

May 4, 2017

[Brittney.Miller@asm.state.nv.us](mailto:Brittney.Miller@asm.state.nv.us)

Dear Assemblywoman Miller:

I am writing today on behalf of the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) to express our opposition for Assembly Bill (AB) 320 as it is currently written, as well as our support for Superintendent of Public Instruction Steve Canavero’s proposed amendments to this bill. [NCTQ](http://www.nctq.org/siteHome.do) is a nonpartisan research and policy organization led by the vision that every child deserves effective teachers and every teacher deserves the opportunity to become effective.

Research overwhelmingly demonstrates that teachers are the most important in-school factor impacting student academic outcomes, both immediately and long term. When used to evaluate teachers, student growth measures provide unique and meaningful information about teacher performance and, as such, should be a substantive component within a multi-measure teacher evaluation system. According to the best-available [research](http://k12education.gatesfoundation.org/download/?Num=2572&filename=MET_Ensuring_Fair_and_Reliable_Measures_Practitioner_Brief.pdf), teacher evaluation systems that assign between 33 and 50 percent of the available weight to student growth “achieve more consistency, avoid the risk of encouraging too narrow a focus on any one aspect of teaching, and can support a broader range of learning objectives than measured by a single test.” Accordingly, a system that weights student growth any less than 33 percent fails to correspond to research-based best practices regarding the most appropriate weight for student growth measures within a teacher evaluation system.

Additionally, in order to ensure that teacher evaluations are comparable within and across schools and districts, particular attention must be paid to ensuring that student growth measures for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects—that is, those teachers teaching subjects other than English/language arts and mathematics in grades other than 3-8 and once in high school—are rigorous, valid, and reliable. As such, growth measures used for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects (*e.g.*, student learning objectives or student learning goals) should be subject to a rigorous review to ensure their quality and comparability.

However, regardless of the strength of the components within a teacher evaluation system, policy makers can only expect evaluations to be used as a tool to inform continual teacher development when these evaluations are implemented regularly and used to provide ongoing feedback. [Research](http://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/jep.24.3.97) suggests that teacher evaluations must occur at least annually, and that annual evaluations are particularly critical for new teachers.

Finally, in order to ensure that such systems are measuring the different contributions that teachers make to student learning and growth, they must be routinely reviewed to evaluate whether teachers are earning the full distribution of ratings. As part of this review, we strongly recommend that the state regularly audit the implementation of its evaluation system, and that it focus on any cases where there is a noticeable discrepancy between the observation and student growth components of a teacher’s final evaluation rating so that it can provide these districts with technical assistance.

For these reasons, I urge you and your colleagues to oppose AB 320 in its current iteration and adopt the amendments proposed by Superintendent of Public Instruction Steve Canavero. These amendments are essential to ensure that educators and school leaders have the necessary information to systematically improve teacher quality across the state so that all students are taught by an effective teacher.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me at 202-393-0020, extension 116, or [eross@nctq.org](mailto:eross@nctq.org) if there is any further information that I can provide. Thank you for your continued leadership in helping to ensure excellent educational opportunities for all of Nevada’s students.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Ross

CC:

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| Committee Manager Betty Kaminski  Senator Moises Denis - Chair  Senator Joyce Woodhouse – Vice Chair  Senator Pat Spearman  Senator Tick Segerblom  Senator Scott Hammond  Senator Don Gustavson  Senator Becky Harris  Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson - Chair  Assemblywoman Amber Joiner – Vice Chair | Assemblyman Eliot Anderson  Assemblywoman Olivia Diaz  Assemblyman Edgar Flores  Assemblyman Ozzie Fumo  Assemblywoman William McCurdy  Assemblywoman Heidi Swank  Assemblyman Chris Edwards  Assemblywoman Lisa Krasner  Assemblyman Keith Pickard  Assemblywoman Jill Tolles  Assemblywoman Melissa Woodbury |