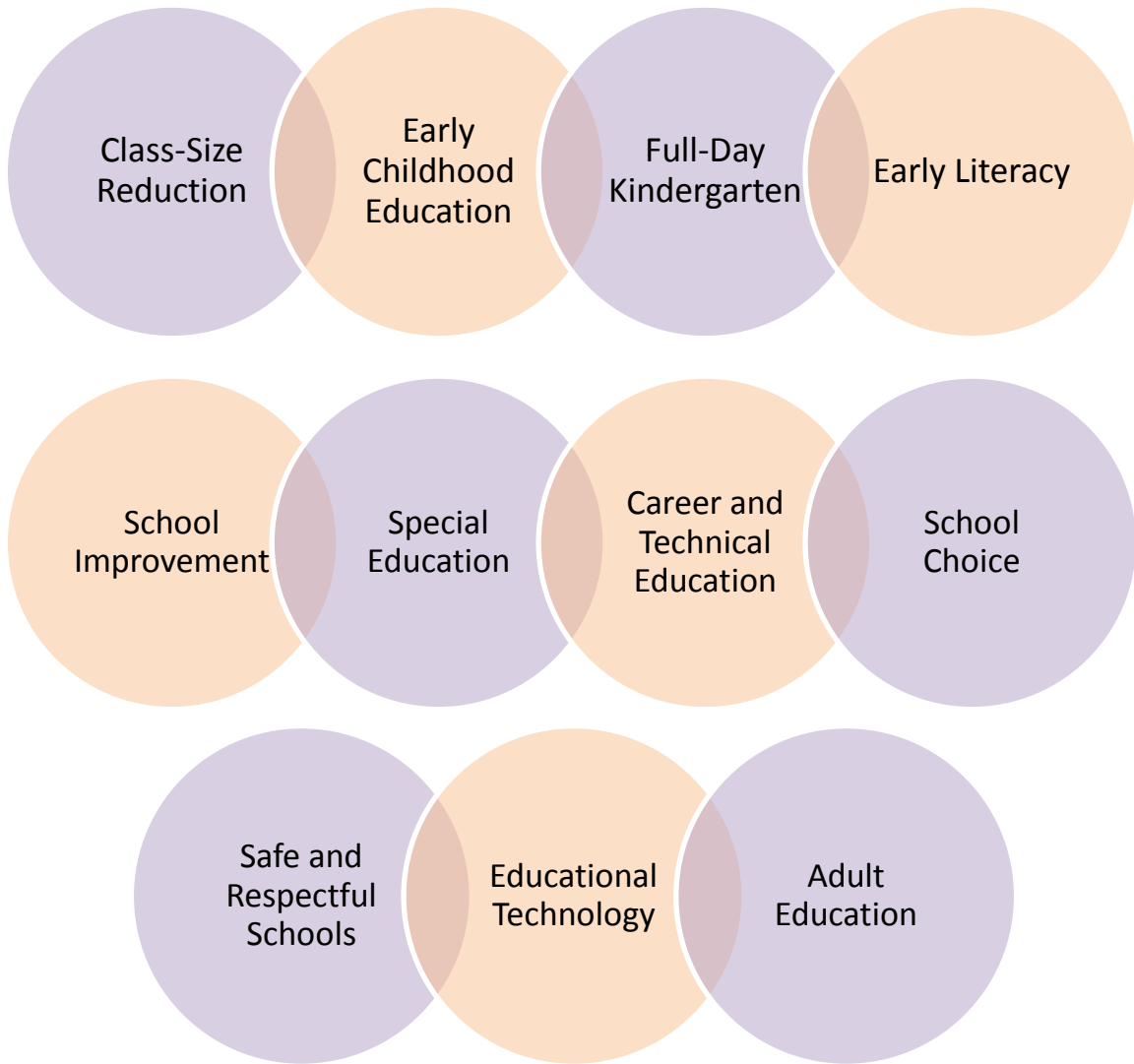


8

Education Programs in Nevada Schools

This chapter contains data concerning several education programs in Nevada schools:



NEW AND EXPANDED PROGRAMS—EXTERNAL EVALUATION

The 2015 Nevada Legislature appropriated funding to support certain new and continued education programs. In approving funds, the Governor and Legislature required an external outcome evaluation of each of the identified programs. The purpose of the evaluations is to collect and analyze outcome data that will either: (1) justify a request to the Governor and 2017 Legislature for ongoing funding for one or more of the programs; or (2) provide data indicating one or more of the programs is not producing the desired outcomes and should not receive continued funding. A preliminary report of findings was due on or before June 30, 2016; these findings assisted the Governor in determining which programs to support through a budget request to the 2017 Legislature. A final report of findings was due on or before December 31, 2016; this report will assist the Legislature in determining which programs to approve funding for the 2017–2019 Biennium. Programs included in the external evaluation are:

- Zoom Schools and Rural Grants;
- Victory Schools;
- Read by Grade 3;
- Turnaround Schools;
- Social Workers/Mental Health Workers in Schools;
- Nevada Ready 21 Technology; and
- Great Teaching and Leading Fund.

CLASS-SIZE REDUCTION—BACKGROUND

A key reform initiative for more than two decades has been Nevada’s program to reduce pupil-to-teacher ratios, commonly known as the Class-Size Reduction (CSR) program. Following a review of the topic by a 1987–1988 Interim legislative study, the 1989 Legislature enacted the Class-Size Reduction Act, Assembly Bill 964 (Chapter 864, *Statutes of Nevada*). The measure was designed to reduce the pupil-to-teacher ratio in public schools, particularly in the earliest grades where the core curriculum is taught. Today, the CSR program is codified in *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 388.700 et seq. By the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2016–2017, Nevada will have expended approximately \$2.8 billion for the direct costs of funding the CSR program, excluding any local capital expenditures or other local costs.

Implementation of the CSR Program in Nevada

The program was scheduled for implementation in several phases. The first step reduced the ratios in select kindergarten and first grade classes for School Year (SY) 1990–1991. The next phase was designed to reduce second grade ratios, followed by third grade reductions.

After achieving a target ratio of 15 pupils to 1 teacher in the primary grades (K through 3), the original program proposed that the pupil-to-teacher ratio be reduced to 22 pupils per class in grades 4, 5, and 6, followed by a reduction to not more than 25 pupils per class in grades 7 through 12. Until the 2005 Legislative Session, CSR in only the primary grades had been addressed. For the 2015–2017 Biennium, the funded class sizes are: 21:1 in kindergarten; 17:1 in grades 1 and 2; and 20:1 in grade 3.

NOTE: Historically, the CSR program has not included charter schools. For the 2015–2017 Biennium, charter schools, for the first time, received funding to maintain kindergarten class sizes at the required 21:1 ratio.

Flexibility in Pupil-to-Teacher Ratios

Based upon a pilot program in Elko County, the 2005 Legislature enacted Senate Bill 460 (Chapter 457, *Statutes of Nevada*), codified in NRS 388.720, which provides flexibility in implementing pupil-to-teacher ratios in grades 1 through 6 for school districts in counties other than Clark and Washoe. Pupil-to-teacher ratios are limited to not more than 22:1 in grades 1 through 3, and not more than 25:1 in grades 4 through 6. During SY 2015–2016, Carson City School District and Churchill, Douglas, Elko, Humboldt, Lyon, Mineral, Nye, Storey, and White Pine County School Districts participated in the alternative program.

In addition to the flexibility provided to certain school districts, the Legislature has authorized all school districts, subject to the approval of the State’s Superintendent of Public Instruction, to operate alternative programs for reducing the ratio of pupils per teacher or to implement programs of remedial education that have been found to be effective in improving pupil achievement in grades 1, 2, and 3. This alternative has not been requested by any school district in recent years.

Temporary Revisions to the CSR Program

During the 26th Special Session of the Nevada Legislature, which convened on February 23, 2010, to address the State’s ongoing fiscal crisis, the Legislature passed A.B. 4 (Chapter 7, *Statutes of Nevada 2010, 26th Special Session*), which temporarily revised provisions governing CSR to allow school districts flexibility in addressing budget shortfalls. The program was known as the “Plus-Two Program” and was implemented as follows:

Chapter 8

- For SY 2010–2011, this measure authorized a school district to increase class sizes in grades 1, 2, and 3 by not more than 2 pupils per teacher in each grade, to reach pupil-to-teacher ratios of up to 18:1 in grades 1 and 2 and up to 21:1 in grade 3.
- If a school district elected to increase class sizes in this manner, all funds that would have otherwise been expended by the school district to achieve the lower class sizes in grades 1 through 3 must have been used to minimize the impact of budget reductions on class sizes in grades 4 through 12.
- For reporting purposes, school districts that elected to increase class sizes in grades 1 through 3 were required to report the pupil-to-teacher ratios achieved for each grade level from grades 1 through 12.

This legislation became effective on March 10, 2010, and was intended to sunset on June 30, 2011. However, due to continued economic hardships across the State, the program was continued through June 30, 2015; the 2015 Legislature discontinued the program.

Recent Changes to the CSR Program

The 2015 Legislature spent considerable time reviewing the CSR program and its costs. The school districts testified that, with elimination of the Plus-Two Program, they would be in financial hardship to implement the program in its previous form and class sizes in grades 4 through 12 would most likely increase. To help mitigate the loss of the CSR flexibility waiver, the 2015 Legislature, through the passage of Senate Bill 515 (Chapter 537, *Statutes of Nevada*), approved an increase to the funded CSR student-to-teacher ratios from 16:1 in grades 1 and 2 and 19:1 in grade 3, to 17:1 in grades 1 and 2 and 20:1 in grade 3. The approved increase of one student per class resulted in CSR funding reductions totaling \$43.9 million over the 2015–2017 Biennium. The savings were used to maintain class sizes in grades 4 through 12 and to increase state funding for Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs.

Variance Requests

Pursuant to NRS 388.700, for grades 1 through 3, school districts must request a variance from the State Board of Education if class-size ratios will exceed the funded ratios of 17:1 in grades 1 and 2 or 20:1 in grade 3. For FY 2015–2016, quarterly variance requests were approved by the State Board for approximately 650 classrooms in 250 schools. Here, it is important to understand the CSR program in Nevada is funded at a district level, not at a school or classroom level. Because of this, there are several instances in which a classroom may have only a few students over the funded ratio, which requires a variance. In these instances, it may not be practical to hire an additional teacher to reduce the ratio. For example, for the third quarter of FY 2015–2016, out of 650 classroom variances, 368 (57 percent) were requested for classrooms that had three or fewer students over the funded ratio.

For kindergarten, the funded pupil-to-teacher ratio is 21:1. If classroom ratios exceed 21:1, the superintendent of the school district may approve variances up to 25:1. Kindergarten classrooms may not exceed a 25:1 ratio except for remote and rural schools with an approved plan of corrective action. For the third quarter, two schools were deemed remote and rural and received variance approvals.

CSR Plans

Nevada Revised Statutes 388.720 requires each school district to develop a plan to reduce pupil-to-teacher ratios in the district. Since the 2013–2015 Biennium, a major component of the district plans has been a goal to eliminate all variance requests in one- and two-star schools (i.e., underperforming schools). As of the third quarter of FY 2015–2016, there continue to be 30 one- and two-star schools with variances.

School Districts With Variances in One- and Two-Star Schools—SY 2015–2016

School District	1st Quarter Number of 1- and 2- Star Schools With Variances/Total Eligible Schools	2nd Quarter Number of 1- and 2- Star Schools With Variances/Total Eligible Schools	3rd Quarter Number of 1- and 2- Star Schools With Variances/Total Eligible Schools
Churchill	2/3 (67%)	2/3 (67%)	2/3 (67%)
Clark	13/217 (6%)	10/217 (5%)	14/217 (6%)
Elko	-	3/12 (25%)	3/12 (25%)
Humboldt	1/8 (13%)	-	1/8 (13%)
Nye	6/12 (50%)	6/12 (50%)	6/12 (50%)
Washoe	9/62 (15%)	5/62 (8%)	2/62 (3%)
White Pine	2/4 (50%)	1/4 (25%)	2/4 (50%)
TOTAL	33/359 (9%)	27/359 (8%)	30/359 (8%)

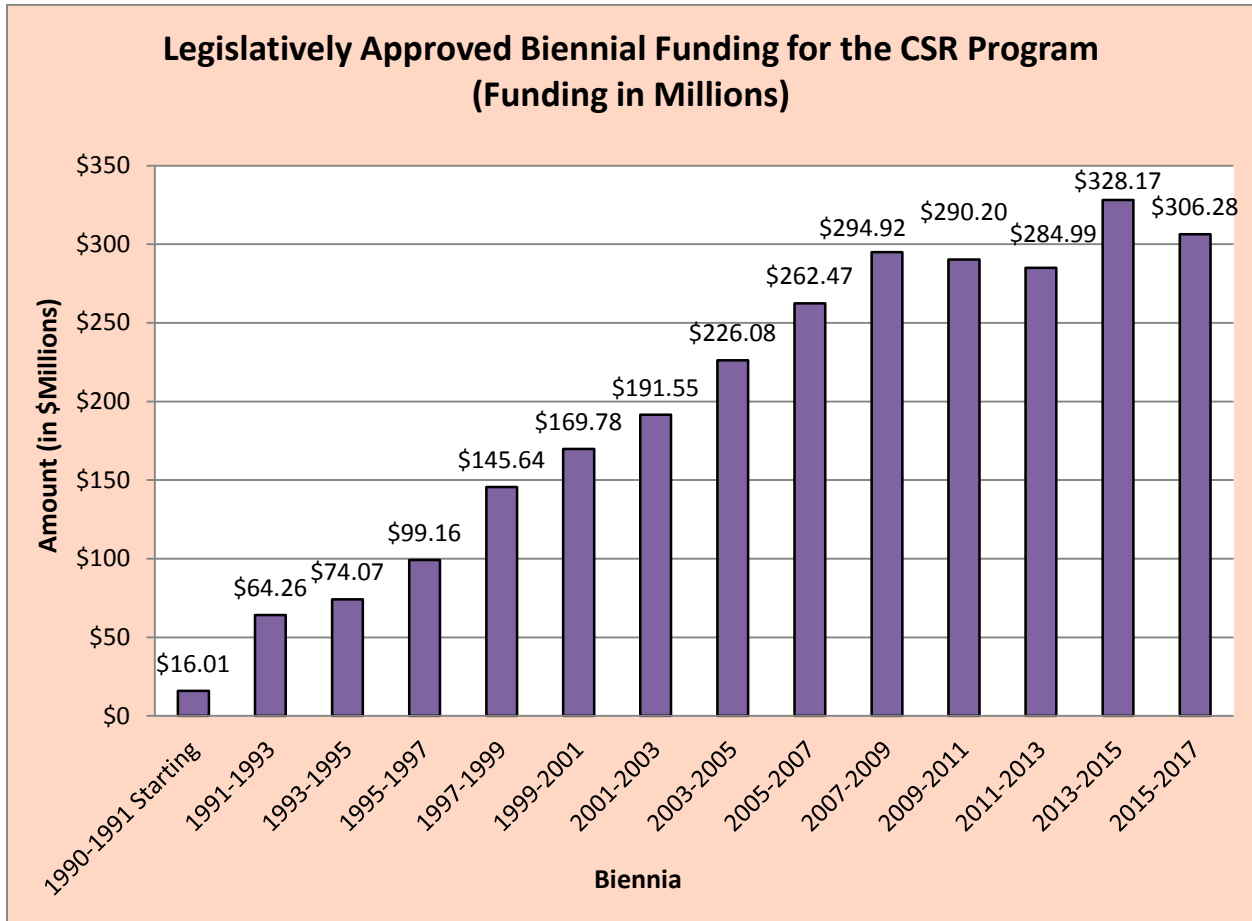
For additional information, please see the fact sheet on CSR published by the Research Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB). The document may be accessed at: <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Publications/Factsheets/index.html>.

In 2015, there were a dozen high schools in the Clark County School District that were designated as five-star schools, the highest rating available under the Nevada School Performance Framework.



CSR—FUNDING

By the end of FY 2016–2017, Nevada will have expended approximately \$2.8 billion for the direct costs of funding the regular CSR program*, excluding any local capital expenditures or other local costs.

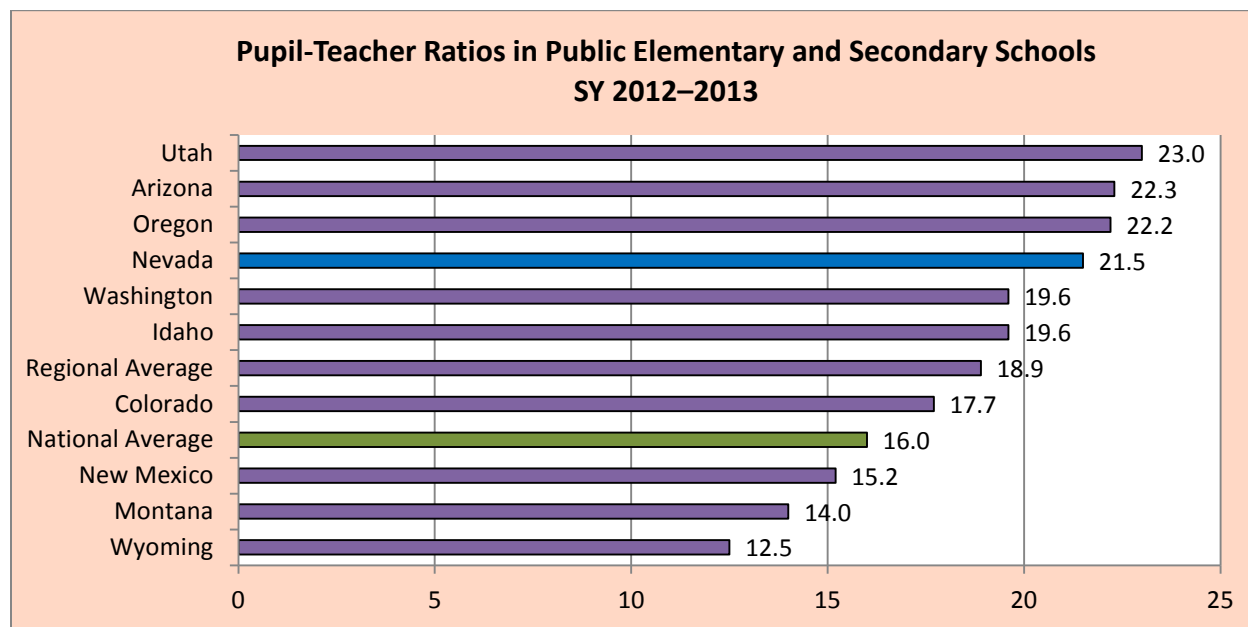


*Regular CSR program: Does not include funding for full-day kindergarten CSR.

Note: Beginning in SY 2007–2008, the Legislature approved funding for CSR for certain at-risk kindergartens; however, the funding was eliminated beginning in SY 2015–2016. This is due to statewide implementation of full-day kindergarten at a student-to-teacher ratio of 21:1, which eliminated the need for at-risk funding.

Source: Fiscal Analysis Division, LCB; *Nevada Legislative Appropriations Report*; various years.

