

DEFUND ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOL DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BUDGET

Date: March 11, 2019
To: K-12 Budget Subcommittee
Re: Defund Achievement School District Budget (2674)

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

NSEA asks that the Achievement School District budget be defunded and recommends the monies be reappropriated to programs proven effective at improving public education.

The Achievement School District is a failed experiment and the wrong answer for our state's struggling schools. The concept of converting public schools to achievement charters has been met with fierce community resistance over the last few years. During the selection process of underperforming schools in 2016, we saw unprecedented mobilization of school communities who felt that charters were being forced on them, with little communication or input. This top-down approach was diametrically opposed to programs and supports like Zoom and Victory schools designed to invest in students and communities.

Simply put, charter schools are not the answer to Nevada's education shortcomings. Data on Nevada's charter schools shows mixed results at best. In fact, when student achievement is controlled for outside factors, charter schools under-perform traditional public schools by almost every measure. Meanwhile, as we learned through the initial raid and ongoing federal investigation of the Celerity Education Group in Los Angeles, one of the organizations originally selected by the Achievement School District to operate in Nevada, lack of accountability and oversight is a very serious issue and should have signaled the end of the Achievement School District in 2017.

Since 2015, NSEA has raised broad and detailed concerns about the Achievement School District. The highly partisan ASD has a union-busting component, potentially putting union members in the position of having to choose between their school site or their collective bargaining agreement – if they are even offered the opportunity to stay. NSEA believes that budgeting reflects true priorities of decision-makers. To this end, we think that it is wholly appropriate for legislators to move the \$272,361 budgeted for the Achievement School District to programs that have proven effective at improve public education.