

**NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
APRIL 30, 2020
9:00 A.M.**

Meeting Location

Due to the circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the State Board of Education met via videoconference. In accordance with Governor Sisolak's State of Emergency Directive 006, Section 1, no physical location was designated for this meeting. The meeting was livestreamed on the Nevada Department of Education's (NDE) website.

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Via Videoconference

Cathy McAdoo
Dawn Miller
Elaine Wynn
Felicia Ortiz
Katherine Dockweiler
Kevin Melcher
Mark Newburn
Robert Blakely
Rui Ya Wang
Tamara Hudson
Teri White

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT

In Las Vegas

Jhone Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Felicia Gonzales, Deputy Superintendent of Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement
Jessica Todtman, Chief Strategy Officer

In Carson City

Heidi Haartz, Deputy Superintendent of Business and Support Services
Dr. Jonathan Moore, Deputy Superintendent of Student Achievement
Terri Hendry, Public Information Officer II
Sarah Nick, Management Analyst III
Amber Reid, Education Programs Professional

Via Videoconference

Craig Statucki, Director of Career Readiness, Adult Learning & Educational Options
Jeff Briske, Education Programs Professional

LEGAL STAFF PRESENT

David Gardner, Deputy Attorney General

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE

Via Livestream

1: CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Meeting called to order at 9:13 A.M. by President Elaine Wynn. Quorum was established. President Wynn led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4: PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Wynn remarked that this meeting would be especially sobering, as nothing had previously come before the Board as consequential as the circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic. President Wynn expressed appreciation for Board members and the work they have done together while trying to represent a variety of constituencies. She said that despite the heroic efforts of educators and families, the public school system has been destabilized due to the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis. President Wynn stated that student learning gaps have widened; there will be increased need for mental health and wellness interventions, and need for ongoing access to services, including food. She remarked that a generation of students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health hang in the balance. The return to school will be impacted by the work being done currently and abiding by instructions from public health and political leaders. Superintendent Ebert and the Department of Education have worked tirelessly to coordinate with State, federal, and district leadership to accommodate conditions and needs. President Wynn encouraged the Board Members to continue seeking information and expressing opinions, while remaining mindful of the Department's current workload; when the Board adjourns today, the Department's work to support districts, schools, students, and educators will continue.

2: PUBLIC COMMENT #1

Public comment was submitted via email and read into the record by the Secretary to the Board.

Emma Dickinson, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, submitted public comment regarding agenda item 10, Non-Binding Recommended Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Kathryn Mead, Director of Guidance and Counseling, Clark County School District, submitted public comment regarding agenda item 10, Non-Binding Recommended Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Stephanie Patton, President-Elect, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, submitted public comment regarding agenda item 10, Non-Binding Recommended Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

The Nevada School Counselor Association submitted public comment regarding agenda item 10, Non-Binding Recommended Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Rebecca Garcia, Nevada PTA, submitted public comment regarding the Path Forward Plan. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Shiloh Crawford submitted public comment regarding the Path Forward Plan. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Calen Evans, Empower Nevada Teachers, submitted public comment regarding the Path Forward Plan. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

The Nevada State Education Association submitted public comment regarding the Commission on School Funding. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

3: APPROVAL OF FLEXIBLE AGENDA

Vice President Mark Newburn moved to approve the flexible agenda. Member Robert Blakely seconded. Motion passed.

5: SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Ebert commended the work of educators and families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and thanked the staff of the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) for their dedication in supporting school communities.

Recapping the recent history of guidance provided to support districts and schools in responding to COVID-19 and the school building closures since her update during the March 12, 2020 Board meeting, Superintendent Ebert outlined the following:

- March 15th, Governor Steve Sisolak announced schools would close beginning March 16th, and the closures have since been extended through the end of the school year; Emergency Directive 005 was drafted and outlined the essential nature of schools, provided directives on distance learning, including expanding the definition of distance education to include paper correspondence, and suspended assessments. School districts have worked diligently to have two-way communication with their students since March 23rd; some districts were on spring break at that time, and once they returned began their emergency distance education program.
- April 14th, Emergency Directive 014 was issued and allowed the Superintendent of Public Instruction to waive or suspend provisions which would place an undue burden on students' ability to graduate high school on-time; work-based learning plan amendments were permitted upon approval of the State Board of Education, and the Regional Professional Development Programs began reporting to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Addressing graduation, the Civics Assessment was waived for SY19-20.
- Various guidance memos were issued, including clarity on assessments and accountability in light of federal and State waivers; for example, schools will keep their School Year (SY) 2019-20 designations for SY20-21, such as Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI). NDE also requested flexibility from the U.S. Department of Education regarding federal grants.
- On April 29th, NDE released the *Path Forward Plan*, which includes a history of the Department's COVID-19 response and the next steps to navigate the remainder of the SY19-20 and prepare for SY20-21.
- Regarding funding, NDE recently submitted its application for approximately \$117 million in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds that were allocated to the state of Nevada, 90% of which will go to school districts.

