

**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Eighty-second Session  
April 10, 2023**

The Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Roberta Lange at 2:15 p.m. on Monday, April 10, 2023, in Room 2134 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4412 and Room 4406 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Senator Julie Pazina, Senatorial District No. 12

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Jen Sturm-Gahner, Policy Analyst  
Asher Killian, Counsel  
Linda Hiller, Committee Secretary

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

John Vellardita, Executive Director, Clark County Education Association  
Jim Frazee, Vice President, Clark County Education Association  
Marie Neissess, President, Clark County Education Association  
Calen Evans, President, Washoe Education Association  
Patricia Haddad, Director of Government Relations, Clark County School District  
Angie Joye, Clark County Education Association

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Brandi Cuti, Clark County Education Association  
Jessica Jones, Clark County Education Association  
Karen Daniel, Clark County Education Association  
Charlene Brown, Clark County Education Association  
Karen Burby, Clark County Education Association  
Katrin Ivanoff  
Elizabeth Adler, Clark County Education Association  
Matt Niswonger  
Dan Price, Clark County Education Association  
Yesenia Gonzales  
M. Justin Red  
Tiffany Padilla, Clark County Education Association  
Gabriel Ayass, Clark County Education Association  
Jeff Horn, Executive Director, Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees  
Lou Markouzis, Principal, Canyon Springs High School, Leadership and Law Preparatory Academy, Clark County School District; Clark County Education Association; President, Nevada Association of School Administrators; Chair, Silver State Education Foundation  
Jennifer Atlas, Nevada Association of School Administrators  
Freeman Holbrook, President, Washoe School Principals Association  
Mary Pierczynski, Nevada Association of School Superintendents  
Andrew Feuling, Superintendent, Carson City School District  
Dylan Keith, Vegas Chamber  
Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association  
Tess Opferman, Washoe County School District  
Kelly Crompton, City of Las Vegas  
Nicole Rourke, City of Henderson  
Gil Lopez, Charter School Association of Nevada  
Brett Harris, Labor Commissioner, Nevada Department of Business and Industry

CHAIR LANGE:

I will open the meeting of the Senate Committee on Education with a work session.

JEN STURM-GAHNER (Policy Analyst):

As nonpartisan legislative staff, I can neither support nor oppose any measure. The first bill on the work session today is Senate Bill (S.B.) 47.

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**SENATE BILL 47**: Revises provisions relating to teachers. (BDR 34-379)

This bill was heard by this Committee on March 27, 2023 on behalf of the Clark County School District (CCSD). As introduced, S.B. 47 creates the Public Education Employee Working Conditions Task Force.

During the hearing, CCSD proposed an amendment which is attached to the work session document. The amendment removes provisions relating to the Public Education Employee Working Conditions Task Force and establishes that the fee set by the Commission on Professional Standards associated with educator licensure may not exceed \$50. I have submitted the work session document ([Exhibit C](#)).

CHAIR LANGE:

Seeing no discussion on this bill, I will take a motion.

SENATOR FLORES MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED  
S.B. 47.

SENATOR DOÑATE SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATORS NEAL AND TITUS VOTED NO.)

\* \* \* \* \*

Ms. STURM-GAHNER:

The next bill is S.B. 114, sponsored by Senator Flores and heard on February 15, 2023.

**SENATE BILL 114**: Revises provisions governing the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association. (BDR 34-854)

The bill provides that a pupil who transfers to a charter school is immediately eligible to participate and practice in any sanctioned sport or other interscholastic activity or event at the school.

Senator Flores proposed an amendment with four provisions listed in the work session document ([Exhibit D](#)).

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CHAIR LANGE:

If there is no discussion, I will take a motion.

SENATOR TITUS MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED  
S.B. 114.

SENATOR HAMMOND SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ms. STURM-GAHNER:

The next bill on work session is S.B. 158 which was sponsored by Senator Hammond and was heard on March 6, 2023.

**SENATE BILL 158**: Requires video cameras to be installed in certain classrooms used for special education within a public school. (BDR 34-182)

The bill as introduced requires each public school, including charter schools, to install, operate and maintain one or more video cameras with the capability of recording sound in each classroom in which the majority of the students receive special education.

Senator Hammond proposed an amendment that has three provisions listed in the work session document ([Exhibit E](#)).

CHAIR LANGE:

Seeing no discussion, I will take a motion.

SENATOR FLORES MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED  
S.B. 158.

SENATOR DOÑATE SECONDED THE MOTION.

SENATOR NEAL:

I thought there was a question on who turns on and off the camera.

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SENATOR HAMMOND:

There was a question, and I do not think we contemplated that, but I can tell you right now that the way I would see it is that the teacher turns on the camera when the instructional period begins. We can make sure we put that in the bill to make sure it is abundantly clear.

SENATOR NEAL:

Is this going to the Senate Committee on Finance?

I was just going to ask Senator Hammond about that. Did your amendment remove the fiscal note?

SENATOR HAMMOND:

I would imagine it takes care of a lot of the fiscal note. I do not know if it takes care of all of it, but because it is upon the request of a parent, we do not know for sure how many cameras will be needed. Because of that, there is no real ability to anticipate how much it would ultimately cost.

CHAIR LANGE:

It is my assumption that it would be referred to the Senate Committee on Finance on the Senate Floor. If there is no more discussion, all those in favor of S.B. 158, say aye.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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Ms. STURM-GAHNER:

The next bill is S.B. 196 sponsored by Senator Hammond and was heard on March 8, 2023.

**SENATE BILL 196**: Revises provisions relating to interscholastic activities and events. (BDR 34-868)

The bill codifies existing regulation that prohibits a coach, manager, or other person associated with a sanctioned sport or spirit squad at a school from making a pupil's participation in an out-of-school activity a condition for

qualifying for a team or for accepting the pupil as a member of a team during the season for the sanctioned sport.

Senator Hammond proposed an amendment to the reporting requirements contained in section 4 of the bill to require the coaches to report the appropriate information. I submitted the work session document ([Exhibit F](#)).

CHAIR LANGE:

Senator Hammond, did you submit the amendment?

SENATOR HAMMOND:

I thought I did.

SENATOR TITUS:

I see a proposed amendment on the work session document, but we do not see the entire amendment. I reached out to Senator Hammond about what was going to be reported. I am okay with the coaches responding that they do coach an outside league that is not on school grounds or during school time. But I felt it was not appropriate that they would have to report how much they are getting paid for that, because I think it is irrelevant to the whole process.

What they want is to make sure that if coaches do have outside activities and they are coaching, say, a club volleyball team, they cannot make that a criteria for a young person to be on their team or to try out for a school activity. What they are getting paid should not have any weight in this.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

I did work with our esteemed legal counsel and I thought we had written something up, but I do not know if it was my mistake and I did not submit it. Part of the agreement we made with the stakeholders is that there is no reporting requirement for financial statements. That is part of the amendment.

The reporting requirement says they have to report using a system that is already in place. Right now, every student athlete uses a certain system, I believe it is called My Athlete. We are going to let the coaches also use that. Really, the reporting requirement was minimal, but the portion of the bill you are concerned about is also part of that amendment that removes the requirement to report how much they are making.

ASHER KILLIAN (Counsel):

Yes, rather than the language of the existing bill as introduced, which would require disclosure of that level of compensation, the amendment would require disclosure that the coach is coaching at both the club level and the public school level. It also requires a disclosure of the pupils who participated in both the coach's club team and the public school team. Further, it would disclose any pupils who did not participate in the club team and tried out for the public school team, were cut, and all of that related information.

There would be a progressive set of consequences for coaches who are in noncompliance with the reporting requirement. The bill as introduced would require the principal to gather the reports from the coaches and transmit them. The amendment instead requires the coach to report for themselves, and then imposes consequences if the coach declines to follow the law and actually report the information.

Finally, as Senator Hammond mentioned, there are existing electronic systems in place where both coaches and student athletes report their information. The idea was to integrate all of this into those existing systems to make the reporting requirements more streamlined.

SENATOR FLORES MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS AS AMENDED  
S.B. 196.

SENATOR NEAL SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

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CHAIR LANGE:

I will close the work session and open the hearing on S.B. 292.

SENATE BILL 292: Revises provisions relating to school administrators.  
(BDR 34-554)

SENATOR JULIE PAZINA (Senatorial District No. 12):

I am here to present S.B. 292 which provides greater accountability for administrators. There are extensive accountability measures placed on teachers,

and if teachers do not meet those expectations, there are consequences. The same should be true for principals, especially given the research on the level of impact a principal has on student achievement and teacher outcomes.

