

## English Mastery Council Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 4, 2021  
8:00 AM

### Call to Order; Roll Call; Pledge of Allegiance

Blakely Hume called the meeting of the English Mastery Council to order at 8:00 AM on Thursday, November 4, 2021, via Lifesize videoconference.

Blakely Hume conducted a roll call. **Quorum was established** (eight members present).

#### Committee Members Present:

Alain Bengochea  
Nancy Brune  
Lorna James-Cervantes  
Laurel Crossman  
Bettye Haysbert  
Cristina Lash  
Karl Wilson (Jonathan Moore's designee)  
Paula Zona

#### Committee Members Absent:

Diana Cantu  
Gladis Diaz  
Jonathan Moore

#### Others Present:

Blakely Hume  
Tina Lombard  
Patrick Bell  
Mike Pacheco

Blakely Hume led the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Public Comments #1

Tina Lombard stated there were no public comments.

### Approval of Flexible Agenda

**Motion:** Approve Flexible Agenda  
**By:** Laurel Crossman  
**Second:** Nancy Brune  
**Vote:** Passed unanimously

Blakely Hume informed the Council that over the last year, Nevada Department of Education leadership has moved forward with memberships and as such, introduced the two newest members of the Council, both NSHE representatives, Alain Bengochea and Cristina Lash.

Alain Bengochea, assistant professor at UNLV, received a BA in French and political science from the University of Florida, a master's in teaching and bilingual childhood education at Fordham University, and doctorate in language

### Approval of Flexible Agenda (continued)

and literacy learning in multilingual settings at the University of Miami. Dr. Bengochea was a bilingual teacher in the Bronx, New York for a few years prior to obtaining his PhD. Dr. Bengochea explained that his research focuses on early childhood and middle childhood vocabulary development and translanguaging.

Cristina Lash, assistant professor in the Educational Leadership Program at UNR, received her BA in comparative literature from Stanford, her master's in social and cultural studies in education from UC Berkeley, and her PhD in sociology of education from Stanford University Graduate School of Education. Dr. Lash works primarily with principal candidates and the MED program, but also teaches doctoral level courses that look at the social context of education and different issues of identity. Dr. Lash's areas of research interest include how language, race, and nationhood intersect, the way students feel that they belong in schools and the factors that contribute and hinder to that sense of belonging, as well as equitable opportunities to learn.

### Approval of May 13, 2021, Minutes

Karl Wilson identified a correction on page 9 of the minutes where the word "doctors" should actually be the word "members."

**Motion:** Approve May 13, 2021, EMC Meeting Minutes with the amendment to the word on page 9  
**By:** Paula Zona  
**Second:** Laurel Crossman  
**Vote:** Passed unanimously

### Election of English Mastery Council Chair 2021-2022

Blakely Hume reminded the members that this is the last year of the EMC as it is due to sunset on June 30. As such, the chair elected at this meeting will serve as chair for only this final year of the EMC. Mr. Hume explained that the council is required by legislative mandate to meet at least four times annually and although in past years has sometimes met more often, this year, due to restrictions and virtual requirements, there will only be four meetings this year. Mr. Hume explained that the role of the chair is to conduct the meetings, run the voting procedures, operate the meeting under the specific Open Meeting Laws, as well as meet with the EMC logistics staff to determine agenda items, discussion points, or any other items that may come forward.

**Motion:** Nominate Lorna James-Cervantes to serve as English Mastery Council Chair  
**By:** Laurel Crossman  
**Second:** Unidentified EMC Member  
**Vote:** Passed unanimously

Chair Cervantes accepted the nomination and discussed the importance of the work the EMC does and the importance of finishing its work in this final year.

### Review of EMC Responsibilities, Original Charge of Council

Blakely Hume informed the members that the EMC was created in 2013 when SB 504 was passed as the legislative body that would provide recommendations based on the work for English learners. Mr. Hume indicated that over the years, there has been different work that has been associated with the recommendations that come with EMC. As such, the EMC has had three or four main work areas based on the recommendations that are legislatively mandated. Mr. Hume indicated that one of the first requirements is about TESL, where the legislative language states that within the EMC, work is to be done on requirements for TESL, which includes: reviewing university courses that teach TESL; recommending and improving any course study or improvements; making recommendations for adoptions and regulations concerning TESL; and submitting recommendations on TESL to the commissions on professional standards. Mr. Hume further indicated that the district policy work group is able to make recommendations concerning criteria for districts in terms of the development of their policies as well as submit policy criteria to the State Board of Education and annually review those policies and plans. Mr. Hume next discussed the standards and

