

# ENGLISH MASTERY COUNCIL

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## Telephonic Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 20, 2019

10:00 A.M.

### Meeting Locations:

#### Video Conference

OFFICE	LOCATION	ROOM
Department of Education	9890 South Maryland Pkwy Las Vegas, NV	Bighorn Conference Room

### Call to Order

Council Chair Sharolyn Pollard-Durodola called to order, from Las Vegas, the English Mastery Council meeting at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, February 20, 2019.

### Roll Call

Mindy Montoya conducted a roll call. **Quorum was established.**

**Council Members present:** Diane Barone, Nancy Brune, Diana Cantu, Lorna James-Cervantes, Laurel Crossman, Sharolyn Pollard-Duradola, Barbara Harris, Duncan Lee, Lori Navarrete, Maija Talso

NDE staff present: Blakely Hume. Mindy Montoya, Karl Wilson

**Council Members absent:** Gladis Diaz, Jonathan Moore, Paula Zona

### Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Karl Wilson.

### Public Comments #1

There were no public comments in Las Vegas or Carson City.

### Discussion of Content of BDR 34-393 Language

Karl Wilson gave a brief history of the proposed amendment to BDR 34-393. In August 2018, the Legislative Committee on Education met in a work session to consider bill draft requests for the upcoming legislative session. Chair Duradola and Blakely Hume had prepared information for leadership at the Nevada Department of Education regarding the request to extend the authorization of the English Mastery Council, (due to sunset at the end of June 2019) to continue its authorization to provide support for English learners in the state of Nevada.

The Legislative Committee on Education received positively that recommendation. At that same meeting there was a presentation regarding concerns from the Clark County Black Caucus regarding low performance and concerns for the educational needs of students who score in the bottom quartile.

The Legislative Committee on Education chose to put the two issues together, and they prepared a bill draft request that has become Assembly Bill 92. In the few weeks, right before the February 14 meeting of the Assembly

Committee on Education, members of the Clark County Black Caucus provided suggested language in terms of amendments to the original draft of Assembly Bill 92. This would have extended the authorization of the English Mastery Council but also included from the Legislative Committee on Education a new responsibility that is incorporated into Section 1, Sub 7 that the English Mastery Council under as AB92 would have the responsibility to make recommendations to the State Board to improve the English proficiency and academic achievement of pupils who are not English learners and who have scored at or below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile in the subject area of English Language Arts in an examination administered pursuant to NRS 390.105. Much of the language in draft revisions incorporates further proposed amendments that were submitted by the Clark County Black Caucus.

On February 14, there was a joint statement made to the Assembly Committee on Education, which was drafted in partnership between the English Mastery Council leadership, leadership from the Clark County Black Caucus, and the Nevada Department of Education that reads, "In the spirit of this bill being borne out of the Legislative Committee on Education's August 2018 work session, the English Mastery Council, Clark County Black Caucus, and the Department respectfully request through February 21, 2019, for our own work session to ensure the ideas from the August work session are fully realized in AB92, and the stakeholders present today will return with an agreed-upon amendment."

Mr. Wilson stated the conversation today was to get input from members of the English Mastery Council as they move forward.

Chair Durodola summarized some key points about what the state was trying to do and what some potential options are going forward. The emphasis in the amendment was on the development of English language proficiency, but a lot of verbiage in the original amendment was a mismatch between children who are in the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile and what their real literacy needs are. The work within the EMC is aligned with federal guidelines that mandate that English language learners receive certain services and types of instruction, and they are based on federal law. The EMC aligns to national expectations around this group of children who are protected.

The Clark County Black Caucus emphasized that they understood the protected nature of ELL, but they were also concerned about the unprotected nature of children in the state who score at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile in literacy and therefore are placed at risk for potential academic failure. These students should receive some type of concentrated focus in order to identify needs.

Chair Durodola stated that she posed many questions before the Clark County Black Caucus about progress monitoring tools, Core instructional models, pedagogical practices, differentiation, and the needs of children who speak variations of Standard English. The language in the amendment did not really address the goals of the Clark County Black Caucus; it only talked about developing the English proficiency of non-ELLs in order to improve their academic achievements, specifically around literacy or English Language Arts.

The Caucus felt that their goals of meeting the needs of children at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile who are non-English learners would benefit from utilizing the structure of the English Mastery Council.

The discussion resulted in two options. Chair Durodola stated that option 1 creates a new advisory council utilizing the same structure that the EMC currently utilizes to focus on students who score at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile or lower.