According to a 2021 research report by The Wallace Foundation, when looking at a principal's impact on student achievement, "replacing a below-average principal with an above-average one would increase the typical student's learning by nearly three months in both math and reading." The research suggests the need for strategies that cultivate, select, prepare and support a high-quality principal workforce. We continue to focus on creating a high-quality and prepared teacher workforce, so the question I would propose to this Committee is, "Should we not do the same for those in school leadership positions?"

Additionally, The Wallace Foundation research cites recent studies that link more effective principals to key student outcomes, such as a reduction in absenteeism and exclusionary discipline. However, the impact of a principal goes beyond just student achievement. According to the report:

Research also shows clear links between effective leadership and important teacher outcomes, including more positive teacher working conditions and reduced turnover, especially among effective teachers.

These conclusions alone highlight the need for policy efforts that strengthen principal leadership in our schools.

The purpose of S.B. 292 is to recognize that the school climate and outcomes expected by this Legislature from Nevada schools are the responsibility of the school leader. Principals need to be held accountable if these school measures are causing teacher turnover or poor performance.

On a personal note, I had the opportunity before last summer to visit and converse with teachers in a number of schools in my Senate district. Several of them shared with me their past experiences with administrators, leading up to high turnover and leading to them leaving the schools where they worked. It was heartbreaking to hear the tales of some of these teachers who were debating leaving the State and going back to Washington, Oregon and other states where they came from before coming to Nevada. There is a short



amendment located in the Legislative website that removes section 3 of the bill ([Exhibit G](#)).

JOHN VELLARDITA (Executive Director, Clark County Education Association):  
This bill is relatively simple. I am going to read aloud section 2, subsections 1 through 4:

1. During the first 3 years of his or her employment by a school district in the position of principal, a principal is employed at will in that position. A principal who is reassigned pursuant to this subsection is entitled to a written statement of the reason for the reassignment. If the principal was previously employed by the school district in another position and is reassigned pursuant to this section, the principal is entitled to be assigned to his or her former position at the rate of compensation provided for that position.
2. A principal who completes the probationary period set forth in NRS 391.820 by a principal is again employed at will if, in each of 2 consecutive school years: (a) The rating of the school to which the principal is assigned, as determined by the Department pursuant to the statewide system of accountability for public schools, is reduced by one or more levels; and (b) Fifty percent or more of the teachers assigned to the school request a transfer to another school.
3. If the events described in paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection 2 occur with respect to a school for any school year, the school district shall conduct a survey of the teachers assigned to the school to evaluate conditions at the school and the reasons given by teachers who requested a transfer to another school. The results of the survey do not affect the employment status of the principal of the school.
4. A principal described in subsection 2 is subject to immediate dismissal by the board of trustees of the school district on recommendation of the superintendent and is entitled, on dismissal, to a written statement of the reasons for dismissal.

Sections 4 through 10 are modifications that conform with what is presented in section 2.

JIM FRAZEE (Vice President, Clark County Education Association):

I am a classroom educator in Clark County and I also have the honor of being Vice President of the Clark County Education Association (CCEA). I work at a suburban high school from 6:15 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., then I drive to the inner city and teach from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. I have done that schedule now for 11 years. I see all demographics and understand the challenges they face daily. I have two amazing principals. Both of my principals inspire me to keep this hectic schedule because I know we are doing good things for our kids.

An inspiring leader has the power to affect a child's life. I believe that administrators, like educators, enter our occupation for the right reasons. I am an optimist. I believe there is no obstacle in public education that we cannot solve together. There are a few exceptions, hence the need for this bill. I have not come here to throw stones. I have no ax to grind. I come to point out a shortcoming and I come with solutions. This again is the reason for the bill.

As important as it is to understand what this bill does, it is also important to understand what this bill is not. It is not an anti-administrator bill in any way. The primary goal of this bill is to halt, and hopefully reverse, the downward spiral of the school community. This bill is 100 percent about student achievement. It would help identify struggling administrators and give a district the opportunity to get them the help and support they need to be successful. In the end, it would allow our students to be successful.

Senate Bill 292 is about accountability. This is what parents deserve. This is the only way we will attract new business and industry to Nevada and expand the economy. An educator in the building has a three-year probationary period. Even a post-probationary educator like myself can be placed back on probation if they have two consecutive years of unsatisfactory evaluations. How is it possible to have less accountability for the leader of the entire building? The leader should have more accountability, not less.

There are multiple layers of protection for principals. They would have to have two consecutive years of 50 percent staff turnover and the loss of a star rating. Then the superintendent would have to recommend action and the board of trustees would have to approve. I have spoken to literally 100 different

administrators in my capacity, and I do not know any who are afraid of this bill. Even though I can be put back on pre-probationary status, I do not wake up every day and wonder if I am going to mess up today. I believe educators and administrators strive to improve and get better. If I could describe this bill in one word, it would be "reasonable," which is not a word we hear around here much.

SENATOR NEAL:

It seems that you have the ability to remove a principal with the criteria that probably should apply to the superintendent. So if this is reasonable, would it also be reasonable for the 50 percent turnover to be applicable to removing a superintendent?

SENATOR PAZINA:

My bill is really only focused on principal accountability based on what I heard from teachers in the schools regarding their personal experience with their administrators. I would leave that open to others to answer.

SENATOR NEAL:

In the presentation, it said there is help for principals if they are not performing. Where is the help written in the bill?

MR. FRAZEE:

I would just say there is an opportunity for the school district to do the right thing to help their staff. There is nothing in the bill that says a district must help.

To your last question, I agree with you 100 percent. Some people are afraid of accountability, and I would ask you if you have met our superintendent. I hope the superintendent and members of Clark County School District (CCSD) would do the right thing and support all their employees.

MR. VELLARDITA:

There is a process, and the associate superintendent who is responsible for a handful of schools is the one that interacts with that principal and reviews student outcomes, performance outcomes of staff and more. The idea behind this bill is that, in the first year for example, if a school's star rating goes down and there is an exit of staff, that is certainly going to trigger an evaluation or

some kind of assessment by the associate superintendent, who is the supervisor of the principal.

SENATOR BUCK:

I just wondered what does request mean, as in request for a transfer?

MR. VELLARDITA:

Educators have an opportunity during the school year to make a request for transfer. They enter a transfer pool, and they are either selected or not.

SENATOR BUCK:

Is there a honeymoon period? In my experience, it took me about three years to become a good principal. I probably had about 20 percent to 30 percent of the staff moving the first year, and then less as it went along. There were people fighting to get in by the end.

MR. VELLARDITA:

I know of no honeymoon period that exists between staff and a principal in terms of some kind of formal timeframe.

SENATOR BUCK:

I am just wondering if I would be penalized going into a school. It takes some time to achieve change, if you have read anything about making change and moving the needle. If you are a disruptor and you go in and you want to make things better at a low-performing school, a lot of times staff that cannot meet that metric decide to leave. It just happens; they are not a fit. How much time would a principal have to settle that?

MR. VELLARDITA:

The threshold of 50 percent of staff leaving is a fairly high standard. It does not happen. We get anywhere from 13 to 17 schools out of 370 schools a year with complaints about school climate issues that, by and large, center around the leadership. Most of those do not hit that 50 percent threshold, and the ones that have hit that 50 percent threshold, you have probably read about in the newspaper. They become very toxic and it is not just a question of staff leaving; it is also a question of parents pulling their kids out of the school.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will now take testimony in favor of S.B. 292.

MARIE NEISESS (President, Clark County Education Association):

The CCEA is in strong support of S.B. 292. This Session is about bringing accountability to every level of our public education delivery system, and this bill is a crucial aspect of bringing that agenda to fruition. Senate Bill 292 ends a double standard between educators and administrators by reinstating a three-year probationary period for administrators just like educators have.

Administrators set the tone for their campus. During my teaching career, I worked with three different administrators. Two of them created an environment where teachers, educators and support professionals felt as if they were part of a team. We had collaborative meetings that focused on improving student outcomes. The other administrator replaced a retiring principal and, unfortunately, the culture and climate of that school changed and morale plummeted. The school went through multiple years of a revolving door of educators where there was little or no consistency and instruction. Ultimately, it is our students who suffer and, more often than not, have multiple substitutes.

CALEN EVANS (President, Washoe Education Association):

I am the President of the Washoe Education Association, representing all the certified professionals in the Washoe County School District (WCSD). We spoke in support of this bill when it was first heard, and we remain in support of S.B. 292. Ultimately, we are trying to create a level playing field with equal accountability across all levels of our school system.