### **Review of EMC Responsibilities, Original Charge of Council (continued)**

curriculum workgroup, explaining that this group essentially finished its work about year and a half ago and as such, moved forward with another recommendation and another work group. Mr. Hume explained that the group has worked to develop standards and criteria regarding criteria or curriculum for ELs with considerations for the state Board. Mr. Hume next discussed the English proficiency and academic achievement work group, which was a recommendation that moved forward in the 80th legislative session. Mr. Hume explained that part of the proposal came in as an extension for the EMC and an inclusion of a new recommendation to make recommendations to the state Board to improve English proficiency and academic achievement of pupils who are not English learners and who have scored at or below the 25th percentile. Mr. Hume indicated that as the EMC approaches its last year, a great deal of this work is in process or approaching completion.

Karl Wilson added that the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) work group did do extensive research that resulted in proposals to the Commission on Professional Standards and to the system of higher education. Mr. Wilson explained that the transition from the TESL endorsement to the ELAD endorsement occurred circa 2015/2016 because of the recommendations from the EMC. In addition, Mr. Wilson reminded the members that the state Board approved that the WIDA English language development standards would serve as Nevada's English language development standards early on in the WIDA adoption process for purposes of meeting federal requirements.

Laurel Crossman commented that when she first joined the EMC, of the 17 districts, only six or seven had English learner district policy plans in place that met the criteria, and within a year and a half, all 17 districts had policies in place that meet the criteria whose plans EMC is currently reviewing. Ms. Crossman further questioned if with the EMC's new charge to make recommendations regarding students in the lowest 25 percent quartile, despite the sunset of the council, was there interest in making recommendations as the work would likely continue beyond the year.

Blakely Hume informed the Council that meetings have taken place with the different workgroups throughout the summer and as such, much of the work has been in process behind the scenes rather than with official EMC meetings.

### **ADAM Presentation: Assessment Data from 2020-2021**

Patrick Bell, Accountability Supervisor for the ADAM office, explained that he and colleague, Mike Pacheco, will be presenting an overview of SBAC (Smarter Balance) which was given to grades 3 through 9 summative assessments for ELA and mathematics for the '20-'21 school year. Mr. Bell explained that the SBAC assessment meets the federal requirement to assess students in grades 3 through 9 in ELA and mathematics annually, whereas the ACT is the accepted grade 11 assessment for ELA and mathematics. Mr. Bell explained that given the pandemic, accountability for the '20-'21 school year was waived; nonetheless, assessment results were published and provided to all districts, schools, and LEAs. Mr. Bell indicated that Nevada had about a 70-percent participation rate despite the waived 95-percent participation requirement.

Patrick Bell discussed the goals of ADAM, indicating that Goal 1 provides that all children, birth through grade 3, have access to early care and education. Goal 3 provides the expectations that all students will experience continued academic growth, access to quality support schools, to exit designation status, and to close opportunity gaps. Goal 4 is for all students to graduate future-ready and globally prepared for post-secondary education.

Mike Pacheco indicated that the 2018-19 school year was the last year in which Nevada had a normal assessment cycle and reiterated the fact that SY '19-'20 assessments were waived for the federal waiver on accountability. Mr. Pacheco explained that the ACT was administered prior to that waiver. Mr. Pacheco reiterated that SY '20-'21 federal accountability and the 95 percent participation mandates were waived, but state assessments were still administered. Mr. Pacheco informed the Council that districts with smaller populations do show significantly larger drops with much smaller numbers of students.

**ADAM Presentation: Assessment Data from 2020-2021 (continued)**

Mike Pacheco next discussed the breakdown of the smarter balanced ELA participation rates by race and ethnicity as compared to the 2018-19 school year. Mr. Pacheco informed the Council that the largest drops were among Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and black students, reminding the members to be aware of the effects of population size on percentages. Mr. Pacheco next discussed the breakdown of the smarter balanced ELA participation rates by additionally federally required student groups such as: students with disabilities, English learners, and students with economic disadvantages. Mr. Pacheco indicated that these rates are like the overall drop in participation at around 30 percent with no individual group being significantly different in the overall state decrease.

Mike Pacheco explained that smarter balanced math participation rates are much lower than in typical years. Mr. Pacheco further indicated that student groups with the lowest participation rates were Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and black students. Mr. Pacheco discussed the math participation rates for students with disabilities, English learners, and students suffering economic disadvantage. Mr. Pacheco concluded his presentation by informing the Council that rates across all groups are like the state as a whole.