### **Discussion of Content of BDR 34-393 Language (continued)**

Chair Durodola stated that this council would have similar structures, responsibilities, and committee membership requirements as those that the EMC currently has, in addition to some other requirements, which were listed in the original amendment to include individuals who are knowledgeable about best practices for African American students.

Option 2 establishes a subcommittee of the EMC to focus on students who score at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile or lower. This subcommittee will make recommendations to the State Board to improve the academic language development and academic achievement of pupils who have scored at or below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile.

Ms. Brune explained the rationale for attaching these amendments to SB 178 was that an amendment could be aligned or attached to any rising legislation around SB 178, which directs funds to schools to serve the least proficient 25% of students. So there's a natural alignment with that sort of structure.

Chair Durodola stated this was an opportunity to provide some type of targeted attention to a group of children who are at risk for failure. She asked for Council's thoughts and opinions.

Ms. Talso said between these two options, she definitely would prefer a variation of the first one. She stated it wouldn't do anybody any good to combine the issues of English language learners with students who are struggling with academic achievement. She said she thought their focus should be around culturally responsive practices, not necessarily just ELA.

Mr. Duncan Lee shared some feedback from some Asian American parents who came to him as a member of the "prestigious" English Mastery Council. The EMC serves an important role in helping the Asian students. The pushback from the Asian community is that they want a constant emphasis on the English language learners. It's important to focus on the English language learners rather than take on additional responsibility. Mr. Lee stated the EMC should just focus on what they were formed to do.

Ms. Laurel Crossman said she would be in favor of a separate advisory council option. The Read by 3 Grant has already put things in place across the state. Perhaps they could have an overseeing role that that advisory council could work with.

Ms. Talso said she was opposed to the Academic Achievement Council name because it dilutes the focus on the group of the students that the Black Caucus was concerned with in the first place. There needs to be a focus on the state's culturally diverse populations across the board, regardless of what languages they speak.

Mr. Lee asked what was the rush to decide and why were they compelled to make a decision within the next 15 to 20 minutes.

Chair Durodola explained there was a deadline from the legislature that something should be finalized by noon to be presented. She stated they could put forth a vote for a separate new advisory council that's going to be created that focuses on the needs of the children that the Black Caucus is concerned about versus the option of a new subcommittee within the EMC.

## Discussion of Content of BDR 34-393 Language (continued)

**Motion:** Duncan Lee made a motion that the EMC recommend a separate council that deals with less proficient students and that the English Mastery Council concentrate on its original focus and mission on English language learners. Ms. Barone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Cervantes stated she thought they should revisit the statement that's being sent forward because it's saying that the English Mastery Council agrees with the Clark County Black Caucus that these stipulations should go forward. They as an English Mastery Council were being asked to support the ideas being brought forward by the Clark County Black Caucus to support the amendments to AB 92 that would make these shifts. She suggested a compromise where the EMC said there should be a separate committee created that would do that work that was presented by the Clark County Black Caucus.

Chair Durodola clarified that the verbiage at the beginning be removed and that perhaps the main idea be stated that a new advisory council be created, which is not saying that it's supported by the EMC, Clark County Black Caucus or the NDE. They are saying that a new advisory council will be created to focus on those issues that the Black Caucus brought forth.

Ms. Crossman said she thought they should say as an English Mastery Council their consensus is that a new advisory committee be formed. The specifics of that should be determined by those drafting the bill. Those students are deserving of attention, but they would be better served by a separate, independent council.

Chair Durodola asked Mr. Wilson what would be the next steps. Mr. Wilson said he hoped that Chair Durodola would be part of the conversation with leadership from the Clark County Black Caucus in terms of developing a joint statement that they would recommend move forward to the Assembly Committee on Education based on the discussion and the decisions of the English Mastery Council. The recommendation that a different council be established will go back and it will ultimately be up to the legislative committees to determine whether they want to go a new direction or continue with what they had already proposed.

Mr. Lee stated he did not want EMC to make a recommendation to agree or disapprove the language drawn by the Black Caucus dealing with the less proficient students. It's not something the EMC should get into.

Chair Durodola clarified they agreed that there would be a new advisory council created, and that this new advisory council, whatever the verbiage is, the narration for this amendment, should come from the Black Caucus so that it serves their needs.

## Public Comment #2

There were no public comments in Las Vegas or Carson City.

## Adjournment

After thanking everyone for their efforts and input, Chair Duradola adjourned the meeting at 11:02 A.M.