

**MINUTES OF THE  
TASK FORCE ON K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDING  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
(Senate Bill 500, Chapter 500, Statutes of Nevada 2013)  
May 21, 2014**

The fourth meeting of the Task Force on K-12 Public Education Funding – Technical Advisory Committee was held at 10:00 a.m. on May 21, 2014, at the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Room 4412, Las Vegas, with videoconference to the Nevada Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Room 4100, Carson City, Nevada.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:**

Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Chair  
Mike Alastuey, Education Finance Consultant  
James McIntosh, Clark County School District Chief Financial Officer  
Dr. Walt Rulffes, Former Superintendent, Clark County School District

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:**

Stephanie Day, Deputy Director, Department of Administration  
Mike Schroeder, Washoe County School District Budget Director

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE:**

Jeff Zander, Elko County School District Superintendent  
Paul Johnson, White Pine County School District Chief Financial Officer  
Dr. Jay Chambers, American Institutes for Research  
Dr. Jesse Levin, American Institutes for Research

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Julia Teska, Director, Department of Administration (Excused)

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:**

Mark Krmpotic, Senate Fiscal Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division  
Julie Waller, Senior Program Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division  
Wayne Thorley, Program Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:**

Cindy Jones, Assembly Fiscal Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division  
Eileen O'Grady, Chief Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division  
Kristin Roberts, Senior Principal Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division  
Donna Thomas, Committee Secretary, Fiscal Analysis Division

## **EXHIBITS:**

- [Exhibit A:](#) Agenda
- [Exhibit B:](#) Clark County School District – Recommended Support for Children in Poverty
- [Exhibit C:](#) Latino Leadership Council
- [Exhibit D:](#) Marsha Irvin - Public Testimony
- [Exhibit E:](#) Guinn Center for Policy Priorities, Victoria Carreon – Public Testimony
- [Exhibit F:](#) Clark County Black Caucus – Public Testimony
- [Exhibit G:](#) Veronica Correa – Public Testimony
- [Exhibit H:](#) Martha Moreno – Public Testimony
- [Exhibit I:](#) Carrie Sampson – Public Testimony
- [Exhibit J:](#) Work Session Document
- [Exhibit K:](#) Clark County School District Recommended Support for English Language Acquisition
- [Exhibit L:](#) Clark County School District Recommended Support for Children in Poverty
- [Exhibit M:](#) Study of a New Method of Funding for Public Schools in Nevada – American Institutes for Research

### **I. ROLL CALL.**

Chair Woodhouse called the meeting to order at 10:26 a.m. The secretary called roll; all members were present, except Julia Teska who was excused.

### **II. OPENING REMARKS.**

Chair Woodhouse said today's meeting was a continuation of the work of the Task Force on K-12 Public Education Funding – Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

### **III. PUBLIC COMMENT.**

Joyce Haldeman, Associate Superintendent of Community and Government Relations, Clark County School District, said there had been a lot of discussion within the community about what the weight should be for English language learners (ELL). She said the change to the funding formula was monumental and it was essential to recognize all of the costs associated with educating students who were faced with different challenges.

Ms. Haldeman recalled that a weight of 1.33 was suggested at the TAC meeting on May 8, 2014. She said that was based on funding of \$1,800 per student for the Zoom schools in the Clark County School District (CCSD). Ms. Haldeman appreciated the Zoom school funding and thought it would be a successful program. She said that in addition to the funding supplied by the Legislature, CCSD provided supplemental funding, because the state funding did not allow for professional development and parent-engagement activities. The parent-engagement activities were in place prior to the state funding and had been paid with federal Title I funds. The state funding also did not cover the cost of certain computer programs and other resources and materials used in the Zoom schools. Ms. Haldeman said all of those items should be included to

determine the true cost of students attending Zoom schools. Additionally, there were other strategies that could be implemented to assist ELL students with English language acquisition. She said English language acquisition was an important element of education and there were different strategies depending on when a student entered the ELL program.

Ms. Haldeman recalled previous discussions at TAC meetings regarding students who classified as both ELL and at risk of low academic achievement. She said there was a question regarding whether additional services were necessary for students who were eligible for both classifications. Ms. Haldeman said both groups required more time on task, increased individualized attention and early intervention. However, students living in poverty may also require wraparound services to improve their chances for learning. She recommended a slightly higher weight for students who qualified as ELL and at risk of low academic achievement to account for any necessary wraparound services.

Ms. Haldeman encouraged the Committee to make their decisions based on all of the services needed for ELL and at-risk students.

Tracy Clark, ELL Director, CCSD, said that CCSD currently had 56,000 active ELL pupils. There were approximately 14,000 students who were monitored to ensure and promote their academic success. Ms. Clark said during the 2012-2013 school year approximately 6,000 students successfully exited the program. Of the 9,000 students who demonstrated language proficiency, about 40 percent of those students were not proficient based on rating criteria in reference tests and the high school proficiency exams. As evidenced by a review of CCSD's elementary school reading proficiency data over the last three years, significant achievement gaps existed between subgroups. Ms. Clark said subgroups, including free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL), African-American, ELL and Individualized Education Program (IEP), consistently performed at a lower proficiency rate in reading, with the lowest proficiency rate being in the IEP and ELL subgroups. A review of the CCSD middle school reading proficiency data over the last three years demonstrated that the ELL subgroup performed 45 percentage points below the district's proficiency rate. Moreover, grade ten high school proficiency exam data indicated that the African-American proficiency rate was well below the district's proficiency rate, and that the ELL proficiency rate was even lower at just 7 percent proficiency.

Danielle Miller, Assistant Chief Student Achievement Officer, Performance Zone 5, CCSD, said the Zoom program made an incredible difference in CCSD with just the initial Zoom funding. Based on the tremendous gains that had been made thus far, she wondered how much more could be accomplished with increased funding. She thought it was important to examine how academic support could be provided for all students, pre-K through grade 12. Increased learning time was crucial; therefore, before and after school tutoring, extended school days and an extended school year would provide students with quality Tier I instruction. Ms. Miller said the quality of a teacher was the number one factor that helped increase student achievement. She said it was essential that teachers were provided with high-quality, job-imbedded professional development even though it was an additional expense. It was also necessary that teachers and administrators had the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) endorsement

to promote the success of ELL students and students at risk in the area of language proficiency. She said it was critical to have quality teaching that was implemented consistently throughout the districts. That type of teaching should include sustained academic rigor, high student expectations, focus on language acquisition, implementation of quality curriculum and explicit reading instruction.

Ms. Miller said active parental educational supports, opportunities for involvement such as educational workshops, and increased parental involvement were all critical to the educational solution.

Ms. Miller said the Zoom reading centers were providing Tier I language and reading acceleration for students who demonstrated low academic achievement and were struggling with language acquisition. She said each center had a reading master teacher who provided direct instruction to students and monitored the paraprofessionals as they worked with students. Moreover, these educators provided professional development to support high-quality Tier I instruction. She said what was happening in the reading centers was moving into the mainstream classrooms too, positively impacting all students. Ms. Miller said that 209 students had successfully graduated out of the reading centers since the start in October 2013, which was a huge success rate.

Brenda Larsen-Mitchell, Assistant Chief Student Achievement Officer, Performance Zone 8, CCSD, said as a school district, there was a responsibility to promote the academic achievement of all students. It was essential that resources were allocated specific for students based on their classification, such as ELL, at risk and students with disabilities. She said it was important to have the appropriate supports and resources to promote students' background knowledge, academic vocabulary, language acquisition, mastery of content level curriculum, and family and community engagement. Ms. Larsen-Mitchell said Nevada must provide a learning environment that valued the cultures of students as a strength within their education by embracing families and the community, and by using culturally-responsive standards-based instruction. Currently there were 42 states with weighted funding for ELL. Eight states did not have weighted funding for ELL including Nevada. In addition, 37 states provided funding for students living in poverty and for students who were at risk of low academic achievement. Again, Nevada was one of 13 states that did not provide weighted funding for at-risk students.

Ms. Larsen-Mitchell said CCSD provided a weighted funding recommendation based on the additional supports and resources that were essential to promote English language acquisition which equated to approximately \$226 million based on the 56,000 ELL students in CCSD. She said the goal was to portray a clear picture of the supports and services that were necessary at varying levels. Within the approximate 1.7 weight, CCSD anticipated allocating resources appropriate to students' needs. For example, pre-K may need more funding to provide appropriate services. Ms. Larsen-Mitchell said those services and supports included, but were not limited to, pre-K, extended school year, summer school, reading centers, tutoring, professional development for teachers and administrators, parent centers and educational workshops, assessments, and tiered interventions.

Tim Adams, Principal, Reynaldo Martinez Elementary School (Zoom school), said there were great things happening in Zoom schools. He said he was a native of Clark County and had attended Clark County schools. Mr. Adams said, during his 11 years as a building administrator, he had never been part of an initiative like the Zoom schools, which focused on and supported ELL students. The four components of the Zoom concept - lower class sizes in kindergarten, pre-K classes, reading centers and summer academy - resulted in tremendous gains in the education of ELL students, as well as all students at Reynaldo Martinez Elementary School. He said a mid-year assessment demonstrated that Reynaldo Martinez Elementary School, as a whole, was 10 percent more proficient than it was the previous year, based on the prior year's data. The Zoom initiative helped change the culture of the school to focus on assisting ELL students acquire the language and literacy necessary to be successful and to ultimately graduate from high school. The funding had been extremely helpful as evidenced by the success of the Zoom program. Mr. Adams said there were more pieces needed, including wraparound services, parent engagement and professional development. However, he said, the first allocation of the Zoom money was well spent and showing great results across all the Zoom schools.

Terri Castillo, Zoom Project Facilitator, Reynaldo Martinez Elementary School, said the reading center where she worked opened October 23, 2013, and, at capacity, there were 79 students between grades 1-3 attending daily. As of May 20, 2014, 46 students had exited the program, which was over 50 percent of the students who originally started in October. "Exit" meant that the student was reading and comprehending at their grade level. Of the 46 students who had exited the program, 18 were first grade students, 14 were second grade students, and 14 were third grade students. Ms. Castillo said it was an amazing opportunity. Everything that was allocated had been put to good use and had helped promote success. She thought additional money would allow even more to be accomplished.

Susan Steaffens, Director of Title I Services, CCSD, said she was asked to speak about how the needs differed between English language acquisition students and children in poverty. She said often times ELL students were also low income and vice versa. The services for the two populations were much the same; however, at-risk students often required wraparound services too. Based on calculations ([Exhibit B](#)), wraparound services equated to about \$295 per school year, per student, although she thought that figure was low. Ms. Steaffens said determining the physical needs of an at-risk student, such as adequate food, clothing and shelter, could interfere with time devoted to student academics.

Sylvia Lazos, Co-Chair, Education Latino Leadership Council, suggested that the Committee consider the weights of the top five states (page 2, [Exhibit C](#)). She indicated that the states highlighted in Table 1 should not be considered because they had been subject to litigation due to a funding system that was irrational and inadequate for meeting the needs of at-risk students.

Ms. Lazos said Clark County, and Nevada as a whole, needed more infrastructure. The population growth of immigrants had been rapid and Nevada was the fifth largest state in terms of immigrants. She said New York, New Jersey, California and Texas also had

high immigrant populations. Those states also provided a pre-K program for vulnerable children that was funded from the General Fund. In addition, they offered full-day kindergarten, extended school days and summer institutes. Ms. Lazos said many of those states had done wholesale retraining of their teacher core. For example, New Mexico and New Jersey retrained their entire teacher core on ELL practices. In 1990, Florida settled the lawsuit LULAC v. Florida Board of Education, and pursuant to consent decree, every teacher in the State of Florida must have a TESL endorsement if there are ELL students in their classroom. Ms. Lazos said Nevada had not made those same investments. For example, according to the English Mastery Council (page 5, [Exhibit C](#)), Clark County had 25 certified ELL staff in a school population where 70 percent of the children were ELL students. Ms. Lazos said Aida Walqui, WestEd, reviewed the performance of 70 plus teachers in 12 CCSD schools based on the Common Core requirements of English language development in the classroom. Ms. Walqui concluded that only one of those teachers was providing high-quality language development. Ms. Lazos said Nevada should be similar to the top five states in the nation (page 2, [Exhibit C](#)), with a recommended weight between 1.7 and 1.9 to help build ELL infrastructure.