Patrick Bell discussed students meeting the proficiency in ELA for grades 3 through 8. Mr. Bell indicated that SBAC ELA showed consistent average growth of 1.3 percentage points from the 2015-16 school year to the 2018-19 school year. Mr. Bell explained that although the 2020-21 school year showed a 7.1 percentage point decrease from SY 2018-19, only 68.3 percent of students were tested that year. Mr. Bell further explained that SBAC ELA proficiency rates for SY 2020-21 are much lower across race and ethnicity when compared to the most recent year of complete testing, which was 2018-19. The largest decrease in ELA proficiency rates were among: Pacific Islanders, who dropped 10.1 percentage points; Hispanic, who dropped 9.3 percentage points; and white students, who dropped 7.2 percentage points. Mr. Bell further indicated that SBAC ELA proficiency rates for SY 2020-21 were also lower for students with disabilities, but that there was only a 0.5 percentage point drop in proficiency for this group.

Patrick Bell informed the Council that SBAC ELA grade level proficiency rates decreased from SY '18-'19 to SY '20-'21, which were disaggregated by grades 3 through 8, with the greatest decrease among the elementary grades and middle schools showing a lower impact on decreased proficiency rates. SBAC math, which showed consistent average growth of 1.6 percentage points between SY 2015-16 and SY 2018-19, showed an 11.2 percentage point decrease between '18-'19 and '20-'21. Mr. Bell reminded the Council that this again represents on 68.2 percent of students tested during the pandemic year. Mr. Bell further explained that SBAC math proficiency rates for the pandemic year are much lower across race and ethnicity, with the largest decreases among: Pacific Islanders, who were down 14.8 percentage points; Asians, who were down 13 percentage points; and white students, who were down 12.6 percentage points. SBAC math proficiency rates, like the ELA proficiency rates, showed a greater decrease among the elementary grades than the middle school grades.

Patrick Bell next discussed the SBAC ELA and math proficiency rates by county, with Lander County showing the largest decrease in ELA by 11.2 percent, followed by Clark County at 10.4 percent. Mr. Bell explained that Storey County and Esmerelda County both showed an increase by 1.5 percentage points. Lander County also showed the sharpest decrease in math proficiency at 16.4 percentage points, again followed by Clark County with a decrease of 14.7 percentage points.

Laurel Crossman asked if the counties showing decreases in proficiency were virtual, remote, or hybrid during the pandemic year and if perhaps that had an impact on the rates.

Patrick Bell indicated that he did not have that data at hand but as it had been submitted, he would provide it to the Council in the future.

Chair Cervantes explained that when looking at the results, citing Clark County as an example, part of the reason for the testing of so many fewer students was the fact that the students were not present in-person at school for testing, thus contributing to the decrease in the number of students tested.

**ADAM Presentation: Assessment Data from 2020-2021 (continued)**

Karl Wilson indicated that although the assessments were administered online, no assessments were administered remotely and that students needed to be onsite in school to take the tests.

Mike Pacheco next discussed the ACT assessment, explaining that it is the federally reported assessment for ELA and math in high school. Mr. Pacheco explained that participation in the ACT is a graduation requirement and students may not be issued a diploma unless they have participated in the ACT.

Patrick Bell explained that Nevada met the 95-percent requirement for participation in the ACT. Mr. Bell indicated that high school ELA showed consistent average growth of approximately 2.7 percentage points from SY '17-'18 to SY '19-'20 and a 2.1 percentage point decrease during the pandemic year, with the greatest decreases among: Pacific Islanders, who were down 6.4 percentage points; two or more races, who were down 3.1 percentage points; and Hispanics, who were down 3.0 percentage points. Mr. Bell explained that black students had the smallest decrease in overall ELA proficiency from '19-'20 to '20-'21. Further, Mr. Bell explained that high school ELA proficiency for student groups decreased in school year '20-'21 for English learners and students with economic disadvantages showed decreases of 1.3 percentage points and 0.1 percentage points respectively.

Patrick Bell informed the Council that high school math showed consistent average growth of approximately 0.4 percentage points from SY '17-'18 to '19-'20 but showed a 3.4 percentage point decrease during the pandemic year, with the greatest decreases among: Asian students, who decreased 5.2 percentage points; two or more races, who decreased 5.1 percentage points; white students, who decreased 4.7 percentage points. Mr. Bell explained that Pacific Islanders, black students, and American Indians demonstrated the smallest decreases in math proficiency of the previous year. Mr. Bell further indicated that students with economic disadvantages showed a decrease of approximately 1.2 percentage points over the previous year.

