

**NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
ENGLISH LEARNER ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 20, 2026
2:00 PM**

Office	Address	City	Meeting
Department of Education	2080 E. Flamingo	Las Vegas	Bighorn
Department of Education	700 E. Fifth St.	Carson	Battle Born
Department of Education	Virtual/Livestream	n/a	n/a

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Torrey Palmer (Deputy Superintendent, NDE)
Dr. Alain Bengochea (UNLV)
Sarah Russell (Title III State Director, NDE)
Janna Moyer (NDE)
Dr. Silvina Jover (Clark County School District)
Lelsy Stewart (Elko County School District)
David Lamb (Nye County School District)
Paola Zepher (Elementary Dual Language Principal)
Dr. Tanya Scott (Carson City School District)
Erick Casallas (Clark County School District)
Diana Walker (Northwest Regional Professional Development)
Dr. Lydia Sedano (State Charter School Authority)

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT EXCUSED

Vanessa Mari (Nevada State University)

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT

Lisa Ford, Chief Strategy Office
Amelia Thibault, Legislative Liaison
Zachary Khan (Assistant to Deputy Palmer, NDE)

LEGAL COUNCIL PRESENT

Christina Georgas-Burns (Deputy Attorney General)

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order at 2:15 P.M. by Amelia Thibault in secretary capacity. Zachary Khan conducted the roll call. Quorum was established.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT #1

- a. **Las Vegas:** Lelsy Stewart (Elko CSD) expressed excitement about joining the council and looking forward to making positive impacts for English Learners (ELs) across Nevada.
- b. **Carson City / Online:** No public comments were submitted.

3. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Deputy Superintendent Torrey Palmer highlighted a recent site visit to Lovelock Elementary School, noting a major bright spot where staff shared that WIDA data showed every single student had progressed by at least one proficiency level. Council members then went around the room introducing themselves, sharing their professional backgrounds, and expressing their dedication to supporting multilingual learners.

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chairperson: Erick Casallas

Vice Chairperson: Dr. Alain Bengochea

5. OPEN MEETING LAW (OML) PRESENTATION

DAG Christina Georgas-Burns provided a detailed legal overview of Nevada Open Meeting Law (NRS 241):

- **Quorum & Deliberation:** OML applies whenever a simple majority of voting members gather to deliberate or take action on council business.
- **Notice Requirements:** Agendas must be posted 3 days prior to a meeting by 9:00 AM and must clearly denote items as "*For Possible Action*" if a vote will occur.
- **Violations & Pitfalls:** Members were strictly warned against "serial communications" (e.g., hitting "Reply All" on emails or discussing agenda topics in small groups at networking events), as these constitute rolling quorums. Members were also instructed not to use the virtual platform's chat feature for policy deliberations. OML violations will make void any actions taken by the council during the meeting.

6. SCOPE AND DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL (AB335)

Amelia Thibault (Legislative Liaison) outlined the tight timelines dictating this interim council:

- **Final Report Deadline:** Due to the Legislative Council Bureau (LCB) by **October 31, 2026**. Because of drafting and approval timelines, core policy work must wrap up by the end of September.
- **Bill Draft Request (BDR):** The council is authorized to request one legislative measure. While legally due by December 31, 2026, Amelia strongly advised submitting the BDR alongside the final report in late October to give the bill a better chance of moving quickly through the 2027 legislative session. The BDR must be bound to a single topic or theme and sit within NRS Chapters 385–394.

7. PROPOSED POLICY PERSPECTIVES AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The committee reviewed the initial policy prospectus (Version 1) containing five primary concepts: (1) *Long-Term EL Success*, (2) *Grow Your Own Programs for Bilingual Educators*, (3) *Universal ELAD Endorsements*, (4) *District-Level Parental Advisory Councils*, and (5) *Bilingual Education Expansion*.

The council requested the following amendments and data requests for future agendas:

- **Professional Development:** Incorporate tracking the professional development requirements mandated by 2030 under AB335.
- **Licensure Pairing:** Combine and evaluate ELAD and Bilingual endorsements collectively.
- **Statewide EL Dashboard:** Look into expanded metrics tracking all LEAP categories (newcomers, short-term ELs, at-risk of being LTELs, and LTELs) rather than just long-term stats.
- **Funding Metrics:** Request an examination of how EL-weighted funding is being utilized by districts statewide (e.g., class-size reduction vs. other academic interventions).
- **Teacher Analytics:** Gather data on the total number of bilingual and ELAD-endorsed teachers, broken down by district and language specialization where available.
- **Special Populations:** Cross-examine data regarding EL students who also have IEPs or 504 plans, specifically checking for indicators of dyslexia.
- **Language & Terminology:** Review the current legal terminology to consider shifting toward asset-based academic narratives (e.g., "emerging bilingual" or "multilingual learner").

Guest Presenter Requests

- Districts (including smaller districts) that have successfully scaled out bilingual/dual-language programs.
- Out-of-state departments of education (e.g., Utah) that have executed competitive grant competitions to grow bilingual programs.
- Out-of-state representatives (e.g., New Mexico, Florida, Rhode Island) regarding state-level infrastructure for language acquisition.

Important Notice: Members must email additional policy concepts or presenter requests to Sarah Russell, Amelia Thibault, and Torrey Palmer by May 29th. *Do not reply all.*

8. SETTING OF MEETING FREQUENCY

Summer Schedule: The council agreed to meet **once a month** in June and July. These summer sessions will be extended to a **2-to-3-hour window** to adequately accommodate presentations and heavy data analysis.

Fall Schedule: The frequency will increase to **twice a month** from August through October to hit report deadlines.

Next Steps: NDE staff will distribute a poll to schedule the upcoming summer sessions and build a public calendar.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT #2

No public comment was offered in Las Vegas, Carson City, or online.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 3:19 P.M.