

CCEA

Clark County Education Association

the union
of teaching
professionals



2019

NVILEG

Education Recap

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Back in January of 2018, we made a bold move backing a candidate for Governor, and we've stayed the course ever since. In the beginning, we were alone in our support. Other public sector unions told us that he wouldn't deliver based on their experiences, and the NSEA derided him as a telemarketer who couldn't be trusted, but when we met with him he assured us that he could be trusted by labor and that he would make public education his number one priority. He told us he would "get things done," but we always knew that our relationship with him would be about holding him to his promises.

That's exactly what this 2019 Legislative Session was about. We laid out our top legislative priorities well before the session began. First and foremost:

- **We wanted to achieve our longtime goal of dedicated funding for educator salary increases;**
- **We wanted more overall funding for resources in our schools and led the effort to develop a local revenue stream; and**
- **We wanted a reformation of the Nevada Plan that would result in a transition to a weighted funding formula.**

As the Session came to a close, it was clear that our focus on these big picture items produced results.

ASSEMBLY BILL 309

Early in the Session, working with Assemblyman Ozzie Fumo, we introduced AB277—a bill our members and supporters were highly engaged on, sending more than 112,000 emails to legislators—to create the dedicated funding stream for educator AND support staff salary increases. Later, that policy priority was absorbed by Speaker Jason Frierson's Assembly Bill 309, which ultimately passed.

By working in close collaboration with Speaker Frierson, we not only ensured the dedicated funding stream for salaries but we also addressed the need for more resources. The bill reappropriates funds from categoricals and other grant programs and converts them to block grants so CCSD has an additional \$28 million over the biennium. In addition, the bill achieves our long-time goal of developing the local revenue stream by authorizing the county to raise a quarter-percent tax to fund pre-K, adult education, incentives for recruiting and retaining educators in vacant positions in at-risk buildings, and more. We appreciate the work the Speaker did leading on these three very important CCEA initiatives.

SENATE BILL 543

The other major piece of education legislation—Senate Bill 543—that passed late on the last night of the Session was the highly anticipated reform of the Nevada Plan funding formula, which hadn't been updated in more than 50 years. The new plan, which is a student-centered plan, moves from categorical funding to a weighted funding formula where money follows the student directly into the classroom. Under the new plan, Clark County will no longer subsidize the rest of the state, and CCSD will receive some additional funds. The new formula, however, ultimately remains unfunded at the levels necessary to adequately address our students' needs.

SENATE BILL 555

Senate Bill 555, the Distributive School Account (DSA) education budget, which is constitutionally required to adequately fund education in the state, also passed, with an allocation of only \$6,067 per pupil in Clark County. Though this budget allocates additional dollars for Clark, it still does not adequately fund the base at the levels needed and leaves our system with a significant education funding gap.

SENATE BILL 551

With a strike of Clark County educators looming, Legislative Leadership introduced Senate Bill 551 in order to allocate additional dollars for school safety and funding for educator salaries. By extending the Modified Business Tax (MBT) that was set to sunset, lawmakers were able to allocate an additional \$72 million for salaries of which \$53 million will be going to Clark County.

SB551 is, however, going to be subject to a legal challenge by the Republicans, who argue that the passage of a new tax required a 2/3 majority. It's unfortunate that this bill failed to receive bi-partisan support. We will monitor the impact—if any—this will have on Clark County if the courts reverse what the legislature has passed.

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In addition to these primary education funding bills, CCEA was engaged on a number of other education policy bills that ultimately passed and will have a positive impact on the profession and our community at large.

SENATE BILL 475

Working closely with Senator Dallas Harris, as well as with the Teachers and Leaders Council, we were able to pass Senate Bill 475, which reduces the Student Learning Goals (SLG) portion of the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) from 40% of an educator's evaluation to 15% in the 2019-2020 schools year and 15% in the 2020-2021 school year.

SENATE BILL 324

With fewer and fewer resources provided in the classroom in recent years, educators have been coming out-of-pocket for school supplies, often spending well over \$1,000 per year. By working closely with Senator Marilyn Dondero-Loop, we passed Senate Bill 324, which provides up to \$250 in reimbursement for these out-of-pocket expenses per educator with a streamlined process for accessing the reimbursement.

ASSEMBLY BILL 289

This Session, CCEA also supported successful legislation to update harmful provisions of the "Ready by 3" program. Assembly Bill 289 changes a key provision, eliminating the automatic retention if a student is not reading proficient by grade 3. The bill also provides added systems to support struggling students through fifth grade with instructional interventions in order to help them become proficient.

ASSEMBLY BILL 196

The need to retain quality educators in Nevada's schools, especially those serving some of our most at-risk communities, was a key concern throughout this entire Legislative Session. Assembly Bill 196, which was led by Speaker Frierson, takes a step towards this goal by appropriating \$5 million for incentive payments to educators already in Title I schools, however, since there are thousands of such educators, it is not yet clear how much this will amount to for each participant.

