

**NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NEVADA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
SEPTEMBER 30, 2021
2:00 PM**

Office	Address	City	Meeting
Department of Education	2080 E. Flamingo	Las	Room 114
Department of Education	700 E. Fifth St.	Carson	Board
Department of Education	Virtual/Livestrea	n/a	n/a

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Felicia Ortiz, President
 Dr. René Cantú
 Katie Coombs
 Dr. Katherine Dockweiler
 Russell Fecht
 Tamara Hudson
 Tim Hughes
 Mark Newburn, Vice President
 Christina Nguyen
 Mike Walker

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT

Jhone M. Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction
 Dr. Jonathan Moore, Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement
 Heidi Haartz, Deputy Superintendent for Student Investment
 Felicia Gonzales, Deputy Superintendent for Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement
 Jessica Todtman, Chief Strategy Officer
 Jeff Briske, Director, Office of Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement (EDLiFE)
 Craig Statucki, Director, Office of Career Readiness, Adult Learning, and Education Options (CRALEO)
 Peter Zutz, Administrator, Office of Assessment, Data, and Accountability Management (ADAM)
 Dr. Patrick Bell, Education Programs Supervisor, ADAM
 Mike Pacheco, Education Programs Supervisor, ADAM
 Mary Holsclaw, Education Programs Professional, Standards and Instructional Support
 Kaitlin Lewallen, Education Programs Professional, Office of Early Learning and Development
 Tina Statucki, Education Programs Professional, EDLiFE

LEGAL STAFF PRESENT

David Gardner, Senior Deputy Attorney General

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE

Hawah Ahmed, Clark County Education Association
 Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association
 SyriSSa Jolley, Mack Lyon Elementary School
 Kenneth Paul, Mack Lyon Elementary School

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

Meeting called to order at 2:01 P.M. by President Felicia Ortiz. Quorum was established. President Ortiz led the Pledge of Allegiance and provided a land acknowledgement.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT #1

Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association, provided comment regarding agenda item 7. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Kenneth Paul, Principal, Mack Lyon Middle School, provided public comment regarding the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan (PCFP). *(A summary of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Syrissa Jolley, School Organizational Team, Mack Lyon Middle School, provided public comment regarding the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan (PCFP). *(A summary of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

3. APPROVAL OF FLEXIBLE AGENDA

Vice President Mark Newburn moved to approve a flexible agenda. Member René Cantú seconded. Motion passed.

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Ortiz celebrated Brooke Wheatly, a teacher at Valley High School in Clark County School District (CCSD), who has been named the 2021 Nevada History Teacher of the Year. The History Teacher of the Year award is presented annually by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, the nation's leading organization dedicated to K-12 American history education.

The Nevada Department of Education also launched the first competition for Early Childhood Educator of the Year. Kaitlin Farley Cortest, a pre-Kindergarten teacher in Washoe County, and Avis Moore, who works at the University of Nevada, Reno's Early Head Start Program, were both recipients of the inaugural award.

Finally, the 2022 Nevada State Teacher of the Year was awarded to Deanne Moyle-Hicks of Natchez Elementary School in Washoe County School District, a fourth-grade teacher. A guest on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Reservation, Ms. Hicks has served northern Nevada students for 28 years. Ms. Hicks advocates for education that embraces and empowers all students of diverse cultures.

5. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Jhone Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction, reported that on September 13, the U.S. Department of Education approved Nevada's State Plan for American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds. The plan was informed by extensive stakeholder engagement, and its approval results in the release of the final 1/3 of ARP ESSER funds, bringing the total amount of relief funding for K-12 education in Nevada to over \$1.5 billion. With each round of funding, 90% was distributed directly to local education agencies based on their Title I allocation, and 10% was reserved for NDE. The Department has been working to expand and deepen initiatives related to equity and access and strengthen Statewide systems.

