

**NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COMMISSION ON SCHOOL FUNDING
FEBRUARY 21, 2020
1:30 P.M.**

Meeting Location:

Office	Address	City	Meeting Room
Department of Education	2080 E. Flamingo Rd.	Las Vegas	Board Room
Department of Education	700 E Fifth St	Carson City	Board Room

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

In Carson City

Andrew J. Feuling
Dr. David Jensen
Mark Mathers

In Las Vegas

Guy Hobbs
Jason A. Goudie
Jim McIntosh
Dr. R. Karlene McCormick-Lee
Dr. Lisa Morris Hibbler
Paul Johnson
Punam Mathur

By Teleconference

Dusty Casey

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT

In Las Vegas

Jhone Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Heidi Haartz, Deputy Superintendent of Business and Support Services
Felicia Gonzales, Deputy Superintendent of Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement
Jessica Todtman, Chief Strategy Officer
James Kirkpatrick, Administrative Services Officer III
Andrew Morgan, Nevada Department of Education
Kaitlin Lewallen, Nevada Department of Education
Stacey Joyner, Nevada Department of Education

In Carson City

Beau Bennett, Management Analyst IV
Megan Peterson, Management Analyst III
Will Jensen, Nevada Department of Education

LEGAL STAFF PRESENT

Greg Ott, Chief Deputy Attorney General

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE

In Las Vegas

Ahmed Saleh, Valley High School
Alexander Marks, Nevada State Education Association
Alison Turner, Nevada Parent Teacher Association

Alma D. Romo, Mi Familia Vota
Andrew Sierra, Mi Familia Vota
Athar Haseebullah, Opportunity 180
Autumn Tampa, Individual
Betsy Para, Valley High School
Brad Evans, Valley High School
Brad Keating, Clark County School District
Brenda Pearson, Clark County Education Association
Carl Dawson, Clark County Education Association- Retired
Caryne Shea, Honoring our Public Education (HOPE) for Nevada
Cecia Alvarado, Mi Familia Vota
Chris Day, Nevada State Education Association
Dale Norton, Nye County School District
Dan Soifer, Nevada Action for School Options
Darlene Anderson, Individual
Dawn Hicks, Valley Athletic Organization
Denise Tanata, Children's Advocacy Alliance
Dr. Jesus Jara, Clark County School District
Eduardo Sierra, Individual
Elisa Martinez, Palo Verde high School
Felicia Ortiz, State Board of Education
Fernando Romero, Hispanics in Politics
Florisel Albino, Valley High School
Gabriela Avila Flores, Valley High School
Hal Mortensen, Clark County School District
Ignacio Prado, Future Academy
Jana Wilcox Lavin, Opportunity 180
Jennifer McCloskey, Girls Athletic Leadership School
John Vellardita, Clark County Education Alliance
Josseline Marengo Martinez, Valley High School
Judy A. Jordahl, Clark County School District
Kate McNabney, Children's Advocacy Alliance
Ken Paul, Clark County School District
Kenia Morales, Individual
Kenneth Retzl, Guinn Center
Kenny Belknap, Del Sol
Kristin Marshall, Nye County School District
Lindsey Dalley, Community Educational Advisory Board
Margarita Hernandez, Individual
Maryam Abdelhamid, Opportunity 180
Maurice Perkins, Clark County School District
Melitza Ramirez-Pedro, Latinos in Action/ Valley High School
Meredith Freeman, Honoring Our Public Education (HOPE) for Nevada
Nicole Rourke, City of Henderson
Patricia Woods, Valley High School
Peter Grema, Clark County Education Association
Prisala Zarate, Individual
Stephen Augspurger, Clark County Association of School Administrators
Sylvia Lazos, Nevada Immigration Coalition
Jazmin Villagomez, Mi Familia Vota
Tom Wellman, Nevada State Education Association -Retired
Vikki Courtney, Clark County Education Alliance
Vinny Tarquinio, Clark County Education Association
Yischeli Martinez, Global Community High School
Yvette Williams, Clark County Black Caucus

In Carson City

Amy Marincic, Washoe County School District
Avery Serink, Washoe County School District
Bonnie Pillaro, Washoe County School District
Cheri DiMartino, Washoe County School District
Dr. Kristen McNeill, Washoe County School District
Dr. Michael Perrin, Washoe County School District
Elizabeth Korinek, Washoe County School District/ Gifted and Talented Education
Dr. Janeen Kelly, Washoe County School District
Jeff Zander, Elko County School District
Jen Harvey, Washoe County School District
Jennifer McMenemy, Law Offices of Allison Mackenzie
Jennifer VanTress, Washoe County School District
Jessica Garcia, Nevada Appeal
Jim Penrose, R&R Partners
Jim Penrose, R&R Partners
Joanna Kaiser, Carson City School District
Johnna Perrin, Washoe County School District
Judith Lombard, Washoe County School District
Julia Molodoi, Washoe County School District
Julian Serink, Washoe County School District
Karen Serink, Washoe County School District
Laura Austin, Carson City School District
Maggie Marincic, Washoe County School District
Mary Owens, Washoe County School District
Mary Pierczynski, Nevada Association of School Superintendents
Millie Marincic, Washoe County School District
Molly Ivans, Washoe County School District
Pat Hickey, Association of Christians in Student Development
Sean Johnson, Washoe County School District
Susan Kaiser, Washoe Education Association Retired
Teagan Serink, Washoe County School District
Valerie Dockery, Carson City School District
Victor Salcido, Charter School Association of Nevada
Wanda V. Washington, Washoe County School District

1: CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE

Meeting called to order at 2:00 P.M. by Commission Chair R. Karlene McCormick-Lee. Quorum was established. Chair McCormick-Lee led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2: INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING FUNDING FOR CATEGORIES OF PUPILS

The Commission dedicated this meeting to hearing feedback from stakeholders and the community regarding the weighted formula components. The Commission is focused on the core ideas presented to them at the beginning of their work: equity, transparency, diversity and a student-centered approach. Chair McCormick-Lee opened the floor for public comment. *Please note that complete copies of all statements, both presented during the Commission and submitted in writing, are available in Appendix A, and any additional attachments submitted are available in Appendix B.*

Member Jason Goudie read a submitted testimony from Senator Joyce Woodhouse and Senator Mo Denis of the Nevada State Senate regarding Senate Bill 543.

Dr. Jesus Jara, Superintendent of Clark County School District, spoke regarding Clark County School District and SB 543.

Fernando Romero, Hispanics in Politics, spoke regarding Zoom and Victory schools.

Dale Norton, Superintendent of Nye County School District, spoke regarding Senate Bill 543.

Member Punam Mathur confirmed that the SB 178 investment for those performing in the 25th percentile, as well as Zoom and Victory funding was distributed to Nye County, and the primary concern is that the new funding formula weights may lead to less funding. She further inquired if Superintendent Norton knew what the approximate per-pupil Zoom investment was in Nye County. Superintendent Norton affirmed his concerns.

Member Paul Johnson clarified that SB 543 has a hold harmless provision which guarantees the revenue of the previous fiscal year, FY20. He has further advocated that CPI be built into the hold harmless to better support school districts. Member Johnson inquired if Superintendent Norton had done modeling for the impact that funding shortfalls would have on programs and services. Superintendent Norton had not yet requested this type of analysis but was pondering how to continue to support thriving programs.

Dr. Kristen McNeill, Interim Superintendent of Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Senate Bill 543.

Dr. Janeen Kelly, Director of the Department of English Language Development, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding English Learner weights.

Member Dave Jensen inquired if Dr. Kelly believed there was benefit to a tiered funding system, or if she believed that the recommended English Learner (EL) weights from APA Consulting would better support EL services. Dr. Kelly explained that she did not believe a tiered system would be beneficial.

Member Mathur inquired if the services provided in Washoe County have been Zoom-related, or if they have been separate or additional services. Dr. Kelly noted that they use Zoom funds but align their services with all other services provided to students.

Jennifer VanTress, Area Superintendent over Special Education Services, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Special Education weights.

Member Andrew Feuling supported the tiered funding model, but asked Ms. VanTress on her thoughts regarding the possibility that districts may attempt to manipulate the system by placing students into higher categories to receive higher funding. Ms. VanTress expressed how misplacing children would work against their best interest.

Member Mark Mathers appreciated tying the tiered weights to IEP coding or Nevada Administrative Codes. He noted that the current practice with weights was to take the highest weight and apply it for those students in multiple categories; he inquired what Ms. VanTress thought regarding that practice, and whether it should be modified, specifically to provide a modification

for Special Education students who would also be At-Risk, Gifted and Talented, etc. Ms. VanTress supported multiple weighted funding to support services to students.

Member Johnson reviewed the AIR study completed in 2012, and numerous states have multiple weights for Special Education. He noted the difficulty of the time constraints that the Commission is under to stand up a model. He cited the AIR study as having a range between 1.6 and 3.1.

Felicia Ortiz, Nevada State Board of Education, spoke regarding Senate Bill 543.

Betsy Para, Valley High School, spoke regarding Victory funding.

Athar Haseebullah, Opportunity 180, submitted written testimony on behalf of Jennifer McCloskey, Girls Athletic Leadership Schools, regarding Senate Bill 543.

Sylvia Lazos, Nevada Immigration Coalition, spoke regarding Zoom and Victory funding.

Member Mathur requested that Ms. Lazos provide the funding calculations she referenced in her testimony and inquired about Ms. Lazos' support of tiered funding when there had already been public comment opposing it. Ms. Lazos noted that her recommendation of tiered funding was not based off of WIDA scores.

Member Mathur asked what an immediate consideration should be to stand up the model, and what should be a consideration for the longer term discussion of adequacy and optimal funding. Ms. Lazos emphasized the importance of proven-successful programs.

Member Mathers inquired if Ms. Lazos has provided the Commission, or could provide the Commission, further information on At-Risk metrics. Ms. Lazos affirmed that she would be happy to provide further information. (*Supporting documentation has not been made available.*)

Member Goudie asked if gap calculations had been made for Zoom schools which lost Zoom school funding, but still received EL, Zoom, and 178 funding for EL students. Member Johnson inquired if Ms. Lazos had thoughts regarding cost adjustment factors for the weights. Ms. Lazos clarified her notes on cost adjustment factors and gap calculations.

Amy Marincic, Parent, Washoe County School District, read a submitted written testimony on behalf of Dr. Timothy Sherry, University of Nevada, Reno, School of Medicine, regarding Gifted and Talented program.

Maggie Marincic, Student, Pine Middle School, spoke regarding the Gifted and Talented program.

Millie Marincic, Student, Magnet Program, spoke regarding the Gifted and Talented program.

Hal Mortensen, Principal, Moapa Valley High School and U.V. Perkins Elementary School, spoke regarding rural schools in Clark County School District.

Maurice Perkins, Principal, Hughes Middle School, spoke regarding rural schools in Clark County School District.

Kenneth Paul, Principal, W. Mack Lyon Middle School, spoke regarding rural schools in Clark County School District.

Member Mathur asked Mr. Mortensen, Mr. Perkins, and Mr. Paul to clarify their total student body, their percentage of Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) students, and their percentage of EL students.

Lindsey Dalley, Community Education Advisory Board, spoke regarding rural schools in Clark County School District.

Ahmed Faris Saleh Qader Aziz Ahmed Nasir Jaber Al-Awsy, Student, Valley High School, spoke regarding Victory funding.

Brad Evans, Principal, Valley High School, spoke regarding Victory funding.

Member Mathur clarified that Valley receives Victory funds and not Zoom funds; she further asked Mr. Evans for his thoughts on tiered funding for English Learners.

Teagan Serink, Student, Damonte High School, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented funding.

Julian Serink, Student, Pine Middle School, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented funding.

Avery Serink, Student, Pine Middle School, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented funding.

Karen Serink, Parent, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented funding.

Carl Dawson, Retired, Clark County School District, spoke regarding Zoom funding.

Brenda Pearson, Director of Strategic Policy Initiatives, Clark County Education Association, read a statement from Dr. Cynthia Rapazzini, Counselor, Orr Middle School, regarding Zoom funding.

John Vellardita, Clark County Education Association, spoke regarding the funding model.

Thomas Welman, President, Nevada State Education Association Retired Program, spoke regarding the funding model.

Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association, spoke regarding the funding model.

Gabriela Avila Flores, Student, Valley High School, spoke regarding Zoom funding.

Melitza Ramirez-Pedro, Student, Valley High School, spoke regarding Zoom funding.

Josseline Marenco Martinez, Student, Valley High School and Vice President, Latinos in Action, spoke regarding Zoom funding.

Convenience Break

Cheri DiMartino, Director, Gifted and Talented Programs, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented weights.

Member Mathur clarified that Ms. DiMartino requested the Gifted and Talented weights remain at .12, rather than the APA recommendation of .05.

Wanda Washington, Program Coordinator, Gifted and Talented Programs, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented funding.

Dr. Michael Perrin, GATE School Psychologist, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented funding.

Member Goudie clarified that under SB 543 §4, subsection 5A, the reduction in multipliers related to the previous year is precluded, which applies to all weighted multipliers. While the Commission may recommend changes to the weights, the law has protections to ensure that multipliers for any program, including GATE, are not less than the previous year.

Caryne Shea Vice President, HOPE for Nevada, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented funding.

Prisala Zarate, Individual, spoke regarding Zoom funding.

Autumn Tampa, Individual, spoke regarding Zoom funding.

Yvette Williams, Chair, Clark County Black Caucus, spoke regarding the funding formula.

Judy Jordahl, Principal, Fay Herron Elementary School, spoke regarding Zoom funding.

Judith Lombard, GATE Facilitator, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented funding.

Molly Ivans, GATE Counselor, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented funding.

Elizabeth Korinek, GATE, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented funding.

Athar Hassebullah, Director, Strategic Initiatives and General Counsel, Opportunity 180, submitted written testimony on behalf of Jana Wilcox Lavin, Opportunity 180, as well as Democracy Prep and Futuro Academy.

Kenya Morales, Parent, Clark County School District, spoke regarding weighted funding.

Dawn Hicks, Parent, Clark County School District, spoke regarding Victory funding.

Denise Tanata, Director, Children's Advocacy Alliance, spoke regarding Zoom funding.

Kenneth Retzl, Director, Education Policy, Guinn Center, spoke regarding At-Risk funding.

Margarita Hernandez, Parent, Clark County School District, spoke regarding Zoom funding.

Eduardo Sierra, Parent, Clark County School District, spoke regarding Zoom funding.

Susan Kaiser, Member, Washoe Retired Educator's Association, spoke regarding the funding formula.

Don Soifer, Nevada Action for School Options, spoke regarding At-Risk funding.

Allison Turner, Nevada Parent Teacher Association, spoke regarding the funding formula.

Jeff Zander, Elko County School District, spoke regarding rural school districts.

Cecia Alvarado, State Director, Mi Familia Vota, spoke regarding Zoom and Victory funding.

Alma Romo, State Coordinator, Mi Familia Vota, spoke regarding Zoom and Victory funding.

Member Mathur asked how to respond to English Learner families who do not have access to Zoom programs, and noted the limited powers of the Commission. Sylvia Lazos and Cecia Alvarado responded.

Member Hobbs emphasized the equity issues surrounding English Learner funding.

Darlene Anderson, Parent, Clark County School District, spoke regarding African-American students and At-Risk funding.

Elisa Martinez Alvarado, Student, Clark County School District, spoke regarding Zoom funding.

Jazmin Villagomez, Organizer, Mi Familia Vota, spoke regarding Zoom funding.

3: PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

4: ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:37 PM.

Appendix A: Statements Given During Public Comment

1. Senator Joyce Woodhouse and Senator Mo Denis, Nevada State Senate, submitted testimony regarding Senate Bill 543.
2. Dr. Jesus Jara, Superintendent of Clark County School District, spoke regarding Clark County School District and SB 543.
3. Fernando Romero, Hispanics in Politics, spoke regarding Zoom and Victory schools.
4. Dale Norton, Superintendent of Nye County School District, spoke regarding Senate Bill 543.
5. Dr. Kristen McNeill, Interim Superintendent of Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Senate Bill 543.
6. Janine Kelly, Director of the Department of English Language Development, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding English Learner weights.
7. Jennifer VanTress, Area Superintendent over Special Education Services, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Special Education weights.
8. Felicia Ortiz, Nevada State Board of Education, spoke regarding Senate Bill 543.
9. Betsy Para, Valley High School, spoke regarding Victory funding.
10. Jennifer McCloskey, Girls Athletic Leadership Schools, submitted testimony regarding Senate Bill 543.
11. Sylvia Lazos, Nevada Immigration Coalition, spoke regarding Zoom and Victory funding.
12. Dr. Timothy Sherry, University of Nevada, Reno, School of Medicine, submitted testimony regarding Gifted and Talented weights.
13. Maggie Marincic, Student, Pine Middle School, spoke regarding the Gifted and Talented program.
14. Millie Marincic, Student, Magnet Program, spoke regarding the Gifted and Talented program.
15. Hal Mortensen, Principal, Moapa Valley High School and U.V. Perkins Elementary School, spoke regarding rural schools in Clark County School District.
16. Maurice Perkins, Principal, Hughes Middle School, spoke regarding rural schools in Clark County School District.
17. Kenneth Paul, Principal, W. Mack Lyon Middle School, spoke regarding rural schools in Clark County School District.
18. Lindsey Dalley, Community Education Advisory Board, spoke regarding rural schools in Clark County School District.
19. Ahmed Faris Saleh Qader Aziz Ahmed Nasir Jaber Al-Awsy, Student, Valley High School, spoke regarding Victory funding.
20. Brad Evans, Principal, Valley High School, spoke regarding Victory Funding.
21. Teagan Serink, Student, Damonte Ranch High School, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented Funding.
22. Julian Serink, Student, Pine Middle School, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented Funding.
23. Avery Serink, Student, Pine Middle School, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented Funding.
24. Karen Serink, Parent, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented Funding.
25. Carl Dawson, Retired, Clark County School District, spoke regarding Zoom funding.
26. Brenda Pearson, Director of Strategic Policy Initiatives, Clark County Education Association, read a statement from Dr. Cynthia Rapazzini, Counselor, Orr Middle School, regarding Zoom funding.
27. John Vellardita, Clark County Education Association, spoke regarding the funding formula.
28. Thomas Welman, President, Nevada State Education Association Retired Program, spoke regarding the funding formula.
29. Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association, spoke regarding the funding formula.
30. Gabriela Avila Flores, Student, Valley High School, spoke regarding Zoom funding.
31. Melitza Ramirez-Pedro, Student, Valley High School, spoke regarding Zoom funding.
32. Josseline Marenco Martinez, Student, Valley High School and Vice President, Latinos in Action, spoke regarding Zoom funding.
33. Cheri DiMartino, Director, Gifted and Talented Programs, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented weights.
34. Wanda Washington, Program Coordinator, Gifted and Talented Programs, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented funding.
35. Dr. Michael Perrin, GATE School Psychologist, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented funding.
36. Caryne Shea, Vice President, HOPE for Nevada, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented funding.
37. Prisala Zarate, Individual, spoke regarding Zoom funding.
38. Autumn Tampa, Individual, spoke regarding Zoom funding.

39. Yvette Williams, Chair, Clark County Black Caucus, spoke regarding the funding formula.
40. Judy Jordahl, Principal, Fay Herron Elementary School, spoke regarding Zoom funding.
41. Judith Lombard, GATE Facilitator, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented Funding.
42. Molly Ivans, GATE Counselor, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented Funding.
43. Elizabeth Korinek, GATE, Washoe County School District, spoke regarding Gifted and Talented Funding.
44. Athar Hasselbullah, Opportunity 180, spoke regarding the funding formula.
45. Kenya Morales, Parent, Clark County School District, spoke regarding weighted funding.
46. Dawn Hicks, Parent, Clark County School District, spoke regarding Victory funding.
47. Denise Tanata, Director, Children's Advocacy Alliance, spoke regarding Zoom funding.
48. Kenneth Retzl, Director, Education Policy, Guinn Center, spoke regarding At-Risk funding.
49. Margarita Hernandez, Parent, Clark County School District, spoke regarding Zoom funding.
50. Eduardo Sierra, Parent, Clark County School District, spoke regarding Zoom funding.
51. Susan Kaiser, Member, Washoe Retired Educator's Association, spoke regarding the funding formula.
52. Don Soifer, Nevada Action for School Options, spoke regarding At-Risk funding.
53. Allison Turner, Nevada Parent Teacher Association, spoke regarding the funding formula.
54. Jeff Zander, Elko County School District, spoke regarding rural school districts.
55. Cecia Alvarado, State Director, Mi Familia Vota, spoke regarding Zoom and Victory funding.
56. Alma Romo, State Coordinator, Mi Familia Vota, spoke regarding Zoom and Victory funding.
57. Darlene Anderson, Parent, Clark County School District, spoke regarding African-American students and At-Risk funding.
58. Elisa Martinez Alvarado, Student, Clark County School District, spoke regarding Zoom funding.
59. Jazmin Villagomez, Organizer, Mi Familia Vota, spoke regarding Zoom funding.
60. Adam Johnson, Executive Director, Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus, submitted written testimony regarding the funding formula.
61. Ignacio Prado, Futuro Academy, submitted testimony regarding the funding formula.
62. Joanna Kaiser, Carson City School District, submitted testimony regarding Gifted and Talented funding.
63. Meredith Freeman, HOPE for Nevada, submitted testimony regarding Zoom and Victory funding.
64. Patricia Woods, Valley High School, submitted testimony regarding Victory funding.
65. Rebecca Garcia, Nevada PTA, submitted written testimony regarding weighted funding.
66. Verlie Dockery, Carson City School District, submitted written testimony regarding Gifted and Talented funding.
67. Jana Wilcox Lavin, Opportunity 180, submitted written testimony regarding weighted funding.