CSR—PUPIL-TO-TEACHER RATIO

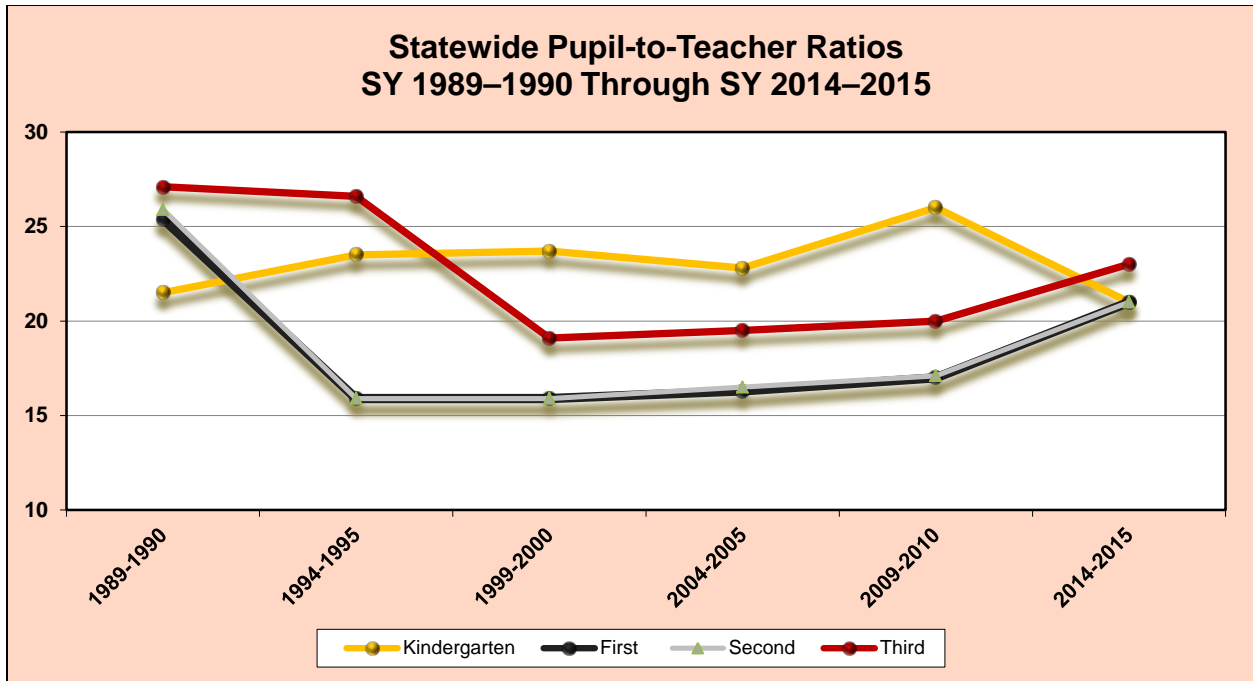


Source: CQ Press, *State Rankings 2012–2013*.

Nevada Pupil-to-Teacher Ratios in Grades K Through 3 SY 1989–1990 Through SY 2014–2015

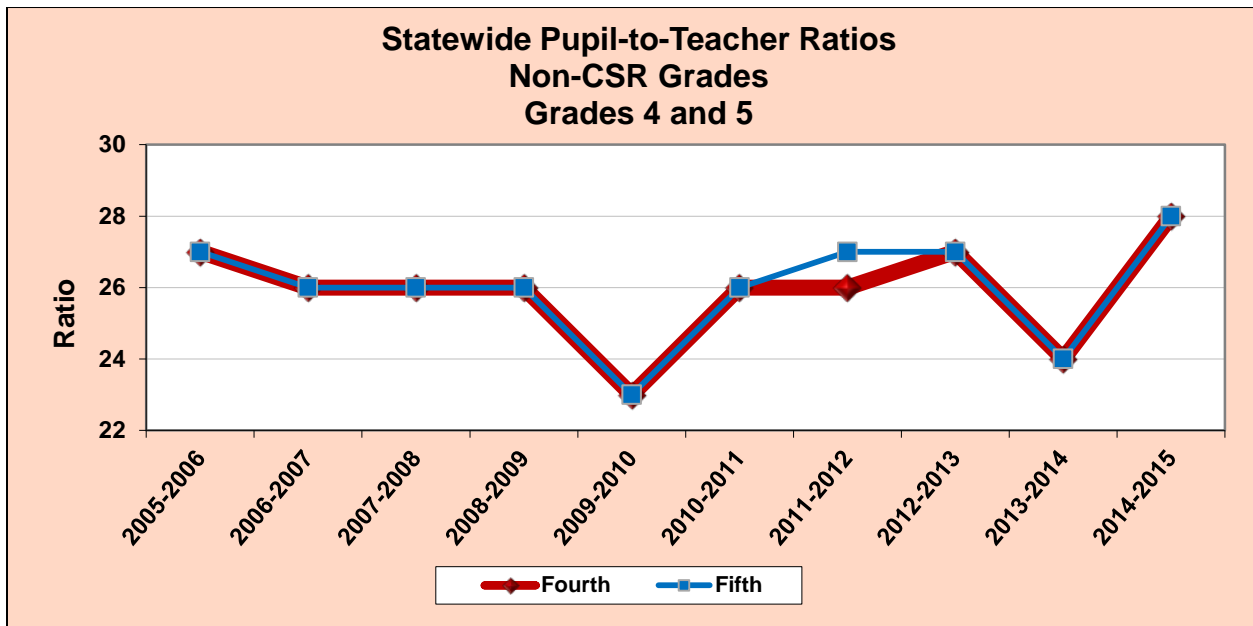
	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
1989–1990	22	25	26	27
1994–1995	24	16	16	27
1999–2000	24	16	16	19
2004–2005	23	16	17	20
2009–2010	26	17	17	20
2014–2015	21	21	21	23

Source: Nevada's Department of Education (NDE), *Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability*, <http://www.NevadaReportCard.com>.

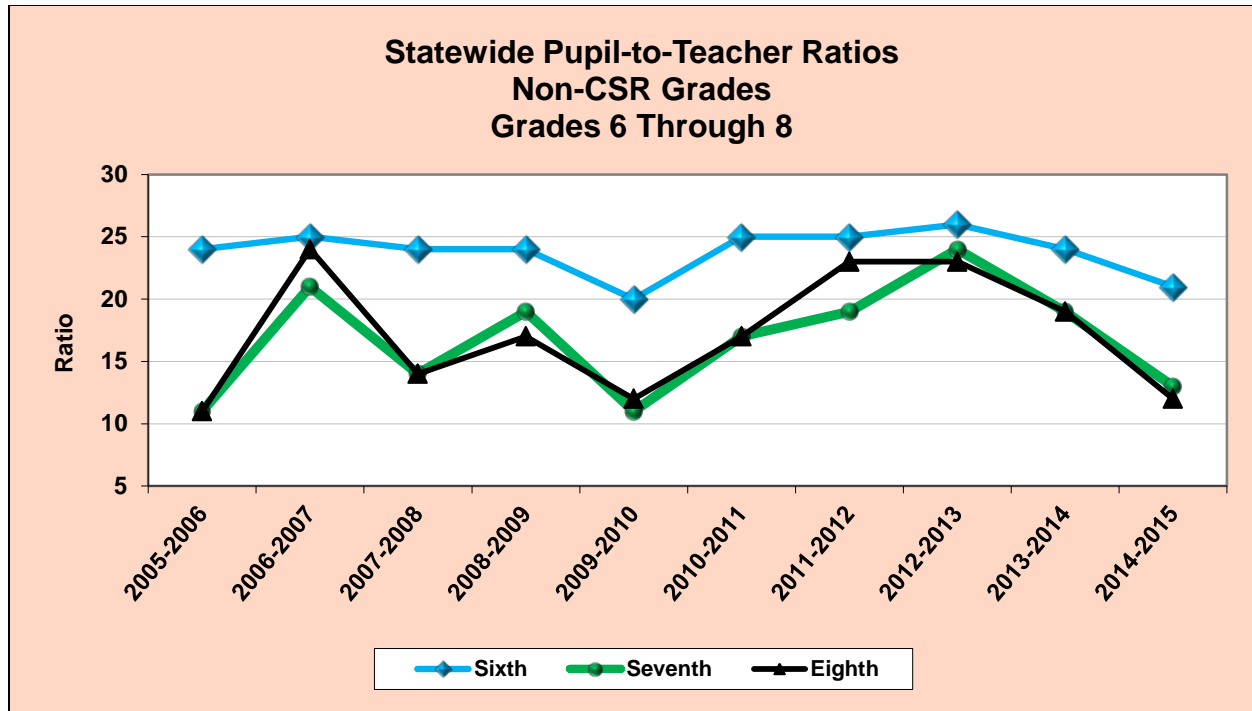


Source: NDE, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability, <http://www.NevadaReportCard.com>.

NON-CSR—PUPIL-TO-TEACHER RATIOS, GRADES 4 THROUGH 8



Source: NDE, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability, <http://www.NevadaReportCard.com>.



Source: NDE, *Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability*, <http://www.NevadaReportCard.com>.

NON-CSR—PUPIL-TO-TEACHER RATIOS, GRADES 9 THROUGH 12

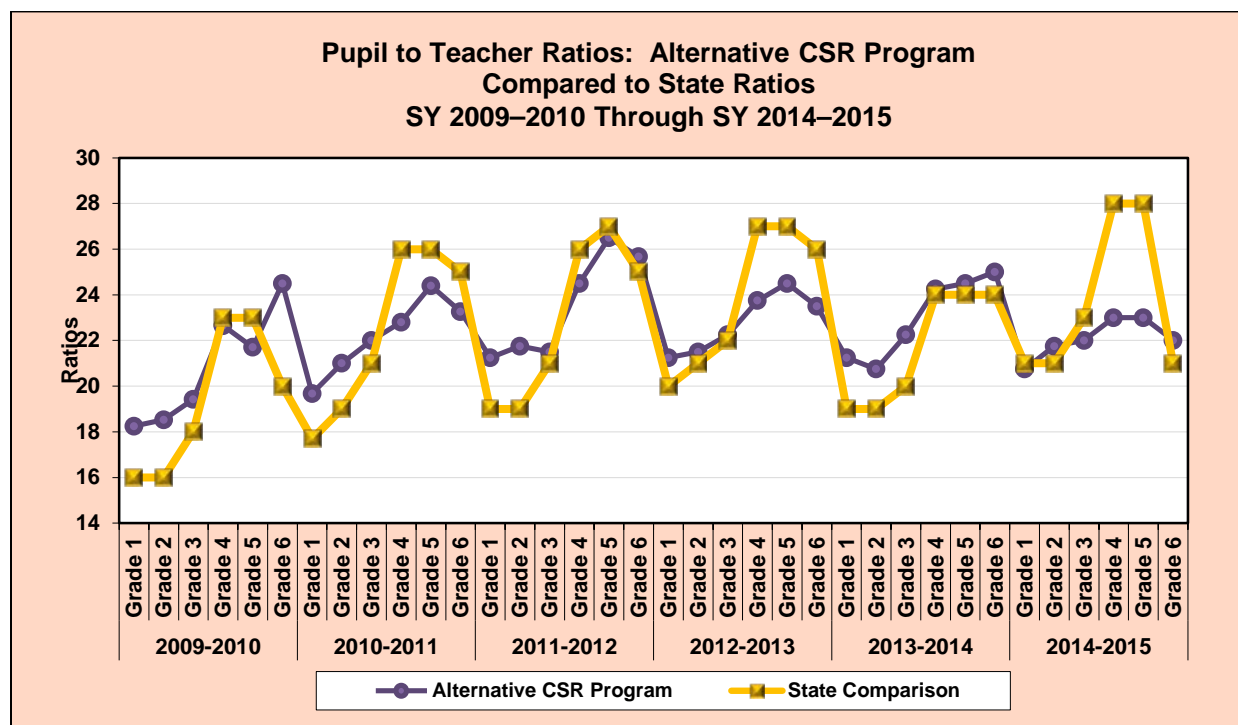
In Nevada's secondary school classrooms, class sizes have remained consistently in the mid-20s since SY 2004–2005. The most recent data (SY 2014–2015) show class sizes average 22 and 23 pupils for English and mathematics, respectively. For science and social studies, class sizes average 25 pupils. (See: NDE, *Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability*, <http://www.NevadaReportCard.com>.)

Nationwide, only 108 teachers each year receive the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Nevada's 2015 awardees were Carrie Hair of Swope Middle School and Jan Howell Hrindo of Incline Middle School, both of the Washoe County School District.



ALTERNATIVE CSR—PUPIL-TO-TEACHER RATIOS, GRADES 1 THROUGH 6

For this comparison, it would be expected the Alternative CSR program would have higher ratios than the State average in grades 1 through 3 and lower ratios than the State average in grades 4 through 6.



Source: NDE, Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability, <http://www.NevadaReportCard.com>.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) PROGRAMS

The Office of Early Learning and Development in NDE was created by Governor Brian Sandoval through Executive Order 2013-16. The Office administers State and federally funded programs providing such services as home visiting programs, child care, pre-kindergarten (pre-K) education, and Head Start. The focus of the Office is to coordinate services across the State for children from birth through third grade.

Federal Preschool Development Grant Program

In FY 2014–2015, Nevada was selected as an award recipient of the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Preschool Development Grants program (one of only five states selected). The first year of the grant allotment was \$6.4 million, with a potential allotment over the next four years exceeding \$43 million. There is a State match requirement for the program totaling \$10.3 million over the 2015–2017 Biennium. It is estimated the State and federal grant dollars will increase Nevada’s

preschool enrollment by 58 percent over four years, serving approximately 15 percent of the State's four-year-old population whose families earn under 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

The State school districts and agencies identified to participate in the program are: (1) Churchill County School District; (2) Community Services Agency; (3) Lyon County School District; (4) Nye County School District; (5) State Public Charter School Authority; (6) United Way of Southern Nevada; and (7) Washoe County School District.

The program requires teachers to have an early childhood teacher's license or an ECE endorsement on a teacher's license. In addition, all programs must provide a minimum of 5 hours per day, or 25 hours per week, of pre-K class time. The programs must utilize the Nevada pre-K Content Standards and must implement developmentally appropriate, research-based curricula. There must be a component of parent involvement, and class sizes must not exceed 20 children with 2 adults (1 adult may be a certified teaching assistant).

State ECE Program

The State-funded ECE Program was first funded by the 2001 Nevada Legislature. The primary goal of the program is school readiness, which is met by providing high-quality early education services to three- and four-year-olds and involving parents throughout. Funding for the program has been set at approximately \$3.3 million per fiscal year since inception.

The 2015 Legislature, through the passage of S.B. 515, appropriated \$3.3 million in each fiscal year of the 2015–2017 Biennium to NDE to continue the ECE competitive grants program for school districts and community-based organizations. The funding may be used either to initiate or to expand pre-K education programs. The following table shows the 11 sponsors receiving funds during SY 2014–2015.

In 2015, the following high schools in Washoe County were designated as five-star schools under the Nevada School Performance Framework: Academy of Art, Careers and Technology; Coral Academy Charter School, Secondary; and Truckee Meadows Community College Magnet High School.



Nevada ECE Projects SY 2014–2015		
Sponsor Agency/ Program Location	Number of Sites	Monetary Award
Carson City School District	2	\$266,720
Churchill County School District	2	\$174,601
Clark County School District	10	\$1,310,305
Elko County School District	2	\$160,372
Great Basin College	1	\$111,722
Humboldt County School District	1	\$105,906
Mineral County School District	1	\$90,374
Nye County School District	1	\$101,410
Pershing County School District	1	\$105,069
Washoe County School District	13	\$709,099
White Pine County School District	1	\$111,797
Total	35	\$3,247,375

Source: Pacific Research Associates; *Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program: Building a Foundation for School Readiness and Success in PreK–12 and Beyond, FY 2012–13, Evaluation Report*; October 2015.

ECE Participation—SY 2014–2015

In FY 2014–2015, there were 1,398 children served through the ECE program; this represents approximately 1.9 percent of the number of three- and four-year-old children in Nevada during the fiscal year. For comparison, nationally, 16.9 percent of three- and four-year-old children are enrolled in state pre-K programs (National Institute for Early Education Research, *The State of Preschool 2015*).

NOTE: During FY 2014–2015, there were 1,040 children on the waiting list to participate in the State ECE Program.

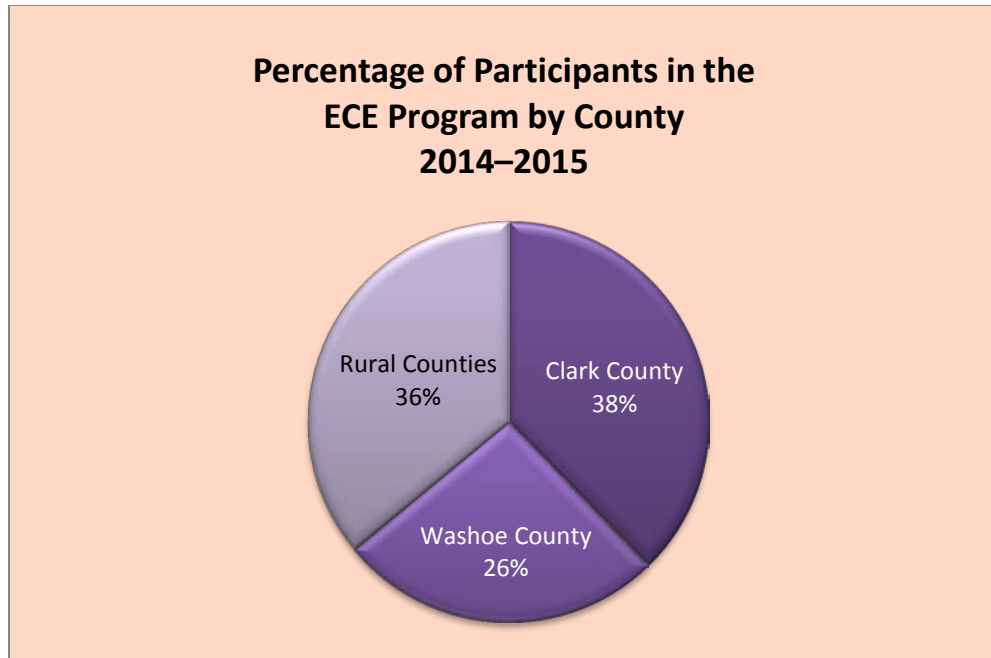
Children Waiting for Services in Nevada's ECE Program FY 2014–2015	
Location	Number of Children
Carson City	0
Churchill County	55
Clark County	309
Elko County	50
Great Basin College	10
Humboldt County	15
Mineral County	5
Nye County	113
Pershing County	32
Washoe County	442
White Pine County	9
Total	1,040

Source: Pacific Research Associates; *Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program: Building a Foundation for School Readiness and Success in PreK–12 and Beyond, FY 2014–15, Evaluation Report*; October 2015.

The characteristics of Nevada ECE participants are based upon data from 11 projects that provided services to 1,360 families, including 1,398 children and 1,461 adults, during SY 2014–2015. The following chart and table present the percentage of participants by county, as well as the number of families, adults, and children served by Nevada ECE projects.

Fewer than one-half of 1 percent of all schools are recognized as National Blue Ribbon Schools. In 2016, two Nevada schools were so honored: (1) Evelyn Stuckey Elementary School of the Clark County School District; and (2) Kendyl Depoali Middle School of the Washoe County School District.

