

Memo to : Senator Moises Denis, Chair, Senate Committee on Education
From: Sylvia Lazos, Policy Director, Educate Nevada Now
Date: March 15, 2017
Re: Suggested Amendments to SB178

Senator Denis, with respect, we ask that you and the co-sponsors of SB178 consider the following amendments to SB178 as a way of implementing the comments of our testimony dated March 15, 2017. Thank you for your consideration.

1. ADD p.4, after line 16, subsections (d) and (e)

(d) State Board shall direct each school district to develop a strategic plan that implement strategies that are research-based and sets goals in order to close the achievement and opportunity gap between at risk students and non-at risk students, as defined in (b) above, and each strategic plan shall be approved by NDE through a process of dialogue along the lines of ELL strategic plan, established in (original zoom school bill). (“at risk strategic plan”)

(e) State Board shall consider the strategic plans developed pursuant to (original zoom school bill) to close the opportunity gap between ELL students and non-ELL students the “ELL strategic plan.”

2. ADD p.4, after line 24, subsection (a)

By January 1, 2018, the Department shall prescribe interim assessments and metrics to determine ROI for additional monies routed to school districts pursuant to the weighted funded formula set forth in Section 4. The interim assessments shall allow Legislature to determine ROI across districts and across programs. ROI assessments shall be reported to LCB on quarterly basis and made publicly available on the website of NDE and each school district. These metrics shall measure the closing of the opportunity and achievement gap for the special populations listed in Section 4.

3. ADD p. 4, line 18 “interim performance targets”

4. ADD p.4, line 24, at the end of the sentence “and opportunity gap. Such metrics shall be published on the website of each school district receiving weighted funding formula monies.”

5. ADD section 2(2a) at p.4, line 24:

(a) For school districts that have more than 30 schools with at risk populations at or above 90% FRL, and that have more than 30 schools that have ELL populations at twice the national average, allocations of additional weighted funds shall be made in the form of categorical programs, for ELL through ZOOM categoricals, and for at risk through VICTORY categorical funding. Unless superseded by the reauthorization of zoom and victory categorical funding, categorical weighted funds shall be prioritized as follows: (i) directed to schools with high ELL and high FRL populations that are poorly performing in furtherance of strategic plans that address their needs and implement research-based strategies, (ii) to assist schools that are high ELL and high FRL populations that are performing

satisfactorily maintain their level of performance in furtherance of strategic plans that address their needs and implement research-based strategies, (iii) otherwise, to implement ELL and at risk strategic plans, set forth in Section 2.

(b) For all other school districts, they shall be eligible to receive weighted funds only if their “at risk strategic plan” and “ELL strategic plan” has been approved by State Board. Each school district shall report how expenditures are to be directed at the district level to implement the at-risk strategic plan and the ELL strategic plan, and how every school receiving monies will implement the district’s strategic plans.

(c) All funds distributed shall in a manner that each district can report ROI on each dollar allocated pursuant to the weighted funding formula. For each biennium the Superintendent shall report to LCB and the finance and education committees overall ROI and success of implementation of weighted funding formula.

6. ADD Section 4(4a) at p. 6, line 10:

For school districts receiving weighted funding formula funds through categorical programs, the Superintendent of Education shall develop a calculation to convert categorical funding directed at highly impacted schools to the weights describe above. By January 2018, the Superintendent shall report to LCB and interim Education Committee the technical aspects of this calculation.

7. ADD Section 4(5a) at the beginning of p.6, line11:

(a) The intent of the Legislature is to fully fund the weighted funding formula by 2020-2021 biennium in order to meet its constitutional obligation to fund schools at a level sufficient so that each child in Nevada has the opportunity to meet the standards of academic achievement in laws and regulations passed by the Legislature and State Board.

(b) In order to achieve the goal of this law by the 2020-21 biennium, the Legislature shall convene a bi-partisan, multi-stakeholder (that includes parents) 2018 K-12 Funding Task Force in the 2018 interim chaired by the Senate Education Committee chair and co-chaired by the Superintendent of Education. The Senate Majority Leader shall choose three members, the Speaker of the Assembly shall choose three members, the Governor shall choose three members, and the President of State Board of Education shall choose two members. The Task Force shall begin meeting no later than January 2018. If appropriate, the Chair and co-chair of the Task Force shall convene a technical advisory committee to assist the Task Force in its work. This Task Force shall provide the Legislature assistance in the work of implementing Sections 4 and 5a, by providing recommendations that i) review the base and modernize the Nevada plan and ensure that the base is based on need of children, per (a) above, ii) confirm that the weights in Section 4(4) are appropriate and sufficient, as mandated in the Constitution, (iii) whether per pupil dollar allocations are preferable to weights, (iv) consider additional populations that merit weighted funding, v) recommend to the incoming Legislature revenue sources to fully fund the new base and weighted funding formula.

