

COMMENTS TO THE COMMISSION ON SCHOOL FUNDING

August 14, 2020

The Nevada State Education Association has been the voice of Nevada educators for over 100 years.

The recommendations adopted by this Commission at your July meeting are profoundly disappointing. The Commission on School Funding should value the voices of educators, school equity advocates, and other education stakeholders, who over the past year have shown up, and since March, written in. We've consistently expressed our concern about the well-being of Zoom and Victory Schools, the lack of new resources to address chronic education underfunding, the specter of years-long budget freezes in most school districts, a multi-million dollar giveaway to charter schools, anti-worker end fund balance provisions, and the broken process that has left us at this point.

Instead of valuing our voices and incorporating our concerns into your recommendations, we have been ignored.

Since March the COVID-19 global pandemic has ravaged Nevada and changed everything. Everything, that is, with the possible exception being the limited scope and imagination of this Commission. A month ago, as legislators were convened in Carson City at the 31st Special Session, making \$156 million in painful cuts to K-12 education funding, this Commission continued as if literally nothing had changed. Today's agenda presents us with more tinkering with the minutiae of the new funding plan.

Instead, this Commission should be engaged in the tough questions.

- How does the \$70 million in cuts to SB178 funding for English learners and at-risk students impact the transition to student weights contemplated in the new funding plan?
- What would be the impact on the transition to the new funding plan with further state budget cuts to K-12 education?
- Why are most major education stakeholder groups opposed to making this shift in funding plans in the first place?
- How completely irresponsible would it be to implement the radical shift of the school funding plan in the middle of a global pandemic?

While the new funding plan was unworkable before with no new revenue, implementation with decreased revenue and painful budget cuts, including wiping out student weights, would be completely irresponsible. SB543 will not help safely reopen schools. SB543 will not bring greater transparency. SB543 will not deliver greater education equity. SB543 is not truly centered on the student, 90% of whom attend our neighborhood public schools. And SB543 is not inclusive of the voices of education stakeholders.