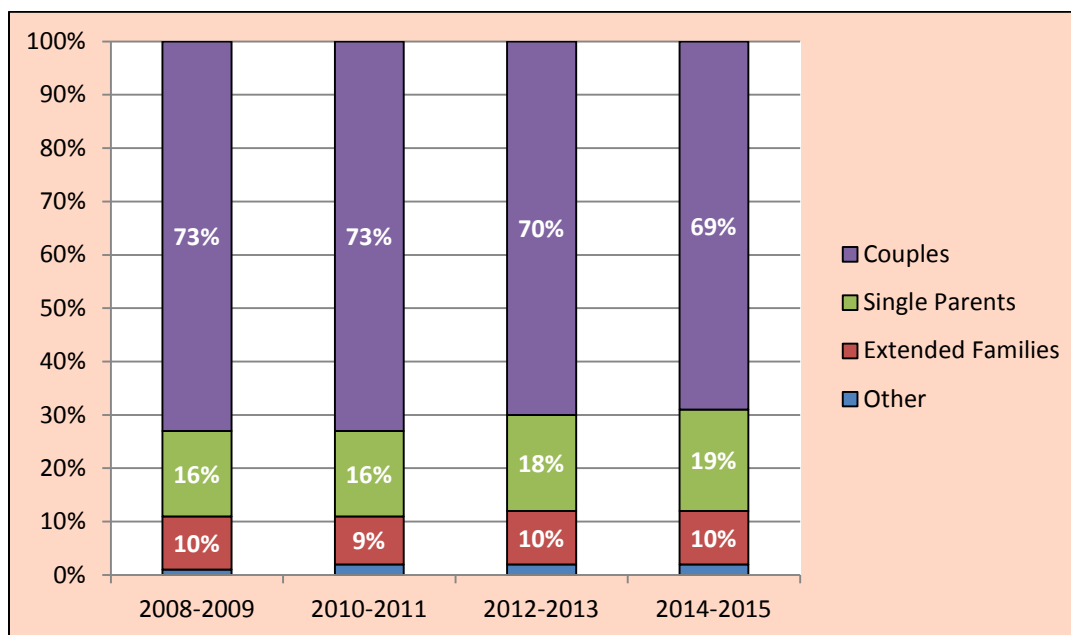




Number of Participants in the ECE Program by County 2014–2015				
Project	Families	Children	Adults	Total Participants
Carson City	63	64	65	129
Churchill County	98	100	99	199
Clark County	526	539	540	1,079
Elko County	74	75	98	173
Great Basin College	40	42	41	83
Humboldt County	43	43	81	124
Mineral County	33	34	46	80
Nye County	45	46	45	91
Pershing County	38	38	38	76
Washoe County	363	379	371	750
White Pine County	37	38	37	75
Total	1,360	1,398	1,461	2,859

Source: Pacific Research Associates; *Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program: Building a Foundation for School Readiness and Success in PreK–12 and Beyond, FY 2014–15, Evaluation Report*; October 2015.

Characteristics of Nevada Families Participating in ECE



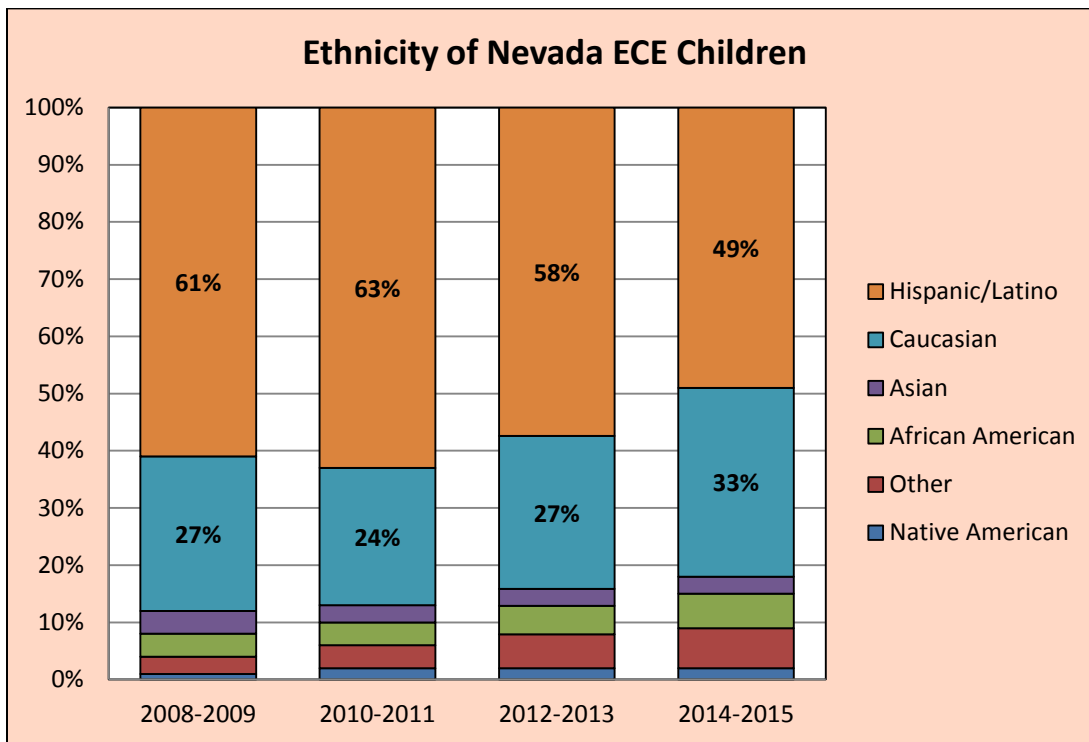
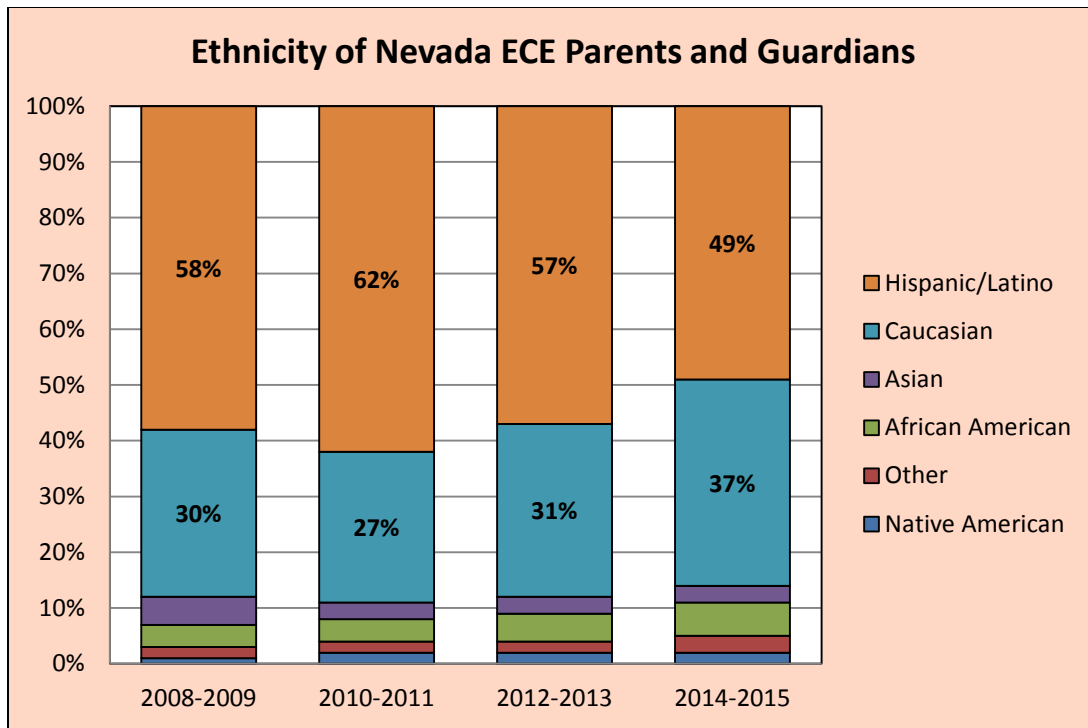
Reported Family Structures in 2014–2015

Family Structure	Number of Families	Percent Families
Couples	935	69
Single Parent	263	19
Extended Families	133	10
Other	27	2

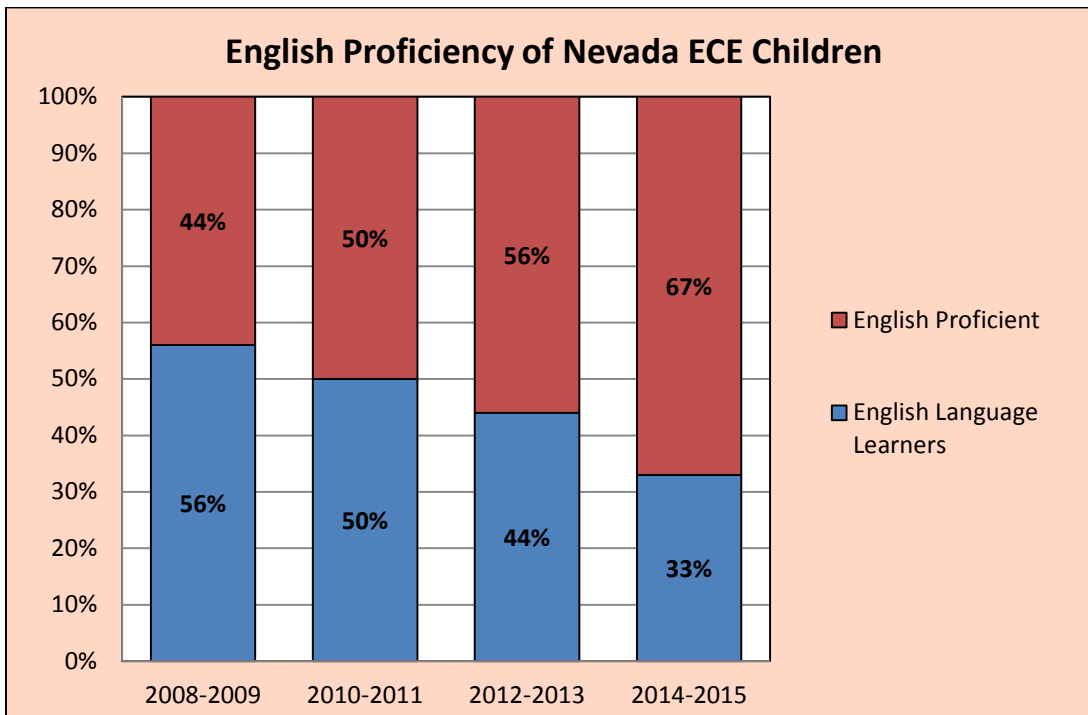
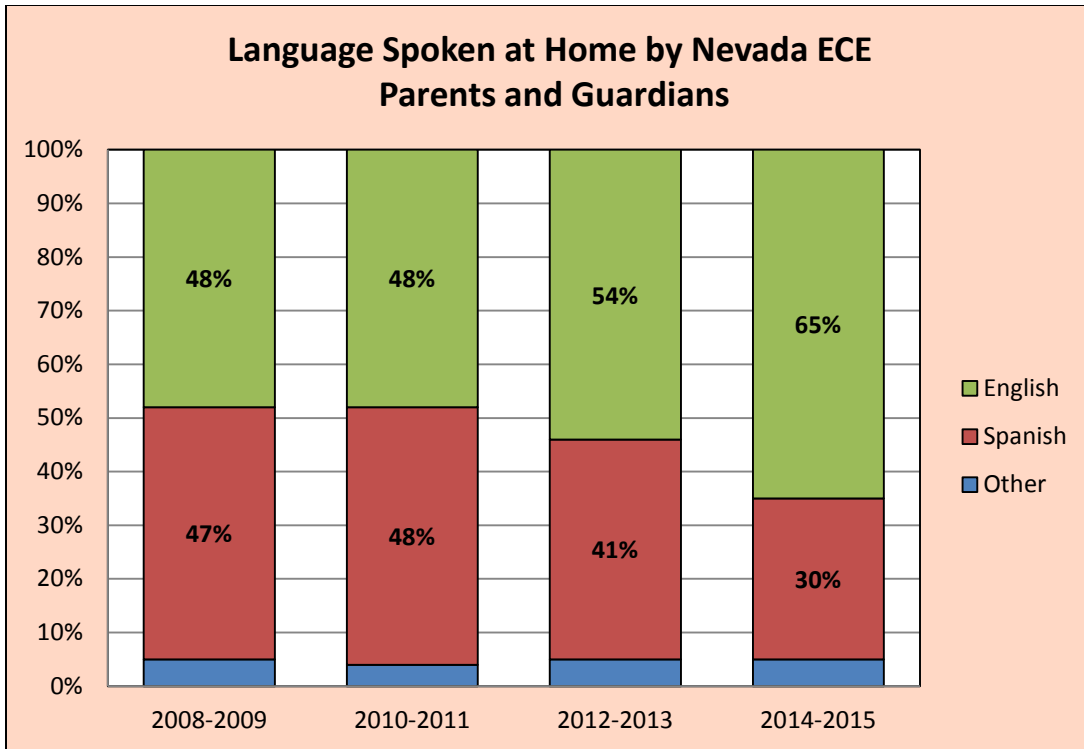
Source: Pacific Research Associates; *Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program: Building a Foundation for School Readiness and Success in PreK–12 and Beyond, Evaluation Report*; various years.

Edgenuity, an online provider of education technology solutions that works with more than 16,000 schools nationally, ranked the Clark County School District among the nation's top ten school districts in the use of blended learning programs.





Source: Pacific Research Associates; *Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program: Building a Foundation for School Readiness and Success in PreK-12 and Beyond, Evaluation Report*; various years.



Source: Pacific Research Associates; *Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program: Building a Foundation for School Readiness and Success in PreK-12 and Beyond, Evaluation Report*; various years.

ECE Program—Evaluation

The evaluation of Nevada’s ECE Program includes a review of short-term effects and long-term impacts. The following summarizes the findings from the 2014–2015 annual evaluation. The complete report may be obtained from NDE.

Short-Term Effects

The primary purpose of the short-term evaluation is to investigate the performance of children and adults on six outcome indicators—three indicators on the developmental progress of children and three indicators on parental involvement. The results show that Nevada ECE parents and children exceeded the expected performance levels for all six indicators for which benchmarks have been established.

ECE Program Evaluation—SY 2014–2015		
Indicator	Benchmarks	
Developmental Progress of Children	Original	2014–2015 Goal (Actual)
Outcome Indicator 1: Reading Readiness—Individual Student Gain. Percent of ECE children from three to five years old with a minimum of four months of participation who show improvement in auditory comprehension and expressive communication—as measured by standard score increase on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT).	70%	80% (PPVT – 82.8%; EOWPVT – 89.3%)
Outcome Indicator 2: Reading Readiness—Average Program Gain. With a minimum of four months of participation, ECE children from three to five years old will make an average gain of standard score points in auditory comprehension as measured by the PPVT and in expressive communication as measured by the EOWPVT.	PPVT-7.0 points EOWPVT-10.0 points	PPVT-8.0 points (11.0 points) EOWPVT-10.0 pts (12.3 points)
Outcome Indicator 3: English Language Acquisition—Average Program Gain. With a minimum of four months of participation, ECE children from three to five years with limited English skills will make an average gain of raw score points in English acquisition as measured by the Preschool Language Assessment Scale (Pre-LAS).	N/A – The Benchmark has not been established	N/A – The Benchmark has not been established
Parental Involvement		
Outcome Indicator 4: Parenting Goals. Percent of participating adults enrolled in ECE for at least four months who meet at least one goal related to parenting skills (e.g., developmental appropriateness, positive discipline, teaching and learning, care-giving environment) within the reporting year.	90%	92% (97.9%)
Outcome Indicator 5: Time Spent With Children. Percent of first-year ECE parents who increase the amount of time they spend with their children weekly within a reporting year.	60%	80% (85.8%)
Outcome Indicator 6: Time Spent Reading With Children. Percent of first-year ECE parents who increase the amount of time they spend reading with their children within a reporting year.	30%	80% (86.9%)

Source: Pacific Research Associates; *Nevada ECE Program: Building a Foundation for School Readiness and Success in PreK–12 and Beyond, FY 2012–13, Evaluation Report*; October 2015.

Long-Term Effects

The longitudinal evaluation of the ECE Program followed one cohort of four-year-old children who participated in Nevada’s ECE Program during SY 2011–2012 and entered grade 2 in SY 2014–2015.

Similar to the short-term evaluation of the ECE Program, the longitudinal evaluation centers its findings on the developmental progress of children and parental involvement. The findings from the 2014–2015 longitudinal evaluation are as follows:

- *Developmental Progress of Children*—Results show this cohort of students made large learning gains on the PPVT (receptive) and the EOWPVT (expressive) in SY 2011–2012 while in preschool. In SY 2014–2015, this cohort maintained the learning gains made in preschool through the end of grade 2 in receptive vocabulary but not in expressive vocabulary. The reasons for the shortfall have not been identified at this time.
- *Parental Involvement*—Results of the study did not conclusively find that parents of this cohort attended parent/teacher conferences at a higher or lower rate than other parents.

Source: Pacific Research Associates; *Nevada ECE Program: Building a Foundation for School Readiness and Success in PreK–12 and Beyond, FY 2012–13, Evaluation Report*; October 2015.

In 2015, 2 Clark County School District schools were recognized among only 100 schools in the nation as National Title I Distinguished Schools. Lawrence and Heidi Canarelli Middle School and Patricia A. Bendorf Elementary School received the honor for significant improvements in student achievement.



FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN—HISTORY

2005 Session	<p>State-funded, full-day kindergarten was approved for the first time by the Nevada Legislature. A school district was not required to offer full-day kindergarten, and a family may have requested that their child attend for less than a full day.</p> <p>The Nevada Legislature appropriated \$22 million from the State General Fund to provide full-day kindergarten in certain schools during SY 2006–2007. These funds were utilized to implement full-day kindergarten in 114 at-risk schools across the State.</p> <p>NOTE: At-risk schools were those with at least 55.1 percent of students receiving free and reduced-price lunch.</p>
2007 Session	<p>The Nevada Legislature appropriated \$25.6 million in FY 2007–2008 to provide for the ongoing costs of full-day kindergarten for 114 at-risk schools.</p> <p>For FY 2008–2009, \$40.8 million was appropriated to expand the program to approximately 166 schools, with a targeted free and reduced-price lunch student count of at least 40.75 percent. However, due to the need for budget reductions, State funding to support full-day kindergarten for the additional 52 schools was subsequently eliminated.</p>
2013 Session	<p>The 2013 Legislature approved a State General Fund appropriation of \$81 million over the 2013–2015 Biennium to continue and expand the full-day kindergarten program for at-risk schools, which was nearly a two-thirds increase over the previous biennium.</p>
2015 Session	<p>The 2015 Legislature completed the expansion of full-day kindergarten reaching all schools by the second year of the biennium at a targeted student-to-teacher ratio of 21:1. The total cost of the program, inclusive of CSR funding is \$75.1 million in FY 2015–2016 and \$96.4 million in FY 2016–2017.</p>

Note: For additional information, please see the research brief on full-day kindergarten published by the Research Division of the LCB. The document may be accessed at: <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Publications/ResearchBriefs/index.html>.

Enrollment in Half-Day Programs

Pursuant to Senate Bill 508 (Chapter 536, *Statutes of Nevada 2015*), for the first time, beginning July 1, 2017, kindergarten students will be counted as a 1.0 student in the regular report of average daily enrollment with the students enrolled in grades 1 to 12, inclusive, and will be funded accordingly. Previously, kindergarten students were counted and funded as six-tenths due to half-day programs.

Although there is statewide funding for full-day kindergarten, parents may continue to request a half-day kindergarten program for their child. In SY 2015–2016, there were 63 half-day programs implemented in four school districts:

Half-Day Kindergarten Programs—SY 2015–2016	
School District	Number of Programs
Clark County School District	47
Elko County School District	8
Eureka County School District	1
Lander County School District	7
TOTAL	63

Source: NDE.

