ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026
4:00 PM

Office	Address	City	Meeting Room
Department of Education	2080 E. Flamingo Rd.	Las Vegas	Suite 114
Department of Education	700 E. Fifth St.	Carson City	Silver Ore Conference Room
Department of Education	Virtual/YouTube	n/a	n/a

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE
Rebecca Dirks-Garcia (Chair)
Tameka Henry
Anna Marie Binder (Vice Chair)
Tom Hendrix
Brande Johnson
Katrina Hone
Michael Roth
Brenda Zamora
Dina Neal

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (NDE) STAFF PRESENT
Anabel Sanchez, Education Programs Professional; Office of Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement (EDLiFE)

Kathryn Hoyt, Education Programs Professional; Office of Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement (EDLiFE)

Jackie Nygard, Education Programs Professional; Office of Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement (EDLiFE)

Rick Derry, Administrative Assistant; Office of Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement (EDLiFE)

Katie Metz, NDE Contractor, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment (OSRLE)

Rose Steffen NDE Contractor, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment (OSRLE)

GUEST IN ATTENDANCE
Alvin Dizon, Family Engagement Director, Clark County School District

Erin Korf, Principal at Silver Stage Elementary School, Lyon County School District

Jed Marciniak, Principal at Silver Stage Middle School, Lyon County School District

LEGAL STAFF PRESENT
Deputy Attorney General Christena Georgas-Burns

1. **CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT**
   Chair Rebecca Dirks-Garcia called the meeting to order at 4:12 p.m. The council stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and Chair Dirks Garcia delivered an Indigenous land acknowledgment recognizing the traditional homelands of the Northern Paiute (Numa), Southern Paiute (Nuwu), Washoe (Washiw), and Western Shoshone (Newe) peoples in Nevada. Chair Dirks-Garcia welcomed new member Katrina Hone who is representing private business or industry. Chair Dirks-Garcia also shared that member Brande Johnson and herself were reappointed to continue serving on the council.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT #1**
   There were no public comments submitted or offered in person.

3. **INFORMATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 18, 2025, MEETING MINUTES** *(Information/ Discussion/ Possible Action*)
   Members reviewed the November 18, 2025, meeting minutes. **Chair Rebecca Dirks-Garcia entertained a motion to approve the minutes. Member Tameka Henry made a motion to approve the minutes, and member Brenda Zamora seconded. Motion passed unanimously**.

4. **INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING NEVADA FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OFFICE UPDATES** *(Information/ Discussion)*
   Members received updates from Anabel Sanchez. The latest edition of the Family Engagement Newsletter was posted to the Parental Involvement and Family Engagement (PIFE) webpage, containing resources, webinars, articles, grant announcements, and courses. Members were invited to share it with district staff.
   The Family Engagement Interactive Guide is on track for completion by July of 2026. It includes 150 new interlinking pages across the NDE website designed to simplify navigation for families, educators, and community members. Google Translate integration supports live translation into 145 languages for greater accessibility.
   The first Parental Involvement and Family Engagement (PIFE) Office Hours meeting took place on February 24, with 10 school districts participating from both urban and rural counties. The next session will focus on artificial intelligence (AI) usage and data collection strategies. Future plans involve coordinating guest speakers from other NDE departments and community groups to provide guidance to our local education agencies. Ms. Sanchez opened the floor for questions.
   Chair Dirks Garcia asked if the AI program and data collection strategies are related. Ms. Sanchez clarified they are separate items: data collection was a direct request from participating school

districts, while the AI portion is a newly added partnership with Nevada State University's assistant dean to teach families about AI.
Chair Dirks Garcia commended NDE on the development of the interactive guide and the 145-language translation support.

5. **INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION, REGARDING CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM INITIATIVES** *(Information/ Discussion)*
NDE contractors, Katie Metz and Rose Steffen provided a presentation on chronic absenteeism initiatives. Their presentation is included as supplemental materials. They shared information regarding the definition of chronic absenteeism, correlations with Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) data, and the check and connect system.
Member Michael Roth praised the "check and connect" focus on relationships, sharing that his school recently hired a custodian who built such strong relationships with students that he became the primary reason some disengaged students chose to attend school. Member Roth asked if NDE was exploring technology, such as classroom robots or virtual hybrid systems, to allow sick but non-contagious students to participate virtually. Ms. Stefen responded that while technology is a prominent topic in NDE's chronic absenteeism task force, there are no active technological systems in place yet. Ms. Metz agreed, emphasizing that "check and connect" is precisely about finding that one connection – whether a custodian, coach, or teacher – and empowering them with training. Vice Chair Anna Marie Binder added that the State Board of Education (SBE) is actively committed to researching and reforming the "seats in the chair" attendance accounting regulations to better fit modern virtual and hybrid education. Ms. Stefen welcomed SBE's review to prevent the duplication of efforts between agencies.
Rebecca Dirks Garcia read a virtual question submitted by Senator Neil: *Are we looking at the correlation between legislative policy passed in 2023 Assembly Bill 330 (AB 330) regarding the restoration of discipline practices and current chronic absenteeism data?* Ms. Steffen confirmed that their restorative justice program tracks LEA data on disciplinary disproportionality (suspensions/expulsions) and its direct impact on attendance trends. Ms. Metz added that NDE works with school districts annually to review restorative justice policies, flagging gaps and working to ensure statewide policy consistency.
Chair Dirks-Garcia pointed out that attendance notices often come from clerks rather than teachers, and that punitive letters break parental trust, rendering outreach and relationship-building by counselors ineffective. Ms. Stefen agreed, stating the newly formed task force is investigating early interventions to prevent truancy escalations and repair relationships after notices are sent. Vice Chair Binder reported that Clark County School District (CCSD) recently restarted its MTSS workgroup under local pressure. She also shared that they spent the last eight months establishing a Special Education Parental Alliance to target attendance issues among special education students.
Member Roth suggested that school administrators should be trained in the "Concept of Honor"—deliberately structuring school systems to ensure families feel known, respected, and listened to. He provided a practical example: placing "table tents" with parents' names (e.g., "Mr. and Mrs. Smith" or "Team Ryan") at IEP meetings to completely shift the tone of the room. Ms. Metz strongly embraced this and requested member Roth's contact information to integrate these ideas into their workgroups.
Senator Neal submitted a virtual question read by Chair Dirks-Garcia asking whether CCSD's proposed 10-year facilities master plan to close certain schools and create K–8 models would worsen