A1, Senator Joyce Woodhouse and Senator Mo Denis

Madam Chair and Members of the Commission,

We apologize for not being able to be at your meeting today to address concerns brought to our attention regarding the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan, as we must attend a meeting of the Legislative Committee on Education. However, please accept our written comments. and we request they be read into the record for the benefit of the members and those following the work of the Commission.

Both of us have been a part of legislative studies regarding the Nevada Plan over the past few years. Because the Nevada Plan had become so out of date, due to the demographic and geographic changes in student and school needs across the state of Nevada, we made the commitment to put forth a legislative measure which would revise the Nevada Plan. Thus, after months of working with the Nevada Department of Education, several research organizations, our Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau Fiscal and Legal Divisions, education stakeholders, and our communities; the Nevada State Legislature, in a bi-partisan vote, passed Senate Bill 543, which provides for the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan.

This Plan has as its major tenets, the following:

- School funding follows the student, thus is student-centered and classroom-focused.
- That it is transparent, accountable, and addresses geographic diversity.
- Base funding is established and is based on the cost of providing general education to all public school students and ensures that base funding is maintained each year.
- Weighted funding is allocated for English language students, Special Education students, students who live at or below the poverty level, and Gifted and Talented students.

One of the concerns brought to our attention is that the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan will not work without additional funding. As you know, the Commission plays a role in determining what the funding levels should be. One of the duties placed on the Commission on School Funding, under Senate Bill 543, is to recommend any revisions the Commission determines to be appropriate to create an optimal level of funding for the public schools in this state including, base per pupil funding and the multiplier for weighted funding. Furthermore, Senate Bill 543 requires the Governor, when determining the amount of money to reserve for transfer from the State General Fund to the State Education Fund, to consider the recommendations of the Commission, as revised by the Legislative Committee on Education, for an optimal level of funding for education and may reserve an additional amount of money for transfer to the State Education Fund.

Having noted the mechanisms incorporated into Senate Bill 543, the 2019 Legislature did respond to calls for increased funding for K-12 education by increasing the overall per pupil funding levels from \$9,349 per pupil in fiscal year 2019 to \$10,343 per pupil in fiscal year 2020 and \$10,426 in fiscal year 2021.

Another concern, which was also voiced during the 2019 Legislative Session, was that the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan would place a “budget freeze and squeeze” on most school districts. The Pupil-Centered funding plan provides for increases in base per pupil funding based on projected enrollment and inflation. Future funding for rural school districts would also be based on the cost adjustment factors that account for variations between counties in the cost of living and cost of labor and the increased cost to a school district to operate a school with a small number of pupils. It is our understanding the Commission will provide recommendations for cost adjustment factors to be considered by the Department of Education.

Concerns have been raised that the Public Centered Funding Plan would compromise successful Zoom and Victory Schools. Section 8 of Senate Bill 543 protects Zoom and Victory programs by requiring schools that receive weighted funding for one or more pupils who are English Learners to use that weighted funding for Zoom services and that a public school that receives weighted funding for one or more At-Risk pupils to use that weighted funding for Victory Services. Senate Bill 543 uses the same definition for Zoom and Victory services as Senate Bill 467 from the 2019 Legislative Session, which reauthorized the Zoom and Victory programs for the current biennium.

We have also received feedback that the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan represents a multi-million dollar giveaway to charter schools. Under the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan, Charter schools are not afforded the same cost adjustment factor for a small district equity adjustment and small schools adjustment.. Furthermore, charter schools would not receive protection under the hold harmless provision, which maintains funding levels for school districts as of June 30, 2020, if funding received under the

Pupil Centered Funding Plan would not be greater. Additionally, charter schools would not receive allocations for food or transportation services. In terms of accountability, in our role as members of the Interim Finance Committee we have overseen the statutory duties of the State Public Charter School Authority. The Authority now performs site visits of charter schools throughout the state. Where the situation warrants, the Authority has not approved the renewal of certain charter schools.

Much concern has been expressed regarding the unrestricted ending fund balance requirement of school district budgets and how that impacts collective bargaining for school employees. We view unrestricted ending balances in school district budgets as a one-time amount that should, where necessary, be applied for one-time uses and not ongoing salary or benefit commitments that impact the school district budgets over the long term. Best practice in school budgeting calls for school districts to maintain a balance of not less than 10 percent of operating revenues.

Lastly we have received comments that there are no educator voices on the Commission. The membership of the Commission is dictated by Senate Bill 543, which in addition to other qualifications, calls for individuals with relevant experience in fiscal policy, school finance or similar or related financial activities. Educators always have a voice through the public meeting process by being able to provide both written and verbal comments under public comment.

Madam Chair, we would like to thank you and the Commission members for your time this afternoon and for the work that you are accomplishing to ensure that the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan provides educational funding to students and schools across our great state in the manner that Senate Bill 543 envisions.

A2, Dr. Jesus Jara

Well Good Afternoon, I'm glad that somebody else has a tougher job than I do in the State of Nevada. Good Afternoon members of the Commission. As stated, Dr. Jara Superintendent here in Clark County. I want to thank the Commission for allowing members of the public to participate today and to provide feedback about how we overhaul the current 52-year old school funding formula. As we look forward it is important to ensure that the new formula is transparent because the public should be able to see every dollar that goes in and where it comes out of. This is not the case today and was a critical consideration in the passage of SB 543. Thanks to the Legislature we have a great opportunity to place students first, not programs. Our decisions must be driven to provide all children in Nevada at the forefront of our decision. Frankly our long-standing practice of funding education on one hand only to take it away on the other has created unnecessary divisiveness amongst stakeholders and created winners and losers not only amongst school districts but also amongst students. We have earned the distrust of the public, so transparency is critical to rebuilding the trust, as is ensuring that money dedicated to educating stays in education.

From my perspective your work with this interim is essential for two most fundamental goals. Adequacy and access, because we know that students that are not proficient have a lower success rate in schools. We also know that students who are struggling with homelessness and hunger, living in extreme poverty have similar outcomes. Today a border determines whether many of these students receive access to the services they need. The formula outlined by SB 543 is by its very definition student centered; meaning access is predicated on a single factor the needs of our children. As we sit here today 70% of our state's students reside in Clark County. As a matter of fact, today 1 in every 11 Nevadan was in Clark County Schools. I have heard the rhetoric that Clark County School District accounts for 70% of the students but 90% of the problems. But let me be clear, under the current funding formula nearly every school district, every school district, nearly all 17 in our state has a very real very immediate challenge. Adequacy does not distinguish between large, small, rural and urban. The order of magnitude may be larger in Clark County but the plight facing our students statewide is remarkably similar. Few realize that I am also the superintendent of the fourth largest rural district in Nevada. In fact, over 7,000 CCSD students attend rural schools, and I realize that we will not be benefiting from the small district equity adjustment. However, the construct of the small school adjustment as well as the cost of living factors are also particularly important to ensuring that we can serve every single student in every school. SB 543 is clearly relative to the starting point for both base funding and weighted funding under the new formula. That said this Commission has the power to make important recommendations relative to both the optimal level of funding as well as the distribution of funds between the base and the weights.

In formulating your recommendation, I would encourage you to keep two things in mind. First it is vital that we preserve base funding. Absent, we are simply stealing from Peter to pay Paul something we have done far too often for far too long. Second a great deal of work has been done during the past several years on how best to structure the weights. The work of legislative leaders, the Augenblick [APA Consulting], and other respective subject matter experts provide us thoughtful well researched starting point. I know that it will not be perfect. It will need to evolve over time. With that said until we can see how these weights are ultimately pushed to districts it will be very hard to determine the impact on each district. So let's not wait for the perfect formula, as we create a barrier to keep the changes that we desperately need. So I appreciate you, your work, and thank you for your time.

A3, Fernando Romero

Buenas Tardes, Good Afternoon, Good afternoon. My name is Fernando Romero. I am President of Hispanics in Politics and I am also the founder of Nevada's oldest existing organization, the student organization of Latinos that I founded 50 years ago, and it is still in existence. Unfortunately, we are still dealing with the same problems. As is common knowledge Nevada is an Immigrant state. According to the Urban Institute, a data driven look at children of immigrants, 36% of Nevada's children have at least one immigrant parent or are themselves immigrants. This is the third highest in the nation behind California and New Jersey. Our immigrant children hail from Africa, Latin America, and East and Southeast Asia. As every politician who visited Nevada this week has said, children of immigrant parents and immigrant children are the future of this country. As a result, Nevada is also a state with a high proportion of English Language Learners, about seventy thousand. Their home languages, their heritage language. These children come to school and their first task is to learn and increase their ability in the language of their country. I have much written for this hearing and I will make it available online. I want to emphasize the need for our children. Again, we are talking 70,000 now. When I started my organization in 1969 there were less than perhaps a thousand. The problem is growing.

SB 543 has been introduced it is there for us. We have proven our success at Valley High School, at Global High School, and other junior high schools across the valley. We cannot stop funding this organization, these schools. We need to continue funding; we need to continue the success of this program. Global has done a tremendous job in bringing their school from almost a zero level to a two in the time period they have functioned as a Zoom school. That is a tremendous stride. We have proven that it can be done. We cannot punish the success that these schools have given and have shown by discontinuing that funding. We must grandfather this and make it a separate budget for the Zoom and Victory schools. I thank you for your time. I have a sick child that I have to go—I know none of you know about this, none of you have children that are ill [joking]—but I have to run and take him to the doctors. But I do thank you very much for listening to me and for your time. Adios.

A4, Superintendent Dale Norton

For the record, Dale Norton, Superintendent of Nye County School District, the largest remote rural district in the lower 48 states of 18,899 square miles, so I can relate to Dr Jara's comments, about the largest populated district, but I have the largest land district. They may be the fourth, but we are the number one in the lower 48. I do want to talk about the remote rurals. I do want to talk about the schools of Warm Springs, K-8 school of 9 students on a ranch, Fallini Ranch. I want to talk about Duckwater school in Currant Creek off the Shoshone Indian reservation of 17 students, K-8. I want to talk about the students in Gabbs K-12 school in another Shoshone piece of the Indian reservation that services those students in Nye County, 35 students in that K-12 school. Those students in my mind are lacking in the At-Risk category because they are remote rural. They are very few students and services are not available in those areas and cost of services are expensive for us to get them there. That needs to be considered in this fairness across the state of Nevada.

I agree with Dr. Jara in the search to have continued, adequate base funding. We've talked about that in our invest documents as superintendents for many, many years with legislation and that's not your area but our area, to continue to push forward with adequate base funding for all of our students across the state of Nevada, and we need to continue to push that. The concerns that I have, I served on a committee and we looked at Pre-K funding across the state of Nevada. I'm afraid that there is about 8.6 million dollars of Zoom money and braided funds that we have used in our districts and it impacts about 12 districts across the state, Nye being one of them. The students of 200% or more under poverty, we are serving 180 students in a school that we had closed; we opened that school back up, the parents have a regiment of things that they have to do to get these Pre-K's into our school, and we braid funds, we just take money from here and there and everywhere to make things work. I can give you just a raw number, \$305,000 supports a portion of two classrooms in that campus that isn't funded by the Nevada Pre-k Program. They have to braid that out of Zoom money to make that work.

I'm concerned about what's going to happen if we put all of that all together and how we track that. How we can continue to make that work. Along with that is CTE money. We get federal money from CTE but we can't use that for consumable supplies for our schools for our CTE program so the quality of our programs will go down if we cannot adequately fund that, because we don't have as much money to do that with if we put the state funding in the general fund formula. And then the other topic on the federal side is Karl Perkins and the CTE funds; it's costing us as much to track the paperwork process for that now as it has to put into the program. We are spending anywhere from 20-30 thousand dollars just to get somebody to track all the documentation that needs to happen. Those are just some examples for that.

I want to make sure that Read by Three is taken care of, social workers in schools, all these things that came through legislation that are all important for kids. Work based learning, every piece of that is important and it is really important in the rurals. These are things we are really focused in on and are trying to put a lot of attention towards. Also, I want to just share with you that there needs to be continued thoughtfulness put into what is the measure for At-Risk. Free and reduced meals or free and reduced is always the one that comes up. We are fortunate that we are 100% free and reduced. We are a CEP district, first one in the state of Nevada, so every one of our kids eat for free. However, in other cases there may be students that are not on free and reduced that I am concerned about that are in the 25th percentile. That they're At-Risk because they are not performing, so what happens with those students if they're not falling under the free and reduced funding; are we adequately funding and being equitable for those students.

In closing I appreciate what you do. I have served on two Commissions in the great state of Nevada and I know that you are only fact finding, gathering, and making recommendations, but you have a lot of work put in front of you and I appreciate the time, if you have any questions I'd be happy to answer them. Thank you.

[Responding to Member Mathur regarding SB 178 and Zoom and Victory funding, as well as concerns about distributions to Nye.]

Yes. Yes, small portions, yes. Yes. As you put it into the formula, yes.

[Responding to Member Mathur regarding the per-pupil Zoom funding in Nye County, and the concern that the new formula will decrease that amount]

I don't have that off the top of my head. I'm sorry. Right. I just don't want it to be lower. I want to keep the adequacy of what we have right now. At least for now, to continue for planning purposes number one. Then the other piece of it is, not having

seen any kind of a formula, it's hard to predict what that is going to look like. You know, so I'm kind of waiting to see what comes out the gate.

[Responding to Member Johnson regarding budgetary modeling]

I personally haven't requested to do that, to look at that. I'm kind of waiting for what is coming out and then look at what that would look like. Eventually we would have to look at, when I talk about PreK and CTE, we would have to look at, again the current level of funding and the current level of success that we are having. If we don't receive enough funding through the new formula and through grants or vice versa. The old model versus the new model, we will have to look at how we continue to support those programs adequately and on top of that you heard me talk about the district. You know a program in Round Mountain where we have less than 100 kids in high school and they have a very productive successful FFA program going on that we need to continue to support that and fund that for that community as well as in other programs in other areas that are very successful. How do we successfully continue to fund it or look at what we have to do to make ends meet; where do we start and where do we end for kids?

A5, Dr. Kristen McNeill

Good afternoon Commission. I'm Dr. Kristen McNeill, Interim Superintendent for the Washoe County School District. We truly appreciate the opportunity to have the public forum that you all are offering us today. I want to say on behalf of our Board of Trustees, President Malena Raymond and Dr. Angela Taylor they give their regrets as they are not able to be here today as they are attending the funeral of the late Mayor Bob Cashell.

Washoe County School District has been following the efforts to update the funding formula from the Augenblick [APA Consulting] study through Senate Bill 543 and now the Commission on School Funding. We are proud to have our Chief Financial Officer Mr. Mark Mathers as a voting member, keenly focused the impact on our 64,000 students and their families from Pre-Kindergarten through adult education. We understand that today is solely intended to gather feedback from experts and stakeholders on the appropriate amount of the weights for our At-Risk, English Learner students and Special Education students included also with our Gifted and Talented students.

I have asked for the experts from our school district in each of those areas to be here today in order to provide very specific testimony in each of those areas and I hope that you will engage them in this process, and I am confident their on-the-ground perspective as educators and administrators will guide your work. But before you get into the details about the weights, I want to remind you that determining the "base" funds per pupil could arguably have an even larger impact on every single student served by the Washoe County School District and other districts across the state of Nevada. Addressing the adequacy of the funds for each of our students received, regardless of their educational labels, will be a critical component on seeing improved student outcomes. And without knowing the "base" figure, it is difficult to make specific recommendations on weights at this time. We ask that you take the time to understand and articulate the impacts that different weights have on each school district. Our teams of finance and educational experts are here today to help do just that today. Thank you for taking the time and listening and asking important critical questions to the people here today that have come to share their perspective on this important work. Thank you.

A6, Janeen Kelly

Finance Commission, thank you for the opportunity to advocate for English Learners. I am Janeen Kelly Director of Washoe County School Districts Department of English Language Development. I am here in support of the weighted funding pupil formula that has been suggested by the study to support our English Learners. Washoe County School District has 64,000 students and approximately 10,000 of those students are identified as English Learners with 81 languages represented. We support 4,500 EL students that have exited services in the last one to four years, as that is the federal requirement that we monitor the progress of our exited EL students for four years to ensure their academic success and progress. We receive no funding or extra support to do this. This is an important component of supporting our former EL's and places an additional caseload on our EL teachers who may already be providing explicit language development instruction and support for over 100 students and then need to find time weekly to touch base with general ed teachers or content specific teachers to monitor the progress of our former EL's. That same teacher could then have an additional 75-100 students to monitor and provide support where needed. The largest number of monitored students are in grades 6 and 7. This is one important reason I am in favor of the weighted funding.

However, I would like to share how the funding will be beneficial for our students and the importance of recognizing through the weighted formula that EL students need that extra support and time in order to learn the language. The weighted funding will assist us in continuing and increasing the work of providing language development for all our students. This funding will allow us to continue to meet the unique needs of our EL students. This funding will enable Washoe County School District to provide excellent language supports that help our EL students with language development and content. We have been able to provide instruction that is explicitly and meaningfully connected to student's personal, social, cultural world, and backgrounds and experiences. We have developed instructional programming that systematically provides explicit development of language and literacy that is needed for all EL's to have equitable access to grade level standards and content. As well as implementing supports that will assist our EL students in being successful throughout their school career. Experts tell us that it takes at least 5-7 years for a second language learner to become proficient in the academic language needed by an EL to demonstrate their learning of grade level content. The proposed weighted funding for EL's will allow Washoe County School to continue supporting 100% of our EL students at all our schools and allow us the time that is necessary for our students to develop their language as well as monitor our exited students. Our data shows we are making steady progress in exiting students from EL services. 64% of EL's exited services last year. That is approximately 2/3 of our EL students as well as an increase of graduation rates of EL students. We celebrated with 74% of students that were EL's that are EL's graduating from high school.

In closing if the funding is not sufficient or adequate schools will struggle to increase excellence for our EL's. The opportunity for EL's to receive and reach excellence comes from a systematic program that supports them and a commitment by all to help them achieve. The proposed weighted funding formula will increase our ability to support every second language learner in our district and give each EL student an opportunity to excel. Thank you.

[Responding to Member Jensen regarding tiered weights or the APA suggested weights]

The need at each proficiency level- Janine Kelly for the record, Director of English Language Development, Washoe County- at each proficiency level for an EL student, they each have unique needs. So I don't know that a tiered system would be the best because the needs for a child who is at a level one, which is emerging, and a two is very different from those that are at a level three and four. One of the-what happens is historically we have seen our students that are newcomers or are emerging, they accelerate in the language pretty quickly. Enough to get by and negotiate school. Where our students spend the most time is at level three and four, and the reason why is they have gained enough language to perform in class but when it comes to the tests, the formative assessment, or the summative assessments they don't have the academic language necessary in order to pass those tests with proficiency. Also, the cognitive level for them is harder. And so if you think of an upside-down pyramid the ones at the bottom, they learn the language quicker but as they move up the academic language gets much more difficult as does the content they need to know. That is why I would not recommend a tiered system, simply because every level needs support in one way or another in order for them to make the necessary progress to exit and be successful.

[Responding to Member Mathur regarding Washoe County services]

Janine Kelly for the record, Washoe County School District, Director of EL Services. In our district we really collaborate together amongst our departments in order to align our services. Have the Zoom funds helped us reach many of these goals? Yes, they have. And so I want to honor the work that has been done with the Zoom funds. We wouldn't want any decrease in

them. We would really like some more because our students have those unique learning needs. But we also align everything we are doing with Read by Three, CTE, SEL, everything that we do we try to make sure that it is equitable for our EL students as well as other students and other types of learners. One of the difficulties with EL's learning the language is we have particularly as they move into the secondary, is we have what we call short term learners and long-term learners. Short term of course are fairly new in our school district and are at the one and two. Whereas our long-term learners have been in EL for more than 5-6 years. They are many times dual certified with Special Ed and so we work very hard with our Special Ed teachers to try to meet the needs of those students in order to help them progress and be successful in their school careers.

A7, Jennifer VanTress

Good afternoon, my name is Jennifer VanTress and I am the Area Superintendent over Special Education Services for the Washoe County School District. We appreciate the undertaking of the Commission as these decisions will impact how we support students in our classrooms daily. Students with disabilities are not an exclusive group. They cross all lines in diversity. They are students who can be considered At-Risk, have different socioeconomics, be second language learners, and identified as Gifted and Talented. Currently there are over 10,000 students in Washoe County School District identified as requiring Special Education services. We recognize students with disabilities require varying levels of support. This may include something as simple as a visual schedule or a token board, to something as complex as extended curriculum materials, physical or occupational therapy equipment, books in braille or audio enhancement equipment. All of this is necessary for students to access and succeed in education. All of these supports require staff to implement, staff to support the students in the classrooms, and time to train the team members. When these supports are in place, students with disabilities succeed, but this takes financial support.

