

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Eighty-first Session
March 17, 2021**

The Senate Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Moises Denis at 1:04 p.m. on Wednesday, March 17, 2021, Online. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Moises Denis, Chair
Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop, Vice Chair
Senator Roberta Lange
Senator Fabian Donate
Senator Joseph P. Hardy
Senator Scott Hammond
Senator Carrie A. Buck

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jen Sturm, Policy Analyst
Asher Killian, Counsel
Ian Gahner, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jhone Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education
Lauren Wong
Mary Beth Seawald, President and CEO, Vegas Chamber
Katie Robbins, Newsela
Kanani Espinoza, Nevada System of Higher Education
Matt Walker, Opportunity 180
Nicole Rourke, City of Henderson
Jeff Horn, Deputy Executive Director, Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional Technical Employees
Lesley Pittman, Waterford UPSTART
Alex Bybee, Communities In Schools of Nevada
Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association
Amanda Morgan, Executive Director, Educate Nevada Now

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Deanne Moyle-Hicks, Teacher, Washoe County School District; Senior Policy Fellow, Teach Plus
Annette Dawson Owens, School Readiness Policy Director, Children's Advocacy Alliance
Kristal Walker
Emily Espinosa, Nevada Association of School Administrators
Rebecca Garcia, President, Nevada Parent Teacher Association
Tonia Holmes-Sutton, Executive Director, Teach Plus Nevada
Bryan Wachter, Senior Vice President, Retail Association of Nevada
Nick Vander Poel, Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce
Jared Luke, City of North Las Vegas
Jenn Blackhurst, President, HOPE For Nevada
Jeanine Collins, Executive Director, Nevada Succeeds
Erin Phillips, President, Power to Parents
Alexandra Dominguez, The College Board
Jonathan Synold
Hawah Ahmed, Clark County Education Association
Paige Barnes, Nevada Association of School Boards
Mary Pierczynski, Nevada Association of School Superintendents
Lindsay Anderson, Washoe County School District
Brad Keating, Clark County School District
Steven Horner
Leonardo Benavides, Clark County School District

CHAIR DENIS:

I will open the hearing on Senate Bill (S.B.) 173.

SENATE BILL 173: Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR S-1003)

SENATOR MARILYN DONDERO LOOP (Senatorial District No. 8):

The Covid-19 pandemic forced many schools to close their doors and transition to distance learning. The phrase "distance learning" has been said so many times that sometimes we forget how this fundamentally shifted and disrupted schooling. The transition was difficult for our students, families, educators and support staff. As we consider everything we have all been through over the last year, we should take great pride in how our communities have worked together to face these challenges. We should acknowledge all those who have gone above and beyond to do the best for our kids in difficult circumstances. Parents, teachers and school administrators are to be commended for adapting, but the

simple fact is in-person instruction cannot be replicated. We know that learning loss because of the pandemic is a crisis that threatens to set many of our kids back, leaving a widened achievement gap and children behind. If we do not work now to correct it, it will have implications for their educational development for years to come.

Research indicates this learning loss, sometimes referred to as the “Covid slide,” may set some students’ educational development back as much as two years. In some cases, the effects may be felt into adulthood, including reduced educational attainment and learning potential. The damaging effects of learning loss can be an even bigger setback for communities that are already disadvantaged socially and economically. One thing is certain; virtual learning does mean unequal learning.

We already know learning losses widen racial disparities in education. Research by McKinsey & Company and the Education Commission of the States indicates the negative impacts of virtual schooling may be more significant for low-income, Black, and Hispanic students. This impact may be partly due to those students having a higher risk of limited time or lower quality remote instruction and uneven access to devices and the internet compared to their peers. According to the McKinsey & Company research, if schools return to in-class learning in January 2021, students who are White may experience six months of learning loss compared to typical in-class learning; however, Hispanic students may experience more than nine months of learning loss, Black students may experience over 10 months of learning loss and low-income students may experience more than 12 months of learning loss. Let me be clear, even one month of learning loss is unacceptable for any of our students.

That same research estimates the economic impact of student learning loss to individuals and society. In the scenario where in-class learning resumes in January 2021, McKinsey & Company estimates the average K-12 student could lose \$61,000 to \$82,000 in lifetime earnings. The research further examines this impact on the United States as a whole—citing an estimated gross domestic product loss of \$173 billion to \$271 billion each year—which could negatively affect the Country’s competitiveness in the world. It is critical to recognize learning loss is not just a problem for students and their families. This is a significant community, State and nationwide problem with far-reaching effects.

