

**NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
FEBRUARY 15, 2019  
1:30 P.M.**

**Meeting Locations:**

<b>Office</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Meeting Room</b>
Department of Education	9890 S. Maryland Pkwy	Las, Vegas	Board Room (2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor)
Department of Education	700 E. Fifth St	Carson City	Board Room

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING  
*(Video Conferenced)*

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

**In Las Vegas**

Elaine Wynn  
Mark Newburn  
Robert Blakely  
Tonia Holmes-Sutton  
Felicia Ortiz  
Tamara Hudson

**In Carson City**

David Carter  
Teri White  
Dawn Miller

**DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT:**

**In Carson City**

Jonathan Moore, Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Greg Bortolin, Public Information Officer  
Chris Thomas, Education Program Professional  
Karen Johansen, Assistant to the State Board of Education  
Shawn Osborne, IT Technician  
Allison Combs, Policy Director, Governor's Office

**In Las Vegas**

Kim Bennett, Administrative Assistant

**LEGAL STAFF PRESENT**

**In Carson City**

Greg Ott, Senior Deputy Attorney General

**AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:**

**In Carson City:**

Pat Hickey, Executive Director, Charter School Association of Nevada  
Gennie Hudson, Human Resources  
Pamela Abercrombie, Indian Colony  
Mary Pierczynski, Nevada Association of School Superintendents

**In Las Vegas:**

Alexander Marks, Nevada State Education Association  
Patricia Haddad, Opportunity 180  
Michelle Housdorf, Rise Up  
John Vallardita, Clark County Education Association  
Carrie buck, Pinecrest Foundation,  
Sylvia Lazos, Nevada Immigration Coalition  
Beth Mundo, HOPE  
Anna Slighting, HOE  
Jenna Lavin, Opportunity 180  
Jenn Blackhurst, HOPE

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. with attendance as reflected above.

**Public Comment #1**

There was no public comment.

**Information, Discussion and Possible Action to solicit input from stakeholders regarding qualifications for the Superintendent of Public Instruction.**

President Wynn explained the Board is currently engaged in finding a replacement for the superintendent of public instruction. A job description has been posted, and the Board is interested in hearing stakeholder comments.

Pat Hickey, Executive Director, Nevada Charter School Association, stated he was a Legislator in 2011 when then Governor Sandoval spearheaded the change that resulted in the superintendent of education in Nevada becoming a cabinet position under the Governor, and changed the structure of the Board and the process whereby the Board plays a role in making that recommendation to a governor. He urged the Board, as they carry out their responsibilities, to find a person of vision and commitment who will complement the goals of newly elected Governor Sisolak, and be a strong leader that can carry their own weight with both the Governor and the Legislature as well. He hopes the reforms and enhanced efforts to improve the funding formula will be continued by the new superintendent. He also hopes public charter schools which were an important part of the puzzle to governor Sandoval and the most recent superintendents, will still be an important consideration and a partner with the new superintendent.

Pamela Abercrombie, representing the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, is representing Indian educators across Nevada. They would like to request that the new superintendent has an understanding of tribal sovereignty and will work with the 27 tribes and tribal leaders across Nevada. Ms. Abercrombie was adamant there is support of the NDE Indian Education Consultant position authorized by A.B. 266 from the 2003 Legislative Session. This position is critical for Indian education across the state and for closing the gaps for Native students

Sylvia Lazos, Nevada Immigrant Coalition, suggested adding “ understands and can engage with the diverse Nevada student and parent community” to the job description. (audio difficulties) General comments regarding recommendations include a superintendent who is someone that understands the importance of a person bringing a diverse perspective to leadership. Someone who is a national player, and is not just about Nevada politics. We want this to be about the person who can see where Nevada is as a national state, and where we need to go.

Jenn Blackhurst, HOPE for Nevada, represents 1100 families who are members of HOPE for Nevada, a student focused public education advocacy group. Input was received from their community regarding the superintendent. The top three qualities that were considered the most important are:

- Has successfully met the challenges of leading a large organization dedicated to ambitious goals, high standards, and continuous improvement and can articulate a clear vision of quality education

with documented evidence of consistent positive results.

- Will continue to work toward equity and adequacy in Nevada education funding
- Experience working with all student demographics including special needs students such as English Language Learners, Special Education, Free and Reduced Lunch students, Gifted and Talented education.

The importance of the future superintendent continuing the work of equity and adequacy in education funding ranked highest. The quality ranked least important was understands and appreciates Nevada institutions, culture, political and educational leadership.

Tameka Henry, Board Member, Rise Up Nevada, which stands for Representing Improvement in Schools and Engagement. They are a diverse group of parents whose families live in east and north Las Vegas as well as the historic west side. Their mission is to connect with, empower and provide families with necessary resources to advocate relentlessly for quality education and positive change within Nevada. They identified priorities to consider for the next superintendent:

- Demonstrate an ability to articulate a clear vision of quality education with documented evidence of consistent positive results. Must have a clear and evident track record of getting results.
- Experience working with large budgets, education funding formulas and federal grants to ensure that work with fixing the funding formula can be carried forward by a strong leader.
- Strongly committed to education reform and a student first philosophy.
- Committed to equity and to ensure all students in Nevada are successful regardless of race, zip code or socio-economic status.