I was listening to the previous discussions around this bill being reasonable, and when you look at the idea of a 50 percent turnover threshold, that is extremely reasonable. When I think about our recent past at WCSD, none of the schools would have met that threshold. Understanding that this bill is not anti-administrator, I would very much like to echo those same sentiments. We have amazing administrators in our District, and we have a very close working relationship with the administrators' union in our District, who we highly respect and appreciate their collaboration. None of the administrators that I see or speak to would be impacted by this bill, but if there was an opportunity where this did come up, we need to have accountability measures in place.

PATRICIA HADDAD (Clark County School District):

We are committed to ongoing conversations about reasonable accountability at all levels in the CCSD, from the classroom to the school building, all the way up through the central office to the very top. We are appreciative and interested in

continuing conversations with the bill sponsor about some potential tweaks and adjustments. One thing in particular I wanted to mention is recognizing that star ratings have been carried over for a number of years without any variation because of COVID-19.

ANGIE JOYE (Clark County Education Association):

I am a second grade teacher at an elementary school. I am here today to share with you why S.B. 292 is vitally important. Teacher accountability is continuously discussed, but administrator accountability is rarely referenced. When issues arise in a school, instead of brushing aside our concerns about the curriculum, testing, student attendance or safety, this bill will ensure that this is a team effort and if administrators cannot lead a successful team, they are accountable. Please give all teachers the support and security of a stable cohesive working environment so we can focus our efforts on the teaching we would much rather dedicate our time to. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit H](#)).

BRANDI CUTI (Clark County Education Association):

I am a school counselor with CCSD. I have been with them for 19 years and I am testifying in support of S.B. 292 because I believe that school administrators should have a similar evaluation by staff and teachers to gauge their reliability and effectiveness in creating a positive and productive school climate. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit I](#)).

JESSICA JONES (Clark County Education Association):

I am a kindergarten teacher on the east side of Las Vegas at a Title 1 school. I wanted to speak today in support of S.B. 292, specifically section 2, which pertains to the 50 percent or more of the staff requesting to transfer to another school. About six years ago, I worked at another Title 1 school on the east side of Las Vegas where that occurred. About half of the staff transferred and then a few of the educators decided to retire early. That administrator at my former school created a very toxic work environment for the staff. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit J](#)).

KAREN DANIEL (Clark County Education Association):

I am a 16-year teacher for CCSD here to support S.B. 292. As a teacher, I am held accountable for the education and behavior of my students and the climate in my classroom. If I am held accountable for all these things that affect my students' achievements and performance, then why are administrators of the

District not held to the same standard? Passing this bill will guard against this double standard and ensure that there is accountability for the administrators. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit K](#)).

CHARLENE BROWN (Clark County Education Association):

I am a teacher in CCSD and I believe we need to pass S.B. 292 because I have been at two schools where the principals were very disrespectful to teachers, staff, students and parents. There were times when the principal would enter Google Meets when we were online and would yell at teachers in front of the students and parents. The parents would ask, "Are you okay, Ms. Brown?" and I would reply, "Yes, she is just having a bad day." It was typical behavior of this principal because she had many grievances against her from the staff.

Passing S.B. 292 will establish a layer of accountability for administrators who engage in these types of behaviors. Our children deserve the best education, not a revolving door of educators, especially given the ongoing staffing crisis in Nevada. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit L](#)).

KAREN BURBY (Clark County Education Association):

I am a teacher in the CCSD and I believe we need to pass S.B. 292 because I have been in a school with high teacher turnover. That principal lost the majority of her teachers for at least two years in a row due to her poor treatment of staff. The principal at another school I worked at as an intervention strategist had favorites and promoted cliques. Anyone the principal did not like was systematically written up and chased out of the school. The end result of this behavior was dozens of longtime teachers leaving that school. We need to pass S.B. 292 to instill much needed accountability for administrators who promote poor school climates. Our children and educators deserve a stable learning and working environment.

KATRIN IVANOFF:

I am a proud mom of two and of course anything to do with education highly affects me and my children. I am in support of the bill and I want you guys to add an amendment that not only monitors the administrators of the school, but also—it escapes me right now—the guy that gets all the money and does nothing in the CCSD with it. One of the Senators just mentioned him and asked why is that person not also in the bill. I apologize. It just escapes me right now, but you know who I am talking about.

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ELIZABETH ADLER (Clark County Education Association):

I am a veteran Spanish and English Language Learner teacher at Sunrise Mountain High School, and I am here today to speak in support of S.B. 292. In my experience as an educator, a school can only be as effective as its leader. Administrators set the tone for the school community and promote a healthy culture and climate.

With the need to have our education system be strong, flexible and accommodate the needs of our ever-changing economy, our leaders need to be accountable at unprecedented levels. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit M](#)).

MATT NISWONGER:

I am a social studies teacher in the CCSD. Unfortunately, as you have heard many times, we have a constant change of management that is disruptive to our school climate. Many times, new administrators come in without a culture that they are seeking to establish. Even worse is when administrators come in and establish a negative culture, one that is not focused on what is best for our students.

Because of the frequency of this, we as teachers can only hope the toxic culture passes with the next administrator. We encourage each other to weather the storm. We hunker down until the bad administrator is promoted or transferred to another school where staff morale there will also suffer. As teachers, we are tired of administrators not being held accountable for the poor climates they create and the staff turnover that ensues. This bill is a step in the right direction of finally holding administrators responsible for the toxic climates they create.

DAN PRICE (Clark County Education Association):

I am a Career and Technical Education teacher at Sunrise Mountain High School. I urge you to pass S.B. 292 and put equity and accountability back in our schools. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit N](#)).

YESENIA GONZALES:

I support S.B. 292. I actually was not going to speak on this bill, but I want to echo the need for accountability with these administrators who act like tyrants in a school instead of administrators who are on our side. They should be supporting teachers who actually love our kids and are just doing their job.



I have had issues with administrators at Clifford O. Findlay Middle School and Raul P. Elizondo Elementary School where my special needs child attended. As a parent and advocate for my child, I have been denied meaningful participation at times and had administrators who would actually intimidate and harass teachers, instead of allowing them to do their job and support my child. The administrators made the environment extremely hostile.

As much as there are good administrators out there who want to help teachers and parents, you also have those administrators who act like tyrants instead of being an advocate for both students and teachers. Especially when incidents occur on school grounds, mismanagement is also a big problem. I hope that you hold these individuals accountable because, at the end of the day, we are supposed to entrust our kids to the care of these individuals.

M. JUSTIN RED:

I am a Clark County educator at Foothill High School here to speak in favor of S.B. 292 and administrative accountability. The Decker Rule is not enough, and teachers who are seeking accountability through the Decker Rule, while they are waiting for that process to go through, are being targeted and run out of their schools, or worse, supplanted by administrators who are seeking retribution. I echo all the previous comments.

TIFFANY PADILLA (Clark County Education Association):

I am a veteran educator of 20 years with CCSD and a parent of a child in CCSD and I support S.B. 292. I have submitted my written testimony ([Exhibit O](#)).

GABRIEL AYASS (Clark County Education Association):

I am a middle school teacher at Theron L. Swainston Middle School, and I ditto everything that my colleagues in the south have said. I want to add a little bit of context. We have heard a lot about toxicity and targeting, and part of the reason both of these issues regarding school climate have been brought up is because many of us do not want to be complicit in supporting a deceptively rosy narrative about the state of education here in Nevada.

Principals and other administrators are complicit in trying to bloat graduation rates. They do so by strong-arming and coercing teachers into giving students grades that do not accurately reflect student performance. For example, in my previous workplace at Cheyenne High School, we were somehow magically

graduating over 80 percent of our high school seniors when less than half of that percentage were at grade level in math and English language skills.

This is a real thing that is happening. I was previously a teacher dealing exclusively with high school seniors. I taught twelfth grade government classes, so we were the gatekeepers to graduation, so to speak. When I and other teachers did not want to give habitually truant and academically ineffective students passing grades, we were targeted with attempts at discipline. I support S.B. 292.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will now take testimony in opposition to S.B. 292.

JEFF HORN (Executive Director, Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees):

I am the Executive Director of the Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees (CCASAPE), representing more than 1,450 CCSD administrators, of which nearly 98 percent are members of CCASAPE. We are opposed to S.B. 292 because it will disincentivize strong leaders who would normally consider applying at underachieving schools in some of CCSD's most challenging areas. If this bill becomes law, what possible incentive would an experienced post-probationary principal have to transfer to a school in need of strong leadership while potentially placing their career in jeopardy?