As a former 30-year educator, I know firsthand there is no substitute for one-on-one instruction time with students at any grade level, in any subject. Our teachers are essential to the success of our kids. There is no way to replicate in-person instruction and one-on-one time with students. We must work to address the learning loss from the past year to make sure our students do not fall behind. We need to know how many students are going to school, what our students are doing on a day-to-day basis, sustain their interest over the summer and use this time in the classroom so they are more prepared to return to school in the fall.

Finally, I want to acknowledge what we are discussing today is only possible because of the American Rescue Plan that Congress passed and President Biden signed into law last week. These critical relief dollars coming to Nevada schools have allowed us to bring forward S.B. 173, which asks our school districts to develop plans to provide options for both virtual and in-person summer school. This bill will help move the State and our school districts through that planning process, ensuring that hundreds of millions of dollars in federal aid intended to mitigate learning loss is being put to work for students.

Senate Bill 173 contains an initial roadmap to address these next steps in two distinct ways. First, it allows for a plan to address the immediate need to counter the loss of learning by providing an avenue for intensive and targeted services for students. Second, S.B. 173 creates a way to measure the problem in more depth so we can fully understand the extent of the learning loss.

Within 30 days after the bill is signed into law, section 1 authorizes the board of trustees of each school district and the State Public Charter School Authority to submit to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction a plan to address any learning loss experienced by pupils as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The plan would include the option for pupils to attend summer school, either in-person or online, and the manner in which the schools and districts, or charter schools, will target pupils most at risk of learning loss.

Examples of students most at risk of learning loss are outlined in the bill. Some of those mentioned include pupils with disabilities, who are chronically absent, who are enrolled in first through third grade and are struggling in mathematics and reading, and who lack the financial resources necessary to access services to address learning loss.

Section 1 also requires a school district or charter school offering summer school as provided in this bill to include transportation and meal services. School districts, when they submit their plans, can design their transportation policy to fit the needs of their students. Additionally, it outlines requirements for summer school personnel and authorizes use of federal money to administer the program. Senate Bill 173 requires personnel who are hired for summer school programs, including, but not limited to, teachers, support personnel and other licensed personnel receive supplemental pay equal to their contract rate.

Section 2 of S.B. 173 requires school districts and the State Public Charter School Authority to submit a report to the State Superintendent by October 31 of this year regarding any plan to address learning loss, including information related to summer school and the use of federal money for that purpose. Nevada's Department of Education (NDE) will then submit a consolidated report by November 30 of this year to Governor Steve Sisolak and the Legislature.

As mentioned before, the degree to which the pandemic impacted some areas of K-12 education are still unknown. The information gathered in these reports will be critical to understanding the severity of the situation we already know exists. For the record, I have two amendments to this bill ([Exhibit B](#)).

JHONE EBERT (Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education):

It is important to acknowledge that regaining our equilibrium as a society is going to take everyone. At the NDE, we are partnering with Governor Steve Sisolak, the State Board of Education, Legislators, our stakeholders and everyone looking forward to getting out of this situation. It is our job to provide our students what their parents want for them—a pathway to success. Every child willing to work hard will have our unwavering support to graduate with the tools to build a home, a life and a future.

This bill is an important part of every school district to deliver our promise to students and their families. As Senator Dondero Loop said, there is no replacement for a highly effective educator. I share her deep appreciation for all the parents, grandparents, siblings, caretakers, other family members and mentors who went above and beyond supporting our students during distance learning. We know students who rely on the support and interventions that only teachers can provide have struggled during this pandemic.

The conversation S.B. 173 has opened in Nevada is part of a national dialogue. The American Rescue Plan, which will invest \$1.1 billion in Nevada and its education system, acknowledges the unique opportunity to leverage summer learning to support our educational recovery. To ensure students are getting the support they need, districts will be asked to identify the tools they will use to measure student progress in their plans. This helps identify the student areas of need, and promotes equity and our educator's ability to tailor instruction as they come into our school buildings. In addition, it helps assure parents and families their children are seeing positive outcomes as a result of this additional learning opportunity.

Of the \$1.1 billion coming to our State, 90 percent of those funds will go directly to the districts and schools. At least 20 percent must be used to address learning loss. Of the 10 percent of the funds NDE may reserve for Statewide activities, at least 5 percent must be used to address learning loss, at least 1 percent must be used for summer enrichment programming and another 1 percent must be invested in after-school programs.