The Augenblick study recommends a weighted support for students with disabilities at a 1:1 weight and we support this recommendation and ask that you to take it a step further and consider adding a tiered approach for support for students. Under a weighted funding system, districts will be able to provide students access to staff, such as speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, nursing, and instructional aides, as well as curriculum and materials necessary for college and career readiness. While the Augenblick study recommends a weighted support system based on a mild, moderate, and severe scale including staffing ratios, there are already IEP Codes used by all schools in Nevada that could better identify how to provide a tiered level of support. Also, the Nevada Administrative Code identifies staffing guidelines for students with disabilities based on eligibility categories. A weighted tiered approach could be funded based upon this existing information available through the IEP process. Students with IEPs are coded based upon the amount of time spent in the general education setting. For example, students are identified as spending 80% or more of the day in general ed, 40% to 79% in general ed, and less than 40%, and then in separate schools. Students who typically spend less time in general ed settings require supports not readily available at schools such as access to modified curriculum, related services, and other supports.

It's also appreciated that the Augenblick study recognized the importance of Extended School Year programs for students with disabilities and the need for this support as well. Extended School Year is an "extension" of a student's education based upon certain criteria. Students who are at a critical learning juncture can extend the school year support during summer breaks and potentially even winter or spring breaks. Students who also demonstrate larger regression and recoupment times also receive Extended School Year services. Regression and recoupment occur when a student takes longer time to recoup the skills after an extended break. Just to clarify, this is not the same as a summer school program but is targeted to address the specific needs of each student, thus requiring a substantial level of support. Thank you for taking the time to hear our feedback today about how we can best support all students in Nevada.

[Responding to Member Feuling regarding the potential for abuse of the tiered system]

Thank you, Jennifer VanTress, Washoe County School District, Area Superintendent over Special Education, thank you for that question. Ethically I hope that that would never happen, because obviously that is not in the best interest of students. Actually my first thought off the top of my head is that potentially you could end up with a lot more due processes in your county if you end up putting children in a less restrictive environment than what the child actually requires than what they need to be successful. Though that's kind of a two-way concern as far as you know, you put a child in a more restrictive setting just to get funding then you're limiting their ability to access tier one instruction. Which would not ever be in the best interest for the child if that is where they need to be. So I could see that, but I think that as professionals I hope that we would keep our integrity and that isn't something that we would see happen.

[Responding to Member Mathers regarding students in multiple weighted categories]

Jennifer VanTress, Washoe County School District, Area Superintendent over Special Education. Yes, that would be, I think that when a child crosses more than one category that needs to be taken into consideration as part of the weighted formula. When you have twice Gifted students which are the Special Education and GTE students, it provides a unique opportunity for a child who is Gifted but also has Special Education needs. You would need to provide more support for a child who is also Gifted that would be different than a child, just a child with Special Education services alone. So yes there should be some considerations for that.

A8, Felicia Ortiz

Felicia Ortiz, for the record – I am a member of the State Board of Education, and a local business owner; thus, my own boss. I might actually leave, because I feel like doo-doo today, but I could not miss this, because I'm so happy we're finally having this discussion. It has been something that I personally have been pushing hard on for the last year and a half. So, one of the things that I am concerned about is that I'm afraid that the public comment today can't be completely accurate in that we can't really help decide what weights should be without knowing what the base is going to be, right? And we can't compare what the weights would be, against what we are currently funding schools if we don't know what the base is – so that is a little bit frustrating. I also want to push, as everyone else has, that we can't continue to try and slice the same sides of pie – the pie needs to grow in order for us to truly, adequately fund our students.

So, my only suggestion, and this is hard work that you guys are doing - I am actually in the midst of taking the Certificate of Education Finance course right now, because I'm trying to get a little bit well versed myself, and it's a lot. So, the only thing I would highly recommend, and I have told this to all the legislatures when they were trying to pass this bill as well, is keep in mind, and always, always, always, keep students as your number-one focus, because that's what we're all here for. And that we don't want to harm any kids in the process, right? We want to make their lives better, not worse. And so, that being said, whatever we do, especially with some of the categorical programs we have today, I'd like to make sure that we not only find a way to somehow maintain a lot of the good things that are happening and the things that are moving our state forward but, also, maintain some of the accountability that ensures that we, as taxpayers, see that our tax dollars are being spent appropriately. So, that is a big, important, topic for me, and I, again, thank you all, for all of the hard work you are doing and the time and effort you are putting into this because it is so important for our state and is long overdue, so thank you.

A9, Betsy Para

Good afternoon, my name is Betsy Para, and I am a former IB student at Valley High School. So, this year we were granted the opportunity to visit the Holocaust Museum and the Manzanar Museum as well, in California. It was a two-day trip. Valley High School is 100% free/reduced lunch, therefore, meaning, that if the trip wasn't funded, most, the majority of IB students that went on the trip wouldn't be able to afford to even go. This trip was really – it was a big, like - it was an important chunk in our like, history class, and it was really like, impactful. We were able to talk to a holocaust survivor, which was completely like, insane – it was mind-blowing. A lot of our actual like IB students cried, we were able to take pictures with him. It was just, an emotional rollercoaster. But I was really grateful to be able to take part in a trip such as this one. Before we went, we had to choose a topic for our extended essay, and my topic happened to be the Japanese Internment Camps. When we went, I didn't know what Manzanar was – and when I found out, it was just insane, how much information I learned and picked up just by going to the museum – and how it benefited me in writing my paper, and it just opened up my eyes to seeing how we take things for granted on a daily basis, and we are fortunate enough to have food on the table, compared to these Japanese kids, who didn't. Or even now – people live in poverty. It just really makes you realize we shouldn't take things for granted.

And if it weren't for the funding, a lot of us wouldn't be able to go – we only had to pay \$10, which I thought was amazing, because I would have, honestly, expected it to be more. And, coming from me – I am a first-generation student in my family – I am not as fortunate as other families. So, having that grant from Victory, and just having all of those fundings, it really helped me be able to take part of a trip like this, and become closer with all of my colleagues, and it just opened up doors to new opportunities. And I feel like, having this funding, it would also like help the new generations coming – like the next year-generation kids, and all of the upcoming IB Seniors. With that being said, I would d like to invite you guys all to our extended essay showcase. It is on March 4th, and it is in the cafeteria from 5 to 8. And we will have our extended essay boards displayed for everyone, and I have mine. And that was my board on the Japanese Internment Camps, and I was able to bring souvenirs, and add additional information onto my board. I am, therefor, thankful for everything you guys do, and for the funding that was provided for us to go. Thank you.

A10, Jennifer McCloskey

Good Afternoon:

My name is Jennifer McCloskey and I am the founder of Girls Athletic Leadership Schools, better known as GALS, which is a public charter school working to open its doors to 6th grade students for the 2020/2021 school year and expand over the following two years. I'm here today because I believe every kid in our community should graduate college and career ready and adjustments within the funding formula are critical in ensuring that happens.

GALS' mission is to provide a personalized and holistic college preparatory education in a supportive environment that fosters the academic mastery and personal development necessary for every girl to become a powerful advocate for herself and a leader of her community. We envision a world where all girls have the opportunity to succeed. We believe in equal rights, physical well-being and emotional safety for all. We also believe in whole-bodied education.

We will locate in Las Vegas' urban core in the vicinity of UNLV's campus and we intend on serving a diverse student body. At GALS, approximately 80% of our projected students will qualify for free/reduced lunch, approximately 35% of our students will be English Language Learners, and roughly 12% of our students will be Special Education students. In order to reflect our community's commitment to our students, we must create the distinctions in weight allocation within this new funding formula to ensure students furthest from the aforementioned opportunity, like the students at GALS, are provided the resources they need to bridge that gap.

We look forward to continuing to be a part of this conversation. Thank you for your time.

A11, Sylvia Lazos

Madame Chair, Sylvia Lazos for the record. I am testifying on behalf of the Nevada Immigration Coalition, and I thank Jessica for handing out a written testimony, which contains the citations that I hope you will be able to click on, or to look at later. It is intended to provide information for you in terms of the deliberations here. Let me kind of start by kind of noting that I am in disagreement with the comments of Senator Denis and Senator Woodhouse that Zoom and Victory would remain intact through the current provisions of 543. It is not part of my current testimony, but I will submit the supplementary testimony.

My calculations that I have made - rough, very rough, calculations because remember, I'm an attorney, so I go to Law School because I'm afraid of the math stuff. But I do enough math to be argumentative. Is that each, in the K-5 area, where we have had the most success with Zoom, each school would lose about \$400-500,000. Now, that \$400-\$500,000 is really important, because Zoom is a system. I think Denise Tanata is going to testify that we have, in Zoom, some of the best pre-K programming that we've been able to develop for At-Risk and also ELL children. That costs roughly about \$200,000 per year I believe, if my memory serves me correctly. Reading Centers cost about \$200K a year. So, once you take out a half-a-mil, then you're forcing that principal to figure out "eh, do I take pre-K away? Do I take the Reading Center away? Do I take the extra instructional time? Do I take away the incentive pay, that is helping me keep and retain my teachers? Do I take away the professional learning that I absolutely need?" So, it is a comprehensive system that has been built around this funding. So, when you take about half, what of these shaky pieces do you take out and still keep the system?

So I would maintain to you that we cannot have Zoom and Victory without keeping this system that we have worked so hard to maintain, and our principals have been brilliant in putting together, without having these levels that we have been able to attain. The rest of my testimony, which is contained here, goes to some of the questioning that you had, and it's based on very good research - National research - that we should be thinking about tiering ELL supports. And in particular I want to bring to your attention the issue of newcomers and long-term ELs. You've heard Global High School being mentioned frequently. We have about a total of 6,000 newcomers. Most of them are refugees. When you are a refugee, you're not exactly coming from a warm and friendly environment; you have trauma. We know that those kids cost more to adjust to the environment and to teach. Same thing with long-term ELs. These are kids that, after six years, have not been able to make that jump to full comprehension. And we know again, from the research, that to get those kids to jump, we need small classrooms, extra time, special curriculum, and - above all - specialized teachers with lots and lots of patience to help those kids make the jump.

So those cost-factors are going to be a bit different. I think I - I don't know - did I hear the thing? Alright, so, pages 2 and 3 contain kind of the recommendations - again, you've heard me drone on about grandfathering Zoom and Victory until we get to a level where we can per-pupil transition out of Zoom and Victory, develop an adjusted weight for rural school districts; the literature is rather robust that rural school districts. ELL kids just cost more - we should make that adjustment for ELL kids and not expect them to survive on what is an urban weight. Finally, we should be thinking about newcomers and refugees - it's just a special case in terms of sub-dividing the weight to long-term ELs. And finally, I think we should ask NDE to really think about, what I think is a crisis, and that is we need expert ELL Staffing. Only one-in-ten Nevada teachers has an ELL or an ELAT Certificate. I feel that we waste money if we fund the formula and then we don't have trained teachers to actually do the quality teaching that needs to happen. So, that's not Teacher Pipeline stuff. That's an NDE/Jhone Ebert problem, but we definitely need for her to figure out how we get better expertise if we're going to have this kind of formula. Thank you.

[Responding to Member Mathur about funding calculations]

I will. I am. Yes. I mean, I think you should look at the numbers. I mean I think again, I'm going to rely on Jhone Ebert to do a vetting of the numbers because she's got more staff than I do. But I think it's a fair consideration for you guys to look at the numbers and to make sure, you know, that my claim is the claim that you should be thinking about. Just gave you more work Jhone.

[Responding to Member Mathur about tiered ELL weights]

Well, she's actually talking about WIDA tiers, which is the test which tells you whether you're a level one, two, three, you heard that? I'm advocating- and so many states do that, actually do funding based on WIDA tiers, and you'll find that in the Sugarman study that I cite in there. But what I'm expressly talking about is types of ELs. You know, so instead of looking at

tiers, look at the special case of refugees, which Global services, and they're doing that at a relatively high per-pupil cost, over 10K. 10-12K is what they're probably running, and I think that's appropriate. It's not to say like "oh wow, you know, that costs too much; oh wow that kid comes with trauma, that kid is 14 and 15, that kid has been out of school for 2 and 3 years, that kid hasn't received anything close to an education." So it's appropriate to be thinking about that as a separate category and maybe a category that we have to superfund. And then I think the other point, long-term ELs, and I didn't have time to make this point, but if you look at our NAPE scores and I put a citation in there that you can click, Nevada is actually doing pretty good along most demographics. Where we suck is with 8th grade middle school NAPE. NAPE scores for ELLs. That's where you see the long-term EL, that's the population where they're at, and it's a 40-point difference in reading. How many grade levels is that, 2-3 grade levels behind? So that is again showing the weakness in our approach in long-term ELs. We really have not developed with the same rigor that we had in K-5, you know, very successful heroes like Judy Jordahl who is just magnificent in that area, we haven't done that kind of work in middle school. So how do you incentivize school systems to do a better job, by telling them they're awful and not doing a good job and you suck? No. We do it with providing additional funding and additional directives from NDE as to what we expect once [there's] an accountability on those sorts of things. So that's the reason for that, my view is more of a system perspective and not kind of a down in the weeds perspective as to why we should be thinking about that kind of funding. Did I go on too long? I'm sorry.

[Responding to Member Mathur regarding adequacy]

Well here's what I think, I think that we have worked long and hard to have success in Zoom and Victory. So in a state like this, where our funding is so thin, we have to hold onto success. And Jhone can define success, I would put that to her again, I keep giving her work, I'm sorry. But you know, not every Zoom and Victory is success. But I would say that if we have a success school, we need to keep that success going for that. Right? Not do what we usually do which is like get you to success and then take everything away from you. That's what makes our educators really really made at us. So let's keep that. We have other funding, you know, 178 and whatever is not success within Zoom and Victory, and we do allocations around that for the district to distribute. But we're pretty clear about what that gap is. Let me give you one statistic. The federal government funds 2% of our ELL need. It's only 6.7. Clark County only allocates \$100 per ELL student using federal funding. You know, whatever we do here, we'll you know, maybe give \$2-300 more. But I think the important thing about Zoom and Victory is that it's created blueprints of success, things that work here in Nevada. Nevada grown success blueprints for these populations that are so important for our future that we need to continue to feed and make sure that in the transition we don't lose that. [Tiered funding would be] As we get to optimal.

[Responding to Member Mathers regarding At-Risk metrics]

I actually have free slave labor in the name of law students. And yes, I have a student working precisely on that, and as soon as we work together on that I will more than happily provide it for your consideration. And again, all I'm saying to you is, this is a more modern way of thinking about this. We know that poverty is about geography as well, lack of opportunity. I don't believe in bussing kids to opportunity. I don't think that makes sense in a place like Nevada. I think we have to create opportunities in these areas of low opportunity and high poverty. So that would be my recommendation for you, to think about At-Risk in that kind of way. That's another reason why I like Victory and Zoom, they're actually in those low-opportunity areas. Which includes by the way, Indian reservations.

[Responding to Member Goudie about gap calculations]

Well I believe I have, but I mean I'm happy to sit down with the Department of Ed to make sure that my calculations are reasonably correct calculations.

[Responding to Member Johnson regarding cost adjustment factors for weights]

Well, I think that's what I tried to say Paul. I mean, I don't know if I was that clear. But I think that again, the Sugarman MPI study is actually talking about the need to do it at a rural level, it's just that you're going to have a higher cost because you're operating at such a small level. And there's various ways that states that have rural populations like our own deal with it. But the most common way is some kind of adjustment for the fact that at a rural county, you are going to need at least one ELL specialist, you know so let's make sure at least you're getting 100K to be able to do that.

[Responding to Member Mathur regarding how to respond to ELL families that do not have access to Zoom or Victory]

You know, I'm just going to be kind of blunt about this. The school district has a legal obligation to fund ELL students at a level where they are learning and it is research based, and they are able to meet their goals. The problem is how much funding have we provided our ELL kids. Historically, nothing until 2015 when we had the Zoom idea bipartisan. The reason we set it up that way is because we didn't want to fail. We didn't want a program that would then be called a waste of money. As you remember the business community was insistent on that being a total pre-condition on coming in. The only way we could do that is not doing per pupil across the board but building a program that was research based and was going to be sufficient critical mass so that we could show results. Judy Jordahl has worked her butt off for the last seven years and turned the worst school in Nevada to a school that is comparable to the Lamping out in Anthem. That is amazing.

[Responding to Member Mathur regarding how to respond to ELL families that do not have access to Zoom]

My point is, we never have. We have had that legal obligation for many many years.

[Responding to Member Mathur, who noted the difficulty in funding English Learners]

Unless you file a lawsuit.

[Responding to Member Mathur, who noted the Commission has a specific set of responsibilities]

Yeah, I know. We underfund Special Ed. That is a lawsuit waiting to happen too. As opposed to ELL we actually take money from the general budget to fulfill that legal obligation, but we have never taken money from the general budget to really do a good job with ELL or even a decent job. I know we are talking around in circles but what I'm saying to you is that we should have been taking from the general budget for the last 20 years to provide ELL services.

[Responding to Chair McCormick-Lee, clarifying her recommendation to grandfather Zoom until such a time that the weights across the board for ELL would be equal to Zoom funding]

That is my recommendation because then at least you are serving a certain portion of that population at a level that the law requires. Not a guessing game because it is pupil centered across the board. Another hundred dollars or another two hundred dollars is a total guessing game and a total crapshoot as to whether it will work at all at the level that the law requires. The level that the law requires is what these parents were talking about here. My kid is learning. My kid has an ELL Teacher. There is an ELL curriculum. That's the minority of schools in this state. Zoom, because we needed to show that when you increase funding it works for kids, did it right. These proposals of take apart Zoom and take that money and spread it around is not even looking ahead and saying is it going to work. We're saying let's keep what's working for that population highly concentrated. Yes, it helps also African American kids and white kids. You go into these schools like Judy Jordahl's school and it's like the United Nations. Everybody is humming. Everybody is learning. It is a win, win. It's not a negative that we have all kids at these schools at a high level.

[Chair McCormick-Lee clarified that that was her response to Member Mathur's question]

What you tell them is to come see Sylvia Lazos and we'll figure it out. So we can get you guys this kind of funding.

One more comment, if you look at the services, it's Pre-K, everybody's included, it is not ELL PreK, it's just good, high-quality pre-K. The reading centers, they're just good, high-quality literacy reading programs, it is not ELL reading. It's just that whoever is at the bottom quartile or bottom third is going to get that help. Extra time in school applies to everybody not just ELL. What I'm trying to say is if this was like a turnaround zone that we were spending this money in, I don't think you would be having these kinds of problems. That is why these schools were selected, they were one and two-star, high high poverty and also high concentration of ELs. What's happened is we also invested in training those teachers. We invested in training that culture. We invested in insisting on high quality ELL in every school. The programs are generic, but the culture change and mentality change that CCSD invested because it was Zoom and we had to have results is really what is happening here. And again, to undo that culture and that emphasis that every professional is going to know how to interact with an ELL student is a damn shame because once you undo that how do you build it back up again.

[Member Hobbs emphasized the equity issue around ELL funding]

A12, Dr. Timothy Sherry

To whom it may concern:

I apologize I am not able to be here in person as was planned - a co-worker's mother just passed and we emergently needed coverage at the hospital.

I believe I come from a unique perspective regarding the Gifted and Talented Program that may be helpful for you in your considerations.

While I do have 1 of 5 children in the GT system, in seventh grade, the long-term effects of the loss of the program would not be severe for my children as they have already made it mostly through.

But I do believe the effects for our community would be very significant if there were further cuts.

I am a physician in our community and I am the chief recruiter for a group of approximately 20 MDs. We commonly have candidates that have as a primary concern the quality of the schools for their children. This makes sense, highly educated individuals prioritize education.

Having a program for those of high capability helps not just grow skilled individuals in our community but a reverse brain drain happens. Three physicians I know have *moved to* our community and or *stayed in* our community because of these accelerated programs.

The GT program is extremely useful in the recruitment of talented candidates. In touting the experiences of my family and friends families, it is an advertisement of great possibilities in the public school system of Nevada. This is *invaluable* to attract talented, skilled labor. And it results in a brain drain on other communities.

If we lose it, we will be the backwards community to suffer from brain drain. We will be the community demonstrating its lack of commitment to a cost effective way of retaining its best prospects.

If the state were to further cut the program, I will be left only able to say to candidates, "Yes, Nevada ranks as the second-worst public school system in the nation. But there are a couple private schools you could send your children to..." "Imagine how hard a sell it is to the highly educated families that are considering moving to our area with highly capable children and or those that anticipate they will have such children. It's a non-starter, and they will look elsewhere. If a community doesn't prioritize tailoring needs to student abilities, it says a lot, whether or not at the top or the bottom of ability. And at the risk of being presumptuous, those at the top are exactly the people our state would most benefit to have moving here.

If this is my experience, yet I only represent a group of 20 physicians, it is likely the overall effect in the community is much greater.

A final comment, I am a product of the same style of GT system in Seattle with a nearly identical design. I have been through it and I believe I'm here today because of it. What do I mean by this? Capable, idle minds are an At-Risk asset. And I believe today the fact I was in this type of program may have prevented me from falling off of a cliff. My best friend from before kindergarten dropped out of high school. We are still in contact - during the Great Recession I employed him in tasks that could keep him providing for his family after losing his job. Other close friends in my school-age years have also fallen into far from optimal life outcomes despite their abilities. *They* didn't get funneled into a system of like-ability Gifted children. But I did. And today I keenly understand the value of that.

I fear our community may lose this important resource, this important investment. And families like mine may become less common in our region. Nevada will become the *victim* as opposed to the *beneficiary* of a brain drain.

This is exactly the opposite of what our states needs.