Ms. Lazos discouraged the idea of eliminating or reducing ELL funding based on a particular duration. According to data from the CCSD research department, there were over 11,000 long-term ELL students in Clark County alone. Eliminating or reducing funding after a six-year period would have a large impact on the lives of those children. She said many states were moving toward a weight specific to long-term ELL students, because the entire profession recognized how difficult it was to educate a child in terms of language development once they entered middle school and high school. Long-term ELL students were accustomed to failure, not success. Motivation and targeted interventions were important to allow those students access to the core curriculum with the appropriate language supports. Long-term ELL students required more funding than less, therefore, Ms. Lazos said it was inappropriate to place a time limit on funding. She said adults, not children, should face the consequences of failing at their job, and that could be done through performance evaluations.

Zoraida Caldera, Nevada Cooperative Extension, said as a second-language speaker and a community educator, she knew the importance of providing quality ELL programs for children. Even from the level of school readiness, quality immersion and inclusive programs were where the ELL student would truly acquire the language. Ms. Caldera said there was concern about the high school dropout rate, however, students often acquired the “dropout” mindset as early as second or third grade. She said during these early years students often felt lost in class because they did not understand the language. That is why it was important to invest in children early on and put the money where it was most needed. She hoped the investment would create more success stories like Erika Carrera, an ELL student who was recently granted a full scholarship by the Gates Foundation.

Ms. Caldera shared the following proverbs: “It takes a village to raise a child,” “Regardless of a child’s biological parents, its upbringing belongs to the community,” and “Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old, he will not depart

from it.” She said there was a lot of work ahead for Nevada, because the rulers of this nation might as well be a Garcia, Sanchez, Lopez, etc.

Jose Solorio said he had been an active member of the Clark County community for many years. He was a member of the Clark County School Board (Board) between 1992-1993. Mr. Solorio said he was blind to the ELL problem at the time, much like when a child was unaware that they were part of a poor family. He felt compelled to assist with improving the opportunities of ELL students.

Mr. Solorio thought Nevada was failing its ELL students. He said it was important to learn about the successful methods of other states and define what was wrong in Nevada so the situation could improve. He thought the Committee’s process was effective and that funding was key to rectifying a failing situation.

Mr. Solorio said the Latino community advocated for a change to the funding formula and the addition of necessary funding. Nevada should focus on the success of the Zoom schools in an effort to help all ELL students. He said the Zoom schools were good, but there were 40,000 ELL students who still needed help. Mr. Solorio said Nevada needed to add weights to elevate students to an appropriate level of proficiency. In doing so, the community would prosper because businesses would be attracted to an educated workforce. Mr. Solorio advocated for a weight of 1.7 to 1.9. Also, he did not think Nevada should restrict itself to a six-year limit on ELL funding. If students were not learning proper English after six years, was it truly the fault of the student or was it the fault of the system? Mr. Solorio thought the system should be corrected before limits were placed on students’ ability to learn.

Mr. Solorio said there should be a slightly higher weight for students who were classified as both ELL and at risk of low academic achievement.

Mr. Solorio thought the Committee should focus on solutions and let the legislators address the money situation, because there was no time for delay when students were failing. He also did not think there should be a “hold harmless.” He implored the Committee to produce a solution that would help ELL students, the City of Las Vegas and Nevada as a whole.

Marsha Irvin, Chairwoman, Black Caucus Education Committee, thanked the Committee for its work, because she thought it was important to identify a more equitable funding formula for Nevada’s children. She said there was growing concern among African-American leaders, as well as the African-American community, about the widening education gap of African-American students. The African-American literacy proficiency at the elementary level in the CCSD during the 2012-2013 school year was 48.5 percent compared to 64.1 percent among all CCSD students. At the middle school level, African-American literacy proficiency was only 39.2 percent compared to 56.7 percent of the overall CCSD population. At the high school level, African-American literacy proficiency was 36 percent compared to 59.8 percent for all CCSD students. She said the data clearly reflected that African-American students were underperforming compared to their peers, which was not uncommon across the country. Ms. Irvin said she was a former superintendent for the northeast region of the CCSD,

which had the highest percentage of African-American students in the district. She said there were not enough resources available for the district's most vulnerable students.

Ms. Irvin thought it was refreshing to observe the work of the TAC who could attest to how challenging it was to provide resources across a vast district like CCSD. Ms. Irvin noted Dr. Rulffes previous efforts as a CCSD Superintendent to provide more funding to meet the challenges faced by struggling students. She said because of his help, the dropout rate decreased in the northeast region, which had the highest African-American student population at the high school level. Ms. Irvin also noted Mr. Alastuey's efforts as a former Chief Financial Officer in CCSD to provide money for children with disabilities, the most vulnerable students. She knew that Committee members comprehended the existing problems. The data clearly reflected that it was time to adequately fund the needs of African-American children and special education students.

Ms. Irvin said that assigning a weighted formula for African-American students was imperative in closing the achievement gap for those students. She recognized and supported what the state had done in terms of ELL students and the Zoom schools. Ms. Irvin requested that the TAC consider, at a minimum, a weight of 1.7, because it would help tackle the proficiency gaps of Nevada's students.

Victoria Carreon, Director of Research and Policy, Guinn Center for Policy Priorities (GCPP), said the GCPP was a new bipartisan "think-tank" in Nevada. The GCPP was focused on performing data-driven analysis.

Ms. Carreon thought it was important to step back and take a critical look at the existing basic support formula before adding several new weights to the funding formula. She said the existing basic support formula was driven by historical staffing and expenditure costs instead of how much it cost to provide an adequate education, an education that would allow students to be successful and achieve state and federal standards. The GCPP suggested the Committee begin by performing an updated adequacy study, because it would provide a better idea of the true cost to educate students in Nevada. After the adequacy study, she suggested the state begin with basic support funding for each pupil and then make adjustments such as the ones that were currently being discussed. Ms. Carreon said adjustments could be made for factors that varied across districts such as size and transportation, and adjustments based on K-3 class size reduction and/or grade level adjustments. She said after adjustments were made for the basic costs of educating students, then weights could be implemented for ELL, at-risk and special education populations.

Ms. Carreon said there was a substantial amount of local tax revenue that currently existed outside of the basic support guarantee. She said during the 2012-2013 school year there were three school districts that received a substantial amount of local funding, making state funding unnecessary (page 2, [Exhibit E](#)). There was a large range of the actual basic support per pupil when local basic support revenue and state support revenue were added together. She said basic support ranged from a low in Clark County of \$5,136 to a high in Eureka County of \$30,837 per pupil. Ms. Carreon said it was important to note that in Eureka County the entire per pupil amount was local tax revenue only. She said Table 2 (page 3, [Exhibit E](#)) provided the actual revenue



outside of the formula which was just tax revenue. It did not include local fees or unrestricted federal revenue. Ms. Carreon said the statewide average of outside taxes per pupil was \$1,104. That ranged from a low in Lyon County of \$925 per pupil to a high in Eureka County of \$45,118 per pupil. She reiterated that was all local revenue. When basic support revenue and tax revenue were combined, the range went from a low in Clark County of \$6,173 per pupil to a high in Eureka County of \$75,955 per pupil (page 4, [Exhibit E](#)). Ms. Carreon said GCPP thought that revenue should be taken into account in some way.

Ms. Carreon said there was a wealth adjustment in the current funding formula (page 5, [Exhibit E](#)). Revenue was taken into account somewhat, but not fully. She said the important thing to consider was that if the basic support guarantee were increased and the full amount of local taxes were taken into account, there would be a clearer picture of the total revenue available to school districts and more transparency. Therefore, GCPP thought the Committee should consider bringing all of the revenue inside the formula, not just using the wealth adjustment.

Ms. Carreon thought there should be a hold-harmless level put into place that would hold each district at a certain per pupil dollar amount. A target funding level could be established and an implementation plan could be developed to phase in the new formula over several years as funding became available. As the formula was implemented each year, the state would evaluate whether a district would receive more funding per pupil under the new formula versus the hold-harmless funding level and then provide the greater amount (page 6, [Exhibit E](#)). She said it was important that the Committee perform funding scenarios during the analysis so that possible implications of the policy choices being made would be revealed. Ms. Carreon said it was important to produce something realistic that could be implemented in a reasonable amount of time.

Yvette Williams, Chair and Co-Founder, Clark County Black Caucus (CCBC), thanked the TAC for their work. She said during the 2013 Legislative Session, the Clark County Black Caucus strongly advocated for the passage of NRS 388.405 to address the historical problem of illiteracy in Nevada. On the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Brown vs Board of Education, she was proud that Nevada had taken steps to ensure that all children with limited English proficiency (LEP) had the tools and resources necessary to succeed. The CCBC believed the specific wording that was adopted promoted literacy for all children. That had been the approach of CCSD in adopting English Language Acquisition (ELA) policy that was inclusive of all students. In America's history, black children once learned to read and write at the risk of death. To date, she thought the system had failed them, often remaining "invisible" when establishing policy for student achievement under the cloak of FRPL (page 1, [Exhibit F](#)). The fact that black students overall were underperforming FRPL students, and in some cases ELL students, further demonstrated failure. Until LEP programs were funded specifically to meet the needs of this subgroup, those students would continue to struggle. Currently, the black FRPL student population represented over 25,386 students (page 6, [Exhibit F](#)), which was a significant number. Ms. Williams said that the data revealed that increased student achievement occurred when programs were in place that assisted early student proficiency, including regular monitoring and a focus on four domains (speaking,

listening, reading and writing). She said this was apparent based on the current ELL program in CCSD where students outperformed their peers upon completion of the program. Currently, students that were most in need did not receive an early proficiency assessment, unlike ELL and IEP students. Given those outcomes and the overrepresentation of black students underachieving in Nevada schools, the CCBC proposed a 1.7 weight for each FRPL, IEP and ELL student. Additionally, the CCBC asked the Committee to provide a weight of 1.7 to fund a program specific to ELA, and that the program would ensure that black students would fit into the funding formula for education.

Key points for consideration:

- With early assessment in ELL programs, former ELL students were outperforming non-ELL peers in elementary math and reading proficiency.
- Former ELL students were performing comparably with non-ELL peers in middle school math and reading proficiency.
- FRPL black students were underperforming in elementary school, in some cases below the ELL student.
- FRPL students were not assessed until third grade.
- FRPL black students did not have a comparable English language learning program to address English language proficiency, see NRS 388.405.
- Without sufficient funding, school districts would continue to struggle and unable to adhere to the law.
- African-American (black) students' overall proficiency in literacy for elementary 48 percent/45 percent (FRPL). Middle school 38 percent/35 percent (FRPL). High school reading 36 percent/high school writing 46 percent. Overall proficiency in math for elementary 51 percent/47 percent (FRPL), middle school 27 percent/23 percent (FRPL) and high school 31 percent. All, well below the average CCSD student.
- Funding weights for this subgroup should be included in The Nevada Plan for education for school districts to adhere to the law (page 4-5, [Exhibit F](#)).
- A proposed weight of 1.7 for FRPL, 1.7 IEP, 1.7 ELL and 1.7 for a new designation for ELA that equally funded and addressed the needs of black student proficiency, which represented over 25,386 students of which 6,356 students were IEP.
- Include funding formula costs to administer a placement test, similar to the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment-Access Placement Test, to determine level of English proficiency for FRPL students.
- Weights should be given based on individual student needs.

Ms. Williams said the total combined population of those groups impacted over 81,714 students. She said that was nearly 82,000 students who were underachieving and underperforming. The decisions of the Committee would greatly impact those students.

Rosemary Flores, former Director of The Family Leadership Initiative (FLI), said the FLI provided parental engagement programs in over 14 CCSD schools. Parents volunteered on a peer-to-peer Go To College project, The Family Network and FLI.

Over the years, approximately 400 parents had graduated from the leadership training and, in turn, provided other immigrant parents the skills to navigate the educational system. During her time as the FLI Director, she had the opportunity to observe many students and parents. One of the things that Ms. Flores observed were the challenges during the recession, when many programs were eliminated for children. For example, a group of parents at one local elementary school had learned how to become more involved in their children's education, the importance of homework, school involvement and visiting the library. Just as they began tapping into those resources, they were no longer available. Ms. Flores said this was especially true when literacy specialists and TESL endorsed teachers were no longer at certain schools. It had an impact on the lives of children. However, she also noticed the increased leadership capability of parents, who began taking a stronger role at home. Even though parents did not have the same resources, they found a way to help their children.