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

Over the past year, we have experienced some of the most challenging circumstances, with nuanced impacts across Nevada's school districts. It is clear our students and schools continue to face significant hurdles from the pandemic's impacts. This is not the time to sit back and wait to see how bad it truly is or just accept this loss as a new reality or new normal. Our kids, our educators, our families, our communities and our State deserve more.

These unprecedented times call for a consistent and guided response plan to address the profound learning loss and other issues experienced across our communities. By providing these next steps to our schools, we will confront the learning loss, achievement gaps, and underlying inequities that have been amplified by the pandemic and get our students back on track.

SENATOR HARDY:

We listed the various groups that did not do well. What became of the micro-schools in North Las Vegas and their ability to not get into as many challenges with learning loss? Do we have any of those statistics or observations? Are the micro-schools continuing as part of this plan?

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SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

I do not have that information with me. The money coming from the federal government is specifically identified for public and charter schools.

MS. EBERT:

I visited the micro-schools after the winter break, and they shared data with me. I do not have any current data but the data I do possess indicates they were on track.

SENATOR HARDY:

That is good to hear.

LAUREN WONG:

I am presenting testimony for Alexander Wong ([Exhibit C](#)) in support of S.B. 173.

SENATOR MOISES DENIS (Senatorial District No. 2):

I have a written statement from Yesenia Serrato Gonzales:

Good afternoon and thank you for giving me the opportunity to give my testimony about the importance of SB173 to not only me, but my children and my community as well. My name is Yesenia Serrato Gonzales and I am a single mother to 3 amazing sons enrolled in CCSD which include my special needs son in an IEP in 5th grade and my neurotypical sons in 6th and 10th grade. As state Sen. Marilyn Dondero Loop stated "We know that learning loss because of the pandemic is a crisis that threatens to set many of our kids back with the potential of leaving behind a widened achievement gap, if we don't work now to correct it, it will have implications for their educational development for years to come" I have seen my sons immensely impacted by the regression that virtual learning has caused. From connectivity problems that caused truancy and grading errors, to extreme anguish and mental distress especially with my special needs son. My sons went from Honor Roll A and B students to failing subjects because the type of instruction all three of my sons needed was in person instruction, particularly with my special needs son who has an IEP tailored to his educational needs and virtual education did not meet or comply with his needs as well as many others. I believe there is no

education like having a face to face interaction and instruction with your teacher and I will quote State Sen. Marilyn Dondero Loop "I know first-hand there is no substitute for one to one instruction time with students, at any grade level, in any subject," "Our teachers are essential to the success of our kids. The fact is there is simply no way to replicate the in person instruction and the one to one time that we spend with our students"

SB173 would allow many children in our community to catch up, especially those with LEP limited English proficiency or ESL English as a second language to also feel full support both academically and mentally as a huge burden would be lifted off their shoulders and that would give us parents a sense of peace knowing that they would be able to take advantage of this bill. As stated by Assemblywoman Natha Anderson "We are asking districts to specifically address ... our students who are most at risk, students who have experienced chronic absenteeism, our students with financial needs, our students who are not quite reading at (their) grade level, our pre-K, our special needs students, the list is long," As parents knowing that our children's education would financially be covered and help provide programs that would offer #1. Free summer school to Pre-K to 12th graders whether in person or virtual learning #2. Free transportation and #3. Free school meals to our children who attend #4 Provide counselors to help with mental well-being and #5. As Assemblywoman Natha Anderson stated "Any educators or staff who participate would receive supplemental pay equal to their regular contract pay rate "I fully support the Back on Track Act and the intent behind it to give every child the key opportunity to be successful academically, this will also help boost their self-esteem which is vital for their mental health and well-being, this will help our children to get Back on Track. We cannot allow any more children to fall behind and to become part of another statistic.

MARY BETH SEAWALD (President and CEO, Vegas Chamber):

We support S.B. 173. We believe this bill will help K-12 students from across the State catch-up on some of the lost learning due to Covid-19. The harsh reality is the pandemic has set back learning for all Nevada's students. Even in cases with the most engaged teachers, students and parents, home learning

could never fully replace in-classroom teaching. As a result, many of our students need summer school to get up to speed in coursework so they can advance to the next grade.

Reports show the pandemic has caused even more losses among students related to the achievement gap. We know that is an issue Nevada struggles with. This funding for summer school will also help students who are at significant risk of being left behind because of the learning lost during the pandemic. At the Vegas Chamber, we believe this investment of federal dollars from the American Rescue Act are essential to helping students achieve the goal of being career or college ready.