Nancy Brune requested that the full presentation with the appendix be made available to the members following the meeting.

Patrick Bell explained that Mr. Hume could send the presentation to the members and that it has also been published on the state Board website.

Bettye Haysbert asked how this information could directly inform the EMC's work for today.

Karl Wilson explained that historically, NDE has asked the ADAM department to give an update on assessment and accountability so that members of the EMC are aware of the progress or lack thereof for English learner students and the ethnic student groups with whom the EMC is most concerned.

Patrick Bell reminded the Council that this was a non-representative year and as such, comparisons cannot really be made to other years. Once the results from the current year are available, a better comparison can be made on student progress. Therefore, this year's data really is good for information, Mr. Bell indicated, but perhaps not so much for comparison.

Chair Cervantes concurred with Mr. Bell and reiterated that it's important not to draw extreme conclusions from this data because of the decrease in testing participation as well as in active participation in learning during the pandemic year.

Laurel Crossman commented that it is important that parents be informed that this data is not unexpected given the circumstances of the pandemic year. Ms. Crossman further opined that it is possible that there may not be positive gains over the next couple of years given that student learning was paused in more ways than one over the course of the pandemic year and some students may not exhibit much growth as a result. Ms. Crossman explained that principals are reporting that many EL students chose the fully remote option during the pandemic school year, and that this could certainly cause some of the losses in achievement.

### **ADAM Presentation: Assessment Data from 2020-2021 (continued)**

Dr. Cristina Lash wondered if more information could be obtained regarding the effect of the pandemic year on ELD departments and the challenges they encountered in supporting EL students.

Karl Wilson suggested that the EMC create a specific request to forward to NDE for additional information from school districts related to the impact of COVID in relation to student assessment and achievement.

Chair Cervantes concurred with Mr. Wilson's suggestion and indicated that the EMC can certainly look at this option upon reaching the priorities and deliverables agenda item.

### **Nevada Department of Education Update**

Karl Wilson reminded the Council that in the spring, the state chose the option provided by the US Department of Education to extend the assessment window for the WIDA assessment through September 17 for students unable to participate during the traditional assessment window. Mr. Wilson explained that several districts took advantage of that opportunity, which does impact the scores getting back to the school districts. Mr. Wilson explained that WIDA has provided results to the school district for all students who had participated by early April, and the district is currently in the process of reviewing those results, but the final report, which includes students assessed in the fall of this school year, will not be available until early December. Mr. Wilson indicated that because the accountability portion of assessment was waived for the pandemic year, student scores will not be part of the annual report card. Nonetheless, Mr. Wilson indicated that individual student proficiencies are critical in terms of making determinations regarding whether students continue as English learners or meet the exit criteria.

Karl Wilson next explained that in the last legislative session, AB 195 was passed, which required districts to provide additional data on an annual basis regarding English learners as well as provide parents of English learners the English Learner Bill of Rights, which outlines the specific rights that parents and students have in relationship to things like identification and support services. Mr. Wilson indicated that NDOE if information, including translation into the five most common languages other than English, and as such, the EL Bill of Rights were sent out the first part of August to assist school districts in meeting those requirements.

Karl Wilson next informed the Council that with the legislative session, the state has moved to a pupil-centered funding plan, which has ended some categorical programs such as the Zoom school program, the Victory school program, and SB 178, to name a few. The funding that was provided for these programs has now been integrated into the weighted formulas for students who are English learners or at-risk.

Karl Wilson next discussed the work group that, upon feedback from the district policy review of district plans and data, was organized between English learner services and the Office of Inclusive Education. Mr. Wilson explained that NDE is in the process of developing resources and training to help ensure appropriate identification of English learners as meeting special education designation as well as ensuring that these learners are not underrepresented due to the confusion that sometimes occurs between language development and specific disability. Mr. Wilson indicated that by mid to late spring, resources will be available, and trainings scheduled to assist districts and schools in better understanding those issues.

Karl Wilson next discussed the English Language Development (ELD) Standards Framework and informed the Council that in the October interim finance committee, funding was approved to provide an additional \$900,000 to support implementation of the ELD Standards Framework Initiative.

Karl Wilson informed the Council that NDE is preparing a response to the US Department of Education monitoring report specifically related to Title II services for English learners. Mr. Wilson explained that the state has proposed making a revision to the ESSA state plan to specifically address the issues of entrance and exit criteria and that this proposal will clearly identify for US DOE that Nevada's exit criteria is 4.5 composite or higher on the WIDA Access Assessment with an alternate methodology if the school believes that a student has English proficiency but did not score well. Mr. Wilson explained that two other proposals will go with this one: identifying exit criteria specifically

## **Nevada Department of Education Update (continued)**

for English learners with disabilities who are unable to participate in all four domains of the assessment; as well as for English learners who have more significant cognitive disabilities and participate annually in the Nevada Alternate Assessment.