Superintendent Ebert talked through the key elements of the [*Path Forward Plan*](#).

- NDE's Office of Educator Licensure has adjusted its workflow to continue regular operations throughout the COVID-19 crisis, and guidance has been released regarding licensure flexibility and delays.
- The Path Forward Plan includes the establishment of the Re-Opening of Schools Committee (Committee), which is a technical committee of experts that will create resources to support the health and safety of students, educators, and staff. The Committee will provide a framework for re-opening based on public health data and education emergency operations planning best practices. In response to concerns regarding the role of parents, educators, and other communities on the Committee, Superintendent Ebert used the metaphor of fire safety: when addressing the fire exits of a building, it is done by the experts who know the safest way out of the building, rather than the community.
- The Re-Opening Committee will provide guidelines based on the expertise of epidemiologists, psychologists, district superintendents, school administrators, and charter school leaders, and will be informed by feedback from educators and parents. The Committee's charge is designed to support locally developed, prioritized essential actions determined by each individual district and charter school. Local school districts know best how to respond to their unique community needs. The Re-Opening Committee will begin meeting on May 1, 2020.

- The Nevada Digital Learning Collaborative will provide resources for educators and families regarding access to technology, high-quality professional development, and high-quality instructional materials.

Member Blakely inquired about the gaps in the membership of the Re-Opening Committee; Superintendent Ebert responded that those positions would be updated shortly. Member Felicia Ortiz confirmed that schools would maintain their star rating through SY20-21; she also inquired about teacher evaluations. Superintendent Ebert noted that the majority of teacher evaluations had already been completed before the school building closures went into effect.

Member Ortiz inquired about the reading of public comment submitted regarding the Path Forward Plan; these comments had been mistakenly reserved for public comment period two and were read into the record at this time; they are listed under public comment section one.

President Wynn requested clarification regarding local re-opening committees and how they will include the voices of local constituents, such as educators and parents. Superintendent Ebert noted that the expectations for local committees would be provided in writing to districts, and the Department would ensure that districts are inclusive of their community in their planning for the re-opening of schools.

President Wynn, responding to Member Blakely, noted that a parent appointment on the State Re-Opening of Schools Committee would not be accurately representative, as a parent from Elko would have different concerns and perspectives than a parent from another county; instead, parents would be most effective participating in their local re-opening committees. The Superintendent is committed to parents having a voice and will work to ensure that they are included at the level which they will have the most impact. Member Kevin Melcher supported parental involvement at the local level; Member Cathy McAdoo also agreed. Vice President Newburn clarified that there may be confusion regarding the charge of the Committee given its name, but they will not be the sole the decision makers in re-opening schools; specific implementation details will be with the school districts. President Wynn agreed that renaming the Committee may provide clarification.

Member Ortiz asked what portion of CARES Act funds would be allocated to Social-Emotional Support of children. President Wynn asked that this item be held for agenda item 11, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Member Ortiz inquired if the Re-Opening Committee would determine how the impact of COVID-19 on children would be assessed. Superintendent Ebert noted that the social and mental health of children, and the best avenue to discuss that, would be reviewed with district superintendents. President Wynn noted that the Re-Opening of Schools Committee had not yet had the opportunity to meet and some questions may not yet be answerable; priorities and outcomes would be assessed during the first meeting of the Committee.

Member Ortiz noted that it was important for the State to set an expectation for the districts to identify how the educational and emotional impact of the public health crisis and related school building closures on children will be measured. Vice President Newburn noted that the Committee would be assessing re-opening, specifically when and how schools may re-open safely; he further noted that assessing the educational and emotional impact on children was the role of the Board of Education. President Wynn asked that the Board remain focused on the items under the purview of the Board; the Re-Opening Committee's role was to determine how and when to return to school, not what school will look like at that time.