The other important consideration is it is not just an investment in the student's future but also Nevada's future by ensuring we have a capable and trained workforce. This bill also provides funding for important services like transportation, meals and extra lessons. In addition, by providing services during the summer, school educators and support staff will have the opportunity to work. The optional summer school will provide aid in the transition back to classroom teaching with significant supplemental support to our students when it is time to go back in person. We know recovery cannot happen in a single summer, but we can start taking the next vital steps by ensuring each student can achieve their potential despite his or her grade level and background.

KATIE ROBBINS (Newsela):

We support S.B. 173 because making summer school accessible for all K-12 students is a step in the right direction to get students caught up. During the pandemic, schools across the State have seen an uptick in failing grades, chronic absenteeism, teacher shortages and an increase in adolescent suicide.

Senate Bill 173 will address the difficulties many of our students and teachers faced as they navigated distance learning. With a summer program accessible to all and balanced social-emotional support with academics that focus on acceleration and not remediation, families can have the opportunity to ensure their children receive all the support and services they need to make up for any setbacks they experienced during the school year.

KANANI ESPINOZA (Nevada System of Higher Education):

We support S.B. 173. The impacts of Covid-19 have been challenging for all students, and S.B. 173 seeks to address learning shortfalls that have occurred

over the past year. The Nevada System of Higher Education supports the usage of federal assistance money to ensure continued student success.

MATT WALKER (Opportunity 180):

We support S.B. 173 and want to echo the comments of everyone who has called in support of this bill. I also want to point you to a statement from Jana Wilcox Lavin ([Exhibit D](#)).

NICOLE ROURKE (City of Henderson):

We support S.B. 173 and applaud the work of the Clark County School District (CCSD) to reopen our schools safely and look forward to students returning to the classroom. While we acknowledge the efforts of our schools and community partners who made distance education possible this year, the reported increase in failing grades alone indicates that many children have suffered a loss of learning during this time. In these extraordinary times and with the unique opportunity of available funding, we must take bold and immediate action to provide the additional support our students urgently need.

Since 2015, the City of Henderson has invested in Henderson schools with revenues from marijuana business license fees and redevelopment areas set-aside funds. We committed \$200,000 to ensure every Henderson student has access to a Chromebook for distance education this year, and we designated almost \$700,000 to continued support for distance education into the next school year. The City of Henderson will be a partner in supporting our schools with supplemental learning, and we look forward to the passage of this bill and approval of a plan to address student learning losses.

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

We support S.B. 173. With the loss of in-person learning that occurred as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is imperative that extra measures and wrap-around services outlined in this bill are provided to our students who have received limited in-person instruction due to mandated distance learning over the past school year. Summer school sessions are offered free of charge, specifically targeting students who are most at risk. It will provide much needed relief and support to school-age children and their families who are desperately in need of help. This bill will enhance student achievement, provide stabilization and a pathway back to traditional in-person learning while still allowing opportunities for students to connect online.

LESLEY PITTMAN (Waterford UPSTART):

We support S.B. 173. We are an online kindergarten readiness program that fills gaps in the provision of early childhood education when parents are either unwilling or unable to access site-based pre-kindergarten locations. With passage of this bill, we look forward to having the opportunity to work with all Nevada school districts to determine how our program may help ensure as many of our four-year-olds are able to get back on track.

ALEX BYBEE (Communities In Schools of Nevada):

I present supporting testimony ([Exhibit E](#)).

CHRIS DALY (Nevada State Education Association):

I present support and amendment testimony ([Exhibit F](#)).

AMANDA MORGAN (Executive Director, Educate Nevada Now):

We support S.B. 173. This bill will provide our students with enhanced summer school opportunities that will lead to improved academics, social and emotional health and confidence. Students choosing in-person learning will see their friends and teachers and begin to adapt to a return to the classroom. Students choosing virtual learning will continue to receive the support and be better prepared for the fall. Whether districts adopted in-person learning early on, or focused on hybrid or virtual learning, this bill will provide an opportunity to help students find a path to success over the summer months. Federal stimulus dollars afford schools the opportunity to successfully transition out of this challenging year with creative solutions. Senate Bill 173 encourages districts to engage their communities and State leaders in developing a path out of this crisis.

DEANNE MOYLE-HICKS (Teacher, Washoe County School District; Senior Policy Fellow, Teach Plus):

Today, I offer the perspective of an individual who has experienced Nevada's educational diversity. I attended and graduated from Eureka County, completed my teaching degree, teaching and substitute requirements in Clark County and spent all of my teaching career in Washoe and Elko Counties. I support S.B. 173. I have been a public school teacher for 28 years, all of them in Title I schools. The last four years I taught at Natchez, a small school on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation which serves about 97 percent Native American school children from pre-kindergarten to fifth grade.

