

**NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MARCH 12, 2020
9:00 A.M.**

Meeting Location:

Office	Address	City	Meeting Room
Department of Education	2080 E. Flamingo Rd.	Las Vegas	Board Room
Department of Education	700 E Fifth St	Carson City	Board Room

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

In Carson City

Kevin Melcher

In Las Vegas

Dawn Miller

Elaine Wynn

Felicia Ortiz

Katherine Dockweiler

Mark Newburn

Robert Blakely

Tamara Hudson

In Elko

Cathy McAdoo

Members Absent

Rui Ya Wang

Teri White

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT

In Las Vegas

Jhone Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Felicia Gonzales, Deputy Superintendent of Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement

Heidi Haartz, Deputy Superintendent of Business and Support Services

Jonathan Moore, Deputy Superintendent of Student Achievement

Jessica Todtman, Chief Strategy Officer

Gabrielle Lamarre, Education Programs Supervisor

Melissa Scott, Education Programs Supervisor

Dr. Kristen Withey, Education Programs Professional

In Carson City

Sarah Nick, Management Analyst III

David Brancamp, Director of Standards and Instructional Support

Peter Zutz, Director of Assessment, Data & Accountability Management

Megan Peterson, Management Analyst III

Dr. Patrick Bell, Education Programs Supervisor

Randi Hunewill, Education Programs Supervisor

Stefani Hogan, Management Analyst IV

LEGAL STAFF PRESENT

Greg Ott, Chief Deputy Attorney General

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE

In Las Vegas

Alexander Marks, Nevada State Education Association
Allison Cook, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Andrea Delaney, Nevada Association of School Psychologists
Andrea Walsh, Clark County School District
Bill Garis, Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees
Bob Weires, Clark County School District
Flor Mowery, Clark County School District
Kathy Mead, Clark County School District
Kelly O'Rourke, Clark County School District
Leonardo Benavides, Clark County School District
Linda Hafen, Voyager Sopris Learning
Mamie Peers, Leadership Las Vegas
Monte Bay, National University
Pamela Salazar, Teachers and Leaders Council
Patricia Haddad, Opportunity 180
Peter Grema, Clark County Education Association
Sasha Bisda, School Psychologist
Shelly Edwards, School Psychologist
Stephanie Patton, Nevada Association of School Psychologists
Tracy Spies, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Willie D. Killins Jr., Outlook University Independent School Network
Zane Gray, Sierra Nevada University

In Carson City

Charles Lednický, Washoe County School District
Emma Dickinson, Nevada Association of School Psychologists
Greg Bortolin, Governor's Office of Economic Development
Keeli Killian, Nevada School Counselor Association
Kimm Rombardo, Northwest Evaluation Association
Mary Pierczynski, Nevada Association of School Superintendents
Nancy Kuhles, Nevada Speech Language Hearing Association
Paige Beckwith, Nevada Association of School Psychologists

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

Meeting called to order at 9:00 A.M. by President Elaine Wynn. Quorum was established. President Wynn led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2: PUBLIC COMMENT #1

Nancy Kuhles, Nevada Speech-Language Hearing Association, spoke regarding agenda item 8, Recommendations from the Teachers and Leaders Council, specifically their revisions to the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) for Speech-Language Pathologists. *(A complete copy of her statement is available in Appendix A)*

Emma Dickinson, President, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, spoke regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel. *(A complete copy of her statement is available in Appendix A)*

Paige Beckwith, Director at Large, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, spoke regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel. *(A complete copy of her statement is available in Appendix A)*

Keeli Killian, President, Nevada School Counselors Association, spoke regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel. *(A complete copy of her statement is available in Appendix A)*

Shelly Edwards, School Psychologist, Clark County School District spoke regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel. *(A complete copy of her statement is available in Appendix A)*

Alexander Marks, Nevada State Education Association, spoke regarding Census 2020. *(A complete copy of his statement is available in Appendix A)*

Bob Weires, Director of Psychological Services, Clark County School District, spoke regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel. *(A complete copy of his statement is available in Appendix A)*

Andrea Walsh, School Psychologist, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, spoke regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel. *(A complete copy of her statement is available in Appendix A)*

Kathy Mead, Director of Guidance and Counseling, Clark County School District, spoke regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel. *(A complete copy of her statement is available in Appendix A)*

Stephanie Patton, President-Elect, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, spoke regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel. *(A complete copy of her statement is available in Appendix A)*

President Wynn assured that Specialized Instructional Support Personnel were of great importance to the Board, and they would engage in an aggressive discussion about the ratios. She further thanked them for their work as unsung heroes in schools, as the work they do becomes increasingly demanding.

Kimberly Reddig, President, Nevada Speech-Language Hearing Association, submitted written testimony regarding agenda item 8, Recommendations from the Teachers and Leaders Council, specifically their revisions to the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) for Speech-Language Pathologists. *(A complete copy of her statement is available in Appendix A)*

117 members of the public submitted written testimony as part of a write-in campaign regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel. *(A complete copy of their statement, as well as a complete list of all members of the public who submitted testimony, is available in Appendix A)*

3: APPROVAL OF FLEXIBLE AGENDA

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

4: PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Computer Science Education Summit was postponed until October.

Reading Week was held March 2-6, and President Wynn was one of many who were able to visit schools as a guest reader. President Wynn noted that on her visit, she was dismayed by the status of the library and reflected on the issue of resources.

As Census 2020 approaches, Sesame Street will be airing a public service announcement, stressing the confidentiality of the census and the variety of ways to participate.