Enforcing meaningful change is uncomfortable. Challenging the status quo creates productive disruption. This bill will ensure that low-achieving schools will continue to struggle while high-achieving schools will continue to succeed. The divide between the haves and the have-nots will grow even larger.

Principals hired from outside CCSD are already required to serve a three-year probationary period. An administrator hired from within CCSD must serve between three to four years of probation prior to becoming a post-probationary principal. It is not an easy process to become a principal in the CCSD. There are multiple layers of checks and balances to ensure effective instructional leadership is taking place. Principals must participate in hundreds of hours of training and professional development. If work performance concerns arise, they are addressed through mentorship, administrative coaching and, if necessary, progressive discipline.

My organization, CCASAPE, is in alignment with holding principals accountable for student outcomes. Our ask is that we empower principals with authority and autonomy needed to run successful schools.

SENATOR FLORES:

Regarding some of the scenarios that teachers brought up in testimony today, including toxic climates in schools and principals specifically targeting certain teachers, what is the recourse for those teachers? What is the mechanism in place now to ensure that teachers have an actual outlet in a scenario where they find themselves where the climate is coming from the top down and it is not good?

MR. HORN:

As a former school associate superintendent, I fielded multiple questions from staff at schools that had these types of concerns. As an association, CCASAPE does not support an administrator doing some of the things that were shared here today. There is progressive discipline that takes place and there are supervisors in place who work daily, weekly and year-round with administrators to address climate and culture issues at schools.

I want to be on the record that we do not support that kind of toxic behavior from principals and administrators. We want to make sure the school is flourishing, comfortable and inviting not just for the staff, but for community members and students, or nobody is successful. We support accountability, but what it takes to become a principal, and the scrutiny they are currently under, is more than sufficient at this time in my opinion.

SENATOR FLORES:

I understand that it may be very difficult to become a principal and I respect that it is a very tedious process. In the past, I have been involved in trying to create a real pathway for teachers to become principals because we have not had a clear pipeline for them to go from teacher to administration to principal. I believe it is a very complicated process to make that journey. But I also do not think it is unreasonable for us to say that, even if you have taken that journey, you still may find that someone is creating a toxic environment that no child will benefit from.

In a toxic workplace, teachers cannot do their jobs because they are not comfortable; they are scared, and they feel their voices are not being heard. As

teachers, they already have a lot on their plate just dealing with a challenging classroom, with students who have barriers and need wraparound services, and all the education requirements they must achieve. And then on top of that, you have a principal who is hounding them.

If there is no clear mechanism in place now for those teachers, why not engage in this conversation through a lens of how do we fix this? If our teachers are complaining, and I cannot imagine they are making all those stories up, why not engage in this conversation as a way of saying, "Let's revisit what we have now because some of our teachers are saying they want help with a toxic principal."

If it is not this bill, what could we do? Is there something else we could offer these teachers in a toxic environment?

MR. HORN:

Absolutely. I was not able to meet with Senator Pazina or the CCEA to discuss this and talk about solutions, but we are all open to solutions. Right now, progressive discipline is the process that is in place to address these concerns. The school associate superintendent and the regional superintendent are all there to make sure these types of things that we heard today are addressed.

If they are not being addressed, the school associate superintendent or the regional superintendent should be held accountable for not addressing those issues with the principal. When I was a school associate superintendent, those conversations took place with the principals I supervised. They were addressed, and if things did not change, that is what the progressive discipline is for.

LOU MARKOUZIS (Principal, Canyon Springs High School, Leadership and Law Preparatory Academy, Clark County School District; Clark County Education Association; President, Nevada Association of School Administrators; Chair, Silver State Education Foundation):

Before I get to my comments, I certainly want to sympathize with my colleagues. Certainly, no one wants to see that happen at any school site. I am currently the proud principal at Canyon Springs High School in North Las Vegas and I have also served as an executive board member of CCASAPE. Like you, I have been elected to advocate for my constituents on various educational matters.

I am here today to speak in opposition to S.B. 292. As Mr. Horn stated, this proposed legislation is a duplication of some of the efforts that we already do in CCSD.

The Nevada Education Performance Framework for administrators is a tool to hold principals accountable and help them by providing support, corrective action and addressing concerns through observations. Also, when principals are hired, they are on probation. If there is clearly a concern for any principals, there is an option for these principals not to be renewed after the probation period. We need to keep in mind that this bill ultimately could affect student learning. We need education professionals to rise up and take the role of being a principal. We need strong experienced leaders to take a bold step to lead a school community.

As a side note, I have had the great pleasure of being part of a design team, for aspiring school principals in Clark County. This pool pipeline process is a rigorous selection process for assistant principals. Once in the pipeline, there are 12 modules teaching instructional leadership. They learn how to build trust with educators, the community and support professionals. Once they graduate from this program, they still have a rigorous interview process to become a principal.

Upon being appointed as a principal, they are assigned a mentor who is a highly qualified principal. These principals do weekly check-ins with their mentees to discuss and support the new principals. They give them instruction on strategic budgeting, managing human capital, school safety and instructional leadership. I serve as a mentor in our system.

In summary, I want to state clearly that this proposed bill would duplicate many mechanisms we have in place in our system.

JENNIFER ATLAS (Nevada Association of School Administrators):

We oppose S.B. 292 because it maintains the premise that all schools and principals are the same. There is not any recognition for the challenge that districts face in hiring principals for schools identified as at-risk. In section 2, subsection 2, paragraph (a) states, "The rating of the school to which the principal is assigned, as determined by the Department pursuant to the statewide system of accountability for public schools, is reduced by one or more levels." One level may be challenging for some schools, especially those identified as at-risk, and a one-level reduction can sometimes be an anomaly.

It is challenging to hire principals to lead at-risk schools. The implementation of this bill could reduce the number of principals wanting to lead such schools. In addition to the challenge of leading at-risk schools, teacher turnover also occurs. Teachers in these schools often live in communities farther away and want to be closer to home. Therefore, we oppose this bill.

FREEMAN HOLBROOK (President, Washoe School Principals Association):

I represent 97 percent of administrators in Washoe County, and we are opposed to S.B. 292. I felt it was vital to share with the Committee how this bill will look in practice, as it would provide multiple barriers to a workforce that is already struggling to retain and recruit good leaders. Principals serve two vital roles in every school they oversee. First, principals are instructional leaders who always do what is best for students within the expectations created at a State and district level. In order to do that, we must put the celebration and growth of our staff at the top of our priority list.

This bill will change that priority overnight and ruin the culture of many schools. In the role we serve for our students and our community, we are sometimes asked to hold staff accountable because it is best for students. This bill will cause a natural collision course, and principals with less experience will not have the ability to hold a staff member accountable because they are at-will and constantly checking over their shoulders.

As leaders, we make tough decisions all day long. When we are held accountable to language, such as in section 2, subsection 3, "the school district shall conduct a survey of the teachers assigned to the school to evaluate conditions," and as it says in section 2, subsection 4, "A principal described in subsection 2 is subject to immediate dismissal by the board of trustees," that threat is always in the back of our minds. It will change how decisions are made for the students who rely on us the most.

Furthermore, with language, again in section 2, subsection 3, "The results of the survey do not affect the employment status of the principal of the school," the means do not equal the outcome. If the survey has no effect on the status, then why are you doing it?

Plans for proactively supporting struggling principals and administrators are already in place and growing in size and efficiency each year. The leadership pathways for administrators are becoming a true focal point for districts in

Nevada and S.B. 292 would destroy all the work that has been done in this area.

Secondly, our building managers are ultimately the very end line for daily decisions concerning the safety of every person in the building and overall organizational efficiency. This bill would negatively and immediately affect some of our students and staff who need our strongest leaders; our most struggling schools and their students are battling outside entities.

CHAIR LANGE:

I know this bill does not really deal with this issue since it is targeted toward principals but, in some respects, if a principal is not doing his or her job, the area superintendent who supervises principals should have a handle on what is going on. They should be able to work with the principal to make things better or make changes. Although your bill does not deal with that right now, this is a further accountability that maybe you can work on next Session.

SENATOR BUCK:

I was just wondering how many schools potentially had over half of their staff transfer.

SENATOR PAZINA:

I believe that John Vellardita shared that it was approximately 18 to 20 schools.