A13, Maggie Marincic

Hi, my name is Maggie Marincic, and I am a 6th grader at Pine Middle School, in the GT Program. I'm going to share the viewpoint of my teacher of my current 6th grade teacher, which points out how important the GT Program is for Gifted Students. Her story is about a half-Hispanic kid who came from a school where there were no GT Services.

His scores were off the charts, but his confidence in his abilities were low and his attitude about himself and school was very negative. He joked that he was going to fail everything and end up homeless living out of a shopping cart. She knows that kids who score high on GT tests do not always have the same educational background as other Gifted kids have. She worked with him all year on his confidence and his skills in Math and Writing. By the end of the year, he was getting all A's and felt like one of the group. Now he's a 7th grader and doing great. My teacher's biggest fear though is that we abandon Gifted children of color and Gifted children from poverty. The GT program is essential to ensuring society benefits from their potential.

She believes that removing the GT Program would affect Gifted children of color and Gifted from poverty more than any other demographic.

A14, Millie Marincic

And then, here are a couple other thoughts from a different teacher – also, I am Millie Marincic, I’m at Magnet, 8th grade. So, quote: “I spent 10 years working with struggling students as a reading interventionist. In my experience, teaching GT is very similar. Both struggling readers and Gifted students have learning differences, which, if not addressed with research-based practices, can lead to drop-outs and just a general failure to thrive in school and in life. Students at both ends of the bell curve need specialized education. To deny them this puts especially those without other resources At-Risk. It’s inconsiderable and irresponsible.” So, end quote. That’s a teacher’s viewpoint.

And then I have a little bit of stuff that’s my own. So, I am Millie Marincic, I am 14, in 8th grade, at Magnet. I have been in GT for seven years. I started in a pull-out class in second grade and, for the first time in my life, I was challenged and had an ability to learn at my level. And then I enjoyed learning. So, the GT Programs have given me opportunities I never could have otherwise, and everyone has a right to want to prosper, so why shouldn’t we? And, thank you for your time.

A15, Hal Mortensen

Hal Mortensen, for the record. I am a principal at Moapa Valley High School and U.V. Perkins Elementary School – two rural schools within CCSD. I just kind of want to give you a visual of where we're located. We're about an hour north drive from Las Vegas. This small community – the High School that I am located at is famous for its agriculture farm. We have 30 acres that we farm, and our kids are actively farming in the fields and taking care of the cattle. The reason I bring this up is that I want to let you know that we are a rural school within Clark County School District. And I think what happens, if I give you a little visualization: like, for Arizona, if you think of Arizona, you think it is all desert, because of the Grand Canyon. People are surprised that there's forest and there's mountains there. Same thing within Clark County School District. Everybody thinks that in Clark County there is the lights, and Las Vegas, and then they don't realize that within Clark County School District, we have 17 rural schools with about 7,000 kids. So, if you do the math, as Superintendent Dr. Jara stated, that we would be considered the 4th largest rural school district in Nevada. And I understand that, when they came up with the per-pupil formula, I know that we're in the planning stages for it, that there's no provision for rural schools. I just want to – I'm concerned because we are fit into an urban model when it comes to formula within school districts, with Clark County, which makes it difficult because it takes a little bit more to run a rural school, as it is with all the other rural schools within Nevada. So I just want to emphasize that, right now, Las Vegas schools, is subsidizing the rural schools, the 17 rural schools within Clark County. As Madam Chairman stated previously, that strong equity, and making sure that we have strong geographic diversity, is being met- I challenge you to consider those 17 schools within Clark County. Thank you.
[Responding to Member Mathur regarding student population]

Okay, Hal Mortensen for the record – Principal at Moapa Valley High School and at U.V. Perkins Elementary School. At the High School we have approximately 550 students. Out of those students, about 10% are FRL, and 10% are ELL, and then, at U.V. Perkins Elementary School, the dynamic changed there; we're right outside to- next to- the Moapa Indian Reservation. And so, we have about 15% are Native American, and about 20% are Hispanic, and the student population there is 150 students. FRL, we are 100% Free-Reduced [and EL] at U.V. Perkins, about 20 [percent].

A16, Maurice Perkins

Hello, Members of the Commission. Maurice Perkins, Principal at Hughes Middle School, located in Mesquite, Nevada, also part of Clark County School District. We are one of the 350 plus schools in Clark County School District. We are rural, and we are considered a Title I School with approximately, 65% of our students below that poverty line. We do also have a high percentage of EL students out there, even though we're a rural school, we fit all of those categories. We don't receive any Zoom funding or Victory school funding. We have received Title I funds and also SB 178 funds, and a really small allocation of Title III funds for our EL students. That being said, we are appreciative of what the school district does, because they do fund these rural schools at the expense of all the other urban schools, to the tune of 12-15 million dollars every year. And we appreciate that and recognize that funding. It's still inadequate. We understand that. But it comes at the cost of the very important work that is being done in the urban school setting, to help subsidize what's going on out there. And so our and my position and hope is that, as a Commission, you consider these factors and the rural needs within Clark County School District. Don't just lump these schools in with this big urban district. We also have needs that other schools - just like it costs more money to educate the students in White Pine County, or Storey County, or all these other counties throughout the State - it costs more money to educate a student in Mesquite, Logandale, and Indian Springs, Sandy Valley, and Laughlin - all these areas - and Clark County School District has been footing this bill for all this time and we would hope that this Commission recognizes that and considers it in their deliberations. And we thank you, and I thank you, for your time.

[Responding to Member Mathur regarding student population]

Maurice Perkins - Principal at Hughes Middle School, for the record. And I can speak, also, for Virgin Valley High School - I can represent them in this communication, that the student population at Virgin Valley High School is 750 students. Their FRL percentage is, approximately 57% and EL percentage around, it's between 15 and 20%, given any given year. At Hughes Middle School, our student population is 590. Our FRL percentage, 63.5-64%. ELL, our EL student population at just over 20%. We are also very diverse. People think of Mesquite, and they think "oh, it's this beautiful golf community", and it is and we love it. But it is a poverty community and, when it comes to our student population, it's not just all retired folks.

A17, Kenneth Paul

I'm Kenneth Paul. I'm the Principal at W.Mack Lyon Middle School in Moapa Valley about 70 miles North of here. And I just want to reiterate what my colleagues have said. I know we're very active with our SOT, School Organizational Team, and we've been talking about the funding of rurals for a long time now. And how especially just talking about staffing, how it takes additional teachers in order to have a curriculum that is comparable to what a student would get elsewhere in an urban school, and that it does cost more money. And so there was a proportionality clause in that originally, and I know that's kind of gone up and down. But I can tell you, from the year that it was implemented in '16 and '17 as far as Hold Harmless, we were down teachers, and just as the district has tried to struggle with the idea of how many additional teachers, how much additional funding should a school get to carry on a comprehensive Middle School Program, or High School Comprehensive Program. Thank you.

[Responding to Member Mathur regarding student population]

Ken Paul, again, Principal of W. Mack Lyon Middle School in Overton, Nevada. We have about 430 students currently, and I should have brushed up on exact percentages, but free and reduced, I believe, is about 40% - right in that area. ELL students that are in that program, there's less than 10 this year that way. American Indian students – we do have the students from the Reservation that attend our school.

A18, Lindsey Dalley

Okay, my name is Lindsey Dalley. I'm currently a Community Education Advisory Board Member. I'm also- I work with Mr.- I'm nervous here- Mortensen as a High School Organization Team Member and also Mr. Paul – I'm on that School Organization Team as well. And I get to see the on-the-ground struggles of budget concern, so I'm going to kind of focus mine a little bit on some realities that'll probably be a little more difficult for a Principal to make the statement here. So I am obviously not a CCSD member – I have a good working relationship with CCSD, but I'm going to kind of make some things- some observations- here.

You've heard currently, we're kind of invisible to the state in this educational inequity, because we're cloaked with the urban cloth. Superintendent Jara, I wanted to give kudos, has been the first Superintendent to recognize that CCSD actually is one of the largest rural schools, and I do not want that to go unnoticed. He has- we've had- good dialogue, and he's opened up to that idea. But to illustrate the difficulty that this places on rural schools in Clark County let's go turn the clock back a little bit prior to Superintendent Jara's term.

There was Superintendent Skorkowsky. Nice man, but he was right in the middle of all of the reorganization meetings, and our community was very active in that. We understood it. We had our C-AB, had a task force specifically for that, so we were there every meeting and followed it and made proposals. So we understood what was going on. And there was a meeting that was being had, and there was discussion back and forth, and the comment was pointed out how, the rural schools, you need some attention. And Superintendent Skorkowsky stated, in that public meeting, that rural school funding comes at the expense of urban schools – something that those principals mentioned. And then he said – cause, you've got to understand, this Commission, you know, politicians, you know, they're Senators and Assemblymen – and he said “what schools in your districts would you like me to take that funding from?”. Now, it was crickets. And that drove home the point in spades about “that's the reality we're looking at.” And we never heard a thing. And after that it just kind of, we just kind of slid off the- you know- out of the microscope, and we were done. Because that's the kind of cloak that we're dealing with. And the problem, the reason that creates a problem is, every time that you get a new Administration, then you know, there's a new Pharaoh in town and they may not look at it the same way. And so you get teacher fluctuations and the harm is in a rural school, you lose a teacher, you lose an entire program, not just a slight adjustment in class size. So we need to rip that cloak off the rural schools in Clark County and begin to address it. I'm not applying blame. I'm just noting the reality. Cause we're getting traction now, but you know, give us the same funding recognition as the other zip codes in Nevada. And just because we're in Clark County, don't let us be cloaked with that. Thank you very much.

A19, Ahmed Faris Saleh Qader Aziz Ahmed Nasir Jaber Al-Awsy

Hello everyone. Good afternoon. For the record, my name is Ahmed Faris Saleh Qader Aziz Amhed Nasir Jaber Alawsy. Do you want me to spell it? I'm here to explain how Victory funding helped my education. I am a junior at Valley High School. I am in a magnet program that is called International Baccalaureate, or IB. I was born and raised in Iraq. And then, because of my family's religious beliefs, the Iraqi Government believed that my father was a spy. Therefore, we had to flee to Turkey, or they would have killed my dad. Afterward, we came to the U.S. as political refugees. When I first came to the U.S., I knew no English, so I had zero English. I was afraid that I would not be able to get an education or be able to learn like other students. But, thanks to the EL Program, that helped me to be where I am now, as an International Baccalaureate student. The EL Program helped me learn English in two years, while it took my five years to learn Turkish, because there was no EL classes over there. The EL Program gave me the opportunity to attend a Summer Bridge by offering me the tools to learn English at home, and at school – such as Reading Horizons, and Achieve3000. Also, the EL Program offered me after school classes, and tutoring, that helped me practice English with experts, and with other students. The EL classes helped me a lot to be ready for the International Baccalaureate, which are basically college-level classes in High School. I hope that the funding will continue to support Valley High School, so that students like me have the opportunity to get an education. Our community cannot improve without education. Please help the communities of Valley High School by continuing these programs and supports. Thank you so much for listening.

[Responding to Chair McCormick-Lee about languages spoken and time in the US]

I speak, my main language is Arabic. I learned Turkish in 5 years, I learned English. And then, I'm taking French Class, and Spanish, with friends. Three years, I've been three years in the United States.

A20, Brad Evans

Hello, good afternoon, thank you so much for allowing us to move ahead so I can get him home, per Mom's request. Thank you so much also for hearing everyone today. For the record, my name is Brad Evans and I have the pleasure and privilege of serving as an Instructional Coach and ELL Facilitator at Valley High School. To give you a little bit about myself, I have 20 years' experience in education as a classroom teacher, lecturer, and pre-service college professor. My career has allowed me to serve students in D.C., France, Memphis, Montreal, and now the Silver State, from Pre-K to adult learners. I hold 2 BAs in English and Spanish, 3 MA's in Literature, Applied Linguistics, and Educational Policy and Leadership from UNLV. I am currently working on my PhD in Education and am a proud Teach Plus Member.

I'm here today to contribute to the conversation on transitioning to weighted funding with regard to my expertise, ELL. At the heart of this conversation, we're implicitly recognizing that different needs require different resources— "one size fits all" does not work for all of our students. I applaud the work of the Education Committee to establish weighted funding, but we must be cautious of unintended consequences when establishing the weighted formulas because all ELL students are not the same - to echo back to what Professor Lazos said. One weight will not adequately support the linguistic diversity of all Nevada.

For example, the Spanish-Language dictionary required for state-mandated testing accommodations are \$16 each, but the Arabic ones are \$20 each. The Dari ones are \$25. Kinyarwanda is \$14. These amounts may seem small, but for the unique population at Valley which serves the largest high school refugee population in Nevada, to my knowledge, we have spent approximately \$15,000 over the past years to be able to provide these state-mandated testing accommodations. This is thanks to Victory. Beyond the bare minimum requirements, the programs that Ahmed told you about, to serve our refugee and newcomer populations, like specialized supports, sheltered instruction with smaller class-sizes of 20 to 30, summer credit retrieval, tutoring supports through hiring Certified Temporary Tutors—other testimony has been submitted in writing from one of our Certified Temporary Tutors, Ms. Patricia Woods—and instructional coaching for teachers who don't have that expertise we talked about in ELL.

Also, our Certified Temporary Tutors and myself, and the testing coordinators – six of us - carry out 3,098 exams for WIDA in the 5 weeks, and these are federally mandated. And we have 5 weeks to do these 3,098 exams regardless of how many students we have – 4 exams per student – reading, writing, listening, speaking. I am providing a shortlist of the cost breakdown of what this looks like at Valley High School. Many of us asked "What does it look like between a long-term learner – an L-TEL, and a short-term learner?" I broke down what we spend on our program, thanks to Victory, and I will leave this with you. The amounts are about the same, but as we stand now, we currently cannot support our 780 ELL students. If we lose Victory in this transition, or the funds that represent, I don't know how I can make students like Ahmed possible.

I want to thank you for your consideration. I'm providing you with my contact information, if you'd like to more specific information of what it looks like for Valley, and I'm available to partner with you, if you think that I can help. Thank you for your consideration and time.

[Responding to Member Mathur regarding receiving Victory and Zoom funds]

No Ma'am, but the Victory funds that you – you don't get Victory and Zoom, or Victory and SB 178. I'm at Valley, and so is he. So, the Victory funds that we have allow us to have these programs that we've talked about – I mentioned the after-school tutoring – that's a prep-buy; I have the numbers – and they're just basic numbers for Valley, but it gives you an idea of what it looks like in the program of 780 kids, and Title III funds do not cover this. Title III funds cover approximately half of this.

[Responding to Member Mathur regarding doctorate]

Not yet. I'm ABD.

[Responding to Member Mathur regarding tiered funding]

You know, it's complex – in the spirit of the bill, of weighted funding, you're considering that different needs have different funding sources or different funding requirements. So it makes sense that we could tier ELL, but the trouble is as – I don't remember the person's name but in Carson City or Reno they spoke about "It's still expensive to monitor kids once they've exited." And if a kid exits in eighth grade, we federally have to monitor them for four years. Who's going to look at all their

grades, and follow up with their teachers, and make sure that kid is getting all the supports they need? For the 525 kids that we have – those are just long-term learners – the monitored kids make up an astronomical part of our school, because most kids have been ELL at some point. That said, it can be troubling to say “Well this kid should get more money than that kid, based on…” but long-term learners still need support. But, as Professor Lazos said, newcomers need sort of super-support to get the results that we had. He [Ahmed] was at school on Saturday. He was at school every day, after school for two hours. He has instant access to tutors and—

[Responding to Member Mathur regarding Professor Lazos’s recommendation]

I would agree that newcomers need more, and then long-term learners also need to be considered. Thank you so much.

A21, Teagan Serink

Good afternoon. My name is Teagan Serink. I am a Sophomore at Damonte Ranch High School and a former GT student. Currently I'm in all Honors or AP classes.

I stayed up until 2 AM yesterday doing homework. So I'm running on about 4 hours of sleep. That's normal. It's not out of the ordinary for me to stay up past midnight completing the massive piles of homework I get from my classes. I've been so run down from lack of sleep I've missed a total of three weeks of school this year due to illness. I've gotten two letters from the school district warning me that I'm At-Risk of failing my classes because of my attendance, despite my 4.2 GPA. The counselors in charge of helping me choose my courses for this year had no background in helping GT students. They only considered what I *could* do, and loaded me up with AP courses, rather than considering what I *should* do. They had no training or experience in working with Gifted students, and so all they could do was load me up with Honors and AP courses because it seemed logical to do for one of the "smart kids." They didn't know that the perfectionism that plagues most GT kids would keep me up until 2 doing homework because I wanted everything to be perfect. They didn't know how hard it is for GT kids to drop classes because of the desire for a perfect transcript. They didn't know that getting a B in a difficult class is enough to send kids like me into a downward spiral of self-doubt.

I am so thankful to have access to GT coordinators, who have helped me navigate the catalogs and set up my courses for next year. These experienced advisors have helped me create a schedule that will allow me to balance challenging courses and my physical and mental health. They have provided invaluable assistance to me and my family.

Please do what you can to maintain the current level of funding for GT programs so that students like me can get the guidance they need. Thank you.

A22, Julian Serink

Good afternoon, Members of the Funding Commission. My name is Julian Serink, and I'm a 6th grade student in the Magnet program at Pine Middle School in Reno. I've been in the Gifted and Talented program since 4th grade. The GT program has allowed me to learn at a pace that is appropriate for me. It keeps me interested and challenges me. I was quite bored in school before GT, and I appreciate that there is a program that meets my needs as a student. But with the recent proposed GT budget cuts, the program won't be able to function, leaving Gifted kids stuck in classrooms that don't challenge them. The Gifted program gives these kids an opportunity to reach their learning potential and meet kids like them. Without this program, kids will be robbed of this opportunity. It's important that the GT funding is maintained for thousands of students rely on it and would be left bored. Having the GT funding cut by two thirds would seem like a lot of money saved by the state but when you consider the amount of students left without classrooms when the GT budget is cut, the amount saved drops drastically when you factor in the space and teachers needed for these children. I hope you take my thoughts with consideration when finding recommendations. Thank you for your time.

A23, Avery Serink

I'm Avery Serink, I'm an 8th grade student from Pine Middle School, I'm also GT. I have been in the GT program since 2nd grade. I've been part of the Pull-Up program, SWAS programs, and I'm now in the Magnet program. Now before all of these wonderful programs came around, I found myself like Julian, in school bored, without anything to do. I was hardly learning anything. Because of this program I have acquired a great many skills. At this point in time, I am taking an Algebra II math class, which most students do not take until sophomore year of high school. I am also able to write an essay in MLA format, cite texts, and cite work easily, along with being able to write up a science lab with little to no difficulty. The GT program has also taught me about important life lessons. Most importantly the importance of failure and how it is OK. This program allows students to move at a fast pace in which they need and go deeper into material than normal schools would. This program is absolutely essential to the education of GT students. With this proposed budget cuts, is shooting itself in the foot. They are removing this program and stealing the opportunity for many of the GT kids to basically learn. I hope that the Washoe County School District considers my words- State, my bad, the State considers my words, and thank you for the time.

A24, Karen Serink

Good afternoon Madame Chair and Commission Members. My name is Karen Serink. I am the parent of 3 students who have received services from Gifted and Talented Departments, starting in 2012. I want you to know that all of the students who have spoken here today in Carson City have received permission and support from their teachers and have arranged to make up the work that they were missing this afternoon; they are not taking the easy way out. GT has allowed my children to learn in a way that is appropriate for them. Just as in any Special Ed classroom, they receive instruction and assignments that are ability appropriate. They receive the support they need in order to be successful.

I would like to touch on an experience that Julian had with his math that he is a little too humble to mention. He has been accelerated to the point where he is doing math in sixth grade that most students do in eighth or ninth. This would not be possible if it weren't for the flexibility and the help of our GT department here. They have been wonderful in terms of testing and guiding and making sure that he is in a classroom that is appropriate for him. We can't say enough how much we appreciate that our kids have access to the education that they need. You would expect that a student in the 10th percentile would receive supports that they needed in order to succeed in school; would you not then expect the same supports for somebody in the 90th or 98th or 99th percentile.

What we are asking for today, is for you to look at the big picture. Current funding for Gifted and Talented Education is a drop in the bucket in terms of the state education budgets. Even with this small amount, our GT departments are able to accomplish great things in terms of identifying and serving Gifted and Talented students, and in terms of getting GT endorsed teachers. They stretch the taxpayers' dollars to achieve maximum benefit, and this money is well spent. I would like to caution you against defunding Gifted and Talented Education, as was recently proposed in New York. If we happen to follow New York's example of dumping GT students into general education in the name of 'desegregation' or saving money, we will likely see the same result: the families that belong to demographics that typically have access to resources will likely figure out a way to get their kids what they need, either through private, charter, university, or home schooling. The group who would be most negatively impacted are ethnic minorities and low-income families who may not have access to the resources or the knowledge that they would need in order to advocate for their children. They likely wouldn't even know that they are supposed to advocate for their children, and they certainly wouldn't know how. How are these children even going to be identified as GT if we don't maintain the current level of funding? Not funding GT programs would have disastrous effects, and those most vulnerable are those who will be hurt the most. We are not asking you for more, because what we have is clearly working. But please, do whatever you can to maintain the current level of funding for Gifted and Talented Education. Thank you.