Addressing Coronavirus, President Wynn emphasized that the health and safety of students, educators, staff, and our communities are the priority. The Department of Education has been working closely with the Governor's Office and the State Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to support districts and schools in prevention and response plans. On February 13th, the Department worked with DHHS to finalize a resource for school administrators and nurses which was updated and made available on the State Coronavirus website. A "Frequently Asked Questions" document was circulated to all district superintendents, as well as charter and private school administrators to support them in addressing local needs. Those documents will be updated as new information is made available. Superintendent Jhone Ebert will continue to work in close coordination with the Governor's Office and other cabinet officials, and the Department is working diligently to answer questions as they arise. President Wynn thanked the staff and school leaders within the districts for their composure, leadership, and empathy during this critical time.

5: SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

The Department is continually updating the "Frequently Asked Questions" document, and Superintendent Ebert commended the leadership of the district superintendents. Addressing distance learning, the Department is working with districts and the pre-existing talent within the state to move forward with investigating distance learning options.

The Commission on School Funding met in February; the Commission dedicated its Thursday meeting solely to hear public comment; to ensure every voice was heard, the Commission meeting lasted until nearly 7 PM. Deputy Superintendent Heidi Haartz presents regular updates from the Commission to the Interim Legislative Committee on Education, and the Department has recently met with the Department of Taxation to discuss the information needed from taxation regarding revenue sources for the State Education Fund, and revising the template districts use to submit their budgets to better accommodate the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan. Work Programs have been developed for the April Interim Finance Committee to review, requesting funds to build a shared budgeting system throughout the state; currently, budgets are submitted on individual Excel spreadsheets. Finally, the Department has begun developing summary documents describing the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan, each of its components, and the decisions made to date to increase transparency. The Commission is scheduled to meet in March to discuss the weights for categories of pupils, the effort and impact of reporting requirements, and benchmarking for monitoring implementation, as well as finalizing the calendar of meetings for the remainder of 2020. The April meeting is scheduled to be held in Elko. The May meeting is scheduled to conduct comparative analyses of school district budgets under the two funding models and the rules and guidance available for school districts as implementation approaches. The June meeting is scheduled to reflect on recommendations the Commission would like to make to the Legislature and Governor, due July 15th.

The official kickoff for Census 2020 is March 12th. The Department has been working with schools, teachers, and stakeholders to ensure that information is available for families in English and Spanish and engage students in spreading awareness. The week of March 23rd, Department staff are scheduled to receive training from the U.S. Census Bureau; the week of March 30th-April 3rd will be recognized as the Census Day of Action. Census Day is April 1st. Through the work of the Governor's Complete Count Initiative, flyers have been made available and sent to all schools to spread awareness to hard-to-reach communities. Patti Oya, Director of Early Learning and Development, has also been working to spread awareness that birth through Pre-K populations should also be included in Census counts.

The ACT has been selected as the college and career readiness assessment required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act; this assessment was taken by all 11th graders in February. Superintendent Ebert discussed the data regarding [the ACT Participation and Fee Waiver Rate](#). 35,000 students took the ACT in 11th grade; of those students, 21,000 were eligible for a fee waiver in order to take the test again in 12th grade. The Superintendent noted that only approximately 10 percent of the students eligible for fee waivers used them in 2019.

6: APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Member Felicia Ortiz asked to pull the Class Size Reduction Report and the Lander County Application for Work-Based Learning for further discussion.

Regarding the Lander County School District Application for Work-Based Learning, Member Ortiz asked what consideration was given to students who were Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) or whose parents may be undocumented, as the application process may lead some students to choose not to pursue the opportunity due to that status.

Melissa Scott, Assistant Director, Office of Career Readiness, Adult Learning & Education Options, Department of Education, noted that the work-based learning application is relatively standard across the districts, and there are prescriptions in the Nevada Revised Statutes and Nevada Administrative Code for what must go into an application, which Lander County adhered to. Given these requirements, Ms. Scott was unsure of how this may affect students with documentation concerns. At the request of President Wynn and Member Ortiz, Ms. Scott will further research the matter and return to the Board to report on her findings.

Regarding the First Quarter Class Size Reduction Report, Member Ortiz noted that the data is not necessarily reflective of the class sizes in schools. Member Ortiz inquired how the Department was evaluating district plans to improve class size reduction, and how they are holding districts accountable. Member Newburn asked that this topic be a future agenda item.

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

7: INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE STATEWIDE PLAN FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF PUPILS

Jessica Todtman, Chief Strategy Officer, Nevada Department of Education, and Sarah Nick, Management Analyst III, Office of the Superintendent, Nevada Department of Education, conducted a PowerPoint presentation [on the Statewide Plan for the Improvement of Pupils](#).

Member Newburn clarified that the complete Statewide Plan for the Improvement of Pupils (STIP) would be presented at the April meeting. Member Blakely supported the process for quality that the Department was undertaking in their drafting process.

President Wynn inquired about advocacy of funding, and funding as it relates to the Legislature. Superintendent Ebert clarified that once the goals of the STIP had been established, the Department would be able to evaluate the funding needed to reach and pursue those goals. The Commission on School Funding is doing their part to draft a Pupil-Centered Funding Plan, and the Department will then advocate

for best practices and the best learning environment for Nevada’s children. President Wynn recommended that consideration be given to identifying the activity that would involve advocacy of funding at the legislative and gubernatorial level. Member Ortiz seconded the recommendation and emphasized its importance. Ms. Todtman noted that early inputs for the STIP include advocacy to be done with education partners towards raising awareness of issues within the community and at the Legislature, beginning in the 2021 session.

8: INFORMATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE TEACHERS AND LEADERS COUNCIL

Dr. Pamela Salazar, Chair, Teachers and Leaders Council, and Dr. Kristin Withey, Education Programs Professional, Office of Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement, Nevada Department of Education, conducted a PowerPoint presentation regarding [Recommendations from the Teachers and Leaders Council](#).

Member Katherine Dockweiler thanked the Teachers and Leaders Council for their work and the avenue they provide for organizations to work through and modify their unique professional standards.

