

Agenda Item 10: Discussion Around SB475's 'Consideration of Class Size' and Additional Business Rules

SB 475 Sec. 4. NRS 391.465 is hereby amended to read as follows:

1. The State Board shall, based upon the recommendations of the Teachers and Leaders Council of Nevada submitted pursuant to NRS 391.460, adopt regulations establishing a statewide performance evaluation system which incorporates multiple measures of an employee's performance. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 3, the State Board shall prescribe the tools to be used by a school district for obtaining such measures.
2. The statewide performance evaluation system must:
 - (a) Require that an employee's overall performance is determined to be:
 - (1) Highly effective;
 - (2) Effective;
 - (3) Developing; or
 - (4) Ineffective.
 - (b) Include the criteria for making each designation identified in paragraph (a) [.] , which must include, without limitation, consideration of whether the classes for which the employee is responsible exceed the applicable recommended ratios of pupils per licensed teacher prescribed by the State Board pursuant to NRS 388.890 and, if so, the degree to which the ratios affect:
 - (1) The ability of the employee to carry out his or her professional responsibilities; and
 - (2) The instructional practices of the employee.

NRS 388.890 State Board to establish recommendations for ratio of pupils per teacher in each grade.

1. The State Board shall develop nonbinding recommendations for the ratio of pupils per licensed teacher in the public schools of this State for kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive. The board of trustees of each school district shall consider the recommendations in establishing the ratio of pupils per licensed teacher in the school district.
2. The recommendations developed by the State Board must:
 - (a) Prescribe a suggested ratio of pupils per licensed teacher for each classroom and course of instruction, except choir, orchestra and band, in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive;
 - (b) Be based on evidence-based national standards; and
 - (c) Take into account the unique needs of certain pupils, including, without limitation, pupils who are English learners.
3. Nothing in this section shall be deemed to relieve a school district of its obligation to comply with the requirements of NRS 388.700 and 388.720, as applicable to the school district.
4. As used in this section, "English learner" has the meaning ascribed to it in 20 U.S.C. § 7801(20). (Added to NRS by 2017, 1158)

Additional Statutes Regarding Class Size Reduction

NRS 388.700 Reduction of ratio in certain grades; request for variance required for each school quarter under certain circumstances; quarterly report on variances submitted to Interim Finance Committee; additional reports by State Board and Department; exception to requirements for charter schools and distance education.

1. Except as otherwise provided in this section, for each school quarter of a school year, the ratio in each school district of pupils per licensed teacher designated to teach, on a full-time basis, in classes where core curriculum is taught:

(a) In kindergarten and grades 1 and 2, must not exceed 16 to 1, and in grade 3, must not exceed 18 to 1; or

(b) If a plan is approved pursuant to subsection 3 of NRS 388.720, must not exceed the ratio set forth in that plan for the grade levels specified in the plan.

In determining this ratio, all licensed educational personnel who teach a grade level specified in paragraph (a) or a grade level specified in a plan that is approved pursuant to subsection 3 of NRS 388.720, as applicable for the school district, must be counted except teachers of art, music, physical education or special education, teachers who teach one or two specific subject areas to more than one classroom of pupils, and counselors, librarians, administrators, deans and specialists.

2. A school district may, within the limits of any plan adopted pursuant to NRS 388.720, assign a pupil whose enrollment in a grade occurs after the end of a quarter during the school year to any existing class regardless of the number of pupils in the class if the school district requests and is approved for a variance from the State Board pursuant to subsection 4.

3. Each school district that includes one or more elementary schools which exceed the ratio of pupils per class during any quarter of a school year, as reported to the Department pursuant to NRS 388.725:

(a) Set forth in subsection 1;

(b) Prescribed in conjunction with a legislative appropriation for the support of the class-size reduction program; or

(c) Defined by a legislatively approved alternative class-size reduction plan, if applicable to that school district, must request a variance for each such school for the next quarter of the current school year if a quarter remains in that school year or for the next quarter of the succeeding school year, as applicable, from the State Board by providing a written statement that includes the reasons for the request and the justification for exceeding the applicable prescribed ratio of pupils per class.

4. The State Board may grant to a school district a variance from the limitation on the number of pupils per class set forth in paragraph (a), (b) or (c) of subsection 3 for good cause, including the lack of available financial support specifically set aside for the reduction of pupil-teacher ratios.

5. The State Board shall, on a quarterly basis, submit a report to the Interim Finance Committee on each variance requested by a school district pursuant to subsection 4 during the preceding quarter and, if a variance was granted, an identification of each elementary school for which a variance was granted and the specific justification for the variance.

6. The State Board shall, on or before February 1 of each odd-numbered year, submit a report to the Legislature on:

(a) Each variance requested by a school district pursuant to subsection 4 during the preceding biennium and, if a variance was granted, an identification of each elementary school for which variance was granted and the specific justification for the variance.

(b) The data reported to it by the various school districts pursuant to subsection 2 of NRS 388.710, including an explanation of that data, and the current pupil-teacher ratios per class in the grade levels specified in paragraph (a) of subsection 1 or the grade levels specified in a plan that is approved pursuant to subsection 3 of NRS 388.720, as applicable for the school district.

7. The Department shall, on or before November 15 of each year, report to the Chief of the Budget Division of the Office of Finance and the Fiscal Analysis Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau:

(a) The number of teachers employed;

(b) The number of teachers employed in order to attain the ratio required by subsection 1;

(c) The number of pupils enrolled; and

(d) The number of teachers assigned to teach in the same classroom with another teacher or in any other arrangement other than one teacher assigned to one classroom of pupils, during the current school year in the grade levels specified in paragraph (a) of subsection 1 or the grade levels specified in a plan that is approved pursuant to subsection 3 of NRS 388.720, as applicable, for each school district.

8. The provisions of this section do not apply to a charter school or to a program of distance education provided pursuant to NRS 388.820 to 388.874, inclusive.

(Added to NRS by 1989, 2105; A 1993, 1362; 1995, 2820; 1999, 3312; 2001, 3157; 2005, 1264, 2161; 2013, 27th Special Session, 32; 2015, 3727)

NRS 388.720 Development of plan by school district to reduce pupil-teacher ratios; alternative ratios for certain grades authorized in certain counties.

1. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 2, each school district together with the recognized associations representing licensed educational personnel shall develop a plan to reduce the district's pupil-teacher ratio per class in kindergarten and grades 1, 2 and 3 within the limits of available financial support specifically set aside for this purpose and submit that plan to the State Board.

2. In lieu of complying with the pupil-teacher ratio prescribed in paragraph (a) of subsection 1 of NRS 388.700, a school district in a county whose population is less than 100,000 may, in consultation with the recognized associations representing licensed educational personnel, develop a plan to reduce the district's pupil-teacher ratios per class for specified grade levels in elementary schools. Alternative ratios for grade 6 may only be approved for those school districts that include grade 6 in elementary school. The alternative pupil-teacher ratios must not:

(a) Exceed 22 to 1 in grades 1, 2 and 3; and

(b) Exceed 25 to 1 in grades 4 and 5 or grades 4, 5 and 6, as applicable.

3. The State Board shall approve a plan submitted pursuant to subsection 2 if the plan:

(a) Reduces the district's pupil-teacher ratio in the elementary schools within the school district; and

(b) Is fiscally neutral such that the plan will not cost more to carry out than a plan that complies with the ratios prescribed in paragraph (a) of subsection 1 of NRS 388.700.

(Added to NRS by 1989, 2106; A 1991, 1605; 2005, 2163)