MR. VELLARDITA:

What I said earlier was that we get anywhere from 13 to 18 schools a year with complaints. Very few hit the threshold of 50 percent or more because that standard is so high. It depends on the year. In the last four years, based on school climate issues, there may have been one or two schools each year.

SENATOR BUCK:

Do you track the reason they leave? Because it could be safety or more student-related, or even that they move to the suburbs. That tends to be what happens.

MR. VELLARDITA:

The CCEA does track that. What we try to separate out is the productive disruption climate. We are trying to be a sea change agent when a principal comes in, to legitimate concerns around an environment that has gone toxic.

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What we find is that when we separate the latter from the former, the number is reduced, but we still have that handful of schools that exceed the threshold.

SENATOR BUCK:

Does CCEA ever bring that to the attention of the associate superintendent?

MR. VELLARDITA:

Yes, we do. We do it with the school district and we do it with their immediate supervisor.

SENATOR PAZINA:

I would just repeat again that a principal who completes the probationary period is again employed at-will if, in each of two consecutive school years, the school rating is reduced by one or more levels and 50 percent or more of teachers assigned to the school request to transfer to another school.

Again, the word reasonable was used a lot with this Legislation, especially relating to some of the challenges educators shared. I would just urge everyone on the Committee to look toward equity when it comes to principals and teachers.

CHAIR LANGE:

I have ten letters of support for this bill ([Exhibit P](#)), and I will close the hearing on [S.B. 292](#) and open the hearing on [S.B. 329](#).

**[SENATE BILL 329](#)**: Requires appointment of a committee to study provisions relating to budgetary and reporting requirements for school districts.  
(BDR S-443)

SENATOR DINA NEAL (Senatorial District No. 4):

This bill came out of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education. It relates to school districts conducting a study of their budgeting processes and determining whether or not there are any changes needed to improve accuracy and efficiency. I was not on that Committee, so I have a co-chair who will explain what they were trying to do in the Interim.

MARY PIERCZYNSKI (Nevada Association of School Superintendents):

This is a really simple bill. The 2021-2022 Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education invited superintendents to come forward and present on several



topics. At one of the hearings, it was brought out that there are problems with our sequencing of budgeting and providing different reports back to the Legislative Counsel Bureau and the Nevada Department of Education (NDE).

This bill is a very simple request to ask the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education, which will be meeting after this Session, to appoint a committee to study our budgeting process along with some of the reporting we are doing. One of our concerns is there is some preliminary budgeting that we think probably does not need to happen. We want the Interim Committee to look at some of the reports and how this budgeting process could be improved.

ANDREW FEULING (Superintendent, Carson City School District):

I do not know how long it has been since this process has been looked at, but we think there is an opportunity to streamline some of these processes. There is a spring budgeting process, and a December budget, and many of the reports are due to the Nevada Department of Taxation and NDE.

Streamlining it would not only make it easier on all sides, it could also improve the accuracy and transparency of what we are doing.

MS. PIERCZYNSKI:

We are just asking the Interim Committee to appoint folks to look at that budgeting process, and I think we have outlined who we think would be helpful in that process.

CHAIR LANGE:

I would like to have our Committee counsel comment on the task force study group. Would this be a group that would count as one of the studies, or would it be an opportunity where the Chair could include this in their plan for the Interim?

ASHER KILLIAN (Counsel):

This would not count against any limit on what the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education can do. It would be something that the Chair of that Interim Committee could include in their work plan for approval by the Legislative Commission during the Interim.

SENATOR TITUS:

You know my opinion about commissions. This is a perfect example of something that we might want to study, but I have a concern about putting something in a mandate for a commission. When was the last time this whole budget process was really reviewed, if ever?

MR. FEULING:

I have no idea, but not in the last decade since I have been involved. In any of the reporting I have seen, going back at least a decade, everything looks exactly the same. The submission process is the same. The forms are the same.

I am originally from Wisconsin and I submitted budgets in Wisconsin and did all the reporting via a very streamlined online process that was quick and very different from our process here. I think there is room for efficiency here.

SENATOR TITUS:

Why are we creating a commission and not going to our State Superintendent and asking her to look at this process? Did you meet with her? Did you say, "Hey, when was the last time we did this?"

MS. PIERCZYNSKI:

No, I have not gone to her for that. She was involved with the Interim Committee, but this is a big process. For instance, there is a preliminary budget that is presented in April and, talking with other finance officers in the other districts, we think it is probably not necessary. This is a big process, and I am sure the NDE would be involved, because we have asked that they would be on the Committee to study it as well.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will take testimony in favor of S.B. 329.

DYLAN KEITH (Vegas Chamber):

The Vegas Chamber is in support of S.B. 329. We believe it is necessary to review these dollars and to make sure that they are efficiently going towards our students and making sure that they have every chance of success.

CHAIR LANGE:

Seeing no one wanting to testify further on this bill, I will submit a letter of support from the Nevada Association of School Administrators ([Exhibit Q](#)) and close the hearing on [S.B. 329](#) and open the hearing on [S.B. 344](#).

[SENATE BILL 344](#): Revises provisions governing education. (BDR 34-4)

SENATOR DINA NEAL (Senatorial District No. 4):

There are three amendments that I will talk about. This bill covers several different things. It talks about public comment, it talks about a knowledge standard for the superintendent, and it also gets into paid leave for parents who want to attend school events. That piece came from a constituent.

I want to start with the amendments. If you look at the first amendment, which was proposed by the Legal Division for me ([Exhibit R](#)), it eliminates a substitute teacher with a high school diploma. I understand why we did this during COVID-19 when our schools were closed, and we did not have a lot of wiggle room to bring substitute teachers into the system, so we adopted this emergency rule to allow folks with a high school diploma to become substitute teachers.

Why am I prohibiting it in [S.B. 344](#)? First, I do not think people with only a high school diploma have the requisite knowledge, experience or competency to be in a classroom to teach kids, even for a short period. I felt very strongly about the policy when it moved during the Interim because I felt that we were setting the substitutes up for failure. We were also setting up a long-term substitute with a high school diploma coming into a classroom with students who had been out of school for two years. These students were emotionally and academically challenged, and a substitute teacher with a high school diploma and maybe a couple weeks of training would be sorely lacking in experience and in the ability to teach, let alone be a long-term substitute for these students who were challenged by being out of the classroom for so long.

These substitutes could maybe understand how to do attendance, understand blood pathogens and be able to at least come in and read a book, but teaching is a little bit deeper than that, even for a long-term substitute to fill in for the day. We are not trying to set up our students to have babysitters in the room. Instead, what we are trying to do is make sure that students have a long-term or a short-term substitute that can manage a classroom of kids and follow the

teacher's lesson plans so content is not missed. The bill basically reestablishes that you must have an associate degree to qualify to go into the classroom as a substitute.

The second amendment ([Exhibit S](#)) came from a constituent who told me that there are parents working in the service field who also want to be able to go to their children's schools to participate. They want to go to parent meetings, attend music programs, special events or fairs with their kid, but they cannot go because they work and cannot afford to lose any income.

The constituents proposed the idea of offering paid time off (PTO) to parents so they can go to their children's school. This would promote parent engagement. We know that in urban districts, there is a lack of parent engagement, especially between from 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., or even being able to come to a parent-teacher conference after school.

When my own children were in school, I had a pretty flexible job, so I went to one of my son's violin programs at his school, and he was shocked that I physically came to one of his events. It means a lot to a child to see their parent actually in the building.

Not only does it help in classroom management, it also acts as a check for the teacher. When I grew up, if a parent showed up in the classroom, it was a game changer. It could affect the student's behavior and how that child was going to continue to perform in that classroom. Especially for negative behavior that needs to be checked, having a parent actually have the capacity to come into the school makes a difference to that child. You can never change the impact of that in their relationship.

That is why I proposed the PTO piece. I changed it to a "may" instead of a "shall" to add permissive language. I deleted section 12, lines 37 and 38 because there is no point in making the language permissive and then punishing someone for doing that. If you allow the parent to go from work to the school, you should not suddenly turn around and mistreat them for it.

The third amendment ([Exhibit T](#)) is a conceptual amendment. This is super important because it is the crux of my bill relating to the superintendent and the associate superintendent. I need to make a correction in No. 2 of the

amendment where it says 10 years; it is supposed to be 5 years for the associate superintendent, not 10.

Why do I have these provisions in sections 7 and 8? During the last Interim, I was having a conversation with some people who happened to be in leadership, and I was surprised at what they did not know. That surprised me because I stopped teaching in the K-12 system in 2019, and I could still recall policy from the years I was teaching. These people did not even know the current policies.