Ms. Flores said that what saddened the active parents was the lost opportunity for others parents to benefit from the parental engagement and leadership programs. Ms. Flores noted that the children of parents who went through leadership training showed increased success. Some of those students were now in college and doing very well. She said it was important to increase parental engagement programming. With the Common Core standards coming up, at-home support of parents was necessary so their children could succeed. Because of the challenges that Nevada faced, Ms. Flores said she supported a weight between 1.7 and 1.9.

Veronica Correa, volunteer, The Family Leadership Initiative, requested more multicultural training for teachers, so they could provide a better and fairer education for children and parents. She said a fair education for parents of ELL children would give parents the confidence to become more involved. Ms. Correa said the FLI helped her learn to navigate the educational system. She could visit the school and rely on her training despite feeling uncomfortable. Ms. Correa knew that her involvement was beneficial for her daughter and her daughter's future. Ms. Correa said that even though the treatment she received at the school's office was not adequate, at least she understood the school system. She asked the Committee to increase the weight, so parental engagement programming could be increased and school personnel could be adequately trained to interact with diverse backgrounds.

Martha Moreno, volunteer, The Family Leadership Initiative, requested support for Nevada students. She said ethical leadership was very important among teachers, so they would respect the students and provide them with the necessary attention. Ms. Moreno recalled an ELL teacher during the 2003-2004 school year who encouraged parents to become involved in their children's education. The teacher encouraged parents to listen, speak and read English to their children. Ms. Moreno thought parents were very fortunate to have had this type of opportunity. She said it was important to support parents, but it was also important to have bilingual teachers who could understand the needs of the parents and the students. Ms. Moreno asked the TAC to increase the weight to support the programs and reduce the dropout rate.

Tracy Spies, Assistant Professor, University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) and TESL certified, said she was previously an elementary school principal in charge of a campus made up of primarily ELL students. Although she worked for UNLV, she was representing herself and her passion for the education of ELL students in Nevada.

Ms. Spies said she wanted to speak specifically about long-term ELL students, and things to consider when establishing weights and duration of funding for this unique population of students. As reported by Dr. Lazos, there were currently over 11,000 long-term ELL students. Long-term ELL students were considered English language learners who had been in United States' schools for six years or more. These students spoke a variety of languages, but most were bilingual and sounded like native English speakers. Ms. Spies said most long-term ELL students were English proficient, but lacked the academic language skills to access the curriculum. She said there were two categories of students, some that traveled between the United States and their home countries, and some that had inconsistent schooling in the United States. Students with inconsistent schooling may have gone from a state like Texas, where there was bilingual education, to a more rural area where they were in mainstream classrooms with teachers who lacked language support.

Ms. Spies said ELL students were considered long-term ELL students for the following reasons:

- They attended a school with curriculum not designed for ELL students.
- They were included in interventions that were designed for struggling native English speakers. A struggling native English speaking student did not have the same needs as an ELL student who was learning English as their second language.
- They were placed in classrooms that were absent of English-speaking peers to support their language development. This resulted in social and linguistic isolation for the long-term ELL student.

There were multiple other reasons at various levels why ELL students became long-term ELL students; therefore, long-term funding was imperative.

Typically ELL students were placed in mainstream classrooms in secondary schools. Content-area teachers had a focus on content-area instruction; however, those teachers required training in language acquisition and how to support ELL students. Sometimes ELL students were pulled out of the classrooms to attend special classes which meant they missed core curriculum taught in the mainstream classrooms. Additionally, they often had to sacrifice electives which were missed opportunities for them to be with their native English-speaking peers and participate in areas where they might excel. Ms. Spies said those factors limited the student's access to the full curriculum. Long-term ELL students had particular needs at the secondary level, such as different programming. Long-term ELL students did not typically move beyond the intermediate level of proficiency. They were not newcomers, therefore, the beginner programs were not appropriate for long-term ELL students. Ms. Spies said long-term ELL students required access to the general curriculum with teachers with strong training in how to help them acquire the language and content simultaneously. She said long-term ELL students needed rigorous grade-level content classes with English-proficient peers as

role models, and they needed to be taught using sheltered instruction strategies specifically designed for ELL students. Additionally, explicit language and literacy development across the curriculum in all content areas was necessary.

Ms. Spies said, with regard to structuring in secondary schools, there needed to be extensive monitoring of progress. The annual assessments of the student's English language proficiency was not enough. Although it took time to develop language, it was important to measure incremental growth along the way which could be accomplished with strong monitoring systems in place. Monitoring systems required the proper training and tools for administrators, counselors and teachers.

Maria Dorantes said her son attended Walker Elementary School in Henderson, Nevada. She said she received a letter saying that the ELL program would change next year. Ms. Dorantes said the school day would be taught partially in English and partially in Spanish. The Spanish-based teaching was going to be reduced from 2 ½ hours to 45 minutes. She expected to see a significant change in her son, because he spoke two languages. Ms. Dorantes thought students who spoke two different languages were treated differently than other kids. Some students, like her son, had to be in special classes. Her son would be negatively impacted by the reduced Spanish-based instruction.

Ms. Dorantes requested the Committee's support by increasing education funding. She wanted her child to graduate and attend college.

Victor Wakefield, Executive Director, Teach for America Las Vegas Valley, said he served on several education committees including The Lincy Institute's Educational Collaborative Advisory Board, and he was the co-chair for the Education Advisory Group for the Downtown Achieves Initiative. In his capacity at Teach for America, he supported nearly 300 first and second-year teachers who taught pre-K through grade 12 across 60 Title I qualifying schools, where 68 percent of the teachers provided instruction in district-identified high-need subject areas. Those areas were identified as special education, secondary science, technology, education and mathematics and secondary English. Additionally, 45 percent of the teachers identified themselves as people of color. Mr. Wakefield also supported nearly 200 alumni in the Las Vegas Valley in a broader effort to improve education in the community.

Mr. Wakefield viewed educational issues through the lens of families, students and communities with the greatest needs, and those who were chronically underserved by the school system. Teach for America believed that the conversation around funding for pre-K through grade 12 education in the State of Nevada was incredibly important. It directly reflected the priority that was placed on education as a state. He thought it was exciting to be engaged in a moment in time when Nevada was considering investing more in education overall.

Mr. Wakefield said one of the most important functions of a state funding system was to distribute funds in a way that aligned with the needs of the students. Accounting for factors such as concentrated student poverty, ELL support, and special education mattered a great deal in the effort to ensure equal educational opportunity.

Unfortunately, Nevada ranked 50<sup>th</sup> in the nation when it came to state funding distribution in account for student poverty. The 2014 School Fairness Report Card found that Nevada had the most regressive funding allocation of any state in terms of state dollars and distribution. This meant that Nevada provided more state dollars, on average, to students above the poverty line than at or below the poverty line ([Exhibit C](#)). Mr. Wakefield said he was not an expert in the technical aspect of funding weights, and he was not well positioned to advocate for a specific weight in formulas for subgroups; however, it did not take an expert to know that Nevada needed a better approach to funding distribution. The current outcomes for students in poverty and ELL students highlighted just how important the focus was for the state.

Mr. Wakefield said Teach for America had 46 unique communities that it was partnered with; therefore, he had to ensure that nothing he said in Nevada would negatively impact his peers in other markets. He said it was logical, non-controversial and morally right to suggest that Nevada's resource allocation should match the critical needs areas of Nevada students. It was time that Nevada's system evolved to do the right thing. Mr. Wakefield said that although this was the first step of many in the funding calculations and conversations, it was important to get the first step right. He asked the Committee to operate with clarity and courage, and to recommend changes in funding distribution to match the immense needs of ELL, at-risk and special education students.

Susie Lee said she served on the Superintendent's Educational Opportunities Advisory Committee, the Prime Six Advisory Committee and the ELL Advisory Committee. She was also the Board Chairman for Communities in Schools of Nevada (CSN). The CSN was a non-profit organization focused on dropout prevention and it served 33,000 students in the State of Nevada. She said 70 percent of the students served by CSN were minorities, and of those students, low socioeconomic status was recognized as one of the top risk factors preventing graduation from high school.

Ms. Lee said poverty had a negative impact on achievement, because students growing up in poverty had less access to appropriate and supportive networks. At-risk students often lived in neighborhoods with lower social capital, had fewer cognitive enrichment activities, and often lacked a caring, dependable adult in their lives. The impact they felt from daily trauma created chronic stress which put them at a cognitive disadvantage and prevented them from achieving academically at the same rate as their non-at-risk peers.

Ms. Lee said the strong middle class population was the core of a vibrant and robust community, and opportunity for growth in all individuals was the basic tenant of the American dream. She said, for a student living in poverty, the "bottleneck" they see in achieving the opportunity for growth was one that often became a cap on their opportunity. A bottleneck was a narrow point in an opportunity structure where future paths became restricted. Ms. Lee said there were three bottlenecks that affected children in poverty: early development years, money and college access. The money bottleneck was most damaging because of the way it predicted developmental and qualification bottlenecks. At-risk students often lacked access to key developmental opportunities such as quality preschool, safe neighborhoods and/or living environment and diverse extracurricular activities. Because of that, money for opportunities mattered

for all children. Ms. Lee said the step to decreasing the money bottleneck was for money to matter less. She said that was accomplished by providing basic needs that children living in poverty lacked, and helping to reduce their chronic stress. The wraparound services provided by such organizations as Communities in Schools Nevada assisted in meeting those needs.

Ms. Lee urged the Committee to consider the highest possible weight for ELL, at-risk, and special education students.

Carrie Sampson, Ph.D. candidate at the School of Environmental and Public Affairs at UNLV, said she had a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics and a Master of Science degree in Cultural Foundations of Education. She had worked at The Lincy Institute for the past four years as a graduate assistant, with research focused on educational policy. In March 2013, she co-authored a report on Nevada's ELL population with Dr. Sonya Douglass Horsford and Dr. Christina Mokhtar and published by The Lincy Institute. Following the report, she co-authored several other papers on ELL policies, funding and practices. Ms. Sampson said she was currently undertaking dissertation work on ELL policies and practices focused in Arizona, Utah and Nevada.

Ms. Sampson said, based on research in The Lincy Report ([Exhibit I](#)), one of the state level policy recommendations was to commission a costing-out study that focused specifically on the needs of Nevada's ELL population. Costing-out studies were used to determine how much it cost to provide an adequate education to ELL students, and states were generally responsible for defining their idea of adequacy. Nevada's goal, in terms of providing an adequate ELL education, should not only be to reclassify ELL students to fluent English proficiency status, but also to ensure that students are proficient in all other academic content. It should also be Nevada's goal to close the achievement gaps between ELL students and their native English-speaking peers, and provide equitable access for both ELL students and native English speakers to become bilingual and bi-literate. Ms. Sampson said the expense was worth the investment because it would result in a higher quality education, and a community that was bilingual and multilingual. That was especially important in a state like Nevada that thrived on tourism and exports knowledge and skills related to gaming and hospitality. Ms. Sampson said that people often said that Nevada had an ELL problem; however, she thought it was important to perceive it as an incredible opportunity instead of a problem.

Ms. Sampson thought the recommended 1.33 weight was insufficient. The 2006 Nevada adequacy study, which was the only costing-out study conducted in Nevada, recommended between \$132 million and \$206 million based on 2003 figures. She thought those figures were likely underestimated given some of the shortcomings of the study. According to Ms. Sampson's calculations ([Exhibit I](#)), a 1.33 weight resulted in approximately \$132 million annually if Title III federal funding was included. She said that was on the low end of the recommendations from the Nevada adequacy study and it did not account for inflation over the past 11 years. Taking into consideration national inflation rates, the recommended figures based on the 2006 study would be between approximately \$170 million and \$265 million for 2014, which would be a weight of between 1.43 and 1.68. However, the 2006 study also



recommended base amounts higher than the Nevada average of \$5,576 for 2013-2014. Ms. Sampson said the recommended 1.33 weight for ELL education was based on Zoom schools' expenditures. Although the investment in the Zoom schools was commendable, there was little information regarding their effectiveness. In addition, it seemed the Zoom schools were still insufficiently resourced to provide the highest quality ELL education, such as proper professional development, bilingual and multilingual teachers, administration and staff, family engagement programs and true bilingual dual-language programs.

