

**NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COMMISSION ON SCHOOL FUNDING
DECEMBER 18, 2020
9:00 A.M.**

Meeting Location

Due to the circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission on School Funding met via videoconference. In accordance with Governor Sisolak's State of Emergency Directive 006, Section 1, no physical location was designated for this meeting. The meeting was livestreamed on the Nevada Department of Education's (NDE) website.

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT

Via Videoconference

Dusty Casey
Andrew J. Feuling
Jason Goudie
Guy Hobbs
Paul Johnson
Mark Mathers
Punam Mathur
Dr. R. Karlene McCormick-Lee
Jim McIntosh
Dr. Lisa Morris Hibbler

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT

Via Videoconference

Heidi Haartz, Deputy Superintendent of Business and Support Services
Jessica Todtman, Chief Strategy Officer
Will Jensen, Director, Office of Inclusive Education
James Kirkpatrick, Administrative Services Officer III
Beau Bennett, Management Analyst IV
Megan Peterson, Management Analyst III

LEGAL STAFF PRESENT

Via Videoconference

David Gardner, Senior Deputy Attorney General

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS PRESENT:

Via Videoconference

Jeremy Aguero, Applied Analysis

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE

Via Videoconference

1: CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order at 9:02 A.M. by Commission Chair R. Karlene McCormick-Lee. Quorum was established.

2: PUBLIC COMMENT #1

Alex Gallegos, Student, Clark County School District, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan (PCFP). *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Aranzazu Juarez, Teacher, Washoe County School District, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Beth Martin, Educator, Washoe County, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Calen Evans, Educator, Washoe County, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Carmen Andrews, Teacher, Clark County School District, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

John Vellardita, Executive Director, Clark County Education Association, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Dr. Jesus Jara, Superintendent of Clark County School District, and Lola Brooks, President of the Clark County School District Board of Trustees, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Dallas Hulsey, Educator, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Elizabeth Cadigan, Educator, Washoe County, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Amanda Morgan, Executive Director, Educate Nevada Now, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Jan Giles, President, Education Support Employees Association, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Jeanine Luciani, Educator, Washoe County School District, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Julianna Melendez, Student Body President of Valley High School and Nevada Youth Legislator, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Kristen Prostinak, Graduate Student, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Maggie Babb, Educator, Washoe County, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Mario Fitzpatrick submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Nevada State Education Association submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Dr. Katie Dockweiler, Director of Government and Professional Relations, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Nevada Parent Teacher Association submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Rachel Fisher, Educator, Washoe County School District, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Ruben Murillo, Retired Educator, Clark County School District, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Ryan Russell and Robert Salyer, Allison MacKenzie, Attorneys & Counselors at Law, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Selena La Rue, Educator, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Susan Kaiser, Retired Educator, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Clark County School District Student Body Presidents submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

HOPE for Nevada submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Stephanie Patton and Community Members submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

3: APPROVAL OF FLEXIBLE AGENDA

Vice Chair Guy Hobbs moved to approve a flexible agenda. Member Andrew Feuling seconded. Motion passed.

4: APPROVAL OF COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Member Paul Johnson moved to approve the November 13, 2020 Commission minutes. Member Punam Mathur seconded. Motion passed.

Member Mathur moved to approve the November 19, 2020 Commission minutes. Member Johnson seconded. Motion passed.

5: NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION UPDATE

Heidi Haartz, Deputy Superintendent of Business and Support Services provided an update to the Commission regarding the work of the Nevada Department of Education (NDE or the Department) since the November Commission meeting.

Deputy Superintendent Haartz reported that the Department has been working with the Governor's Finance Office to review the Department's agency requested budget, inclusive of the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan (PCFP) and the recommendations made to the governor and legislature by the Commission. The Department has been working with the Governor's Finance Office, the State Controller's Office, and the State Treasurer's Office to discuss the creation of the State Education Fund within existing accounting structures.

Department staff have begun to draft the business rules for reporting requirements and will be collaborating further with districts in January. The Department is in the process of drafting regulations for an alternative measure of At-Risk. Department staff have also been working to revise the Commission's public-facing communication materials.

Deputy Superintendent Haartz further reported that Superintendent Jhone Ebert requested that Department staff complete a comparison between the staffing and funding ratios at the Nevada Department and other state education agencies. The Department hosted the first of three virtual legislator open house briefing events on December 17, 2020, the topic of which was the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan (PCFP).

6: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POTENTIAL REVENUE SOURCES FOR OPTIMAL FUNDING

Vice Chair Hobbs, Member Johnson, and Jeremy Agüero, Applied Analysis, conducted a PowerPoint presentation regarding [Potential Revenue Sources for Optimal Funding](#).

Member Mathur confirmed with the presenters that the estimates in the presentation were based on the current economic reality. Member Mathur reflected that there is a unique challenge for funding, in that Nevada does not have personal income tax which can be used as a revenue. She further asked for a ranking or comparison of where Nevada stood in relation to other states' taxes. Vice Chair Hobbs noted that he believed Nevada property tax was comparatively lower but recommended researching further. Regarding sales tax, he recommended a base-to-base comparison. Understanding how taxes are applied will be critical to understanding the rates and their applicability, as will defining the funding targets. Member Mathur noted no interest in trying to develop a new tax, and that sufficiency, predictability, and stability are minimum thresholds to aim for. Member Feuling agreed with Member Mathur's assessment of the necessary characteristics for a taxable revenue source.

Responding to a question from Member Feuling, Vice Chair Hobbs noted that there are statutory caps and abatements that may be changed by the legislature, as well as assessment mechanics. Equal and uniform requirements are also constitutional. Member Feuling and Vice Chair Hobbs discussed examining currently exempted categories and/or services which could be used as revenue sources.

Member Jim McIntosh asked what the impact would be if Assembly Joint Resolution 1 (AJR1) of the 32nd (2021) Special Session of the Nevada Legislature was signed into law and implemented. Mr. Agüero stated that AJR1 would shift the tax from net proceeds of mining to gross proceeds of mining; increase the tax on the net proceeds; and shift the allocations away from local governments in a way that would require further legislative action. Once those allocations were made, they may not ultimately benefit local schools and/or programs.

Member Johnson noted that relatively low tax burdens are a selling point for moving to Nevada, and this much-needed growth in population is often at odds with new tax initiatives. He further emphasized the importance of contextualizing the figures as they relate to populations.

Member Dusty Casey supported diversification of revenue sources to protect against market fluctuations. Member Mark Mathers asked whether the Commission should comment on specific taxes or fees that are not feasible, but which may need to be addressed to provide clarity for the public.

Vice Chair Hobbs noted that sufficiency is the goal of this first discussion, and when reviewing potential changes, rate and base are the primary controls for adjustment.

[Convenience Break]

7: DISCUSSION REGARDING OPTIMAL FUNDING

Chair McCormick-Lee facilitated a discussion regarding the [Definition of Optimal Funding](#).

Chair McCormick-Lee emphasized the importance of agreeing on the elements and steps involved in progressing toward optimal funding and noted that the immediate work of the Commission would primarily focus on the work under "restore and maintain" and "adequate." She noted that under "adequate," the basis is currently supported by the APA study that includes an approximate \$9000 per-pupil allocation, already significantly higher than the current allocation. Using this base would develop a clear gap between "restore and maintain" and "adequate." Chair McCormick-Lee expressed that work under "optimal" may be further into the future and the Commission had some time to further ruminate on the meaning of optimal, while "adequate" and "restore and maintain" have greater urgency.

Member Mathur asked if adequate should be further disaggregated into adequate base, aspirational weights, and a “harmless” hold harmless provision – each with inflation included – with target numbers associated for each element. From there, those markers could be used to target and phase in funding.

Member Jason Goudie clarified that while “restore and maintain” includes restoring funding to the original budgeted amounts legislatively approved in the 2019 regular session, under the PCFP, that budget may not be under the same use and/or allocation restrictions. Regarding hold harmless, Member Goudie noted that once base and weight funding was adequate, the hold harmless provision should be moot.

Member Lisa Morris Hibbler reflected on the long process to achieve optimal even while striving for expediency.

8: OVERVIEW OF THE ECONOMIC FORUM’S DECEMBER 3, 2020 APPROVED REVENUE FORECAST REPORT FOR THE 2021-2023 BIENNIUM

Beau Bennett, Management Analyst IV, provided an update regarding the [Revenue Forecast Report for the 2021-2023](#) biennium as reviewed during the December 3, 2020 meeting of the Economic Forum.

The Economic Forum met on December 3, 2020 to forecast the general fund revenues for the next biennium. The Governor’s Finance Office is currently updating non-general fund projections, and the Economic Forum will provide updated projections in May of 2021.

The total Nevada general fund revenues after tax credits have been applied, are forecast for \$4.1 billion for fiscal year 2022 (FY22) and \$4.3 billion for FY23. The total 21-23 biennium of \$8.5 billion is a 5.2% increase from the revised estimates of FY21 and an increase over the actual 19-21 biennium collections of \$8 billion, with an estimated increase of \$418 million in total general fund revenues between the current biennium and the 21-23 biennium.