Member Dockweiler moved to approve the recommended revision to the Nevada Educator Performance Framework for School Counselors, School Nurses, and Speech-Language Pathologists for adoption in the 2020-21 school year from the Teachers and Leaders Council. Member Blakely seconded. Motion passed.

Member Newburn asked for further clarification regarding the reasoning for bringing Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 491 to workshop for revision. Dr. Salazar noted that many standardized assessments are not precise measures of individual content standards; they measure multiple standards, which makes it difficult to parse out a particular standard that a student may need. Teachers were unable to match student need and assessments within their Student Learning Goals (SLG).

Member Newburn asked what steps were going to be taken to ensure that there were not going to be conflicting indicators and student progress was being successfully measured. Member Dawn Miller noted that there is not a standardized assessment for music students, but she still creates an SLG. The current process excludes her students, as she lacks a standardized test. The proposed shows a snapshot of 6-10 weeks of progress, which allows for the focus of a particular strand of content and learning, where a standardized assessment may show an entire year’s progress.

Responding to Member Newburn, Dr. Salazar clarified that the understanding of the current process is that everyone must use a standardized assessment. However, this does conflict with the instruction to use the best cyclometric test available for the content standard.

Member Newburn moved to approve the recommended revision to NAC 491, as revised by R138-17, to be brought to public workshop for revision from the Teachers and Leaders Council. Member Blakely seconded. Motion passed.

9: INFORMATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING NON-BINDING RECOMMENDED RATIOS FOR SPECIALIZED INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Christy McGill, Director of the Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment (OSRLE), Nevada Department of Education, and Amber Reid, Education Programs Professional, OSRLE, Nevada Department of Education, conducted a PowerPoint presentation on [Non-Binding Recommended Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel \(SISP\)](#).

Member Ortiz inquired if the Department had done a gap analysis for current ratios versus reaching the proposed ratios, and the approximate cost of meeting the ratios. Ms. Reid noted that the Department had previously done an analysis with school social workers and school counselors; the last estimate had been an increase of 1800-1900 school social workers and school counselors; a cost estimate would be possible to attain, but pay varies across districts and may take more time to compile. School psychologists could

be added to this analysis. Director McGill noted that the Department had been investigating Medicaid as a possible funding source for SISP.

Member Kevin Melcher asked if school nurses had a required level of qualification; Ms. Reid noted that the National Association of School Nurses included information on levels of qualification, and each state includes scopes of practice within their regulations. Member Melcher expressed concern with the availability of SISP, such as Speech-Language Pathologists, in rural counties, and inquired if there were plans to work with higher education to recruit and prepare SISP to meet needs. Ms. Reid shared the Department's efforts to expand grant funding, interest students in pursuing SISP jobs, and work to meet needs, including bilingual SISP services. Member Ortiz added that Nevada State College is now offering a Masters in Speech-Language Pathology and should be able to graduate an additional 60 students per year; they will also be putting their School of Education online in the Fall.

Member Dockweiler noted that the National Association of School Psychologists have a mechanism in place to track employment nationally, which will provide a more accurate assessment of ratios. She further noted that Nevada was short approximately 3,500 school-based mental health providers. Member Ortiz estimated that the funds needed to appropriately staff SISP to their ratios would be approximately \$300 million. Estimated revenues from marijuana tax in 2019 was approximately \$65 million, which still fell significantly short of need.

President Wynn expressed that non-binding ratios are an exercise in futility, as they are the ratios schools would undertake if they had the funding. Since the Board was required to set non-binding ratios, President Wynn asked that the Board strongly signal the deficiency of these categories and adjust the ratios to reflect that concern and need. For example, a ratio of 1:250 for school psychologists, which illustrates the need in schools and when analyzing funding, would be an accurate reflection of the goal to reach. Member Ortiz noted that these ratios are recommended to support general education students; Nevada has approximately 12% Special Education, 30% English Learners, and in Clark County, 67% Free and Reduced Lunch; staff are not supporting only general education students.

Member Ortiz noted that students often express an interest in learning more about mental health, but school mental health providers are not able to provide educational or preventative services if they are constantly in postvention or intervention due to shortages. Without mental health support, students are more likely to end up in the juvenile justice system, dropping out of school, or self-harming. Member Ortiz emphasized the importance of adequate funding.

Member Melcher noted that some schools may have special needs beyond the ratio and evaluating all assignments by ratio only may mean shorting one school in order to provide for the specific needs of another. Member Melcher suggested assembling a task force to organize information and present a united front for the forthcoming Legislative session. President Wynn clarified that the decision of the Board was not time sensitive, and invited Member Melcher to pursue a task force investigating SISP. Chief Deputy Attorney General Greg Ott clarified that no subcommittee would be formed, and any work done by Member Melcher with other Board members regarding SISP would be done outside of a quorum.

Convenience Break

10: INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS OF THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

Dr. Patrick Bell, Education Programs Supervisor, Office of Assessment, Data & Accountability Management, Nevada Department of Education; Gabrielle Lamarre, Education Programs Supervisor, Office of Student and School Supports, Nevada Department of Education, and Stefani Hogan, Management Analyst IV, District Support Services, Nevada Department of Education, conducted a PowerPoint presentation on the [Implementation of the Financial Transparency Requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act](#).

President Wynn requested clarification regarding how the new Pupil-Centered Funding Plan would relate to this data. Ms. Hogan noted that per-pupil expenditures are currently reported in the Report Card, and this would be enhanced with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Financial Transparency requirements; these are reported by expenditures. Under the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan, how schools are utilizing their funds will be reviewable, and work is being done to create systems to assist in capturing the process of dollars flowing through schools.

Member Newburn remarked that financial transparency may have been one of the best elements, and one of the best methods for equity, to come out of ESSA. He requested clarification regarding whether the reporting would be specific for the salaries to the school, and not averaged district salaries. President Wynn further requested confirmation that budgets would be completed at the school level, receive an allocation, and determine how they would allocate those funds. Member Newburn emphasized that using average salaries skews results, as a school with new teachers uses significantly less, while a school with more experienced teachers may use well above the average amount to fund their salaries. Member Newburn emphasized the importance of financial transparency and accountability to the public.