Karl Wilson reminded the EMC that in 2019, AB 219 required schools whose academic performance for English learners in the bottom 30th percentile of the state to develop a corrective action plan. Mr. Wilson explained that based on the information received from the ADAM department around assessment participation and the waiver of accountability, a decision was made to maintain the designation made in 2019 rather than identify new schools for corrective action.

Chair Cervantes requested that Mr. Wilson send out the information presented to all members.

## **Zoom Work Group Breakout Discussion**

Chair Cervantes informed the Council that the TESL workgroup will have a report on the presentation to the COPS last August and planned next steps as well as potentially presenting recommendations to ensure the ELAD endorsement is moved to the next stages of approval. Chair Cervantes indicated that the district policy and planning group would discuss likely providing feedback to the districts this year on their plans. Chair Cervantes further indicated that the English proficiency & academic achievement group (EP&AA) would be focusing on finalizing the recommendations that would come back before the EMC for a vote prior to moving forward to the State Board of Education.

During this period the EMC will separate various members into Zoom breakout sessions. There will individual discussions in groups regarding work, progress, procedures, and next steps for work on the various legislative requirements regarding TESL, District Policy and Criteria Planning, and English Proficiency and Academic Achievement. An NDE staff member will attend each group to help guide the discussion. All notes and thoughts will be reported to the full EMC in the next agenda item. After the work group breakout sessions, the full EMC will reconvene to report out on what was discussed. Possible actions could include discussion or voting on the topics from the breakout sessions.

## **Share-out on EMC Work Group Updates**

Chair Cervantes confirmed all members were present and asked the workgroups to discuss their work during the breakout sessions.

### **TESL Work Group:**

Dr. Cristina Lash explained that discussion in the work group began with a recap of where the different higher-ed institutions are in terms of logistics of integrating the ELAD endorsement into the elementary credential. Dr. Lash explained that conversation then shifted to the content and curriculum for training teachers in the ELAD endorsement. Dr. Lash indicated that the group discussed the lack of clarity regarding alignment across institutions around what pre-service teachers are learning in their classrooms. As such, Dr. Lash indicated that this is an area this work group would like to explore further to ensure that standards are uniform across institutions.

Dr. Cristina Lash further explained the second element related to curriculum was the need to identify the need to shape the attitudes and perceptions of pre-service teachers such that they are coming in with an asset-based framework for linguistic assets of English learners. As such, the work group would like to recommend that the full EMC support doing more research on alignment across institutions as far as curriculum as well as investigation about how English learners are currently being framed in the curriculum and the attitudes about multilingualism within the curriculum currently being taught to pre-service teachers so that that the Council can try and support a more strengths-based approach to language learning.

## Share-out on EMC Work Group Updates (continued)

### TESL Work Group (continued)

Laurel Crossman recommended the inclusion of a timeline for the TESL work group's recommendations given that the EMC is due to sunset at the end of June of 2022.

Chair Cervantes asked the TESL committee to provide the Council with a timeline by which recommendations would be made to the NSHE institutions.

Dr. Cristina Lash indicated that the workgroup would not be able to complete that work should the next meeting be held in early December and as such, would need additional time to gather the information across the institutions. Dr. Lash explained that timing in the fall is tricky for institutions of higher ed due to applications and holidays, and as such, suggested contacting institutions to begin the request for information by December 2nd and then discuss that gathered information in the spring.

Chair Cervantes indicated her support for this timeline.

Laurel Crossman indicated her support for this timeline.

**Motion:** Recommend that the English Mastery Council adopt the recommendations of the TESL work group as explained by Dr. Lash and read into the record by Mr. Hume

**By:** Laurel Crossman

**Second:** Alain Bengochea

**Vote:** Passed unanimously

Alain Bengochea explained that the workgroup discussed the need to look again at the alignment of the bilingual endorsement courses in relation to the ELAD endorsement courses.

Chair Cervantes suggested making the request of NSHE institutions to include not only the content of the ELAD coursework, but also the content of their bilingual coursework.

Alain Bengochea reminded the Council that at the state level, the requirements are different and as such, suggested discussing reworking the coursework at the state and the way that the ELAD requirements were designed.