Ms. Sampson said another issue was the matter of how to address the varying needs of ELL and at-risk students. Although similar resources were necessary for both populations, costing-out studies revealed that there were differences. The National Assessment of Educational Progress test scores, nationally and in Nevada, indicated that low-income ELL students performed worse than their non-ELL and/or non-low-income peers. For instance, in 2013 there was an 8 percent gap between low-income fourth grade ELL students who scored proficient or above in reading, and non-low-income ELL students who performed at this level. Although more research was needed beyond test scores, based on just those indicators, populations who qualified as both ELL and at risk may need more, and/or different, resources to close achievement and opportunity gaps with their peers. With that in mind, she asked the Committee to consider creating a formula that provided more funding for students who qualified as both ELL and at risk.

Ms. Sampson said between 2000-2010 Nevada's ELL population grew at a rate of 255 percent, making it the third fastest ELL growing state in the nation. However, Nevada's past failures to fund ELL education, and now the possibility of not funding it adequately, had and would continue to have detrimental results. She said Nevada must learn from states like Arizona, which recently ended 21 years of litigation in the *Horne vs. Flores* case. Arizona's failure to provide an adequate ELL education cost the state millions of dollars and, more importantly, it cost ELL students significant opportunities to access an equitable and quality education. If Nevada wanted to offer even the bare minimum in terms of an adequate and equitable education for students, it was highly questionable whether a weight of 1.33 would suffice. However, if Nevada wanted to invest in the future of its children, then the state must ensure that every child received an equal opportunity which would require a weight higher than 1.33.

Ms. Sampson urged the TAC to consider a weight of at least 1.68 to fund ELL education. Moreover, she advocated for a costing-out study that focused on ELL education. She recommended the Committee define adequacy using the third and fourth definitions provided in her written testimony to develop an evidence-based weight (page 1, [Exhibit I](#)). Ms. Sampson thought that with the help of education finance experts, it was feasible to conduct a study in 1-3 months, even if it was just a cost-functional analysis study.

Staci Pratt, Legal Director, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Nevada, said the ACLU believed, fundamentally, that a new day must come for Nevada. When the U.S. Supreme Court decided *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954, it recognized that education was a cornerstone of a fair social structure, and a right that must be made



available to all people on equal terms. The national ACLU provided support in the case, demonstrating the organization's historic and deeply rooted commitment to ensuring that students had meaningful opportunities to pursue open and equitable education. Ms. Pratt provided the following quote from the U.S. Supreme Court: "Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments. In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education."

Ms. Pratt said the ACLU's interest in racial equity and education remained and endured. The ACLU of Nevada had thoroughly examined the current state of educational opportunities in Nevada and found them to be deficient. Ultimately, education was a civil rights issue. The ACLU would explore each avenue to ensure the state provided fair and adequate educational opportunities to all.

Amanda Morgan, Staff Attorney, ACLU Nevada, said she echoed the requests for a costing-out study, because it was truly important. She urged the Committee to ensure that districts, teachers and students had the necessary resources to meet the state's own standards. The state must fund for the cost, and The Nevada Plan in its current state must be abandoned. Nevada's arbitrary funding scheme did not meet the needs of students, it was unconstitutional and it exposed the state to liability. Ms. Morgan hoped the TAC would represent the first steps in making real change for students.

Marco Amaral said he was a former ELL student. When he was 13 he moved away from Las Vegas for many reasons including gang violence and an inadequate educational system. Mr. Amaral said the new school district he attended had ELL funding and he was involved in appropriate classes, all of which helped him improve. Eventually he qualified for advanced-placement courses and attended college at the University of California-Berkley. Mr. Amaral said he promised himself he would come back to Las Vegas someday, and upon his return he noticed that there had not been many changes in the middle schools and high schools. He said there were children in the same situation he was in years ago and they felt undervalued, under-resourced and unsafe, especially in the Latino and black communities.

Mr. Amaral said CCSD did not have a good history of supporting minority students. He said statistics showed that CCSD and the State of Nevada did not support a diverse education. He encouraged the Committee to increase the weight thereby improving the state's educational system.

David Carrillo said he had heard about the lack of resources in the CCSD. His daughter was often angry when she came home from school and he thought it was due to the teacher or because there were too many students in the classroom. Mr. Carrillo was concerned about the upcoming school year and whether the teacher would be adequate. He wanted the Committee to invest in education, because children were the future of the country.

Luz Nevarez said she was the mother of three children. She had a child in fifth grade, college and a college graduate. Ms. Nevarez said she had always been involved in the education of her children. Even though she did not receive a formal education, she

worked as a volunteer at school and helped her children keep track of homework. Ms. Nevarez said without the necessary funds the schools did not have the support they needed to help students succeed.

Ms. Nevarez said her child was reading at grade-level during pre-K. However, he had reached a point where he was no longer learning. She said teachers should be better prepared to meet the needs of students. Ms. Nevarez thought it was also important to have school staff who treated parents with respect, indicating that she had received disrespectful treatment in the past.

Ms. Nevarez said students needed a strong foundation beginning in pre-K to make it into college. Lack of a proper education was causing students not to graduate. She said people come to America looking for opportunities. Children needed support so they could have a future full of opportunities as well. Ms. Nevarez said students required encouragement, academic support and moral values from parents and teachers to be successful.

Ms. Nevarez noted that she did not agree with the removal of the Criterion Referenced Test.

Maria Torres said she was the mother of three children and also head of her household. She said that her fifth-grade child was accepted to a magnet school with dual-language education.

Ms. Torres requested that the Committee provide the necessary funds to support the education of Nevada's children.

Ms. Torres thanked Hergit Llenas for providing interpretation assistance for her at today's TAC meeting. She also thanked Ms. Llenas for the work she performed through the Public Education Foundation (PEF).

Ms. Llenas explained that although she was not representing PEF at today's meeting, she was the Director of the PEF's Family Literacy Program. The purpose of the program was to help parents learn English and vocabulary words similar to what their children were learning in the classroom.

Judith Ruiz said she was a graduate of The Parent Leadership Institute and was currently attending the Family Literacy program at Paul Culley Elementary School. She was actively involved in the education of her three children and wanted them to succeed.

Ms. Ruiz stated that the Committee had the capacity to decide how to allocate the necessary weight so the budget would represent the needs of the students and teachers. She said it would be a civic investment for everyone. Ms. Ruiz said she saw many ELL students fall behind, and sometimes they would not ask questions for fear of interrupting the class. She said the needs of students were not being met; therefore students were not making the necessary academic gains to read at proficiency level. Ms. Ruiz thought the teachers should be better prepared to meet the needs of students.

She said the decision to invest in the education of Nevada's students and decrease the dropout rate was in the hands of the Committee.

Ruben Murillo, President, Nevada State Education Association (NSEA), said he represented approximately 23,000 members. He thanked the TAC for considering a weighted formula as opposed to redistributing and stripping The Nevada Plan. The current formula was antiquated and did not reflect the current needs of Nevada students or educators. Mr. Murillo said, as a special education teacher he knew that one size did not fit all when educating students or funding Nevada's education system. Nevada's funding system should be as diverse as its student population. He recommended that the Committee create a system that would offer school districts enough funding to provide the appropriate services for every student to graduate including ELL, at-risk and special education students.

Mr. Murillo suggested that the Committee consider what services were necessary and the actual cost of those services when deliberating specific weights. He said decisions should be made based on the cost to see a student through to graduation. It was important to define specific exit strategies to avoid perverse incentives for over identification. However, it was also important to have an exit metric strategy to ensure that students did not become "lifers." Mr. Murillo said the NSEA recognized that some students may not exit the ELL program due to individual educational circumstances.

Mr. Murillo said the NSEA believed the weighted addition should be included inside the formula. However, the money currently distributed to school districts should not be redistributed. He thought by placing funds outside the formula, the additional money would be susceptible to the "winds of political change" or economic downfall. Funds outside the formula were the first to get cut. Mr. Murillo said the weight should be part of the student calculation and those calculations should be done inside the formula and used as the standard to build the new Nevada Plan year after year.

Mr. Murillo said the NSEA expected and demanded that all students receive a comprehensive education that included math, science, history, language arts and the arts. One subject should not be sacrificed for another. Students should be literate in all disciplines.

With regard to TESL, Mr. Murillo said an endorsement was a good step; however, it may not guarantee a change in practice. There needed to be a connection between a teacher's evaluation and feedback from a peer or an administrator, such as the complete support and implementation that the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) guaranteed in those changes in practices.

Mr. Murillo said it was important not to abandoned bilingual programs. He said other states with large ELL or second language populations also had thriving bilingual programs which helped to supplement education.

#### **IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MARCH 31, 2014, MEETING.**

DR. WALT RULFFES MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 31, 2014, MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE ON K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDING TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

JIM MCINTOSH SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

#### **V. WORK SESSION – DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE TASK FORCE ON K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDING CONCERNING POSSIBLE MODIFICATIONS TO NEVADA’S K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING MODEL AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUCH MODIFICATIONS FOR:**

- a. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS.**
- b. STUDENTS AT RISK OF LOW ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.**
- c. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.**

Julie Waller, Senior Program Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division, said the TAC had been tasked with examining and discussing key components pertaining to the development of a plan for revising and implementing the Nevada K-12 funding formula. At the May 8, 2014, TAC meeting there was discussion and approval of several policy matters that recommended modifications to the funding formula for ELL, at-risk and special education students.

Ms. Waller said at the May 8, 2014, TAC meeting, the Committee took the following action:

English Language Learners:

- a) Use the current data collected by school districts and the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) on the number of ELL students within a particular district. The data was collected and reported annually as part of the Title III requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind act.
- b) Not provide additional ELL funding based on density of ELL students within a district.
- c) Provide weighted funding for ELL students for up to six years, or until the student was reclassified as non-ELL. After the sixth year, or in the year the student was reclassified as non-ELL, if the reclassification occurred before the end of year six, two additional years of reduced maintenance funding would be provided. The amount of the weight or maintenance funding was to be considered at today’s meeting.
- d) Use a single weight value with the value of the weight to be considered at today’s meeting.

At-Risk:

- e) Use FRPL data to identify students, or when data was not available, an alternative measure approved by the NDE may be used.
- f) Use a single weight value with the value of the weight to be considered at today's meeting.
- g) Initially provide weighted funding as a categorical grant program outside the state funding formula, with a transition to inside the formula at a date to be determined in the future.
- h) Apply the highest single weight to a student who qualified as both ELL and at risk based on an unduplicated count of students.

Wayne Thorley, Program Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division, said there were several major K-12 funding formula issues to be discussed (page 2, [Exhibit J](#)). The first item of discussion was Weights to be Used to Determine Funding for ELL and At-risk Students. As mentioned, the TAC agreed to recommend a single ELL weight, distinct from the at-risk weight, to the full Task Force. He said the Committee asked Fiscal staff to gather information from the school districts and other sources to provide the Committee with a basis in which to recommend a specific weight to the full Task Force.

Mr. Thorley said there was information about the weights used in other states and a summary of the 2012 AIR report in the Work Session document (page 3, [Exhibit J](#)). He recalled that the AIR report did not recommend a specific ELL weight; however, it did provide a summary of a 50-state survey, stating there was a reasonable range of weights based on other states that Nevada could consider (Attachment 1, [Exhibit J](#)). Mr. Thorley said the weights ranged from 10 percent in Texas to 99 percent in Maryland, with an average weight of 37 percent. The average weight for the top five states was 63 percent, the average for the middle five states was 38 percent, and the average for the bottom five states was 16 percent (Attachment 3, [Exhibit J](#)).

Mr. Thorley said Fiscal staff also reviewed a costing study that was performed for Arizona by the National Conference of State Legislatures in 2005. The study used three methodologies to determine the incremental costs associated with raising ELL students in Arizona up to Arizona's educational standards (page 3, [Exhibit J](#)).

Mr. Thorley said the first methodology was a survey of the school districts. The survey found that the incremental costs of raising an ELL student in Arizona up to the state's standards was \$670 per student. The second methodology was a professional judgment panel of Arizona ELL education experts. The panel concluded that the average incremental spending increase was \$1,500 per ELL student. The third methodology involved a similar professional judgment panel, but it consisted of national education experts. The range recommended by that panel fluctuated from \$1,026 for high school ELL students with lower needs to \$2,571 for elementary school ELL students with higher needs. Mr. Thorley said staff reviewed per-pupil expenditures in Arizona for FY 2005 and then used the cost estimates provided by the Arizona study to determine estimated weights (page 4, [Exhibit J](#)). The weights ranged from 11 percent from a district survey to 42 percent from the National Panel High-Need Elementary Students.