Evaluations of Effectiveness in Nevada

In Nevada, evaluations of the effect of full-day kindergarten on student academic achievement have shown positive results over the years. A recent 2015 study conducted by the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, School of Community Health Sciences, entitled, *Full-Day Kindergarten in Nevada: A Health Impact Assessment*, begins the discussion of the connection between education and health. For example, it has been found that people with higher levels of education live healthier and longer lives. These people tend to engage in healthy behaviors, have lower rates of illness, and have higher life expectancies.

The Nevada study found that full-day kindergarten has the potential to contribute to improved educational attainment in Nevada, particularly for students who are English learners (ELs) and/or come from low-income households. In turn, improved educational attainment has the potential to improve the health of adults through healthier behaviors and lower rates of disease. By increasing time spent in school, physical development may also improve through access to school-based nutrition education and physical activity.

EARLY LITERACY

There are several research studies linking the importance of early literacy on future academic success. Findings from a longitudinal study by sociologist Donald J. Hernandez entitled, *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation* (2012). An update by the Annie E. Casey Foundation found that children who do not read proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma than proficient readers. African American and Hispanic children who are not reading proficiently in third grade are twice as likely as their white peers to not graduate from high school. When poverty is added to the analysis, Hernandez found that the graduation failure rate for children who cannot read proficiently and are poor for at least one year is 26 percent; this is more than six times the rate for all proficient readers.

Based upon this and other research, the Governor recommended and the 2015 Legislature approved significant investments in early literacy. Funding not only supports early childhood education, full-day kindergarten, and intensive reading interventions, but also begins weighted funding for certain populations of students, including: (1) ELs; (2) students residing in high poverty areas of Nevada; (3) special education students; and (4) gifted and talented students.

In this section, the programs for ELs, students residing in high poverty areas of Nevada, and intensive reading interventions will be discussed. Programs for special education and gifted and talented students will be discussed in a following section.

ELs—Zoom Schools and Rural Grants Programs

The 2013 Nevada Legislature enacted Senate Bill 504 (Chapter 515, *Statutes of Nevada*) to ensure children who are ELs benefit from instruction designed to address their academic and linguistic needs. State funding of \$25 million in each fiscal year of the 2013–2015 Biennium was appropriated to provide literacy support for EL students. The program implemented in Clark and Washoe County School Districts is called the Zoom Schools program. The program implemented in the remaining school districts is called the Rural Grants program.

The purpose of the programs is to provide support to low-performing schools with the highest percentage of EL students. The goal is to assist EL students with English language acquisition and, ultimately, to improve the academic achievement of each student. Because of the success of the Zoom Schools program during the 2013–2015 Biennium, funding was doubled for the 2015–2017 Biennium, providing \$50 million in each fiscal year. Program reports may be viewed at: [http://www.doe.nv.gov/English Language Learners\(ELL\)/SB405 Zoom Reports/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/English_Language_Learners(ELL)/SB405_Zoom_Reports/).

Zoom Schools and Rural Grants Programs Enrollment and Estimated Weighted Funding				
School Year	State Funding	Students Served (Schools)	Average Funding Per Pupil	Weighted Funding*
2014–2015	\$25 million	19,912 (23)	\$1,250	0.21
2015–2016	\$50 million	32,853 (44)	\$1,377**	0.24
2016–2017 (projected)	\$50 million	41,459 (62)	\$1,087**	0.19

*Weighted Funding: This represents the additional funds needed to educate an ELL student, expressed as a multiplier of the per-pupil basic support guarantee.

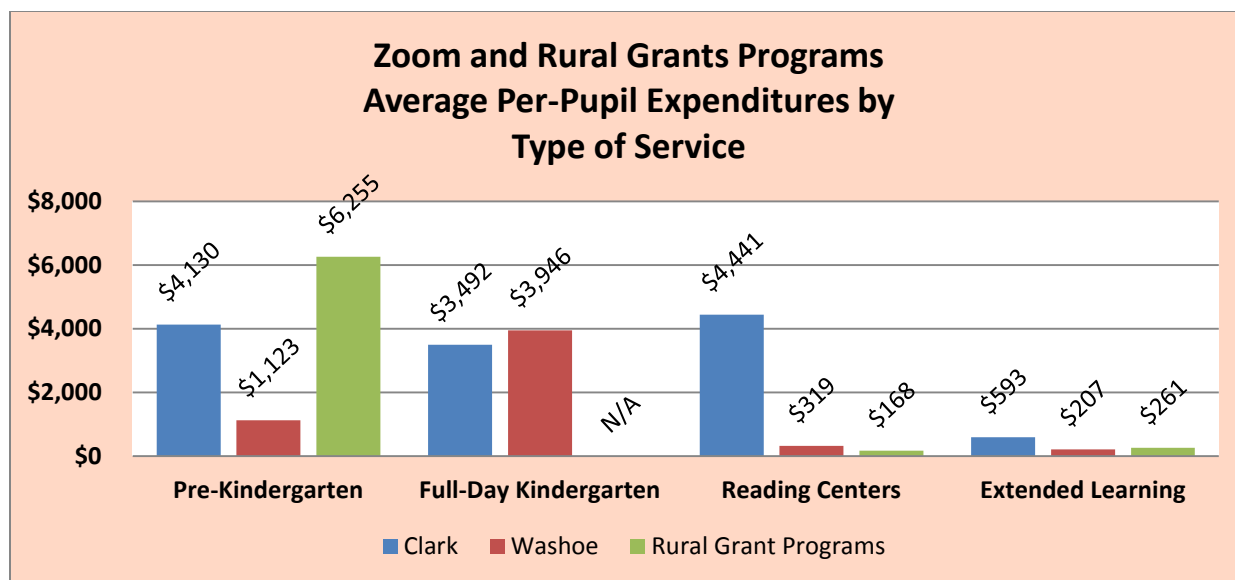
**The average for SY 2015–2016 includes full-day kindergarten funding provided to Zoom Schools and Rural Grants programs. Beginning with SY 2016–2017, full-day kindergarten is available statewide, so the Zoom Schools and Rural Grants programs no longer support this expense.

Source: NDE; presentation to the Legislative Committee on Education; *Improving Student Outcomes The Plan to Provide Additional Resources to the Nevada Plan*; July 28, 2016.

The services supported by the Zoom Schools and Rural Grants programs include pre-K, full-day kindergarten (through SY 2015–2016), reading centers, and extended learning time. When reviewing the average per-pupil expenditures by type of service and by school district, there are significant differences; yet, all programs report a positive impact on EL student academic performance. These differences will need to be reviewed at length when determining average weighted funding that may have the greatest positive impact on the academic achievement of EL students.

Fewer than one-half of 1 percent of all schools are recognized as National Blue Ribbon Schools. In 2015, three Nevada schools were so honored: (1) Sue H. Morrow Elementary School; (2) Glen C. Taylor Elementary School; and (3) Sig Rogich Middle School all located in the Clark County School District.





Entity	Pre-Kindergarten	Full-Day Kindergarten	Reading Centers	Extended Learning
Clark	\$4,130	\$3,492	\$4,441	\$593
Washoe	\$1,123	\$3,946	\$319	\$207
Rural Grants Programs	\$6,255	N/A	\$168	\$261

Source: NDE; presentation to the Legislative Committee on Education; *Improving Student Outcomes The Plan to Provide Additional Resources to the Nevada Plan*; July 28, 2016.

Students in Poverty (Victory Schools Program)

Through the passage of Senate Bill 432 (Chapter 389, *Statutes of Nevada 2015*), State funding of \$25 million in each fiscal year of the 2015–2017 Biennium was approved to support the creation of a Victory Schools program to focus on increasing the academic achievement of students living in the poorest communities in Nevada. The goals of the program focus on students reading at grade level, being prepared for rigorous curricula, and graduating from high school with the skills and attributes necessary to immediately succeed in college or a career.

The program is designed to be implemented in a similar fashion to the Zoom Schools program; however, Victory School programs may be expanded to include wraparound and family engagement services. School districts are required to provide comprehensive plans that address the specific needs of students in order to achieve the goals. For SY 2015–2016, 35 schools in five school districts (Clark, Elko, Humboldt, Nye, and Washoe County School Districts) received funding. The high poverty communities were identified using United States Census data.

Victory Schools Program Enrollment and Estimated Weighted Funding				
School Year	State Funding	Students Served (Schools)	Average Funding Per Pupil	Weighted Funding*
SY 2015–2016	\$25 million	21,982 (35)	\$1,137 (estimate)	0.20 (estimate)
SY 2016–2017 (projected)	\$25 million	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

*Weighted Funding: This represents the additional funds that would go toward educating a student enrolled in the Victory Schools program expressed as a multiplier of the basic support guarantee.

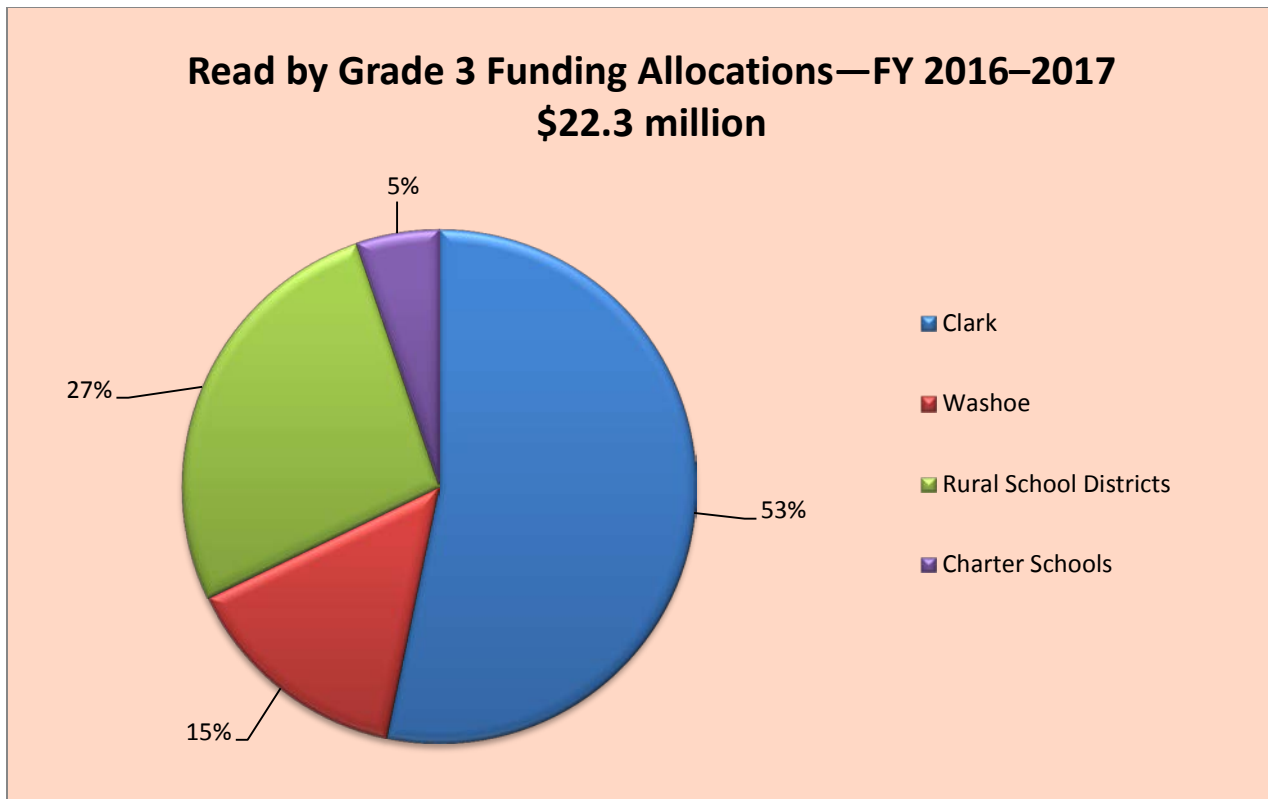
Source: NDE; presentation to the Legislative Committee on Education; *Improving Student Outcomes The Plan to Provide Additional Resources to the Nevada Plan*; July 28, 2016.

All Other Students Who Do Not Read at Grade Level (Read by Grade 3 Program)

The 2015 Legislature approved \$4.9 million in FY 2015–2016 and \$22.3 million in FY 2016–2017 to increase the percentage of third grade students reading at or above grade level who are not served through the Zoom Schools, Rural Grants, or Victory Schools programs. To receive a grant, school districts must provide a plan to improve literacy with performance measures. For SY 2016–2017, Clark and Washoe School Districts, 13 rural school districts, and 8 charter schools were awarded a competitive grant award.

The Washoe County School District is among just ten districts nationally to be recognized as a district “on the rise” by Education First, a national strategy and policy organization. In bestowing the recognition, Education First cited the district’s commitment to collaboration, innovation, and hard work, which has led to improvement in student proficiency and graduation rates.





Source: NDE

The Clark County School District saw 91,996 students completing student literacy performance plans in 2016, putting the district at 46.2 percent literacy proficiency by grade 3—more than halfway toward the target of 80 percent proficiency by 2019.



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Nevada’s Department of Education has developed a “**Theory of Action for Underperforming Schools,**” as follows:

If NDE provides underperforming schools with a structured diagnostic and planning process, focused on three priority areas:

- **School leadership;**
- **Tier 1 instruction aligned to standards; and**
- **Teacher professional learning communities that analyze and use data to strengthen instruction.**

And, if school districts provide these schools with the conditions required for successful school turnaround, including freedom from certain all-district programs and requirements, and the freedom and resources to identify and build programs and capacity to address their specific needs; and

NDE identifies external organizations that can provide schools with diagnostic and planning supports in the three priority areas; and

NDE establishes a Leadership Network to support school leaders; and

The leadership of NDE, school districts, and schools utilize all available resources to provide schools with that support; and

NDE works with schools, school districts, and support organizations to monitor implementation and identify and solve problems; and

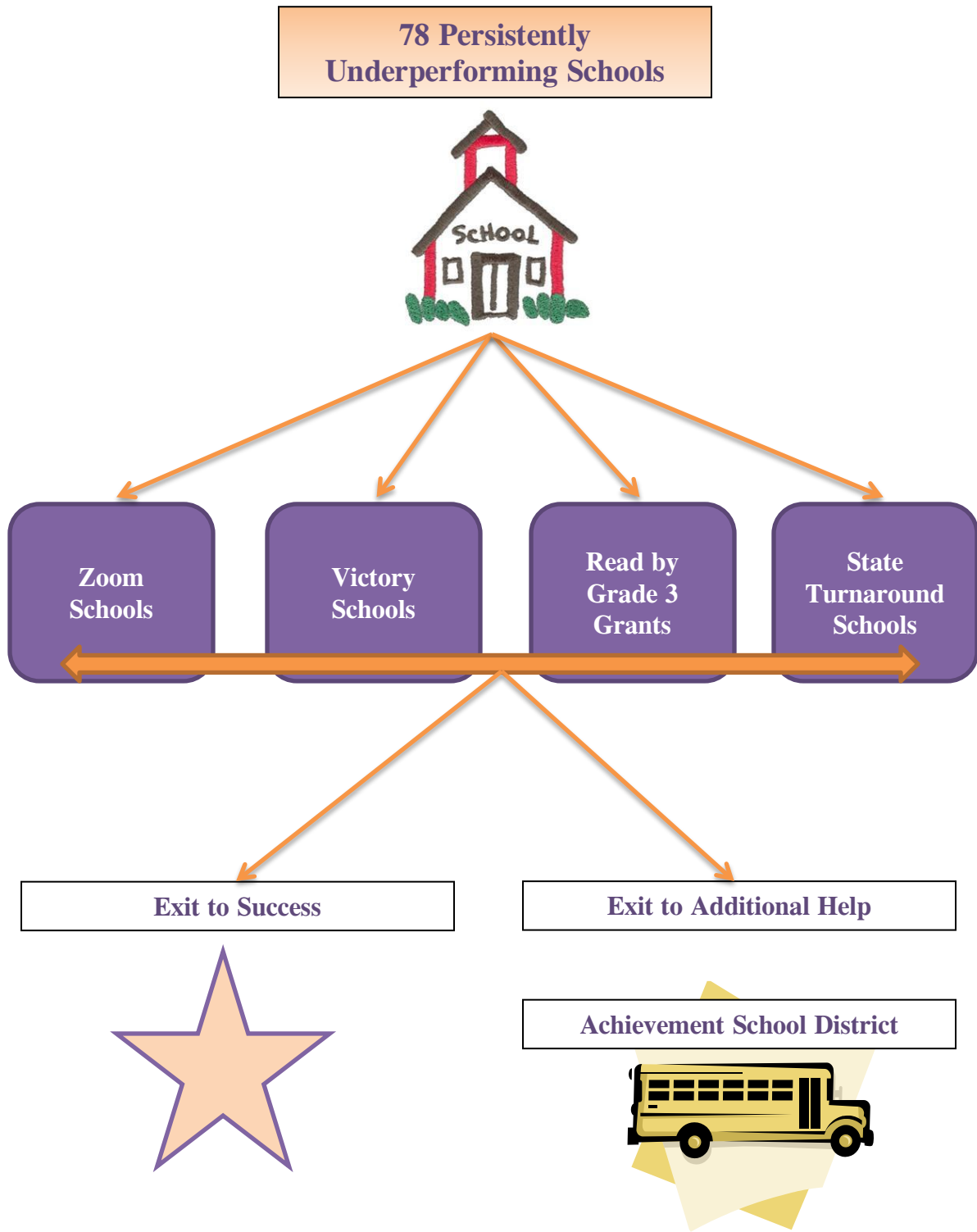
NDE, school districts, and schools build shared social trust among parents, students, teachers, administrators, and staff;

Then all underperforming schools will exit their low performing status within three years.

Source: NDE, *Nevada’s Underperforming Schools: Turnaround Strategy and Process*, April 2015.

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The components of Nevada's plan to improve the academic performance of students are as follows:



Turnaround Schools Program

The 2015 Legislature approved funding of \$2.5 million in each fiscal year of the 2015–2017 Biennium to assist in turning around persistently underperforming schools. The funding must be offered to district and public charter schools rated one- or two-star schools under the Nevada School Performance Framework. The funding must be utilized to assist in implementing a school improvement plan that is aligned to NDE’s Theory of Action for improving the achievement of underperforming schools. The funds will support such services as vendor contracts, performance management assessment, and staff incentives. Provisions for the program are contained in Senate Bill 92 (Chapter 541, *Statutes of Nevada 2015*). For SY 2016–2017, the following schools have been awarded turnaround grants:

SY 2016–2017 Turnaround Grant Awardees	
School District/Entity	School
Clark County School District	100 Academy of Excellence Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy Dean Peterson Elementary School Delta Academy Howard E. Hollingsworth Elementary School Innovations Elementary School Innovations High School Innovations Middle School Paradise Elementary School Wendell P. Williams Elementary School
Humboldt County School District	French Ford Middle School Winnemucca Junior High School
Mineral County School District	Hawthorne Elementary School Mineral County High School Mineral Junior High School
Pershing County School District	Pershing County Middle School
State Public Charter School Authority	Honors Academy of Literature (Reno) Silver State High School (Carson City)
Washoe County School District	Agnes Risley Elementary School Desert Heights Elementary School Grace Warner Elementary School I Can Do Anything Charter High School Lois Allen Elementary School Rita Cannan Elementary School Sun Valley Elementary School
White Pine County School District	David E. Norman Elementary School

Achievement School District

The 2015 Legislature approved Assembly Bill 448 (Chapter 539, *Statutes of Nevada*), which created the Achievement School District (ASD) within NDE. The ASD will oversee the rapid improvement of the State's lowest performing schools. The ASD will not operate schools or control the curriculum at the schools. Instead, the ASD will match low-performing schools with high-quality charter management organizations, ensure a successful transition of management, and conduct ongoing oversight and performance management for all ASD schools.

