 cooperatively works with school districts, charter schools, and other types of virtual schools to offer programs for all kinds of technical training. We are excited about section 2 of this bill which includes workforce development activities. In section 2, line 6, it dramatically increases State money for CTE from 7.5 percent to 20 percent. We worked closely with the Governor's Office of Workforce Innovation. It is important because, after high school, many students do not continue to higher education. It would be wonderful if they could have dual credentials. We also do medical certifications and advanced trainings for people who have jobs and want to advance their careers.

We work in all 50 states and 100 countries to help with these programs. We look forward to S.B. 9 being passed.

RYAN OLSON (State Officer, Future Farmers of America):

I am here to advocate for CTE as it relates to S.B. 9, section 2. I have provided written testimony ([Exhibit I](#)). There are 16 CTE program areas. Each of those program areas has one to three Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO). The FFA is the CTSO for the agricultural education program area.

Students who are active in CTE and their CTSO on a local and state level gain workforce skills, learn leadership skills and are active members of their community. Section 2 includes language related to work-based learning and training experiences within the classroom and CTSO.

During the 2021-2022 school year, Nevada Agricultural Education and the FFA work-based learning projects had an economic impact of over \$357,000. These work-based learning projects could be owning your own business or working for an employer. This statistic was derived from a Statewide recordkeeping system that helps students create a budget and maintain sound financial records. Work-based learning opportunities help students gain both technical and professional skills that expand classroom lessons and, ultimately, create career success. I know I personally have benefited from these experiences.

MARK TONEY:

I support S.B. 9. I live in Las Vegas. I work with the Career and Technical Student Organization. I will be working with Nevada DECA next week.

CAITLIN WILLNER:

I am a senior at Northwest Career & Technical Academy in Las Vegas. I am in the Teacher Education Program. I am the Vice President of Community Service for The Nevada Society for Collegiate Leadership & Achievement (SCLA). At Northwest Career & Technical Academy, I have learned many new things about the field of education and teaching. My passion for teaching has grown more than I can express because of the multiple resources and experiences I have been given.

I support S.B. 9 because it will help expand access to CTSO, which gives students opportunities to apply skills for work-based learning. More funding in our education system can also help expand equity access and opportunities for students in Nevada. The Nevada SCLA has given me so many amazing skills such as public speaking and being an excellent leader. I have gained experiences from structural professionalism trainings. I have the opportunity to be involved with the State to show my support for the community and education.

JENNIFER REYES:

I am the State Officer of Nevada Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). I am also the Vice President of Development in this organization. I am a senior at the Academy of Arts Careers & Technology in Reno, Nevada.

I fully support S.B. 9. The courses I have taken have given me the appropriate resources and skills for career preparation and workplace readiness. These

courses have helped me to better understand child development and to pursue a career in child psychology. They also cover financial literacy and skills that foster independence such as cooking, training and textile work. This is because courses cover career clusters such as hospitality, education, fashion and design.

Nevada FCCLA is a family and consumer sciences organization. Their membership has doubled, but a barrier for some students accessing CTSO has been low income. I joined Nevada FCCLA because of the family focus. I believe more funding to our education system would provide students opportunities like the ones that I have been fortunate to have.

CHAIR LANGE:

Is there anyone in neutral?

MARY PIERCZYNSKI (Nevada Association of School Superintendents):

The Nevada Association of School Superintendents is in full support of most of this bill. We have some further questions about the mechanics of section 2; that is why we are in the neutral position.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 9 and open the floor for public comment.

MR. DALY:

It is only the third day, yet there has already been a great deal of focus on education this Session. With the adoption of the new funding formula and record State revenues, significant dollars are being captured in the education fund. While this is good news, it is important to note the severity of issues in public schools caused by chronic underfunding, as well as the work that remains to reach optimal funding.

This is why NSEA has been saying it is Time for 20. Time for 20 means a 20 percent raise for every Nevada educator, a \$20 per hour minimum wage in our schools and average class sizes of 20 students.

Since the coronavirus pandemic, educators left their jobs in record numbers due to low pay and severely low morale. At the mid-point of this 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. A December report from the Economic Policy Institute found

there is a widespread national teacher shortage that is especially severe here in Nevada. They found the current shortage is not the result of an insufficient number of qualified teachers, but rather low pay and an increasingly stressful work environment. The average pay differential between teachers and similar college graduates in the job market has grown to 23.5 percent.

With educator vacancies at crisis levels, Governor Lombardo has not made a proposal to address educator pay. To contrast this with other states who have had similar issues and available resources, in early 2022, New Mexico Governor Lujan Grisham announced an average raise of 20 percent for all New Mexico educators. Later that year, New Mexico saw a 34 percent drop in teacher vacancies, a direct result of the salary increases and investments in hardworking New Mexico educators. Nevada could see those same results, but it will take bold action and true investment. Just last night, Governor Huckabee Sanders announced her proposal to raise Arkansas teacher pay by 29 percent to 39 percent.

With billions of dollars proposed for reserves, there is more than enough to cover a 20 percent across-the-board educator raise, estimated by the Commission on School Funding to cost about \$650 million annually. A proposal by legislative Democrats to add \$250 million for educator raises represents a good down payment on Time for 20. However, due to the mechanics of the new funding formula, certain school districts still will not have the resources for any educator raises. This needs to be addressed, because every Nevada educator deserves a raise.

I have submitted my testimony in a public comment ([Exhibit J](#)).

Remainder of page intentionally left blank; signature page to follow.

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CHAIR LANGE:

I have also received 2 letters of opposition for S.B. 9 to put into the record ([Exhibit K](#)). We are adjourning the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Kirsten Oleson,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Roberta Lange, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit Letter	Introduced on minutes report page No.	Witness / Entity	Description
	A	1		Agenda
	B	1		Attendance Roster
	C	2	Senator Roberta Lange	Rules for the 2023 Legislative Session
	D	2	Senator Roberta Lange	Committee Brief
	E	2	Zeke Perez, Jr., Education Commission of the States	Presentation, Trending Education Policy
	F	6	Zeke Perez, Jr., Education Commission of the States	Flyer, Key Education Issues for 2023: Resources to Inform your Legislative Session
	G	9	Wayne Workman, Lyon County School District; Nevada Association of School Superintendents	Document, iNVEST in Education
	H	20	Jhone Ebert, Nevada Department of Education	Presentation, The State of Education in Nevada
S.B. 9	I	34	Ryan Olson, Future Farmers of America	Written Testimony
	J	37	Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association	Public Comment
S.B. 9	K	38	Senator Roberta Lange	Letters of Opposition