

**NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COMMISSION ON RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION
MAY 6, 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 Angie Joye
Commissioner Dana Crowley
Commissioner Grant Hanevold
Commissioner Misty Olmos

In Person Carson City:

None

Ex-Officio Members:

Dr. Bernnell Peltier-Glaz
Danica Hays
Janet Vreeland (Virtual)

Virtual Attendance:

Commissioner Anna Colquitt
Commissioner Alexandria Shelton
Vice Chair Beth Smith
Commissioner Christine Hull
Commissioner Douglas Owen
Commissioner Greg Cole
Commissioner Janelle Sazon-Valdez
Commissioner Jackie Zavala
Commissioner Jenny Hunt
Commissioner Monica Bryant
Commissioner Rachel Croft
Commissioner Tim Logan

COMMISSION MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Chair Donald Easton-Brooks

Commissioner Matt McNair
Commissioner Victor Wakefield

LEGAL STAFF PRESENT:

Deputy Attorney General Christena Georgas-Burns (Virtual)

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT:

In Las Vegas:

Kathy Hoyt, Assistant Director, EDLiFE
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:

Nic Ciccone, Clark County School District (CCSD)
JoAnna Grant, Human Resources, CCSD

Carson City:

Hope Binco, Mineral County School District
Diana L ElAlami, University of Nevada, Reno
Brandon Sanders, University of Nevada, Reno

Presenters:

Lisa Merrill, Senior Researcher, American Institutes for Research
Cheryl Krohn, Senior Technical Assistance Consultant, American Institutes for Research
Julie Kauffman, Truckee Meadows Community College
Denise Padilla, Great Basin College
Diana L ElAlami, University of Nevada, Reno
Danica Hays, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Dr. Bernell Peltier-Glaze, Nevada State University
Hope Blinco, Mineral County School District
Chelle Wright, Nye County School District
Merri Pray, Carson City School District
Dana Crowley, Clark County School District
Tate Else, Eureka County School District
Gayle Jefferson and Lorena Perez, Academica (Somerset Academy, Pinecrest Academy, Doral Academy, Mater Academy), State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA)
Ercan Aydogdu and Bridget Peevy, Coral Academy of Sciences, SPCSA

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

Vice Chair Smith called the meeting to order at 2:00pm. Roll call attendance was taken as reflected above and a quorum was established. The Pledge of Allegiance and Land Acknowledgement was led by Vice Chair Smith.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT #1

There were no public comments in Las Vegas.

3. APPROVAL OF MARCH 4, 2026, MINUTES (*Information/Discussion/For possible action*)

Vice Chair Smith asked the Commission if there were any discussions regarding the March 4, 2026, meeting minutes. No discussion was made regarding the March 4, 2026, minutes. Vice Chair Smith entertained a motion to approve the March 4th meeting minutes.

Motion: Commissioner Olmos moved to approve the March 4, 2026, meeting minutes. Commissioner Logan seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously and the March 4th meeting minutes were approved.

4. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS. (*Information/Discussion*)

Vice Chair Smith welcomed the Commission and new Commission members, Alexandria Shelton, Dana Crowley, Janelle Sazon-Valdez, and Jenny Hunt and asked the new Commissioners to introduce themselves to the Commission. New Commissioners Dana Crowley, Janelle Sazon-Valdez, and Jenny Hunt briefly introduced themselves to the Commission.

5. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING COMMISSION STUDIES ON HEALTH CARE. (*Information/Discussion/Possible Action*)

The Commission heard a presentation from Lisa Merrill and Wrandi Czulno from the American Institutes of Research (AIR) regarding the study on providing health insurance to educators through the Public Employee's Benefits Program (PEBP) per Assembly Bill 460 (2025) Sec. 38 1(b). The presentation compared current school district plans to PEBP options, highlighting premiums, deductibles, and out-of-pocket maximums.

Commissioner Hull asked if any of the counties in Nevada report information about health insurance premiums and were those numbers inclusive in the study presented. Wrandi Czulo confirmed that the health insurance plans pulled were from the school district website and that AIR reached out to counties who did not have the information available publicly. Commissioner Hull expressed interest in the "opt-in" models used in the states of Georgia and Oregon. She specifically questioned whether those states utilized a broader commission or committee to decide plan benefits, which might help bridge the gap in coverage disparities. Commissioner Hull highlighted that rural districts such as Esmeralda and Storey counties are highly interested in the potential to "opt-in" into a larger pool. The core motivation for these smaller districts is the economy of scale-larger pools generally lead to more stable and competitive insurance rates, which could help mitigate current budget deficits. Commissioner Hull requested further research into the timeline and transition process for other states, focusing on the level of involvement school districts had in shaping the plans and how governing bodies managed the transition to ensure comprehensive benefits over time.