9: DISCUSSION REGARDING THE TRACKING OF LOCAL MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE STATE EDUCATION FUND

Heidi Haartz, Deputy Superintendent of Business and Support Services, and Will Jensen, Director of the Office of Inclusive Education, provided information regarding the tracking of local maintenance of effort (MOE) for Special Education in the State Education Fund.

Director Jensen reviewed redistribution models as used across the country, and reported that Utah, Arkansas, and Texas have viable models about which NDE has requested further information. To avoid being unable to identify or locate a local contribution to the maintenance of effort (MOE), Director Jensen highlighted a few trends to keep in mind regardless of the model chosen, emphasizing transparency. Specifically, that each local education agency (LEA) has the ability affect their own MOE. The impact of increasing or reducing MOE must be clearly seen on both sides of the equation – both the local and state agency contributions.

Chair McCormick-Lee noted that MOE was the reason that the Commission separated Special Education funding from the waterfall. To proceed, options regarding MOE include separating and protecting state education agency (SEA) contributions to MOE prior to moving into the waterfall; separating and protecting both SEA and LEA MOE prior to moving into the waterfall; or having funds move through the waterfall, with LEAs shifting those funds as they are received to local MOE. However, the local MOE amount will not change whether the funds are allocated at the beginning or end of the waterfall.

Member Goudie supported separating both components – both the SEA and LEA MOE prior to moving into the waterfall – in order to illustrate the total amount of funding for Special Education and allow better tracking and support.

The Commission requested further information regarding how states such as Utah, Arkansas, and Texas are tracking dollars once they are moved to another funding formula; how they ensure the funding increases over time; and how they track or compare those dollars to base funding.

10: UPDATED INFORMATION REGARDING THE DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING UNDER THE PUPIL-CENTERED FUNDING PLAN

Heidi Haartz, Deputy Superintendent of Business and Support Services; James Kirkpatrick, Administrative Services Officer III; and Megan Peterson, Management Analyst III, provided an update regarding the distribution of public school funding under the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan.

The PCFP model has been updated since it was last presented in October and November, and updates include removing local Special Education contributions to MOE from the hold harmless for each district, and updating the hold harmless from FY20 based on the financial information provided in the Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 387 report. The model does not include updates regarding enrollment.

Member Casey confirmed with the presenters that Special Education/MOE, including local transfers, was pulled from the model currently being presented, and this accounted for the reduction in per student in base funding. Deputy Superintendent Haartz confirmed, but cautioned thinking about it as a per-pupil amount, as costs per student under an individual education plan may vary widely.

Member Feuling asked for further clarification regarding the changes to the hold harmless, asking whether they were due to the movement of Special Education/MOE and updated data from the NRS 387 report. Member Goudie further clarified that NRS 387 reports were lower than expected due to COVID-19 conditions.

Member Johnson emphasized the importance of showing Special Education funding within the context of the PCFP. Member Mathers asked if there were any other major items due to be added to the model; which Mr. Kirkpatrick clarified that there were not. Member Mathers asked for more time to review the model and discuss changes to the model during the next Commission meeting.

11: RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF MONEY THAT EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT MAY DEDUCT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES FROM THE ADJUSTED BASE PER PUPIL FUNDING

Heidi Haartz, Deputy Superintendent of Business and Support Services and James Kirkpatrick, Administrative Services Officer III, conducted a PowerPoint presentation regarding [Administrative Cost Caps](#).

Member Goudie moved to approve the recommended administrative cap. Member Mathur seconded. Motion passed.

12: RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUPIL-CENTERED FUNDING PLAN

Chair McCormick-Lee facilitated a discussion regarding the implementation of the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan.

Member Goudie asked for an opportunity to address many of the comments submitted regarding delaying implementation. A frequent complaint is that education funding is not adequate, specifically related to Senate Bill 543. Member Goudie agreed that there is no question that K-12 funding in Nevada is inadequate. However, an increase in available funds or taxable dollars does not equate to an increase in funding to school districts. Under the current education funding plan, funding is not based off of need, but rather prior spending with adjustments. By the first year of the biennium, the funds are already lower than the money spent in the prior year. Regardless of revenue source, the model needs to be funded. Under the current model, adding revenue only decreases the amount of money the State must pay out of the general fund. The marijuana tax was dedicated to education and went to the distributive school account, but under the current model, that equated to a decrease in the total amount of funds coming from the general fund, rather than an overall increase in funding for education. Member Goudie emphasized that without fixing the funding model, it will be impossible to address adequacy.

Member Goudie addressed that another frequent comment is that due to COVID-19 and the economy, it is a poor time to implement to the model. Member Goudie emphasized that this model does not decrease funding for education, it makes funding more transparent.

Member Goudie requested that Mr. Aguero be permitted to provide further context and Chair McCormick-Lee invited Mr. Aguero's testimony. Mr. Aguero noted that implementation of the PCFP would not create a decrease in funding compared to the Nevada Plan; more specifically, because neither the PCFP nor the Nevada Plan dictate

how much money is spent on K-12 education. Article 11 of the Nevada Constitution requires a uniform system of public schools that the Legislature funds. Early in the deliberations of the Commission, there was detailed review of section two of SB 543, which details the revenues that get deposited into the State Education Fund. Mr. Aguero noted that subsection three of section two of SB 543 further states that, in addition to money from any other source provided by law, support for the State Education Fund must be provided by direct legislative appropriation from the State General Fund in an amount determined by the Legislature to be sufficient to fund K-12 education. This means that in addition to any dollars in the State Education Fund, the Legislature has an obligation to ensure that education is funded appropriately.

Mr. Aguero continued by stating that SB 543 actively works to alleviate many of the issues encountered under the Nevada Plan, such as the supplanting of funds as highlighted by Member Goudie. Mr. Aguero emphasized that SB 543 works to “fix the plumbing” of education funding. He stated that without correcting the formula, it is impossible to move forward in discussing adequate or optimal funding. Furthermore, he noted that the lack of transparency and the system of funding under the Nevada Plan has frustrated legislators and school leaders while alienating the business community in attempts to address education funding. The PCFP can evolve under new contexts and is supported by the Commission, working to address the transparency and mechanics needed to ultimately address funding K-12 education.

Member McIntosh supported continuing with implementation and appreciated the opportunity to hear public comment. He noted that while comment addressed not moving forward with the PCFP, there were no comments that provided a reason to stay under the Nevada Plan. Furthermore, receiving comments regarding implementation of the funding formula is an illustration of SB 543 and the Commission working as intended.

Member Mathur reflected that Nevada has had longstanding funding inadequacy, an incomprehensible means of explaining that funding, and a funding plan that did not reflect contemporary contexts. Poverty, urban and rural designations, and countless other items were not accounted for under the Nevada Plan. She added that the Nevada Plan suffered under inadequacy, inequity, and incomprehensibility. Information needs to be relevant and easy to understand in order to get “buy-in” from all Nevadans, which is needed to address inadequacy. Member Mathur strongly supported addressing the plumbing of education funding effectively, aggressively, and expediently in order to ultimately pursue adequacy.

Member Feuling reviewed estimated budget cuts for Carson City School District (Carson CSD) under the Hold Harmless in addition to the Governor’s proposed 12% reduction. Member Feuling estimated his new general fund will have an approximately 10%, or \$6 million reduction; over a period of three years, Carson CSD has had a 20% budget reduction. Based on the PCFP, Carson CSD has been “overfunded”, which is difficult to believe under their funding realities. Carson CSD would be in Hold-Harmless for 4-6 years; within that context, without growth, projections would put them as insolvent in five years; with expected and normative growth, by mid-FY23. He acknowledged that when communities hear about a lack of State funding, they fear for their community.

Member Feuling emphasized that while the PCFP is within SB 543, there is much more to SB 543, and the transparency and calculation are a huge gain over the Nevada Plan, which was ultimately a broken model. The Nevada Plan didn’t appropriately account for weights or charter schools, and there were significant issues with baseline expenditures. Member Feuling acknowledged that there is much work to be done, and there are some elements which he believes still need to be revised after their initial acceptance for the sake of standing up the model, such as the comparable wage index (CWI). Under CWI, Clark County currently reflects that they must pay more to attract residents and employees, for which Member Feuling expressed is skepticism. Meanwhile, 30% of the Carson City workforce are government workers, who are paid 20% less than their private sector counterparts. This becomes an issue under CWI, where Carson City’s is inaccurate. Since CWI is relational, he noted his belief that this makes Nevada’s overall CWI incorrect. Member Feuling also expressed that a greater commitment from the Legislature was needed for success. The last two states to implement comparable funding plans received significant increases to their funding, which Nevada will likely not receive.

Member Johnson agreed with Member Feuling that cuts are incredibly difficult for communities and his school district has experienced similar cuts. He further agreed that change must occur with a sense of urgency, and he was willing to take a short-term loss for a long-term gain. He also agreed that the PCFP is an element of SB 543,

which provides many additional improvements to education funding and is a major improvement over the Nevada Plan, including clauses to protect the State Education Fund, retain education funds in education, systemic ways to manage grant programs and funds, and many more. Ultimately, Member Johnson expressed fear that delay of implementation would lead to inaction. He systematically recapped a history of actions undertaken since 1999 to review or address education funding which have time and again been delayed for a “better time.” Member Johnson noted that he was willing to add to deficit as a stopgap until funds were identified and recovered. He strongly supported proceeding with implementation and focusing on the “restore and recover” phase to develop funding.