SENATE BILL 153

Senate Bill 153 restores “evergreen” provisions to collective bargaining, which means that steps and columns MUST be paid at the end of a contract regardless of whether a new contract has been negotiated.

SENATE BILL 319

CCEA members were particularly engaged throughout the Session around Senate Bill 319. Unfortunately this bill initially had a 5% bonus payment included, but this provision was ultimately removed. Good provisions, however, remained in the final version of the bill that passed. The bill clearly defines the job responsibilities of school counselors, psychologists, and social workers such that they cannot be used for other purposes.

SENATE BILL 467

Senate Bill 467 simply extends and adds additional money to Zoom and Victory categorical programs for the next two years before the new funding formula (Senate Bill 543) begins in July 2021. CCEA has been a strong advocate for an accelerated timeline for getting off of categorical programs and moving toward a weighted funding formula.

SENATE BILL 84

Senate Bill 84 continues and expands dollars for pre-K grants for school districts. In addition to SB84, AB309 allows, at the county level, for a tax that would help fund pre-K programs in Clark County.

SENATE BILL 239

Senator Heidi Seevers Gansert’s Senate Bill 239 makes progress on protecting victims of bullying by prioritizing their interests and authorizing the extension of time required to conduct an investigation into reported cyber-bullying in certain circumstances.

SENATE BILL 296

By providing licensure reciprocity for professionals in other countries, Scott Hammond’s Senate Bill 296 allows the Clark County School District to recruit educators from abroad.

SENATE BILL 321

Assembly Bill 321 abolished the Achievement School Districts (ASD) from statutes. The ASD was one of the worst policies passed in the 2015 Legislative Session and never produced any good results.

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CCEA members were engaged throughout this Legislative Session like never before, but as is the case with every Session, not every bill survived.

SENATE BILL 191

Despite the efforts of our librarians and their leadership, one high profile piece of legislation that ultimately died in committee was Senate Bill 191, which, if it had passed, would have required a librarian in every building.

SENATE BILL 303

Another ultimately unsuccessful bill that CCEA members were highly engaged on was Yvanna Cancela's Senate Bill 303, which also died, but would have given National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) in Title I, Tier I schools an additional 5% bonus payment.

ASSEMBLY BILL 277

Assembly Bill 277, despite not passing, was key to developing Assembly Bill 309 because it was the first legislation introduced that required dedicated funding for teachers salaries. Our ultimate success in securing dedicated funding via AB309 would not have been possible without CCEA members' critical engagement around AB277. Nearly 3,400 educators sent more than 112,000 emails to lawmakers in Carson City in support of a dedicated funding allocation.

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Finally, not every education bill that passed is good legislation. Some bills have good intentions but are ill-conceived from a policy perspective, while others are simply too inadequate or ineffective to address the problems they seek to solve. CCEA was consistent throughout the Legislative Session in highlighting insufficiencies or shortcomings where necessary and in speaking out against misguided legislation.

ASSEMBLY BILL 168

Assembly Bill 168 requires a plan of action based on restorative justice for a student facing discipline including expulsion. Although this bill has good intentions, it does not adequately address the reality of what educators are facing in high school classes, especially since the behavioral schools have been closed and those students have been moved into the general population.

We support and feel there is a place for restorative justice in the discipline of students, but we feel the experience of the classroom educator must be central, and that principals and educators must be granted more authority to remove students from classrooms.

ASSEMBLY BILL 304

Another bill that we expressed serious concerns about for being inadequate was Assembly Bill 304, which sought to address a critical need for Nevada schools: class size reduction. To reduce class sizes any piece of legislation needs to have funding attached to it, and this bill never did.



Tuesday, April 16 2019 — CCEA educators meet with Governor Sisolak for Lobby Day in Carson City.

THANK YOU!

Once again, we owe all of our members and supporters a heartfelt THANK YOU and congratulations. You have been engaged in this legislative process from the very beginning like you've never been engaged before.

- Prior to the Session, we launched our Fund Our Schools NOW campaign with a petition that garnered more than 20,000 signatures from educators, parents, students, support staff, and community members.
- Then, we held a rally to Fund Our Schools NOW on Saturday, April 27th to show our community just how serious and organized we are, where more than 4,000 educators, your families, and our supporters turned out and shut down Las Vegas Blvd.
- Finally, over the course of the Session, we launched a series of campaigns to contact lawmakers (first around AB277, then about Clark County schools' need for \$120 million more annually). In total, we sent more than 500,000 emails to Carson City, with more than 300,000 coming in the final 72 hours of the Session.

Now, as we wait to see exactly how the funds are allocated, we're strike-ready, and we're looking ahead to the next election cycle. We were consistent with our Governor—as well as with Legislative Leadership—that promises made must be promises kept. Many of our lawmakers went above and beyond to make things happen, but the truth is that others fell short. We were up there, we know who said what, and we know how they ultimately voted.

The Session is over, but the struggle to Fund Our Schools NOW continues. The challenge in 2021 is going to be even greater than what we just experienced. To meet that challenge, CCEA is planning for the 2020 elections to ensure we have the right people in office for education.