Vice Chair Smith asked the Commission if there any further questions. Vice Chair Smith asked if critical need hires be included in the health coverage. Ms. Czulo stated that AIR would need to research and

ask other states if this was included in their transition plans. Vice Chair Smith asked Commissioner Owen, who is the Chief Human Resources lead for Washoe County School District, how much insurance costs are absorbed by the Washoe County School District. Commissioner Owen confirmed that approximately \$100 million in insurance costs were absorbed for Washoe County School District.

Commissioner Logan highlighted the challenges of rising healthcare costs for rural school districts and the potential of joining a state-run insurance system. He attributed higher healthcare costs in rural areas to lack of accessibility and competition. He described that residents often have to drive long distances to access care, which naturally drives up prices compared to urban hubs like Washoe or Clark Counties. He emphasized that rural districts have a smaller pool of insured individuals providing less leverage than larger metropolitan districts. Commissioner Logan noted that this year Lyon County saw a 9% increase; the district typically faces a 20% annual increase in insurance costs. He mentioned that the district has considered becoming self-insured to mitigate costs and acknowledged the high funding requirements and administrative work that comes with it. Commissioner Logan expressed his interest in combining healthcare systems with the state but would be concerned that including groups such as fire and police departments in a combined system could drive up healthcare costs for everyone else, whereas educators typically have lower healthcare expenditures. Commissioner Logan was also concerned that under Nevada law, unions have the right to negotiate insurance benefits. Commissioner Logan questioned how joining a state system would affect these rights, specifically, whether a state-mandated plan would conflict with a union's right to negotiate its own benefits. Commissioner Logan expressed that Lyon County would be interested in a state-level insurance solution due to unsustainable cost increases, but they require clarity on how it would impact local union negotiations and whether educator costs would be inflated by higher-risk groups. Vice Chair Smith asked if this subject matter could be brought back to the Commission. Ms. Charles noted that the past recommendation of the past Teachers and Support Staff Recruitment and Retention Task Forces was to expand the benefit enrollment umbrella to allow districts to negotiate for participation in PEBP as their healthcare provider. For example, Clark County could choose to opt in, but Washoe County could choose not to opt in. This was a study to gather information to reflect what it would look like if a county opted in and would there be any savings, would it bring costs down, what would the comparison be. Commissioner Owen requested that if the study was to continue, he would like to see a cost analysis. Commissioner Joye asked if PEBP could be invited to talk to the Commission and what would be the next steps in the study. Ms. Czulo noted that AIR would plan to conduct interviews with the districts but also with several Nevada representatives to understand what the healthcare with PEBP would look like and to share AIR's findings.

Motion: Commissioner Joye moved for AIR to continue with the healthcare study. Commissioner Olmos seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously and AIR will continue with the healthcare study and report findings to the Commission at a future meeting.

6. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ON NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION EDUCATOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION EFFORTS. (*Information/Discussion*)

The Commission heard from Nevada's colleges and universities regarding their efforts to recruit to the profession and retain students in their programs.

- **Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC).** Dr. Julie Kaufman highlighted recruitment through Career Fairs, School Visits, and a paraprofessional apprenticeship program and

retention via Faculty Advising, authentic classroom experiences with students, and education club and events.

- **Great Basin College (GBC).** Denis Padilla discussed GBC's fully online and hybrid programs, extensive practicum experiences and their alternative route to licensure programs.
- **University of Nevada, Reno (UNR).** Diana ElAlami and Brandon Sanders shared data on increased enrollment, their dual-degree Nevada Teach Programs, and retention strategies like the Student Success Series.
- **University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV).** Commissioner Danica Hays presented on reducing structural barriers, utilizing the Nevada Forward Teacher Apprenticeship program, and expanding school-based mental health pipelines.
- **Nevada State University (NSU).** Commissioner Bernell Peltier-Glaze outlined the creation of a dedicated recruitment committee, networking job fairs, and plans to hire an academic success coach to help students pass licensure exams.

Commissioner Hunt asked how the information and opportunities presented are disseminated to all public schools in the state of Nevada. Commissioner Peltier-Glaze mentioned that NSU developed a listserv that reaches educational institutions throughout the state. Commissioner Hull noted that the Nevada Department of Education holds a database of all private and charter schools contact information.

Commissioner Hull commended NSU and UNLV for adopting the term apprenticeship. She emphasized that this change elevates the professionalism of the field and more accurately reflects the nature of the work. She asked GBC for clarification on the specific acronym or grant program used to fund their paid apprenticeship/internship program. She also noted that UNR does not appear to offer paid internships yet. She asked about the current status of these programs statewide and seeks advice on how the Commission can support all Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) institutions in moving toward a universal paid apprenticeship model. Denise Padilla of GBC identified the acronym mentioned as Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching (IPT). Ms. Padilla explained that the funding is provided directly by the Nevada Legislature and is accessible to all four-year institutions in the state. Because the funds are distributed per legislative cycle, the amount of support institutions can offer depends entirely on what the state allocates. Ms. Padilla noted that previously students received two separate payments of \$8,600 over the course of a year. Currently, due to legislative budget changes, funding has decreased. Students now only receive a single payment of \$9,600 during their student teaching semester. To help offset costs before IPT funding kicks in during the final semester, students can apply for the Teach Nevada Scholarship to help cover earlier coursework.