Vice Chair Hobbs expressed that he had reviewed concerns that implementation of the model would create shortages but noted that this was not accurate. While the hold harmless was a frequent concern, regardless of implementation, it could not be addressed without identifying new funding sources. He also supported Member Feuling’s concerns that some items, such as the comparative wage index, may need to be revisited. Vice Chair Hobbs further noted that the Legislature has implemented SB 543, and the Commission was created to advise on and make recommendations for how to improve upon implementation. He also expressed that the PCFP and optimal funding are inherently tied together.

Member Mathers agreed with Vice Chair Hobbs in that the law requires implementation of the PCFP on July 1, 2021 and, as an advisory body, there is no jurisdiction to stall implementation. He also supported revisiting the comparable wage index and expressed concern with the inflation factor. Member Mathers expressed that SB 543 was an unquestionable improvement over the Nevada Plan, but the current PCFP model and calculation still had flaws with major impacts that need further review. He also reflected, in line with Member Dave Jensen (who was absent but provided comment to Member Mathers), that while he supports the implementation of the PCFP, it is a qualified support and there must be a mutual implementation of the Plan. He noted that SB 543 puts obligations on the State while including the intention of the Legislature to do a number of things. He expressed significant concern with the hold harmless and noted that the Legislature needed to fully fund the hold harmless. There should also be an increase in the base per pupil in the second biennium consistent with the growth in State revenues. Member Mathers also emphasized that if there is any erosion to the concept of the State Education Fund and education funds as “locked away” for education only, the PCFP falls apart.

Member Morris Hibbler expressed that transparency and a roadmap to optimal funding, and by extension to optimal education, is key.

Member Casey expressed that, much like Carson CSD, his school was also facing reductions. However, he agreed with previous statements that SB 543 and the PCFP are a long-term improvement for education in Nevada that should not be halted due to short-term difficulties. He emphasized supporting student resources and opportunities under a pupil-centered plan which moves funding with the student. To that effect, he strongly supported the need to identify funding and improve upon the hold harmless so that student resources and opportunities do not suffer from FY20 to FY22.

Chair McCormick-Lee reflected on her prior experience in the Clark County School District that it was often frustrating under the Nevada Plan to know what the budget may be because it was unclear which grants may or may not be received; spending funds was then made difficult by determining what could be paid for from one grant but not another. She appreciated the PCFP having more transparency, predictability, and flexibility. She added that the focus must be on generating revenues that can be allocated to education.

Member Mathur expressed that under the Nevada Plan, supplanting frequently occurred for funding initially earmarked for education, and SB 543 is a major step in preventing supplanting. She also emphasized that getting “buy-in” from Nevadans was not only critical, but needed to be mobilized.

Member Goudie moved to provide a formal recommendation to the Nevada Legislature to proceed with the implementation of Senate Bill 543 effective July 1, 2021. Vice Chair Hobbs seconded.

Chair McCormick-Lee noted that recommendations would be made to the Legislature and Governor in February moving into the Legislative Session. Member Johnson asked if Member Goudie would amend the motion to include a recommendation regarding funding support. Member Goudie noted that SB 543 already includes

language that requires identifying funding, and he was hesitant to tie this recommendation to finding funding that may not be identifiable in this biennium. Member Mathers asked if Member Goudie would consider an amendment regarding implementation subject to the State fully funding the hold harmless or fulfill the intentions stated in the law, particularly regarding the State Education Fund. Member Goudie expressed that he was broad in his motion, which would inherently include the items requested by Members Johnson and Mathers.

Motion passed.

13: FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chair McCormick-Lee reviewed that future agenda items would include optimal funding and revenue sources.

Deputy Superintendent Haartz added that future items would address administrative components of NDE, data requests for “restore” and “adequate” funding, summary documents for the PCFP, an update to the model including a tab regarding Special Education, and further discussion regarding accountability and reporting for MOE.

Member Feuling requested that, due to ever-evolving contexts, there be a review of classroom and education needs in order to best adapt funding needs.

Member Casey requested that NDE run the model with the recently acquired numbers to provide context for the funding gaps that need additional revenue identified, and to see what the impacts of the plan would be over a 5-year span.

Member Johnson requested further details regarding funding and expenditures.

Member Morris Hibbler requested an FAQ be made available on the Commission’s website. Chair McCormick-Lee noted that further review of public-facing summary documents regarding the Commission’s work and the PCFP would be included on the next meeting agenda and should address the items most likely to appear in a FAQ.

14: PUBLIC COMMENT #2

Joni Martindale, Educator, Washoe County School District, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association, submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

15: ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 2:36 P.M.

Appendix A: Statements Given During Public Comment

1. Alex Gallegos submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
2. Aranzazu Juarez submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
3. Beth Martin submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
4. Calen Evans submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
5. Carmen Andrews submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
6. John Vellardita submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
7. Jesus Jara and Lola Brooks submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
8. Dallas Hulsey submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
9. Elizabeth Cadigan submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
10. Amanda Morgan submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
11. Jan Giles submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
12. Jeanine Luciani submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
13. Julianna Melendez submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
14. Kristin Prostinak submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
15. Maggie Babb submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
16. Mario Fitzpatrick submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
17. Nevada State Education Association submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
18. Katie Dockweiler submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
19. Nevada Parent Teacher Association submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
20. Rachel Fisher submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
21. Ruben Murillo submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
22. Ryan Russell and Robert Salyer submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
23. Selena La Rue submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
24. Susan Kaiser submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
25. Clark County School District Student Body Presidents submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
26. HOPE for Nevada submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
27. Stephanie Patton submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
28. Joni Martindale submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.
29. Chris Daly submitted public comment regarding the implementation of the PCFP.

Item A1, Alex Gallegos

Good morning members of the Commission,

My name is Alex Gallegos and I am a student in the Clark County School District, the Student Body President of Eldorado High School, and the current Student Member to the Nevada State Board of Education. I would like to make known my adamant support for the implementation of the new funding formula under SB 543.

While Clark County School District and the city of Las Vegas have changed drastically within the last 50 years, legislation impacting the funding of education does not reflect this change. We are long overdue in the need to modernize the method by which our schools, and its children, are funded and given the resources necessary to attain an optimal education. Simply put, our schools and its populations have changed at such a speed that makes 1967's Nevada Plan ineffective, impractical, and inconsiderate to the majority of students it now serves. Most importantly, the new formula creates much-needed transparency in a process that is overwhelming to parents, ultimately allowing them to hold the state accountable in the future.

I thank you for the strides this Commission has already taken to make funding more equitable, such as updating the definition of a student who is considered "at-risk," but nevertheless there is much work to be done and this formula must be speedily implemented. We must clearly differentiate from what is considered "adequate" funding and what is "optimal" funding, and always strive for the latter. This makes all the difference in ensuring Nevada's students have the tools within their reach to become life-long learners and tomorrow's leaders.

While I am a senior in high school, and thus will not be affected by the proposed funding formula, I am nevertheless in strong support of this necessary change because I have three siblings who will still be students in the Clark County School District over the next 5 years. They deserve access to an education that will prepare them for a life of success and the funding plan to uphold that promise, as does every other child in CCSD and across the state.

Thank you for your time,
Alex Gallegos

Item A2, Aranzazu Juarez

Dear Education Funding Commission,

My name is (miss) Aranzazu Juarez and I am a 2nd grade teacher at Washoe County. For the past 7 years of my teaching career, I have seen Nevada's education system continue to fail our teachers and students. This is due to the lack of properly funding our state's education. Nevada will continue to be last in education if we don't start adequately funding our schools. We can not ask our teachers to do more with less. It is frankly unacceptable and appalling that teachers continue, year after year to use their own hard earn money, to support their classroom and students.

Our education system prior to COVID was not sustainable and now we're seeing things get even worse. Again, we are failing our students, educators, and our community.

Educators need this funding commission to step up and take a stand on supporting new revenue for the state. We need to address our archaic tax system and stop supplanting money from education. We also HAVE to delay SB 543, because with the lack of base funding, you will cripple districts across the state. This funding commission needs to speak the truth to lawmakers and the general public, and let them know that we do NOT have current funds and resources to adequately serve our community.

I urge you to step up and support Nevada's education system.

Sincerely,
(miss) Aranzazu Juarez

Item A3, Beth Martin

My name is Beth Martin and I'm an educator in Washoe County. I've been teaching for the last 13 years and during this time education has never been adequately funded. The pattern of asking teachers to do more with less has continued to place the burden of our public education system on the backs of educators. While lawmakers may feel that education is properly funded, one thing I can tell all of you is that 99% of educators whole-heartedly disagree with that statement. We know first hand how our lack of funding and resources is impacting our students and educators because we live it everyday. Now, you throw into the mix Covid and we're seeing a pandemic further cripple an already broken system.