One highlight of the use of our State federal relief funds is NDE's partnership with DonorsChoose. The Department allocated \$8 million of federal relief funds to support 10,000 educator projects of up to \$800 of classroom resources; DonorsChoose donated \$1.7 million to cover processing fees and operating costs to implement the program. Projects submitted for consideration must align with Nevada Content Standards or align with the priorities established for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Providing an update on the work of the Commission on School Funding, Superintendent Ebert shared that the implementation of the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan began in July 2021, and the Commission is continuing conversations regarding monitoring implementation and optimal funding. Commission Chair Dr. Karlene McCormick-Lee stepped down from her role in August, and Guy Hobbs, who had previously served as Vice Chair, has been appointed by the Governor as the new Chair.

Finally, three Nevada schools were recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as National Blue Ribbon Schools: Charlotte Hill Elementary School and Frank Lamping Elementary School of Clark County School District were recognized for Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing, while Pinecrest Academy of Nevada Inspirada, sponsored by the State Public Charter School Authority, was recognized as an Exemplary High Performing School.

Member Tim Hughes asked how the outcomes and impacts of individual DonorsChoose projects would be assessed. Superintendent Ebert responded that reporting would be provided by DonorsChoose as well as that the Department is working with the University of Utah Education Policy Center to assess the impacts of our investments and initiatives under the umbrella of COVID-19 relief.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

The possible approval of Social Studies Instructional Materials, item 6(b)(i) was pulled from the agenda. **Member Hughes moved to approve the consent agenda. Member Katherine Dockweiler seconded. Motion passed.**

7. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR THE 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR

Peter Zutz, Administrator, Office of Assessment, Data, and Accountability Management; Dr. Patrick Bell, Education Programs Supervisor, ADAM; and Mike Pacheco, Education Programs Supervisor, ADAM, provided a PowerPoint presentation to the Board regarding the [2020-21 Statewide Assessment Results](#).

Superintendent Ebert noted that Nevada applied for and received a federal assessment waiver for assessments and accountability requirements in the 2019-20 school year. In the 2020-21 school year, certain accountability requirements such as the 95% assessment participation requirement were waived, but federally required assessments still had to be administered. The data from these assessments will drive how districts and the Department will use federal funds to continue to support students and educators moving forward.

Member Tamara Hudson asked about the scores of students who identify as Black as well as students who identify as Black and who are differently abled. Dr. Bell clarified that for reporting, students may be reported in one category for race/ethnicity and counted separately with regard to their status as English learners, students with disabilities, migrant status, etc. The data as presented do not reflect student outcomes across categories. Member Dockweiler noted that race/ethnicity is still a factor for students with disabilities, and another category for possible expansion include the 13 disability categories. Mr. Zutz stated he would look into the Board's comments as well as clarified that all outcomes reporting is in alignment with federal requirements for disaggregation.

Vice President Newburn asked if the ACT participation rate was different from prior years. Mr. Zutz noted that administration in both 2018-19 and 2020-21 had met the minimum federal 95% participation requirement. Vice President Newburn asked if the SBAC was administered as usual. Mr. Zutz noted that Nevada proceeded with administration of all assessments along the same lines as previous non-pandemic years, however there were differences in participation rates that affect the validity of comparing data across years.

Vice President Newburn asked how to make SBAC data meaningful since relatively few students took the test. Mr. Zutz responded that to understand the data, we need to understand who didn't test; while we have some of that information, initial data is being gathered to provide further insight. Superintendent Ebert added that the concerns raised by Vice President Newburn were the main reason the data is not being used for accountability purposes. She noted that many organizations, including the Nevada Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, are publishing reports regarding opportunity and learning gaps as a result of the pandemic. This data must then be used to drive how we invest and target our federal relief funds.