Chair Cervantes asked if perhaps a presentation by NDE's Department of Licensure would help the TESL work group to understand the alignment of licensure requirements for the state for both the ELAD and bilingual endorsement to identify overlap and to see if there is a need to realign that course work or to look at any recommendations for changes.

Karl Wilson indicated that this topic could be included in the next TESL work group session.

Chair Cervantes asked Mr. Wilson to make that request of NDE.

### District Policy and Criteria Planning Work Group:

Laurel Crossman explained that this workgroup has been in a bit of a holding pattern given the pandemic and the plan was to send out the plans and policies this fall. However, Ms. Crossman explained that with COVID practices, plans have changed in individual districts. Additionally, Ms. Crossman indicated that with the passage of AB 195, there are new requirements that the districts now need to incorporate. As such, the work group's plan is now to send out notice to the districts and request them to update their policies with the new requirements from AB 195 and the implementation plans that they have. Ms. Crossman further indicated that Mr. Hume informed the work group that the Title III work group has done significant work in completing what the policies and implementation plan should include and therefore, the plan is for districts to update and receive feedback in desktop form so that the work group will be able to review this in the spring and give further feedback going into the fall.

## **Share-out on EMC Work Group Updates (continued)**

### **District Policy and Criteria Planning Work Group (continued)**

Karl Wilson asked if the work group has a proposed timeline for sending out the request for LEAs to update and complete their plans.

Blakely Hume suggested working on this in November to provide the year for the districts to incorporate that feedback such that the recommendations could be provided to the state Board by fall of 2022.

Laurel Crossman informed the Council that the following weekend would be the Nevada Association of School Boards annual conference, and that this might be a good time for Ms. Crossman to alert members of the Boards to look forward to this plan.

### **English Proficiency and Academic Achievement Work Group:**

Chair Cervantes informed the Council that this group has done a significant amount of work around identifying what is happening across the state and the country with students in the lowest 25th percentile. Chair Cervantes informed the Council that very often, EL learners, African American students, Pacific Islanders, and Native-American students fall into this category and as such, the group worked last year and throughout the summer to provide three main recommendations to present to the EMC for approval and then move forward to the State Board of Education:

1. Language Variation and proficiency

Chair Cervantes indicated that the group would like to see research done on the national trends in states to identify African American English variation speakers as English learners and disseminate that information to districts. In addition, because African American learners speak a language other than English academic language and benefit from ELL instruction, they should be designated as standard English learners and afforded the opportunities and resources of EL.

2. A recommendation that the Nevada Department of Education work with a team of curriculum and language experts around multi-dimensional supports for teachers and administrators, with the inclusion of five different actions:

- a. to determine how the ELD Standards Framework can be a support tool for non-standard English speakers
- b. to require school districts in Nevada to include their English language learner policies language surrounding how they will also support the English proficiency and academic achievement of students in the lowest 25th percentile and that this be included in the policies being reviewed by the district policy and criteria planning work group
- c. to support districts in the implementation process that supports students in the lowest 25th percentile while incorporating an effective monitoring system
- d. to ensure proper training and supports for school districts as they move through the process of creating and implementing actions 1 through 3 to meet the needs of students in the lowest 25th percentile, including: professional development recommendations; gathering experiences in the field regarding students' academic experiences and contents specialties with individual school cultures in the form of focus group conversation and language around non-standard English speakers
- e. to work toward establishing strong, positive relationships with learners school-wide and to reflect concerns of learners' responses as to what makes them feel welcomed, cared for, and safe, as well as using the Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement (TESA) behavior program, which is a philosophy built on the belief that the relationship between the teacher and learner is a key component to academic achievement; this would be accomplished by providing a common language and framework for teachers to use to discuss and improve their practice, to identify behaviors preventing teacher and learner success, to raise the academic achievement, and to identify and eliminate low expectations, biases, and discriminatory practices. Chair Cervantes discussed that Clark County had been charged with and districts across the state have been working toward creating an anti-racism policy for the district of the whole, work that Chair Cervantes opined parallels this action step. Chair Cervantes continued to indicate the importance of creating school-wide structures

## Share-out on EMC Work Group Updates (continued)

### District Policy and Criteria Planning Work Group (continued)

- that accelerate the time to double or triple the time during the school day spent instructing learners in reading and literacy to bring them up to grade level, and to provide learner-chosen books and resources reflective of the learners' history and culture.
3. For NDE to work with schools in the lowest 25 percent in student achievement in the state to develop a required, corrective action plan. NDE will identify root causes for underachievement and create specific action plans that will meet the needs of those students, a plan that will incorporate the development of a systematic process and/or rubric and parameters for schools to move out of correction action as well as the effective use of school data, which will be reviewed on an annual basis. Step 3 references AB 219 because this is work that is already being done with school in the lowest 25th percentile for English language learner development and success, and so the idea here is that this would mirror that work but for schools that are falling in the lowest 25th percentile for students across the state.