Member Katherine Dockweiler noted that a standardized assessment may be needed to review impacts consistently across the districts. President Wynn emphasized the importance of being mindful of capacity. Member Dawn Miller inquired if the meetings of the Re-Opening of Schools Committee would be livestreamed; Superintendent Ebert noted it would not be streamed, but regular updates would be provided. Member Ortiz that updates also go out to districts and trustees. Superintendent Ebert noted that she speaks to district superintendents at least weekly and would emphasize the importance of distributing information to their boards.

Superintendent Ebert reported that the Commission on School Funding did not meet in March but did meet in April; they discussed equity adjustments and weights and received a presentation on the blueprint of the Pupil-Centered Funding Formula.

Finally, Superintendent Ebert introduced the Board to two new staff members: Craig Statucki, Director of Career Readiness, Adult Learning & Educational Options, and Terri Hendry, Public Information Officer.

Member Ortiz inquired if the work to compare budgets between the Nevada Plan and the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan, and by extension, understand the impact the new funding plan may have on individual schools, had been completed. Deputy Superintendent Heidi Haartz responded that Senate Bill (SB) 543 requires each school district compare their Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 budgets under the Nevada Plan to the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan (PCFP) and submit to the Commission on School Funding by May 15th. Since the PCFP formula is not completed, school districts have been asked to conduct a modified approach; the comparisons will be presented during the May and June Commission meetings. The PCFP Model will be presented at the May meeting using FY21 data and will then be built with FY22-23 data to include in NDE's agency budget request, which is due on or before September 1, 2020. Specific data can not yet be run for school districts, as data and revenues still need to be validated. Member Ortiz asked when the fully formed model would be complete. Deputy Superintendent Haartz noted that SB 543 implements the PCFP on July 1, 2021. The agency budget request will include data for the Nevada Plan and the PCFP, due on or before September 1, 2020. As soon as the information is available, it will be distributed to the school districts. Some aspects of the comparison and formula are dependent on information provided by the Department of Taxation.

6: APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Member Melcher moved to approve the consent agenda. Member Blakely seconded. Motion passed.

11: INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF, AND ECONOMIC SECURITY (CARES) ACT

Dr. Jonathan Moore, Deputy Superintendent of Student Achievement, conducted a PowerPoint presentation regarding [the CARES Act](#).

Member Ortiz asked how the Department intended to spend the 10% of CARES Act funds that the state educational agency is permitted to use, and how much will be used for social-emotional support. Deputy Superintendent Moore noted the four statewide priorities that the Department had identified for support: access to technological capacity, high-quality professional development, high-quality instructional materials, and the reopening of school buildings. The Department has not determined how they will award funds but are discussing methodologies for such. Regarding social-emotional support, Dr. Moore noted that under the reopening of schools, there could be a request of funds for innovations to pilot or test social-emotional supports or assessments, to provide wraparound services, etc. Dr. Moore noted that funding had not yet been received from the U.S. Department of Education, and there were additional processes needed to make the funds available to districts; the first priority upon receipt of funds would be disbursement to local education agencies (LEAs).

President Wynn if a request for proposal (RFP) process was being considered. Dr. Moore clarified that the 90% distribution to local education agencies would be administered on a formulaic basis. President Wynn asked specifically about the 10% provided to the State and how those funds would be distributed to groups or nonprofits who wanted to apply for those funds. Dr. Moore noted that an RFP was one methodology being considered. President Wynn requested that the Department draft a response for those organizations that were already submitting inquiries, so they may know that there will be an opportunity to submit their requests; Member Ortiz asked that the Board be copied on such responses.

Dr. Moore emphasized that the provision of services was the first priority, which was why the Department would be focusing on the distribution of funds to LEAs. Member Dockweiler asked if the LEA application could incentivize social-emotional priorities. Dr. Moore noted that the LEA allocation would be administered on a formulaic basis, however State funds could prioritize certain funding opportunities.

Member Melcher clarified that CARES Act funding decisions would be made by the Department and not the Board.

Vice President Newburn noted that moving to the digital learning model, a number of students have “disappeared.” He emphasized that in a school, the discussion is about supporting the teacher; in a distance education context, the support needs to be directed towards the parent. He reflected that he hadn’t heard much conversation regarding the support of the parent. President Wynn agreed that the support of parents and digital learning was crucial. Superintendent Ebert noted that the Regional Professional Development Programs have discussed professional development not only for educators, but parents as well. President Wynn asked that support for parents be pulled out of the professional development category and made its own piece for prioritization in funding.