Having spent all my career in schools with disenfranchised students, I have seen a great amount of inequity. The pandemic has impacted all students from all demographics in socio-economic status. However, it has disproportionately impacted students in the Title I communities at an even greater rate than what we would normally experience in any given school year. While summer school will not solve all of our problems, it will give us the opportunity to identify and offer individualized time toward academic development for students who need it.

A few years back, I tutored three boys for several weeks during the summer. At the end of the tutoring time, they were not yet to grade-level standards. What they gained were specific and individualized strategies that helped them navigate through their deficiencies and build the confidence and tools they needed to master their own education and academic destinies. Summer school allows us to teach outside the boundaries of the regular school year. It provides the time and space for teachers to strategize and build learning opportunities that support each student's individual learning limitations.

ANNETTE DAWSON OWENS (School Readiness Policy Director, Children's Advocacy Alliance):

We support S.B. 173 for many reasons, three of which I will briefly mention. One, it is critical for us to address and understand student learning loss. In high school and middle school, many of our students may be credit and learning-deficient, not only in core subjects but also in the arts. I have witnessed this personally with my son struggling to learn the trumpet virtually. We know in elementary schools, our students need a strong start in high-quality instruction. The best single indicator of a child's future success is their school readiness.

Two, we support S.B. 173 due to the Children's Advocacy Alliance's commitment to equity and access for all of our students, especially for those who are at risk.

Three, we know this bill is critical to our economic recovery and is directly related to our future workforce development. There are successful models across the Country who do this well. We can build upon what works nationally and create our own programs for each of our districts. This is the time for us to be innovative in our approach to getting back on track and providing the option to attend summer school. We can focus on the social and emotional learning

that is necessary now in engagement mastery learning. This can be a time for innovation and rethinking education, possible community partnership and investing in education for all our students.

KRISTAL WALKER:

I am a sophomore at Advanced Technologies Academy, Las Vegas. I am here to read the testimony of Joanna Bieda ([Exhibit G](#)).

EMILY ESPINOSA (Nevada Association of School Administrators):

As stated in our mission statement, our primary function is to promote legislation that improves education in the State. Senate Bill 173 addresses the need for a plan to combat the loss of learning during the Covid-19 pandemic response, following in line exactly with the goal of our organization. We support S.B. 173.

REBECCA GARCIA (President, Nevada Parent Teacher Association):

Even with educators, schools, and family's best efforts, many students, including my children, have struggled to learn and be engaged during this year. Often, the students who have felt the impact of this last year the hardest are those with the greatest needs. The pandemic and resulting education upheaval have exacerbated already existing equity gaps. Now that school buildings across our State are expanding reopening, we can use this opportunity to gain momentum in closing these gaps to ensure that all students can reach their full potential. We support S.B. 173 to use strategically in a targeted way the federal funds provided by the American Rescue Act to bolster summer learning programs across the State with no cost to families. The Act directs districts to prioritize those with the greatest potential learning loss, an important step to ensuring students can catch up from this year. Most importantly, this legislation would ensure essential support, including providing meals, transportation, and a focus on emotional and mental health be taken care of to break down barriers to participation. For many families, transportation is the deciding factor for whether a child would be able to participate in summer learning. For program success, equity and access must be prioritized, which S.B. 173 does.

TONIA HOLMES-SUTTON (Executive Director, Teach Plus Nevada):

Nevada's children, families and educators have been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 crisis and the modified engagement of schooling during the past year. The transition to distance, remote and hybrid learning has not been without its challenges. In-person learning is remarkably different than it was

prior to the pandemic. Teach Plus Nevada supports this bill due to its alignment with our values as listed in our supporting testimony ([Exhibit H](#)). We have also listed a number of recommendations.

BRYAN WACHTER (Senior Vice President, Retail Association of Nevada):

We know that economic output is a function of innovation from the skills workers bring to their jobs and the machines they use to create goods and services. We know that innovation and skills are shaped by education. We note Professor Margaret Raymond at Stanford University is projecting \$25 trillion to \$30 trillion of lost economic output for the next century. They estimate the lifetime household income for students affected during this pandemic will be 6 percent to 9 percent lower. The vertical alignment of our academic standards provides all the roadmap we need to understand the holes our students will have if they progress and build on standards they may have not yet mastered. [Senate Bill 173](#) provides a clear pathway and guidance to school districts as they rise to this challenge of combating the effects of Covid-19 and the effect this had on the education of our students. We support [S.B. 173](#).

