

**NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COMMISSION ON SCHOOL FUNDING
APRIL 22, 2022
9:00 A.M.**

Office	Mode	Platform
Department of Education	Teleconference/Livestream	Lifesize, Phone

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Nancy Brune
Dusty Casey
Andrew J. Feuling
Jason Goudie
Guy Hobbs, Chair
Dr. David Jensen
Paul Johnson
Mark Mathers
Punam Mathur
Jim McIntosh, Vice Chair
Joyce Woodhouse

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT

Heidi Haartz, Deputy Superintendent for Student Investment
James Kirkpatrick, State Education Funding Manager, Student Investment Division
Beau Bennett, Management Analyst IV, Student Investment Division
Jessica Todtman, Deputy Superintendent for Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement

LEGAL STAFF PRESENT

Greg Ott, Chief Deputy Attorney General

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE

Via videoconference

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Meeting called to order at 9:02 A.M. by Commission Chair Guy Hobbs. Quorum was established.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT #1

Jenny Hunt, Director, Mariposa Language and Learning Academy, provided public comment regarding the definition of “At-Risk” (*A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A*)

3. APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Member Paul Johnson moved to approve the March 18, 2022 Commission Meeting Minutes. Member David Jensen seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

4. NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION UPDATE

Heidi Haartz, Deputy Superintendent for Student Investment, Nevada Department of Education, (NDE or Department) provided an update regarding the work of the Department since the March meeting.

The Department has been focused on conducting the solicitations for two vendors to provide additional information for property tax and sales tax. The solicitation period has closed, and applications were received and reviewed. The Department has notified all applicants of the selected vendors and is now in the midst of an 11-day appeal process for those who were not selected as vendors to raise any concerns. Once the appeal process has closed, the Department will be able to move forward with the contractual agreements. Once the contractual agreements have been signed by all parties, the selected vendor and the materials will become public information.

5. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE IMPACT OF FUNDING ON EDUCATION

Commission Members Andrew Feuling and David Jensen provided an update on efforts by the Nevada Association of School Superintendents (NASS) to inform the Commission’s conversations regarding the impact of optimal funding on Nevada’s K-12 education system.

Member Feuling proposed a three-step process for communicating about optimal funding. The first step, is communicating the results of the report being generated by the Guinn Foundation that details student achievement in Nevada and the correlation between the investments that have been made in education and the increase in student achievement. The second step is the communication of how increased education funding would be spent and the outcomes that can be expected. Member Feuling noted that NASS discussed the specific, meaningful, and tangible outcomes of the investments that legislators and the public would be able to support. NASS also discussed that the investments should align with the Department’s five-year strategic plan as well as with input from the superintendents to inform outyears beyond the current plan. The third step of the process is identifying sources of funding for additional investments into education.

Member Jensen noted that NASS now has a standing agenda item to address this topic and at their May 5th meeting will discuss developing a subcommittee to support this three-step approach.

Member Mark Mathers noted that there are two main issues school districts are struggling: staffing levels and compensation levels. Member Mathers noted that in terms of staffing levels, Assembly Bill (AB) 266 (2021) requires school districts to identify the additional staffing needed to meet State-recommended class size ratios by February of odd numbered years, which are currently 15:1 for grades K-3 and 25:1 for grades 4-12. Member Mathers noted that both compensation and staffing levels should be key points in building justification to support a funding increase.

Chair Hobbs noted the importance of NASS supporting the Commission to address questions about how

additional funding would be invested and what the return on investment would be.

In order to address this question, Member Johnson suggested that a study should be conducted by a neutral and independent entity to determine how best to strategically invest in classrooms, weights, and student support services.

6. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING MESSAGING RELATED TO OPTIMAL FUNDING

Member Punam Mathur reported that the informal work group is prepared to begin speaking with stakeholders to generate support for the recommendations forthcoming from the Commission in August. Member Mathur noted that the work group is developing a plan to determine which stakeholders the messaging related to optimal funding will be delivered to as well as in which order to deliver the message. She noted that the work group previously reported on the Guinn Center's research to examine student achievement over the past five years. The work group is \$2,000 short of meeting the \$32,000 fundraising goal to fund the research. The work group aspired to identify a diverse group of funders and so far, the funds have been supplied by ten different groups.

7. DISCUSSION REGARDING OPTIMAL FUNDING

Chair Hobbs noted that he and members Joyce Woodhouse and Punam Mathur will have a conversation with Senator Dina Neal and members of the Legislative Counsel Bureau to broach the subject of broadening the sales tax base. He noted that the Commission is not the only group in the State looking for ways to enhance revenue.

Member Mathur requested that the Commission Members make suggestions of key stakeholders, influencers, and policy makers in their respective communities that should be engaged in ongoing work related to optimal funding.

Member Jensen asked if the Commission would be comfortable with Members meeting with key stakeholders and influencers such as the Rotary Club on behalf of the Commission. Chair Hobbs, Member Woodhouse, and Member Johnson agreed. Member Goudie noted that it is important to have consistent talking points.

8. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING METHODOLOGIES FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO PROPOSE BUDGETARY SUPPORT FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND FOOD SERVICES AND FUNDED THROUGH THE PUPIL-CENTERED FUNDING PLAN

Member Mathers provided a PowerPoint presentation from the informal auxiliary services work group regarding the [Recommendations for Funding of Auxiliary Services](#).

Deputy Superintendent Haartz shared that the Department had not had the opportunity to review the recommendations put forth by the work group prior to the presentation. She noted that the State funding match for the national school lunch program was transferred to the Department of Agriculture during the last Legislative Session. Member Nancy Brune asked if the recommendation would need to be adjusted to include the Department of Agriculture instead of NDE. Deputy Superintendent Haartz responded that if the recommendation moves forward, NDE would partner with subject matter experts from the Department of Agriculture.

