

**NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
REGULATION WORKSHOP
MARCH 30, 2021
3:00 P.M.**

Meeting Location

Due to the circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held 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 WORKSHOP

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT

Jeff Briske, Director, Office of Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement (EDLiFE)
Michael Arakawa, Program Officer III, EDLiFE
Amelia Thibault, Executive Assistant, Superintendent's Office
Jolene Borges, Administrative Assistant III, EDLiFE
Jocie Truesdell, Administrative Assistant III, Superintendent's Office

LEGAL COUNSEL PRESENT

Greg Ott, Chief Deputy Attorney General

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE

Via Livestream

1: CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 3:00 P.M. by Jeff Briske, Director of the Office of Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement (EDLiFE).

2: PUBLIC COMMENT #1

Emily Ellison, Chief Human Resources Officer, Washoe County School District, submitted public comment regarding the regulation workshop related to Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 391.0896. *(A complete copy of the statement is available in Appendix A)*

3: WORKSHOP TO SOLICIT COMMENTS ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO NAC CHAPTER 391.0896 – SPECIAL LICENSE AS EMERGENCY SUBSTITUTE TEACHER; AUTHORIZED EMPLOYMENT

Michael Arakawa, Program Officer III, provided an overview of the [proposed emergency regulation](#) related to substitute licensure. These amendments are currently proposed as a temporary regulation and will expire on November 1, 2021; however, the Department intends to propose these amendments as a permanent regulation after July 1, 2021.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, school districts have struggled to find sufficient substitute teachers to meet needs. In November 2020, Governor Steve Sisolak approved an emergency regulation allowing school districts with 9,000 or more students enrolled to hire emergency substitutes during the declared state of emergency. This emergency regulation expired in February 2021, making emergency substitutes hired pursuant to this emergency regulation no longer eligible to be employed. However, districts have expressed that the need to employ additional substitute teachers still exists. The proposed emergency regulation would allow any school district or charter school in the State of Nevada, regardless of student enrollment, to employ emergency substitute teachers during a state of emergency pursuant to Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 414.070, and allow any emergency substitute teacher hired under that provision to remain employed through the end of the school year in which the state of emergency is terminated.

13: PUBLIC COMMENT #2

No public comment.

14: ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 P.M.

Appendix A: Statements Given During Public Comment

1. Emily Ellison, Chief Human Resources Officer, Washoe County School District, submitted public comment regarding the regulation workshop related to Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 391.0896.

Item A1, Emily Ellison

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of the proposed amendments to NAC 391.0896 which outlines provisions for licensing and employment as an emergency substitute teacher.

As a District, we faced a variety of challenges and unknowns as we worked to reopen our schools in August 2020. As the first semester progressed and the pandemic surged, we struggled to cover in-person classrooms impacted by positive cases and potential exposures. We were forced to transition secondary students, who had been on an in-person hybrid model, to full distance learning for a period of time while we worked to recruit and onboard even more substitute teachers who could cover classrooms. At the same time, Governor Sisolak signed an emergency directive allowing our District to utilize the emergency substitute licensing provisions currently available to rural Nevada school districts. Our intensive recruiting efforts were successful and expansion of the pool of potential hires meant that distance learning for our secondary students was temporary and we were able to return students to hybrid learning after just a few weeks.

While opponents of this measure may cite a lowering of licensing requirements as potentially detrimental to students, those arguments fail to acknowledge several key factors of our current reality.

First, merely possessing a license doesn't make someone eligible for hire; applicants are still subject to the hiring and screening practices of the district in which they are seeking employment. Additionally, current substitute licensing requirements exclude a great number of individuals with personal and professional experiences that our students could benefit from simply because their path didn't involve the accumulation of 60 higher education credits. For example, Career and Technical Education educators often follow a non-traditional pathway to the classroom. Many of these individuals qualify for a Business and Industry license that can be issued based on their professional experience but, do not qualify for a standard (non-emergency) substitute teaching license. Finally, this licensing provision is currently available to rural counties. Why shouldn't this educational resource be available to students in the State's two largest school districts, at the very least during emergencies?

The pandemic has underscored the importance of laws, regulations, and policies that allow for flexibility in responding to unprecedented circumstances. The proposed regulation change does just that and the Washoe County School District enthusiastically supports any change that would allow us to utilize the provisions NAC 391.0896 to meet the needs of our students.

Emily Ellison
Chief Human Resources Officer
Washoe County School District