Mr. Thorley said Fiscal staff gathered information about recent ELL expenditures from the school districts in Nevada. Upon examination, it was determined that there was a wide variation among Nevada school districts as to how much was currently spent on ELL students ([Exhibit L](#)). The difference depended on the services that each district provided. He said each district provided different services, because there was not a statewide standard. The expenditures for FY 2013 ranged from \$278 in Clark County to \$14,802 in Lincoln County.

Mr. Thorley said another basis to approximate an ELL weight was to look at the Zoom school model. As mentioned earlier, the Zoom schools created by S.B. 504 were required to provide four specific services for ELL students. Those services included pre-K programs, expansion of full day kindergarten, reading skill centers and summer/intersession academies. Fiscal staff requested information from Clark County School District (CCSD) and Washoe County School District (WCSD) on their Zoom school expenditures (page 5, [Exhibit J](#)). As requested by the Committee, the listed expenditures excluded funding received for full-day kindergarten and class-size reduction. He said based on the expenditures currently at the Zoom schools, the estimated ELL weight would be between 20-24 percent. Mr. Thorley noted that the estimated ELL weights were based only on a fund appropriated for the targeted services at the schools participating in the Zoom school program. As a result, any costs related to professional development or other ELL services outside of the Zoom school model were not captured in the estimate. Additionally, the Zoom school model targeted pre-K and elementary grades only, with no targeted state funding for middle or high school ELL students.

Mr. Thorley said the TAC should consider what weight value, if any, to recommend to the Task Force for students identified as ELL.

Mike Schroeder, Washoe County School District Budget Director, thanked Fiscal staff for gathering thorough information that was helpful for the discussion. He said there was much public testimony about weights and what might be an appropriate number; however, he did not think there was enough evidence specific to Nevada to determine a weight. Mr. Schroeder was unsure about using an average of other states, and thought it would be helpful to hear from individuals familiar with program particulars and what it took to develop an adequate education. He thought it was important to determine what Nevada wanted its students to achieve and how to reach that goal before establishing a weight. Mr. Schroeder thought a weight should be determined that was specific to Nevada, not based on the weights in other states.

Jim McIntosh, Clark County School District Chief Financial Officer, said Mr. Schroeder reinforced some of his thoughts on adequacy. Adequacy was difficult to calculate without having program and curriculum staff involved. Mr. McIntosh said CCSD worked with its staff to thoroughly examine the cost of educating an ELL student by level based on each of the programs ([Exhibit K](#)). A per-pupil range was determined based on the students currently in the ELL program and their current level. Using the CCSD basic support as the foundation, Mr. McIntosh said a range from 1.46 to 1.86 was determined. Therefore, he agreed with Mr. Schroeder that it might be worth conducting an adequacy or costing study as recommended in public testimony. Mr. McIntosh said many weights

were suggested from the AIR study and other states; however, he was not sure it was fair or adequate to use a weight from another state, or even the top five weights from the AIR study. Mr. McIntosh thought it was important to find out exactly what was required to educate ELL students in Nevada.

Mr. McIntosh said there had been discussion about not recommending an exact weight, but perhaps the TAC could recommend a minimum weight.

Dr. Jay Chambers, American Institutes for Research, agreed with Mr. McIntosh regarding utilizing weights from other states. He said every circumstance, district and state had its own set of services, and weights would vary depending on where the study took place. Dr. Chambers said it was important to establish a suggested starting point, and then follow up with further studies around the area of adequacy in education. Dr. Chambers said Nevada should think about weights very carefully. The weights for ELL and at-risk students should be much more substantial than the ones outlined in the Work Session document ([Exhibit J](#)). He said the suggested weights might be reasonable, but it was difficult to say because Nevada's goal was to provide additional resources to meet outcome standards for students.

Dr. Chambers said it was not a matter of just adding funding to support educational services for high-needs students. The idea was also to provide funding to support wraparound services that made those educational services more valuable. Nevada should consider weights that would have a real impact on student performance. He said students came to school hungry, without health services and without necessary family support. Class sizes and resources were helpful, but it was critical to find ways of integrating wraparound services with educational services to make them that much more valuable. He said at-risk and ELL populations had overlapping needs, therefore, the difference in weights between the two populations was not that important.

Dr. Chambers encouraged the TAC to keep the funding simple and inside the formula. He discouraged using the categorical method, inferring that it would be difficult to change methods in the future. He recommended providing additional weights to support ELL and at-risk students in practical ways, beginning with a reasonable number as a starting point. Dr. Chambers said Nevada should continue to conduct studies on an ongoing basis to get a better handle on costs and then examine the relationship between spending and outcomes. He thought districts and schools should have flexibility, but should also be required to develop accountability and services plans, which many were probably doing already.

Dr. Chambers said many of the studies that had been conducted were focused on educational services. Educational resources and personnel were often the main focus of studies, while wraparound services that made educational services more effective were often passed over.

Dr. Chambers thought a weight of 1.3 or 1.4 would be ineffective, therefore, he recommended a higher weight. He also suggested finding opportunities to combine educational and wraparound services.

Dr. Walt Rulffes, Former Superintendent, Clark County School District, asked if the weight would apply to total funding. He recalled that Mr. Alastuey suggested that the weight be applied to total funding, which would be state and local funding combined.

Dr. Rulffes also asked how much a weight range of 1.5 and 1.9 would generate on a state per pupil basis.

Mr. McIntosh agreed that a standard should be determined for which amount of funding would be used as a weight. He said many of the models provided for CCSD were based on CCSD's basic support per pupil, but he was not sure if that was appropriate in this case. He agreed with Mr. Alastuey's recommendation of incorporating local revenues which currently sat outside the formula. Mr. McIntosh said there were some school districts that did not receive much, if any, Distributive School Account (DSA) funds and it would seem sensible to include local revenues in the figure when calculating the basic support per pupil for weighting purposes.

Mike Alastuey, Education Finance Consultant, noted there was not much cost history in Nevada. He said, using the total of \$226 million for pre-K through secondary schools, with a deduction for pre-K, the remaining amount was \$200 million divided by 56,000 students. This resulted in a factor of about 1.46 without many wraparound services. Mr. Alastuey said if \$7,700 of state and local money was included it would produce a coefficient of 1.46. He agreed that clarification was necessary regarding which funds would be included in the weighting process. The more comprehensive, the higher the weights. Mr. Alastuey said it was important to avoid a minimum weight that was too low.

Mr. McIntosh agreed that the outside local revenues should be included to see a uniform support amount. He agreed that the minimum weight should not be too low and agreed with Mr. Alastuey's recommendation.

Paul Johnson, White Pine County School District Chief Financial Officer, said it would be optimal to conduct a funding study to determine the cost of education before establishing a weight; however, he did not think there was enough time. He said the Committee would have to use a starting point of 1.4 or 1.6.

Mr. Johnson asked if the weight would be multiplied by the state average per pupil amount or by the school districts' per pupil amount.

Mr. Alastuey replied that had not been determined. He said the state arrived at a single statewide average basic support per pupil amount, and then there were factors other than the student weighting such as geographical dispersion, transportation, assumptions regarding salary structure, etc. Those factors should remain in place to arrive at a basic support ratio, and from there he thought the weights for different student populations might be superimposed. He recalled that Mr. Zander indicated that ELL instruction was more expensive in some areas than others; therefore, a combination of the existing geographical dispersion and other cost factors would need to underlie the student population weights.



Mr. Zander agreed that a cost analysis should occur; however, he understood there were time constraints. He recently had discussions with the rural school districts about obtaining ELL costs. In doing so, he ascertained there was not a lack of complexity with the rural districts' accounting systems, but more than likely it had never been a priority to accurately track ELL costs. For example, Elko tracked professional development costs, but only for certain trainers.

Mr. Zander agreed that all allocated education funds should be used for weighting, not just the basic support amount. Also, he thought the TAC agreed that the weighted allocation would be multiplied by the actual per-pupil per-district allocation. The idea would be to use the per pupil allocations that were already adjusted for geographical dispersion and/or basic support ratio to provide additional funding for some of the smaller and/or rural districts that had a higher cost of delivery instruction.

Ms. Waller said the 2012 AIR report noted that weights used by states targeting funding for at-risk students varied widely, from 5 percent in Mississippi to 97 percent in Maryland (page 5, [Exhibit J](#)). The 50-state inventory conducted by AIR showed the average at-risk weight was 29 percent, with most states providing approximately 20-25 percent per student beyond the base funding. In addition, AIR had conducted an analysis and identified 10 states with the most progressive funding/poverty of relationships. South Dakota was among those states and was also identified as one of the states whose instance of student poverty crossed varying sizes of districts, similar to Nevada. Among the 10 states identified as having the most progressive funding, Ms. Waller said the highest weight was 1.34 in Minnesota and the lowest was 1.13 in Connecticut (page 6, [Exhibit J](#)). She said the top three highest weights averaged 1.3, the four middle weights averaged 1.21, and the three lowest weights averaged 1.15.

While gathering additional information for the TAC, Ms. Waller said staff tried to determine an approximate weight for Title I funding of \$220 per student. Using a statewide average basic support, staff arrived at a weight of 4 percent, which was significantly lower than weights reviewed by other states. Ms. Waller stated that the value of the weight was correlated to the amount of base funding and should be considered when comparing ELL and at-risk weights in other states.

Ms. Waller said that Mr. Griffith, Education Commission of the States, indicated the cost of educating an ELL or at-risk student in any particular state would vary based on that state's definition of those student populations, their state standards, and the base funding amount per student. She said a higher base funding equated to a lower weight. Ms. Waller added that regional cost differences and density populations were other factors that affected the cost of educating ELL or at-risk students in a particular state.

Ms. Waller said the issue to be discussed was what weight value the TAC wanted to recommend for students at risk of low academic achievement.

Mr. Alastuey noted the various services utilized in CCSD, such as tutoring, intervention, wraparound services, etc., resulted in an approximate amount of \$1,400 per K-5 student. Using the figure of \$1,400, he divided it into \$7,700 per student available

in Clark County for all students including state basic support and state-mandated local tax rates. The result was a weight of approximately 1.2, which fell into the middle range of the 10 states identified by AIR (page 6, [Exhibit J](#)). He thought that could be a guidepost for recommending a minimal rate and minimal weight, or range of weights. Although there was limited cost history in Nevada, he thought it was a valid starting point.

Ms. Waller asked if the Committee wanted to consider using all funding sources, including federal funding.

Mr. Alastuey asked Dr. Levin and Dr. Chambers if other states typically included federal funding in their weights.

Dr. Chambers replied that generally states had to be careful for the reason of supplementing versus supplanting. When AIR performed an adequacy study in New Mexico, they encouraged the state to include federal funds. New Mexico was reluctant and nervous about the impact that might have in terms of how the federal government would respond. In most cases, states tried to keep federal funds separate from state and local funds.

Dr. Chambers said the implicit poverty weights in table 3.4 were not funding weights (page 6, [Exhibit J](#)), they were weights analyzed based on actual spending. AIR compared spending across schools or districts in relationship to FRPL or poverty. He said a weight such as 1.3 was the bottom line of how expenditures varied with poverty, but not what the funding weight should have been. Dr. Chambers said a spending study was just that, it did not reveal the outcomes achieved in the analysis.

Dr. Levin said the implicit weights were based on outgoing revenues, not expenditures. AIR provided explicit weights, that is, what the state systems explicitly fund for different subpopulations such as at-risk pupils. The implicit poverty weight analysis was a statistical analysis run for each state, and it tried to take into account the fact that ELL students also had a tendency to be impoverished. The goal was to disentangle the relative weights simultaneously using statistical analysis. Dr. Levin reiterated that the implicit weight was the bottom line after all the various policies interacted with one another. He said it was the purest weight specific to poverty. AIR was unable to incorporate all of the needs, so ELL was eliminated from that particular analysis because it was too difficult to incorporate both at risk and ELL; however, scale and density were included. Dr. Levin said the implicit poverty weight was isolated from other cost factors such as scale, density and a control for the relative price of hiring and retaining staff. Overall, he thought the implicit poverty rates were important to take note of, because they took into account how the explicit funding weights interacted and the final outcome.

