



NSEA OPPOSES AB495

Public Comment to Assembly Education 4.9.25

The Nevada State Education Association has been the voice of Nevada educators for 125 years. NSEA opposes AB495 to lower operating standards for Nevada's poorest performing charter schools.

Since 2017, NSEA has been asking for greater control and oversight of charter schools, especially given the separate and unequal dynamics between charter schools and neighborhood public schools. In 2017, NSEA worked with CCSD on AB78 to require charter schools to notify the school district and conduct a needs assessment before they could be approved. In 2019, NSEA sponsored and the Committee on Education introduced AB462, a proposed moratorium on new charter schools in Nevada.

NSEA has also advocated to level the playing field between charters and neighborhood public schools. While the legislature has taken some action over the years, there remain fundamental inequities. For example, 100% of full-time teachers at traditional public schools are required to be fully licensed. Not so with charters.

When a student leaves a neighborhood school for a charter school, the public funding for that student goes with them, but the neighborhood school's overhead costs remain. Charter schools can exacerbate existing inequities by creating barriers to entry for vulnerable students. This could be as simple as students with the greatest support self-selecting into charters, effectively siphoning away students with the most engaged parents, leaving students with greater needs and fewer resources. Also, charter schools are much quicker to expel students with behavior problems, sending these students back to their neighborhood public schools. This has created a two-tiered system of public education. While the SPCSA authority has worked on inequities in their student population, charters educate a significantly lower percentage of students with IEPs, students who are low-income, and English learners.

NSEA continues to advocate for greater controls and accountability of charter schools. Allowing charters who have the lowest performance rating among schools for 3 out of 5 years to continue operating does a disservice to Nevada students.