

**Greetings English Master Council Members,**

**On behalf of the Clark County Black Caucus Board and members, we are submitting this public comment in support of the recommendations, as written and approved by the EMC unanimously on May 13, 2021 (see below). We have a particular concern about any changes to the language in section 1.a and 1.b as outlined below. I personally attended that virtual meeting and witnessed a lot of discussion around students in the lowest 25% percentile proficient and African American Standard English Learners. See attached copy of the entire recommendations. We ask that this document be made as part of our public record and available for the public. We also ask once again that ALL research, documents, etc that the EMC committee used to inform these recommendations be made available on the NDE website for the public to review. We made this request during public comment #2 at the May 13th meeting. This is in our opinion a violation of open meeting laws that require documents be provided and/or made available on NDE website to ensure transparency and accountability.**

- 1. Recommendation regarding language variation and proficiency:**
  - a. What is the national trend in states for identifying African American English variation speakers as English Learners (ELs).**
  - b. Since African American learners speak a language other than the academic language, and benefit from ELL instruction, they should be designated as Standard English Learners (SEL) and afforded opportunities and resources of all ELs.**

**We continue to oppose any effort by the EMC to dilute and disregard the needs of our African American students' literacy needs to master academic standard English, and delays in presenting annual recommendations to the State Board of Education. Nevada revised statute was passed in 2019, with resistance from the EMC members to address the needs of these students and wanted the scope of work to remain solely ELL students. It is now 2022 and although particular members invested a tremendous amount of their time, providing research, recommendations, and many conversations, this committee continues to, as they say in an African proverb, "talk, talk, talk, too much talk." The proficiency gap based on racial disparities is too wide and demands urgent action. We have immediate and urgent concerns that the make-up of committee members brings into question a commitment to students other than ELL, and with recent events in the EP&AA subgroup racial biases that have created an environment that lacks racial inclusion nor values BIPOC perspective, which unfortunately has left one important contributor to this subgroup feeling unwelcome and disrespected as reflected in her absence today. A Black woman who is highly credentialed, and an expert in this area herself.**

**Additionally, we want to express our concerns about the lack of diversity and inclusion of African American linguistic professionals and experts in addressing the EMC, demonstrating a lack of cultural competency. Although BIPOC recommendations were provided to staff, none have presented as experts to help inform recommendations of policy. To that end, we encourage the EMC to consider the findings of the Linguistic Society of America, an organization founded in 1924, made up of scholars world-wide to advance scientific study of language and its**

**applications. We have attached their resolution on the Oakland School Boards adoption that recognizes "the language variety spoken by many African American students and to take it into account in teaching Standard English, and recognize the vernacular of African American students in teaching them Standard English is both linguistically and pedagogically sound." We ask that this document attached is also provided to the public as part of our public comment.**

**Another point we want to make is that the current education system does not critique other speakers' language as to whether they speak a dialect (which is common) or vernacular. They simply provide the "same" English language instruction. We expect African American Standard English Language (SEL) speakers to be given the same access to EL resources and learning opportunities as other students. Again, it is our opinion and interpretation of federal law that students not be discriminated against based on language, place of origin, or race. After all, this is 2022 and access to mastery of academic standard English should not be a discussion, but a right unlike the days of chattel slavery when learning to read or write as an African American was prohibited by law. We compel this committee to do the right thing. Nevada is a leader in education reforms. The notion that we must follow the standards of another State is ludicrous. Lead by example. That's a great lesson that our students can learn from.**

**Finally, we again request all research documents, reports, information that informs the EMC in any decisions made today regarding these recommendations for discussion in Agenda Item 9 that informs a decision by the members. The public is entitled to know the reasons and basis for a revision, modification of a previously approved item. Transparency matters.**

**Thank you for your time and consideration.**

**Yvette Williams  
Caucus Chair**