Dr. Levin said the implicit weights did not take into account or control for outcomes. However, he thought one of the best poverty weights available that included control for outcome came from AIR's New Mexico study. That particular adequacy study determined a weight similar to the weight of 1.34 in Minnesota. That is, an estimated weight was provided for New Mexico that would help achieve its specific educational

goals, provide appropriate and sufficient educational opportunity for all students, and it included a weight of 1.34 for impoverished students.

Dr. Levin said it was important to eventually conduct a study to determine the true weights to achieve Nevada's specific goals. The study should allow for the unique nature of Nevada's goals and needs. He said a study was more appropriate than picking and choosing weights from other states, even if the study could not take place immediately. Dr. Levin said all states had their own specific standards, goals and unique cost schedules. He thought it was reasonable to establish entry-level weights until a study could be conducted.

Dr. Chambers said the New Mexico study did not take into account professional development that might be required to serve ELL or at-risk students. Also, the study did not include possible wraparound services. He noted that, in many ways, the New Mexico weight did not capture all of the additional costs associated with serving at-risk or ELL students.

Mr. Schroeder thought CCSD provided a good starting point until the state defined adequacy and what should be achieved through the weights.

Mr. Schroeder said full-day kindergarten and class-size reduction seemed to be good methods to help at-risk and ELL students attain better achievement results. He also thought full-day kindergarten and class-size reduction should be considered as part of the data when determining a weight.

Mr. Johnson said if a study was conducted at the present time it would be based on available funds as opposed to what the state should ideally spend. He suggested the Committee recommend a funding study in each category to align the weights with adequacy. Generic factors, such as 1.5 for ELL and 1.3 for at risk, could be inserted into the existing basic support funding formula to determine the impact on the existing funding within the state. Mr. Johnson said it would reveal changes in funding based on those particular weights and provide a talking point about the amount of funding.

Dr. Levin said he developed a funding adjustment simulator (FAS) when AIR performed their 2012 Nevada study. He said the FAS was capable of performing simulations district by district. Various values could be adjusted for at risk, ELL, scale density and price level. It was also feasible to adjust things such as differential staffing costs across states. Dr. Levin offered to run some simulations, or to demonstrate how to use the FAS.

Mr. Alastuey said wage differentials had not been discussed yet; however, he thought simulations could be completed by holding price, scale and other non-student related items constant, and then running ELL and at-risk weights separately.

Dr. Rulfes said he preferred to provide a more concrete recommendation to the Task Force and not just a suggestion to perform another study. He thought the TAC should recommend using all funding as the basis for the weight, suggest an entry-level

weight for ELL and at risk, and decide if there should be a single weight or separate weights.

Chair Woodhouse agreed with Dr. Rulffes' recommendation. She thought it was a good idea to set a floor weight and then adjust the weight as necessary. Cost studies were important, but Chair Woodhouse agreed that the TAC should provide concrete recommendations.

Mr. McIntosh offered to make a motion and asked the Committee for input regarding a floor weight. He agreed with the idea of a cost study, but he did not think there was enough time. He thought a cost study would be helpful in the future to determine a more appropriate weight.

Dr. Chambers clarified that he was not suggesting the Committee delay a decision until a study could be conducted. He recommended that the Committee move forward with recommendations for the Legislature. Dr. Chambers thought there was enough information to begin the process of setting a weight and then studies could be conducted along the way as part of the deliberation process.

Mr. Alastuey suggested the motion include state and local funding, but not federal funding, follow-up with a study, and a minimum entry-level weight of 1.5 for ELL and 1.25 for at-risk students.

Chair Woodhouse reminded the Committee that motion was made by Mr. McIntosh and seconded by Mr. Alastuey.

Dr. Rulffes suggested expanding the motion to include a provision for two-year maintenance funding for ELL students.

Dr. Chambers recommended using a weight of 1.5 for both ELL and at-risk populations, because there was not enough evidence to suggest they should differ.

Mr. Schroeder asked Dr. Chambers to explain his rationale for a single weight rather than differential weights. He said it appeared that most states used a lower weight for the at-risk classification.

Dr. Chambers replied that in all of the adequacy studies performed by AIR it was indicated there were many overlapping services between ELL and at-risk students. He did not think there was enough information to differentiate the nature of the kinds of services that would be offered to those two groups of students. Often there were different types of resources provided, such as bilingual teachers or teachers who had capabilities in the student's language, which required additional professional development, but in terms of the actual services being provided, there was not a difference in those services. He noted that educators and professional judgment panels who defined the programs and services for different categories of students said ELL students did not require more resources than at-risk students and vice versa, they just needed different resources.

Dr. Chambers added that assigning identical weights for ELL and at-risk students helped to avoid a “we/they situation” that could not be defended.

Mr. McIntosh said CCSD developed a lot of their information in conjunction with the CCSD instruction and program departments, which allowed them to strategize some of the programs. He agreed with Dr. Chambers and suggested using a weight of 1.5 for both programs until a study determined otherwise.

Dr. Rulffes agreed, adding that it was practical and had good application for the current situation. Recalling public comment regarding the achievement gap for African-American students, he said the 1.5 weight for at-risk students would probably enable a substantial amount of funding toward African-American academic issues.

Mr. Schroeder said, based on the way Mr. Alastuey summarized the CCSD information, it appeared the at-risk weight was lower than the ELL rate ([Exhibit L](#)). He thought the at-risk weight should be set lower until studies provided evidence to support a higher weight.

Mr. Thorley asked if the current motion for the weight included categorical funding. For example, in FY 2013 the state appropriated approximately \$211 million through various categorical programs. He asked if the weight would be applied to that amount too, as part of district funding.

Mr. Alastuey recalled that California essentially folded many categorical programs into the weighted funding. He said one outcome would be that the categorical funding could be expressed in the weight initially and then converted to a weight at some point. He recalled discussion at a prior TAC meeting about the option of keeping the funding separate and categorical initially, until it grew sufficient to scale and purpose. Mr. Alastuey expected there would be some conversion of the existing categories into something similar to a weight.

Mr. Thorley said specific dollar amounts for each district would be necessary in the event that staff was asked to run scenarios using the suggested weights. Staff was aware of the statewide average and basic support guarantee; however, local revenue varied by district. Mr. Thorley said staff could also include state categorical funding in the per pupil amount.

Mr. Johnson agreed that the ELL and at-risk weights should be equal until there were figures to justify a difference. Also, whether to use categorical or non-categorical would depend on how the state chose to fund the weight. Ultimately, the lump sum would still be the same in the end. He said there was a basic support amount and a per-pupil amount, so it would either be one large all-purpose fund for education, or a basic support amount for the General Fund and a separate amount for ELL and at-risk funding. Based on that, he did not think it would be difficult to convert from categorical to inside the funding formula.

Dr. Chambers said there was a significant difference between categorical and weighted funding. Categorical focused more on fiscal compliance rather than performance outcome. Also, categorical had less flexibility concerning how the funds were allocated. Dr. Chambers said it was important that Nevada school districts had the flexibility to make decisions concerning fund allocation, but with constraints on accountability indicating specific plans for addressing students' needs. He thought the weighted approach promoted the potential for flexibility more than the categorical approach. From a fiscal standpoint, categorical and weighted approaches appeared similar; however, the categorical approach had a tendency to pit one group against another more clearly than the weighted approach. Dr. Chambers agreed with the suggested weight of 1.5 for both ELL and at-risk students, with the potential for future studies to resolve possible differences.

Mr. Alastuey said his recommendations were suggested as minimum weights given the evidence that there was a likelihood that cost studies would support higher coefficients. He was aiming at the lower end of the scale to allow room for necessary increases. However, if a cost study provided evidence in favor of a lower coefficient it would be more complicated to reduce the weight. Based on that information, Mr. Alastuey wanted to adhere to his original suggestion of a 1.5 weight for ELL and 1.25 weight for at-risk pupils.

Dr. Chambers said he did not understand the rationale of differing weights, given the studies that had been conducted; however, he recommended selecting a weight in between 1.25 and 1.5 as a compromise.

Dr. Rulffes noted that Mr. Alastuey recommended a minimum weight, not a lower weight. He thought Mr. Alastuey was leaving open the latitude for the weight to be higher; however, based on available cost studies, an at-risk weight of 1.25 could be defended. Dr. Rulffes was not sure a weight of 1.5 could be defended without relying on "what if" scenarios. He said he would support a change in the motion to include a minimum weight of 1.25.

Mr. Zander thought the weights being discussed were hypothetical, because the impact was unknown until formulas could be run. He understood Mr. Alastuey's argument in regard to setting a base. Mr. Zander also understood Dr. Chambers' reasoning for one weight. Because it was unknown which students would be eligible for both weights, he thought it seemed logical to begin with one weight.

Mr. Zander thought categorical funding should be included in the pool of funding used to determine the weights. He felt strongly that categorical funding should be used for allocation, but the funding itself should remain categorical to put the ELL and at-risk programs in place, especially in the rural districts. He said a weighted formula would leave rural districts susceptible to collective bargaining issues, so the money needed to be restricted.

Chair Woodhouse reminded the Committee that the current motion was for a weight of no less than 1.5 for the ELL and at-risk populations, and it included local and state funding, but not federal.

Mr. McIntosh agreed with Mr. Zander's suggestion to include categorical funding in the calculation as well.

Mr. Johnson thought the Committee had already decided to use categorical initially and then move the funding inside the formula at an appropriate time. He thought the discussion at today's meeting was about weight and revenues.

Mr. Thorley confirmed that the motion at the May 8, 2014, TAC meeting was to provide the funding as a categorical grant. He clarified that his original question about categorical funding was related solely to which dollar amount the weight would be applied to. The current motion before the Committee included all state and local revenue, but not federal revenue. Mr. Thorley asked if the state revenue included categorical funding, or only funding the state provided through *The Nevada Plan*.

Ms. Waller said, from a revenue perspective, it sounded like the recommendation was to include categorical funding and state and local funding as the base. She said that categorical funding was supposed to be the weight as a percentage of the base cost for a general education student. Some categorical funds were targeted for specific programs, so she was hesitant about adding categorical to the base funding to determine the weight.

Mr. Alastuey thought the categorical funding items within the DSA that could be included were at-risk kindergarten and early childhood education, because they tied into the needs the Committee had been discussing. He thought staff might be aware of other items that should be included.

Mr. Schroeder concurred with Mr. Alastuey. He thought it might be best to state that the funds included would be those within the DSA per pupil calculation, which would cover all state and local funding.

JIM MCINTOSH MOVED TO APPLY A WEIGHT OF NOT LESS THAN 1.5 FOR ELL STUDENTS AND 1.5 FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS UNTIL SUCH TIME AS A COST STUDY MAY BE CONDUCTED. FOR PURPOSES OF CALCULATING THE BASE AMOUNT UPON WHICH THE ELL WEIGHT OR AT-RISK WEIGHT WOULD BE APPLIED, INCLUDE ALL STATE AND LOCAL FUNDING WITHIN THE FUNDING FORMULA PER-PUPIL CALCULATION, BUT EXCLUDE ALL FEDERAL AND CATEGORICAL FUNDING FROM THE CALCULATION.

DR. WALT RULFFES SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (Ms. Day, Mr. Alastuey and Mr. Schroeder opposed the motion)

Mr. Thorley reminded the Committee that one of the ELL program goals was to help students achieve English literacy level so they could be removed from ELL designation.

At the May 8, 2014, TAC meeting, the Committee approved weighted funding for ELL students for up to six years or until the student was reclassified as non-ELL. After the sixth year, or upon reclassification, there would be two additional years of reduced maintenance funding (page 6, [Exhibit J](#)). Mr. Thorley said the amount of the maintenance funding was not determined at the May 8, 2014, meeting. He recalled that one member suggested 50 percent of the full weight; however, the amount was still up for consideration by the Committee.

Mr. Schroeder suggested striking the ELL time limit recommendation and reexamining it at a later date based on public testimony.

Chair Woodhouse replied that she would like to move the topic to the June 5, 2014, TAC agenda. She was hesitant to strike the recommendation immediately because of related decisions made by the Committee.

Mr. Johnson recalled testimony at the May 8, 2014, TAC meeting that indicated that the longer a student remained in the ELL program, the more difficult it was for them to exit the program. He thought the Committee might want to reconsider a term on ELL funding as a means to incentivize a school district to exit those students from the program. Mr. Johnson did not think a school district would intentionally try to enroll a student in an ELL program to prolong funding, and the fact that it may actually require more resources to lengthen a student's time in the program, made him think that perhaps the model of terminating funding at a certain time may be flawed.