Member Rui Ya Wang supported the emphasis on mental health and having a plan for mental and emotional support for students upon the return to schools was needed. Member Blakely supported adult education, as there would be job displacement due to the pandemic. Dr. Moore emphasized that the funding being distributed to school districts is incredibly flexible, and may be used for social-emotional support, parental engagement, etc. President Wynn noted that she appreciated the flexibility that had been provided in the CARES Act, but in turn great responsibility had to be exercised with that flexibility.

7: INFORMATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING AMENDMENTS TO WORK-BASED LEARNING PLANS

Craig Statucki, Director of Career Readiness, Adult Learning & Education Options, provided an overview of submitted [Work-Based Learning Plan Amendments](#).

Member Ortiz asked why the work-based learning plans varied so widely across districts. Director Statucki noted that Nevada Revised Statutes identify the specific items which must be included in the plan but does not specify the format. Washoe and Clark County School District’s work-based learning plans appear different in format but include the same requirements and material. He noted that when these work-based plans expire, the Department may develop a more consistent format so that when students move between districts, they are working from the same format and held to the same expectations.

Vice President Newburn moved to approve. Member Blakely seconded. Motion passed.

8: INFORMATION, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE STATEWIDE PLAN FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF PUPILS

President Wynn pulled this item from the agenda in light of other pressing issues facing the Department due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

9: INFORMATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF THE TEACH NEVADA SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Jeff Briske, Education Programs Professional, Office of Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement, conducted a PowerPoint regarding [the Teach Nevada Scholarship Awards](#).

Member Ortiz asked for the breakdown between traditional and alternative route to licensure (ARL) awardees; Mr. Briske noted approximately 53 ARL; he noted that for highest return on investment, the Board may want to pursue ARL as they would enter classrooms soonest. Member Ortiz requested information on teacher retention rates from ARL programs; Mr. Briske did not have this information available. President Wynn remarked that there was benefit to distributing all of the funds if there were people qualified to receive it.

Member Ortiz moved to approve the 97 scholarships in the Cohort 21 table and to award additional scholarships to deplete the final balance. Member Blakely seconded. Motion passed.

Convenience Break

10: INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING RATIOS FOR SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Amber Reid, Education Programs Professional, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, conducted a PowerPoint regarding [Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel](#).

Member Melcher expressed that meeting with the workgroup for specialized instructional support personnel (SISP) ratios was a rewarding experience, and he commended the members and their work. Member Dockweiler inquired about the exclusion of occupational and physical therapists, who are service providers under the Every Student Succeeds Act and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as well as ratios for caseloads for speech and language pathologists and annual and biannual reporting for occupational and physical therapists. Ms. Reid responded that district information was gathered for the SISP defined in State law.

Member Dockweiler asked about the recommended ratios and financial requirements, as the ratios do not appear to reflect the students attending charter schools. Ms. Reid noted that the numbers in the presentation are from districts only; many charter schools contract for providers, and there was no way to align the cost accurately. Member Dockweiler expressed concern with adequate staffing.

President Wynn noted that the recommended ratios and the current ratios are vastly different, and this verged on an extraordinary wish list. The Board's recommendation must include the numbers in the categories they would like to adopt; the range of ratios; direct the Department to continue working with stakeholders to develop the 15-year plan; support the development of a representative group of SISP to address shortages; and support sustainability through the Medicaid reimbursement model.

Member Teri White noted that the Board's recommendations are non-binding, and that seeking Medicaid reimbursement is easier in a district such as Clark or Washoe than a smaller district such as Douglas. As such, partnerships may need to be established with districts such as Washoe or Clark for administration of the program. President Wynn also supported community and evidence-based programs.

Member Melcher moved to approve non-binding nationally accepted best-practice ratios for school counselors at 1:250, school psychologists at 1:500; school social workers at 1:250; school nurses at 1:750; and school library media specialist 1: school. Member Dockweiler seconded. Motion passed.

Member Melcher and President Wynn remarked on the importance of social-emotional learning and student wellbeing.

12: FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Member Ortiz requested a presentation from the Teach Plus Fellows on the exit survey they prepared for school districts to identify why teachers are leaving their positions. She noted that understanding if teachers are moving to other schools or districts or leaving the profession altogether would also be important.