Schools eligible for inclusion in the ASD will be identified by NDE on an annual basis and are under a cloud of uncertainty from an eligibility list based upon school performance, community feedback, and the availability of high-quality charter school organizations in the neighborhood. Students who attend a school that is placed in the ASD will have first preference to attend the school. If a student chooses not to attend the ASD school, the student will have the option of attending a nearby neighborhood school in the local school district. Once a school is placed in the ASD, it will remain there for at least six years.

Teachers in a school selected for the ASD will have the opportunity to apply to work in the ASD school. Teachers who choose not to teach at the ASD school, or who are not selected to remain at the school, will have the opportunity to find another position in the local school district according to that school district's collective bargaining agreement.

With regard to school facilities, the ASD will be permitted to use all facilities of the schools that are transferred to the ASD. This includes the contents of the facility (i.e., textbooks, technology, media resources, instruction equipment, and other resources), as well as existing utilities, including broadband capability and Internet access.

Advisory Committee to Develop a Plan to Reorganize the Clark County School District and the Empowerment Program

In an effort to increase the academic achievement of students in the Clark County School District (CCSD), the 2015 Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 394 (Chapter 543, *Statutes of Nevada*), which created an advisory committee and a technical advisory committee to develop a plan for the reorganization of the CCSD into local school precincts.

The Advisory Committee held ten public meetings and the Technical Advisory Committee held ten public meetings during the 2015–2016 Interim. An additional eight town hall meetings were held throughout Clark County to solicit input from the public regarding the plan to reorganize the CCSD.

The final plan calls for the extensive involvement of frontline school staff and each school's community in local decision-making and makes staff accountable for the results. The CCSD is charged with providing the framework and structure under which schools can achieve the desired results. The new framework will be implemented for SY 2017–2018.

The new structure follows the basic guidelines of the Program of Empowerment Schools, codified in NRS 388G.050, which was created by the 2007 Legislature. This program was piloted by the CCSD from SY 2006–2007 through SY 2008–2009. At that time, the CCSD's program overview, *Empowerment Schools 2008*, provided that the concept of empowerment is anchored in the belief that critical decisions affecting instruction should be made at the school level, by those most closely involved with the children. If schools are to be held accountable for student achievement, they should be given adequate resources and the freedom to determine how to attain targeted, specific goals by deploying those resources effectively and engaging the school community in the process.

During the pilot program, the CCSD had 14 Empowerment Schools, 11 elementary and 3 secondary. Funding of \$600 per student was provided from the school district's general fund and private donations. Funding was utilized to provide smaller classes, increase the minutes in a school day, increase school days in a year, increase salaries, and provide for a staff program of pay for performance. It is not clear at this time what the cost of the new program will be; however, it was noted in testimony that the CCSD will approach the 2017 Legislature to request funds to support the reorganization.

Newsweek magazine ranked these five Clark County School District high schools among the best in the nation in 2015: (1) Advanced Technologies Academy; (2) College of Southern Nevada High School, East; (3) College of Southern Nevada High School, West; (4) Veterans Tribute Career and Technical Academy; and (5) West Career and Technical Academy.



SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special education services are provided directly to students by local school districts and are funded by federal grants, State appropriations, and local dollars. All special education services are delivered in accordance with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed for each student with special needs as required by federal law.

Nevada's Department of Education oversees special education programs provided by school districts. State authority, responsibilities, services, and direction to local districts are outlined in NRS 388.5221 et seq. (Program for Persons with Disabilities with Unique Needs) and in Chapter 395 ("Education of Persons With Disabilities") of *Nevada Administrative Code* (NAC). Both NDE and local school districts are bound by federal legislation and regulations governing the provision of services to students with special educational needs.

State Funding for Special Education

The 2015 Legislature made substantive changes to State funding for special education. Historically, funding has been allocated on the basis of special education program units, which are defined pursuant to NRS 387.1211 as organized instructional units, in which a licensed, full-time teacher is providing an instructional program that meets minimum standards prescribed by the State Board of Education. To qualify for a full apportionment, a unit must have operated the full school day (330 minutes) for at least nine of the school months within a school year.

Beginning in SY 2016–2017, the unit method of funding is repealed through the passage of Senate Bill 508 in 2015. The new calculation provides for the first time weighted funding, which is State funding for special education divided by enrollment. A cap of 13 percent is placed on special education enrollment in each school district.

The goal weight for special education, as recommended by the Task Force in K–12 Education Funding during the 2013–2014 Interim, is 1.0; this weight was subject to review and revision during the 2015–2016 Interim. In order to begin transitioning to a weighted student formula for students with disabilities, the 2015 Legislature approved an increase in State funding of \$25 million in FY 2016–2017. This funding is estimated to provide a statewide weight of approximately 0.50.

For School Year 2015–2016, Douglas Trinkle of Variety School in the Clark County School District received the NASET Outstanding Special Education Teacher Award for excellence in special education instruction.



State Funding for Extraordinary Expenses Related to Special Education

In FY 2016–2017, the 2015 Legislature approved \$5 million for the first time to support the Contingency Account for Special Education (CASE) program, which provides State funds for extraordinary expenses related to the education of students with disabilities. The funds may be used to support services that are not ordinarily present in the typical IEP, and the costs must exceed the total funding available to the school district or charter school for the student.

The regulations for the new program were approved by the State Board of Education at its June 2016 meeting. School districts may submit an application for funds during SY 2016–2017. In order to meet federal Maintenance of Effort (MOE) mandates, the State must continue the provision of \$5 million in each fiscal year going forward.

Special Education Enrollment

Pursuant to S.B. 508, funding for special education must not exceed 13 percent of the total enrollment for a school district or charter school, except to maintain MOE requirements under federal law. The first allocation of funds under the new model occurred for SY 2016–2017. For this allocation, 12 of the 17 school districts were at or above the 13 percent threshold and required additional funds of \$2.7 million to meet federal MOE requirements.

In May 2016, Donald Bernard of West Preparatory Academy in the Clark County School District was 1 of 21 educators who were honored at the Heart of Education Awards; Mr. Bernard received recognition for his work with special education students.



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SY 2016–2017 Special Education Enrollment Utilized to Allocate Funds			
Entity	FY 2016 Special Education Enrollment	FY 2016 (1st Quarter) Student Enrollment	Percentage of Special Education Enrollment
Carson City	1,066	7,524	14.17
Churchill County	511	3,258	15.68
Clark County	37,700	316,311	11.92
Davidson Academy	1	156	0.64
Douglas County	892	5,989	14.89
Elko County	1,132	9,907	11.43
Esmeralda County	9	78	11.54
Eureka County	20	258	7.75
Humboldt County	542	3,444	15.74
Lander County	112	999	11.21
Lincoln County	144	1,011	14.24
Lyon County	1,097	8,093	13.55
Mineral County	86	500	17.20
Nye County	831	5,012	16.58
Pershing County	91	639	14.24
Storey County	59	408	14.46
Washoe County	8,885	63,532	13.99
White Pine County	182	1,254	14.51
State Charter Schools	2,054	26,496	7.75
STATEWIDE	55,414	454,869	12.18

Source: NDE.

State Versus Local Resources

In order to begin transitioning to a weighted student formula for students with disabilities, the 2015 Legislature approved an increase in State funding of \$25 million for FY 2016–2017. It is projected that, as State funding for special education increases, local funding increases will level off.

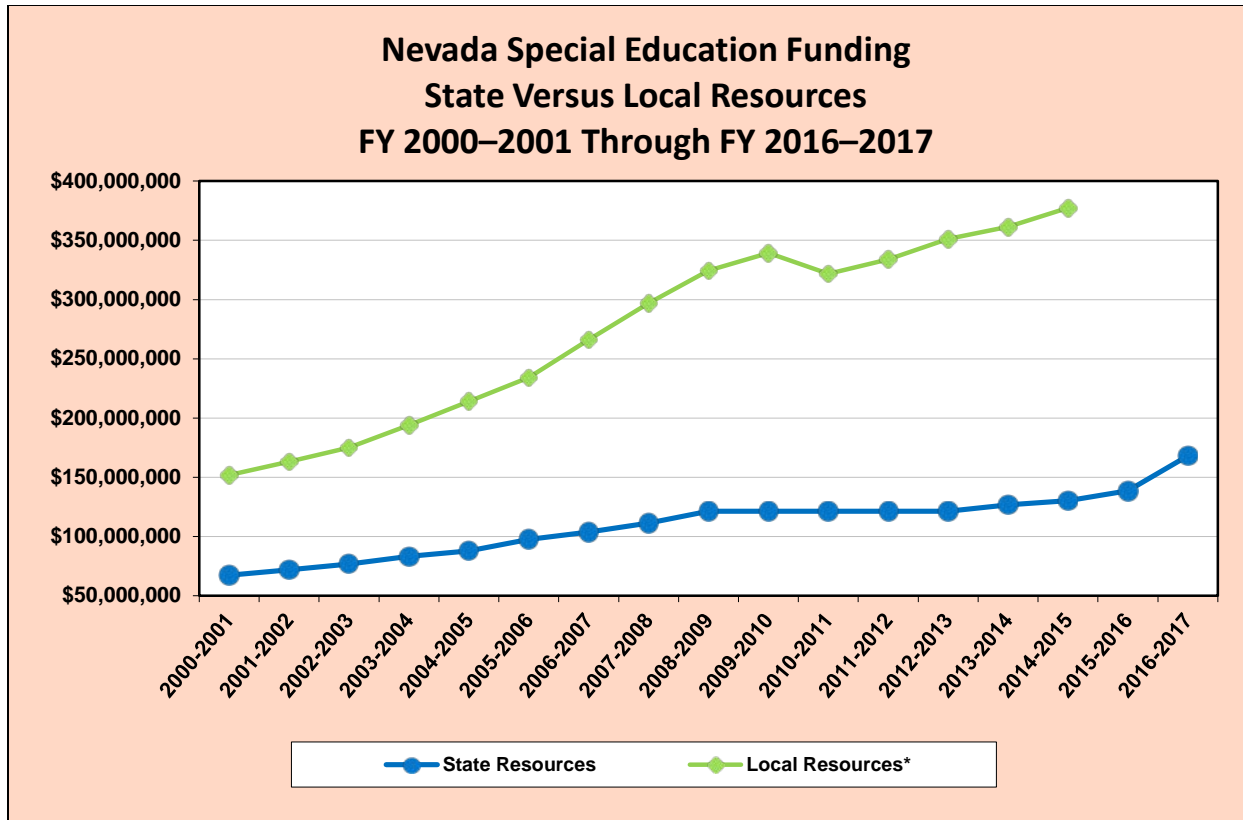
Fiscal Year	State Resources	Local Resources*
2000–2001	\$67,330,199	\$151,949,548
2001–2002	\$72,004,754	\$163,313,519
2002–2003	\$76,868,064	\$175,025,638
2003–2004	\$83,185,765	\$193,915,875
2004–2005	\$87,866,476	\$214,087,930
2005–2006	\$97,617,555	\$234,142,483
2006–2007	\$103,715,266	\$266,124,337
2007–2008	\$111,303,886	\$296,926,735
2008–2009	\$121,250,664	\$324,372,632
2009–2010	\$121,252,632	\$339,197,530
2010–2011	\$121,252,632	\$321,862,256
2011–2012	\$121,252,632	\$333,995,229
2012–2013	\$121,252,632	\$351,072,318
2013–2014	\$126,862,792	\$361,325,760
2014–2015	\$130,329,505	\$377,335,168
2015–2016	\$138,591,298	N/A
2016–2017	\$168,125,519	N/A

*Local resources are not known until the November following the applicable fiscal year.

Sources: NDE, *NRS 387.303 Report*; and Fiscal Analysis Division, LCB, *Nevada Legislative Appropriations Reports*, various years.

In 2016, 22 of the Clark County School District’s 32 magnet schools received the Magnet Schools of America’s highest rating of “Magnet School of Excellence” or the second highest rating of “Magnet School of Distinction.”





*Local resources are not known until the November following the applicable fiscal year. It is projected that as State funding for special education increases, local funding increases will become stagnant.

Public School Expenditures for Special Education: In\$ite Financial Analysis System

According to In\$ite, in SY 2014–2015, the average cost to educate a student in Nevada with special education needs was \$18,125 per year, which includes the expenses for general education classes and special education programs. With total special education enrollment of 53,761 in SY 2014–2015, the cost to educate these students totaled \$604,635,616 paid from a combination of federal, State, and local dollars.

GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION

State Funding for Gifted and Talented Students

Historically, State funding for the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program was less than \$200,000 each year. The funding was utilized to support competitive grants for technology and related GATE programs. The 2015 Legislature increased the funding to \$5.2 million each year of the 2015–2017 Biennium and required the funds to be allocated on a per-student basis. Students are identified as “Gifted and Talented” by performance on a State-approved assessment or procedure or both. In FY 2015–2016, the funds served 12,436 GATE students and, in FY 2016–2017, the funds will serve 12,829 GATE students.

GATE Program Funding by District SY 2016–2017	
District	Funding
Carson	\$305,811
Churchill	\$14,146
Clark	\$2,708,198
Douglas	\$74,893
Elko	\$68,652
Esmeralda	\$0
Eureka	\$0
Humboldt	\$0
Lander	\$0
Lincoln	\$0
Lyon	\$15,811
Mineral	\$2,080
Nye	\$0
Pershing	\$416
Storey	\$10,402
Washoe	\$1,873,978
White Pine	\$0
State Charters	\$42,855
TOTAL	\$5,117,241

Source: NDE, *2015 Legislative Session Programs and Initiatives Quarterly Update*, July 2016.

**CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE),
INCLUDING THE TECH PREP PROGRAM**

Career and Technical Education

In Nevada, CTE courses are organized under six major program areas, as follows:

1. Agricultural and Natural Resources;
2. Business and Marketing Education;
3. Education, Hospitality and Human Services;
4. Health Sciences and Public Safety;
5. Information and Media Technologies; and
6. Skilled and Technical Sciences.

The size and scope of CTE in Nevada is also defined by participation in career and technical student organizations (CTSOs). Each organization provides co-curricular leadership and technical skills development opportunities for students enrolled in CTE programs. The six CTOS in Nevada are as follows:

1. DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America)—an international association serving students studying marketing, management, and entrepreneurship in business.
2. FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America)—focuses on bringing business and education together in a positive working relationship through innovative leadership and career development programs for high school and college students enrolled in business education programs.
3. FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America)—serves students enrolled in family and consumer sciences programs; focuses on the multiple roles of family members, wage earners, and community leaders; and promotes members developing skills for living and earning a living.
4. FFA (Future Farmers of America)—develops leadership, personal growth, and the career success of students enrolled in agricultural education programs through supervised agricultural programs, leadership development, and classroom instruction.
5. HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America)—enhances the delivery of compassionate, quality health care by providing opportunities for knowledge, skills, and leadership development for students enrolled in health sciences programs.

6. SkillsUSA—promotes partnerships of students, teachers, and industry representatives working together to prepare students for careers in trade, technical, and skilled service occupations.



Through NAC 389.800 through 389.815, NDE has prescribed program completion requirements for CTE students. There are defined course sequences, required end-of-program assessments, employability skill standards measured through a State assessment, a State certificate of skill attainment, and a CTE endorsement that may be affixed to a student’s diploma.

End-of-Program CTE Assessment Results		
	SY 2013–2014	SY 2014–2015
Course Completers	5,136	6,158
Assessment Participants	4,781	5,848
Participation Rate	93%	95%
Passing Rate	56.7%	55.4%

Source: NDE.

The National Workplace Readiness Skills Certification is endorsed by the Career and Technical Education Consortium of States and assesses CTE students in: personal qualities and people skills, such as a positive work ethic, teamwork, and conflict resolution; technology knowledge and skills, such as job specific technologies, information technology, and Internet use and security; and professional knowledge and skills, such as critical thinking and problem solving, health and safety, customer service, and time, task, and resource management.



A team of three students from Damonte Ranch High School of the Washoe County School District took first place in a national competition sponsored by the Future Business Leaders of America. The team won in the category of “3D Animation.”



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Workplace Readiness Assessment Results for Nevada CTE Students		
	SY 2013–2014	SY 2014–2015
Course Completers	5,399	5,588
Assessment Participants	5,091	5,336
Participation Rate	94.2%	95.5%
Passing Rate	83.1%	83.6%

Source: NDE.



To receive a Certificate of Skill Attainment, a student must achieve a 3.0 grade point average in his or her CTE core course sequence, pass the end-of-program technical assessment, and pass the workplace readiness assessment. This certificate qualifies a student to receive a CTE diploma endorsement and to receive postsecondary course credit.

Skill Attainment Certificates Awarded to Nevada CTE Students			
	SY 2012–2013	SY 2013–2014	SY 2014–2015
Students Eligible	2,924	5,136	6,158
Certificates Awarded	706	2,051	2,433
Certificate Award Rate	24.2%	39.9%	39.5%

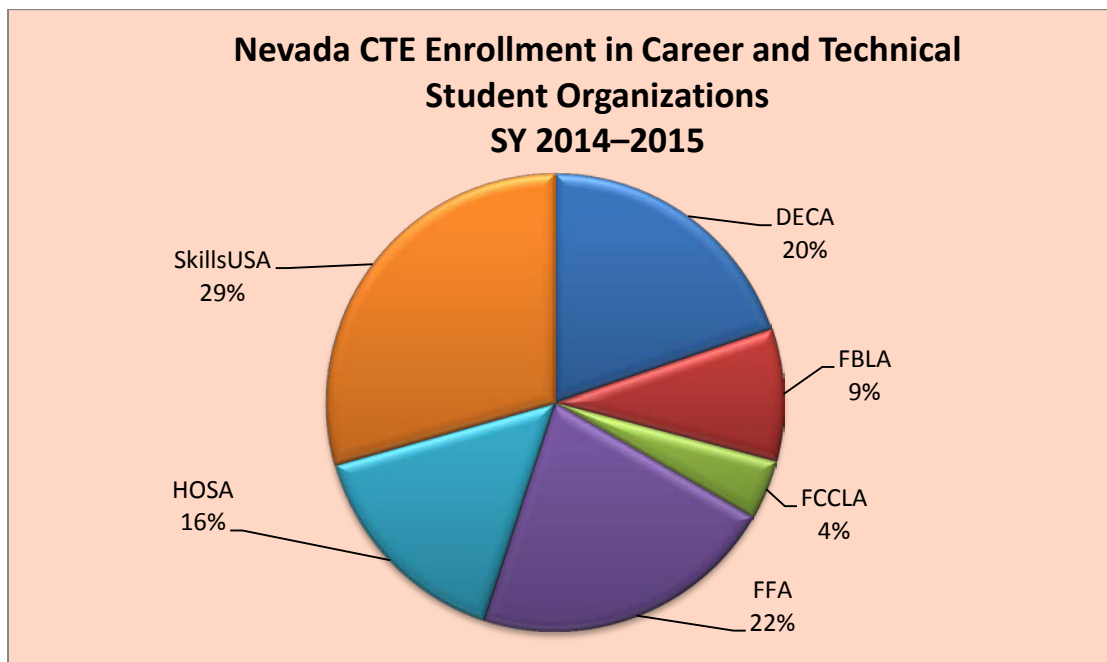
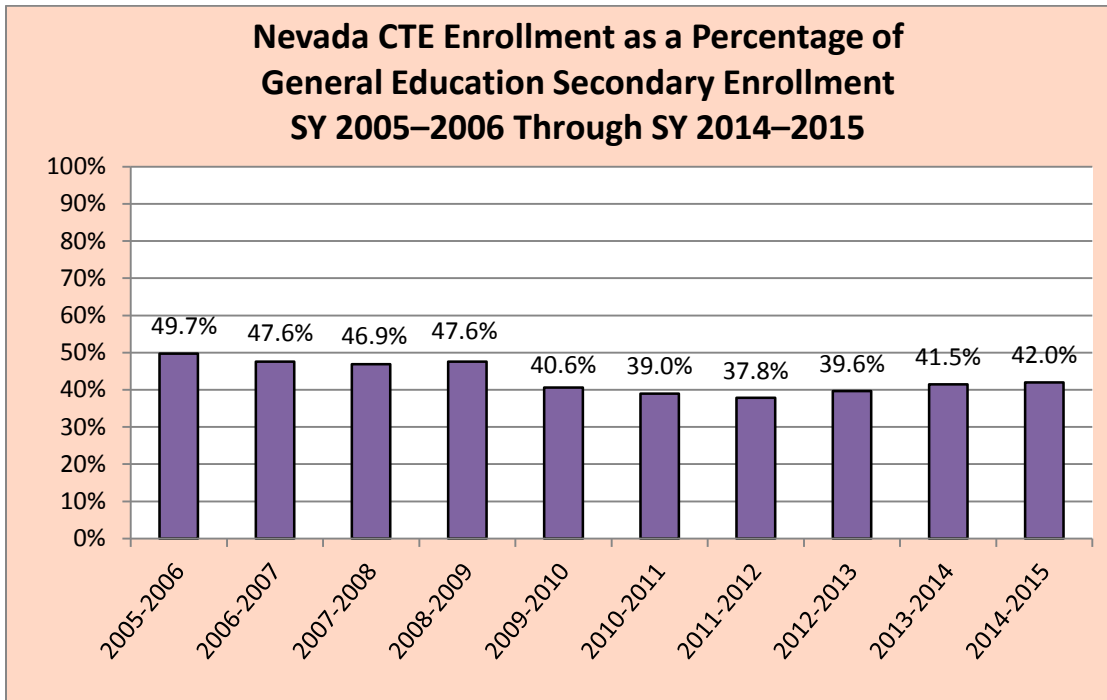
Source: NDE.