Chair Cervantes indicated that the work group is also requesting a vote of the EMC to adopt these recommendations and present them to the Board of Education to make the recommendations to NDOE once the language of the recommendations is finished.

Bettye Haysbert explained that the African American language has been researched for more than 50 years now and there have been myriad understandings and discussions, yet a lack of information about what the African American language is all about. Dr. Haysbert indicated that because it is a language, therefore the pedagogical needs of those learners are like anybody else who is speaking a second language. As such, Dr. Haysbert explained that much of what is being recommended is stemming from the fact that this is being viewed as a language.

Paula Zona asked if the corrective action plan is an additional one than what is already written for the bottom 30 percent of if it is just to include all subpopulations in the lowest achievement group.

Chair Cervantes indicated that this recommendation is for schools that fall in the lowest 25th percentile in the state rather than for individual students falling into that category.

Karl Wilson clarified that under AB 219, some schools have been required to develop a corrective action plan that specifically addresses the academic needs of English learners when the school is in the lowest 30th percentile. Mr. Wilson explained that these corrective action plans may be the same ones as those for students in the lowest 25 percent of student achievement, and as such, the state Board is interested in seeing how one corrective action plan rather than multiple corrective action plans would meet the needs of the students and the schools. Mr. Wilson further explained that in terms of this specific recommendation, there may be schools not identified for AB 219 English learner corrective action plans that would be identified as being in the lowest 25 percent of schools for overall student achievement, and therefore, this would be a new requirement if the schools are identified under this recommendation and not the other.

Laurel Crossman, in reference to action step 2, asked if there are recommendations from the work group about what type of language and how the district should support these students in the lowest 25th percentile that would be recommended as criteria to be included in the policy.

Chair Cervantes explained that the recommendation would be very similar to what is expected for English language learners, first in identifying who the students are in those groups, and then in working with them using action step 1.

Bettye Haysbert added that the group has clearly identified that many of the strategies that are being used with present second language or English learners are beneficial for these learners. As such, there is no need for creation of a lot of different strategies for these learners as they are learning a second language just as other learners are.

## **Share-out on EMC Work Group Updates (continued)**

### **District Policy and Criteria Planning Work Group (continued)**

Chair Cervantes asked if Ms. Crossman recommends that the language be changed in 2B to incorporate requiring school districts in Nevada to include in their English language learner policies language surrounding how they will mirror support for English proficiency and academic achievement for students in the lowest 25th percentile.

Laurel Crossman indicated there is no need to change the language but suggested that districts may want guidance. Chair Cervantes suggested that in the next EP&AA work group meeting, guidance could be created for districts on what would be expected in that policy.

Laurel Crossman discussed the importance of the group being prepared to address the large vocal group raising the concern of critical race theory, who may try and label these suggestions as critical race theory.

Dr. Cristina Lash raised the concern of the language 1B seeming to homogenize the linguistic practices of African Americans despite the knowledge that language variation happens because of multiple different things. In addition, Dr. Lash noted that there are many students who speak AAVE and standard English and for that reason, would not need to be designated as standard English Learners. As such, Dr. Lash recommended including a qualifier in the statement to indicate that this includes some or many African American learners as opposed to all.

Chair Cervantes indicated her support for adding a qualifier.

Bettye Haysbert also indicated her support for adding a qualifier, but further indicated that many African Americans can speak both AAVE and standard English and that this mostly affects the students who are unable to code switch.

Blakely Hume noted the change in the documentation.

Karl Wilson informed the Council that in 2011, the Department of Justice worked with Los Angeles Unified School District and one of the very specific requirements was that the English learner master plan was to include a component identified academic language proficiency to address the language proficiency and needs of African American students, thus setting a precedent of what could serve as the model for what Nevada could do in terms of next steps.

Laurel Crossman asked how these students will be identified in the school setting and wondered about the potential wording of the home language survey that is typically distributed to English language learners.

Chair Cervantes indicated that therefore the recommendation in 1A is to research national trends in states for identifying African American English variation speakers as ELs.

Bettye Haysbert indicated that some of this work has been done already and therefore, some of the already-established guidelines, rules, and instruments can be used to identify these students as well.

Cristina Lash requested clarification as to the differences in terms of the target audience for these recommendations.