Diana ElAlami noted that University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) like GBC, has access to IPT funding, but they experience significant state delays. For example, funds requested in September were not distributed to students until February. Ms. ElAlami explained that to help offset financial challenges, UNR relied heavily on specialized scholarships designed specifically for the apprenticeship and student teaching semester. She highlighted that UNR does not offer paid internships. They found that paid internships often leave students isolated in the classroom without necessary connections to a lead teacher. This lack of support has previously led to higher attrition rates, with students leaving the teaching profession entirely. Paid partnerships can be effective, but only if constant support from lead teachers and supervisors are actively maintained in the classroom. Commissioner Hull provided clarification that she does not support paid internships where students fill teacher vacancies and are left alone in the classroom. Instead, she advocates for a traditional, fully supported model similar to a trade internship; where the intern is scaffolded, monitored, and works directly alongside a lead teacher the entire time. Reflecting on her own internship, she suggests that financial support could simply mean covering the

cost of the required university credits, which would significantly ease the financial burden on students. Commissioner Hull emphasizes that the current four-and-a-half-month delay in state funding distribution is virtually impossible for most students who need to pay rent. She urges that a faster disbursement method must be researched and implemented, potentially by routing funds directly through students' university accounts.

Ms. Kaufman explained the paraprofessional apprenticeship program at Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) that because TMCC is not a four-year institution, the program focuses on a paraprofessional apprenticeship rather than a traditional student teaching program. The program operates in two ways; recruiting existing paraprofessionals to receive free education, or helping students secure paid, on the job training in a classroom. The program consists of five courses designed to enhance a paraprofessional's skills while they work alongside a teacher. If a student chooses to pursue a full teaching degree later, these five courses transfer directly into the degree programs to give them a head start. Ms. Kaufman emphasizes that providing a higher education helps paraprofessionals feel more confident and competent in their roles, which ultimately boosts job satisfaction and retention. The partnership and funding aspect work in the way that TMCC provides the education, the school district provides paid on the job training with Nevada Works who has provided funding, although this funding is nearing its limit. The total cost for the five courses and required textbooks is approximately \$3,000 per student. TMCC is currently seeking funding extensions or new organizational partners to commit to this amount so that they can continue moving students through the program.

Commissioner Hays mentioned that to officially be designated as an "apprenticeship program", the program must be registered with the Nevada's Office of the Labor Commissioner. By state law, registered apprenticeship programs are required to cover 100% of the student's tuition and fees. To participate in an apprenticeship program through a higher education institution, the student must maintain full-time employment within a school. Consequently, many of the apprentices currently in their program are working as a substitute teacher or are otherwise on the school district's payroll.

7. INFORMATION DISCUSSION REGARDING NEVADA SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPPORT STAFF VACANCY DATA. *(Information/Discussion)*

The Commission heard from Nevada's school districts on Nevada support staff vacancy rates.

- **Rural Consortium (Mineral and Nye Counties):** Hope Blinco and Chelle Wright reported severe shortages in bus drivers and food service workers, compounded by housing shortages, funding constraints, and federal CDL training requirements.
- **Carson City School District:** Merri Pray reported a low 3.4% classified vacancy rate, attributing success to a two-pronged approach focused heavily on wraparound onboarding and mentorship retention programs.
- **Clark County School District (CCSD):** Dana Crowley reported reducing support staff vacancies from 1,295 in 2022 to 410 currently, utilizing strategic partnerships, military recruitment, and "Skills for Success" hiring events.
- **State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA):**
 - **Academica:** Gail Jefferson and Lina Perez noted stability in general roles but reliance on contracted services for highly specialized roles (like speech pathologists).
 - **Coral Academy of Science:** Bridget Peavey reported an overall 82% retention rate but noted major hiring challenges taking six or more months for specialized SPED-related roles.

8. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE PUBLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION'S 'FASTTRACK' PROGRAM. (*Information/Discussion*)

Vice Chair Smith pulled this item from the agenda to be presented at a future meeting.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS (*Information/Discussion*)

- Continued updates from AIR and possible invitation to PEBP to discuss expanding the health insurance pool.
- Information on the timeline and legislative process for distributing funding for student internship/apprenticeship programs.
- Data on the retention rates and placement locations of apprenticeship programs in the state.
- A presentation outlining the logistics, requirements, and employer registration process for the Nevada Forward apprenticeship program.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT #2

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

11. ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair Smith adjourned the meeting at 5:18 P.M.