A25, Carl Dawson

Thank you for this opportunity, to the Members of the Board. My name is Carl Dawson, I am a retired teacher from the Clark County School District where I have taught for past the 30 plus years. I obtained two double masters and have taught both elementary as well as middle school in the Clark County School District. I recently retired as of November 2019. During my tenure in the Clark County School District I have had the opportunity to teach students from various parts of the world and a massive number I would say within the Clark County School District, and especially at the middle school that I retired from, we have a very high level and number of ELL students in attendance at the school that I retired from as well as a large number of Free and Reduced Lunch program as well.

In reference to our ELL program I would say that it could benefit from various forms of financing in reference to the Zoom Program. My last couple of years I have taught reading as well as English. I have noticed that the students transitioning from the elementary school to the middle school in sixth grade, and especially those students who have made the transition from elementary schools who were implemented in the Zoom program seem to do a little bit better than the students that were not from Zoom schools.

Now this is my plea to the committee here. It is my belief that we should spread the wealth around to all of the students who meet the criteria for ELL and those students who are either tier 1,2,3, and 4. Now here it is. When I notice students who make a transition—I should say from the previous school I retired from, it is a transitional school, there are student who come in and out like a revolving door throughout the academic year during the 180 days we are in school. During that time, I notice students who are coming from schools that have implementation of Zoom programs seem to do a little bit better than the schools that do not have it. So, my question is, and I am looking at the fact that if these students are doing better because they are being introduced, or they are part of a Zoom program and when they come to my particular school which is not a Zoom school, they are being short changed because of the fact that there parents moved to a different demographic location within Southern Clark County, this becomes problematic for them.

For example, we talk about the ideal of students going from- we see the transition from Pre-K through 5 and looking at the transition from middle school to high school, we are look at the various tiers and levels. Now here is my problem, here is what I don't quite understand, and I'm wanting your support in this financially supporting the programs so all students can receive funding. Once the students have reached K-5 and 6-8th what happens to those students in 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th. Now if they are not receiving continuous funding, with those students that were in Zoom schools, if they are not receiving the continuous program and support of the Zoom programs throughout, and they get to certain schools that do not have it and they transition from the middle school to the high school, it's drop dead so to speak. They are not receiving that so therefore we are looking at the comprehensive high schools, at the college bound high schools where we have these rigorous programs set up and designed for these students, but they are not getting the support that they need to continue and to be more competitive in reference to the areas of going into high schools and competing on a higher level classes because there's not that support system there. If these funds were to follow the students, each individual student as they travel throughout their transitions throughout the Clark County School District, this would better benefit them at the various levels and at the end it will benefit us all as they progress and continue to build their educational program either in the workforce or into the higher level post-secondary schools.

A26, Brenda Pearson on behalf of Dr. Cynthia Rapazzini

Good afternoon, my name is Brenda Pearson, Director of Strategic Policy Initiatives at CCEA. I am reading a statement on behalf of Dr Cynthia Rapazzini who is currently a middle school counselor in CCSD:

I previously worked at a Zoom Middle School which served a high population of EL students. I am aware of the benefits and potential outcomes that Zoom schools offer to CCSD students. My concern however is that not all EL students are able to receive the benefits of the additional instructional time during the school day or during the summer. When students are not zoned for a Zoom school they are left out of the support, additional instructional time, and exposure to a variety of vocations are a pathway to higher learning and future careers for many but not all EL students. If the funding were to follow the students it would better serve that population, no matter which school they attended. With only 37 schools classified as Zoom there are too many students that are unable to access the resources that are available. This needs to change. Thank you.

A27, John Vellardita

Madam Chair, Members of the Commission, my name is John Vellardita, I represent the Clark County Education Association. Thank you for this opportunity today. I know a lot of people have been waiting so I'm going to just kind of sum up a few things in terms of where we are coming from. We think the major thrust of this Commission is to make funding recommendations to the legislature. We understand the parameters of 543. You spoke to it, Punam, not too long ago, a ten-year plan will work with existing. But we would like to see the day that session opens up, particularly since there have been three independent studies that essentially said if we go to weights then we need to fund our base at a certain level we need more than a billion dollars more annually into the system; we would like to see a recommendation come out of this Commission that says this is the kind of money we need. Otherwise every piece of narrative you have been hearing today and you will hear later about a cut in services or a fear of that is basically built around this construct that we are going to do more with less. We got to break from that.

The other thing I want to share with you is we are hoping in 2021 this Commission comes out with something on the governor's desk and law makers that says this is how much we need. We have no issue with CFOs on this Commission because that's your charge. You know exactly what kind of money we need for these schools. That's why you're here. We asked the Guinn Center to do a report that we are going to submit for the record to this Commission that essentially analyses the dedicated funding streams under 543 and prior to 543 under the Nevada Plan that go into K-12. Now it identifies not just each and every one of them but the level of those funding and it gives you some insight that if you were going to make a recommendation to increase funding levels particularly based on a stream that can't be back funded out of this new state education fund, this would be a document that could help it. I would point out that when we submit this to you that you look closely at what took place in the 1980s when there was a paradigm shift in the policy that moved from property taxes as a revenue stream for our K-12 system to a sales tax. It is an interesting dynamic and unless somebody forces the issue that we go back to a stable revenue stream, that is the principal source of revenue in K-12, 39 cents on every dollar in our education system comes from sales tax, then it's general fund, and then it's property tax, and then it's a number of other issues. We are going to submit this to you. I was hoping to do it today, we're going to submit it to you probably Monday, because it's being vetted right now with fiscal analysts. We hope that this document proves to be helpful with your deliberation.

The last thing I want to say is that I have been through several legislative sessions and we support the construct of this bill. Raise the base, go to weights. It's that simple. But it has to be funded at adequate levels. That's the mystery what is the adequate level. We think that they've already been determined but that's your charge. What we don't support is the status queue of categorical programs particularly ones that are building based and not student centered based and that is what the Zoom programs are. If you look at the Zoom schools in Clark County alone there are 38 schools. In those schools there are 29,365 students. Only 9,860 are ELL students. That means only 18% of our ELL students in Clark County, which is 56,000, get Zoom dollars. But the non-ELL kids in those buildings also get the services of Zoom and that kind of model has to end. SB 178 is not that. That's the first attempt by the legislatures to go to a universal weight where it is placed on a student 1,200 dollar value, follow the kid into the school with prescriptive services that that money had to buy and schools had to manage how do we use this kind of money for the two students in our school. Well that's the challenge with the weights. Victory was the same thing. Victory followed kids into the schools because Victory was based on FRL. An entire building was FRL students that got Victory dollars. The exception was the Zoom model. We are not saying that the Zoom program and the Victory program and 178 were not successful. They'll stand on their own. The evidence can make that case. We won't. What we will say is maintenance of the status queue is unacceptable and in particular a model that is school based and not student center based, categorical that are school based cannot coexist with a weighted funding formula.

A28, Thomas Wellman

Madame Chair, Members of the Committee, thanks for pushing my button, as always. Good Afternoon, my name is Tom Wellman and I am president of the NSEA, the Nevada State Education Association Retired Program. I was a classroom teacher and school counselor for CCSD for 32 years. I have been retired now for eight years and I am still very concerned about public education. I am committed to improving the quality of education in this state. As you can see, I am still here on a Thursday afternoon. One of the major problems that has plagued all of the school districts across this state for years is funding. As time has passed inflation has plagued school funding for years and there is never enough money to go around. SB 543 is not the answer, it is broken and needs to be fixed. This bill has created winners and losers across the state, and it appears that there is no equity for the 15 rural counties. As a school councilor I learned very quickly that one of the costliest things involved in the education process is the school curriculum. By freezing and squeezing these 15 rural districts are going to make major decisions about the quality and caliber of the curriculum that they will be able to provide their students. Do not do this to those schools and those students. A new revenue stream must be found to make this plan viable and equitable for all students. All of our students deserve a quality public education regardless of their zip code. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

A29, Chris Daly

Madam Chair, Chris Daly Nevada State Education Association, the voice of Nevada Educators for over 100 years. I heard that while we were at the Interim Education Committee that Senator Woodhouse had a letter read into the record and while I did not catch all of the letter I hear that there may be a difference of opinion on some points around SB 543. We will continue to make our arguments and our concerns about the legislation known here at this Commission, at any interim committees, and at the legislature next year. Instead of taking my word for it let me quote some elected officials who felt compelled to vote for the legislation even though “It had some language that I thought would be problematic in its implementation” or “It was a process that legislators and stakeholders felt was not sufficiently transparent and inclusive” or “A more inclusive discussion of the bill would have been helpful” or “I had and still have some serious concerns about the methodology that underlies the budget formula”. Those were legislatures voting in favor, late at night, of SB 543.

In terms of the weights and the issue in front of the Commission here today, I had the honor of serving on the Interim Committee last interim, the SB 178 working group. We reached the end of our process with the Augenblick funding study and we had to choose between full adequacy and full adequacy and weights, lower levels of adequacy in terms of what the base was and scaled weights, meaning weights that had higher percentages to get that dollar figure which I think was about \$3,000 extra for At-Risk students and over \$4,500 extra for English Learners. We are talking about weights in the .7 or .8 area and then what we ended up settling on because there really is no choice in this matter, even if you wanted to deliver equity, it's just where the base is at it's fiscally irresponsible to talk about anything other than relative weights. So when we are talking about relative weights the .3 and the .5 recommended by Augenblick and adopted by the Interim Funding Study Workgroup out of 178, we look at programs like Zoom and Victory. Those model programs like my colleague, Sylvia Lazos testified earlier, they are too important to compromise. They are successful, they are located in the neediest and most vulnerable communities in Nevada, they are working for kids who desperately need them, and most importantly they've built communities that are strong and that you are hearing from and that the legislature will continue to hear from. As you choose to move forward, I assume based on the data and evidence with relative weights that don't quite get there, grandfather the programs and the models that work. That are excellence in education equity that Nevada is currently doing. Thank you.

A30, Gabriela Avila Flores

Hi, I am Gabriela Avila Flores, I am a current senior at Valley High School, and I am also in the IB program as you can see. The IB program is the International Baccalaureate Program, and it is full of amazing students who have a lot of potential and I think that shouldn't be limited because of our economic status. As you know Valley is 100% Free and Reduced Lunch and we are around 3,000 students who are all diverse and we all have potential. I am also part of the Latinos in Action program. It is a new program that our principal started this year in which we as Latinos are trying to empower community. Every Tuesday and Thursday we walk down to an elementary school to tutor the young kids. It is not just to help them out right now but to set an example, that they can also reach this. As a first-generation high school student and a first-generation college student, it's incredible to have this program in which I have learned to build a resume, I have learned about internships and about a lot of things I had no idea existed. Scholarships and all those things. All these programs are not just empowering us right now and helping us as current students, but for the future generations who are going to be in our position who need help and need a pathway. Thank you.

A31, Melitza Ramirez-Pedro

My name is Monter Ramirez. I am a Junior at Valley High School and I am attending right now the AOHT program, the Academy of Hospitality and Tourism. I want to talk referring to Zoom again. So my brother is in the program Zoom in elementary school. He has speaking disabilities which makes him really low in his academics. Through the Zoom program he has learned so much and he has improved because they have helped him a lot throughout the years. Now he speaks very well and has improved a lot throughout his academic experience. Through programs like these he has learned a lot throughout the years and he has improved a lot. He used to tell me a lot of the things that people would tell him about his speaking abilities and about his academics and now through these programs he has learned so much. I am very proud of that for him. These programs have helped him a lot throughout the years and they were very beneficial to him and to his academics and now he is doing really good. Now he is in middle school and now he is doing really good in mathematics and he is doing really good in English. I am very proud that through the Zoom programs he has learned a lot and has been able to be better in his academics and his speaking abilities.

A32, Josseline Marengo Martinez (*Translated by Sylvia Lazos*)

Buenas Tardes. My name is Josseline Marengo, I am a student at Valley High School, and I belong to the same student organization and I am Vice President of that organization. I have been at Valley for a year and 5 months and this is the first year that Latinos in Action has been operating in Valley High School. In this short time, we have been helping kids in K-5 through tutoring. We hold events to be able to help needy people. As a Latina I feel very supported by this program. It not only supports me in learning a new language, but it is also inspiring my hopes and helping me approach my goals and dreams. Latinos in Action has helped me perform better in my classes and has also helped me recognize that I am a leader. We need this program so that we can be motivated, and we can achieve our goals. From the bottom of my heart I ask the Department support this program and other programs at Valley High School so that we can continue to succeed. We each deserve to discover the leader in us. We should also approach all Gifted students equally. We don't all have the same goals but not because of those differences should we diminish the dreams of others. It's important to educate children so they are happy and not rich, because then that way they will know the value of things. Department of Education help us to fulfill our dreams and make our dreams become real. Gracias.

A33, Cheri DiMartino

Good evening and for the record Cheri DiMartino, Director of the Gifted and Talented Education Programs in Washoe County. First, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak today about the proposed funding formula as it directly relates to Gifted education. It is noted that your hard work and dedication has been hard, and we have to commend you. The state of Nevada recognizes the importance of funding the unique needs of certain students. English Learners, Special Education, At-Risk, and Gifted and Talented Students. The substantial decrease proposed by the Augenblick/APA would reverse the positive progress our state has made in Gifted education since grant funding began in 2015. Nevada has mandates through the Nevada Revised Statute and the Nevada Administrative Code to provide for Gifted students. Our state also incorporates standards from the National Association of Gifted Children and the Council for Exceptional Children as guidelines for continuous improvement and growth for Gifted students. The myth regarding Gifted students that they would learn regardless could not be farther from the truth. Gifted students are under the umbrella of Special Education and have unique individual needs and should be supported like their Special Education counterparts. These needs must be addressed appropriately for Gifted students to reach their maximum potential both academically and effectively.

I would like to take a moment to speak about the APA report and recommendations provided in 2018. On page one of the study in the APA proposal it states it would create a set of recommendations to better serve students with a focus on resources for English Learners, At-Risk, Special Education, and Gifted students. The study would also include engaging stakeholder feedback, however after reading the entire report it lacks credibility in regards to Gifted students. The panel of 22 professional judgment participants can be found on page 143 of the full APA report. Represented were 6 from Special Education, 9 from English Learners, 7 from At-Risk schools, and 0 and I repeat 0 from Gifted. What is glaringly missing from this professional judgement panel is anybody with Gifted expertise yet the recommendations on page 53 of the APA report stated and I quote “No additional resources are needed to serve Gifted students if schools have class size and resources identified in the base”. I now ask the Funding Commission to reflect honestly on the lack of credibility of the recommendations in the APA study regarding Gifted education, when experts in the field were supposed to be at the table for this critical decision and recommendation. I would also like to bring to the attention of the Funding Commission that the panel recommended to increase the funding formula for the three groups represented on the panel and a decrease for the only one not in attendance, Gifted.

Today you will hear from administrators, psychologists, councilors, and facilitators all experts in Gifted education from our state. Collectively we respectfully request that the funding Commission revisit the proposed Gifted weight of .05 from the APA and keep the funding weight at the current levels so our state can continue to support the academic and effective needs of the Gifted population. Thank you very much.

[Responding to Member Mathur regarding the weights referenced]

That is correct it would go from .12 to .05 for Gifted.

[Member Mathur clarified that Ms. DiMartino is requesting the weight remain at .12]

That is correct. Thank you.

A34, Wanda Washington

For the record, Wanda Washington, Program Coordinator of Gifted and Talented Education in Washoe County, and a committee member for the Leadership Development Committee for the National Association of Gifted Children. I am here before you in opposition of the proposed cuts to the current level of funding for Gifted education. The proposed cuts would affect directly all Gifted learners, urban and rural Gifted programming, and our ability to endorse and train GT teachers. My alternative solution is to neither cut nor raise the funding but to maintain the current level of funding. Prior to the Nevada Department of Education allocating funding to GT programming in 2015 it was shared at the 2013 National Conference for Gifted Children that Nevada was the lowest ranking state for the lack of providing all students across all racial groups access to identifications as Gifted. The impact after that 2015 funding allocation, Nevada did grow significantly ranking 38th of the 50 states and DC. Nevada was still not identifying students in our underserved underrepresented populations. To see this data up on a screen at a national conference made it personal for me. Upon return we analyzed everything from our programming practices to our student data. We identified and removed barriers and made changes accordingly. The impact of this during the 2018 National Conference the following data was on the big screen. Nevada received an A and ranked 9th amongst the 50 states and DC for providing access to 90.29% of students who have the opportunity to be identified as Gifted or with talents. Nevada was also ranked 17th for providing equity access to Gifted programs with students in Title I schools being identified as 73% of the rate of those not at Title I schools. Nevada received an A for equity of access by race in underrepresented population with work to do for our American Indian and Alaskan Native populations and trust me we are working on this. In a later study Nevada ranked 7th for students from underrepresented populations to have accessibility to be identified as Gifted, while outranking the Nation for the availability of Gifted program for all school poverty levels and I have that data if you would like. These achievements led to educators and administrators from other states and countries visiting Nevada's GT programming and families relocating to Nevada to enroll their child in our Gifted programs. The current level of funding made it possible. It is with a sincere and selfless heart that I firmly oppose the recommendation to cut off funding but instead maintain the current level of funding for GT. Thank you for listening.

A35, Dr. Michael Perrin

Good afternoon, Members of the Commission on School Funding. I am Dr. Michael Perrin. I submit this statement as your constituent and GATE school psychologist in Washoe County who has also served as a school counselor and Special Education teacher. First, I applaud your efforts to review the funding formulas to ensure equity in our vulnerable populations including Gifted and Talented. Your work is needed and appreciated. I am speaking today because I want to express my firm opposition to cuts to funding for Gifted education. I urge you to keep the funding at its current level. In my role as a psychologist with the department of Gifted and Talented Education Programs I oversee a universal assessment to connect Gifted students with appropriate services. I applaud the states 2017 implementation of the identification matrix for identifying Gifted learners which considers factors such as language background, Free and Reduced Lunch status, and underrepresented ethnic populations. This represents movement by the state towards a more inclusive system for delivering needed supports to our Gifted. Across Nevada tens of thousands of students are assessed each year to find our brightest and most academically talented youth. We identify students across the boundaries of race, socioeconomic status, language background, and disability category. My role is similar to that of this committee. I work with parents and schools to provide equitable access to appropriate educational services for Gifted students including those in underrepresented groups. However, all of this work is for nothing without adequate funding.

As a former Special Education teacher of 10 years I cannot emphasize the parallels that exist between the populations of Special Education and Gifted students. Both exhibit exceptionalities, both need specialized instruction to meet their learning needs, and both will suffer without this. Just as students with disabilities have unique characteristics and need different curricula, so too do Gifted students need it to reach their potential. There is a priority on identifying twice exceptional learners. Those with both Gifted characteristics and a disability who are underserved and struggle. Without appropriate educational support we cannot expect positive outcomes for Gifted, Special Education, or twice exceptional children. Without our current level of funding the work we are doing and the success that we are seeing will be set back years. Further it will send a message to Nevadans that we do not care about the needs of these students. Please join with me in advocating for the adequate funding of services for the Gifted and profoundly Gifted students in Nevada who require nurturing to go on to be our innovators and leaders both locally and nationally. Thank you.

A36, Caryne Shea

Good afternoon or evening Chair McCormick-Lee and Commission Members. My name is Caryne Shea and I am Vice President of HOPE for Nevada, a public education advocacy organization. Thank you for taking the time today, and thank you to the Department of Ed, and thank you to Superintendent Ebert and her work for making sure that all of these meetings today and tomorrow are livestreamed. When considering the number of students that require extra money to meet their needs it's clearly the majority of students in our state. When considering the number of students that will receive all funding that is required to meet their needs it's clearly very few and some would say none. What is essential to consider is that while weighted funds will realistically be slow growing for our students, if this committee doesn't recommend the appropriate base for all students to grow with the weights will continue to be further lacking, especially with no current time lines for additional funds to accompany SB 543. As for the weights in general we have found the work that was done previously by Julia Teska and the states 2014 task force to be an excellent starting point for FRL, ELL, SPED, and GATE. We would encourage when examining the At-Risk weight in particular that the committee consider recommending a method in which we could successfully identify those students. Since FRL information is currently embargoed from administration and is difficult to declare transparency for that money following those students. We have seen encouraging success with our piloted Zoom and Victory schools as well with additional SB 178 funds. It is now time to make those components whole for every student that needs them, and we thank the Commission for taking on the responsibility of tackling student equity in this way. On a personal note both of my children receive services in CCSD in grades 3-5. Services that had not been funded by the state of Nevada. CCSD provides \$631.00 each year to my child's school. Half of that amount pays for just testing to my child's school to identify Gifted students. At my daughters' elementary school, the number of identified Gifted students has more than doubled in the past seven years but funding and manpower to deliver those services has remained flat. One more area that our education professionals have been told to do more with less. There are now 150 students served by one teacher. The remaining \$100.00 per a grade level leaves no purchasing options for teachers, programing materials, and much needed classroom space. Kids are not just Gifted in grades 3-5 and GATE services are not offered in middle or high schools. It is well understood that GATE kids have very different needs that cannot be addressed in honors or AP classes. They are totally different types of learners and my girls are a prime example of many students that are missing out on the continuation of nationally recognized services due to Nevada's lack of funding. Thank you for your dedication and consideration to achieving excellent public education for all of Nevada's students.