While we were talking about things like the break-up of the CCSD and education in Nevada, all I started to think about was,

How can you defend a school system when you do not even know the policy, law or anything we passed in the past 12 years that I have been in the Legislature? How are you not aware of any of the programs so you can decide where we should go? If your role is to hire and lead principals who are the leaders of the schools, implementing the curriculum and academic achievement standards and the goals the district has set forth for the school, how exactly is it that you are able to lead and make decisions that are appropriate that are going to move that district forward?

If you do not even know the policies, you cannot talk about the academic strides, gains, movements, successes, failures or anything that we have done in the district. How can you lead us to better educate our students? That is why I needed to include the conceptual amendment to clarify what I meant by "when you are hired." The way folks read the bill, and rightfully so, we would have eliminated an out-of-state person from coming in and working for the district. That was not my intent.

If you do have an out-of-state person that comes in, my intent was having a knowledge standard for that person. They might come in saying, "I did all these wonderful things in Tennessee," but I do not really care about you and Tennessee. I want to know what they know about Nevada, about Nevada policy, about the State and our academic achievement standards. How have you understood the law and policy in the State to help our children? If you cannot answer those simple questions, I think we have a problem.

Superintendents should be evaluated on what they know, and whether or not they understand the law that was implemented, primarily so they do not break it. In the Interim, we saw how A.B. No. 469 of the 79th Session was manipulated. I do not know why it was manipulated, because the law said X, but it was interpreted as Y.

To me, it is simple—follow the law, make sure our kids are achieving within the school districts and that the policies and goals you set forward can actually be understood by your principals. Superintendents should be representing themselves as the leaders and the top academic content leaders of the district. If you cannot do that, you should not be running a school district because it is not just about budget, it is not just about money, it is money and academic achievement.

So those are the reasons why I put in the standards for the associate superintendent and the superintendent. Upon being hired as a superintendent, you must have at least ten years of academic policy experience. For an associate superintendent, it would be five years.

There is another part of S.B. 344 that limits cities from running charter schools. Why do I have that provision in there? Since the implementation of the policy in 2017, I have disliked it. I agreed to vote on the policy because, at the time in a particular city, they were taking on early literacy. We were not funding pre-K.

After several weeks of my strong dislike, I said that it made sense, because of *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 279, which is the redevelopment language for a city to engage in the work of wraparound literacy and early learning, we needed that. Now, there is an expansion of cities wanting to not only do K-3, but also potentially K-5, K-8 and even K-12.

My concern with the expansion of that policy is that it is not really the role of a city to take over education. They should take care of homelessness services, sewage, remedying blight and focus on things that have to do with the management of a city. Their role is not to run schools. That is the role of the school district and the board of trustees. It is not the role of the city just because they feel deeply about education and want to get into the business of running schools. That starts to dilute the per pupil expenditure, so it can then be used for the charter school set up outside of the existing schools that we have in the district.

We already have the charter authority. Why do we need a third entity to perform the work of school districts? In the city that is currently doing charter schools, they have a mixture of Redevelopment Agency (RDA) dollars and per pupil expenditure. It lacks transparency. I do not know what the RDA is paying for because it is still in law that they are allowed to do the wraparound services.

In my city, they have micro schools that are not licensed by NDE. We had a huge conversation about where to get them licensed if they are not licensed by the NDE. There was an outside group that decided their licensing standard was the equivalent of NDE, and they had data showing all these academic gains. I wondered by what standard and by what measurements are they achieving these gains? And who is overseeing any of this?

The requirement was that you had to remove yourself from the school district in order to participate. So how does that help the broader goal of the districts or the schools that are trying to maintain their attendance and their count, when all you are doing is pulling them off? We are not really sure exactly how they are succeeding or achieving. Ultimately, you would have to enroll these students back into the district if they fail because the district is starting to be treated as the fallback school.

If they do not do well in the charter, just send them back to the regular school. Well, the regular school is actually supposed to perform for the kids. That is what we are paying for. That is why we decided this Session to put an extra \$2,000 per child to change the narrative on how we perform for the student. Hopefully, the money will perform for the students so they can academically stand up for themselves and be able to graduate.

SENATOR BUCK:

Sections 9 and 10 are where I am concerned. You talked a lot about your intent, and I heard that loud and clear, but why would we limit the cities if they can offer a strong option for parents and children? We both know that there are schools in different areas that are pockets of excellence, and there are those that are not. Why would we limit that choice if parents are stuck in a one-star school year after year after year?

At least this option gives parents hope. Strong Start Academy, which receives financial and other support from the City of Las Vegas, is another solution to

help a school district that is struggling in pockets around the City. It provides parents with another option, and it is a public charter school.

I heard some of your intent with the idea that cities should be concentrating on trash and homelessness and such, but if they can actually put together a private foundation or nonprofit corporation that is able to provide families with another high-quality choice, why would we not want to do that?

SENATOR NEAL:

This is where there is going to be a philosophical difference. My question is, whose role and responsibility is it to educate children? To me, it is the school district, not the city. That school currently provides early literacy in pre-K, which is in NRS 279, the redevelopment chapter, specifying early literacy. That statute is still the same; it was literacy in general, and then it was wraparound services. So why are we expanding beyond the law? If you say, "I am getting ready to open a K-3 school," there is nothing in statute that I have seen which would allow them to take their RDA dollars and then to expand.

I also feel that having cities run charter schools is a dilution of the per pupil dollars. It should not be going to the cities. We had this conversation during the CCSD reorganization meetings in 2015, talking about the roles of cities and counties and asking what should their role be in regard to schools? Should they start opening up schools and taking away dollars from the school district and dismantling the public school system? My answer is no. If they want to engage in the work of providing wraparound and support, no problem. But if you are trying to start running a K-5 school as a city, I do have a problem.

SENATOR BUCK:

From my experience, you can unite a community around a high-quality school where it may not be happening in a traditional district school. It is better, and there is so much more opportunity. I just see it hurting those students who are continually in one-star schools because obviously nobody has fixed them in ten years. This is a viable option to unite a community around a vision and bring in extra donor dollars to help these students. We know that charter schools do not get facility funds and need to get buy-in from a community. Everyone is scraping for solutions, and I guess I am looking for solutions too if this is not a viable one.



SENATOR NEAL:

I understand your frustration and I also understand your point. If the cities want to run schools, let them run them on their own dime. Since you brought up Las Vegas, if they want to continue to do early literacy, no problem. Stay in that lane. But if you are talking about expanding, which we heard several times this Session, then I do not feel that is the role they should be stepping into. We have passed so much policy this Session to strengthen the districts—for accountability for teachers and principals and to try study this and study that.

So where exactly do these city schools fit into that? Why are we investing all of that time and policy dollars into the existing public system and charter system to then allow cities to run the school? They have enough on their plate. Are they doing their basic duties under the charter chapter? If the answer is that they are doing all of those things well, and education is just the other footprint, then I would say okay. But I do not think that is true.

SENATOR BUCK:

Maybe it is subjective whether they are doing things well. What would be an outcome? If the city school is doing well, and they are implementing Read by Grade Three or whatever their charter school model looks like, what would be the outcome to call it a success, or not? Is this a success or not? What do you see as a success, as opposed to students being stuck in a one-star school year after year?

Personally, I like options because I do not want to send my child to a school that continually fails them. I prefer to send them to a school that is showing student achievement and good outcomes.

SENATOR NEAL:

I do not think it is a matter of what I see as success. I am not challenging what they have done with early literacy. What I am saying, though, is that I see more of the negative response. In the areas where they are working, these schools historically have been one- or two-star schools, but they have also never had the benefit of true interventions. The first time the interventions were brought forward, were the Zoom and Victory school dollars, which was in 2013 under Governor Sandoval.

Then the conversation shifted in 2017 through 2019 to shift those dollars and move them out. But that was the first time we had ever directed dollars to

poverty. My biggest fear is that the Wendell P. Williams and the Matt Kelly Elementary Schools, and the Prime Six schools on the west side of Las Vegas will lose some of their students. Ultimately, the 300 kids they have will then be closing a public school. Why? Can the city wrap into an existing school? Why do they have to start their own school? They can do wraparound services, which is listed in NRS 279. They could wrap into Matt Kelly, Wendell Williams, Quannah McCall and Twin Lakes Elementary Schools.

If you have the dollars to expand, and if this is the city's passion, why not bring that extra staff to help run that after-school tutoring program? Why not come over there to help with the literacy and Read by Grade Three? Why is that not a solution or an option? That would have the same effect, right? We are looking for students to have extra support and intervention, but to me, the result is dilution.