Deputy Superintendent Haartz clarified that ESSA reporting requirements will track expenditures at the individual school level; instructional costs will report salaries but will not segregate the salary expenses by professional type; teachers and paraprofessionals will be reported in one lump sum. Under the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan, individual schools would account for the adjusted base per-pupil funding that they receive from their district, and separately account for weighted funding.

11: FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Member Newburn requested insight into class size reduction plans, including the expectation of the plans, the type of support the Department is providing, if the plans are realistic, and what districts are doing to monitor the schools' plans.

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 schools or their profession. She noted that understanding if teachers are moving to other schools or districts or leaving the profession altogether would also be important.

12: PUBLIC COMMENT #2

No public comment.

13: ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 A.M.

Appendix A: Statements Given During Public Comment

1. Nancy Kuhles, Nevada Speech-Language Hearing Association, spoke regarding agenda item 8, Recommendations from the Teachers and Leaders Council, specifically their revisions to the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) for Speech-Language Pathologists.
2. Emma Dickinson, President, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, spoke regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel.
3. Paige Beckwith, Director at Large, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, spoke regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel.
4. Keeli Killian, President, Nevada School Counselors Association, spoke regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel.
5. Shelly Edwards, School Psychologist, Clark County School District, spoke regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel.
6. Alexander Marks, Nevada State Education Association, spoke regarding Census 2020.
7. Bob Weires, Director of Psychological Services, Clark County School District, spoke regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel.
8. Andrea Walsh, School Psychologist, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, spoke regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel.
9. Kathy Mead, Director of Counseling, Clark County School District, spoke regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel.
10. Stephanie Patton, President-Elect, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, spoke regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel.
11. Kimberly Reddig, President, Nevada Speech-Language Hearing Association, submitted written testimony regarding agenda item 8, Recommendations from the Teachers and Leaders Council, specifically their revisions to the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) for Speech-Language Pathologists.
12. 117 members of the public submitted written testimony as part of a write-in campaign regarding agenda item 9, Non-Binding Ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel.

Item A1, Nancy Kuhles

Good morning, for the record my name is Nancy Kuhles, I am a speech-language pathologist. President Wynn, Vice President Newburn, and Members of the State Board of Education, good morning. My name is Nancy Kuhles. I am a speech-language pathologist and serve in the role of Lead for the Workgroup that revised the NEPF Framework for Speech Language Pathologists. For the record, I would like to address item number 8 on the State Board of Education's agenda and the information that will be presented.

On behalf of the Speech Language Pathologist Workgroup, I respectfully request the members of the State Board of Education to approve the NEPF Framework for the Speech Language Pathologists for the 2020-2021 school year.

The NEPF Framework for SLPs (Speech-Language Pathologists) was piloted in 2017/2018 and fully implemented in 2018/2019. Implementation provided insight and perspective into what was working with the Framework, concerns with it, and a request by SLPs to revise it. In June 2019, the TLC approved the reconvening of the SLP Workgroup to revise the Framework.

The current NEPF Framework for SLPs has two rubrics, Professional Practice and Professional Responsibilities, with a total of 10 standards and 31 indicators. A thorough document specifically developed by SLPs for SLPs.

However, the rubrics were not capturing the real work of a SLP. There was duplicated language, the rubrics were cumbersome for both the evaluator and SLP and new hires were overwhelmed with the wordiness of the rubrics. Evaluators did not understand the clinical verbiage and there were redundancies within standards and indicators resulting in implementation challenges.

The reconvening of the SLP Workgroup addressed these concerns and others resulting in a revised Framework containing language that is clear, concise, and captures the essence and real work of the SLP. The revised Framework consists of one category, Educational Practice, and one domain, Professional Practices. There are 4 standards and 17 indicators. The revised Framework for aligns ASHA's national standards and practices, nationally recognized practice guidance standards, federal regulations, and where applicable, the NEPF.

CEEDAR and the Council for Exceptional Children developed a set of High Leverage Practices for special educators. The revised NEPF Framework for SLPs has 17 indicators, of which all 17 are High Leverage Practices.

In closing, on behalf of the SLP Workgroup, I would like to take this opportunity to thank President Wynn, Vice President Newburn, and the members of the State Board of Education for all the work you do and the opportunity to provide public comment on agenda item number 8 addressing the revised NEPF Framework for Speech-Language Pathologists. I respectfully request your consideration in approving the revised NEPF Framework for Speech-Language Pathologists for the 2020-2021 school year. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Item A2, Emma Dickinson

Good morning, President Wynn, Vice President Newburn, and Members. My name is Emma Dickinson and I am President of the Nevada Association of School Psychologists, in addition to serving as a practicing school psychologist in the Washoe County School District. I am speaking to you today in regards to agenda item 9, in favor of establishing ratios of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel, or SISP, including school psychologists, according to the national guidelines of which school psychologists is 1 psychologist to 500 students.

Currently in our state, according to our research, the ratio is approximately 1 psychologist to 1825 students. In some places the ratio ranges as high as 1 to 2500 students. This is unacceptable. School psychologists are uniquely trained to deliver comprehensive behavioral and mental health support to students, in preventative and responsive roles, as well as with direct and indirect services. This is in addition to being experts in academic development. However, working in a comprehensive capacity requires that we have the numbers to do so. Evaluating students for Special Education is an important part of our role but requires an extraordinary amount of time due to the legal requirements and timelines. If we were to have our ratios at 1:500-700 we would be able to ensure schools as systems employ evidence-based preventative practices, such as universal screening for mental health issues, and deliver direct services to students who require more intensive supports. This would not only benefit students who require such services, but all students.