CTE College Credit

Career and Technical Education College Credit is a dual enrollment program that allows eleventh and twelfth graders to earn college credit for CTE courses completed in high school. Students begin their study with a sequence of high school CTE courses and can continue the same program in college. To be eligible, students must earn a grade of A or B in an articulated class with a community college.

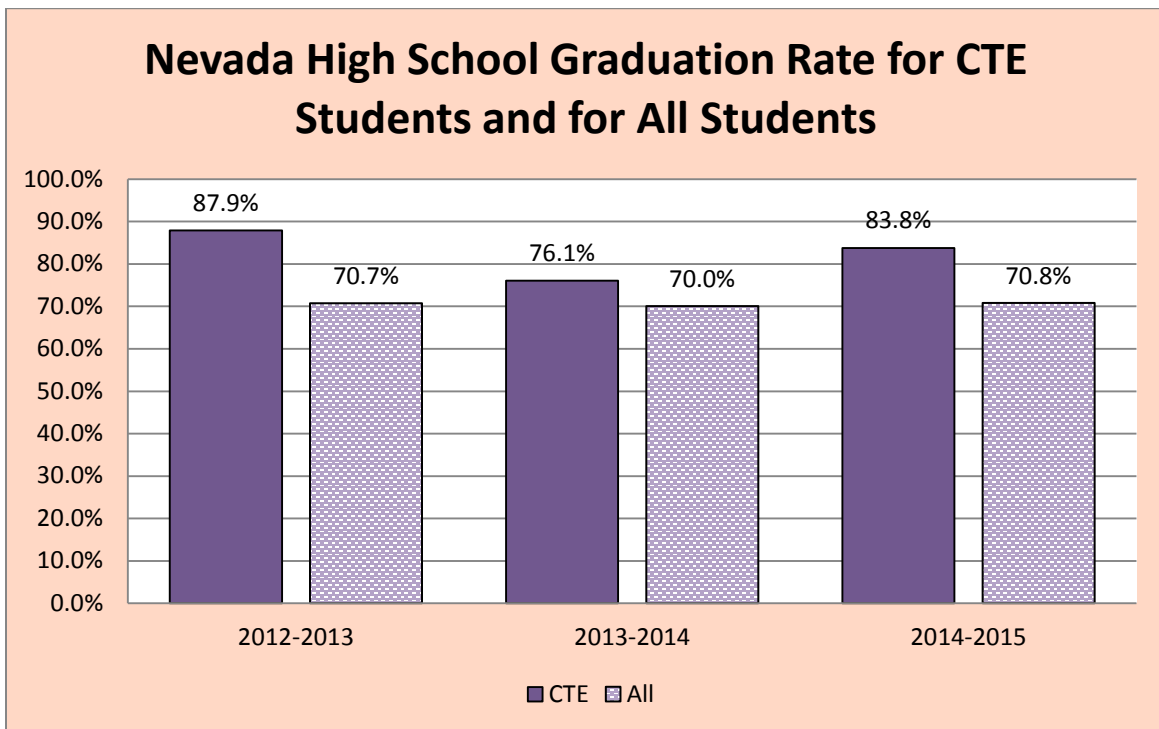
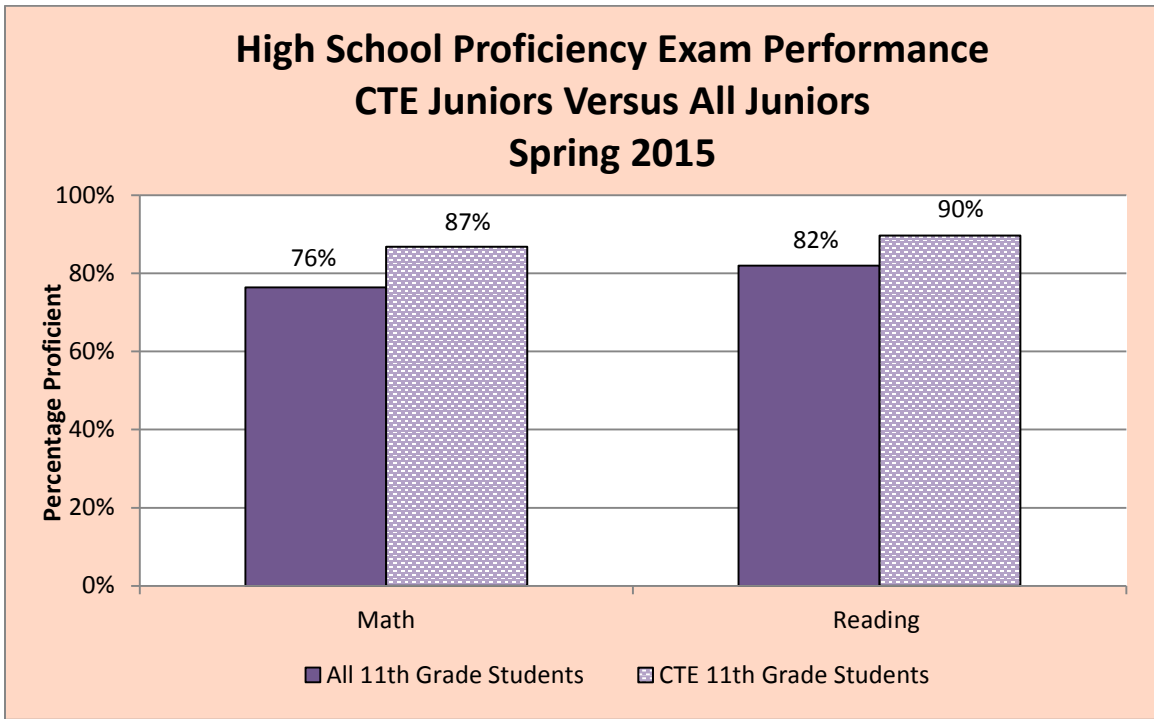
The maximum number of credits that may be earned is 21. Because the classes are taught by high school teachers instead of college instructors, there are no instructional costs to the college; therefore, there is no cost to students.

CTE Enrollment



Source: NDE, 2014–2015 CTE Secondary & Postsecondary Education in Nevada.

CTE Exam Performance and Graduation Rate



Source: NDE, *CTE Secondary & Postsecondary Education in Nevada*, various years.

SCHOOL CHOICE

School choice in Nevada has historically included public schools, charter schools, private schools, and home schooling. The 2015 Legislature increased the availability of school choice options for Nevada’s parents and students through new funding programs.

Nevada Educational Choice Scholarship Program

Assembly Bill 165 (Chapter 22, *Statutes of Nevada 2015*) established the Nevada Educational Choice Scholarship Program. The measure authorized the formation of scholarship organizations to provide grants for pupils of low-income families for attendance at schools of their choice in Nevada, including private schools. A scholarship organization may not own or operate any school, and it must be exempt from taxation pursuant to Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. The organization may expend up to 5 percent of the money received to pay its administrative expenses. Schools receiving scholarship grants must maintain a record of academic progress in a manner prescribed by NDE so that the Department is able to aggregate and report this information. To date, there are five registered scholarship grant organizations.

The bill provides for a tax credit against the modified business tax and establishes a process for a taxpayer who intends to donate to a scholarship to request approval for the credit from the Department of Taxation. In addition, A.B. 165 establishes a process that the Department of Taxation must follow to approve or deny applications for the tax credit. The total credits approved may not exceed \$5 million for FY 2015–2016, \$5.5 million for FY 2016–2017 and, for each fiscal year thereafter, 110 percent of the amount authorized for the immediately preceding fiscal year.

Nevada’s Department of Education is responsible for determining the maximum amount of scholarship funding any one student may receive based on the Consumer Price Index. In FY 2015–2016, the funding provided on behalf of any one student could not exceed \$7,755.00. The maximum funding for FY 2016–2017 is \$7,763.00. For SY 2015–2016, approximately 1,558 scholarships were awarded with the awards ranging from \$548 to \$7,500, based on student need.

Education Savings Accounts (ESAs)

According to the Education Commission of the States’ August 2016 report entitled, *Education Trends, Education Savings Accounts: Key provisions and state variations*, education savings accounts (ESAs) are individual accounts funded by the state that allow parents or guardians to purchase a broader array of educational choices, including tutoring, online courses, or private school. As of June 2016, five states, including Nevada, have adopted ESA laws, and six additional states are considering programs in current legislative sessions.

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For more information on ESAs, please see the sections in Chapter 3 titled, “Changes to Enrollment—School Choice” and “School Choice Cases Before the Nevada Supreme Court,” on page 16 of this publication.

Charter Schools

Charter schools are independent public schools, responsible for their own governance and operation. In exchange for this independence, there is increased accountability for their performance. The first charter school legislation in Nevada was enacted in 1997 through the passage of Senate Bill 220 (Chapter 480, *Statutes of Nevada*), and Nevada’s charter school law was substantially amended in subsequent sessions. While private schools can “convert” to a charter school, homeschools may not.

There were 39 charter schools operating in Nevada during SY 2015–2016. Local school boards sponsored 16 schools, and the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) sponsored the remaining 23 schools. There were 22 charter schools located in the Clark County School District, 12 in the Washoe County School District, 2 in the Carson City School District, 1 in the Churchill County School District, 1 in the Elko County School District, and 1 in White Pine County School District.

Sponsors and Governance

Until the 2011 Legislative Session, local school boards, the State Board of Education, and institutions of the Nevada System of Higher Education were authorized to be sponsors of charter schools in Nevada. Through the passage of Senate Bill 212 (Chapter 381, *Statutes of Nevada*), the 2011 Legislature created the SPCSA to replace the State Board as a sponsor.

In addition to sponsoring certain charter schools, the SPCSA is expected to act as a model of best practices for all charter schools in Nevada. In addition to sponsors, each charter school is overseen by a governing body, which must include teachers and may include parents or representatives of nonprofit organizations, businesses, or higher education institutions.

The 2015 Legislature approved \$5 million in each fiscal year of the 2015–2017 Biennium to support a new Charter School Harbor Master program. The funds are utilized as a match for private philanthropy in establishing a fund to recruit best-in-class national charter management organizations to Nevada. Funds may be used to augment basic per student guarantee requirements for not more than two years and provide access to construction capital or facilities. The funds are a direct distribution to an established 501(c)3 (nonprofit) organization each year upon proof of the match. For the 2015–2017 Biennium, the Charter School Harbor Master grant was awarded to Opportunity 180 for the entire \$5 million in each fiscal year. Opportunity 180 began operations in 2015 in Clark County.

Accountability

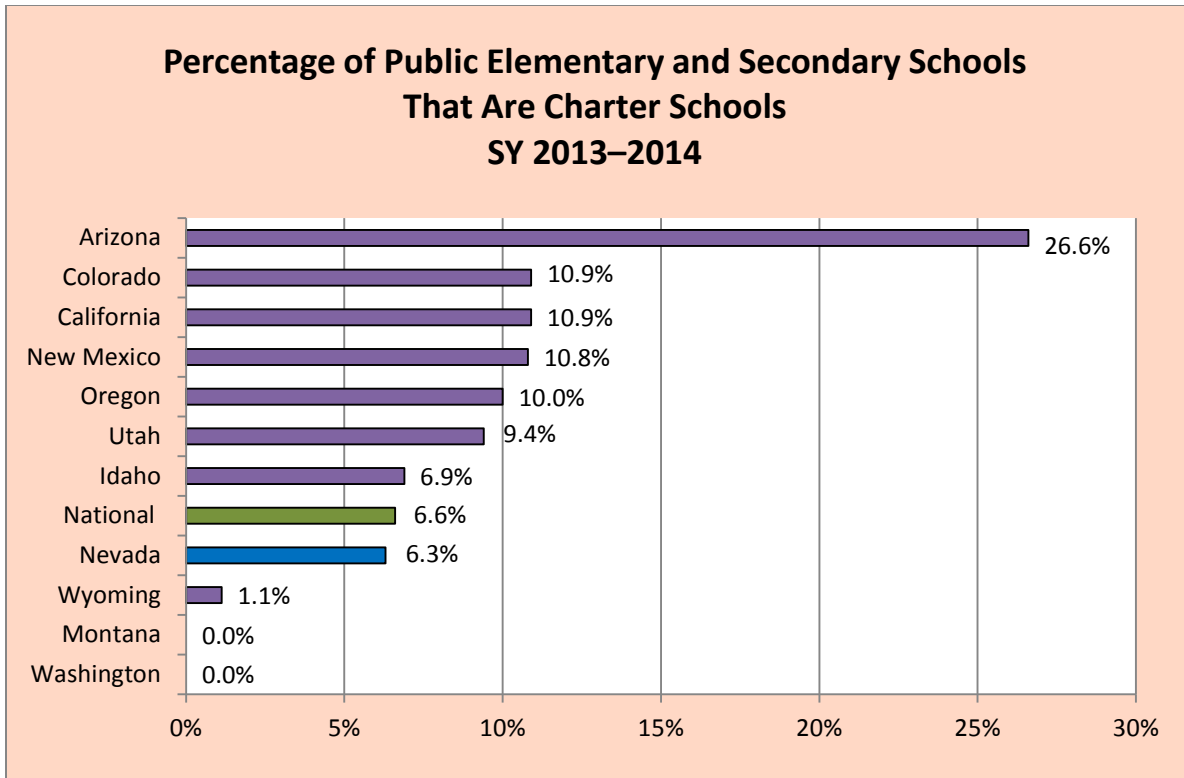
The 2013 Legislature passed Assembly Bill 205 (Chapter 484, *Statutes of Nevada*) requiring Nevada's charter schools to begin operating under performance-based contracts, rather than written charters. Critical to accountability, charter school contracts include performance measures for student achievement and proficiency, attendance and re-enrollment rates, graduation rates, financial and governance outcomes, and indicators that are specific to a school's mission.

Assembly Bill 205 also established grounds for termination of a charter contract if a charter school persistently underperforms, as measured by the statewide school performance framework. The impact of this measure was monitored during the 2014–2015 Interim, and concern was raised that certain charter schools specifically targeting services to at-risk students (i.e., those who have dropped out, been expelled, been declared habitual disciplinary problems, etc.) were adversely impacted by the legislation. In response to concerns, the 2015 Legislature approved Senate Bill 460 (Chapter 429, *Statutes of Nevada*) requiring the State Board of Education to create an alternative performance framework to evaluate schools serving certain at-risk populations. The measure added school restart as an alternative to school closure for persistently underperforming charter schools. The measure maintained tough auto-closure provisions for persistently underperforming charter schools to include those receiving the lowest possible annual rating for any three years in a five-year period instead of three consecutive years.

Revenue, Expenditures, and Inclusion in State-Funded Programs

Charter schools receive the full per-pupil State funding for their students. School districts are obligated to share any State or federal funds, such as for special education students, on a proportional basis.

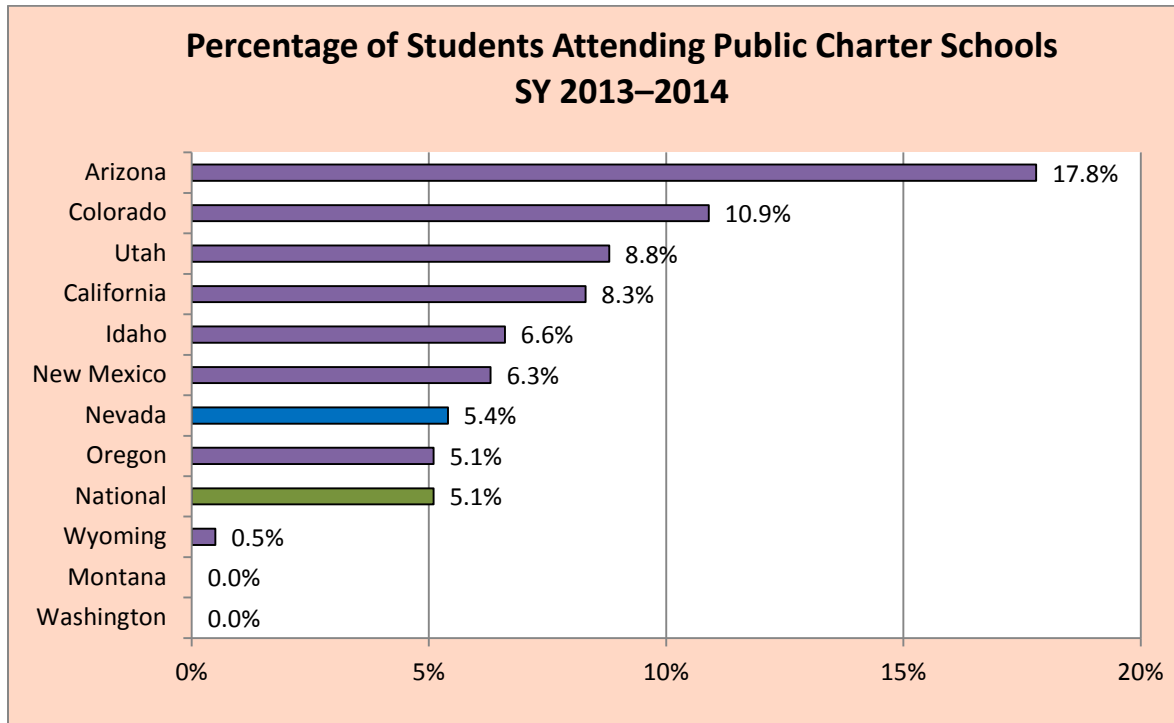
The SPCSA was created as a Local Education Agency (LEA), as defined in federal law for the schools it sponsors. This LEA status allows it to receive and distribute State and federal categorical aid, such as Title I funds for disadvantaged students, to its State-sponsored charter schools. Under Nevada's previous structure, federal law prohibited Nevada's State-sponsored charter schools from receiving such funding. Historically, charter schools have not been eligible to participate in the State's Class-Size Reduction (CSR) program for grades 1 through 3. However, with statewide implementation of the full-day kindergarten program at a student-to-teacher ratio of 21:1, charter schools became eligible, for the first time, for CSR funds for full-day kindergarten. It is anticipated that inclusion of charter schools in the CSR program for grades 1 through 3 will be a discussion point during the 2017 Session.



