

April 6, 2021

Nevada Assembly Committee on Education

C/O Chair Assemblywoman Bilbray-Axelrod

401 S Carson Street

Carson City, NV 89701

Re: Public Comment for April 6, 2021: AB415: Provides for an interim study on public school accountability. (BDR S-752)

Good afternoon, Committee Chair Bilbray-Axelrod, and committee members. My name is Marie Neisess, and I am the president of the Clark County Education Association.

I'm speaking in support of AB415. An external and impartial consultant should be hired to review the effectiveness of the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF). Does the annual summary do what it intended? Does it portray an adequate picture of a school's performance? An interim study on public school accountability is needed.

The NSPF was developed to provide an accountability system that reports meaningful and actionable data. The data is provided to parents, students and educators, and the community. The intent is to provide accurate data about how schools are performing on a star scale. While accountability is necessary, it also harms underperforming schools. As a former teacher, I only taught at Title 1 schools. Title 1 schools typically have a hard time filling all of their positions with fully licensed educators. These positions are often filled with long-term substitutes or first year educators. More often than not, experienced educators do not want to work at lower performing schools because of the stigma associated with the star ratings.

Prior to becoming the CCEA President, I was a reading interventionist. I worked with students who were two to three grade levels below grade level and provided support for teachers. I saw firsthand how tirelessly teachers worked to meet the needs of their students only to feel so defeated once the star ratings were released. This made it difficult to keep fully licensed teachers and resulted in large turnover rates every year.

While accountability is necessary, it must lead toward growth and improvement. It is important to look at how other states address accountability so we can move beyond the feeling of defeat that the NSPF often fuels.

Please vote yes on AB415.

Respectfully,

Marie Neisess

Marie Neisess, President
Clark County Education Association