Dr. Chambers said if the ELL and at-risk weights were equal then an ELL student could change classifications upon exiting the ELL program, if they also qualified for the at-risk classification. An unduplicated count would mean there would not be a decrease in the weight applied to that particular student. Because many ELL students were also eligible for the at-risk classification, Dr. Chambers asked if reduced maintenance funding would truly make a difference.

Mr. McIntosh agreed with Dr. Chambers, adding that CCSD found that over 90 percent of ELL students were also at risk. He said if a student were no longer eligible for ELL status, they would still be eligible for the at-risk classification and the weights would still apply. Mr. McIntosh said school districts were responsible for providing an adequate ELL program with a goal of reclassifying students to non-ELL status. If school districts were unable to reclassify students within the timeframe, perhaps their program needed to be reevaluated. Discontinuation of funding was detrimental to the student; therefore, Mr. McIntosh agreed the Committee should reexamine ELL funding duration.

Ms. Waller said, at the May 8, 2014, TAC meeting, the Committee recommended to implement the weights initially as a categorical grant program with a phase-in to inside the funding formula at an unspecified future date. She said, overall, there were comments supporting initial ELL and at-risk funding as categorical followed by a phase-in to inside the funding formula. Committee members also discussed the need to be able to measure performance and track results. Ms. Waller said staff wanted to clarify certain aspects of the motion. She said the following options were for consideration by the Committee in recommending a phase-in period to shift from



providing funding for ELL and at-risk students outside the state funding formula to inside the state's K-12 funding formula:

- a. Recommend that the NDE develop performance benchmarks in reporting of requirements tied to ELL and at-risk funding; develop a plan to phase-in funding to inside the state's funding formula at a unspecified future date.
- b. Do not make a recommendation to the Task Force of a timeframe to phase-in funding inside the state's funding formula, but rather allow the Legislature to determine when to phase-in funding inside the state's funding formula.

With regard to option a, Mr. Alastuey said a recommendation from an Executive Branch agency such as the NDE might not carry as much weight with the Legislature. He thought it might be best to provide a recommendation to the Legislature for a specific timetable, or recommend that the Legislature determine the timetable.

Mr. McIntosh agreed with Mr. Alastuey, adding that he was amenable to the idea of the Legislature determining a timeframe for phase-in to the formula.

Mr. Schroeder was unsure if the Legislature would determine performance benchmarks, which he felt were an important component. Additionally, he thought the school districts should have input on performance benchmarks. Mr. Schroeder indicated that unknown issues could arise that might impact the phase-in plan; therefore, he thought it was preferable to have the NDE, with input from the school districts, establish a timeframe for the phase-in plan.

Mr. Alastuey suggested recommending a combination of options a and b.

MIKE ALASTUEY MOVED THAT THE NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DEVELOP PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS TIED TO THE ELL AND AT-RISK FUNDING AND DEVELOP A PLAN TO TRANSITION THE FUNDING TO INSIDE THE STATE'S FUNDING FORMULA. THE PHASE-IN PLAN DEVELOPED BY THE NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO BE APPROVED BY THE NEVADA LEGISLATURE PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION.

JIM MCINTOSH SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (Mr. Schroeder opposed the motion)

Ms. Waller said AIR noted in its September 2012 report that changes in the way funds were distributed, even if applied in a way that was fiscally neutral for the state, had significant implications for existing programs and students in individual school districts. As such, AIR recommended a phase-in period of three to five years. She said that AIR suggested holding districts harmless that incurred losses under the new funding mechanism, and only provide increases to districts that gained under the new formula. In this way, those additional investments in education would be concentrated in districts that were currently underfunded under the new funding mechanism. Ms. Waller said one option for implementation of additional ELL funding and new at-risk funding would

be to recommend that only new funding approved by the Legislature and Governor be considered for distribution under the state's modified K-12 finance model. In this way, districts or charter schools would not face decreases in their basic support per pupil in order to shift funding to a categorical program to provide assistance to ELL and at-risk students.

Ms. Waller said another option to consider was a phased-in approach to ELL and at-risk funding. A 2006 study by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute entitled *Fund the Child* noted that one approach to implementing changes to a funding formula was to phase-in the fiscal reduction or increases any school district would face. For example, Hawaii had developed a phase-in program over four years with a 10 percent maximum reduction or gain in year one, 25 percent in year two, 50 percent in year three and complete implementation in year four (page 8, [Exhibit J](#)). Ms. Waller reminded the Committee that in 2006 there was a DSA evaluation team comprised of financial personnel from the school districts and representatives of the Nevada Association of School Boards and Nevada Association of School Superintendents (page 9, [Exhibit J](#)). The evaluation team reviewed and recommended updates to the DSA equity allocation model and those changes were implemented into a four-year phase-in period. She said beginning in the 2008 school year each school district's DSA amount increased or decreased by 10 percent in year one, 30 percent in year two, 60 percent in year three and 100 percent of the total calculated change in year four.

Ms. Waller said under the Hawaii and DSA evaluation team's phase-in implementation approaches, school districts and charter schools were not held 100 percent harmless, but rather increases or decreases were phased-in over a specified period to allow time to adjust to the fiscal increases or decreases that each school district or charter school might face. She said another component of an implementation plan for categorical funding was to consider the eligible uses of such funding. Ms. Waller said the TAC may wish to discuss and recommend a list of approved eligible uses of the supplemental funding directed to students identified as ELL and at risk of low academic achievement (page 9, [Exhibit J](#)). Suggested ideas for eligible uses included:

- a. Classroom teachers to reduce class sizes or for ELL instruction;
- b. Before and/or afterschool academic programs, including transportation to and from programs;
- c. Pre-kindergarten programs;
- d. Tutors, teachers' aides, counselors, social workers, nurses, and curriculum specialists;
- e. Parent education;
- f. Summer or intersession programs;
- g. Early intervention programs;
- h. Materials, supplies, and equipment, including technology used in approved programs or for approved purposes;
- i. Funding a longer school day;
- j. Funding a longer school year;
- k. Remediation programs partnering with higher education institutions;
- l. Assessment activities;

- m. Community liaison staff with language and cultural skills appropriate to the ELL population; and
- n. Professional development activities.

Ms. Waller said, alternatively, the TAC could recommend that the NDE, with stakeholder input, determine which programs and services would qualify for use by the funding.

Ms. Waller provided the following options for the TAC to consider in recommending an implementation plan for modifications to the K-12 funding model for ELL and at-risk students:

- a. An implementation plan directing that only new funding approved by the Legislature and Governor be considered for distribution under the state's modified K-12 funding model for ELL and at-risk students.
- b. An implementation plan that would phase-in increases or decreases over a specified period of time to allow school districts and charter schools time to adjust to the fiscal increases or decreases that may occur utilizing the modified K-12 funding formula for ELL and at-risk students. Under this approach, school districts and charter schools would not be held 100 percent harmless, but rather they would face potential increases or decreases in their basic support per pupil, limited by the applicable phase-in percentage, in order to shift funding to a categorical program.

If option b were selected, the TAC should consider the percentage of increases or decreases of the total calculated change to implement in each successive year of the phase-in period, as well as the length of the phase-in period.

Ms. Waller said, with either option, the TAC should consider whether to identify and recommend the eligible uses of the categorical funding, or to direct the NDE, with educational stakeholder input, to identify the eligible uses of the categorical funding ELL and at-risk populations.

Mr. Schroeder said Nevada was recovering from tough economic times and he supported a true hold harmless. He supported implementing a plan that was based on new funding approved by the Legislature. Mr. Schroeder said he was agreeable to all of the eligible use recommendations for the funds and thought the categories provided flexibility.

Mr. Zander agreed that a true hold harmless would be best based on the fact that all of the districts were operating at post-recession funding levels, and the impact of the weighted adjustments on the total state funding was unknown.

Dr. Rulfes thought there should be a structured transition in the plan and he empathized with any district that would lose funding. He suggested a combined recommendation where there would be a hold harmless for the 2015 Legislative Session, followed by the development of a phase-in plan to be approved during the 2017 Legislative Session. He explained that this would give districts a two-year period to plan for the upcoming phase-in while being held harmless.

Mr. McIntosh agreed with Dr. Rulffes' recommendation. He added that he was sympathetic to how the counties were affected during the recession and he was open to the idea of a true hold harmless.

Mr. Johnson said, with respect to the prior DSA adjustment, it was a much different financial time. He said the ability for school districts to adapt to those changes was much different than during the current eroded levels. Mr. Johnson said it was sensible to include a true hold harmless or establish a floor of basic support, because he could not imagine school districts operating at a level lower than the current level.

Mr. Zander thought Mr. Alastuey's presentation made sense. He said the NDE was very busy and had lost a lot of capacity in their finance office. The current formula used out-of-date salary and transportation figures. He explained that the DSA adjustments were put in place in the mid-2000's when adjustments were made and brackets were inserted. Mr. Zander said the second year after the recommendations were made the recession hit, so the actual reductions and increases that took place in some districts lost their identity through cuts that occurred. He thought it should be a priority to update the existing formula and see what effect that would have on distributions.

Dr. Rulffes suggested incorporating Mr. Zander's suggestion into the motion by recommending that an adjustment be made mid-session to account for the deficiency.

In response to a question from Mr. McIntosh, Dr. Rulffes clarified that the motion included a hold harmless for the 2015 Legislative Session followed by a phase-in plan and formula adjustments.

Mr. McIntosh recommended a four-year implementation period to relate to the biennium. He understood the motion would direct that only new funding approved by the Legislature and Governor in the 2015 Legislative Session would be considered for distribution under the modified funding model, and then going forward, the implementation plan would phase-in increase/decreases.

Ms. Waller asked Mr. McIntosh for his recommendations for percentages for each year of the implementation plan and who would create the plan. She asked if the TAC would be making the recommendations for the four-year period and the percentages that would commence after year two of the upcoming biennium.

Mr. McIntosh said he did not have specific recommendations, he was just considering Hawaii's phase-in plan. He was open to suggestions from the Committee.

Mr. Schroeder suggested using 10 percent in year one, 30 percent in year two, 60 percent in year three, and 100 percent in year four of the phase-in implementation plan.

Mr. Johnson said "new funding" only applied to the 2015-17 biennium, so in the subsequent biennium, if funding were less than the current biennium, the "new funding"

would no longer apply. Therefore, a cut in funding would be realized and potentially a reduction in redistribution as well.

Dr. Rulffes replied that Mr. Johnson's observation was accurate; however, he thought the resulting funding cuts and redistribution would be uniform among all the districts and not limited to any specific category of districts.

DR. WALT RULFFES MOVED THAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS WOULD BE HELD HARMLESS FOR THE 2015-17 BIENNIUM BY ONLY DISTRIBUTING NEW FUNDING APPROVED BY THE NEVADA LEGISLATURE AND THE GOVERNOR THROUGH THE MODIFIED K-12 FUNDING MODEL FOR ELL AND AT-RISK STUDENTS. BEGINNING IN FY 2018, A FULL PHASE-IN OVER A FOUR-YEAR PERIOD THROUGH FY 2021, WITH 10 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL CALCULATED FUNDING CHANGE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FIRST YEAR, 30 PERCENT IN THE SECOND YEAR, 60 PERCENT IN THE THIRD YEAR, AND 100 PERCENT IN THE FOURTH YEAR.

JIM MCINTOSH SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (Mr. Johnson, Mr. Zander and Mr. Schroeder opposed the motion)

Mr. Thorley said the AIR report noted several deficiencies in Nevada's current distribution of special education funds (page 10, [Exhibit J](#)). He said Nevada used a unit-based system where a "unit" was intended to represent the cost of a special education teacher. Unit funding was considered outside the state's funding formula. Some of the deficiencies noted by the AIR report were:

- Lack of formal documentation explaining how the special education units assigned to each district were determined.
- No link between special education units and the services received by any given student with a disability. As a result, the current unit funding approach did not provide financial support for instructional aids or other non-personnel related resources such as instructional materials or technology.