NICK VANDER POEL (Reno + Sparks Chamber of Commerce):

We all can agree the pandemic has had a significant impact on students in every part of our State. This bill is a step in the right direction for Nevada's education community. We support [S.B. 173](#).

JARED LUKE (City of North Las Vegas):

I echo many of the comments made before me. In August 2020, when it was evident CCSD would remain closed for the foreseeable future, the mayor and council instructed staff to set up Southern Nevada Urban Micro-academy (SNUMA). They said based on the history of systemic racism, and the digital divide in North Las Vegas, kids in this area would struggle with distance learning. In August, SNUMA was quickly created to serve children in North Las Vegas who did not have internet or a device and would struggle with distance learning. The program has been awesome. Speaking from a position of data in terms of learning loss, we have been able to track these kids and see where they were before they started at SNUMA and determined what deficiencies needed to be addressed. Many of these kids have met where they need to be grade-wise and some have surpassed those levels. When we discuss this concept of learning loss from a data perspective, the issue is real. [Senate Bill 173](#) is very timely.

JENN BLACKHURST (President, HOPE For Nevada):

We are in support of S.B. 173. We are grateful to be receiving federal funds targeted towards providing educational support for our students who are most in need. The language of this bill works to pinpoint those areas demanding additional attention, like credit deficiency, beginning learners and students experiencing the most instability. We are also grateful this bill incorporates the inclusion of transportation and meal components which will make a great difference in the ability of children to participate. Lastly, the reporting due at the conclusion of the programs will provide necessary transparency and data moving into the fall when we consider the next steps for supporting our students. Investing this additional money to combat learning loss is not just a summer fix but the first step of many. We look forward to getting our students back on track.

JEANINE COLLINS (Executive Director, Nevada Succeeds):

The challenges of this year have been reflected in the presentation of this bill and in much of the previous testimony. I present my supporting testimony ([Exhibit I](#)).

ERIN PHILLIPS (President, Power to Parents):

Parents want their children to have access to a quality education, and distance education has not provided that for the majority of students. Since the beginning of this school year, we have called for schools to be open and have shed light on the glaring inequities for students related to access and learning loss. We know deficits in achievement already existed before students were forced online, but these gaps have only continued to widen, especially for our most vulnerable students. Those with less resources and less parental availability have experienced the most loss. Since October 2020, we have called for CCSD and other districts to prioritize summer bridge programs to help eliminate some of this loss. While we still need to get many kids back into classrooms, this is a good opportunity to prioritize kids who have lost so much already.

ALEXANDRA DOMINGUEZ (The College Board):

We are in support of S.B. 173. This bill will help address some of the exacerbated inequities caused by learning loss as a result of the pandemic. It will be instrumental in helping students get back on track so they are better prepared for things like advanced coursework and postsecondary success.

JONATHAN SYNOLD:

I oppose S.B. 173. I am concerned with one aspect of the bill as it is written. Section 1, subsection 1, paragraph (b), subparagraphs 3 and 4 specifically limit elementary schools from only allowing pre-kindergarten to third graders to attend summer school. Nearly all middle and high school students are allowed to return because of the multiple subject areas in the bill. Yet, the bill specifically excludes fourth and fifth graders who also have the highest class sizes in elementary school and were excluded from hybrid learning in CCSD.

To put the bill in context, section 1, subsection 1, paragraph (b), subparagraph 5 allows middle school students who are struggling in something like band to receive summer school assistance, but a fourth grader who is years behind in math would be excluded from summer school.

This bill specifically excludes fourth and fifth graders which sets them up to fail in middle school and beyond. Learning loss is just as real for our fourth graders as it is with our seventh graders. It is critical we support all students. I encourage a revision of this bill to include fourth and fifth graders so all students can receive the help they need.

HAWAH AHMED (Clark County Education Association):

We are neutral for S.B. 173. I will read testimony ([Exhibit J](#)) from our President, Marie Neisses.

PAIGE BARNES (Nevada Association of School Boards):

We are neutral for S.B. 173. As school board trustees, we have seen the negative impact of the worldwide pandemic and have taken action to mitigate the learning loss while keeping our students safe. All school districts have some in-person learning options, and the majority have been available since August. The needs of the State are not uniform and must be considered at a local level. Summer school has been used for years to provide continuous learning and bridge gaps for all students, including our low performing and minority students. All school districts are preparing to provide summer school and have started the planning process. School board members will review and approve the plans.