Number and Percentage of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools That Are Charter Schools SY 2013–2014		
Western States	Number	Percentage
Arizona	600	26.6%
California	1,125	10.9%
Colorado	200	10.9%
Idaho	49	6.9%
Montana	0	0
Nevada	41	6.3%
New Mexico	95	10.8%
Oregon	124	10.0%
Utah	95	9.4%
Washington	0	0
Wyoming	4	1.1%
National	6,465	6.6%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*.

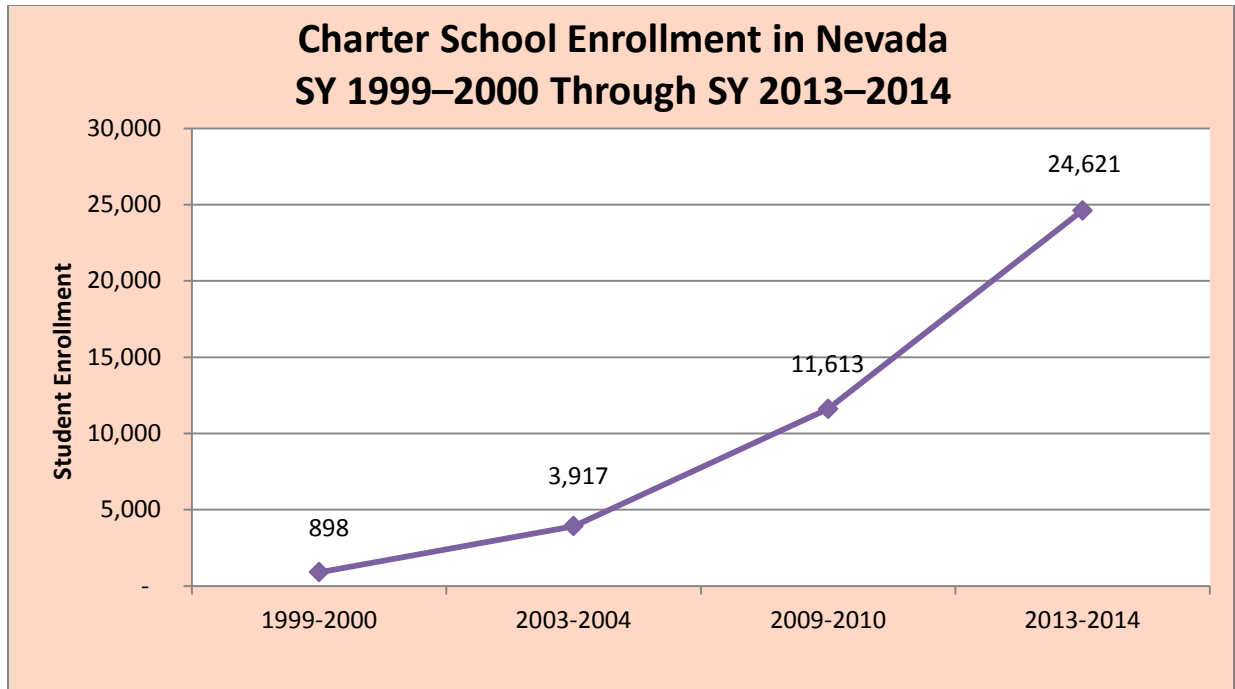
Charter School Enrollment



**Number and Percentage of Students Attending Public Elementary
and Secondary Schools That Are Charter Schools
SY 2013–2014**

Western States	Number	Percentage
Arizona	195,027	17.8%
California	513,350	8.3%
Colorado	95,860	10.9%
Idaho	19,375	6.6%
Montana	0	0%
Nevada	24,621	5.4%
New Mexico	21,485	6.3%
Oregon	28,241	5.1%
Utah	54,795	8.8%
Washington	0	0%
Wyoming	463	0.5%
National	2.5 million	5.1%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*.



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2015*.

Charter School Expenditures

For an In\$ite Financial Analysis System comparative analysis of expenditures by charter school, please see pages 86 through 90 of the section titled, “In\$ite Financial Analysis System Expenditure Comparisons,” in Chapter 6 of this publication.

Nevada’s charter school law is rated first among 43 states—tied with Indiana—on a recent analysis by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.



Charter School Laws Compared to Other States

Every charter school has an authorizer. Yet, in many states, the laws that govern charter schools and authorizers are weak or vague about school quality and accountability. The National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) is an organization dedicated to improving public education by strengthening and leveraging the work of charter school authorizers. Each year, NACSA analyzes state charter school authorization laws and issues scores and rankings. In 2013 and 2015, NACSA found that “Nevada passed laws designed to improve authorizer quality, strengthen charter school accountability, and encourage the growth of high-performing charter schools. The legislation was partially motivated by generally weak charter school performance.” As a result of its statutory improvements, Nevada received a perfect score and a number-one ranking in NACSA’s state policy analysis process.

State Charter School Laws—NACSA Scores and Rankings, 2016		
Western States	Score (Out of 33 Points)	Rank (Out of 44 States)
Arizona	18	18
California	13	29
Colorado	10	35
Idaho	17	20
Montana	N/A	N/A
Nevada	33	1
New Mexico	15	24
Oregon	5	39
Utah	8	37
Washington	N/A	N/A
Wyoming	5	39

Source: NACSA; *State-by-State Authorizer Data and Policy Analysis*; 2016; <http://www.qualitycharters.org/policy-research/state-policy-agenda/>.

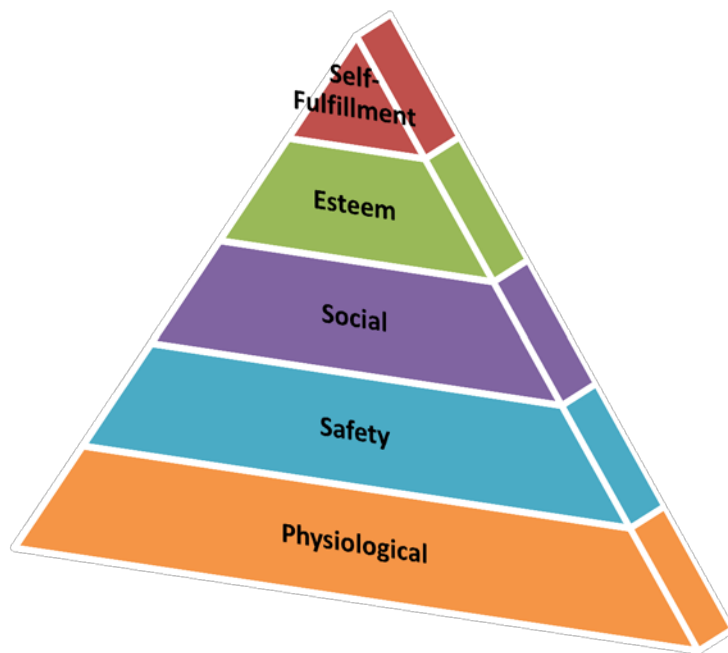
SAFE AND RESPECTFUL SCHOOLS

The provisions of a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment are contained in NRS 388.121 through 388.1459. The 2015 Nevada Legislature made significant strides in helping to keep students safe. Funding of \$300,000 in each fiscal year of the 2015–2017 Biennium was approved to create a new Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment within the Department of Education.

Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment: Mission Statement

The mission of the Office is to train, empower, educate, collaborate, advocate, and intervene in order to ensure that every student in Nevada, regardless of any differing characteristic or interest, feels fully protected physically, emotionally, and socially.

According to the Department, the Office is responsible for the four foundational levels of the learning hierarchy: (1) physical needs; (2) safety; (3) belonging; and (4) self-esteem.



Pursuant to Senate Bill 504 (Chapter 115, *Statutes of Nevada*) and S.B. 515 of the 2015 Session, the Office must perform a variety of tasks, including:

- Establish the Safe-to-Tell Program (Safe2Tell);
- Maintain a 24-hour, toll-free statewide hotline and website by which a person can report a violation of laws relating to a safe and respectful learning environment, as provided for in NRS 388.121 through 388.145;
- Provide outreach and anti-bullying education and training for students, parents and guardians, teachers, administrators, principals, coaches, and other staff; and
- Oversee implementation of the Social Workers/Mental Health Workers in Schools Grant Program.

Safe-to-Tell Program

The 2015 Legislature approved Senate Bill 338 (Chapter 503, *Statutes of Nevada*), which required the establishment of Safe2Tell within the Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment in NDE. The program must enable any person to anonymously report dangerous, violent, or unlawful activity being conducted or threatened at a school, at a school activity, or on a school bus.

To date, the Department is working to design a name and logo for the program, with an easy-to-remember hotline phone number. Once designed, a statewide marketing campaign will be launched. The Department is partnering with the Department of Health and Human Service's Division of Public and Behavioral Health and Division of Child and Family Services and the Department of Public Safety to develop a comprehensive system. In addition, NDE received a four-year grant that will provide \$5 million to improve Nevada's school safety initiatives, such as Safe2Tell.

Crisis Call Center

The Department of Education has partnered with the Crisis Call Center to launch a new 24-hour anti-bullying hotline.

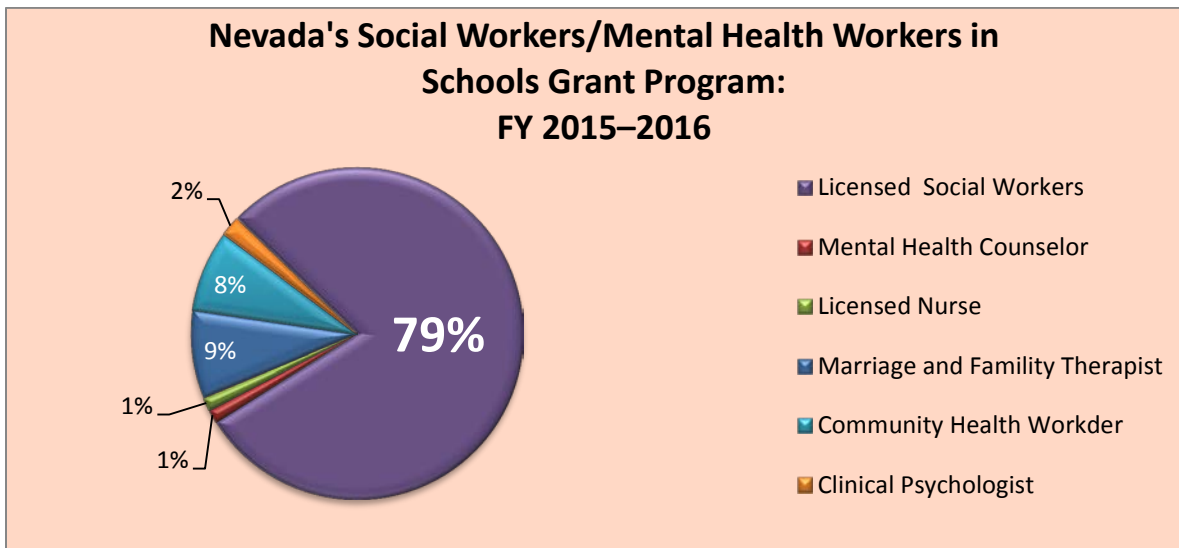
Call: (775) 689-0150
Text: "STANDUP" to 839863

In 2016, 351 schools in the Clark County School District participated in the district's Week of Respect, a week in which students, staff, and parents joined in daily activities geared toward educating students on treating others with respect and kindness and taking a stand against bullying.



Social Workers/Mental Health Workers in Schools Grant Program

The Department’s Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment oversees a new grant program for schools to provide students with access to a social worker or other licensed mental health worker. The program is funded through a block grant program to local school districts based upon needs, as identified via results of a mental health screening survey. To support the program, the 2015 Legislature approved the allocation of \$5.6 million in FY 2015–2016 and \$11.2 million in FY 2016–2017. As of June 2016, 151.5 licensed health professionals have been hired in 12 school districts and in Nevada’s 39 charter schools. Included in this number are three social worker liaisons that are overseeing implementation of the program statewide.

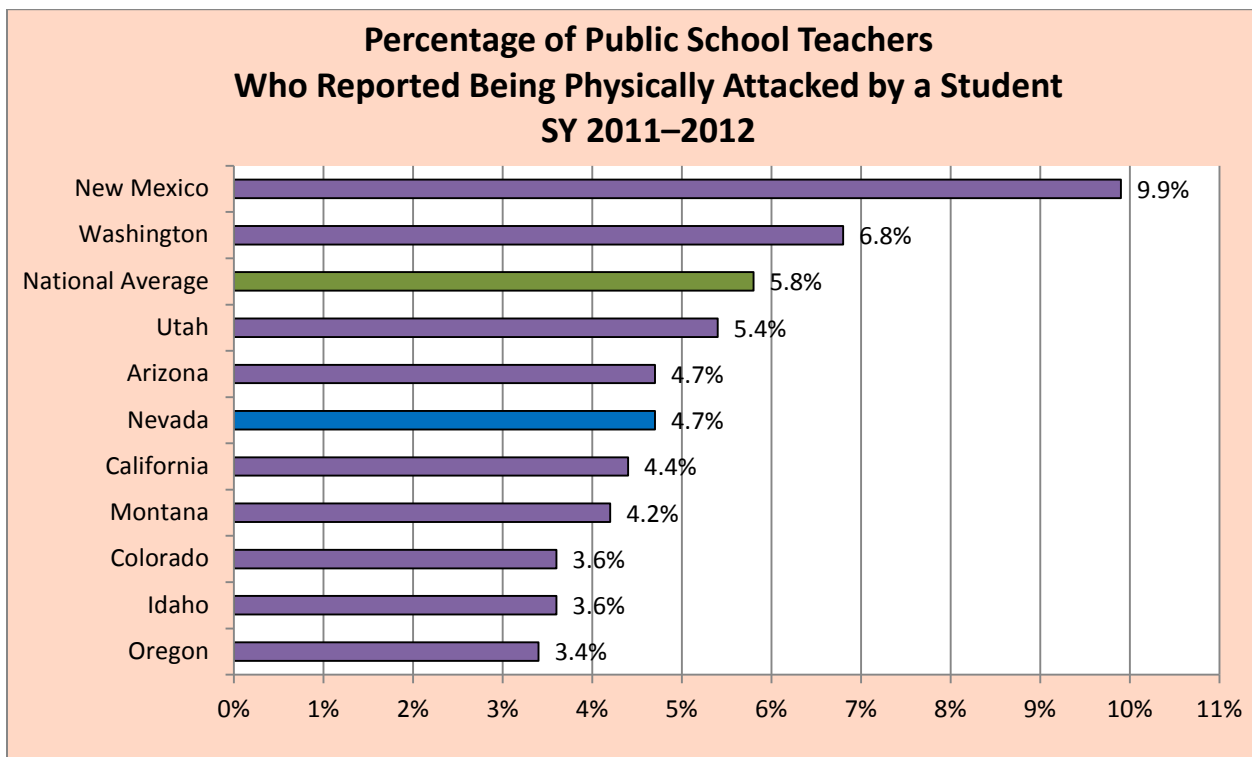
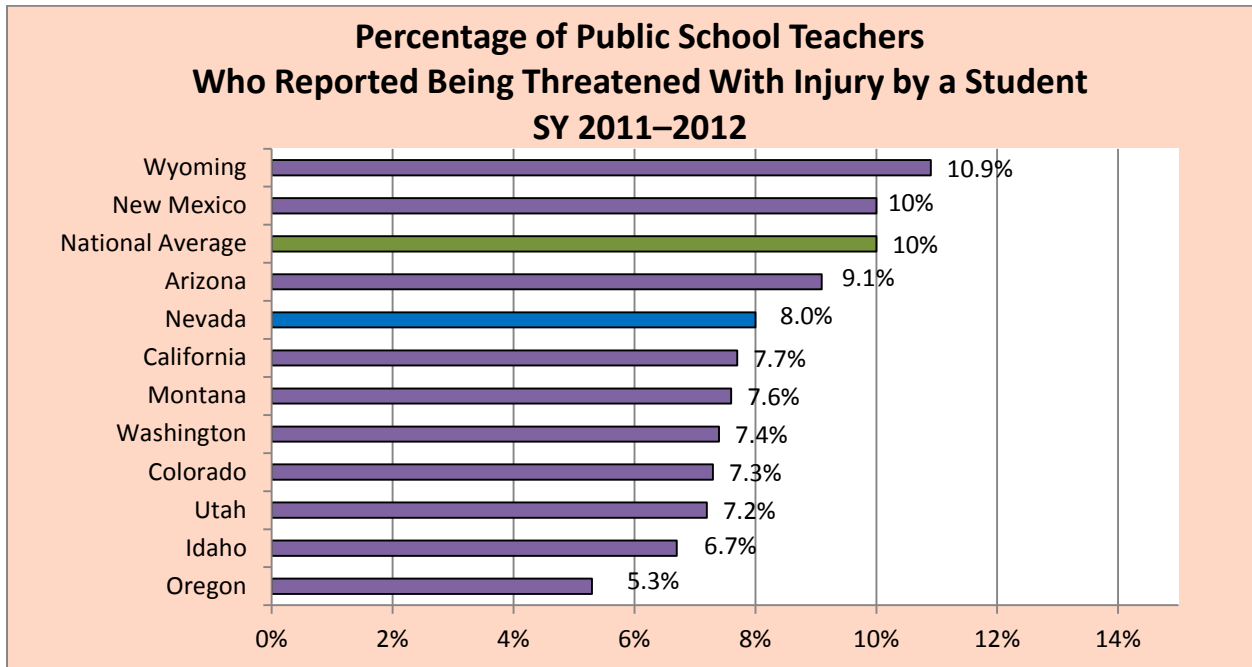


Source: NDE; Interim Finance Committee meeting; June 30, 2016; Agenda Item J; <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/InterimCommittee/REL/Interim2015/Meeting/4711>.

For the ninth consecutive year, the Washoe County School District’s music education program was honored with the 2016 Best Communities for Music Education designation from the National Association of Music Merchants. This designation is typically achieved by fewer than 5 percent of the nation’s school districts.