In my 12 years as a school psychologist and 23 years working with multiple school systems across Nevada, I have witnessed time and time again the ravages of trauma, substance abuse, and severe mental illness. These take a tremendous toll daily on our schools, community, and in society. I remember one student in particular, who did not have the support system of his family to help him. He dropped out and was living on the street due to incapacity directly linked to his untreated severe mental illness. As a school counselor at the time, there was nothing I could do for this young man. With more mental health school professionals, such as school counselors, school social workers, and psychologists, more early preventative measures could be taken, in order to avoid the situation like the one my student faced.

Ensuring proper support for all of our students so they can access their education and succeed to their potential becomes a moral imperative for all of us. The suicide rate in Nevada is one of the highest in the country. It literally becomes life or death, as in the case of the recent student suicide in Washoe County School District. Please vote in favor of improving ratios for all SISPs, including a ratio of 1:500 students for School Psychologists, and finding the funding to make this a reality.

Item A3, Paige Beckwith

Hi, my name is Paige Beckwith, I am representing to the Nevada Association of School Psychologists, and I would like to address item number 9. Good morning. My name is Paige Beckwith, and I am Director at Large of the Nevada Association of School Psychologists. I am also a school psychologist in Lyon County School District. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of establishing ratios of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel. Specifically, I would like to encourage your support for the National Association of School Psychologists recommended ratio of 1 school psychologist for every 500 students. Our national association has made this ratio recommendation based on solid data and research which shows this is what is effective and beneficial for students.

My professional experience supports that this ratio is vitally important to not only the academic achievement of students, but for the health and safety of students, staff, schools, families, and communities. Lyon County is the fourth largest school district in the state and encompasses 2,024 square miles. We have 18 schools located in 5 unique attendance areas. As in much of the state, the number of students in my caseload is far above the recommended ratio of 1:500. I currently have a caseload of over 2000 students, which is four times larger than the recommended ratio.

During my 9 years as a school psychologist, the needs of our students have continued to become greater. So many of our students have experienced trauma, which contributes to significant negative school and life outcomes, including disruptive behavior, poor attention, truancy, and academic problems. Additionally, we know that 1 in 5 students will experience a mental health problem that requires support. It is heartbreaking to experience the reality that many families lack access to outside mental health providers, and it is devastating to know that school psychologists are uniquely trained to provide mental health support in schools, but that due to high caseload numbers, we are relegated to a fraction of the support we can provide.

School psychologists are highly trained, dedicated, and among the hardest workers on school campuses. We have a heart for students, and we know that we have the capability to do so much more to help students thrive. I respectfully ask for your support of the recommended ratio that will allow us to support our students, schools, families, and communities in the way they deserve. Thank you for your time and attention.

Item A4, Keeli Killian

Good morning, my name is Keeli Killian, I am the President of the Nevada School Counselor Association, and I'm also a school counselor specialist in Washoe County. I just want to thank you today for allowing some of us in the school mental health field to speak with you. I'm here to speak with you today regarding the support and work towards the non-binding ratios for Specialized Instructional Support Personnel. I'm also a parent of a student in Washoe County School District, and before I give you some information, all of the work that we're doing and all of the requests that we're making are for our students. It's not just for us as educators, but it's for our students because at the end of the day, that's who we are working for, is for the students of Nevada.

So there's a lot of research to support the ratios, and I'm not going to spend a lot of time with you today on that research, but I do want to give you some information, so that you understand the critical need of what's going on in our schools, and I'm going to share some information regarding Washoe County School District. As you know, we have a tip line called SafeVoice, and students access this tip line when they need help, and on the end of every single tip is a school counselor. So last year at this time, the last two months of school, we received 238 tips in Washoe County. This year at this same time, we're well over 100 more tips from students to SafeVoice regarding things like suicide, self-harm, bullying, guns/weapons violence, and that is critical if we are to be helping students and we don't have the correct amount of staff to do so.

Secondly, one of the things that we are doing in Washoe County, is we have suicide prevention for all of our middle school students, and we decided to put the suicide screener permission for parents on our registration. And this is for 7th grade. So as of March 3rd, we had 2000 responses for parents who want their students screened next year. That's not even 50% of the parents who have registered. Washoe County School District is projected to have about 5300 7th graders next year, and we're going to be close to 90% for screening students. And who is going to be able to do that? It's going to have to be our school mental health professionals, and it's going to be a critical need. And of course, we are going to partner with our community agencies to help us, but I just want to give you some numbers so that you understand the dire situation that we are in, just related to mental health alone.

You are going to hear some information about our evaluation, which is really important, we worked really hard on that, but if much of the work we're doing is related to intervention and postvention, it's very very hard to get to prevention and do the work that's required just on our evaluation for our job. So those are just a few numbers to show you how critical it is, and what's going on with our students. I was also a first responder to the Damonte Ranch High School, and in Washoe County alone, we have had 6 students die, and several staff members die. Our department is the Crisis Response Department, we do not have a separate department in Washoe County School District, so every time we respond to a crisis, we are pulling from other schools to help us, we are pulling our school psychologists, our school social workers, and our school counselors, to help us alleviate the pressure at schools because we do not have the recommended ratios to support schools and critical needs in a time of crisis and response.

So thank you so much for listening to me today. I think I may have some other colleagues who may be speaking in Las Vegas. I appreciate your time; I appreciate the work that you do in support of our students in Nevada. Thank you.

Item A5, Shelly Edwards

I would get called first, I'm so nervous. It's my first time. Thank you. Dear Honorable and Esteemed Board Members, my name is Shelly Edwards. I'm a school psychologist in Nevada, and I am here to advocate for lower student ratios. 1:5-700 Specialized Instructional Support Personnel in accordance with Senate Bill 89.

