

NSEA SUPPORT SB 321

ABOLISH THE ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Date: March 28, 2019

To: Senate Committee on Education

Re: Abolish the Achievement School District – SB321

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 supports SB321 to abolish the Achievement School District and responsibly move existing ASD charter schools to the State Public Charter School Authority.

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 ended of the Achievement School District two years ago.

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 it is time to acknowledge the failure of the Achievement School District and move on in a responsible manner by transferring the existing ASD charter schools to the State Public Charter School Authority. Meanwhile, we would encourage that any savings be dedicated to programs that have proven effective at improving public education.