We all want to provide a robust program this summer and provide services to all students who want it. To best meet the needs of all students, decisions should be made at the local level. Our school board members and school districts understand the gaps in learning and identify where to target resources and

funding. We acknowledge and plan to use summer school as a tool to address the needs of our students, including learning loss. In addition, we will continue to leverage the federal funding for other targeted resources to help our most vulnerable students and students impacted by the pandemic. We are still reviewing the amendments proposed today and will provide feedback to the Committee at a later date.

MARY PIERCZYNSKI (Nevada Association of School Superintendents):

We are neutral on S.B. 173. We all realize the importance of extinguishing the learning loss. We have the same goal of getting our students back on track.

LINDSAY ANDERSON (Washoe County School District):

We are neutral on S.B. 173 and appreciate the intent. We will continue to work on proposed amendments with Senator Dondero Loop. The Washoe County School District is creating a response to recovery two-year strategic plan. While our elementary school students have been in school five days a week during the school year, our middle and high school students have been on an every-other-day hybrid plan. We know it will take time and dedication for our students to recover academically and for our students and staff to recover emotionally from this difficult year.

Federal funding from the American Rescue Plan will help support our efforts to implement system-wide support. We are planning to gather public input for our response to the recovery plan and the use of federal monies with a survey beginning the week of March 29. Our plan will incorporate feedback we receive from families to ensure maximum participation and satisfaction to the needs of our community. In partnership with nonprofit and community agencies, we are creating academically-focused and appealing summer school programs with both in-person and virtual options. We will strongly encourage our students and families to participate.

Summer programming is scheduled to begin the week of June 21, three days per week at all levels, Tuesday through Thursday for four consecutive weeks and will be offered to all students. There will be in-person and asynchronous on-demand options. Transportation and meals will be provided. Elementary schools will have new subjects each week, focusing on social and emotional learning, targeted interventions and support, and will be working with partners such as PBS Reno. Middle schools will also focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics with targeted interventions and activities. A

jump-start program for incoming ninth graders will focus on transition to high school math, English language and social-emotional learning. Our high school efforts will focus on credit-accrual and recovery, social-emotional learning and social activities. The primary objective will be to make summer school as appealing as possible to ensure the highest participation in reengagement of our students. We are committed to serving our students during summer school and other creative learning opportunities outside the regular school year for as long as it takes to get our students back on track.

BRAD KEATING (Clark County School District):

The district is neutral for S.B. 173. We acknowledge the pandemic has been especially difficult on our kids. The way they are traditionally educated in the classroom completely changed in the past year. We need to address the effects it will have on our children in the future.

Summer school has been offered to students in past years, and this year we will continue to provide this opportunity to our students. The CCSD has been in conversations with our bargaining partners so we can start planning our summer programs needed to address and accelerate the academic loss from this pandemic. We understand that additional families may be seeking summer school opportunities as a way to build upon a year of distance education. We are committed to offering our students extended learning opportunities to overcome the issues caused by this pandemic.

CHAIR DENIS:

We will move to closing remarks and questions.

SENATOR BUCK:

What accountability will there be for tracking student data? Will there be a pre-post assessment?

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP:

There will be some accountability of achievement. It may be different for every district. That is why we ask each district to submit a plan, and they will also be submitting reports.

All of us want what is best for the children of our State. All of us want them to be prepared for the future. I believe this bill is the logical glue that will help catch Nevada students who have fallen behind and ensure a return to normalcy

in the fall under a new school year. With this legislation, we will be able to restore the relationship between teachers and their students and empower children to learn in a setting where they can thrive. This past year has been tough for our kids, not just because of the educational disadvantages of distance learning, but also the mental toll of being away from their teachers and their friends. Many of our students have felt isolated. By allowing them to return to school this summer we not only allow them to catch up on their school work, we allow them the opportunity to return to a day-to-day life that more resembles their lives before the pandemic. We will be able to alleviate the mental and educational burdens many have faced as a result of virtual learning.

We are all looking forward to the day when this pandemic is behind us. Senate Bill 173 will ensure when it is all over, our kids have the ability to transition more seamlessly into a brighter future. We have the resources we need to fund this initiative, the educators to execute it and the students who are ready to learn. All we need now is for the Legislature to empower our school districts to establish these programs for the long-term health and benefit of not just our students but our communities as a whole. I would ask that Chair Denis, and Senators Lange and Donate, read into the record the letters we have received from the Nevada Congressional delegation.