Alexander Marks, Nevada State Education Association (NSEA), stated that the NSEA requests that the Board strongly consider applicants who have a passion and record of fighting for public schools and the institution of public education - including our students, educators, parents and communities. Ideally, applicants would have their heart with students in the classroom and at school sites. This can help inform and drive their work in managing large budgets, transitioning Nevada's funding formula to build more equity for diverse student populations and inspire all statewide stakeholders to continue improving Nevada's public schools.

NSEA takes issue with language in the draft Job Announcement referring to "education reform" as unnecessarily vague. "Reform" could include corporate efforts such as private school vouchers, expansion of charter schools without appropriate accountability, efforts to blame teachers for any shortcomings in the classroom, and our system of over-testing that began with the Federal Race to the Top. NSEA hopes that these "reforms" will be left behind as our new superintendent takes on the work of advanced public education in Nevada.

Member Newburn commented about the desired qualifications in the draft job announcement. Ranking will come into play with the subcommittee when it comes time to select resumes. The priority will be a factor then. Of the comments he heard that were not trying to subtly trying change education policy were; understand and appreciates Nevada's institutions, culture and he suggested including diversity. It would read understand, and appreciate Nevada's institutions culture, diversity and political and educational leadership. When this started a decade ago, education reform meant something different. It meant improving outcomes for all students. Slowly over time the term has evolved and has been usurped by certain organizations. It has taken on an adversarial tone that it does not need. The mantra has always been, improving academic outcomes for all students. He would like that sentence to read, *strongly committed to improving academic outcomes for all students.*

President Wynn noted that language exists in the sentence that also includes, *and student first philosophy*. In view of the earlier comment made about expanding the definition of what student focus is, she asked if he would like to recommend another approach in that category as well. Member Newburn said when committed to improving academic outcomes for all students, it implies the student first focus.

Deputy Attorney General Greg Ott suggested that Genevieve Hudson, Human Resources, incorporates suggestions from the Board unless there is an objection. If a member of the Board feels suggested language

should not be included, then they could speak up for a discussion. Otherwise Ms. Hudson will incorporate the changes as we go, eliminating the need for a formal motion for each specific change. President Wynn asked if any board member would not be supported of what member Newburn has advanced. Hearing no objections, the suggestions will be passed on for incorporation.

In response to member Blakely, member Newburn noted that some comments received are less about job qualifications and more about trying to change policy, or change the superintendent's job. Neither are appropriate.

President Wynn reviewed comments received today including a suggestion about evidence based programs which is covered in the job description. She noted it was a good recommendation to expand the consideration of candidates who may have more of a national presence or experienced background.

Member Ortiz agreed and said suggested the language could be " understands and appreciates the national education landscape and has national connections that will allow Nevada to maintain its national presence".

Member Carter concurred but also thought it might conflict with understanding and appreciating Nevada's institutions, culture and political educational leadership. He recognizes the value and questioned if the search is going to be expanded to a nationwide search, and that there may be a majority of those from other states that would know very little about the culture in Nevada. In going national he suggested to consider removing that item and looking at it as a possibility of encouraging individuals to learn those institutions as soon as they are hired. President Wynn said she does not want to speculate, but anyone applying for this job will probably do a great deal of research for this job so they can understand the environment.

Member Newburn concurred. He said he does not think the two are conflicting, it is additional desired qualifications and part of what the subcommittee will consider. He recommended keeping both qualifications and appreciated member Ortiz's point to have familiarity with the national landscape. Member Carter agreed.

**Information, Discussion and Possible Action to form a Superintendent of Public Instruction Search sub-committee of the Board.** The sub-committee may review candidates applications, select candidates for interviews and perform other tasks related to the search for the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

President Wynn said one of the most important jobs the Board has is to present superintendent candidates to the Governor. In discussing with the Governor's office, the board has concluded that they can lead a thorough search and complete it on an accelerated timeline. Governor Sisolak and his team have been good partners and she is grateful for that. It is critically important.

President Wynn stated she has given a great deal of thought to the composition of the subcommittee to ensure maximum diversity of the expertise required. She proposed a subcommittee of five, comprised of vice president Newburn as the chair, and member Ortiz as vice chair. Member Holmes-Sutton will be the parent representative, member Hudson will represent teachers on the Board, and member Carter will represent the north and ensure the national and Nevada elements will be successfully collaborative. She expressed gratitude for the board members willingness to participate on the subcommittee. They will be working with the states personnel office to ensure the robust search to review candidates. A special committee will review the candidates on March 5, and on March 12 qualified candidates will be presented to the board for interviews.

**Member Blakely moved to approve the creation of the subcommittee and to include the five members President Wynn suggested. Member Ortiz seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

#### **Public Comment #2**

There was no public comment.

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.