A37, Prisala Zarate

Good evening. My name is Prisala Zarate, I am a parent of a student in a Zoom School. I am also a member of ASLT. I'm not going to say a lot because first of all I want to say that I heard about this hearing through Mi Familia Vota and that's why I'm here. I'm not prepared. On my way over here I was thinking about the situation and what I can say is that eliminating this funding for the students will be, in my personal thinking, it will be something that would not be beneficial for the students. In the school where my daughter is at it's a Zoom school. They get a lot of funding towards reading and other stuff. I do believe that cutting or eliminating this funding, instead of helping out, it would affect the students. I was once an ELL student in Clark County a few years back. I was a student who did not speak any English at all. Through this funding it helped me a lot. Now I'm here in front of you guys. I can talk to you guys. I can understand you guys because of this funding and I strongly believe that if you guys would keep this funding it would help out more students instead of people being on the streets and doing bad things, this funding would help them get a better education and also get better jobs. I really appreciate it. Thank you for your time.

A38, Autumn Tampa

Hi Autumn Tampa, speaking as an individual. Can you guys hear me ok? Everybody here tonight has helped me to be educated more and have inspired me. I have learned a tremendous amount and I'm really grateful for that opportunity. That kind of brings me to a little bit of a concern. I found out about this meeting because of a union email and I don't think that there is a great awareness in the community of Las Vegas or in the communities of Nevada are aware about what is going on with education funding. Even the people in my school who I try to keep updated are like what, who, huh? And so I would really encourage you to try to find a way, and I don't know if that's possible or even if that is possible, to try and reach out to the community and the parents and the employees more. That is sorely lacking in every single type of legislative process I have seen in ten years. I have worked at CCSD for over twenty years and six years in Illinois in Pre-K so I have a lot of experience with different types of children. I have worked with special need students, ELL students, I have done ELL testing, I have been a substitute teacher, and now I'm currently a Zoom tutor.

I have to say that I loved every single opportunity that I have had, but I am extremely impressed with the Zoom program. What I want to say is that in our school we have 17 different languages and cultures. 17 different languages and cultures, maybe more maybe less by one or two and Zoom inspires and encourages these children. It gives them a sense of belonging. It helps them to foster that confidence that they are lacking. A lot of them come in very afraid, very shy, and very insecure. That is an aspect to Zoom that I don't think is talked about a lot, but I see it every day. I think that is important to put on the record. I am in favor of the weighted formulas, but I am also in favor of keeping Zoom and Victory. I would like to see a way, and I don't know if that's possible, to not use the Zoom and Victory funds to cover the cost of the weighted funding formula.

And that's where I think the communication with the community and employees is extremely important. We have all sorts of political things coming, all of those things are going to weigh in the favor. I am talking to anybody that would listen. I am in favor of creating a dedicated fund for education. The things that have been passed have not been dedicated solely to education. One of my coworkers asked "Well what happened to the dispensary money. Have we seen any of that?" and I didn't know the answer to that question. I think that Nevada has neglected its children. We have the casino industry, the hospitality industry, now we have the sporting industry. We need children to be able to fulfill those jobs. But we need children who feel confident and happy and that's missing. So I think communication, recommending--we need more money. I am in the classroom and there are 550 people short SBTA's, 700 teachers, and there is so much a shortage of staffing to supply the needs of these children. Thank you.

A39, Yvette Williams

Good afternoon. This is my first visit to you. My name is Yvette Williams, I'm Chair of the Clark County Black Caucus. I did not attend many of these meetings, although I watched those I could online, until we got to this point, I figured this was the time to come out. Thank you so much Madame Chair for allowing us the opportunity to come before you today and share our comments. I am not going to repeat a lot of the things that have already been said to you today because there's people out here today, and I know I was like come on, stick with the three minutes. I just want to say first that many of you have probably already heard our position. It was no secret during the last legislative session how we felt about SB 543 and even when the consultant came around about weighted formulas. We were very disappointed that our least proficient students were not accommodated and we just in 2019, SB 178 was passed. Specifically, it was our very first attempt at a weighted formula to deal with those students that are least proficient. Those are our children that are 25% or less proficient and that is, it doesn't matter what color they are, where they live, what their economics are. These are all our children. Although I will say that African American students, which I have heard very little about today which is disappointing, is the least proficient by race in the state of Nevada and this is historical data.

I am here before you today, first I want to take just a quick second to acknowledge our ancestors and to acknowledge the state of Nevada for being the very first state in the union to ratify the fifteenth amendment 150 years ago which gave African American men the right to vote, and all other people of color as well. I just want to say that and acknowledge Nevada for that because we will be celebrating on March 30th of this year, is the date that the US Secretary of State proclaimed the ratification and that now constitutionally we were protected and had the right to vote, so thank you for that Nevada. So, I just wanted to say that what we are asking as a caucus, we are requesting that the intention of SB 178 be preserved by incorporating a sliding scale in the distribution of Free and Reduced Lunch funds based on the individual students proficiency rate. That means that if a student is least proficient, meaning there is the widest gap for them, they would get a larger chunk of that money, and those that are closer to being proficient, they would get less money. So that would be the base amount for Free and Reduced Lunch. We also feel that that amount of money that least proficient students should have should be equal to our ELL students have.

Sharroky Hollie is well respected and in her report acknowledging the language of African American students instructional strategies, she states that, "After years of failing many African American students, particularly in literacy, the American school system needs to search for instructional methods that could substantially impact the academic achievement of these students. One would think that, after thirty years of research on African American literacy, the home language of African American students would be acknowledged, and these students would be recognized as what LeMoine calls Standard English Language Learners, not only by classroom teachers and instructional leaders, but also by systematic instructional methodologies and general curriculum policies."

We are asking that this Commission and the Nevada Legislature reconfirm their commitment to literacy for all students, regardless of first language, race/ethnicity, gender, income, or zip code. This is our big opportunity to ensure that each child has the resources they need and the access to those same opportunities as their peers. This is equity. I also wanted to mention that this subgroup, the subgroup, not Free and Reduced Lunch, but students who are least proficient, if you can identify a subgroup who are least proficient, we are protected through ESSA federal law, saying that you must make that subgroup a priority in your ESSA plan which Nevada did, thankfully. The Nevada Department of Ed did a very good job about doing that and went a step further in making sure that proficiency gaps are weighted in school report cards. So now if a school has proficiency gaps based on race, they are not likely to be a 5-star school. They need to reduce that gap in order to get that 5-star back. This is something that is important to the state and we are asking that this Commission bear that in mind when making their recommendations going forward to protect that law.

[Chair McCormick Lee clarified that a written testimony would also be submitted]

In email, yes, I didn't have a chance to make copies, but I am going to send it to your email. The other thing that we wanted to mention as it relates to categorical funding around Zoom and Victory. We weren't going to talk about that today but since that's being discussed today, we thought we would address it. Zoom was put in place for ELL students, so for second language students, however the majority of that Zoom money is not going to ELL students and many ELL students are not getting any funding for that and so we would be supportive of, and I am not saying that we do not need categorical funding. We do need some gap funding to address some of the other needs that we have whether it is homelessness or whatever. I am sure people will talk about those other categoricals. But we really feel very strongly that many of our students are not being

served who are ELL because they are not in a school that is a Zoom school. So I just wanted to put that on the record as well. Thank you so much for your time.

A40, Judy Jordahl

Thank you very much for taking the time out here. I feel sorry for you, you're going to be here for a little bit longer and I'm going to get to go home. I am speaking as a private citizen, but I have been a school building administrator since 1993, either as an Assistant Principal or Principal. I have been in 4 different buildings, it's been in Colorado and Nevada. One of the things that I feel is lacking in Nevada and I think is making one of the biggest differences is that there are too many changes. We keep trying to fix things before they have established themselves and in working well. That's one of my concerns. Would I be advocating for any school I was at? Certainly. I happen to be in a Zoom school, and I am at Fay Herron Elementary School. When I came to the school, it was the lowest elementary school in the entire school district. They had never made AYP. We were one of the original Zoom schools. Currently the last three years we have been a 5-star school. We have exceeded the district math by 22.4% and have exceeded district ELA by 11%. Is it only due to Zoom? No. However does it have a great deal to do with it? Absolutely, because it is the programming. It is now established in the school. If we were not able to maintain that programming, we would take a pretty significant dive. Part of my concern is that although we are 100% Free and Reduced Lunch, we were indeed originally 78% ELL but due to better being able to teach the students and have them speak right, read, and listen better. Now we are down to 38% ELL despite the fact that it is 88% Hispanic. I don't envy the position you are in. Quite clearly there is not enough money for anything. My daughter was Gifted and Talented and I want to root for that. I want to just root for everything but right now that is my vent on the schools. Thank you for everything you've done and I appreciate your time.

[Member Mathur asked if the Zoom funding has changed since the school has shifted from 78% EL to 38%]

No, it has not. As other people have explained, the students take a WEIDA test, and in that WIDA test, once they test out, they are no longer in the ELL program, but we have remained a Zoom school across time.

[Chair McCormick-Lee clarified that students were exiting the program, but still being monitored]

Yes, that's exactly right.

A41, Judith Lombard

Thank you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon. For the record my name is Judith Lombard and I am representing the GATE facilitators behind me from Washoe County School District. Why do Gifted and Talented students need something different? Why can't their needs be met in the regular classroom? Because GT students have different needs. Their brains are wired differently and that is not just a saying. Research backs that statement. On page 53 of the Augenblick report it proposes that we can service GT in the general ed classroom, but more often than not that is not the case. GT students require equitable access to education that is commiserate to their abilities. They require higher degrees of complexity, more abstract, more openminded, more multifaceted concepts, than their grade level peers. Conversely what happens most often in a gen-ed classroom is the Gifted students are asked to learn the skills and concepts that they already have shown mastery on while waiting for others to learn them. Or they have been given assignments that are just about filling time while other students catch up. Gifted students also need curriculum that is paced in response to their particular needs. Some GT students need an accelerated pace, and some need a slower pace allowing for the depth and breadth that they need. More often in a general education classroom, Gifted students are asked to do more of the same stuff, but faster or they are just asked to be the junior teacher, tutoring others. Finally, Gifted students need teachers who understand their needs. Because it is a myth thinking that teaching GT students is easy just because they are smart. It is quite the opposite. Just like Special Education requires an endorsement to teach students with special needs, teachers must be endorsed to teach GT students because of their special needs. To be truly effective we need our funding to remain the same, because without funding at the current levels our Gifted learners would be lost to disengagement. We must remember there isn't just an opportunity gap there is an excellence gap. I'd like to leave you with a personal story about a profoundly Gifted student who was affected directly by the funding allocated to teacher training in the Gifted educated program. In elementary school his well-intended teacher informed his mother that he would not be good in math because he was not passing or making progress in the computation fluency test, the Math Mad Minutes. However, his GT Pull Out teacher recognized his precocity and helped his mother understand her son so she could support him through the misunderstandings of his general education teachers. He continued to flounder though and would come home crying and frustrated. In High School still he was in danger of flunking Trig/Pre-Calc but scored a perfect 80 out of 80 on his PSAT. It was then that the district placed him into coursework that was matching his abilities. He later graduated college with dual degrees in math and physics and distinguished himself by finishing in the top 20% of the prestigious William Lowell Putman Mathematical competition. It was truly because of the training his GT endorsed teacher received, that he did not give up on math entirely. Thank you.

A42, Molly Ivans

For the record I'm Molly Ivans, GATE high school Counselor and I am here to represent the GATE counseling department. Today I'll address the unique needs of Gifted and Talented students and the supports and services existing state funding has allowed us to provide. GT students have unique and diverse developmental needs requiring specialized guidance and counseling services. Research suggests that GT students share certain characteristics such as perfectionism, idealism, heightened sensitivity, and emotional intensity. We've seen these characteristics lead to increased levels of depression and anxiety. Some GT students experience boredom in school when their curiosity and intellectual drive are unappreciated. We've witnessed this led to disengagement, underachievement, and behavioral issues. GT students may find school unreceptive and unresponsive to their knowledge and talents. Discomfort related to poor fit may continue throughout the school years. Consequently, social and emotional difficulties may arise. GT students can experience difficulties in peer relationships due to unusual talents, interests, and asynchronistic development which is a discrepancy between emotional maturity and cognitive ability. High achieving GT students may experience high levels of stress related to expectations of self and others, high levels of involvement in activities, heavy academic loads, and decisions related to post-secondary education.

As GATE school counselors our services are aligned with American Counselor Association and National Association for Gifted Children Standards. The ASCA position statement reads: "The school counselor delivers a school counseling program to meet students' academic, career, and social emotional needs. Gifted and Talented students have unique developmental needs that are addressed by school counselors within the scope of the school counseling program and in collaboration with other educators and stakeholders." Also, NAGC standards state: "That while educators need to understand the cognitive development of students with gifts and talents, they also need to know about psychological and social emotional needs that need to be addressed that support talent development in the context of school, home, and the larger community." As GATE counselors we advocate for the unique needs and exceptional abilities of GT students. We deliver classroom guidance lessons, small group counseling, and individual counseling to address GATE specific topics such as executive functioning skills, perfectionism, anxiety, stress management, underachievement, social skills and peer relationships, self-regulation, and twice exceptional students. Our services include providing GATE specific strategies, interventions, and resources to students, parents, teachers, and administration. As well as facilitating connections between home school and community. In closing we implore you to consider the value GATE counseling services play in supporting GT students in realizing their full potential. Thank you.

A43, Elizabeth Korinek

For the record my name is Elizabeth Korinek and I am with the Washoe County School District Gifted and Talented Department and currently collaborating with the Career and Technical Education Department in Washoe County School District as a work-based learning facilitator. We do not operate in a silo. Good evening Commissioners and thank you for the opportunity to speak and your hard work. We must provide opportunities of individualized learning of Gifted and Talented students by connecting them with work-based learning opportunities such as internships and job shadows. As I implement this programming service, I collaborate with community members to ensure the students diverse learning needs are met and that we provide our community with a highly qualified work force. Community partners are very vocal about keeping our GT students here and are very supportive of engaging them in the opportunities that will help shape their future, keep them motivated, and teach them valuable workplace skills. It is an unfortunate yet commonly held belief that Gifted students are highly motivated, high achieving, and successful in school and that these students will make it on their own without additional supports and programming. I can tell you firsthand, the students I work with need specialized support to make the transition to the work world. The time and effort taken to find the correct placement for the student is only the beginning.

Providing additional support throughout the process is a necessity because without the support we would limit our students like Paul. I was able to get him placed in the department of Mechanical Engineering at UNR where he would work on a project to find a suitable material for use in a prosthetic arm. Besides his hours on site he also had employee mandatory monthly meetings and assignments tied to employee ability skills. The young man missed the mandatory first class because he lost time working in the lab. I called him, we met, and I caught him up. Over the next few weeks he did not turn in any of his assignments. I wasn't getting a response to emails or phone calls, so I called his mom. She explained that this had always been a problem. He often saw class meetings and class work as repetitive and non-productive. I explained the importance of the employability assignments and she said, "I understand if you don't get him. Most people don't. I also understand if it is too much work for you to keep him in the program, but I can tell you this is the best thing that has happened to him as far as school goes." I was struck by the defeat in her voice. I replied that I absolutely get him, and I wanted to help him reach his goals. She said that she would discuss the information with him, and she did. I also contacted his mentor and ask that he speak with him. The effort invested on all of our parts paid off. He successfully developed a prosthetic system on his own. He has written a research paper which will be presented with his team of PH students at a conference as well as joining the team at a robotics competition at Purdue in the spring, all as a high school senior. Just as importantly he is applying and planning to go to UNR in the fall. Please maintain the funding necessary to provide the resources for the special needs population to allow them to be identified and support them to reach their potential. This support is important for their sake and for the state of Nevada. Thank you.

A44, Athar Hassebullah

Good Afternoon my name is Athar Hasselbullah and I am the Director of Strategic Initiatives and General Counsel of Opportunity 180. We submitted a letter for the record for our testimony, so I will not be redundant and I'll save everybody the time of me reading out my letter aloud. I also did want to mention for the record a few of our partner schools in the community, Democracy Prep has submitted a letter as well for this committee's consideration, as well as Futuro Academy. So thank you for your time and consideration and your work on this Commission.

A45, Kenya Morales

Thank you for having me Madam Chair and distinguished members of the Commission. For the record my name is Kenya Morales and I am speaking on behalf of myself. So, I feel like in a lot of ways I am at the intersections of all of the things that you are talking about, so I wanted to share the story of my daughter. My daughter is a graduate of Pittman Elementary school which is located off of Torrey Pines and Washington in Las Vegas. Our school was 88% Latino, Title I, Free and Reduced Lunch. Now she is at Hyde Park Middle School in the STEM program, in the Magnet program In Hyde Park and I am also a SLT member at Hyde Middle School. I just want to share a little bit about what Zoom did for us. She was in Zoom in third and fourth grade and was in 21st Century, an afterschool program in 5th grade. Her school day was extended by one period and she received school homework help and overall support. Beginning in 4th grade her teacher Mr. Miller started encouraging her to think about middle school and began pushing the idea of Magnet middle schools to her and that was reinforced through the wrap around services she received. In fifth grade her teacher Mr. Gutierrez also picked up from her third and fourth grade teachers and ran with it. She was in the advanced class in the fifth grade, so her teacher supported the application process to the various middle schools, we applied to that we applied to multiple magnet programs. Pittman really supported her to be there. She is now in Hyde Park in the magnet program and to me it is clear, as I look at the makeup of these magnet programs that there is still quite a way to go in the Clark County School District. She is one of a handful of Latino students in the magnet middle school despite her school being overwhelmingly people of color. That is a different story for a different conversation when we want to talk about Magnet schools. My ask is for the Nevada Legislature and for you all, as you are undergoing this revamping of the funding formula that you grandfather in Zoom and Victory programs. I think for our family the program was successful. My daughter is now a Gifted and Talented student. I think, that I can name, she is the only- I'm assuming, very few people are talking about Gifted and Talented students as it refers to students of color. So I just want to name that she is a Gifted and Talented student of color and is now in a magnet program at Hyde Park. I think that the program is successful. My daughter has now gone back to Vale Pittman to talk to her peers and her teachers who are also in Zoom programs and talking to them about applying to Hyde Park. I think the program is successful, my daughter has now gone back to Pittman and talked to her peers and her teachers, who are also in Zoom programs, and talked to them about applying to Hyde Park. It really just demonstrates to me the way that these programs work and the ways they really build the communities. It has really been critical. I ask that you grandfather this program in, in the spirit of transition. I am happy to take any questions.

A46, Dawn Hicks

Well hello everyone. For the record my name is Dawn Hicks and bear with me as this is my first time doing anything like this. I felt pretty passionate about being here. I come here representing parents of Valley High School. I have heard a lot of students from Valley, you've heard a few of our educators, and of course our principal was here a little bit earlier. My oldest son is a part of IB programming. You've heard a few students in the IB program as well, but he is also a student athlete. One of the things I recognized is he is a student that is going to be motivated to show up at school every single day just because that is who he is. Many of his classmates and many of his teammates are not cut from the same cloth as him. It's the sporting, the athletics that brings them to school. A lot of them do not have the ability to pay for some of the fees, the uniforms, what have it. That brings them to school to get that education that they desperately need. I do recognize that a lot of our athletic teams benefit in some capacity from Victory funds. I know a lot of these kids. I am the founding member and president of The Valley Athletic Organization which is a fancy name for Booster Club. Call it what you want, it's a Booster Club. There are awesome wonderful children who sometimes don't know their own self-worth. You would want for them to just come to school and get that quality education, but they are drawn to the athletics. Without them being able to pay for that, I just fear that they would disengage. They would not want to show up regularly unfortunately they have working parents that can't always be here at a meeting like this and express to them how important it is to just get that education. I come from the angle of Victory funds helping that student population. There is obviously help across the board in numerous ways, but my niche is that group. I am so grateful for what it has done. My son is a junior, so I have had the pleasure of watching this progress over the last three years in our relationship with Valley High School which I absolutely love. I want to see it continue. I know when my son graduates in the next year and a half I don't want to see those same students I see as freshman now not showing up for class because they couldn't afford to pay for a uniform for the basketball team that brought them to school. I just offer that up to you for consideration, and I thank you all and so proud of me for making it under three minutes.

A47, Denise Tanata

Thank you. For the record Denise Tanata, Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Alliance and for those in Carson City, you didn't see but I jumped up like I won the lottery when she called my name. Very excited to be here and I thank you for the opportunity. I will keep it short, I just wanted for those who aren't familiar with the Children's Advocacy Alliance, we serve as an independent voice for children and families in the state of Nevada. Working to improve policies and practice in the areas of children's health, school readiness, child welfare and economic well-being. As some of you know, our organization has been working extensively to increase access to high quality early learning programs in Nevada for many years and we have made significant progress toward that goal of ensuring that every child in Nevada has an opportunity to enter school ready to learn, but we still have a very very long way to go. High quality PreK programs, and more specifically, public school PreK programs, play a critical role in developing the foundational skills that young children need to be successful in school and beyond. These programs are especially important for pupils identified in the weighted and programmatic funding categories that you have identified, many of whom require extra assistance to ensure school readiness.

