

**NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COMMISSION ON RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION
JULY 22, 2026
2:00 PM**

Office	Address	City	Meeting
Department of Education	700 E. Fifth St.	Carson City	Boardroom
Department of Education	2080 E. Flamingo Rd.	Las Vegas	Boardroom
Department of Education	YouTube Stream with Captions	Virtual	Link

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION MEETING

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

In Person Las Vegas:

Commissioner Grant Hanevold
Commissioner Jackie Zavala
Commissioner Monica Bryant

In Person Carson City:

None

Ex-Officio Members:

Dr. Lindsay Couzens (Virtual)
Jannet Vreeland (Virtual)
Dr. Joseph Morgan (Virtual)

Virtual Attendance:

Vice Chair Beth Smith
Commissioner Alexandria Shelton
Commissioner Angie Joye
Commissioner Anna Colquitt
Commissioner Christine Hull
Commissioner Dana Crowley
Commissioner Douglas Owen
Commissioner Greg Cole
Commissioner Misty Olmos
Commissioner Tim Logan
Commissioner Janelle Sazon-Valdez

COMMISSION MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Commissioner Jenny Hunt
Commissioner Rachel Croft
Commissioner Christy McGill

LEGAL STAFF PRESENT:

Deputy Attorney General Christena Georgas-Burns (Virtual)

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT:

In Las Vegas:

Kellylynn Charles, Education Programs Professional, EDLiFE

Geri Mendiola, Administrative Assistant III, EDLiFE

In Carson City:

Emily Richarson, Administrative Assistant II, EDLiFE

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE

In Las Vegas:

None

Carson City:

None

Presenters:

Lisa Merrill, Senior Researcher, American Institutes for Research

Cheryl Krohn, Senior Technical Assistance Consultant, American Institutes for Research

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

Vice Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 2:02pm. Roll call attendance was taken as reflected above and a quorum was established. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commission Secretary, Kellylynn Charles followed by a reading of the Land Acknowledgement. Vice Chair Smith announced that Agenda Item 5 was pulled and would be moved to a future meeting.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT #1

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

Vice Chair Smith acknowledged and welcomed new Commission members Dr. Joseph Morgan, Interim Dean of the College of Education at UNLV, Jannet Vreeland from College of Business, and Dr. Lindsay Couzens, representing Chancellor McNair, Academic and Student Affairs at NSHE.

3. APPROVAL OF JUNE 25, 2026, MINUTES.

(INFORMATION/DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION)

Vice Chair Smith asked the Commission if there were any discussions regarding the June 25, 2026, meeting minutes. This agenda item was held open due to several Commissioners unable to access the draft minutes to review online. The item was reopened at the end of the meeting.

Motion: Commissioner Hull moved to approve the June 25, 2026, meeting minutes. Commissioner Bryant seconded the motion. Motion carried and the June 25th meeting minutes were approved.

4. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING STAY INTERVIEWS. (INFORMATION/DISCUSSION)

Cheryl Krohn, Senior Technical Assistance Consultant and Lisa Merrill, Senior Researcher from American Institutes for Research (AIR) presented to the Commission on stay interviews as a proactive teacher retention strategy for Nevada.

Ms. Krohn outlined several key initiatives during her presentation. She noted that while initial testing of the stay interview protocol might involve a small group, it would provide valuable insight into why teachers remained in their roles. Ms. Krohn then detailed plans for developing state resources, similar to efforts in Arizona and Ohio, which could include a toolkit with steps, sample questions, and support for analysis to assist districts with teacher retention. Ms. Krohn emphasized the necessity of offering training alongside these resources, pointing out that many people were not experienced in conducting stay interviews. Lastly, she suggested studying the implementation and impact of stay interviews in other states and districts so Nevada could learn from those experiences when evaluating strategies for teacher retention. Vice Chair Smith opened the floor for questions from the Commission.

Commissioner Bryant inquired whether stay interviews could be proactively targeted at schools experiencing high turnover rates, rather than relying solely on reactive exit interviews. Ms. Krohn responded that targeting specific schools with consistent turnover was a viable option, noting that audience selection was a critical decision point and pointing to contrasting examples in Utah and Maricopa County. She agreed that understanding why educators stayed in high-turnover schools could yield valuable insights. Commissioner Bryant further suggested extending stay interviews beyond classroom teachers to include other licensed educators, such as literacy strategists, special education facilitators, and school counselors because their broader role in the school provided a wider perspective compared to a single classroom setting.

Commissioner Morgan acknowledged the concerted efforts made toward recruitment pipelines for special education, school site counseling, and related services. He emphasized that addressing initial pipelines without focusing on induction and retention felt like filling a “leaky bucket,” leaving overall educator numbers stagnant. He praised the presentation’s ideas, particularly the proposal to study why professionals remain in the field, what concerns they hold, and what factors might drive them away. Having observed the same core teacher shortage areas persist over his 21-year tenure, Commissioner Morgan urged the group to focus on retaining their staff in these consistently high-need roles. Finally, he recommended broadening their focus beyond classroom teachers to include related services providers and other key stakeholders who perform critical roles within the education system.