I have been a Nevada resident and an educator here in this great state for the past 20 years. I am proud to call Nevada my home. Nevada is a unique state and has a prodigious heritage that includes many firsts. The first state to discover and mine silver; the first state to pass the 15th amendment and provide African-Americans with the opportunity to vote; the first state to embrace Elon Musk and his Boring Company; the first all female-led state legislature, and the list goes on and on. Unfortunately, where Nevada has not been first is in education. Large class sizes, large ratios of students to support personnel, and educational spending, have often taken a back seat to other Nevada priorities, such as gaming, mining, and the new Allegiant Stadium.

Meanwhile, Nevada students are desperate for necessary supports and services that can be offered through multi-tiered systems of support. I currently provide assistance to support to over 8 campuses and approximately 5000 students. And I am here to tell you that I am not enough. I am in a unique position in that I work with both CCSD and Nevada Charters, and I can tell you that both institutions are suffering from a lack of appropriate support personnel. There are currently not enough supports available to these schools, and I am stretched way too thin to be able to provide the level of supports and services that are needed. We need more psychologists, social workers, and counselors. We need more mental health supports and services for our youth. We are headed towards a crisis that needs your intervention.

Well here is my challenge for you today. Today you have an opportunity to make Nevada's children a priority. to make sure the children of Nevada finally have access to the necessary supports and services that are so desperately needed to address the fragile mental health of today's youth. Today you have the ability to continue on Nevada's proud heritage of firsts and innovation. Today you are dared to lead. I implore you to please adopt the ratios of 1:5-700 support personnel, like school psychologists, so that we can address student needs, and raise the bar. So that we can make Nevada's children first: our first priority. Thank you so much for your time, I appreciate it.

Item A6, Alexander Marks

Good morning, Madame President, Members, Alexander Marks with the Nevada State Education Association. Article 1, Section 2 mandates that the country conduct a count of its population once every ten years. That count starts today. Today, most Nevadan's, if they haven't already received something from the U.S. Census Bureau will be able to go online to my2020census.gov and fill out the census online. If you recall a couple meetings ago, Member Ortiz gave a great presentation on the billions of dollars that are at stake with the census; everything from Title I to National School Lunch, Head Start, CTE, etc. 6.2 billion dollars was the last census, that's how much Nevada got. So obviously as leaders, members of this committee, we need your help to spread the word, as everybody else in the community is doing. So as part of the Education Subcommittee, we have fielded quite a few questions from members in the committee about misinformation, disinformation, myths, and I would like to go over at least three or four right now, just to get on the record, so that if anyone's listening or wondering, they'll have the answers.

One, the census does not include a citizenship question. Two, the census does not count only U.S. citizens, it is about counting every person living in our 50 states, District of Columbia, and our 5 territories. The census is safe, important, and necessary. Federal law prohibits using census information for law enforcement, immigration enforcement, or any personal reason. There are steep penalties and the Census Bureau also does not disclose any of this information for 70 years. In 70 years, I can't imagine it's going to be very personal to any of us. An accurate census count for our vibrant and diverse community is crucial and it brings critical funding and resources to our state that we need. The census only happens once every 10 years, and this is the first day of that new 10 years, we're starting over. Again, the census only happens every 10 years, and every human being regardless of age needs to fill that out. Our 0-5 community is our hard to reach community, that's the community that for whatever reason people forget to count, so we need to make sure that the 0-5s are being counted.

This is an all hands on deck effort for our state, and our kids are counting on us, no pun intended, so let's please get the word out. Thank you.

Item A7, Bob Weires

Good morning. Madame President, Members of the Board, Superintendent Ebert, for the record my name is Robert Weires, I go by Bob. I recognize the importance, under item number 9, the importance of all the Specialized Instructional Support Personnel listed, but I want to take a couple minutes to speak specifically about the importance of the school psychologist. I also love to talk, so I'm going to try really hard to keep it to three minutes.

I think one of the things that I can add is a historical perspective, firsthand experiences in the state of Nevada. I've been a licensed school psychologist for over 28 years. I've been the Director for Psychological Services within Clark County School District for at least 15 years. So I've seen a lot in that period of time, and I can tell you first hand the importance and the impact of adequate staffing relative to the initiatives of the school and serving kids.

When I became Director for Psychological Services, we were severely understaffed at that point. We were basically functioning as testers for Special Education, and it's not acceptable. My charge as the new director was to build staffing, and it took us 4, 5, 6 years, but we did that. We actively recruited, we retained staff, and we expanded. We expanded including roles and functions and servicing kids. Along those lines, we started providing services of need by kids that we see today and we're still maintaining. Things like supporting kids that are transitioning back out of hospitals; things like training school staff in positive behavior and interventions and supports; things like staffing folks so that we have a response for threats, for crisis, and to train all of our licensed staff in terms of all of our specialists for crisis intervention purposes.

So as staffing became adequate, as ratios became adequate, we could reflect the service model provided by the National Association of School Psychologists, we could serve more than one kid at a time, we could have an impact for school improvement. Well unfortunately what I've seen over the last six years is reversing that trend. Since the 2013/14 school year our estimated staffing ratios, our averaged staffing ratios, have consistently increased. We stand at an estimate in the fall of an averaged ratio right now of 2158 to 1 psychologist, and that's an averaged rate. We have staff that are serving secondary schools with anywhere from 3000, 4000, 5000 to 1 in terms of their ratio. At the critical point where we're seeing an increase in needs for kids, and the acknowledgement at the state and the district level that we need to adjust the academic, behavior, and mental health needs of all kids, we are losing staff. And it's important to signal the importance of all Specialized Instructional Support Personnel, including school psychologists.

In my humble opinion, Clark County School District is significantly handicapped at the moment, in part, by not having adequate psychologists in relation to pushing integrated student supports and multi-tiered systems of support. We are hurting. On a daily basis, psychologists have to make a judgement of prioritizing what services they're going to provide. And they need to back up in terms of focus on Special Ed evaluations and crisis interventions. We are much more than that. Today you have an opportunity. It seems like an innocuous agenda item, but you have an opportunity to establish the importance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel, and I encourage you to provide good attention to that board item. Thank you.