Member Ortiz requested a presentation from the Clark County Education Association (CCEA) regarding class size reduction. President Wynn noted that class size reduction now has two fronts: pre-COVID-19 class size reduction, which sought to get classrooms to a manageable size, and post-COVID-19 class size reduction, which needs to align with social distancing measures. She stated that a presentation on the best-case scenario would not benefit the pressing need for class size reduction oriented to the current climate. Member Ortiz emphasized that Bill Draft Requests (BDRs) are due to the Legislature by September for the upcoming Legislative Session, and viable solutions need to be presented. Superintendent Ebert noted that the Department had been working on class size reduction plans with various stakeholders, including CCEA and Nevada Succeeds. The models, while still in progress, may be adaptable in the COVID-19 context. Superintendent Ebert updated the Board regarding the Nevada State Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force, which convened for the first time on April 25th, and will be collaborating with the Department to address issues including class size reduction.

Vice President Newburn requested a formal thank you for educators and the education system, to commend them for the immense work undertaken to adapt to distance learning and COVID-19, an effort he stated he had not before seen in his lifetime. President Wynn seconded the sentiment and expressed hope that communities will have a better understanding and appreciation moving forward of the work that educators do daily. Member Melcher also commended the work of Superintendent Ebert, which President Wynn supported. Member White added that the communications from the Department and Superintendent were among the best she had experienced in her career, and Member McAdoo emphasized Superintendent Ebert's composure and compassion during press briefings. Superintendent Ebert commended her staff for the work being commended and emphasized the critical work of educators in the field.

13: PUBLIC COMMENT #2

Calen Evans, Empower Nevada Teachers, submitted public comment regarding class size reductions. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

14: ADJOURNMENT

Since an item was pulled from the agenda, a vote was required to adjourn the meeting. **Vice President Newburn moved to adjourn the meeting. Member Blakely seconded. Motion passed.**

Meeting adjourned at 12:21 P.M.

Appendix A: Statements Given During Public Comment

1. Emma Dickinson, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, submitted public comment regarding agenda item 10, Non-Binding Recommended Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel.
2. Kathryn Mead, Director of Guidance and Counseling, Clark County School District, spoke regarding agenda item 10, Non-Binding Recommended Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel.
3. Stephanie Patton, President-Elect, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, spoke regarding agenda item 10, Non-Binding Recommended Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel.
4. The Nevada School Counselor Association submitted public comment regarding agenda item 10, Non-Binding Recommended Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel.
5. Rebecca Garcia, Nevada PTA, submitted public comment regarding the Path Forward Plan. Alexander Marks, Nevada State Education Association, spoke regarding Census 2020.
6. Shiloh Crawford submitted public comment regarding the Path Forward Plan.
7. Calen Evans, Empower Nevada Teachers, submitted public comment regarding the Path Forward Plan.
8. The Nevada State Education Association submitted public comment regarding the Commission on School Funding.
9. Calen Evans, Empower Nevada Teachers, submitted public comment regarding class size reductions.

Item A1, Emma Dickinson

Good Morning President Wynn, Superintendent Ebert, and Members of the State Board of Education. This is Emma Dickinson, President of the Nevada Association of School Psychologists, for the record. Thank you so much for your time last month in hearing our support for reducing our ratio to one to no more than 500, and the clear and present urgent needs we face in terms of support for students. The discussion that followed was extremely important, and we were glad to participate in the task force that the board created. We wanted to briefly reiterate NVASP's support of moving quickly to a vote to adopt non-binding ratios of SISPs, including one to no more than 500 School Psychologists. We believe that this will clear the way to set precedent in Nevada as a leader among states for setting the bar high and not letting down our students. We would like to see this come to a vote as soon as feasible and provide some quick resolution to this important issue.

Thank you for your time.

Item A2, Kathryn Mead

Good morning

My name is Kathy Mead and I am the Director of School Counseling for the Clark County School District. As you know, CCSD is the largest school district in the State and employs approximately 675 school counselors. CCSD School Counseling Department enthusiastically supports the Nevada Department of Education's recommendations to reduce ratios for school counselors, school psychologists, and school social workers.

