

NSEA SUPPORT FOR AB462

Date: April 4, 2019
To: Assembly Committee on Education
Re: Support for AB462

The Nevada State Education Association represents teachers and education support professionals across the state. We believe that every Nevada student deserves a high-quality public education.

NSEA supports AB462 to give Nevada the time and space to implement appropriate controls and accountability of Nevada charter schools.

Charter schools were initially promoted by educators who sought to innovate within the local public school system to better meet the needs of their students. Over the last 22 years, charter schools have grown dramatically to include large numbers of charters that are privately managed, largely unaccountable, and not transparent as to their operations or performance. The explosive growth of charters has been driven, in part, by deliberate and well-funded efforts to ensure that charters are exempt from the basic safeguards and standards that apply to public schools.

Too frequently charters are operated expressly for profit or are nominally non-profit but managed or operated by for-profit entities. These charters have devolved far from the original concept, developed in part by people affiliated with the National Education Association, of charters as small incubators of innovation. Most importantly, the growth of charters has undermined local public schools and communities, without producing any overall increase in student learning and growth. It is important to note, that most recent studies have shown that public schools outperform charter schools on average, and public schools educate every student, including English learners, students in poverty, and students with individualized education plans. While they are prohibited from discriminating, charter schools serve far fewer students with disabilities.

Charter schools rarely are held to the same standards as traditional public schools. Adding insult to injury, we now have learned the controls we thought governed Nevada's state public charter schools have not been followed. Site visits are a basic component of delivering oversight and accountability for any regulator. The State Public Charter School Authority went years without following the Charter Performance Framework, including not conducting site visits until earlier this year. Many district regulated charters also fall short in terms of regulations and accountability.

It is imperative that we have a moratorium on new charter schools. When asked why the State Public Charter School Authority was approving new charter school applications when they couldn't properly regulate those schools, the response was they had no legal authority to deny applications. AB462 will provide the State Public Charter Schools Authority the legal authority as well as the time and space they need to implement appropriate controls and accountability of Nevada charter schools. We are long past time for the legislature to assert strong controls of Nevada charter schools, **including joining 21 other states in capping charter school expansion**. Meanwhile, the legislature should continue its work to improve traditional public schools, providing the supports necessary so that every Nevada student can get a quality education from their neighborhood public school.