Item A8, Andrea Walsh

Good morning, Madame President, Members of the Board. My name is Andrea Walsh, I'm a nationally certified school psychologist in the Clark County School District, and I'm also the Nevada Delegate for the National Association of School Psychologists. I'm here to talk about agenda item 9, in regards to recommended ratios for School Psychologists.

To provide a comprehensive range of psychological services, the National Association of School Psychologists recommends a ratio of one school psychologist for every 500 students enrolled in a school. In Nevada, our ratios are more than quadruple the recommended ratio. I alone support 3761 students between my high school and my elementary school as of yesterday. That's seven and a half times the recommended ratio.

While school psychologists provide a range of services and supports to all students in our schools, a large portion of our job is dedicated to serving students with disabilities. Under the recommended ratios, a school psychologist would service about 65 students receiving Special Ed. However, in my two assigned schools, there are 422 students receiving Special Education services. This leaves little to no time to support the other 3339 enrolled students who could benefit from critical prevention and early intervention services.

Furthermore, high ratios limit a school psychologist's ability to engage in consultation with teachers, administrators, and families, to help them support students in the classroom and at home. Only 28% of youth with sever major depressive episodes are receiving some consistent treatment. Nevada continues to rate last, 51st, in regards to prevalence of mental illness and access to care for youth. We know that the vast majority of children who need mental health support receive that support in school. What does it say about Nevada that not only do we have some of the highest rates of mental illness in youth, but we also have the highest ratios of children to school psychologists.

For too long, we have not prioritized mental health. For too long, we have somehow believed that things would get better, yet at the same time the number of school psychologists in Nevada has steadily decreased. In our largest district, Clark County School District, we currently have the fewest number of school psychologists that we've had in 15 years, and yet our population has increased drastically. I've been the school psychologist at Sierra Vista High School and Tony Alamo Elementary School since 2004. In 2004, my role as a school psychologist was essentially to test students for Special Education. In 2020, in addition to that responsibility, my role includes conducting suicide protocols, reentry plans for students returning from psychiatric hospitalizations, attending RTI meetings for general education students with academic difficulties or social/emotional difficulties, consulting with educators, families—just to name a few. I easily spend over 50% of my day dealing with these other duties. We also seem to have a crisis at every school, every day, which pulls us away from all the things we planned to do.

My numbers have increased drastically, my job duties have increased, but I am still the only school psychologist for nearly 4000 students. Thank you.

Item A9, Kathy Mead

Good morning, Madame President, Members of the Board, Superintendent Ebert. My name's Kathy Mead, I'm the Director of Guidance and Counseling for the Clark County School District, and I'm here to talk about counselor ratios. I second everything Keeli said up North, so I've deleted all research from my presentation. I would just like to talk about our staffing here in Clark County.

Currently in middle schools and in high schools our counselors are staffed according to student population. It's hard to get the numbers of what that actual ratio is, because in many high schools some counselors are not given a case load, and those counselors are then put in charge of testing, master scheduling, etc. They don't have a case load of students. So although schools may be staffed one way on paper, it's not that way in actuality for student need. In our elementary schools we're especially concerned. We right now have two elementary schools that have two counselors. Priest Elementary and Elaine Wynn. They both have two counselors.

Unfortunately, balancing that out or not balancing that out, we have 12 elementary schools that have chosen in the budget cuts not to have a counselor. So those students have no access to a counselor, and anytime anything happens, they are trying to go to neighboring schools for help. We have some schools, the rest of the schools get one counselor. That means we have some elementary schools as high as 1077:1 is the ratio, some that are 1020, and we have at least 10 that are 907 and above to 1. Our national organization recommends 250:1, so you can see we're way off. We're especially concerned as budget cuts continue to hit, we're especially concerned with principals that are making the hard decision to cut a staff member like a counselor while they meet the other needs of their school. Thank you for your time.

Item A10, Stephanie Patton

Good morning, Madame President and Members of the Board. For the record, my name is Stephanie Patton, I'm a school psychologist in the Clark County School District, and I am President-Elect of the Nevada Association of School Psychologists. I'm here to continue the conversation about the importance of school psychologists and the need for appropriate ratios in Nevada.

I want to tell you about a school psychologist named Jaime, who works in the Irvine Unified School District in California. Jaime is an excellent school psychologist. She has spearheaded initiatives in her school for tiered behavioral and academic interventions, trauma informed practices, and restorative justice. Jaime supports a mental health team dedicated to her school alone and is currently piloting an evidence-based social/emotional learning program. She regularly provides individual and group counseling to students. Jaime provides parent outreach and trainings to help coordinate community services, she attends most IEP meetings to help support consultation on best practices. Jaime maintains close interaction with the special programs in her school providing leadership and coordinating data-based decision making. She also actively collaborates with district leaders to improve Special Education practices throughout her district. When evaluating students, Jaime is able to provide a thorough, strengths-based assessment and behavioral analysis to every child, to ensure that they are not simply identified for Special Education, but that the school team has all the tools necessary to ensure success. I'm amazed, and frankly jealous when I hear about everything Jaime is able to accomplish and all the benefits the children in her school have experienced because of her.