Commissioner Hanevold echoed Commissioner Morgan’s comments and questioned the presentation’s breakdown of why teachers leave. He found it misleading that student discipline, workload, and school culture were listed separately from leadership. Drawing on his experience as a former principal and superintendent, he asserted that issues like culture and behavior management are direct reflections of site leadership. He observed that teachers rarely leave students; rather, they leave other adults, emphasizing that leadership dynamics must remain a top priority when addressing retention. Vice Chair Smith agreed with Commissioner Hanevold’s

points and raised a question for Ms. Krohn regarding interview protocols. Drawing on her human resources (HR) background, Vice Chair Smith noted that employees rarely feel enough psychological safety to be completely honest with a direct or skip level manager who may be contributing to their challenges. She asked whether best practice dictated using an independent, trained interviewer, such as someone from HR or relying on direct managers.

Ms. Krohn responded that research does not point to a single best practice. While HR literature often considers direct supervisors ideal, she acknowledged that this is not always effective due to potential lack of trust. Referencing examples such as Utah's use of instructional coaches or outside entities, Ms. Krohn explained that the choice of interviewer should ultimately be driven by the specific purpose of the interviews, the target audience, and the overall context rather than a rigid rule. Vice Chair Smith asked a follow up question regarding whether any states utilized stay interviews to track internal employee migration. She noted that employees often leave specific schools or work areas while remaining within the same district, and she wondered if stay interviews were used to understand why staff were moving away from certain sites or roles. Ms. Krohn replied that based on her review, states generally provided the tools and resources for stay interviews rather than conducting the interviews themselves. She explained that entity decision-making was typically driven by data trends. Using Utah as an example, Ms. Krohn pointed out that exit trend data showing high turnover among novice teachers led stakeholders to tailor their interview questions specifically to that demographic. Ultimately, she concluded that state and district leaders leveraged existing data to identify problem areas and guide their focus accordingly.

Commissioner Crowley pointed out that in large districts like Clark County, hundreds of teachers transferred each spring for the upcoming school year. She suggested that gathering survey data from these internal transfers could yield even more revealing insights than surveying teachers leaving the district entirely. Additionally, Commissioner Crowley questioned where this survey data and reporting should live, emphasizing the need for transparency so administrators, HR, or central leadership could access the information and convert it into actionable steps to address retention issues. Ms. Krohn responded to the question regarding data management and reporting, acknowledging that it required careful consideration. She explained that depending on the option Nevada chose, protecting participant privacy while sharing usable data was a critical balancing act. Ms. Krohn noted that stay interview initiatives were often kept at the school or district level because local leaders could quickly view and act on the findings. Involving an outside entity would require a different process to effectively distribute actionable information back to individual schools.

Lisa Merrill from AIR clarified that when working with the Department to design the state's Exit/Transfer survey, they adopted a school-level perspective. She explained that a teacher leaving a school impacts its culture, relationships, and students, which led them to framing the tool as an "Exit/Transfer Survey." She informed the Commission that the state already surveyed individuals about their reasons for transferring between schools. Furthermore, she noted that this data was available on a public-facing dashboard, allowing users to filter responses specifically for internal transfers and view findings by district provided response thresholds were met. Ms. Merrill concluded that while this tool differed from a stay interview, it served as a valuable, existing resource for gathering key information.

Commissioner Cole raised concerns regarding organizational dynamics during stay interviews, referencing prior points made by Commissioners, Smith, Crowley, and AIR Researcher, Lisa Merrill. He noted that having higher-level leadership such as a direct supervisor's supervisor, conduct these interviews could backfire during retention efforts, as employees might find the presence of authority figures intimidating. Ms. Krohn agreed with Commissioner Cole's observations about these delicate dynamics but emphasized that research consistently identifies stay interviews as the recommended approach over simple surveys. She explained that face-to-face interviews allow organizations to collect rich qualitative data, build relationships, and demonstrate to employees that their engagement is valued. However, Ms. Krohn acknowledged that surveys, or a hybrid approach combining surveys with select follow-up interviews, remain a viable, cost-effective alternative when direct interviews are financially or logistically impractical. Commissioner Cole agreed with the value of direct dialogue, referencing Commissioner Hanevold's point about why employees leave. He noted that while people sometimes depart due to poor leadership or heavy workloads, they also leave simply for convenience, such as accepting a position closer to home after years of hard service. He concluded that open-ended survey text fields cannot replicate the honest, detailed insights gathered through face-to-face conversations. Ultimately, Commissioner Cole expressed appreciation for the presentation and underscored the importance of implementing effective stay interview strategies at both the state and district levels.

Commissioner Olmos asked Ms. Krohn whether her research uncovered surveys geared specifically toward retention and departure factors for support staff. Ms. Krohn replied that while Arizona's toolkit offered the most detailed employee category breakdowns, most existing research and survey questions were written broadly to apply across various roles. She noted that while specific questions could be tailored for targeted groups, such as Utah's protocol focused on novice teachers, she found very little literature on stay interviews for support staff, as the practice remained merging in K-12 education. Vice Chair Smith highlighted the value of well-designed surveys, particularly given Nevada's limited funding, noting that direct employee feedback helps bridge the gap between frontline staff working with students and leaders making budgetary decisions. Ms. Merrill added that for the upcoming school year, an Exit/Transfer survey had been developed for all Nevada educators and support personnel, including principals, counselors, paraprofessionals, nurses, secretaries, bus drivers, and cafeteria workers.

5. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S STUDENT WORK PROGRAM.
(INFORMATION/DISCUSSION)

Vice Chair Smith pulled this item from the agenda for a future meeting.

6. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION UPDATES ON RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION INFORMATION REQUESTS. ***(INFORMATION/DISCUSSION)***

The Commission heard updates from Commission Secretary, Kellylynn Charles regarding recruitment and retention information requests. Ms. Charles noted that the educator survey dashboard had been updated to improve user friendliness, accessibility, and sorting capabilities, with

additional updates planned for the near future. It was also shared that the Exit/Transfer survey would be expanded starting this year to include all educators, rather than just teachers.

Regarding ongoing research, AIR was continuing its work on scholarships for advanced degrees while evaluating their impact on retention. AIR was also diving deeper into inquiries regarding the Public Employee's Benefits Program (PEBP) and the possibility of allowing districts to negotiate inclusion in the state healthcare plan. To do this, they were examining Nevada plans, reaching out to local districts, consulting with PEBP, and analyzing other states with singular healthcare plans. Additionally, AIR was conducting district interviews to gather information on scholarship endorsements for school mental health positions, such as social workers and counselors. Ms. Charles emphasized that because these efforts were nearing completion, additional presentations might be scheduled for the following month.

Addressing previous requests for data, Ms. Charles reported that tracking teacher movements into critically staffed Other Licensed Personnel (OLP) positions for wraparound services was still in progress, as extracting and counting that data from the OPAL System required more time. However, data regarding registered apprenticeship licenses was available. Ms. Charles clarified that once educators completed their required coursework, their apprenticeship licenses converted into standard educator licenses and many program graduates no longer held an apprenticeship designation. As of earlier that week there were 54 active apprenticeship licenses distributed across the state:

- Clark County: 25
- Charter Schools: 13
- Elko County: 6
- Washoe County: 5
- Nye County: 3
- Churchill County: 1
- Eureka County: 1

Ms. Charles concluded her updates by sharing that planning and scheduling for statewide focus groups gathered to collect data on specific student behavior issues were in their final stages, with the goal of beginning to hold sessions across the state by end of August.

Vice Chair Smith noted that Washoe County School District had led a similar overhaul of its behavior manual and discipline matrix three to four years prior based on educator feedback. She asked how focus groups were being formed and who was recommending participating educators. Ms. Charles explained that the Department intended to make participation open to everyone rather than relying on recommendations. The goal was to capture broad perspectives, including those of teachers, support staff, principals, district leaders, parents, families, and students. To accomplish this, the Department planned to host multiple sessions, including virtual whole-group discussions as well as dedicated groups specifically for teachers, parents, or students. Ms. Charles added that these groups aimed to gain a deeper understanding of feedback from the exit and transfer survey, where educators frequently cited student behavior as a key concern. Vice Chair Smith expressed strong approval of the inclusive format and offered to help promote the opportunity. She asked how the initiative would be publicized and whether a webpage or promotional email would be provided.

Ms. Charles confirmed that details, including in-person dates, virtual session times, and registration links would be shared through the Department's newsletter, social media platforms, direct email lists, and sent directly to the Commissioners so that they could amplify the message.

7. INFORMATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING WORK SESSION. (*INFORMATION/DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION*)

The Commission conducted a brainstorming session to draft recommendations for their upcoming November 15th legislative report. **No formal actions were taken, but key recommendations were discussed for future refinement:**

Mentorship: Commissioner Owen proposed recommending dedicated state funding for paid mentorships, internships, and teacher residencies to support new educators during their first two years.

Health Insurance: Strong consensus emerged around exploring options to lower healthcare costs, such as allowing districts to opt into the state Public Employee Benefit Program (PEBB) or permitting districts to band together to create a unified health fund.

Counselors and Social Workers: The Commission debated strategies to fund and retain mental health professionals. While some supported making counselor positions mandatory before the planned 2030 timeline, others raised concerns about the financial strain unfunded ratios would place on districts. A compromise was suggested to tie state scholarship funding to "critical labor shortage" designations determined locally by district boards.

Loan Forgiveness vs. Scholarships: Members debated whether to recommend consecutive-year loan forgiveness programs. Some members, like Commissioner Hull, suggested prioritizing front-end scholarships and fully staffing schools overpaying off federal loans.

Licensure and Out-of-Field Teaching: The Commission discussed recommending a streamlined, less expensive licensure and endorsement process, specifically for transitioning to special education roles.

Stay Interviews: The Commission supported a recommendation for NDE to contract a third party to develop a state stay-interview tool and provide implementation training to districts.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (*INFORMATION/DISCUSSION*)

Commissioner Valdez requested a future agenda item exploring what specific employee engagement strategies and retention tactics are currently being utilized successfully across different Nevada school districts.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT #2

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

10. ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no objections from the Commission, Vice Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 4:13 P.M.