student achievement, attendance, and discipline. Ms. Stefen noted she could not speak on CCSD's internal leadership plan but recorded it to bring to the NDE task force workgroup. Chair Dirks Garcia observed that many parents in CCSD have actively petitioned for K–8 models over the past three years due to severe transportation and multi-school childcare challenges, though she acknowledged the need to review national research on how K–8 configurations affect attendance. Vice Chair Binder offered to connect Senator Neil with the district's bond oversight committee for a deeper look.

Member Roth, representing rural counties, cautioned that Nevada's two largest school districts (Clark and Washoe) tend to dominate statewide policy discussions. He urged the council to maintain a strong focus on statewide and rural-specific issues, rather than becoming overly consumed by Clark County's localized administrative shifts. Chair Dirks Garcia agreed that balancing urban and rural needs is a constant, necessary challenge.

6. **INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION, REGARDING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES FROM THE CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT** *(Information/ Discussion)*

Alvin Dizon, new to his role as director for approximately two to three months, provided background on CCSD's highly diverse and massive district. The department's mission is to guarantee access to district resources and support systems for all families using Nevada's five foundational principals for family engagement.

Director Dizon shared resources and structures implemented by the Clark County School District (CCSD) including, University of Family Learning (UFL), Community Family Support Centers, Early Childhood Workshops and the "Parents as Partners" model. Their presentation is included as supplemental materials.

Chair Dirks Garcia asked how CCSD reaches families who cannot attend in-person events or do not live near an engagement center. Mr. Dizon explained that they offer virtual workshops and large weekend "Super Saturdays", however, because the family engagement staff is funded through Title I federal grants, serving non-Title I schools requires creative staffing workarounds and "skeleton crews" due to strict funding restrictions.

When asked by the Chair to identify a single, highly effective best practice that could be scaled statewide, Mr. Dizon stated: *"Offer food every time there is an event."* He emphasized that food is a universal, highly effective incentive. He also candidly noted that despite the success of weekend events, the district has seen a post-pandemic decrease in in-person parent attendance.

7. **INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION, REGARDING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES FROM THE LYON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT** *(Information/ Discussion)*

Erin Korf, Principal of Silver Stage Elementary School, and Jed Marciniak, Principal of Silver Stage Middle School shared a presentation with the council. Their presentation is included as supplemental materials. They shared information regarding open house policies, partnership with the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) to host events, middle school career fair, their Harvest Festival and "I Am Proud" showcase.

Member Roth asked about facility and sustainability logistics, noting his rural county recently lost its club due to a lack of physical space and sustainable funding. Ms. Korf explained that sharing their existing school lunchrooms was the key to securing the club, and that the 21st Century Grant helps sustain academic tutoring partnerships. Regarding the "I am Proud" events, Member Roth asked how

they manage the emotional impact on children whose parents cannot attend during the school day. The presenters explained that because the event is scheduled right before dismissal, it captures the high volume of parent-pickup drivers. She reiterated that the classroom layout naturally encourages parents to look at neighboring desks, and staff are assigned to ensure no child is left unvisited. Chair Dirks Garcia, speaking as a parent of 20 years and former State PTA President, highly commended the strategic scheduling of the Lyon County team. She emphasized that parent-pickup scheduling and student-led showcases are far more effective at building authentic parent-school bonds than traditional evening parent nights or dry academic math presentations, noting that she personally took time off work to attend showcases because they felt deeply meaningful.

8. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS** *(Information/ Discussion)*
   Ohio State University (OSU) has finalized its full family engagement research report. Representatives have agreed to present their findings at a future council meeting. Due to time-zone differences, NDE will propose earlier meeting times for the next session to accommodate the presenters. NDE's Office for Safe and Respectful Learning Environments (OSRLE) will prepare and deliver a comprehensive presentation on statewide restorative practices at an upcoming meeting. Outlined current-year funding plans are allocated to support travel and registration for Vice Chair Anna Marie Binder and member Michael Roth to attend the 2026 National Community Schools and Family Engagement Conference hosted by the Institute for Educational Leadership. NDE invited council members to submit creative ideas and suggestions for spending fiscal year 2027 family engagement council funds, to be formally discussed at the next meeting.
   Washoe County School District and Lincoln County School District will be formally invited to present their local family engagement best practices at the next council meeting.

9. **PUBLIC COMMENT #2**
   There were no public comments submitted or offered in person.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**
    Without any further objections, Chair Rebecca Dirks Garcia formally adjourned the meeting at 6:00 PM.