As each of these professions have unique specialized skills to enhance quality instruction and improve conditions for student learning, we firmly believe that the implementation of the national ratio recommendations will lead to a vast improvement in overall outcomes for all Nevada students. Research and evidence based data provided by the American School Counseling Association shows the impact of school counselors on student achievement - which includes students academic success as well as their social-emotional success. What better time than now, living through this COVID 19 pandemic, that we are having these discussions that make it crystal clear that students and families need more school counselors. However, we know at some of our schools the reality is grim - one elementary school counselor for 1000 students cannot serve each student to the best of their ability. What a difference it would make if that one elementary school counselor had 250 students to provide needed mental health, social, academic, and family support in addition to resources enabling all students to be the best they can be. Ensuring that all students succeed should be the mission of every administrator.

With these conversations of reducing ratios - I do want to bring to your attention CCSD opposition regarding Medicaid as a funding source for school counselors. We simply do not fit in the current requirements of the Nevada Plan for billing. If so, school counselors scope of work, licensing ,and supervisory structure comes into jeopardy. These discussions were opposed last year during the legislative session. We support other SISP professionals who do fit in this framework, but school counselors do not. We again request that other funding sources be explored prior to any release to all 17 school districts across the State. One option discussed in the past was opening up the language of the Social Work Block Grant to include school counselors and/or other mental health professionals.

School counselors are certified/licensed educators with a minimum of a master's degree in school counseling, making us uniquely qualified to address *all* students. School counselors are an integral part of collaboration as a team in our schools, working closely with students, families, and school administrators on academic and career achievement as well as social and emotional development.

We thank you for your time and encourage any conversation in the future.

Item A3, Stephanie Patton

Good morning madam president and members of the board. For the record, my name is Stephanie Patton, I am a school psychologist in the Clark County School District and President-Elect of the Nevada Association of School Psychologists. I would like to thank President Wynn and the entire board for your commitment to ensuring Nevada's children receive the school mental health services they need. I was incredibly encouraged by the discussion last month regarding ratios of mental health providers in schools. I would like to stress the importance of moving forward as soon as possible and voting on recommended ratios. School districts will need time and support to develop strategic plans to meet these ratios, and the sooner we can get to work the better!

I also want to emphasize that mental health support will be needed more than ever when we return to school. There has been so much discussion around how we can support children academically given COVID-19 and the transition to online learning. We must also consider the social and emotional impact of the pandemic and how this is going to look upon return. There will most certainly be increases in anxiety and depression among students and staff. There will be children and adults who have lost or almost lost loved ones. Many children may have a very difficult time transitioning after being away so long, emotionally and behaviorally; this will likely be especially true for our children with disabilities. Unfortunately, many of our children will be coming back to school after months of poor living conditions including possible trauma, abuse, and neglect.

We cannot overlook the importance of supporting these children. We know that children cannot learn academically until their basic needs are met and they feel safe and supported. We must ensure we have sufficient mental health supports available and in place for children and staff upon return.

Thank you for your time.

Item A4, Nevada School Counselors Association

Dear Nevada State Board of Education members,

The Nevada School Counselor Association (NvSCA) appreciates its partnership with the Nevada Department of Education, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, and Nevada School Social Work Association to work collaboratively to reduce ratios of school-based mental health professionals.

According to a press release dated April 14, 2020, from the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), Nevada saw the most significant worsening of student-to-school-counselor ratio in the nation, moving from 478-to-1 (2017–2018) to 544-to-1 (2018–2019). Currently, only seven other states have a larger student-to-school-counselor ratio than Nevada. We have attached to this letter, empirical research that has shown when students, especially minorities and those economically disadvantaged, have greater access to school counselors, graduation rates increase, disciplinary incidents decrease, and academic, social, and emotional development improves.

NvSCA strongly recommends adopting a ratio of 250 students to one licensed school counselor as recommended by ASCA.

NvSCA is submitting this public comment to document our opposition to school counselors being utilized as Qualified Mental Health Associates to access Medicaid funds through the School Based Mental Health Services Plan. School counselors are educators who address the academic, career and social/ emotional development of all students. School counselors do not provide medical related services for Individualized Education Plans nor psychological counseling services. Utilizing school counselors to access Medicaid funds would violate the Use- of-Time specified in SB319 which passed during the 2019 legislative session. The documentation and billing practices of Medicaid would increase the amount of time counselors spend in non-counseling related activities and decrease the amount of time to provide direct services to all students. Additionally, school counselors may be pressured to practice outside their competence level, which violates our ethical standards, in order to procure more funds for schools.

NvSCA looks forward to working collaboratively with the NDE, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, and Nevada School Social Work Association to develop alternative ways to reduce student-to-mental health professional ratios in Nevada. It is with our strongest recommendation that school counselors not be utilized to access Medicaid funds since it does not support the role of Nevada's school counselors.