Chair Cervantes indicated that it really is any students in the lowest 25th percentile, but with a focus on African American students who are failing and the role that language development plays in their lack of achievement, particularly in ELA.

Cristina Lash asked if students were to identify that they speak AAVE in their home, would they then similarly be tested to receive English learner supports, and would there be an assessment that would be able to recognize if students speak both AAVE and academic English.

Chair Cervantes explained that the idea is to have schools focus in on providing these students with a similar level of support to that being provided to English language learners to help them to succeed in school.

## Share-out on EMC Work Group Updates (continued)

### District Policy and Criteria Planning Work Group (continued)

Cristina Lash indicated that based on the concern that English learners who speak Spanish at home automatically are tested to receive EL services, even if they are bilingual. Dr. Lash explained that these tests are constructed in such a way that even native English speakers have a hard time passing the test. As such, Dr. Lash wondered if speakers of

AAVE will automatically be tested to receive EL services in way that could potentially overlook the fact that they could be bilingual and thus receive a categorization that may in some other way be stigmatizing.

Chair Cervantes indicated that this is also why the number 1 recommendation is to ask across the country what is being done to identify the academic language level of students who speak African American vernacular or other non-standard English in their homes.

Bettye Haysbert indicated the importance of ensuring that the language is not a barrier to the learner's lack of success at that level.

Karl Wilson reiterated the point that the WIDA assessment is not appropriate for students in this category, and the focus is on students whose academic achievement is in the bottom quartile as well as on identifying what barriers exist to their success in academics.

**Motion:** Recommend that the English Mastery Council adopt the recommendations brought forth by the EP&AA work group to be presented to the State Board of Education

**By:** Laurel Crossman

**Second:** Bettye Haysbert

**Vote:** Passed unanimously

## Priorities & Deliverables discussion for 2021-2022 school year

Chair Cervantes listed the request of information from NDE on the impact of COVID-19 on the achievement of EL students and students in the lowest 25th percentile as well as the recommendations to be made based on that work as a priority. Chair Cervantes also listed as a priority the TESL work group to look at the ELAD endorsement requirements for the state as compared to the bilingual endorsement expectations for the state, to see what overlap exists, and to see if there are recommendations from that work group for changes to licensure moving forward. Chair Cervantes listed the priority of the EP&AA work group to look at what should be in the district policies for the students in the lowest 25th percentile and to create a guidance document to assist those school districts with implementation should that recommendation be accepted by the State Board of Education and passed. Chair Cervantes listed the priority of the district policy and criteria planning work group to send out a request to districts to send in their policies and ensure that they have included it in their implementation plan and then to begin the review process so that they can provide any recommendations to the districts on those plans, or the implementation plans for the coming year.

Laurel Crossman indicated the importance of emphasizing that the Nevada Academic Content Standards do not include critical race theory as curriculum and finding a way to disseminate that information.

Chair Cervantes suggested requesting that NDE create either a presentation or a statement on the Nevada Academic Content Standards and their lack of correlation to critical race theory to clarify for parents what is being taught in the state of Nevada regarding multiculturalism and the interaction of different groups of people within the state.

Bettye Haysbert indicated the importance of defining critical race theory and opined that many people are unclear as to what critical race theory really is; as such, other things are often categorized as critical race theory when they are not.

### **Priorities & Deliverables discussion for 2021-2022 school year (continued)**

Chair Cervantes explained that it might be a good idea to ask NDE to present to the EMC exactly what critical race theory is, how it is or is not paralleled and/or taught in the schools. Chair Cervantes indicated that this might be a good presentation to ask NASBE to make, as well.

Cristina Lash suggested reframing conversations regarding the kind of education and society that is wanted for students and as such, moving away from the more defensive discussions and/or definitions of critical race theory, which Dr. Lash opined might not matter to the public receiving them.

Laurel Crossman added that NASB has some documents on their website that are being shared across multiple states in the Pacific region as to what critical race theory is and what it isn't.

### **Public Comments #2**

Tina Lombard indicated that there was no public comment.

Blakely Hume informed the Council of the tentative meeting schedule he had revised for January, March, and May in case the original December, February, May schedule was too quick.

**Motion:** Recommend that the English Mastery Council change the meeting dates to January, March, and May at 8:00 a.m.  
**By:** Paula Zona  
**Second:** Cristina Lash  
**Vote:** Passed unanimously

Blakely Hume indicated that he would send out the updated meeting dates to the Council once he had confirmed that the dates did not interfere with the State Board of Education.

### **Adjournment**

Chair Cervantes adjourned the meeting at 12:30 PM.