Our education system prior to COVID was not sustainable and now we're seeing things get even worse. We are failing our students, educators, and community because we continue to not fund education in our state.

Educators need this funding commission to step up and take a stand on supporting new revenue for the state. We need to address our archaic tax system and stop supplanting money from education. We also HAVE to delay SB 543, because with the lack of base funding, you will cripple districts across the state. This funding commission needs to speak the truth to lawmakers and the general public, and let them know that we do NOT have current funds and resources to adequately serve our community.

Educators need lawmakers to step up and support our education system.

Thank you,

Beth Martin

Item A4, Calen Evans

My name is Calen Evans and I'm an educator in Washoe County. I've been teaching for the last eight years and during this time education has never been adequately funded. The pattern of asking teachers to do more with less has continued to place the burden of our public education system on the backs of educators. While lawmakers may feel that education is properly funded, one thing I can tell all of you is that 99% of educators whole-heartedly disagree with that statement. We know first hand how our lack of funding and resources is impacting our students and educators because we live it everyday. Now, you throw into the mix Covid and we're seeing a pandemic further cripple an already broken system. Our education system prior to COVID was not sustainable and now we're seeing things get even worse. We are failing our students, educators, and community because we continue to not fund education in our state.

Educators need this funding commission to step up and take a stand on supporting new revenue for the state. We need to address our archaic tax system and stop supplanting money from education. We also HAVE to delay SB 543, because with the lack of base funding, you will cripple districts across the state. This funding commission needs to speak the truth to lawmakers and the general public, and let them know that we do NOT have current funds and resources to adequately serve our community.

Educators need lawmakers to step up and support our education system.

Thank you,
Calen Evans

Item A5, Carmen Andrews

Good morning Chair McCormick and Commissioners,

My name is Carmen Andrews and I am in my 25th year of teaching in the Clark County School District. When I came to Nevada in the mid-90s my class sizes were in the 40s. I was shocked - I had taught for a year in New Mexico prior to moving to Las Vegas and the largest class I had was 20 students. It wasn't even just the largest class in the school, it was the largest class in the entire district.

In my first year here in Nevada I had one class at VoTech - now the Southeast Career and Technical Academy - that had 53 students. We were in a classroom that had a sign on the outside of the door that said "capacity 25". We had to push all of the desks to the edges of the classroom and students had to sit on the floor. I had to literally step over students to check everyone's homework.

In 2009 I helped open Veterans Tribute Career & Technical Academy. At the time, it was THE most expensive high school campus in the entire state. And yet I still had 38-43 students in a classroom that was built for classes in the mid-20s. It seems that in construction we are ever the optimists but when it comes to funding education we just shirk the responsibility.

In 2020 secondary class sizes are still in the 40s and sometimes in the 50s crammed into the same size classrooms. It's no secret that Nevada has the highest average class sizes in the nation. How are we going to improve education if educational funding doesn't get significantly better so that we don't have to keep cramming students into classrooms? The simple answer is - it isn't going to happen by itself. Until funding of public schools - all of them - is made a priority, we will continue to be at the top end of the bad lists and the bottom end of the good lists.

SB543, in its current state, will do nothing to improve educational funding. It is unconscionable to let SB543 go into effect without adding any additional revenue sources. To do so will only hurt numerous students in the state while benefitting others. There is zero equity in that. No student deserves to benefit by taking money from another. Our students deserve better. My own children who graduated from the CCSD deserved better. It's too late for them so let's find some sustainable revenue sources to permanently fund education in Nevada so that future generations don't suffer the same fate.

Thank you for your time,

Carmen R. Andrews

Item A6, John Vellardita

Re: Public Comment for December 18, 2020 SB543 Commission Meeting

SB 543 Commission Members:

When SB543 was drafted and passed no one knew that a pandemic would hit our country and shut down our economy. Prior to that, the intent with the passage of SB543 was to finally reform Nevada's funding plan for public education. The legislation was unfunded due in part because a commission would be formed to tackle some of the key issues related to the new funding plan.

Since the pandemic has hit, there has been some who say that now is not the time, and that the Commission should recommend a delay. We disagree with this for the following reasons:

First, the pandemic has exposed what our State went through in 2008 and what the Legislature acted on in 2011 by passing AB449 to rebuild Nevada's economy. That legislation concluded that Nevada could not afford to be dependent on two industries for primary sources of revenue. Further, the legislation concluded that critical to rebuilding the economy was adopting a strategy to build workforce development. The report stated that Nevada's "*workforce skill level is low*" and the "*k-12 educational system is underperforming*". Investing in k-12 education is foundational to developing a workforce development strategy. Today, more than ever, is further evidence of the conclusions reached in 2011. We must diversify Nevada's economy by, in part, having a robust workforce development strategy to attract new businesses and industries. We can accomplish that through investing in our education delivery system.

Second, SB543 legislation provides for two branches of State government to ultimately make the decision regarding how to proceed with SB543. The legislation empowers the Governor to ignore all recommendations of the Commission. Likewise, the legislature can pass legislation regarding Nevada's education system including any or none of the recommendations from the Commission.

That leaves what we believe is the Commissions' primary objective under this legislation: to make recommendations as outlined in the legislation specifically: 1) the level of funding, 2) sources of funding, and 3) an implementation timeline. Lawmakers didn't pass SB543 for the Commission to recommend continuing the status quo. That is what you would do if you delayed its' implementation .

Accordingly, CCEA believes now more than ever our economy needs to be rebuilt. We need to diversify and attract new industries and businesses to modernize Nevada's revenue system. Reforming our education delivery system that allows for the development of a strategic workforce development program to have a workforce ready for businesses to come to Nevada must take place. The work of this Commission now has even greater historical importance.

Education has always been part of any economy. The two cannot be mutually exclusive. SB543 is the architectural structure to advance our public education system.

We recommend that the Commission proceed with making recommendations to the Governor and Legislature regarding optimal funding as a level of funding; identify sources of stable and reliable funding for k-12 like reforming property tax system to support the new plan; and developing an aggressive 10-year implementation plan with heavy investment to fund the basic per pupil funding level the first six years of that ten-year plan.

John Vellardita, Executive Director
Clark County Education Association (CCEA)

Item A7, Jesus Jara and Lola Brooks

Madam Chair and Members of the Commission on School Funding:

As superintendent and president of the Board of School Trustees for the fifth largest school district in the country, we thank you for your work in helping to modernize Nevada's 53 year old funding formula. Our student population has changed vastly since the implementation of the funding formula in 1967, and your work to define the weights for our diverse student population is of immense importance as we look to have the funding follow the students. We also appreciate the work you have done in regard to moving special education students outside of the formula as well as further working on the definition of "at-risk" students so students that need the appropriate support and resources continue to receive them . With these efforts, it is even more imperative that the Commission recommends to the legislature that the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan is implemented in 2021.

We understand that the pandemic has led to budget cuts, including ours, across the entire state, and we have worked hard to ensure that every dollar is focused on student achievement. But, we must continue to forge ahead on implementation of a formula that has been badly needed for our students for decades. The transparency of the plan makes it easier for the public to follow the dollars as well as add in new potential revenue streams in the future to supplement, and not supplant, existing funds. With approximately 70 percent of students in the state receiving their education in Clark County, this formula represents the best chance to set the foundation for true equity in Nevada for decades to come . As members of the Commission, you know the game changer this formula is to education in our state, and therefore, why it is important that you give a final recommendation for legislators as we head into the 2021 Legislative Session.

Sincerely,

Jesus Jara, Ed .D.
Superintendent

Lola Brooks
President, Board of School Trustees

Item A8, Dallas Hulsey

Dear members of the Commission on education Funding,

My name is Dallas Hulsey and I have approximately 7 years of teaching experience in Nevada. I have been a middle school science teacher at a Title-I school in Las Vegas and a non-title school in Reno. I am writing to you this morning to describe how the lack of funding for education in our state has personally hindered my teaching. I am also writing to ask you to delay voting on SB543, show public support for AJR1, and listen to our educators, who are the experts when it comes to understanding how your proposed formula and spreadsheets affect real people on a daily basis.

When I was 23 I moved to Las Vegas to teach at a Title-I school through teach for America. Even though I brought home only ~\$28,000 that year and our school had Title-I funds I had to pay for all of my science supplies out of pocket. When you're a good science teacher you strive to make learning a hands-on experience so that students see firsthand what you're talking about. I deliberately chose not to skimp on supplies when I could because my students were already disadvantaged enough. I paid around \$1,000 for supplies each year I was there trying to make science relatable and interesting to my students, who I felt a duty to do my best for.

My class sizes were about 35 students/class at that time. Many teachers in my hallway had 40-44. I was working on my master's degree full time while teaching full-time, and it absolutely drained me. I had about 3 minutes a week to give to each individual student if I kept to the time I was paid, which of course I didn't. I was young but I was a role model for these students, and they came to me with so many problems wanting to talk.