Member Johnson noted that there is a difference between transportation capital and operating costs and suggested a factor for replenishing transportation through the operating side to make it more consistent with the way that school districts fund transportation.

Member Feuling noted that he does not believe that option A regarding capital funding for transportation costs is reasonable in terms of the burden it would put on NDE. He further asked if option B would generate enough funds to finance the cost of a bus on an annual basis for rural districts. Member Mathers responded that option B allows smaller districts to front the cost of a bus and wait for reimbursement.

Member Goudie noted that he does not disagree with splitting capital and operating costs for transportation for a number of reasons but expressed concern with requiring the capital piece to only be used for capital each year because of the reporting requirements. He agreed with the funding mechanism being separated for operating capital, but the requirement to spend in two different buckets may not be the appropriate solution. He suggested providing districts flexibility in spending and noted that when calculating the number of buses, the Commission should consider the reserve necessary for busses that are going to be in maintenance as well as the different types of buses districts may need.

Deputy Superintendent Haartz asked if the funds for capital costs for transportation would be allocated through the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan (PCFP) waterfall. Member Mathers responded that transportation would be allocated through the PCFP waterfall, but broken out into two separate buckets: one for transportation operating and one for transportation capital.

Member Mathur asked if there is a recommendation around when and how these options would be implemented. Member Mathers responded no, the goal was to clarify the concepts and avoid confusion and then work through implementation.

Chair Hobbs asked what the time sensitivity is on getting closure on the items that are part of the letter of intent from the Legislature. Deputy Superintendent Haartz responded that the response to the letter of intent is due to the Interim Finance Committee no later than August 31, 2022.

Member Goudie moved to adopt Option A recommended component for Food Services Operating and Capital costs from the [Funding of Auxiliary Services Presentation](#). Member Mathur seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The Commission decided to continue the conversation regarding transportation operating and capital costs at the May meeting.

9. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING FUNDING FOR ONLINE SCHOOLS

Beau Bennett, Management Analyst IV, Student Investment Division, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding [Online School Survey Results](#).

Member Mathur asked the total number of online students from school districts and the total number of online students in charter schools. Mr. Bennett responded that there are 1,701 district students and 4,352 charter school students. Member Mathur noted that currently the 1,701 district students receive a higher per pupil amount than the 4,352 charter students and confirmed that the decision point is to create parity between them by lowering the district per pupil amount. Mr. Bennett replied that district students receive the adjusted base amount, and the charters receive the Statewide base amount.

Member Goudie expressed concern with the difference between a pure online school and a school district that adopts an online model to meet the needs of the district and the costs may not necessarily be comparable. Member Goudie stated that if the online model is not a school's primary mode of operation, the cost structure is different.

Member Brune moved to fund district and charter virtual students at the Statewide base amount. Member Dusty Casey seconded. Members Brune, Casey, Goudie, Hobbs, Mathur, McIntosh, and Woodhouse voted in support. Members Feuling, Jensen, Johnson, and Mathers voted in opposition. Motion passed 7 to 4.

10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Hobbs noted the following agenda items stemming from the conversations during the meeting:

- Continuation of the auxiliary services discussion
- Update on the work of external subject matter experts
- Discussion regarding messaging related to optimal funding
- Discussion on funding need with continued input from NASS

Member Johnson requested a discussion comparing the group of students identified as at-risk based on different eligibility standards.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT #2

No public comment.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 12:16 P.M.

APPENDIX A: STATEMENTS GIVEN DURING PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Jenny Hunt, Director, Mariposa Language and Learning Academy, provided public comment regarding the definition of “At-Risk”

APPENDIX A, ITEM 1: JENNY HUNT

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission.

My name is Jenny Hunt and on behalf of the 176 students who attend Mariposa Language and Learning Academy and their families, I sincerely thank you for your service on this commission.

I wanted to follow up on public comment you received at your last Commission meeting from Educate Nevada Now regarding the new definition of “At Risk”, to be used to determine which students are identified to receive the “At Risk” weight in the Pupil Centered Funding Formula.

A small group of us have since looked closely at the factors contained in the Infinite Campus based algorithm, and we have questions and concerns that we want to place on the record with you and will bring forth to other education bodies as well. We appreciate the assistance of the NV Department of Education staff in taking a deeper look at this.

Our inquiries are at four levels. First, is the overall philosophy that appears to underlie the At Risk formula. It appears to be a deficit model, where schools will identify students as “At Risk” through deficits, such as absenteeism, and get funding credits for those deficits. That could act as a counter measure from schools seeking to rectify those deficits. The Nevada Framework, aka Report Card, focuses on positive aspects of schools to receive stars, this focuses on negative and seems to be contradictory.

Second, is many of the 75 measures themselves. How is this data captured? Will it require new rounds of daily data input by our teachers? WCSD sponsored charters do not input the same data as neighborhood schools, and we have limits to our access from our schools to WCSD data sets. Another example is the percentile scores on assessments – is that the first, second, or third time the student takes or retakes the assessment – how will Infinite Campus know?

Third is the applicability to the public charter school model. For example, 6 of the 75 measures are based upon attendance, including tardies. Most charter schools do not offer transportation; thus, we may choose to be somewhat flexible in how we count attendance and tardies, in order to not penalize and shame families doing the best they can. There are many other criteria that may not be appropriate measures for public charters based upon the ways we seek success for our students, yet many of us have a majority of our students who are from low income families.

Finally, many of these measures appear to be most appropriate at the high school level, and others starting in middle school. How will we ensure that elementary age students who warrant “At Risk funding” be recognized by this formula?

We also share the concern Educate Nevada Now raised about serving many fewer students, and how the reporting will be managed.

Again, thank you for your hard work on this Commission and for your time this morning