For the record, there was reference to fourth and fifth grade students not involved in this bill. Those were examples of things that schools might want to consider. This is a K-12 school plan.

SENATOR ROBERTA LANGE (Senatorial District No. 7):

I present supporting testimony from Senator Jacky Rosen ([Exhibit K](#)) and supporting testimony from Congresswoman Dina Titus ([Exhibit L](#)).

SENATOR FABIAN DONATE (Senatorial District No. 10):

I present supporting testimony from Congresswoman Susie Lee ([Exhibit M](#)).

SENATOR MOISES DENIS (Senatorial District No. 2):

I present supporting testimony from Senator Catherine Cortez Masto ([Exhibit N](#)).

CHAIR DENIS:

I will close the hearing on S.B. 173. We will now move to public comment.

STEVEN HORNER:

Two of my passions are travelling and playing golf in rural Nevada. During the summer of 2015, while playing in a tournament in Ely, Nevada, I fell and broke my oxygen concentrator. Suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease at close to 7,000 feet above sea level, I needed oxygen. I was not traveling with backup oxygen. I needed help. I called the local hospital to get any help available. However, I was not yet eligible for Medicare and would have to pay full fare to get any needed oxygen.

My wife was able to drive from Las Vegas to Ely to bring backup oxygen. Until she arrived, to keep my oxygen at a safe level, all I had was albuterol and my nebulizer. Thankfully, my breathing disability had not yet progressed to the point I needed hospitalization. As long as I stayed inactive, I could maintain acceptable oxygen levels. At that point, I realized we needed some kind of affordable health coverage for those educators and State workers who either had to retire, could retire before Medicare eligibility or may not ever qualify for Medicare.

Now that I am qualified for Medicare and have supplemental insurance to help defer extra costs, I worry about those individuals who will never qualify for Medicare because of the government pension offset and windfall elimination programs. Even with the supplemental insurance, my quarterly prescription drug costs are well over \$1,100 after the deductible is paid. Many of our teachers, support professionals and State workers will have to make choices to take needed medication.

I urge you to open a conversation and start a study to address this important issue. Teachers, support professionals and State workers have dedicated their lives to our State, and they deserve the best we can give them in retirement.

Ms. ANDERSON:

For our good news minute, I am happy to report that 60 students from Desert Skies Middle School participated in National Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day sponsored by Envirolution and Tesla.

LEONARDO BENAVIDES (Clark County School District):

For a good news minute, the Clark County School Board recently approved \$10,000 bonuses for school nurses performing coronavirus-related tasks like testing, contact tracing and helping administer vaccines. First aid safety

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assistants are also receiving an additional stipend for working on the front lines during the pandemic. These incredibly important staff members have already been performing additional duties along with routine work like tracking medical histories of students, administering medicine and responding to medical emergencies.

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CHAIR DENIS:

With no further public comment, the meeting is adjourned at 2:51 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Ian Gahner,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Moises Denis, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit Letter	Begins on Page	Witness / Entity	Description
	A	1		Agenda
S.B. 173	B	1	Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop	Proposed Amendment
S.B. 173	C	1	Lauren Wong	Supporting Testimony from Alexander Wong
S.B. 173	D	1	Matt Walker / Opportunity 180	Supporting Testimony from Jana Wilcox Lavin
S.B. 173	E	1	Alex Bybee / Communities In Schools Nevada of Nevada	Supporting and Amendment Testimony
S.B. 173	F	1	Chris Daly / Nevada State Education Association	Support and Amend Testimony
S.B. 173	G	1	Kristal Walker	Supporting Testimony from Joanna Bieda
S.B. 173	H	1	Tonia Holmes-Sutton / Teach Plus Nevada	Supporting Testimony
S.B. 173	I	1	Jeanine Collins / Nevada Succeeds	Supporting Testimony
S.B. 173	J	1	Hawah Ahmed / Clark County Education Association	Supporting Testimony from Marie Neisses
S.B. 173	K	1	Senator Roberta Lange	Supporting Testimony from Senator Jacky Rosen
S.B. 173	L	1	Senator Roberta Lange	Supporting Testimony from Congresswoman Dina Titus
S.B. 173	M	1	Senator Fabian Donate	Supporting Testimony from Congresswoman Susie Lee
S.B. 173	N	1	Senator Moises Denis	Supporting Testimony from Senator Catherine Cortez Masto