Member Christina Nguyen stated that the ACT testing date was the single day that many students were allowed on campus and noted that she was unaware that students with disabilities also had to take the ACT as a graduation requirement. Mr. Pacheco clarified that there is a separate exam for the 1% of students who have the most severe disabilities, but the remainder of students with disabilities did have to take the regular assessment, though there is no outcome requirement or cut score for students. Member Mike Walker emphasized that SBAC was just one point of data, and that we should be looking for wider measures that provide more data points to develop a portrait of student outcomes. Member Russell Fecht stated that entering a third school year affected by COVID-19, the struggles students and schools have faced are not unexpected, and some of the trends we see may not be indicative of a deeper pattern; there is much more going on with our students and educators than what is reflected in these data points.

Member Hughes highlighted that the overall proficiency rates are alarming, and that deeper data analysis may help develop actionable next steps. He asked why participation rates for SBAC were so low in Clark County School District (CCSD) – Superintendent Ebert clarified that students were 100% virtual in CCSD until March 1st, while most other districts had some or all students learning in school buildings the entire school year. Member Cantú also emphasized the proficiency rate shortcomings. Member Hudson noted the need for greater sharing across districts to support best practices and better solutions. Member Dockweiler asked how the ACT was funded, and Mr. Zutz confirmed the assessment is paid for out of the State general fund, not district funds.

8. INFORMATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE TEACH NEVADA SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Jeff Briske, Director, Office of Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement, provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding the [Teach Nevada Scholarship Awards](#). Member Hughes noted that he would abstain from the discussion and vote as his organization and employer run a teacher preparation program that has applied for this scholarship.

President Ortiz asked for additional detail regarding the carryover dollars. Mr. Briske stated that awards are compiled in early spring to recruit students, but the exact allocation is not always known so the carryover cannot be predicted. Funding is handled conservatively as the number of graduating students is unknown. Twenty-seven awards made by the Board went unused, leading to approximately \$650,000 in carryover. Vice President Newburn if performance metrics or success rates were tracked post-award. Mr. Briske stated that 2015-17 awardees were not entitled to their 25% hold-back position, but as those applications are submitted for future cohorts, their teaching record will be reviewed. Member Hudson stated that she was a product of this program.

Member Cantú moved to approve the 250 Teach Nevada Scholarship Awards for the 2022 Cohort. Member Hudson seconded. Motion passed. Member Hughes abstained.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Member Dockweiler requested an update regarding ratios for school specialized instructional support personnel. Member Hughes requested further work regarding the development of the Board's interim goals and progress monitoring. Members Cantú and Newburn supported opportunities to better understand the roles and responsibilities of Department staff and other Board members within education.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT #2

Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association, provided public comment regarding Assembly Bill 57. *(A summary of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

John Carlo provided public comment regarding education. *(A summary of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Lorena Cardenas provided public comment regarding education. *(A summary of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

11. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 3:50 P.M.

APPENDIX A: STATEMENTS GIVEN DURING PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association, provided public comment regarding agenda item 7.
2. Kenneth Paul, Principal, Mack Lyon Middle School, provided public comment regarding the PCFP.
3. Syrissa Jolley, School Organization Team, Mack Lyon Middle School, provided public comment regarding the PCFP.
4. Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association, provided public comment regarding Assembly Bill 57.
5. John Carlo provided public comment regarding education.
6. Lorena Cardenas provided public comment regarding education.

APPENDIX A, ITEM 1: CHRIS DALY

The Nevada State Education Association has been the voice of Nevada educators for over 120 years. We are commenting on agenda item 7 regarding statewide assessment results for last school year.

As reported in the Nevada Independent, “Nevada students’ mathematics and English Language Arts skills tumbled since the pandemic began... exceeding national downward trends.” This reporting was in contrast to a press release from the Superintendent’s office downplaying the statewide test results.

Over the years, NSEA has frequently raised concerns about an over-reliance on standardized tests that have shifted the focus in the classroom away from student learning toward a culture of high-stakes testing. We have been actively working to reduce the burden of standardized testing, including whole-heartedly supporting SB83, which would have authorized a temporary waiver on mandated student assessments during the COVID-19 pandemic and SB353 requiring a review student assessments. Standardized tests have failed to foster the improvements in student achievement they were intended to deliver, and we believe education administrators place far too great importance on test results at the expense of actual feedback from classroom educators.