We thank you for your time and welcome the opportunity to discuss the contents of this letter of opposition

Sincerely,

Keeli Killian
President
Nevada School Counselor Association
keelikillian@gmail.com

Judy Pelto
President-Elect
Nevada School Counselor Association
judypelto@gmail.com

Item A5, Rebecca Garcia

Superintendent Ebert and Members of the Board,

My name is Rebecca Garcia, the President of the Nevada Parent Teachers Association. I am reaching out this morning to express concerns with the lack of parent representation on the Re-Opening of Schools Committee. It is important that Nevada have an appropriate plan and the formation of committee is a positive step forward. While obviously many well qualified individuals appear to have been selected the lack of inclusion of the parent voice is a challenge.

A main purpose stated for the committee is "To produce an actionable framework... The framework will address the physical, mental, social, and emotional considerations to reopen and manage districts and schools during this ongoing crisis."

This pandemic has shown the essential need for quality school-family partnership is drastic ways. Families have been asked to step up to become co-educators. Often this has happened with simply providing access information or handing a chromebook to a family. We've seen how engaged families who had relationships with schools have remained engaged and how those families without have in many cases simply walked away and chosen not to participate at all in digital learning. In meeting students physical, mental, social and emotional needs it is imperative that families, the legal guardians of students, have a full voice in the process.

There are many unknowns currently but what we do know is that education is and may continue to need to happen in some form at home. Blending learning and alternative schedules are possibilities that, based on public health guidance, may need to be a reality longer or in another time of crisis. Full engagement and participation in these various forms of learning will require parent partnership. Excluding parents from the table and then wondering why families aren't engaged is a repeated challenge in education and one that should be avoided in the midst of this crisis or in planning for the future.

Now is the perfect time to lead the way and ensure that parents have a seat at the table. Parents should not just be asked for comment or told what will happen after the decisions are made. Parents can share unique needs that educators, even educator parents, sometimes miss. Understanding these needs is vital for schools and districts to create re-opening plans that engage all families in continued learning regardless of whether school buildings are open.

As a parent of three current Nevada students and the President of the Nevada Parent Teachers Association I urge you to ensure a parent is a member of the Re-Opening Committee. Nevada PTA stands ready to support in any way possible.

Thank you,

Rebecca Garcia
President
Nevada PTA
President@NevadaPTA.Org
www.nevadapta.org

Item A6, Shiloh Crawford

I would like you to take into consideration teachers that are also parents of young elementary age kids when recommendations or implementation of any school schedule for the start of the school year. My husband and I are both teachers and my two kids go to the school I teach at. If you do staggered times or days please have a plan for us or a lot of us will have to take FMLA or leaves of absence. I teach in Las Vegas where you don't have the extra teachers or Subs for this. I just ask that you have something in place for us if you do creative scheduling.

Item A7, Calen Evans

My name is Calen Evans and I am a member of Empower Nevada Teachers. ENT is a grassroots teacher and educational advocacy group comprised of nearly 3,000 current educators across the state of Nevada.

As we decide how best to move forward from this pandemic it's imperative that we consult the parties whom are most directly effected by the decision.

Currently on the committee constructed to make these decisions there are no current teachers or paraprofessional. No parents from the community. There is no representation from any of the educational associations in the state. How is it that those whom will be most directly impacted by the decision to reopen schools do not have a say in the matter?

For too long lawmakers in Nevada make decisions that impact education without consulting the professionals that comprise the education field. Educators across this state feel as if they don't have a voice and it's for these exact reasons. Current teachers and ESPs should have a say on these crucial decisions. I urge you to include current educators on this committee so that teachers and other educational professionals get the voices we deserve.

Thank you,
Calen Evans
WCSD Teacher
WEA Member
ENT President

Item A8, Nevada State Education Association

The Nevada State Education Association has been the voice of Nevada educators for over 100 years. In our history, there have been few more challenging times than the one we find ourselves in right now, with the global COVID-19 pandemic. Governor Sisolak issued an executive order closing all Nevada schools on March 16th and extended school closures through the end of the school year. In this time, our members have quickly responded, with classroom teachers now engaging their students in distance learning and food service workers on the front lines, providing meals to families in our districts. This transition has been a difficult one. We learned earlier this month of an NSEA member working in food service in Clark County who passed away after contracting COVID- 19.