You see, we didn't have enough school counselors for these kids. We had 2 in a school or ~1,250. Not nearly enough to provide the emotional support these kids needed because their parents were absent, dead, in jail, etc. They babysat their siblings, didn't have food, couldn't afford new shoes, and so much more. I spent several hours each week being a mentor and a confidant to these kids. It was heartbreaking, but I did my best, even though it sort of emotionally broke me. That was the last time I taught in a Title-I school. I realized I couldn't do it all and they didn't have the resources they need to succeed. I couldn't afford to be the resource they really needed, and honestly, just my support and time wasn't enough anyway. They needed resources that only more funding could provide.

Things were a bit better in Reno. I still have large class sizes and not nearly enough paid time to plan or grade. The administrative tasks and meetings are overwhelming and draining. I could really use about 7 less students each class period and 30 extra paid minutes in my day. Without them I don't know how much longer I'll be able to teach; my goal is to try to get to 10 years full time. After that I may move to part time, as I simply can't take the stress. Having less kids and more paid time to complete work would boost morale more than anything, and these are exactly the kinds of things we won't get in your new funding formula.

This new "student-centered" funding formula is ludicrous, especially for Washoe. Your commission really thinks Washoe and our state is over or adequately funded? Lord help us all. Please, create a REAL funding formula, one that brings us up to the national average AND includes new revenue streams. If there is no new revenue, it just creates new winners and losers. Meanwhile, Governor Sisolak has asked departments, including Education, for 12% cut proposals for next year. So, public education is likely to get cut even further than what your formula proposes. It is irresponsible to implement a new funding plan while decimating education budgets.

To better fund public education, I am asking the Funding Commission to support passage of AJR1 from the second special session this past summer. AJR1 is a constitutional amendment that would change the mining tax from 5% of net proceeds to 7.75% of gross proceeds. AJR1 would generate about \$485M in new revenue for Nevada.

And I certainly believe the funding model should be updated to reflect the changing needs of the state, but that this plan, with no revenue, and these turbulent times, will not have the desired effect. This commission is cutting public education to the bone. Please delay SB543 and find a true, dynamic funding formula that actually increases our state education budget. Please publicly support AJR1. And please listen to your educators who are literally risking their lives and dying this year to ensure our students get an education. Are any of you making the same

sacrifices? If not, please, listen to your educators. We're on the front lines and we understand what your formula does and means.

With respect,
Dallas Hulseby

Item A9, Elizabeth Cadigan

Dear Education Funding Commission,

I am writing to say that finding new revenue to fund our public schools in Nevada is a MUST. While I realize that this may be the last meeting of this year, the need to find new revenue is an ongoing task that is not going to disappear when the clock strikes midnight on January 1st. Nevada has been struggling to properly support its students for decades- how much worse do things need to get before we begin to do what's right for our students?

As an educator in Washoe County, I am constantly worrying over what the next budget deficit will bring- how many students will this add to my rosters? How many colleagues will I lose? How much more will I be expected to take on to make up to cover the gaps? How long before I am either burnt out or let go myself? The "do more with less" conditioning needs to stop.

Do what's right for our students, our community and our future- Find a way to create new revenue to fund our public schools.

-Elizabeth Cadigan

Item A10, Amanda Morgan

Dear Chairwoman McCormick-Lee and members of the Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on behalf of Educate Nevada Now.

In regards to Agenda Item 12, ENN supports implementation of the PCFP in the coming biennium. However, issues with implementing the formula during an economic crisis should not be ignored.

Given the recent budget turmoil, changes could be made to ensure students are not harmed during the implementation. Please consider the following recommendations:

1. Delay movement to true school-level weights that “follow the student” until we are sure our most vulnerable students will not be harmed in the process.

The effective weights for students with unique needs were abysmal before the current economic crisis, but the loss of funding during the 2020 Special Session has only made the situation worse. Currently, SB 543 gives districts discretion in how they appropriate weighted funding to schools during the 2021-2023 biennium (allowing districts to maintain Zoom and Victory schools during the transition to weighted funding).¹ However, beyond the coming biennium, districts must allocate weighted funding directly to schools based on their enrollment of eligible students.²

With the loss of SB 178 dollars meant to aid in funding weights and the potential for even more cuts during the coming session, the Commission should consider recommending an extension to the discretionary two-year period. This will allow time for the restoration of funds that are critical to the effective implementation of weights. Additionally, it would give the Commission time to study the impact of transitioning to weights on our high-need schools, avoiding harm to those students, and preventing a premature transition to insufficient effective weights.

2. Adopt a hold harmless that promotes wider investment in revenue growth, preventing deterioration of resources in counties that are not currently adequately funded.

The economic crisis may set the state back, creating a longer road to appropriate school funding levels. Even prior to the crisis, fifteen out of seventeen counties were inadequately funded per the APA study.

The current model freezes the majority of districts funding levels, for potentially several years, before receiving additional funding to account for increased costs or enrollment growth. Many districts will find themselves unable to support their teachers and staff, replace books or technology or afford the essential resources and programs that support their students. ENN recommended the adoption of the Illinois adequacy distribution model during the 2019 session as a way to move all underfunded counties towards adequacy. With the prospect of falling even further behind, this alternate model could be a more responsible and fair way to grow into the PCFP.

The Illinois model calculates each district’s adequacy target and provides a proportional amount of new or additional dollars based on each district’s distance from that target. This growth model presumes good faith by lawmakers when they state their intent to move towards adequacy versus simply reshuffling inadequate funding. This method is more likely to gain wider support than the current method that simply freezes all funding for districts that do not benefit from the new PCFP redistribution. This model would ensure no district receives less funding than they currently do, and each district that is not currently receiving adequate funding would proportionally benefit from additional revenue down the road. This model avoids harming students in the coming years and should be considered give the current economic turmoil.

3. Re-evaluate funding and programs to be included in the Restoration Funding Target in the event of additional cuts during the 2021 session.

¹ SB 543 § 78.

² SB 543 § 8(3).

The Restoration Funding Target seeks to avoid implementation of the formula in a worse situation than we found ourselves pre-pandemic. For example, the target includes restoring funds that were initially expected to support weights, such as SB 178 funding lost during the special session.

We do not know how long a road we have to reach pre-pandemic funding levels, and unfortunately, we also do not know if more cuts to K-12 are on the way. Additional cuts may negatively impact implementation of the PCFP and its intent. For example, we do not know if districts will be held harmless at 2019-2020 funding levels as intended in SB 543. We do not know if other programs designed to support weights will be reduced or cut. With this in mind, we urge the Commission to consider including potential funding or programs lost during the 2021 session in the Restoration Funding Target to honor the original intent of the bill.

In sum, we believe there is a path forward to implement the PCFP responsibly, and we thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,

Amanda Morgan, Executive Director
amorgan@educatenevadanow.com

Item A11, Jan Giles

Good morning Madame Chair, Members of the Commission. My name is Jan Giles and I am the President of the Education Support Employees Association (ESEA). ESEA represents thousands of Education Support Professionals (ESPs) in Clark County, and most of our support staff professionals are women and persons of color; they fill the majority of lower paid positions in CCSD. ESPs are the backbone of public education in Clark County. We keep the schools running; we support the teachers; we feed the students; and most importantly we care for the students.

I write you today to ask that you recommend a delay in the implementation of this new pupil centered funding plan. While some in the District have lobbied us hard, we do not believe that this plan should be implemented July of 2021. ESEA supports updating the way we fund public education in Nevada, but this plan needs too much work, and without proper recommendations and amendments, this plan will fail our students, our teachers, our support staff professionals, and our state.

As has been well-established, Nevada public school funding has suffered for years. As a result, Clark County students and employees have suffered through large classroom sizes, inappropriate staffing levels, limited services, underpaid staff, and the list goes on. This new funding formula does not fix the lack of funding education in Nevada. In fact, it contains no new funding at all! It instead attempts to help the current inadequate state of education funding in Nevada. We're still fighting over the same pie no matter how you cut it.

In Clark County, this inadequate and insufficient funding has hit us extremely hard with the unique needs of a community built on a service sector population. Our students have not received the necessary per pupil funding to provide them the full range of services they need and deserve. To make this plan work, you will need new revenue, yet this Commission has not recommended a way to achieve that goal. There are several mining tax proposals on the table in 2021. We think AJR1 is the best path forward, and would enjoy hearing the Commissions thoughts, as well as a formal recommendation or endorsement.

I'd like to make particular note of the 16% End Fund Balance provision. The language in SB543 to set the end fund balance for school districts not subject to collective bargaining at 16.6% is a gross departure from current practice, policy, and direction. We believe that this is an anti-union and anti-collective bargaining provision that could wall off hundreds of millions of dollars from the collective bargaining processes in Clark County. Simply put, this provision will hurt Education Support Professionals on the ground, and this requirement needs to be removed. I encourage you to remember that an ESP's working environment is a student's learning environment. The words and numbers on your pages and spreadsheets have real world implications for the members I represent and the students we serve each day.

Nevada's parents and educators expect this Commission to take the right and responsible actions on implementation of this bill. I ask you to do the responsible thing for Nevada and recommend a delay of Senate Bill 543.

Thank you.