SENATOR BUCK:

That is why I went from working for the district to charter, for more autonomy. You can infuse many resources into these schools, and many of them get Title 1 dollars and obviously they cannot spend a lot of it. They have so much money and it is sitting there in the bank. We saw that with one of the previous bills. What I found is that, in order to make a difference, I needed a bit more autonomy. A lot of the times in the district, you would fight the bureaucracy. I guess we will agree to disagree that you can infuse money into schools, as many cities do. In Henderson, they give grants out, which is monumental for a city to try to make a difference for the kids that need it, the ones that are left behind.

We talk about this over and over and over again. I just feel that giving them an opportunity and maybe shutting down a system that does not work is a worthwhile effort. I am not advocating for shutting down the district. Parents are going to vote with their feet where they are going to want their child to go for education. Every parent wants the best for their child. So that is just where I have a problem with sections 9 and 10 of the bill.

SENATOR TITUS:

I understand your passion and I appreciate you bringing it forward because the whole discussion is always about improving the education system, not only in Nevada, but especially in Clark County. Your effort and passion are very much appreciated.

You were discussing substitute teachers at least having an associate degree. I am concerned about that because I know that in some of the rural areas when you have, say, a welding class, those teachers may be part-time. If they have that professional experience, they can teach something like welding. We want these kids to be job-ready when they get out, and I worry that having that mandatory associate degree would preclude these people from teaching subjects like welding, woodworking or construction.

SENATOR NEAL:

I do not believe this limits them because we created a special business license in 2013 to allow individuals to come in with a particular expertise or trade in certain areas. From everything that I have read, we have not removed that special license option that was different than the substitute license.

MR. KILLIAN:

There are licenses for various grade levels issued by the NDE. There is a license for special education and a special license for a person who does something in schools other than teaching. What you can do is determined by the endorsement you hold on that license. So a school nurse, for example, would hold a special license with the school nurse endorsement. A school psychologist would hold a special license with a school psychologist endorsement.

One of the endorsements you can get on a special license is a substitute teacher endorsement or an emergency substitute teacher endorsement. One of the other endorsements you can get is an endorsement in business and industry. That allows you to teach welding and all of those kinds of things. The requirements for the business and industry endorsement are set by regulation, specifically *Nevada Administrative Code* 391.425. It generally requires a high school diploma plus some sort of experience in the industry you are teaching. The proposed conceptual amendment would only be affecting substitute teacher endorsements and not the business and industry endorsements. People who hold a special license with the business and industry endorsement would continue to be able to teach business and industry without receiving an associate degree. It would only be the people who are seeking a special license with a substitute teacher endorsement that would be required to have the associate degree.

SENATOR TITUS:

Do we have a breakdown on how many substitute licenses we have in the State and how many have an associate degree or higher?

SENATOR NEAL:

I do not have that information. The first time we made that emergency regulation to allow someone with a high school diploma to be a substitute was during COVID-19. I thought it was a minimum bachelor's degree required before that. Maybe when CCSD comes up in opposition today, you can ask them how many school substitutes they have.

SENATOR TITUS:

And also, ask about what training the permanent substitutes have.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will take testimony in favor of S.B. 344.

CHRIS DALY (Nevada State Education Association):

We are excited to be here to speak in support of S.B. 344, which I believe to be the biggest bill this Committee is hearing today. Thinking about all the components of the bill and attempting to categorize it, I read this bill as a generic good government bill for public education. Having paid leave for parental engagement in school activities and meetings; ensuring members of the public have the ability to comment at board meetings; requiring superintendents, the leaders of their districts, to know the history and issues of those school districts; and making sure cities focus on delivering the public services they are charged to provide without going into other fields, is all good government. This is a good bill. We hope you pass it.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will take testimony opposed to S.B. 344.

Ms. HADDAD:

I have extensive comments, section by section, that I am more than happy to submit to this Committee. There is a lot of complexity above and beyond a philosophical discussion about the delivery system of public education. I have not seen the third amendment regarding the hiring requirements for the associate superintendent and superintendent, so we will be on the lookout for that to have more opinions on that piece.

In section 1 and section 6, we see the words "impede or interfere" with regard to the open meeting law. For section 1, these matters are already governed by the Nevada Open Meeting Law, so open meeting laws for boards of trustees should be aligned to all other boards of trustees and public agencies. The CCSD is already subject to extensive auditing requirements, so the provision in section 2 would create an additional administrative burden without taking into account whether the money is available. It also does not state how the audit would be paid for. Furthermore, it ignores the fact that large school districts already undergo a financial statement audit each year.

In section 4, as with all board policies, the community at large has the opportunity to engage throughout the development process of any policy. We do not feel it is appropriate to single out a particular group that the board of trustees must consult with in order to develop the policy that is proposed here. I will submit more extensive comment.

TESS OPFERMAN (Washoe County School District):

A significant portion of this bill does not apply to the Washoe County School District (WCSD), but we do support some of the bill. I want to highlight specifically sections 7 and 8, which we are opposed to. Section 7 puts restrictions on the evaluation procedures that our Board of Trustees does for the Superintendent.

We feel strongly that the discretion of these evaluations should be reserved for the Board of Trustees. They were elected by their constituents. They serve that population, and they should have full discretion on what that evaluation procedure looks like. Section 8 talks about the qualifications of a superintendent. I know that Senator Neal talked about an amendment and we have not seen that amendment yet. I am sure that we will be able to look at it and we may be just fine, but at least in terms of what is written here, we are opposed.

We love our Superintendent at WCSD; Superintendent Susan Enfield is wonderful. She had zero years of experience in Nevada before she came into her role as Superintendent, so this bill as currently written would have prohibited her from becoming our Superintendent. We will look for that amendment because that might resolve an issue with that particular section. But as written, we must be opposed to S.B. 344.

MR. KEITH:

The Vegas Chamber has been working with the sponsor and we do appreciate her effort with this bill. So far, as written, the Chamber is opposed to S.B. 344, specifically for the uncapped paid leave with only a minimum 12-hour notice as outlined in section 12.

We represent the business community, which is the largest taxpayer group in the State, so we have a concern with section 11, which grants the same to public employees. We worry that section 12 will not allow our smaller business members to operate with the possibility of finding replacements and shifts because a 12-hour notice is not enough time to find someone else to cover for that employee.

We appreciate the sponsor working with that amendment, but we are not sure it will protect small businesses enough. Those were our two primary concerns with the bill, but we will continue working with the sponsor.

SENATOR DOÑATE:

Does the bill say it has to follow the same provision that we have for the PTO across the board where it has to be a business of 50 employees or more?

MR. KEITH:

It does. This bill, as written before the amendment, would require any business with more than 50 employees to find a replacement for that person with just a 12-hour notice. Our smallest businesses would be exempted out of that piece, but even 55 to 60 employees is still not a very large business and it is not always easy to find those replacements.

MS. PIERCZYNSKI:

Speaking for the Nevada Association of School Superintendents, we appreciate Senator Neal speaking with us briefly prior to this meeting. The way it reads now, section 8 says you have to be an employee of a public school in the State for ten years. If that is not clarified, it would mean that 7 of our 17 superintendents would not have been able to apply for the positions.

Section 7 has some issues for us as far as the evaluation is concerned. We understand people get to have their input on what the evaluation should consist of, and most districts bring in the public when they do a superintendent evaluation. This bill puts 25 percent of the annual evaluation of the

superintendents of schools dependent on student achievement. Even though we understand student achievement is the most important goal of a school district, we feel that is something communities and school boards should determine. We look forward to working with the sponsor and getting some of these areas clarified.

KELLY CROMPTON (City of Las Vegas):

The City of Las Vegas is in opposition to S.B. 344, specifically the language in section 10 that would prohibit local governments from supporting, sponsoring or operating a charter school. In 2022, the City of Las Vegas applied through the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA) process and was granted the ability to support, through our nonprofit partners, the Strong Start Academy Elementary School. The school is in its first year and serves K-2 children, adding grade levels through the next few years to bring it up to grade five.

The Strong Start Academy supports low-income students in wards 1, 3 and 5 in areas where there are currently no three-, four- or five-star schools available. The school is a bilingual, biliterate model with all core subjects being taught in both English and Spanish. Current Measures of Academic Progress scores show that, in its first year, the small class sizes and smaller school size is allowing students at Strong Start Academy to achieve greater outcomes. After this hearing, I will provide that MAP report to all of you so that you can look at some of the data.