In addition to school closures, the Governor introduced a COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Initiative that closed all non- essential businesses and services and postponed or canceled all large gatherings. While this bold action was the right call to protect the health and safety of every Nevadan, we are afraid the economic impacts of this crisis will be devastating and long-lasting. On April 7th, Governor Sisolak asked all state agencies to review their budgets and make recommendations for general fund reductions of 4% in the current fiscal year and between 6-14% in FY21. As you know, the operation of Nevada schools also depends on revenues from Local School Support Tax (LSST) as well as the Public Schools Operating Property Tax. We assume LSST revenues will be devastated in the current quarter and will likely be depressed well into FY21. With the likelihood we are entering a recession, property taxes could take another long-term hit.

Over the past 8 months, NSEA has been engaging the Commission on School Funding regarding our concerns about the implementation of the new school funding plan in SB543. We have echoed a number of these concerns here at the Board of Education. While NSEA believes the school funding plan should be updated to reflect the changing needs of Nevada, it would be completely irresponsible to implement this radical shift during these already turbulent times. While NSEA'S previous concerns with the new funding plan remain, the new economic realities not only undermine school funding generally but also the work of the Funding Commission specifically. The main charge of the Funding Commission is to model the new funding plan, running it alongside the Nevada Plan in the current fiscal year and to make recommendations based on these numbers. This pandemic has made that task impossible, or at the very least, impracticable. Data from this fiscal year likely will need to be discarded, as Nevada's economy hit a wall toward the end of the third quarter. Even after stay at home orders are lifted, we know that the economy will take time to return to anything that resembles normal.

Given this crisis, we were disappointed the April Funding Commission meeting seemed like business as usual. The impact of the current crisis on Nevada schools eclipses anything else that has happened in recent memory. Instead of discussing the impact of this economic uncertainty and upheaval, the Commission was mired in details like administrative caps, small school adjustments, and regional cost differences. While these items had greater significance a couple of months ago, everything has changed. The text of SB543 may not explicitly state the Commission can stop its work, but the language most certainly allows for such a recommendation. The original purpose of Section 11 has been frustrated by the COVID-19 pandemic and it would be impracticable and irresponsible to continue the work as if things have not changed. No matter the recommendations that will be made, the Section's original intent cannot be accomplished because of Nevada's economic uncertainty. The only recommendation that makes sense is one to delay the radical implementation in uncertain times. Thank you.

Item A9, Calen Evans

My name is Calen Evans and I am a member of Empower Nevada Teachers. ENT is a grassroots teacher and educational advocacy group comprised of nearly 3,000 current educators across the state of Nevada.

Because of the lack of state allocated resources and not having the proper legislation in place, Nevada has the largest class sizes in the country. These large class sizes are well above the national average and far exceed the recommended teacher-student ratio suggested by all educational studies conducted on this matter. These class sizes have a significant negative impact on the the learning and working conditions of students and teachers.

With the current pandemic we are all facing these large class sizes are no longer simply a learning and working condition but now they are a matter of pubic safety. Jamming 40+ 5th graders into a single classroom or having a high school teacher come in contact with the over 200+ students on their caseload (daily) makes the need for proper social distancing impossible. It should have been bad enough that students can't learn and teachers can't teach when Nevada has these insanely large class sizes but now that we are putting the health and well being of our students and teachers at risk, hopefully this will be the catalyst needed for state lawmakers to provide the needed resources and educational funding for our students to learn and be safe.

As citizens in Nevada we all need to come together and help create the type of education system our children deserve. We can use this tragic pandemic as an opportunity to learn from our past mistakes and take a better approach going forward. Educational is entailment to our recovery as a state.

Thank you,
Calen Evans
WCSD Teacher
WEA Member
ENT President

Appendix B: Documents Submitted for Board Review in Addition to Public Comment

1. Empirical Research Studies Supporting the Value of School Counseling, submitted by Nevada School Counselor Association
2. ASCA Student to Counselor Ratios 2018-2019, submitted by Nevada School Counselor Association
3. Measuring the Impact of School Counselor Ratios on Student Outcomes, submitted by Nevada School Counselor Association
4. Most U.S. School Districts Have Low Access to School Counselors, submitted by Nevada School Counselor Association
5. ASCA National Model Implementation and Appropriate School Counselor Ratios Promote More Informed College Decision-Making, submitted by Nevada School Counselor Association