Jan Giles, ESEA President

Item A12, Jeanine Luciani

I have been a teacher in Washoe County for 25 years. Ten years after Nevada schools' budgets were cut in half to accommodate the 2010 recession, education funding has not recovered. Now, we find ourselves in a deeper crisis and once again we are asking our children and teachers to carry the financial burden. I can tell you that my first few years of teaching were much different than they are now. My classes were smaller. I had more time to plan for my instruction. Frankly, I was less stressed. I retired last year earlier than expected because I was losing my love of teaching and I fear that many more teachers are on their way out – we cannot afford to lose experienced, dedicated teachers in Nevada. They are creating the next generation of scientists, doctors, legislators, and first responders.

Now is not the time to change the funding plan – we do not need to move money around, what we need is additional money allocated to education. Nevada spends less per pupil than 90% of the country. This is unacceptable for our community. We can do better, and I implore you to find a way to adequately fund education in our state. This pandemic has shown the community what educators have always known – schools offer our children far more than just an academic education. Students' mental, physical, and nutritional health also rely on having a strong education system. This crisis is the opportune time to require the mining companies to give back to Nevada – providing continued funding for the future. Nevada cannot continue to handle our finances one crisis at a time. Delay SB543 until there is a plan for new revenue for K-12 education in Nevada.

Thank you,
Janine Luciani
Educator

Item A13, Julianna Melendez

Good morning to all members of the Commission. My name is Julianna Melendez, a current Nevada Youth Legislator representing Senate District 10 and Student Body President at Valley High School. Most importantly, I am a Clark County School District student here to show my full support of SB 543.

Being enrolled within this school district since the beginning of my educational career has allowed me to witness all of the amazing change achieved by the amazing workers of said district and admirable legislators. However, it has also granted me the opportunity to see that the legislation regarding educational funding has not kept pace with the change happening in our state. The previous 1967's Nevada Plan, the oldest in the nation, is outdated and inadequate; traits that should never be proudly used to describe legislation. The new formula proposed under SB 543 ensures that our weighted funding is pupil-focused, transparent, and overall an effective and modern addressal of the money spent on K-12 education. This piece of legislation aligns with our state values of prioritizing student achievement through providing weights for students with more needs than the average pupil. Due to the current economic climate here in Nevada, it is imperative more so now than ever that we ensure the funding given towards student education is appropriate and accounted for. With the "lock-box" method mentioned within SB 543, we achieve just that.

As a senior with younger siblings and friends, I know this historic bill will benefit their educational careers exponentially. I am in extreme support of this bill, for the proposed funding plan guarantees equitable and successful outcomes for all Nevadan students. There is no such thing as 100% perfect legislation, but this is as close as we've gotten.

Thank you for your time and attention,
Julianna Melendez.

Item A14, Kristen Prostinak

Dear Commissioners,

I am an Aspiring Educator and a Graduate Student at the University of Nevada, Reno. I'm studying to be an educator and this is how I would explain my concerns to my kiddos. The Nevada Legislature is holding all of the infinity stones right now if they snap their fingers we are going to lose 1 out of every 8 education staff. That means we might not have a school nurse to care for us when we aren't feeling our best, that could be a bus driver who drives us to and from school everyday, or it could be a 3rd grade teacher. All of these people are superheroes like Spiderman and we need them in education!

SB543 will absolutely devastate our schools and has to be delayed until the Legislature finds new revenue to fully fund our schools.

Please listen to educators and don't be a Thanos!

~Kristin Prostinak
NSEA State Student Board Representative/ President
Vice President/ Professional Development Chair- U of NEA
kprostinak@gmail.com

Item A15, Maggie Babb

My name is Maggie Babb and I'm an educator in Washoe County. I have been a teacher in Nevada for six years, and through my time I've heard my superintendent and others throughout Nevada say that teachers must do more with less. This is a huge burden to bear for educators. A burden we can no longer take on for education in Nevada.

What we need is new revenue to begin to take the burden off of our educators. I am asking you to please delay SB543. We cannot afford to "freeze and squeeze" money from districts and create losers all across our state. We couldn't afford that in 2019, and we certainly can't afford it now in these COVID times.

Education in Nevada is in crisis. Please listen to educators and take a stand towards finding new revenue for education funding and delay SB543.

Thank you,
Maggie Babb

Item A16, Mario Fitzpatrick

Good Evening,

Tomorrow the Education Funding Committee will be meeting tomorrow morning and I would like to advocate for recommending new sources of revenue. At this point the most logical would be to raise taxes to a level consistent with mining around the nation. Our schools already rank at the bottom of per pupil funding and I have seen first hand the impact this has on students. On top of this we are facing a possible 12% reduction in education funding suggested by the governor. We simply cannot sustain this type of funding reductions and expect it won't impact student learning. Please consider finding new sources of revenue so that our students aren't left behind.

Thank You,

Mario Fitzpatrick

Item A17, Nevada State Education Association

The Nevada State Education Association has been the voice of Nevada educators for over 100 years.

When the legislature passed SB543 in 2019, no one could have foreseen the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic crisis hitting hardest here in Nevada. The unfortunate new reality is Nevada is falling further away from optimal funding for K-12 education. During the first Special Session this summer, \$156M in painful cuts were made to K-12 education, including total elimination of weighted funding for at-risk students and English learners—the very basis for the new funding plan. And with COVID-19 cases at record highs, the crisis and the related economic impacts are far from over. Last month, Governor Sisolak requested 12% reduction proposals from all departments, including the Department of Education, for the next biennium. If these proposed cuts are enacted, it will further decimate our chronically underfunded system, which will likely lead to layoffs and takeaways, further elimination of education supports and equity programs, and even larger class sizes.

When SB543 was first released, NSEA said that any new funding plan for Nevada schools needs to include new funding to be successful. Now faced with deep cuts to education, new funding is even more desperately needed. NSEA maintains it is completely irresponsible to effectuate a radical shift in the state's education funding formula in the middle of a global pandemic, as devastating cuts are being made to our schools. NSEA's other concerns with the new funding plan have also become more pressing in the current climate. For most Nevada school districts who are new losers with the new funding plan, their budget "freeze and squeeze" will be longer and more devastating. Zoom and Victory Schools, Nevada's model equity programs will be even further watered down. The anti-union end fund balance provision will mean that no educator raises can be won through the collective bargaining process for the foreseeable future. And while SB543 proponents have sold the new funding plan as righting a wrong in the south, according to the Commission's November analysis, CCSD stands to net less than 1% of its budget, while charter schools would receive a multi-million dollar payday.

The only responsible course of action for the state is to delay the implementation of SB543 until after the pandemic, while education stakeholders are able to develop a revenue plan to get us out of the current economic crisis and on our way to optimal funding.

To this end, NSEA is asking for the third time for the Commission on School Funding to adopt a formal position in support of AJR1 from the 32nd Special Session. AJR1 would amend the Constitution to increase the mining tax from 5% of net proceeds to 7.75% of gross proceeds. This would generate \$485 million in new revenue. While AJR1 is only a part of what is needed to deliver a high-quality public education to every Nevada student, we see it as a critical first step toward building a funding plan to achieve optimal funding.

Item A18, Katie Dockweiler

Hello Madam Chair and members of the Commission, my name is Dr. Katie Dockweiler, school psychologist and Director of Government and Professional Relations for the Nevada Association of School Psychologists. From a funding perspective, fully implementing the new funding formula is imperative to improving outcomes for Nevada's students, especially those most at-risk. Students benefit from the new funding formula in a variety of ways, from instructional support for academic and social-emotional learning, to human capital support in the form of additional staff to deliver these critical services. The new funding formula will support the hiring of school-based mental health professionals, which in turn will help districts to meet the recommended staffing ratios set by the Nevada State Board of Education. Attaining these ratios are critical as we currently do not have sufficient school-based mental health professionals to meet students' mental and behavioral health needs. We kindly request full implementation of the new funding formula as student wellness needs are critical and build a foundation for student success. Thank you.

Item A19, Nevada Parent Teacher Association

Dear Chair McCormick-Lee and Commission Members,

Once again, thank you all for your hard work and dedication to the Commission’s historic and difficult task. Nevada PTA believes that the work of the Commission is one critical part – and only one part – of desperately needed change to bring Nevada’s students, families, schools, and our state into the future.

A new pupil-centered formula, dramatically increased transparency, optimal funding levels, new funding sources, implementation with fidelity, and maintaining equity across all Nevada school districts is a heavy lift no matter how it is viewed. The Commission is tasked with difficult and complex policy issues and must make decisions that will rarely please everyone. Nevertheless, it is crucial that progress continues, and recommendations are provided to the 2021 Legislature. The timeline to perfection is an endless one, and meanwhile our children and our state continue to grow relentlessly.

The conversation over additional revenue sources must also move forward now. We know education funding in Nevada is inadequate, multiple studies have documented that reality. Every Nevada student deserves the resources necessary to succeed and that requires action now. Any new revenue plans will take time to be implemented and even longer to impact our students. While we recognize the current challenges, this week’s delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine in our state reminds us that with hard work, and perhaps even economic diversification at last, Nevada can once again thrive. Reaching optimal funding requires first restoring recent cuts and then already identified adequacy targets which requires crafting a revenue plan to meet those goals over the next decade.