Mr. Thorley said the AIR report also identified and outlined four alternate approaches to funding special education students in Nevada:

- Fixed allocation per student
- Weighted student funding that reflected the relative cost of providing educational services
- Weighted student funding that used school district group averages
- Census-based approach

Mr. Thorley said Mr. Alastuey had provided an overview of each of the methods and explained some of the advantages and disadvantages to each of the approaches. He said the fixed allocation per pupil was a simple approach that allocated an equal amount

per student eligible for special education services across all districts. One of the problems with the fixed allocation method was it could incentivize over identification of students with disabilities. Mr. Thorley said the next method was weighted student funding which allocated special education funds based on weights for each specific learning disability or service provided. One of the concerns with this option was that it could incentivize the over identification of students or the identification of greater portions of students who were classified into high-cost disability categories. Mr. Thorley said Daniel Thatcher with NCSL provided information to the Task Force regarding states that did not have a weighted funding formula for special education. The State of Oregon had a single weight of 0.5 and West Virginia had a single weight of 2.0. Mr. Thatcher also indicated that some states had greater weights, such as New Mexico with 12 distinct special education weights. Additionally, some states weighted students based on disability (Oklahoma) and some based on the services provided (Texas). According to Mr. Thatcher, the trend indicated states were moving toward funding school districts based on services provided. The reason for this was because studies found that costs for students with disabilities were based on the services that may be required and not on disability classification.

Mr. Thorley said the AIR report attempted to identify special education funding adjustments that could be considered best practices. The authors used data from a national study that developed estimates of spending ratios by student disability. Mr. Thorley noted that the study was based on an analysis of a nationwide random sample of students. He said AIR provided a list of 12 separate weight categories for special education students compared to general education students, with an average special education weight of 1.9 (attachment 4, [Exhibit J](#)).

Mr. Thorley said the third method identified by the AIR report was a weighted student funding formula by district group averages. This method used group-based average identification rates and group-based average proportion of students classified by disability. According to AIR, this method would reduce the ability of any one district to affect its own special education allocation through over identification or misclassification.

Mr. Thorley said the last method discussed in the AIR report was a census-based approach. This model allocated special education funding based on total enrollment. He said the authors noted that one of the advantages of this approach was that it reduced incentives for over identification or inappropriate classification. It also allowed flexibility with how special education funding was used. Mr. Thorley said one of the disadvantages noted in the AIR report was that the census-based approach was based on the assumption that incidences of disabilities over a large geographic area were uniformly distributed. It was noted that the census-based model may not provide sufficient funding under certain circumstances, such as the presence of a high-cost special education student in a small school district. The reason was that the census-based approach did not provide differential funding for variations in identification. Mr. Thorley said the census-based approach was often accompanied with a contingency fund which would reduce the likelihood that one or more high-cost students would cause excessive financial strain on a district.

Mr. Thorley said the Legislative Commission's Subcommittee to Study a New Method for Funding Public Schools during the 2011-2012 Interim included a recommendation in its final report that Nevada consider a census-based approach coupled with a contingency fund, and that the state study the specific details of how this approach would be implemented.

Mr. Thorley said another special education funding model suggested by Julia Teska at the April 21, 2014, TAC meeting, was a hybrid approach that coupled the weighted funding approach with a census-based model. According to Ms. Teska, a weight would be assigned to high-cost students with severe disabilities and a census-based model would be used for low or moderate-cost students with IEP designations. He said the hybrid approach would have the benefit of limiting over identification while also protecting school districts and charter schools from potential financial strain caused by the presence of a few high-cost students.

Mr. Thorley said there were a several options for the TAC to consider in making a recommendation to the Task Force about modifying the special education funding approach:

- a. A fixed allocation per student method.
- b. A weighted student funding model - If this option were recommended the Committee would need to determine a single weight value or multiple weight values based on disability category or services provided.
- c. A weighted student funding model using group averages - If this option were recommended the Committee would need to determine a single weight value or multiple weight values based on disability category or services provided.
- d. A census-based approach.
- e. A hybrid option combining both the census-based approach and the weighted student funding model - If this option were recommended the Committee would need to consider the eligibility line between the census-based approach and the weighted student funding model.

Mr. Thorley said that any recommendation to change the special education funding model would also require legislation to amend Title 34 of NRS which included language about the current unit funding.

Dr. Chambers clarified that AIR's attempt to identify special education funding adjustments was not necessarily based on best practices. He said the study was based on a random sample of students and it estimated costs based on the amount of time that students spent receiving various kinds of services. Therefore, it was more of an expenditure study and not a cost of best practices.

Dr. Chambers said while he agreed with Mr. Thatcher that there were problems with estimating costs based on disability, he thought there would be potential incentives created by using services as a basis for cost. It could create incentives for assigning students to the highest cost placement. He said it may not be intentional, but it created the potential for perverse incentives in assigning students in the same way as attaching dollars to a student with a disability could create the incentive to over identify.

Dr. Chambers said he was attracted to the hybrid option. He thought there were some details that would need to be fine-tuned, but there was some merit to the combined method given the difficulty of applying a census-based approach across 17 districts that varied in size.

In response to a question from Mr. Johnson, Mr. Thorley said under the census-based approach the total enrollment would be counted for each district and special education funding would be allocated based on the enrollment figure.

Mr. Johnson asked, in the event that a charter school had one or no special education students, would the factor still be applied to its student population, or would there be means to allocate a different amount to charter schools with fewer special needs students?

Mr. Alastuey recalled that although charter schools as a whole were the third largest district in the state, it did not comprise one organization with sufficient population to represent even a mid-sized district. He thought a census-based allocation would address school districts only, recognizing that there were some outliers with low enrollments such as Esmeralda and Eureka Counties. Currently, charter schools did not have the uniform expectation of serving special education students; therefore, unless charter schools were considered as a whole, a census-based method would probably be specific to the public school districts. Mr. Alastuey added that charter schools would likely be part of a contingency pool.

Ms. Waller said the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) was considered a local education agency (LEA), so in theory it could receive a distribution under the census-based approach and then allocate its funding to the appropriate charter schools.

Mr. Alastuey thought incidences of special education students enrolled in charter schools was not particularly uniform, and in some cases may be zero. He said even if the SPCSA was considered an LEA, the Committee might want to determine if the proportion of special education enrollment within charter schools was close to the 11 percent statewide identification rate, if not, he thought charter schools would require separate treatment.

Mr. Schroeder thought a child who was classified as a special education student deserved the necessary services. He noted that there were only five states that used a census-based method and he was unsure that it was the right approach for Nevada. Mr. Schroeder thought a weighted student funding model addressed the student needs better. He said an average weight might be more appropriate than a different ratio for every classification of need.

Mr. McIntosh said the special education funding weights should remain as simple as possible. He thought a census-based approach and the weighted student funding model both would serve districts personally; however, he favored the weighted student



funding model. Mr. McIntosh said he preferred a single weight but was open to discussion as long as the weights did not become complicated.

Mr. Alastuey asked if weighting would be based on state and local support. He said, implicit in that was the notion that eventually the state would abandon the unit funding method altogether.

Mr. McIntosh proposed a motion for a weighted student funding model with a weight of 2.4, and a contingency for students that were outliers.

Mr. Alastuey asked Mr. McIntosh what the basis was for a weight of 2.4. He said the AIR study noted a composite weight of 1.9 and studies in Clark County offered a weight slightly above 2.0, but he did not recall seeing a weight as high as 2.4.

Mr. McIntosh said the 2.4 weight was based on a recommendation from the CCSD's Office of Special Education. However, he thought it might be better to recommend an entry-level weight to be more consistent with the ELL and at-risk funding recommendations. Mr. McIntosh thought a floor of at least 2.0 was sufficient; however, he did not have specific backup data to provide to the Committee.

Dr. Chambers agreed that a weight of 2.4 seemed high. He said over the last 40 years there had been four national studies, and the range of relative weights for those studies were approximately 1.9, 2.3, 2.17 and 1.92, respectively. Based on that information he thought it would be better to use a number in the range of 2.0.

In response to a question from Dr. Rulffes, Dr. Chambers replied that a number of states had enrollment caps for special education students; however, he was unsure of the specific number of states. He said, generally, the enrollment cap was around 12-14 percent. Based on Nevada's identification rates, the special education enrollment rates ranged from a low of 4.7 percent in Esmeralda County to 18.5 percent in Mineral County (page 96, [Exhibit M](#)). Dr. Chambers noted the special education enrollment rate for charter schools was 8.4 percent.

Dr. Chambers said the report offered suggestions for what proportion of funds could be set aside, and he thought the report for the TAC may have indicated that a certain amount of federal funds could be set aside for contingency funds.

Dr. Rulffes thought the Committee should consider a special education enrollment cap of 12-13 percent to protect against over identification.

In response to a question from Mr. Alastuey, Dr. Chambers confirmed that Mineral County's total special education enrollment, including gifted students, was 18.5 percent (99 students). Dr. Chambers noted that he was unsure which year the figures pertained to.

Mr. Alastuey thought perhaps the Committee should consider an enrollment cap within the main body of funding. In addition, contingency funds could be made available on a case-by-case basis for school districts that exceeded the cap.

Mr. Alastuey asked Dr. Rulffes his opinion on small counties with high identification rates. Dr. Rulffes replied that he understood that to be the purpose of a contingency fund.

Dr. Chambers said there were two purposes for a contingency fund. Identification rate was one purpose; however, more often than not the contingency fund was for exceptionally high-cost students that could place a large financial strain on a small district.

Mr. McIntosh agreed with a 12 percent enrollment cap and a contingency fund for districts that exceeded the cap.

Ms. Waller noted that the issue being discussed was related specifically to students with disabilities; therefore, based on federal guidelines, that excluded funding provided for gifted and talented students.

Dr. Chambers said table 4.6 in the AIR report provided a process for calculating a special education contingency fund to support exceptionally high-cost students with disabilities in Nevada (page 93, [Exhibit M](#)). He said three scenarios were proposed that ranged in cost from \$15.6 million to \$73 million depending on classification. The contingency fund calculation process modeled a study that AIR performed for New Mexico where a recommendation was made for a census-based approach with a contingency fund. Dr. Chambers noted that the assumption was that districts would assume some responsibility for a portion of high-cost students, and only a portion would be the responsibility of the state.

Mr. Thorley noted that the work session document provided information about contingency funds (page 15, [Exhibit J](#)).

Chair Woodhouse said, due to time constraints, the Committee would need to decide if the motion should pass, fail or be held until the next TAC meeting on June 5, 2014. She thought it might be best to carry item 5 over to the next meeting and discuss in conjunction with item 6, because the topics were related.

Mr. McIntosh withdrew the motion.

Chair Woodhouse said the remaining agenda items would be discussed at the TAC meeting on June 5, 2014. Agenda items discussed at today's meeting would be reported to the full Task Force on May 22, 2014.

## **VI. PUBLIC COMMENT.**

Jose Solorio thanked the Committee for recommending a minimum floor weight of 1.5 for ELL and at-risk students. He thought the funding would improve the education of Nevada's students and create equal education opportunity. Although a phase-in period was sometimes necessary, Mr. Solorio said, for every year that implementation was delayed, there were that many more students lacking vital services. He noted that

CCSD alone had 56,000 students. Mr. Solorio encouraged the Committee and the Legislature to consider increasing the education budget in such a way that no county would be negatively impacted, because the sooner the money became available, the sooner services could be made available.

Yvette Williams said she appreciated that the TAC recommended a floor amount for the ELL and at-risk weights, so if any district needed to put additional funding toward a student, it would have the opportunity to do so.

Ms. Williams said 16 percent of the IEP population were African-American students which were over represented in that group. African Americans made up 10 percent of the student population and she thought there should be more money available for them. Ms. Williams said she appreciated the work of the Committee though, and understood the difficult nature of their job.

Ms. Williams said there was concern about the repeated reference to weights used by other states and CCSD. She said the current weights were not effective which is why so many people were advocating for a higher weight for ELL and at-risk populations which have historically struggled.

Ms. Williams said it was an honor to be at today's meeting and to see the Committee's commitment to create change.

Craig Stevens, Nevada State Education Association, asked what the actual costs were to educate ELL and at-risk students, and if the cost to educate ELL students was higher than the cost to educate at-risk students. He suggested asking the school districts directly what programs they required and the associated costs.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT.**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Carla Ulrych, Transcribing Secretary

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Copies of exhibits mentioned in these minutes are on file in the Fiscal Analysis Division at the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. The division may be contacted at (775) 684-6821.**