As such, we have concerns regarding the proposal to move Zoom categorical funding into the DSA, which ultimately could result in the loss of PreK seats for many ELL students. During this current school year Zoom Pre-K has a total enrollment of over 1,900 students in the state of Nevada. Assessments of Zoom PreK students through the Clark County School District have shown significant improvements. For example, in the Fall of 2018, 30.2% of Zoom PreK students met or exceeded targets on the GOLD Language Assessment, by Spring of 2019, that number rose to 87.9%. For Literacy, the gain was even greater, going from 30.4% to nearly 94%. These programs work. As you consider parameters for the funding formula, in an effort to ensure that all of our children have the opportunity to enter school ready to learn, we would respectfully request that you consider including PreK into the funding formula or at the very least ensure that accommodations are made to ensure that the current resources being utilized for those PreK programs, especially for our At-Risk populations are not compromised, and that any adjustments do not result in a loss of PreK seats for these students. Thank you.

A48, Kenneth Retzl

Madam Chair and members of the Commission, my name is Kenneth Retzl, the Director of Education Policy with the Guinn Center so hello everyone and thank you for all of the work that you guys are doing, it's commendable. I am here to discuss the determination of weights considered under the "At-Risk" funding category. I also believe my comments will extend into the other weights, specifically, the English Learner and Pupil with a Disability categories. The current conception for a student to qualify for the "At-Risk" weight under the Pupil Centered Funding Plan is whether that student qualifies for free-or-reduced price lunch (FRL). This may be the easiest indicator and place the least amount of burden on schools and districts since it is already being collected and reported. However, it may also not be an adequate or fair conception of "At-Risk."

We know that some residents of our rural counties are hesitant to complete government forms — whether it be FRL or Pell Grants. Therefore, relying on FRL in rural counties may result in an underestimate of the needs in those counties. To support this claim, a 2019 report from the Nevada Health Workforce Research Center suggests the poverty rate in urban and rural counties is approximately the same, around 20%. However, if you compare the rate of students receiving free-or-reduced price lunch in those same urban and rural school districts, urban districts report an FRL rate of 60% and rural school districts report 47% – a gap of 13 percentage points. Given this discrepancy, where poverty is just as prevalent in rural counties and school districts but not evident from the FRL rates, the Guinn Center believes an "At-Risk" indicator based solely on whether a student qualifies for FRL may adversely affect rural school districts. Some may argue that rural school districts will benefit under the Pupil Centered Funding Plan because of the Small District or Small School adjustment and no action is needed to correct for this discrepancy. However, we humbly suggest these weights are to account for the unique costs of running a small school or district, not to account for poverty.

We request this Commission consider alternative or additional measures to incorporate into the "At-Risk" weight that may not be captured under a strict understanding of poverty. To maintain the spirit of the current categorical programs, specifically, Zoom, Victory, and SB 178, the alternative measure might be to include a consideration for student achievement in addition to the socio-economic measure. This would be similar to what Superintendent Norton spoke to earlier. While this could be written so that a student would be eligible to receive a weight if they either qualify for free-or-reduced price lunch OR tested in the bottom 25th percentile of the state mandated proficiency assessment (currently the SBAC), the Guinn Center would prefer an additive effect – students receive a specific weight for either qualifying for free-and-reduced price lunch or performing in the bottom quartile and adding to that weight if both conditions are present. This conceptualization could then be applied to the English Learner and the Pupil with a Disability weights – so that students would receive an increased weight if they also scored in the bottom quartile on the state proficiency assessment.

By including a measure of achievement as an additive measure to the discussed weights recognizes there is nuance to these classifications, maintains the spirit of the current categorical programs, and would provide the additional supports needed for students and schools regardless of their location. It could also assist to rectify the potential under-reporting of measures of poverty in rural areas.

[Responding to Chair McCormick Lee and Member Johnson regarding the report referenced and copies of his testimony]

Already submitted, so yes it should be on record. Kenneth Retzl for the record. Mr. Johnson, the report is out of the Organization out of the University of Nevada Reno. On the submitted file there is a link to the report. It is the Nevada Health Workforce Research Center.

A49, Margarita Hernandez (*Translated by Sylvia Lazos*)

Good afternoon I heard about this meeting through Mi Familia Vota. My name is Margarita Hernandez. My son attends Twin Lakes which is a Zoom school and we request that these funds not be withdrawn. The Latinx community needs these funds. We are low income and the education standards that are required by schools are difficult for our kids to reach. These programs help our children reach their dreams and their goals in order that they be better persons tomorrow. Thank you very much for your time and we hope that the schools will continue to be funded.

A50, Eduardo Sierra (*Translated by Sylvia Lazos*)

Good afternoon my name is Edward Sierra. I am a head of family and I come here with a preoccupation. I am grateful that my son attends Twin Lakes. I know if Zoom funding is withdrawn from Twin Lakes, he won't have the same level of opportunities. He and his peers will encounter more obstacles in their learning process and in their development. Up until now their abilities and the methods of learning at the school are good. We are a hard-working family and we need to work hard to cover our bills, so we do not necessarily have the time to provide our children with the support we would want to give them. That is why I plead with you today, please don't withdraw the Zoom program so that our children can have the future they deserve. Thank you.

A51, Susan Keizer

Good evening, for the record my name is Susan Keizer. I am speaking on behalf of the Washoe Retired Educator's Association and as a member of the Nevada State Educator Association. I am a National Board-Certified educator and for the last 20 years I have been a regular ed science teacher at Pine Middle School in Reno. During the entire span of my teaching career in Nevada our public schools have been underfunded. In the classroom this translates to a lack of tools and time for educators to provide instruction to students. It means working extra hours to develop my own teaching materials to fill this gap. It means the student to teacher ratio is high. My husband is a high school government teacher who has 180 students. If he scores an assessment at the rate of one paper a minute, it takes him 3 hours to give feedback to his students on that single learning task. This situation is unacceptable for us all.

In fact, the 2018 Quality Counts report from Education Week, ranks Nevada 47th in per-pupil funding and dead last in both class size and overall education quality. In the last few years funding increases were allocated to targeted populations and Zoom and Victory Schools were created to provide supports for underperforming schools where a high percentage of students are poor. With this funding students were able to get intensive services they need to begin catching up in their learning. Teachers access better tools for instruction and with smaller classes could give more time working one-on-one with their kids. Their improved performance is a glimpse of the future success for every student if adequate and sustained funding is provided to every public school. Our state is growing and changing rapidly. To best position the future workforce of our state and prepare them to navigate the increasing number of tech jobs in Nevada we must shift the school funding paradigm. Continuing in the same pattern of underfunding public schools keeps our students at the bottom of the Quality Counts list. The proposed shift in funding formula would harm most school districts in the state by freezing their revenues at current levels, creating new winners and losers across the state, while the truth is more funds are needed. Public schools meet students where they are academically and emotionally and help them build the skills they need to be successful and productive citizens, even against the odds of poverty and social challenges. Our state Constitution requires all public schools receive adequate funding to fulfill their duty to educate every Nevada student. That mandate has not been met in decades. I am here today to ask the members of this committee to take action to fix the unintentional problems created by SB543. I appreciate the efforts of this committee to address these challenges which sadly seem to pit one program against all others. All Nevada public schools must be funded consistently, equitably and adequately so that our students will be able meet the needs of our growing and changing Nevada economy. Thank you for your time.

A52, Don Soifer

Thank you, Chair McCormick-Lee I'm Don Soifer with Nevada Action for School Options. This Commission has graciously heard me testify in the past about the research associated with specific risk factors increasing the likelihood of dropping out and the cost associated with them. That and the fact that some of you great Nevadan's heard that testimony at twelve thirty at night, a spring morning in Carson City, I will keep this brief. My recommendation dovetails closely with that of Yvette Williams and Kenneth Retzl with one particular distinction that I'd like to make here. I think that a recommendation for At-Risk, definition and weighting based on two provisions. First, as they stated, a weight of 2.0 for learners eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch via the National School Lunch Program. Secondly, learners identified at the 25% or below, as called for in §8 of SB 178 will achieve additional weighted funding at a weight of .15. My distinction here is that I would propose this school also receive this funding two years after that student has improved their performance to above the 25th percentile at a weight of .10 for the first year and .05 for the second year. I deeply appreciate this Commission and the work they do and the way they do it. I would be happy to provide any further information. Thank you.

A53, Allison Turner

Madam Chair and members of the Commission for the record Allison Turner on behalf of the Nevada Parent Teacher Association. First thank you. No one envies you this heavy lift. Your collective intelligence, integrity, and dedication to children, schools, and communities across Nevada has been clear every step of the way. Nevada PTA has heard from our members and leaders as well as from other stakeholders and here is some of their concerns.

First equity, a revised funding formula addressing student needs in order to successfully deliver instruction is desperately needed. While the financial limitations are clear, leaving a path open to fully fund multiple weights would be helpful for the future. Funding must also provide equity as so many have commented already, but I'll chime in, among differentiated costs to effectively deliver instruction in urban, suburban, and rural schools and school districts. Although the Hold Harmless Provision is the first step it simply costs more per a pupil to cover the costs in smaller schools and smaller school districts. You work around actual wage costs has been instructed to observers as well as informing the Commissions processes.

Implementation is the next one. While the roll of the Commission in making recommendations to the legislature is understood the devil is always in the details. Fidelity and implementation will be vital, especially as existing categorical funding is transitioned beyond the first-year guarantee.

Finally, adequacy. To quote Jeremy Aguero, "Are we aspiring to be adequate?" Nevada PTA prefers the concept of robust funding to provide education in order to prepare students for life success, to compensate educators fairly at a sustainable level, and to include resources and supplies to educate every child in Nevada. This is complex under Nevada's system. We have an estimated 17% hole in our education budget based on budget cuts made during the great recession that were never restored. This includes multiple billions of dollars in deferred maintenance, capital repair, and constructions costs across the state. While Nevada PTA will join with the other 53 Congresses and National PTA next month to urge the United States Congress to include schools in any infrastructure bill. We also hope that the Commission's recommendations will acknowledge the true state of all education funding in Nevada. Again, thank you for your dedication during this difficult task and for doing your jobs so carefully and so well. Thank you.

A54, Jeff Zander

Thank you very much I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to talk to the Commission. I have served on a couple Commissions during my ten years as superintendent. I'm actually a retired superintendent from Elko County at this time and I am working with a couple of small rural districts up in Northern Nevada right now, in regard to SB 543. I just wanted to bring to light a little bit of the conversation that Dale brought up, from Nye county as it compares to Elko County. I think he said Nye was the largest county in the continental United States at this time. Elko's the second largest if that's the case. I thought we were third or fourth. We are right behind Nye at 17,203 square miles. You can fit five New England States and the District of Columbia, just to give you a perspective. When we talk about the delivery of ELL, At-Risk, GATE programming, Special Ed services, OTPT, psych services, and you know all of the different services that we have out there. In rural Nevada, the majority of those services are delivered by itinerant staff coming from the County Seat like Elko. In Elko's case Owyhee is 96 miles from Elko with 320 students. Jackpot is 117 miles from Elko with 132 students. West Wendover is 110 miles from Elko with around 1,100 students. The cost and delivery of ELL, OTPT, psych services all of those are incrementally higher than what it is for the Elko students.

The reason I am bringing that up is twofold. We sort of talked about equity and the distribution and we talked a lot about lack of resources. In no way am I suggesting that kids that are currently receiving services should not receive services in the future because of a change in the formula, but I am thinking as an alternative, I don't know if it would be a bad idea to run the weighted funding through the same cost factors your running base funding through. Just because of what is happening in Elko County in regard to itinerant services, are happening in every other county in the state of Nevada with itinerant services for these same programs whether it be Humboldt County, Washoe County, or Clark County. No doubt, where you have small rural attendance areas out there you are going to have increased costs to provide those services. I appreciate all of the work you are doing; I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you, and I'm open to any questions if you have any. I'm sure we are all happy to go home. Thank you.

A55, Cecilia Alvarado

Good evening members of the committee. My name is Cecilia Alvarado and I am the Nevada state director for Mi Familia Vota a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing participation of Latinx, immigrants, and our allies' communities. As you have witnessed today, we have had a few members of the community and students that have come forward that have wanted to share their personal story, their personal testimony and their experience either as a Zoom or Victory student or parent. Working with the Latino community and working with the immigrant community is challenging. I have a great privilege to represent their best interest in this space. It's challenging because mobilizing a community that usually has one or two jobs, or evening jobs, or is supportive and have to pick up like most residents in Nevada right now they have to pick up their children from school. I am here today to ask the committee, to invite the committee to come to a community meeting that Mi Familia Vota will be holding with parents who want to speak up. They want you to hear from them, but due to their schedules, also you will notice that I was in and out we were back and forth. This can also be a very intimidating space even for some of us that are used to speaking in public. I have been here a few times, I'm a familiar face. It gets intimidating. They are waiting outside, and they felt a little intimidated to come inside. I'm not saying this isn't a welcoming space, it's just out of their comfort zone, it is out of what they consider to be a part of the community. It is a government space. They asked me if it is necessary to share their address.

I want the community to feel they can come forward and they can speak to us, they can use their voice, they can address their concerns, and that you are also a part of our community. I know that you have the best interest in your heart to make a decision. I have sat here through many hearings and hearing different testimonies, and we wish that we can create the perfect formula to help students, to help for families and communities. What I represent is a really vulnerable community that is afraid to use their voice at times. I just wanted to invite you to a community meeting in a very respectful way, just for them to be heard in a space that they are familiar with and in a space they don't feel is a government space, and in a space where they don't feel if they should share their home address or their whole names. Understanding that is always feel as a safe space when you have to share certain information for certain communities. That is my ask today. I understand you will have busy schedules and we are willing to accommodate the schedules, because we want the community to be heard. They have written letters and there are language barriers and I just want them to feel that it's ok. We will accommodate them we will have the translators and we will have Sylvia to help us. I want to create a space where they can be heard and that is my ask for you today, if that would be possible.

[Responding to Chair McCormick-Lee, who noted that the Commission is not able to make decisions, but thanked her for the invitation]

Can I request through email that you consider our invitation?

[Responding to Member Mathur regarding how to respond to ELL families that do not have access to Zoom or Victory]

I'll put it in my own simple words. That's exactly what it is. This is already working. They want this committee here to fix a bigger problem. To figure out a bigger problem. It is already working. Leave this alone. Leave what's giving these schools Zoom and Victory. It's their life support. Let's keep this. I understand through the work that I do, I not only work with ELL students. We are bringing ELL students, because most Zoom schools are low income communities and a lot of those communities are comprised of immigrants and refugees. The ELL program is a big component of our Zoom and Victory schools but that is not the only component of these schools. It is helping my community and I am here to advocate for my community and bring in folks that can testify in favor of the shared experience in school. It is more than an ELL program. We also created AB 219 this past legislative session which is if a school has a student that is an ELL student and they don't have an ELL program to help the students, than that student can go to the nearest high school that has an ELL program and the school district also provides transportation for that student. Now that school will have to enter a correctional program. So, we are working with legislatures. We are working with legislation to address these different issues with ELL students. My daughter goes to Palo Verde and there are maybe three ELL students in the whole school, so they do not need to be a Victory school. They just need the three students whose parents and background can't afford private tutors, they have different venues to help the students. I'm here advocating for folks that cannot pay for private tutors. I'm here advocating for funding that has given life support to one and two-star schools. It has given them that additional money they need. My daughter doesn't need additional funding at her school.

A56, Alma Romo

Hi good evening, my name is Alma Romo and I am the Nevada State Coordinator with Mi Familia Vota. As Cecilia said, it is a national organization that works to build political power within Latinx and immigrant communities with civic participation. I have been an advocate for students in the low-income community since I have been in high school. In fact, my advocacy started when I became a member of the Student Organization of Latinos in high school or SOL for short. I have seen firsthand how low-income students as well as ELL students try twice as much as any other student just to succeed in school. They stay late after school for tutoring. They join programs. They do everything possible in order to improve their performance in school. I have always fought for equity for our students because at the end of the day they are our future. They are the future leaders of this nation, so we want to ensure they have the right tools to be successful. We need to focus on our students and ensure that they have the right tools to be successful and that they know their school is there for them and not against them. We need to move forward and break down barriers instead of building them. Children who go to schools that are performing at low levels should have the support to improve their classes so they have the opportunity to excel. All children, not just ELL students benefit from Zoom, extended instructional time, PreK, and reading centers. Zoom legislation required that the districts implement a strategic plan that improved the quality of classroom instruction for ELL's. The type of tiered support that is at the core of ELL instruction also helps students whose level of literacy participation is low, such as children from poverty. SB 543 should continue services at a proven level of success for our poorest children. ELL students and low-income students deserve these Zoom services, so they are not being left behind. Changes in the funding formula should not leave any children behind. Thank you.

A57, Darlene Anderson

Thank you. My name is Darlene Anderson, and I've been involved in education for a very long time. I have three boys; my oldest is Gifted in GATE, my middle child was nonspecific disability, and my youngest child was severely mentally retarded and communication handicapped, which is where we started. But he graduated with a 1.018, a laptop, and above proficient, and I will say that because of the services in Special Ed. I will say that because I was a single parent, a poor parent, and I raised my boys all by myself. None of my children ever went to jail, none of my children have ever been incarcerated. But I can see that behavior is an issue here in Clark County, and the willful defiance issue is critical. When I see so many African-American children being misdirected or redirected, or not having the ability to stay in a program. And I see that Nevada has created several tiers of graduation diplomas, separate but unequal, because once you get in a tier, that's where you're going to be. No one is going to help move you up or down. So there's no catch-up in education, so we can all agree that once a child starts school and is below grade level, that's pretty much where they'll stay. And that's the whole entire journey of education. When we try to address equity issues and define what At-Risk is, At-Risk is whatever is going to keep you from graduating school. For whatever reason, it's really affecting African-American children and the dialog here is not addressing it, and that's tragic. We don't get to be in this nation, and live as one America without addressing the needs of all children.

But how can you address the needs of children who don't even understand that education is compulsory and that they have a responsibility to benefit from it. Because there is no benefit. It's only a collection of data from the time they enter into public school all the way until they end up in the juvenile facility. And that's here. Because that's why you have a 256 or 259% behavior infractions in Clark County. Irregardless of you being urban and rural, it doesn't really matter, because we're working on the buildings and we're not working on the children. All children have a right to learn in America. We are all citizens, and I would hope that this At-Risk solution, this dialog really expresses the needs, but how do you address the needs of children who have behavioral issues, and I would say they are real. But they don't ever have a right to learn how to transition from those next steps, that would be Special Education. These walls are all blended together, and they're not defined.

When you look at the African-American community, know that you're not graduating children who are born here, whose parents are undereducated, and whose parents had children before they even understood that there was a responsibility for a child. So they're so busy trying to maintain their livelihood, everybody's got to eat, everybody has to have a roof over their head, then we wind up with 15,000 homeless youth in Nevada. This represents America. This represents the entertainment capital of the world, where African-Americans can come and entertain downtown on the strip, but they cannot perform or entertain in their local communities because there's no place for that. So I'm following education, I'm trying to understand what we're doing here, and I'm confused. I understand the weighted formula, I understand that, and I understand that Victory and Zoom schools are a baseline under federal regulations and the requirements for all children to have access to the public education system. Now how do we get there? I'm confused too, but I'm still going to be coming and asking those major questions and asking how we're going to do it. Because it's a lot of work. Thank you.

A58, Elisa Martinez Alvarado

Good evening Members of the Committee. I am a freshman student, my name is Elisa Martinez Alvarado. I went to Gwendolyn Woolley Elementary School for Kindergarten. Thanks to having access to all-day Kindergarten, my mom was able to work and go to school. I enjoyed learning at Woolley and having free tutoring after school. For first grade, we moved to a different school, and thanks to full day Kindergarten at Woolley, I was ahead of my grade. I read at a higher level. Thanks to the Zoom program, I had a strong start at school. I want you to know that Zoom schools need the money they receive, not less. Thank you for your time.

A59, Jazmin Villagomez

Hello, my name is Jazmin Villagomez, I'm an organizer with Mi Familia Vota. In my position I've had the opportunity to work with various high schools, specifically Valley High School. While working with Valley High School I've gotten to meet many of the students through different programs that they have. For example, the students here earlier today, Latinos in Action, I've been working with them the past month. I've seen all the things that they do. They go and tutor at the elementary schools, Josseline always brings me amazing ideas, I don't know how she comes up with them. They do all the work. They don't receive the funding to get these activities up and running, but somehow they still find a way to get it. They go to a restaurant and ask them for donations, I have no idea how they do it, but that program is helping them build leadership skills which will help them a lot in life. I do believe it's important, I hope that they don't get the money taken away that they desperately need. I know it's helped them a lot, their graduation rate has gone up a lot, I just hope you all take that into consideration. I know our education system needs a lot of work, but I don't think we should take away something that has shown to help them a lot. Thank you.

A60, Adam Johnson

Good Afternoon Members of the Commission on School Funding.

My name is Adam Johnson and I am the the Executive Director at Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus -- or 'DPAC' as we are affectionately known in the community.

DPAC is a K-12 tuition free public charter school located in the heart of historic West Las Vegas. My team and I have the privilege of educating nearly 1,000 hard-working scholars each day. At Democracy Prep we are committed to educating responsible citizen-scholars for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship, and are unified in our work through our motto of 'Work Hard. Go to College. Change the World!'

Like many schools located in 89106, we have students who face a variety of challenges, but are nevertheless committed to graduating high school and finding success in the college of their choice. However, because of the demographics at Democracy Prep, (85 out of 100 scholars qualify for free or reduced price lunch; more than 12 percent of our scholars have either an individualized learning plan, are emerging bilingual, or both; and 2 out of 10 scholars have dealt with traumatic events which require additional emotional support during the day), the cost of successfully educating scholars at DPAC is higher than in places where some of these obstacles are not as severe.