In reality, there is not much difference between Jaime and myself. In fact, our training foundations are identical. We both received our graduate training at UNLV. We went through school together and we graduated side by side. We are both autism specialists, and nationally certified school psychologists. The biggest difference? Here in CCSD, I'm expected to provide support to more than 2200 students, while Jaime supports 700. I have two assigned schools and I'm asked to provide additional coverage every year due to shortages; Jaime works in one school. I hesitated coming here this morning, knowing that I have more than 20 open evaluations and timelines are waning. Jaime has the time and the means to do so many wonderful things because she is working at an appropriate ratio. Let me ask you: are the students in Jaime's school more deserving than Staton Elementary or Lawrence Junior High School, where I work? Do my students require less support, fewer programs, less comprehensive evaluations? Do the social/emotional needs of my students pale in comparison to Jaime's? I don't believe so. I believe Jaime's district understands the importance of school psychologists and the impact they have on schools. I believe they have actively chosen to prioritize the social/emotional needs of their students. I believe they understand that in order to provide comprehensive evaluations, case loads must be manageable. My case load is not manageable. 120 evaluations in a school year is not manageable; it is simply wrong. Please help my students get the support they deserve. Thank you.

Item A11, Kimberly Reddig

Re: NEPF Framework for Speech Language Pathologists

Dear President Wynn, Vice President Newburn, and Members of the State Board of Education,

The Nevada Speech-Language Hearing Association (NSHA), the professional organization of Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) and Audiologists in the State of Nevada, is in strong support of the NEPF Framework for Speech Language Pathologists recommended by OLEP Work Groups and the Teachers and Leaders Council for the 2020-2021 school year.

The performance evaluation holds school-based SLPs to the highest professional standards and aligns with the expected competencies and standards outlined by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association. This framework includes 17 indicators which are all considered High Leverage Practices for special educators developed by Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR) and Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). Not only does this evaluation ensure that SLPs are successfully demonstrating the expected level of professionalism, but feedback can also be applied in future professional growth opportunities.

NSHA works in conjunction with the University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada State College, and the State of Nevada Speech-Language Pathology, Audiology, and Hearing Aid Dispensing Board to ensure that the professionals in our beloved field adhere to professional standards of excellence. We believe that this performance evaluation will demonstrate the diverse value and contributions of the SLPs who are school-based in the State of Nevada.

NSHA is proud to support this effort, and the Board of Directors hopes that the State Board of Education will approve this valuable performance evaluation.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Reddig, MS, CCC-SLP
President, Nevada Speech-Language Hearing Association
Speech-Language Pathologist

Item A12, Submitted Testimony from the following 117 Members of the Public:

Alayna Sacca; Allyson Stanley; Amanda Hovey; Amy Bodensteiner; Antonia Cladianos; April Stevens; April Wilder; Ashley Diggs; Bertha Villa; Beth Barber; Carissima Perkins; Caroline Sousa; Christina Lawrence; Cindy Johnston; Coraline Dubois; Danielle Karges; Danielle Scott; Danielle Shaw; Darby Beckwith; David Nomicos; Emma Dickinson; Erandy Banavides; Eugene Jeff Pineda; Franco Carranza; Gwynne Partos; Heather Thompson; Jen Green; Jessica Amargo; Jessica Barboza; Jessica Molina; Jim Dunlap; Jordan Wenger; Joyce Chen; Kathleen Robinson; Maria Jauregui; Marlene Hart; Matthew Martinez; Michelle Barlow; Michelle Gullickson; Michelle Rutherford; Nicole Smead; Patrice Leverett; Rachel Schaller; Rebecca Fahning; Ronald Lewis; Ryan Conn; Sara Escobedo; Sara Morris; Scott Shaw; Shannon Colon; Shelly Edwards; Stephanie Pasquale; Synthia Thune; Tami Sakelaris; Thomas Andrews; Thomas Carozza; Varotta Johnson; and Wayne Van Der Wal: Alison Clark; Alma Katschke; Andrea Delaney; Andrea Walsh; Ashley Pilat; Billy Miller; Bonnie Barber; Bonnie Lefevre; Brandee Evarts; Brandy Tillmon; Brendon Ross; Catherine Barber; Christina Blöse; Christopher Pilat; Daisy Easton-Newell; Daniel Egly; David Quick; Diane Hernandez; Dorothy Parriott; Elayna Hocking; Emily Myers; Erin Miskimins; Galdino Griego; Heather Witt; Holly Eberle; Jamie Maloney; Jasmine Mitchell; Jasmine Zuppan; Jennifer Guyer; Jennifer Mitterer; Jessica Musikanth; Jessica Peck; Jessica Ramos; Katherine Jones; Katherine Lee; Kim Pickens; Kristen Allen; Kristen Solis; Lauren Lesniak; Leatena Bozek; Linda Pirtle; Maria Pena; Mary Beckstead; Melissa King; Michael Morris; Nicole Lenzini; Paige Beckwith; Paige Myers; Patricia Carroll; Rebekka Vecchiarelli; Richard Jones; Robert Scholl; Rosemary Virtuoso; Sasha Bisda; Stephanie Gonzales; Stephanie Patton; Sylvia Blum; Tamara Filangieri; and Thomas Sullivan:

With expertise in both education and mental health, school psychologists are uniquely qualified to help address the needs of students and schools. This means addressing challenges such as poverty, mental and behavioral health issues, bullying, homelessness, increasing cultural and linguistic diversity, record high student enrollment - just to name a few. All argue for the critical importance of the services provided by school psychologists.

The National Association of School Psychologists recommends a ratio of one school psychologist for every 500 students in order to provide the comprehensive psychological services our students need. Shortages result in schools receiving fewer services and school psychologists being spread thin, negatively impacting the ability of Nevada school districts to retain and recruit quality professionals.

The growing needs of Nevada's public schools will continue to limit how prepared we are to meet the academic, mental health, and behavioral health needs of our students, especially if these shortages continue. With 13-20% of children in the US experiencing a mental health disorder every year, and with the prevalence of those disorders increasing among children, it is clear that a growing student population presents schools with more challenges to meeting the needs of students.

Our school districts need guidance from the Nevada State Board of Education. A ratio recommendation in line with the National Association of School Psychologists would help encourage school districts to make the necessary changes in order to prioritize these positions and do what is necessary to recruit and retain school psychologists.

Please consider the well-being of Nevada's children and support us by recommending a school psychologist ratio of 1 to 500.