With that said, reading from the Independent, “Nationally, the ELA proficiency rate dipped 5 to 6 percentile points for elementary students, but the declines were even sharper in Nevada (10 to 11 percentile points). A similar trend occurred with math proficiency rates: The national dip for elementary students was 11 to 12 percentile points, while, in Nevada, the downward slip was 15 to 19 percentile points. State education officials, however, pointed out that Nevada’s declines would be in line with national trends if excluding Clark County School District scores.” (The Clark County School District educates about 320,000 students or about 2/3 of all Nevada students, including overwhelming majorities of Nevada’s at-risk students, English learners, and students with disabilities.)

In July, this Board adopted its vision and goals to support student success. Your first goal was to reach the top 10 in Education Week’s K-12 Achievement Index. Superintendent Ebert even said, “Nevada typically receives a negative perception in national rankings, but our student achievement levels continue to increase year-over-year. We are proud that our students have attained the 18th ranking nationally and are committed to supporting them in equitable achievement gains in the coming years.”

Setting aside that Nevada ranks near the bottom in just about every other education metric, including overall education quality, Nevada’s reversion on test scores indicates we are likely to freefall in this cherry-picked metric in the coming years. This is even more apparent when we consider the successful interventions like Zoom and Victory schools and early literacy supports, largely responsible for past improvement, have been defunded. Perhaps the Board could revise your goal to stay out of the bottom 10 in this one metric.

APPENDIX A, ITEM 2: KENNETH PAUL

Principal Paul stated that five years ago, the focus was on proportionality regarding what percentage of dollars would go to a rural school, as it typically costs more money per-pupil. There has been confusion under the PCFP regarding rural schools allocation, specifically regarding checks and balances. Principal Paul asked that this be reexamined. In the rural school model, the calculations for the percentage above the average per-pupil only includes staffing and supplies, not SLA dollars, and the overall application of the percentage for each rural have issues. He requested that the proportionality be 19.3% for the next school year so that rural schools are not shorted funds.

APPENDIX A, ITEM 3: SYRISSA JOLLEY

Ms. Jolley emphasized the importance of rural allocations under the PCFP, as the loss of a single teacher may equate to the loss of an entire program in a rural school.

APPENDIX A, ITEM 4: CHRIS DALY

Mr. Daly stated that Assembly Bill 57 (2021) pauses the use of student learning goals (SLGs) in terms of use in teacher evaluations. The intent of the bill is to give educators a break during this difficult time; SLGs were paused until the 2023-24 school year and reflect 0% of a teachers evaluations until then. Reasons for doing this include the unprecedented times, changing instructional models, illness and inclusion, assessment, stress, etc., and that this should be a time of support and flexibility. It was disappointing and deflating when the Department sent a memo in August encouraging districts to continue developing SLGs, although it was not required. As such, many districts are requiring teachers to do SLGs this year, a burden that teachers do not need. He asked for reconsideration.

APPENDIX A, ITEM 5: JOHN CARLO

Mr. Carlo opened his comment period with prayer. He reported that grades are going down and critical race theory is in the assembly bills; that Clark County School District is promoting Chinese nationalism and American patriotism is being discouraged; that money was disappearing from the district; and that steps should be taken until teachers and students improve.

APPENDIX A, ITEM 6: LORENA CARDENAS

Ms. Cardenas began her comment regarding a new grading policy undertaken by Clark County School District; President Ortiz noted that the Board does not have jurisdiction over this matter. Ms. Cardenas reported that school libraries are carrying inappropriate and sexually graphic books in their libraries, such as “the Lawn Boy,” which is a danger to students. She emphasized the importance of focusing on education fundamentals.