As the Commission on school funding continues to discuss how to ensure equitable funding for all schools, please know that the additional financial support assists schools like Democracy Prep and others who educate children in the urban core of Las Vegas, significantly increases our ability to provide the necessary wrap around supports required to ensure children are prepared to learn everyday.

The results at DPAC have proven that when you allocate resources wisely, your zip code does not need to be your destiny. Our middle school was rated as a 5-star school in 2019, our high school saw 100% of our seniors gain college acceptance, and our elementary school saw gains in reading and math proficiency in our first year of operation. As a school we have much more work to do, but the results we have already attained are directly related to funding available to help us educate children in our community.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to watching the Commission help change outcomes of children and families in our community.

A61, Ignacio Prado

Good morning. My name is Ignacio Prado and I am the Executive Director of Futuro Academy Charter school, a neighborhood option public charter school in the Achievement School District. **I'm here today because I believe every kid in our community should graduate college and career ready and adjustments within the funding formula are critical in ensuring that happens.**

Our school is in its third year currently serving grades K-3 for 340 students and their families. We are a Community Eligibility Provision school providing 100% of our students free lunch and breakfast, with an identification rate of 52.33% based on Direct Certification, and 5 in 10 of our students is an English Language Learner.

In our short time open, we already have shown great strength and promise on the wings of the commitment of our families and teaching staff. We've all put in long hours and as a result, our school from Fall to Winter this year on the NWEA MAP produced 120% of expected growth. That is the equivalent of 2 months of extra learning time per school year. Most meaningfully to me, it flies in the face of and challenges the pervasive pessimism in our culture, our media, our society, and even our city about the potential and brilliance of children that grow up in a place like East Las Vegas.

This is not an accident, this is the result of the great work and care of our community of families and teachers on the mission, and it is a manifestation of a belief we hold close to our hearts:

I ask you to then go about your complex and daunting task of figuring out the how of supporting schools who work with students at risk with three things in mind:

1. Futuro Academy, and charter schools like it are equal partners in the work and ready to roll up our sleeves with equal access to whatever funding mechanisms you decide upon.
2. That the systems we use to define at-risk be clear, predictable, and have no unintended consequences like incentivizing over-identification, and
3. That the support be substantial enough to provide resources to support the challenging daily work for schools like ours, rather than a nominal acknowledgement or a net-neutral change by making this process about accounting rather than material support.

I remain and continue to be at your service if you have any questions or want any input beyond this forum. Thank you for you time.

A62, Joanna Kaiser

Thank you members of the committee for providing this opportunity for public comment.

My name is Joanna Kaiser and I am the GATE Implementation Specialist, TOSA for Carson City School District. In listening to so many stakeholders in both Las Vegas and Carson City give public comment on the critical nature of funding for groups of students such as our English Learners, our Special Education students, and our GATE students, I could not agree more with the calls for a need to fund programs which support all learners. I was a classroom teacher for 18 years in Carson City, Gardnerville, and Minden before becoming the GATE TOSA 2 years ago. I have had the privilege of teaching a wide range of students including Special Education students, English Learners, and GATE students. Each and every one of these students deserves the highest quality education possible which means adequate funding for all. As the TOSA for gifted education in Carson City, I am concerned that the funding levels for GATE students will be cut by more than half with the proposed budget cuts. Why am I concerned about budget cuts of this magnitude for gifted education?

1. Research shows that 25% of gifted people are underachievers which means they are not meeting their potential(davidsongifted.org).
2. Over 80% of teachers believe that our advanced students need special attention from educators in order to foster their talents(davidsongifted.org).
3. 88% of high school dropouts had passing grades but dropped out due to boredom (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation: “The Silent Epidemic”).
4. There is substantial research that shows that we need to expand access and availability to gifted programs and services for our minority and low-income students because minority students performing at the same level of their gifted peers are 250% less likely to be served in programs for gifted and talented students(National Association for Gifted Children).
5. “Research indicates that teachers who have received training in gifted education are more likely to foster higher-level thinking, allow for greater student expression, consider individual student strengths and weaknesses, and provide a variety of learning experiences to challenge students. This vital expertise that benefits all students is not developed merely as a result of one-hour training sessions; refining teacher skills requires high-quality professional development, time, materials, and continued support”(National Association for Gifted Children).

In Carson City School District we have worked hard to provide a program for our GATE students which is truly excellence in action. We have used our GATE funding to provide GATE endorsement courses for teachers in our district. At this time, we have 47 GATE endorsed teachers working each day with GATE students from 1st grade through middle school. Each year in CCSD more teachers are receiving this specialized instruction geared for GATE students through our GATE endorsement coursework. In addition to our GATE courses, we have 9 professional development days throughout the school year dedicated for our 47 GATE teachers to receive continued professional development to work with this specialized group of learners. These teachers are regular classroom teachers with specialized GATE training so it is not only the GATE students who benefit from their expertise but every student placed in their classrooms. We like to say in Carson City that our GATE students are not only gifted for the required 600 minutes/month that the state requires, so we provide cluster classrooms and immersion classrooms with all GATE students or a cluster of GATE students. We also have after school enrichment opportunities at our elementary schools to foster creativity and further challenge for our GATE students. We have a “Freshman Transitions” course at Carson High School taught by a GATE endorsed teacher to help our high school GATE students with the sometimes difficult transition to high school. We also use our funding to support our GATE families with a GATE Parent Council which averages 3 meetings a year with between 30-40 people in attendance. We discuss topics related to gifted children and help support families in their parenting journey. We also have a GATE Families Book Club which also meets 3 times a year to further support families focusing on books related to raising gifted children. We provide social emotional learning resources to teachers, students, and families including resource books for families at all school libraries. I could go on and on about the support we provide our students with the funding we receive for gifted education. However, I know I am limited on time. So, let me end with a sobering quote. “A child miseducated is a child lost”(John F. Kennedy). Please do all you can to make sure all of our children receive a quality education that helps them reach their full potential. Thank you!

A63, Meredith Freeman

My name is Meredith Freeman and I want to thank the Commission for serving to help improve Nevada. When I talk to people in our community, I often find that they forget that Funding our schools is about so much more than just kids; we need to prepare people to become successful adults and successful productive members of our community. As in most things people come from very different backgrounds and need different support. Addressing the needs of weighted funding is a great place to start.

When we look at all of our tax dollars that have been spent in recent years doing studies and funding this Commission, we see that funding education needs to be a priority and it needs so much more than what we currently spend. As things stand now, if we look at just today's public comment, we will see another attempt to divide as each of the speakers are going to try to "be the squeaky wheel" and receive funding for one particular weight. This should not be the goal. The expectation that students receive the necessary attention should be our norm. When we address the funding needs, we should not be listening to only the loudest voices, but we should be looking at those that have no voice as well, we are hearing today from the FRL, ELL, SPED and GATE communities. And they all need attention, but we should also not forget those in the middle that also need to be challenged, while we look at weights, we also need to look at the base. When we have adequate bases, we can have lower more reasonable class sizes that allow teachers to more readily address differentiation and needs of all students.

Based largely on those studies our past legislature provided categorical funding to help our community with the most needs, there was a will to target the squeaky wheels. We saw the success of programs like Zoom and Victory and now this Commission has the legislative mandate to extend these services from pilot programs to weighted funding for all students that meet the 4 specified criteria. When we have adequate funding for services in these categories it will relieve pressure on the whole system and allow the individual needs of all students to be met. We need to see this same will extended to find the revenue to help all students succeed.

CCSD recently did an Equity report that demonstrates a failure of our system to identify and provide services for gifted students. At this time they are looking to expand identification in 2nd grade; while this is commendable, it is not enough, CCSD provides gifted services for grades 3-5 which is due largely to lack of funding, children do not start being gifted in 2nd grade and they do stop being gifted after 5th grade, they need services and supports for all years of their education. Many people often state "well there are honors and AP programs in secondary schools, and that is a false solution that confuses high achievement with giftedness. Our gifted community is not always high achieving and they need additional support that is not available thanks to the states chronic underfunding and failure to meet kid's needs.

We need to stop placing so much emphasis on proficiency and focus more on growth. Every student deserves the supports required to grow to their full potential whether we are talking about kids at the low end of proficiency or the high, we cannot look at proficient students and be satisfied, these students are not satisfied and our society will be much better served if we raise the bar and push all students to their full potential.

We are not only failing our students but we are failing our community and the state of Nevada every time we lower the bar by accepting the excuse of inadequate resources, we are failing these students and we are teaching them that they should expect the status quo and that it's not only acceptable to make excuses, but is expected. We hear a lot about accountability, we need to be accountable for higher standards for ourselves and our future.

A64, Patricia Woods

Good afternoon President McCormick-Lee and School Funding Commissioners. My name is Patricia Woods. I have been working at Valley High School as a Certified Temporary Teacher for the past four years within their English Language Learner Department. I have approximately 30 years teaching experience having taught in Nebraska, Nevada, Egypt, Israel, and Rwanda. I am certified in History, Psychology, and Special Education focusing on Learning Disabilities. This experience has enabled me to help support Valley's approximately 800 English Language Learners.

My role, along with three other CTT's, is to assist our ELL students in their various classes such as Geometry, Algebra II, Chemistry, US History as well as English. These classes are considered sheltered or transitional, Transitional classes are smaller and often contain students that may speak as many as ten of the approximately 18 languages spoken at Valley. Furthermore, we offer additional after school tutoring as needed.

As CTTs, we are each allowed to work only 650 hours per school year. Our focus is on newcomers or students with the greater needs. These students come to us speaking little or no English, at times credit deficient, and often having never attended school. With 200 newcomers this means that each of us are only able to offer four hours help per student per year.

Teachers have stated that our assistance has enabled many students to become very successful. For example, I worked with a student from Ghana for the past three years providing differentiated instruction in the classroom and additional support outside of the classroom. Although he came to us credit deficient and having limited access to schooling before coming to Valley, he was able to graduate on time. Today, he has a job in our community and is able to support his family.

The Victory Funding that we receive not only pays for my salary but also provides many additional resources necessary to assist in helping to educate our ELL students. These resources include dictionaries in multiple languages for classwork and testing support. They pay for unplanned services such as bus passes, snacks, lunches during summer school, and incentive academic success celebrations. They also include programs such as Saturday School, which offers extra time and support for students seeking additional help on class assignments, and a Summer Bridge Program, which gives students the opportunity to take classes for graduation credit due to credit deficiency.

All of the work and programs that I have addressed are due to the Victory Funding that we receive. Without these funds, the 100's of ELL students that have graduated from Valley High School to become successful in our community would not have been possible. I realize that we will be moving to a weighted funding situation in the near future but would like you to consider grandfathering in Victory Funds so that our ELL students may continue to receive these vital services and resources. I truly believe that this funding changes lives for the better. Thank you for your time.

A65, Rebecca Garcia

My name is Rebecca Garcia, I am the President of the Nevada PTA. Nevada PTA has long advocated for equitable school funding that provides every child a quality public education. Ensuring that all students have access to a high-quality education requires recognizing the unique and varying needs of students in our state. As the Commission moves forward with a new funding formula it is essential that the needs of students be the primary consideration. As a mother of four with three still in school, I see these needs first-hand every day. I live in Las Vegas and my children have always attending Title 1 schools with friends speaking a variety of languages. My neighborhood has several Zoom Schools. My kids adore their GATE teacher and can't wait for those minutes every week. I have also navigated the challenges of an IEP and 504s to ensure my children receive the services they need to be successful. While you consider weight and programmatic funding for categories of pupils, like many parents and teachers across our state, I see the faces and names of my kids and their classmates. These are Nevada students, with bright futures, who deserve the resources necessary to achieve their potential. Resources cost money. Teachers and support staff, equipment, transportation, tutoring, additional instructional time, curriculum - all of these important resources have costs attached. Students arrive in our schools with different needs and the funding formula should recognize those needs accordingly. Weighted funding for At-Risk, ELL, GATE and Special Education students is essential to ensuring that students with varying needs are provided appropriate tools and instruction that meet those diverse and specific needs. Stable, appropriate funding for students, based upon the actual costs associated with providing a quality education, is key to achieving statewide goals of increasing student achievement and closing opportunity gaps.

While the specific topic today relates to categories of pupils and potential weights overall education funding challenges remain. All Nevada students deserve a quality education and current funding levels, regardless of how redistributed, are insufficient. Students with diverse needs are found in every part of our state. A new funding formula is only part of the equation for student success. Nevada must be willing to invest resources that match the needs of our students so that every child, in every county, is provided a quality education and opportunity to reach their potential.

Thank you.

A66, Valerie Dockery

Good afternoon, my name is Valerie Dockery, Director of the Gifted and Academically Talented Education Program for the Carson City School District. Over the last 7 years, our District has worked hard to completely re-vamp services for gifted students. While we began this work prior to the onset of state funding, the high-quality program we now offer would not have been possible without these funds.

The cornerstone of our GATE program is our identification protocol. We have developed a process that is based on multiple criteria: cognitive ability, academic performance, teacher observation and special factors that can inhibit identification. To date, we have identified over 800 students as academically gifted. Within this population of gifted students in Carson City, 7% are students with special needs, 10% are English Learners, and 2% are considered homeless by the federal definition; percentages that are getting closer to our district averages.

These funds have also allowed us to build a high quality GATE program to serve this diverse population. We offer GATE cluster classes in grades 3 – 5 at all 6 of our elementary schools, and in grades 6-8 at Eagle Valley middle school. At Carson middle school, we offer a full GATE immersion program in grades 6-8. Students enrolled in all of our programs receive differentiated and accelerated instruction for an average of 3 to 4 hours per day from GATE endorsed teachers. We believe our program is working because our GATE students outperformed their state-wide peers on the SBAC: 88% scored at the proficient level on the English Language Arts assessment, and 84% scored at this level on the math assessment.

With this funding, we also offer our teachers the opportunity to earn their GATE endorsement in-house, which is a requirement to teach these students. We have also been able to hire a GATE specialist to coach our teachers and ensure that the cycle of continuous improvement is present in all GATE classrooms. We have also established a variety of enrichment programs specifically designed for gifted learners, and we have launched a Young Scholars program to provide services to students in grades K-2, prior to actual gifted identification. Equally as important, we are able to provide supports for the social and emotional needs of these students, which are essential for their long-term success.

Please do not reduce funding to this already underserved population; only 6 districts and 3 charter schools currently receive GATE funds. The potential of gifted students is endless, but it needs to be nurtured and cultivated. We would never dream on reducing funds for students with learning disabilities. Gifted students are no different. Their success depends on our ability to provide them with differentiated instruction designed to meet their considerable cognitive skills, along with essential supports to ensure that they are college and career ready.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to these remarks.

A67, Jana Wilcox Lavin

Good Afternoon:

My name is Jana Wilcox Lavin and I am the Executive Director of Opportunity 180, a champion for quality public education. We are here today because we believe every kid in our community should graduate college and career ready and that the new funding formula should reflect that commitment.

Our community's future depends largely on the ability to provide our students throughout the state a quality education. While there is work being done to improve student achievement across constituency groups, our community has a long way to go to ensure every, single student is college and career ready and the choice of their future is up to them.

As this Commission considers weights for different categories of students, we urge you to ensure that students furthest from the aforementioned opportunity are provided the resources they need to bridge that gap. This should be about kids, regardless of the type of public school they choose to attend. We know that you will hear directly from school leaders and families today and throughout the process on the importance of our funding decisions aligning to our values as a community—commitment to all kids first.

We look forward to continuing to be a part of this conversation. Thank you for your time.

Appendix B: Attachments Submitted

1. Brad Evans, Valley High Schools, submitted two invoices reflecting the cost burden on English Learner schools. *Available upon request.*
2. Don Soifer, Nevada Action for School Options, submitted further written testimony with additional data. *Available upon request.*
3. Kenneth Retzel, Guinn Center, submitted further written testimony with additional data.
4. Yvette Williams, Clark County Black Caucus, submitted further written testimony with additional data.

B3, Kenneth Retzl

Hello, my name is Kenneth Retzl, the Director of Education Policy at the Guinn Center and I am here to discuss the determination of weights considered under the “at-risk” funding category. I also believe my comments will extend into the other weights (specifically, the English Learner and Pupil with a Disability categories).

The current conception for a student to qualify for the “at-risk” weight under the Pupil Centered Funding Plan is whether that student qualifies for free-or-reduced price lunch (FRL). This may be the easiest indicator and place the least amount of burden on schools and districts since it is already being collected and reported. However, it may also not be an adequate or fair conception of “at-risk.” We know that some residents of our rural counties are hesitant to complete government forms — whether it be FRL or Pell Grant. Therefore, relying on FRL in rural counties may result in an underestimate of the need in rural counties.

To support this claim, a 2019 report from the Nevada Health Workforce Research Center¹ suggests the poverty rate in urban and rural counties is approximately equivalent (the urban poverty rate is .5 percentage points higher than the rural rate). However, if you compare the rate of students receiving free-or-reduced price lunch in those same urban and rural school districts, urban districts report an FRL rate of 60 percent and rural school districts report 47 percent – a 13 percentage point difference. Given this discrepancy, where poverty is just as prevalent in rural counties and school districts but is not evident from the FRL rates, the Guinn Center believes an “at-risk” indicator based solely on whether a student qualifies for FRL may adversely affect rural school districts.

Some may argue that rural school districts will benefit under the Pupil Centered Funding Plan because of the Small District or Small School adjustment and no action is needed to correct for this discrepancy in the classification of “at-risk.” However, we humbly suggest these weights are to account for the unique costs of running a small school or district, not to account for poverty that may be present in these communities.

We request this Commission consider alternative or additional measures to incorporate into the “at-risk” weight that may not be captured under a strict understanding of poverty. To maintain the spirit of the current categorical programs (specifically, Zoom, Victory, and SB 178), the alternative measure might be to include a consideration for student achievement in addition to the socio-economic measure. While this could be written so that a student would be eligible to receive a weight if they either qualify for free-or-reduced price lunch OR tested in the bottom 25th percentile of the state mandated proficiency assessment (currently the SBAC), the Guinn Center would prefer an additive effect – students receive a specific weight for either qualifying for free-and-reduced price lunch or performing in the bottom quartile and adding to that weight if both conditions are met.

This conceptualization could then be applied to the English Learner and the Pupil with a Disability weights – so that students would receive an increased weight if they also scored in the bottom quartile on the state proficiency assessment.

By including a measure of achievement as an additive measure to the discussed weights recognizes there is nuance to these classifications, maintains the spirit of the current categorical programs, and would provide the additional supports needed for students and schools regardless of their location. It could also assist to rectify the potential under-reporting of measures of poverty in rural areas.

¹ <https://med.unr.edu/statewide/reports/data-book-2019>

B4, Yvette Williams

CCBC strongly believes that students least proficient in English critically need both language and literacy interventions. Neither stand alone and data shows that many strategies used for ELL improves outcomes for first language students (or Standard English Language Learners) also.

Sharroky Hollie is well respected and in her report says, “After years of failing many African American students, particularly in literacy, the American school system needs to search for instructional methods that could substantially impact the academic achievement of these students. One would think that, after over thirty years of research on African American literacy (Adger, Christian, and Taylor), the home language of African American students would be acknowledged, and these students would be recognized as what LeMoine calls Standard English Language Learners, not only by classroom teachers and instructional leaders, but also by systematic instructional methodologies and general curriculum policies.” - SHARROKY HOLLIE, *Acknowledging the Language of African American Students: Instructional Strategies*, English Journal, 2001 National Council of Teachers of English (See Attached Article)

We are asking that this Commission and the Nevada Legislature reconfirm their commitment to literacy for all students, regardless of first language, race/ethnicity, gender, income, or zip code. This is our big opportunity to ensure each child has the resources they need and the access to those same opportunities as their peers. That’s EQUITY.

We want to remind stakeholders of Nevada’s obligation as mandated in ESSA, as a group least proficient. It is our request that the intentions of SB178 be preserved by incorporating a sliding scale in the distribution of FRL funds based on the individual student’s proficiency rate. Whereby those students with the greatest needs would receive an additional weighted funding to allow for the additional resources needed to achieve equity in their education. We propose students in the lowest 25% quartile receive the same weighted formula as ELL students.

Historically, ZOOM was introduced as a school based program targeted to students struggling the most. At that time several Prime Six schools were included to serve the needs of FRL students in the historical Westside of Las Vegas.

However, to our disappointment, as the BDR developed, those Prime Six schools were removed and the focus changed to second language students inclusively.

However, in 2018 ZOOM schools served 23,018 students in 38 schools in CCSD. Of those students, 8,950 were ELL students. Although many of these students are also on FRL the overwhelming number of ELL students are not being served.

FRL students represent approximately 67% (214,400). The least proficient subgroup by race/ethnicity in Nevada is our African American students. Not all African American students on FRL are least proficient, and not all Hispanic students are ELL. Not all students designated FRL are least proficient. Because of the severity of need presented by students struggling the most with English language arts, and the similarity of the needs between second language learners, we believe that the kind of supports, resources, and alignments provided by a sliding weighted funding formula would serve all students in Nevada with the highest proficiency gaps and greatest needs equitably.

Lastly, we would like to thank the Commission and NV Department of Education staff in working tirelessly on this critical issue. Your service to our State is greatly appreciated and hope our recommendation will have your thoughtful consideration of education equality, justice, and equity. If you have any further questions or would like to reach us, please contact us at (702) 596-2559 or ClarkCountyBlackCaucus@gmail.com.