

NSEA SUPPORTS AB289

Date: April 9, 2019
To: Assembly Committee on Education
Re: Support for AB289

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

NSEA supports AB289 removing the retention mandate from Read by Grade 3.

Learning to read by the third grade is critical. When students are unable to read by the third grade, they risk falling further behind their peers. As highlighted by the National Conference of State Legislatures, third grade “marks the time when the focus is placed on *reading to learn* instead of *learning to read*.”

In 2015, Read by 3 was passed into law through SB391. The legislation contained a provision that students must be held back if they cannot read at the end of third grade. Since that time, NSEA has expressed concerns regarding the retention provision which would be triggered at the end of the 2019-2020 school year.

For the last several years, NSEA’s members have been troubled by the amount of paperwork and testing demanded of our students without the resources provided to our educators to help our students succeed as learners. There are far better ways to solve this issue without having a mass retention of over 9,000 students. With AB289, NSEA is encouraged there is flexibility with student retention. Moreover, under this bill, such a retention would now require written consent by the student’s parent or guardian.

There is no doubt this program has potential to work better. NSEA believes the cleanup language about literary specialists will enhance the program. Further, a great deal of the complaints over the last several years have dealt primarily with a lack of resources. For the last biennium (2017-2019), \$45 million was allocated for Read by 3; Governor Sisolak has proposed \$63 million for Read by 3. To that end we are encouraged by the non-competitive grant language contained in this bill. The success of Read By 3 relies heavily upon investing the funds where they are needed the most.

AB289 moves forward with responsible fixes which will benefit our students without penalizing them for simply attending schools in a system that is chronically and consistently underfunded.