Your work is the critical cornerstone in an effort that will require continued dedication and fidelity from the Legislature, the Governor, the Department of Education, and all school districts. We stand ready to work together with all parties to make PTA’s vision – “Every child’s potential a reality” – become Nevada’s reality.

Nevada PTA has advocated for decades over its 80-year history in the Battle Born state for the kinds of changes and improvements you are all laboring over. We thank you again for your dedication to getting this right, for all students across our state, and look forward to continuing our support of your work moving forward.

Sincerely,

Nevada Parent Teacher Association Rebecca Garcia, President
Alison Turner, Vice President of Advocacy
Kali Fox Miller, State Legislative Chair and Member at Large

Item A20, Rachel Fisher

Dear Education Funding Commission,

I am writing you today as an elementary educator in the Washoe County School District. Public education in Nevada has remained chronically underfunded for years, and now our already unsustainable educational system has been pushed to the the breaking point by the current pandemic. As a teacher I have seen the devastating effect this lack of resources has on my students, and have first hand experience on the overwhelming burden placed on myself and my colleagues.

The archaic tax system in our state and the constant supplanting of education funds are the two biggest contributors to the fact that Nevada continues to have school rankings at the bottom of the nation, currently ranking 48th in per-pupil spending. Mining companies in Nevada have gotten away with not giving back to the communities that have provided them billions in profits from our land's resources. Nevada public education will not survive without new revenue--we need you to fully support the passing of AJR1 to amend our state's constitution to increase the mining tax to provide for Nevada's future. In addition, voters in Nevada continually vote for new revenue to be provided for education, but then continually have their votes betrayed as this money is supplanted away from public schools making it so our educational system essentially NEVER sees the desperately needed increase in funding and resources. You have a duty to not only ensure that our state's public education system gets a plan for new revenue, but that ALL of that new revenue is fully dedicated to actually going to education.

Until such a plan is in place to allocate new funding to public education, you need to delay the implementation of the new funding plan presented in SB543. Moving money around with the lack of base funding will destroy districts across the state.

Our students deserve so much more than to have their future continue to be the first on the chopping block for every budget crisis. Nevada needs our law makers to take bold action and stand with educators, and we need you to tell them and the public the truth--we DO NOT have the current funds or resources to adequately serve our communities.

Thank you,
Rachel Fisher
dnrfisher@gmail.com
Reno, NV

Item A21, Ruben Murillo

My name is Ruben Murillo, a retired special education teacher in Clark County. A good friend of mine is a first grade teacher in a Title 1 school. Pre-pandemic, I volunteered in his classroom once a week and witnessed how a third year teacher had to supplement classroom supplies with his own funds with a beginning teachers salary Obviously funding is important to the success of students and the educators who work with them.

The Covid 19 pandemic has devastated the Nevada economy, much more so than the 2008 recession. Governor Sisolak has asked for all Departments to implement a 12% cut in their budgets on top of what was reduced in the special sessions held this summer. It doesn't make sense to move forward not fully knowing the impact of the loss of revenues on the state budget especially the education budget.

Many of our educators had worked second jobs and lost them due to the pandemic, have had to scramble to find additional work to supplement a loss of revenue in order to make ends meet. They will do what needs to be done to make their families whole.

This commission has the same obligation to make the residents of Nevada whole, especially when it comes to public education funding.

This commission needs to recommend new revenue funding which includes a mining tax, to benefit the residents of Nevada, when it comes to public education. I am asking for the Funding Commission to publicly commit to increased funding through AJR1 in their recommendations.

The development of a funding revenue plan is important and I'm not asking for the Commission to table everything. I'm asking this commission to think strategically about their funding plan and to include additional funding revenue that would tell educators you are focusing on a workable plan that truly meets their needs throughout the state.

Ruben Murillo
Retired Special Education Teacher
Former President of the Clark County Education Association
Former President of the Nevada State Education Association

Item A22, Ryan Russell and Robert Salyer

Madam Chair and Members of the Commission on School Funding:

We represent the following county school districts and their respective superintendents: Elko, Eureka, Storey, Douglas, Pershing, Lander, Lyon, Esmeralda, Lincoln, and Carson City. We are, once again, requesting that the Commission make a recommendation to the Nevada Legislative Committee on Education to delay the implementation of Senate Bill ("SB") 543 until at least the 2023-2025 Legislative Session.

As evidenced by a solid majority of the public comment presented to the Commission on November 19, 2020, we are not alone in our concerns surrounding the mechanics and equity of SB 543 or our request to delay its implementation. As you know, many stakeholders who spoke at the November 19 meeting requested that the Commission make a recommendation to delay implementation of SB 543.

In previous public comment, we have outlined several aspects of the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan ("PCFP") that still remain uncertain at this late date. First and foremost, the hold harmless provision still remains unfunded. Hold harmless funding is absolutely vital to many of the aforementioned school districts and cannot be further overlooked or dismissed. The gubernatorial call for school districts to cut twelve percent (12%) for the 2021-2023 biennium, combined with an unfunded and improperly vetted hold harmless provision, will likely result in extreme negative financial consequences for many school districts.

The Commission has also failed to address several other serious consequences of the PCFP relative to the current situation in which many school districts find themselves. Such concerns include the decline in enrollment, perceived lack of PCFP transparency, issues with the cost-wage index, cost of delivery of services in rural districts, uncertainty of net proceeds of minerals and lack of civil immunity for school districts. There is simply not enough time for the Commission to properly discuss and vet all of these issues prior to the beginning of the Legislative Session in February.

At the last Commission meeting, there was a brief discussion about how the PCFP can be modified to "hurt people less" than the most current iteration. While this is a noble inquiry, the premise is inherently flawed. An educational funding formula that causes the Commission to deliberate how to hurt students, educators, and administrators less is not ripe for implementation and requires serious further inspection and vetting from the Commission. As such, we believe the only path forward is a recommendation to delay implementation until all issues and concerns with the PCFP have been addressed.

As always, the school districts appreciate the opportunity to work with the Commission and are open and available for discussions about any of the aforementioned issues. We wish all Commission members a happy and safe holiday season and look forward to continuing to work with them in the new year.

Sincerely,

Ryan D. Russell, Esq.

Robert M. Salyer, Esq.

Item A23, Selena La Rue

I am writing today as a deeply concerned educator who has witnessed firsthand the effect chronic underfunding has had on Nevada education.

For years we have been consistently asked to do more with less. Put in more hours of unpaid labor, with fewer resources, in order to support more students. It is a cycle which gets worse every year as we face down more cuts and our class sizes grow.

As a high school teacher, I have had class sizes of 45 and I've had colleagues with over 50 in their classroom! And these are social studies classes, not band or PE. How is it reasonable to instruct 50 sophomores in a room made for 25? Most days teachers have to hope students are absent just so that every child in the room can have a chair. How have we gotten to a point where teachers have to hope students don't show up to class? When class sizes cross 30, the class is less about learning and more about crowd control. Teachers do not have time or space to get to know students in a class that large and instead spend 90% of the time dealing with behavior problems. Is this what we want for our children? To be shuffled from crowded classroom to crowded classroom, asking them only that they sit quietly and not pushing them to ever really learn?

This pandemic has only worsened the issue. Schools were forced to reopen in the midst of a deadly pandemic not only without any new funding to pay the costs of keeping our kids and staff safe, but in fact with even fewer funds than we had the previous year! How are we supposed to keep our kids safe, address their learning loss from last year, and help them cope with the trauma of this last year with even LESS money than we've ever had? And for this commission to operate under the assumption that the pandemic has had no effect on schools or funding is beyond ridiculous, it is downright harmful. It is in fact willful neglect of your duty to our children.

All of this is to say nothing of the effect the years of chronic underfunding has had on our educators. Too many educators have been pushed to their breaking point and cannot continue to give everything, including now their lives, to a state which seems to care so little for education. We cannot save the children of our state with only the hard work and passion of educators. We need more support. We need smaller class sizes. We need the funds our children deserve. If this doesn't happen, there will be an exodus of educators leaving the profession for good. What good will your precious funding plan do you then, when there are no teachers left to teach? When no bus drivers will drive your children to school? When no custodian will be there to keep our schools safe and clean? This is a dangerous game you are playing and the losers will be our children.

I am asking, even begging, that you delay implementation of SB543 until there is new revenue to properly fund the plan. As it stands, all this plan will do is create losers across the state without any real benefit to our public school students. You cannot implement a new funding plan with cuts to spending from the very start. This must wait until we are out of the current crisis.

Further, I ask the commission to take an official stance in support of AJR1 so that our schools can gain some of the funding they so desperately need. This commission is meant to focus on funding of education and new revenue is essential to that charge. Please, fulfill your duty and support bold new revenue for our schools.

Thank you,
~Selena La Rue Hatch
WEA member and Teacher

Item A24, Susan Kaiser

Dear Commissioners:

While I have only been retired from the public school classroom for a year and a half the challenges teaching in Nevada remain fresh in my mind. For a moment, imagine trying to teach middle school science students about chemical properties. My job is to engage my students and hold their attention every class meeting as they navigate foreign concepts about phenomena they can not directly observe, learn to use unfamiliar vocabulary correctly and pursue the answers to questions to clarify their understanding. The tools provided to me to accomplish this mission is a set of textbooks adopted by WCSD in 2008 which are out of date and any digital content they once provided are now all dead links.