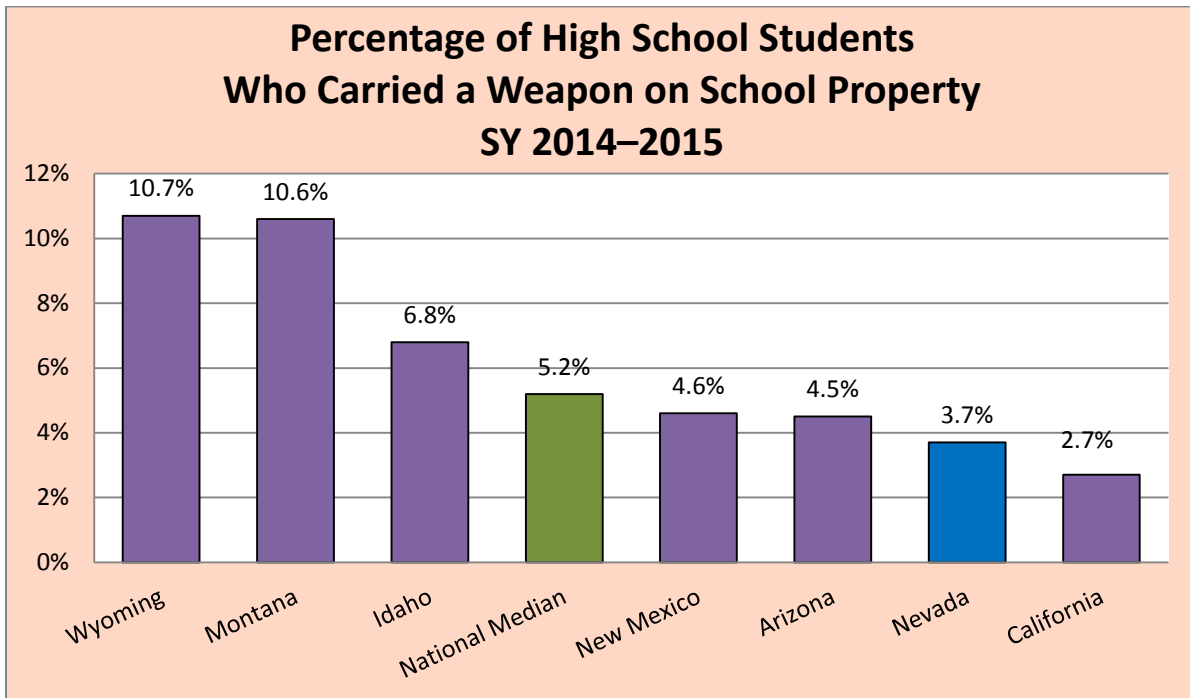
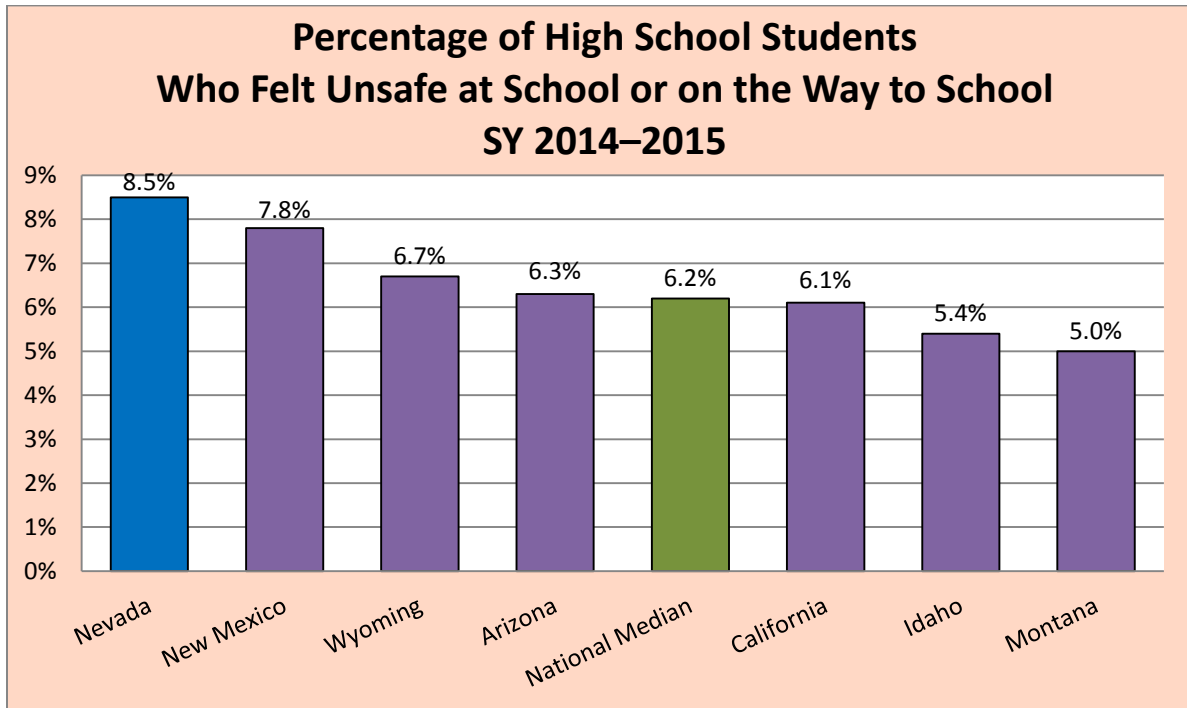


School Safety—Teachers



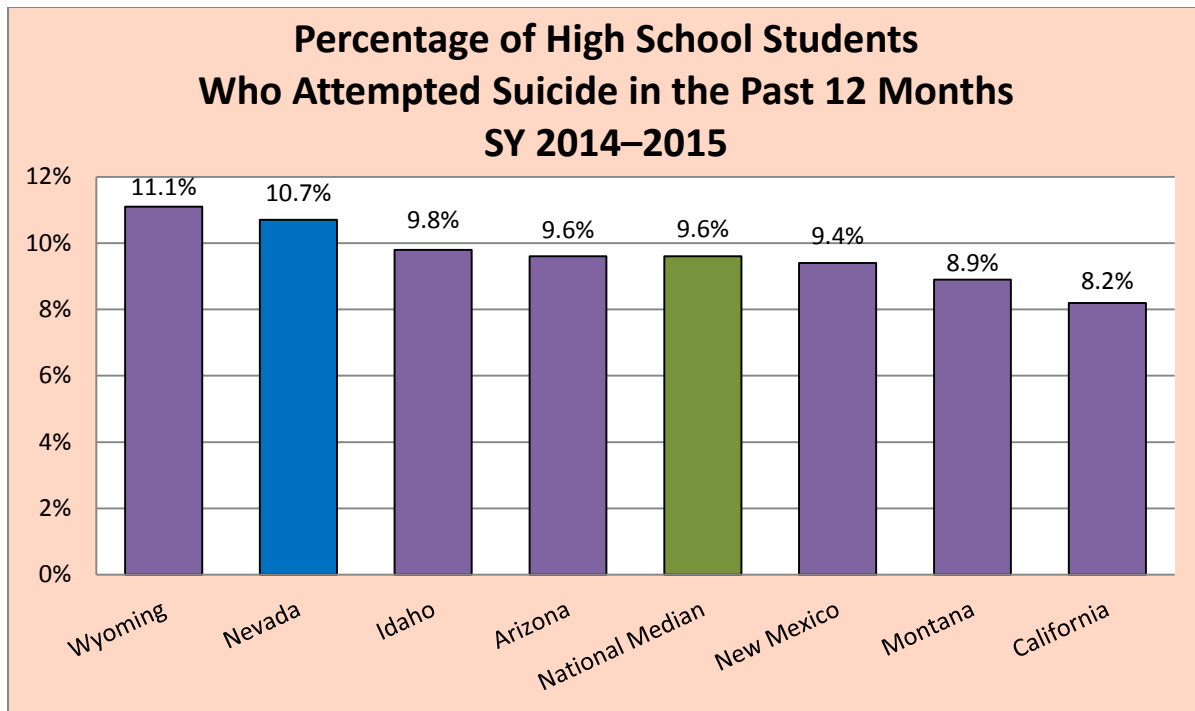
Source: United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2014*, Table 228.80.

School Safety—Students



Note: Data includes only those western states that reported.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2015*; <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/results.htm>.



Note: Data includes only those western states that reported.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2015*; <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/results.htm>.

In 2016, nine Nevada schools were named to Nevada’s Department of Education Shining Stars list in recognition of their outstanding performance in serving all students, with an emphasis on closing opportunity gaps.



EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

The 1997 Legislature created the Commission on Educational Technology to:

- Establish the State’s educational technology plan;
- Develop statewide technical standards; and
- Allocate funds to school districts for support of educational technology in the schools.

The Commission consists of 11 members appointed jointly by the Governor and legislative leadership. The Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Administrator of the Division of Enterprise Information Technology Services of the Department of Administration serve as ex officio nonvoting members of the Commission.

Since the 1995 Legislative Session, the Legislature has appropriated State funds for support of technology in the classroom. Historically, funds could be used for infrastructure, best practices, professional development, high-quality content material, and support. Funding was allocated to school districts based upon needs in that area. The 2015 Legislature altered this funding method by supporting a new one-to-one technology program called Nevada Ready 21 and a Wide Area Network (WAN) incentive program.

Nevada Ready 21

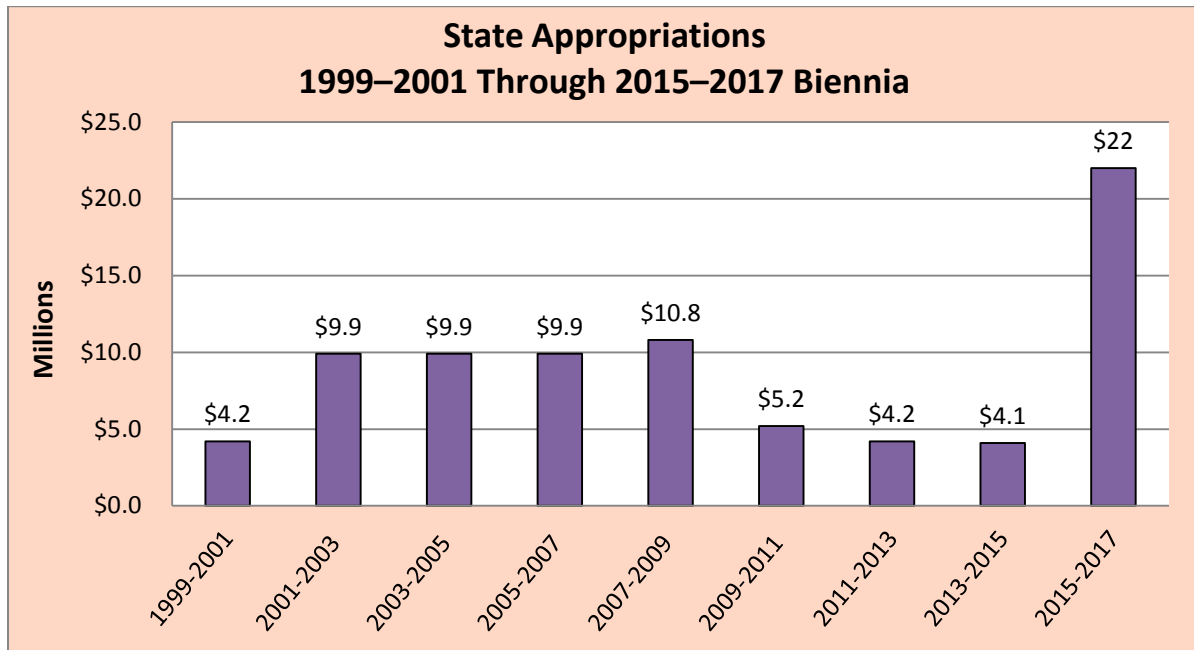
The 2015 Legislature approved \$10 million in each fiscal year of the 2015–2017 Biennium to support this new technology program. One-to-one computing provides students and teachers with 24-hour access to their own personal, portable technology device connected wirelessly to the Internet. During the first three years of the program, the focus will be on deploying technology in middle schools. Once the program is fully implemented in middle schools, it will be expanded to high schools. Professional development for educational staff is a key component of the program; several workshops will take place throughout the school year.

An application for funds was distributed by NDE in January 2016, and applications from six school districts and six charter schools were approved, representing 23 schools. Funding will provide 19,041 devices for students and 1,030 for staff. The device selected for use statewide is the CTL NL6 Education Chromebook. The warranty includes accidental damage, theft, loss, and an in-state repair depot.

WAN Incentives

For those schools lacking sufficient WAN bandwidth, the 2015 Legislature approved \$1 million in matching funds each year to assist with the expansion of broadband and WAN access.

Educational Technology—Funding



Note: Due to State budget considerations during the 2001–2003 Biennium, all but \$500,000 of the \$9.95 million appropriation was reverted to the State General Fund. Additionally, due to mandatory budget reductions during the 2007–2009 Biennium, all but \$770,000 of the \$10.78 million appropriation was reverted to the State General Fund. The 2011 Legislature approved the transfer of the Ed Tech Library database funding in the amount of \$421,165 in FY 2012 to the State Library. This accounts for a small portion of the funding decrease in the first year of each biennium.

Source: Fiscal Analysis Division, LCB.

Clark County School District’s Cimarron-Memorial High School robotics program, Team 987 “High Rollers,” won third place in the 2016 FIRST Robotics World Championships. The school was also inducted into the Chairman’s Hall of Fame for its outstanding record of success over many years.



ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Background

Adult Education Programs: Mission Statement

The mission of the adult education program in Nevada is to provide educational services to assist adults in obtaining the knowledge and skills necessary to become self-sufficient, productive citizens.

Implementation History

1950s	Adult education programs began in Nevada in the 1950s when the Clark and Washoe County School Districts implemented evening adult education classes and apprenticeship courses.
1952	The General Educational Development (GED) test was first introduced to military personnel in 1942 and was subsequently expanded to the general public in 1952.
1972	The Nevada Legislature approved State funding to support adult education programs for the first time in 1972.

Eligibility Requirements

Eligible students for adult education programs include the following:

- Individuals who are 18 years of age or older who are not currently enrolled in school and do not have a high school diploma;
- Individuals who are 17 years of age and are enrolled in alternative education programs; and
- Individuals who are 16 years of age may participate in High School Equivalency (HSE) test preparation, if the individual has obtained approval through the school district.

NOTE: Adult education programs are also available to persons in correctional facilities.

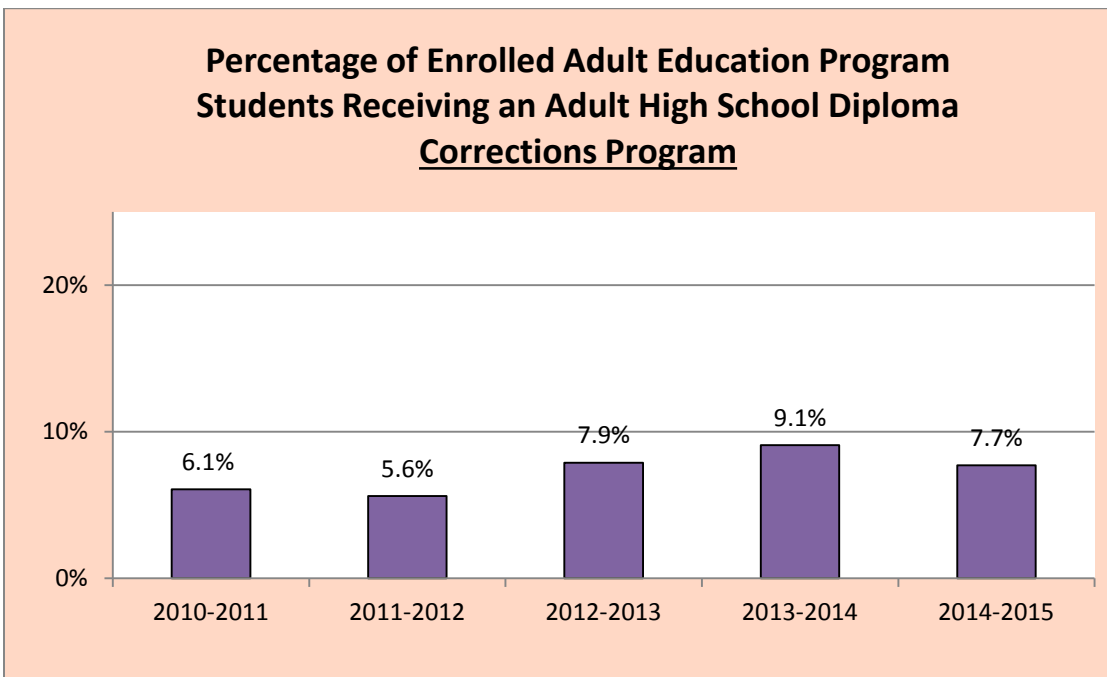
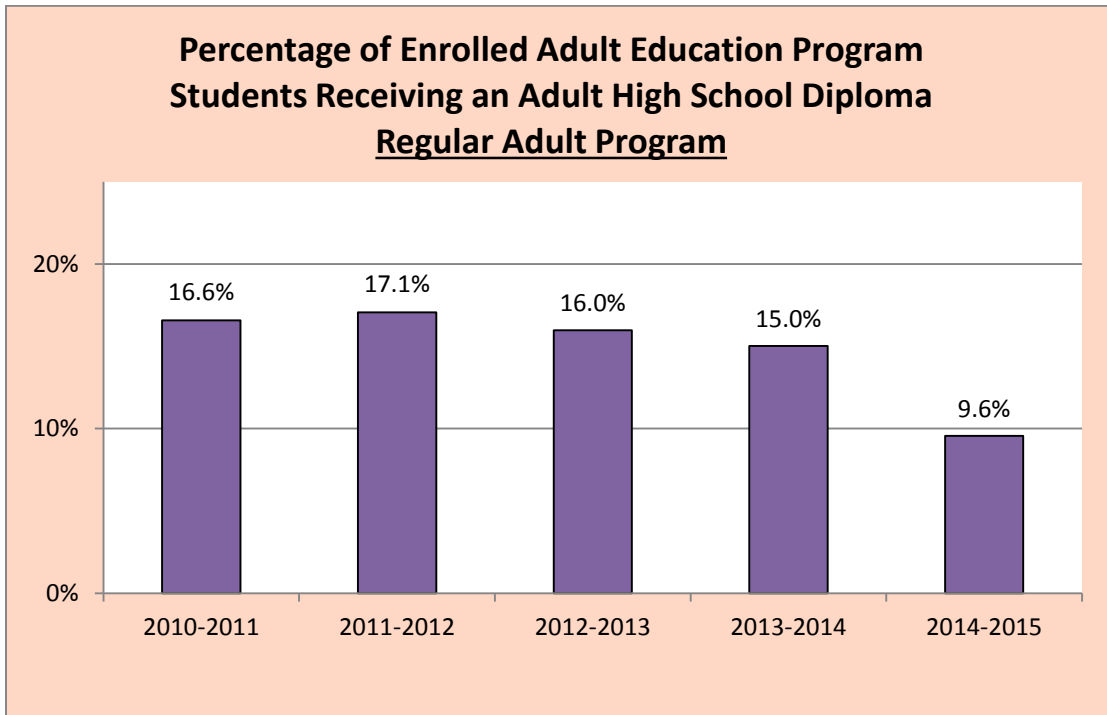
Adult education programs cover several distinct programs, including:

- *Adult High School Diploma (AHSD)*—This program provides services to adults with an attained education level of ninth grade or higher who are working toward a high school diploma. The program is located in 14 of Nevada’s 17 counties. The counties without AHSD programs are Esmeralda, Lincoln, and Storey Counties.
- *High School Equivalency*—This program provides services to individuals pursuing HSE certification, rather than an adult high school diploma. Test takers may choose from three approved HSE examinations: (1) the GED; (2) the HiSET; or (3) the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) test. The HSE examinations are administered at test sites located throughout the State.
- *Adult Basic Education (ABE)*—This system provides adult literacy and language programs to prepare adult learners with basic skills necessary to function in society. The programs are located throughout Nevada and provide such services as literacy and basic skills instruction, English language classes, college and work-readiness preparation, and HSE examination preparation.

The Washoe County School District is one of only two dozen school districts in the nation to be named a “District of Distinction” by District Administration Magazine. The district was recognized for establishing a data warehouse designed to provide up-to-date information about students’ academic progress to teachers and staff so they can provide appropriate resources to help students become college- and career-ready.



Adult Education Programs—Completers



Source: NDE, Annual Adult High School Performance Reports, various years, [http://www.doe.nv.gov/Adult Education/High School/Performance Reports/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/Adult%20Education/High%20School/Performance%20Reports/).