

# **At-Risk Students:** **A conversation around defining options**

**Presentation to the Commission on School Funding**

June 11, 2020

# Agenda

- ✓ Review previous presentations on at-risk
- ✓ Opportunity Gap Methodology
- ✓ Alternative indicators
- ✓ Nevada Department of Education Recommendations

# “At-Risk” in Nevada Revised Statutes

- **NRS 387.1211**

- “**At-risk pupil**” means a pupil who is eligible for free or reduced-price lunches pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §§ 1751 et seq., or an alternative measure prescribed by the State Board.
- This definition becomes effective July 1, 2021.

# Free and Reduced-Price Lunch:

## Strengths

- Consistent with the definition used by a majority of states that provide additional at-risk funding providing an opportunity for Nevada to compare itself to those states.
- Definition implemented by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to identify Economically Disadvantaged students and programmatic reporting on FRL students is already required under ESSA.
- Is currently the poverty measure for district allocations of Title I funds.
- Past data is available making it easier to study the effects of the funding.

## Weaknesses

- Increases both the false positive and false negative identification of students that are at-risk, leaving less dollars for students that are at-risk.
- Does not consider any academic factors.
- Issues with tracking pupils without violating confidentiality.
- Increased identification problem for Schools that qualify for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA), a federally-funded nutrition program that passed in 2010. Included in the Act is the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which states that every student in a school is eligible to receive free meals if social services or the school districts have identified 40 percent or more of the students are eligible through direct certification.

# Free and Reduced Priced: Projected FY 20

Pupil Count: 202,306

Weighted Funding Per Pupil: \$296

# Infinite Campus

- Machine learning to identify at-risk students.
- Daily inputs consisting of:
  - 14 academic risk factors
  - 6 attendance risk factors
  - 7 behavior risk factors
  - 24 home and enrollment stability factors
  - 24 other risk factors

# Infinite Campus

## Strengths

- Provides real time data synchronization.
  - Daily inputs and outputs
- Does not add reporting requirements.
- Reduces false positive and false negative identifications.
- Increases students qualifying as at-risk.

## Weaknesses

- Methodology lacks in transparency:
  - Difficult to explain
  - Difficult to understand
- Difficult to verify methodology

# Infinite Campus: Projected FY 20

- Pupil Count: 214,758
- Weighted Funding Per Pupil: \$279



# Opportunity Gap Methodology

- Select an opportunity gap, identify the source of the gap, and use evidenced-based strategies to lessen or remove the gap.

– Examples:

**Gap:** *Proficiency in math drops significantly between grades 4 and 5*

**Evidence-Based Strategy:** *Increase community engagement and parental involvement.*

- Re-evaluate each biennium.

# Opportunity Gap

## Strengths

- Identify an issue affecting education and solve or reduce its impact.
- Potential for wide impact on issues affecting many students.
- Issues can be identified and selected each biennium.

## Weaknesses

- Selected issue could have little historical data making the tracking of outcomes more difficult.
- Could add additional and potentially burdensome reporting requirements each biennium.
- Selected issue could re-occur if funding pulled for a newly selected issue.
- Issue could be difficult to align with per pupil funding plan.
- No other state has implemented an issue approach.
- Issue could result in reduced flexibility of use of funds at school level.

# Opportunity Gap: Projected FY 20

Example:

- Pupil Count: 37,300
- Weighted Funding Per Pupil: \$1,608.03

# Alternative at-risk factors

- In the bottom quartile as measured by the statewide summative assessment.
- In Foster Care
- Family is living below the poverty line
- Repeated a grade

# Alternative Factors

## Strengths

- Includes educational and economic factors in determining at-risk.
- Funding follows identified students and is consistent with legislative intent of SB 543.
- Transparent: Easy to explain and understand.
- Removes confidentiality concerns.

## Weaknesses

- Potential for significant changes in qualifying enrollment.
- Significantly reduces FY20 projected at-risk enrollment, increasing the chance for a false negative.
  - Michigan example
- While a few states include educational factors in identifying at-risk, the use of economic and educational factors would be unique to Nevada and lose comparability with other states

# Alternative at-risk factors: Projected FY 20

- Pupil Count: 53,534
- Weighted Funding Per Pupil: \$1,120.40

# Measures of success

- Decreased percentage of truancy and disciplinary incidents
- Increased proficiency on statewide assessments
- Increased graduation rates
- Connect families to school and school activities
- Strengthen links to external mental health and behavioral services

# References

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