In order to provide relevant and engaging learning activities for my students I had to find them for free on the Internet or write them up myself and on my own time. I would post them on a website I created and managed to provide easy access for homework tasks or on the chance occasion that a student was absent. However, even in 2018 digital access for students at home was not insured. In this era of the coronavirus which requires increased virtual learning the glaring gaps in accessibility are obvious.

I taught at my site for 20 years. For my entire tenure we were just below the 40% threshold of free and reduced lunch students to qualify as a Title 1 school and receive extra funding. Across the street at the elementary school where they did qualify for Title 1 students had specialists to help catch up on reading, receive Math tutoring and had many more computers to build their technology savvy. Sadly, once they crossed the street to enter 6th grade the funding stopped and with it the extra help they needed.

All of these problems can be solved by increasing funding to public schools. For educators, teaching without tools is difficult but for students learning without the tools is a deadend. It can impact the rest of their lives. Implementing SB543 without identifying new revenue will be devastating. I am asking you as a body to take a position on raising revenue for education funding and support AJR1. Please, do not make the students in Washoe County School District the losers.

Sincerely,
Susan Kaiser, NBCT
Retired, 25 years of service

Item A25, Clark County School District Student Body Presidents

Good morning Members of the Commission,

We are 10 of Clark County School District’s Student Body Presidents, whose responsibilities as Presidents entail actively fighting for what is in the best interest of the student populations we serve and projecting the voices of those populations. Today, we would like to carry out such a responsibility and stand together in support of the rapid, but mindful, implementation of the funding formula proposed under SB 543. Any further delay would only perpetuate the implications of the 50+ year-old Nevada Plan, the oldest in the nation in terms of funding education.

We believe that this modernized funding formula would be a step in the right direction to ensuring each Nevadan has the resources, financial and otherwise, to access a meaningful education, one that prepares them for a life of learning. More than ever, it is important to re-evaluate our conventional systems of education and adapt them to a rapidly changing world. This funding formula addresses that need, and it centers funding on the students, their parents, and their communities.

Keeping in mind that our official responsibilities as Student Body Presidents come to an end after this school year, and realizing that the effect of this plan will touch the students of our schools, our district, and our state for years to come anyways, we would like to ask that this Commission recommend the implementation of the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan for the 2021-2022 school year to the next legislative session.

Respectfully,

Alex Gallegos
2020-21 Eldorado Student Body President

Julianna Melendez
2020-21 Valley Student Body President

Natalie Flores
2020-21 Desert Pines Student Body President

Dylan Signor
2020-21 Rancho Student Body President

Aiden Western
2020-21 Liberty Student Body President

Paige Lawrie
2020-21 NWCTA Student Body President

Marisa Boyce
2020-21 Green Valley Student Body President

Deanna Rahmani
2020-21 Las Vegas Academy Student Body President

Jazzlyn Roel
2021-21 Bonanza Student Body President

Roiva Vinca Karagdag
2020-21 Advanced Technical Academy Student Body President

Item A26, HOPE for Nevada

Chair McCormick-Lee and members of the committee,

We'd like to take the opportunity to thank you all for the work you have done so far. We are heartened to see the commitment and focus from all of you and can only hope that our legislators will honor the work you have done during the upcoming session.

One of the more important tasks you have been given is to research and suggest possible sources of funding to meet the needs of our school districts throughout the State. Unfortunately, as you begin this discussion, we once again find ourselves in the middle of a fiscal crisis. While the trigger for our current setbacks is different than in the past, the results are still the same. And they come as no surprise.

As long as Nevada relies on such a narrow economic base, we will face this problem over and over again. We urge you to find funding sources for education from stable, broad-based sources that are able to better withstand the ups and downs of the economy. We all know that a well-funded, exemplary education system is the key to diversifying Nevada's economy, which in turn will strengthen our State against economic fluctuations.

We would also like to express our support for implementing the Pupil Centered Funding Plan. Standing still will never allow us to actually reach our destination, and will only allow for the continuation of the practice of supplanting education funding, as well as keeping the lack of transparency.

We acknowledge that there are NO school districts in Nevada that receive optimal, or even adequate, funding and that some aspects of the plan must be fixed immediately. However, we believe the only way to do this is to continue forward.

Thank you again for your long-term commitment to this cause.

HOPE For Nevada

Item A27, Stephanie Patton

Madam Chair and Members of the Commission on School Funding,

As a group committed to the education of our students, we want to thank each of you for the dedication of this commission and the work you put toward improving the state of education funding in Nevada. However, there is still much more work to be done in order to ensure this important and transparent formula is implemented and ultimately provides equitable funding for all students. That is why it’s so important for this commission to recommend its implementation for this upcoming legislative session.

One of the most important aspects of this funding formula is the focus on students and their needs above all else. That focus must continue as educators work to address the vast changes in our student population as our valley continues to grow. The transparency the new funding formula provides gives the public the ability to easily track and understand the dollars provided by the state to the students. Parents will finally be able to see how much money each student across the state receives. This helps us build trust with our communities as they see the costs and resources invested in their children. This level of transparency in the new funding formula also discourages the long-standing practice of supplanting education funding instead of adding new funding sources as promised to the voters.

As a community, we understand that you must take into account the needs of every district in the state. Our students, employees and community have struggled for far too long under a funding formula that doesn’t serve our needs today. This new funding formula lays the groundwork for us to work together as a state to transform public education.

Sincerely,

Alex Gallegos
CCSD Student – 12th Grade

Andrea Cole
Founder, CCSD Parents Facebook Group

Derek Bellow
President, Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees

Marie Neisess
President, Clark County Education Association

Matthew Caldwell
President, CCSD Police Officers Association

Stephanie Patton, Ed.S., NCSP
President, Nevada Association of School Psychologists

Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner
Board Member, Las Vegas My Brother’s Keeper Alliance

Item A28, Joni Martindale

Good morning-

I am writing in support of increased and more consistent funding for education. We have to find/appropriate a new revenue source for education. We cannot continue to lag in funding if we expect to produce well educated students - the future leaders of our state and country. Where is the tax money from the marijuan industry being spent? If that can be a source for education funding, it should not decrease current funding sources but be in addition to current funding sources.

As a teacher in Washoe County, I spend countless hundreds of dollars each year for supplies. We have not had a Science textbook adoption in over 20 years. The classroom computers for my class are 16 years old. My teacher computer Is over 9 years old. The laptop connected to my ActiveBoard is at least 8 years old. While we have been focused on getting technology to students due to the pandemic, we also have to be mindful of what we need in our schools. We need funding for field trips to broaden our students' life experiences. The cost of field trips has increased considerably. Our only way to take field trips is by using money we have collected for class fees from parents. That is not right. We need to provide our students with a well-rounded education with field trips to musical events, museums, and historical sites.

We also need to insure that our support staff is fully funded. We NEED our librarians, music teachers, and computer techs in our schools. Students need books in their hands, music to stimulate their brains and inspire them, and good training on computers.

I implore you and the commission to prioritize funding for education.

Sincerely,

Joni Martindale
3rd Grade teacher
Washoe County School District.

Item A29, Chris Daly

As NSEA stated in public comment made this morning, one of our main concerns with the new funding plan is that it includes no new funding for Nevada schools.

None.

Zero.

Zilch.

While the new funding plan is not responsible for statewide cuts to education, it is undeniably true that the new funding plan is scheduled to be implemented alongside draconian budget cuts. It is also true the new funding plan will make cuts in inflation-adjusted dollars to most Nevada school districts. And these are truths this Commission has never adequately addressed.

And as the original sponsor of the IP1 room tax to fund education, NSEA is painfully aware of the problems with supplanting of education funding under the existing Nevada plan. However, the need to fix the issue of supplanting does not justify the creation of a series of new problems, many of which would be ameliorated by the inclusion of significant new revenue alongside the implementation of the new funding plan. That's why we have asked for a delay of implementation of the new funding plan, until it is accompanied by actual new funding. And given this Commission's conversation about new revenue, it unfortunately feels like we are a long way off.

Proponents of SB543 talk a great deal about how the new funding plan will bring greater transparency to school funding in Nevada. However, the conversation on Item #10 today makes it clear that much work still needs to be done to transition to a truly transparent funding plan. One significant problem with accuracy of the new funding plan is the use of the term "hold harmless". A majority of Nevada school districts who are losers with the new funding plan are not going to be held harmless. They will have their budgets frozen in place for a number of years, while increases in costs and student enrollment squeeze their ability to maintain operations. And it seems like every time new, lengthy spreadsheets are reviewed by this Commission, the math changes. Today there are increasing numbers of losers who are facing very long budget winters.

Finally, educator voice has been sorely missing from the deliberations of the new funding plan – from the legislative process in 2019 all the way through today. Having public comment of educators from across the state read into the record doesn't make up for this omission. It is past time to do better by those who teach in classrooms and make our schools run.