The City of Las Vegas has entered into a six-year contract and commitment to our partners, the community and the students of the Strong Start Academy. The language in section 10 will impact the support we are currently provided and committed to. Section 10, subsection 1, paragraph (d) would prohibit any grant dollars from local governments to support charter schools. Outside of the Strong Start Academy, the City has awarded support through grant funds to charter schools within opportunity zones.

One of the most common phone calls and constituent interactions our elected leaders have is about education within our community. Supporting the Strong Start Academy is one effort to make a positive impact for low-income students who need these services within the City's jurisdiction. If any of you would like to tour the facility, we would welcome that opportunity.

In response to some of the dialogue that has gone back and forth here today, no dollars go directly to the City of Las Vegas to operate this facility; it goes to the nonprofit that is operating the school. Starting the Strong Start Academy was a long effort toward supporting schools within the City's jurisdiction through the Downtown Achieves process. It includes a lot of our wraparound services within the RDA. This was not just a decision to start a school. This is many, many years of trying to support the schools within our City.

CHAIR LANGE:

You hit on a couple of things. Small class sizes are really important, we all know that, and small schools are also important.

SENATOR DOÑATE:

Earlier, we heard sentiments that there is concern with a city running a school when that is not essentially in your wheelhouse. Can you provide some context as to why the City of Las Vegas chose to weigh in on it?

In reading about some of the language when S.B. 344 was proposed, I understand that Las Vegas City Councilman, Cedric Crear, shared his concerns about whether or not charter schools even work because the ones that were nearby were also struggling. I think that is probably the concern that we are hearing. Is this even something you should be addressing, considering that there is duplication, and schools are in the jurisdiction of the school district?

In the long term, seeing that you have already been involved in this space, are you going to continue to open charter schools in other locations?

MS. CROMPTON:

Addressing the concerns you talked about within our City Council, that was at an open public meeting. The support for the charter school was ultimately decided by our elected body of seven Las Vegas City Council members.

We have Strong Start Academies for pre-K and mobile pre-K. We have always supported after-school programming, so this was just another effort to try and make an impact in low-income areas. The City of Las Vegas is not operating the school. We do not have the curriculum. This school was a granted authority through the SPCSA.



NICOLE ROURKE (City of Henderson):

We have a few concerns about this bill. Section 10 expressly prohibits a city from sponsoring a charter school or providing any financial support to a charter school. We currently use 30 percent of our marijuana business-licensing funds to support Henderson public schools. These include both school district and charter schools through grants for supplies and other things that they deem necessary to provide quality instruction. Senate Bill 344 will prevent us from doing any of that for charter schools. For us, it is a grant that schools can apply for to the City of Henderson. Those funds are then distributed based on a committee decision. This would limit us from serving at-risk students in all of those schools.

While currently not allowed in statute, the City of Henderson would like the opportunity to potentially sponsor charter schools in the future. Our growing population cannot be accommodated in our existing CCSD schools and the capital resources are not sufficient to address all the needs. The District cannot build the schools necessary to resolve the overcrowding issues that exist today, much less keep up with our population growth. For that reason, charter schools need to remain as a viable solution.

We also have concerns with section 11 which requires paid leave in addition to our already generous PTO policy. We would like it to be made permissive. I understand the amendment makes it permissive for the private sector, but local government has very open PTO policies, and we are certainly very supportive of education in the City of Henderson. I do not see this being an issue for releasing people to attend necessary school-based conferences and things like that. For these reasons, we are opposed to S.B. 344.

GIL LOPEZ (Charter School Association of Nevada):

The Charter School Association of Nevada is opposed to S.B. 344. Sections 9 and 10 will prohibit partnerships, support, or any type of help in the future with charter schools. This does not necessarily apply to running the schools, but even grants with some of the advisory committees, and money that comes down through the neighborhoods could stop, potentially causing an unintended consequence.

MS. IVANOFF:

I am speaking about this bill because I want kids to have more choices. I do not know why we have to protect public schools, especially Nevada public schools,

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with the results we are getting. If they are good public schools, parents will keep their kids in them. If the public school is not good, parents should have the option to offer their child a better chance in life and put them in a school that gives them better education. If our public schools were so good, we would not be in the position we are in right now. I am surprised you guys are not listening to any bills on school choice, period. The money should follow the child and then everything is going to be much better.

CHAIR LANGE:

I will take testimony in neutral to S.B. 344 now.

BRETT HARRIS (Labor Commissioner, Nevada Department of Business and Industry):

We would handle the enforcement on this bill, so I wanted to be present to answer any questions.

CHAIR LANGE:

I do not see any questions right now. I will submit a letter of support from Battle Born Progress ([Exhibit U](#)), and a letter of opposition from the Henderson Chamber of Commerce ([Exhibit V](#)), and close the hearing on S.B. 344 and open public comment.

MS. GONZALES:

I am the proud mother and advocate of an amazing autistic 13-year-old son. I am the assistant to Azul Blue United by Autism and I am a member of the Parent Leadership Team of Nevada, a nonprofit organization serving families in Las Vegas. I want to thank Senator Scott Hammond for bringing forward S.B. 158, which will protect children with special needs.

CHAIR LANGE:

I really want to hear what you have to say, but in public comment you cannot speak about any of the bills we talked about today.

MS. GONZALES:

Okay, but in regard to a bill earlier, I am really concerned about a teacher controlling the cameras. Accountability is a major factor and I am not sure if there is a different operating system that could possibly ...

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CHAIR LANGE:

I am sorry, but you are still talking about that bill. How about you contact Senator Hammond directly?

Ms. GONZALES:

Thank you so much.

Ms. IVANOFF:

I want to know when you guys are going to hear Assembly Bill 400.

ASSEMBLY BILL 400: Revises various provisions relating to education.  
(BDR 34-1088)

I do not see a schedule. I am also not sure if you listened to S.B. 200 and S.B. 220, but those are really good education bills.

SENATE BILL 200: Revises provisions relating to education savings accounts and education funding. (BDR 34-181)

SENATE BILL 220: Revises provisions relating to the Nevada Educational Choice Scholarship Program. (BDR 34-99)

Can we have those scheduled in the next couple of days?

CHAIR LANGE:

If you look at the schedule, our schedule is posted a day ahead of time on the Legislative website.

Ms. IVANOFF:

They are not scheduled.

CHAIR LANGE:

If they are not scheduled at this point, they are not going to be heard. If you call my office, I would be happy to discuss this with you offline.

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CHAIR LANGE:

I will close the hearing of the Senate Committee on Education at 4:37 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Linda Hiller,  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Senator Roberta Lange, Chair

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

<b>EXHIBIT SUMMARY</b>				
<b>Bill</b>	<b>Exhibit Letter</b>	<b>Introduced on Minute Report Page No.</b>	<b>Witness / Entity</b>	<b>Description</b>
	A	1		Agenda
	B	1		Attendance Roster
S.B. 47	C	3	Jen Sturm-Gahner	Work Session Document
S.B. 114	D	3	Jen Sturm-Gahner	Work Session Document
S.B. 158	E	4	Jen Sturm-Gahner	Work Session Document
S.B. 196	F	6	Jen Sturm-Gahner	Work Session Document
S.B. 292	G	9	Senator Julie Pazina	Proposed Amendment
S.B. 292	H	14	Angie Joye / CCEA	Written Testimony
S.B. 292	I	14	Brandi Cuti / CCEA	Written Testimony
S.B. 292	J	14	Jessica Jones / CCEA	Written Testimony
S.B. 292	K	15	Karen Daniel / CCEA	Written Testimony
S.B. 292	L	15	Charlene Brown / CCEA	Written Testimony
S.B. 292	M	16	Elizabeth Adler / CCEA	Written Testimony
S.B. 292	N	16	Dan Price / CCEA	Written Testimony
S.B. 292	O	17	Tiffany Padilla / CCEA	Written Testimony
S.B. 292	P	24	Chair Roberta Lange	Letters of Support
S.B. 329	Q	27	Chair Roberta Lange	Nevada Association of School Superintendents Letter of Support
S.B. 344	R	27	Senator Dina Neal	First Conceptual Amendment
S.B. 344	S	28	Senator Dina Neal	Second Conceptual Amendment
S.B. 344	T	28	Senator Dina Neal	Third Conceptual

				Amendment
S.B. 344	U	42	Chair Roberta Lange	Battle Born Progress Support Letter
S.B. 344	V	42	Chair Roberta Lange	Henderson Chamber of Commerce Letter of Opposition