NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COMMISSION ON INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION
October 20, 2026
9:00AM-4:30PM

Office	Address	Meeting Room
Virtual	Teams Link	Meeting ID: 296 819 847 774 503; Passcode: 6uX6iS33 Dial in: +1 775-321-6111; Phone conference ID: 707 476 329#
Southwest Career and Technical Academy	7050 W. Shelbourne Ave. Las Vegas, NV 89113	Ballroom

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Chair Charlton called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. Roll call was taken and presence was confirmed.

Chair Charlton offered special congratulations to Superintendent Wakefield and his wife on the birth of their baby girl over the weekend. For the record, Superintendent Wakefield was removed as co-presenter for Agenda Item 9, and Chief Strategy Officer Tom Green presented on his behalf.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT #1

The first period of public comment was opened by Chair Charlton.

- **Carson City / In-Person:** No public comment was present.
- **Las Vegas / Online:** No public comment was present.
- **Written Submission:** No written public comments were submitted prior to the deadline.

3. APPROVAL OF FLEXIBLE AGENDA *(For Possible Action)*

Chair Charlton requested a motion to approve the use of a flexible agenda, allowing agenda items to be taken out of order if necessary.

- **Motion:** Member Senator moved to approve the use of a flexible agenda.
- **Second:** Member Senator Dr. Marilyn Dondero Loop seconded the motion.
- **Vote:** The motion carried unanimously.
- **Action Taken:** The Commission approved the use of a flexible agenda.

4. Consent Agenda (For Possible Action)

Information concerning the following consent agenda item was provided to Commission members for study prior to the meeting:

- **a. Possible Approval of the September CIEE Meeting Minutes**

Chair Charlton requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

- **Motion:** Member Senator Dondero Loop motioned to approve the Consent Agenda.

- **Second:** Seconded.
- **Vote:** The motion carried unanimously.
- **Action Taken:** The Commission approved the September CIEE meeting minutes.

5. REVIEW OF AGENDA, GOALS AND 2026-2027 WORK PLAN *(Information and Discussion)*

Chair Charlton and Nathan Driscoll (NCE) reviewed the Commission's agenda, overarching vision, goals under SB460, and the work plan leading to the 2027 legislative session.

- Grounded in the guiding vision that every Nevada learner should experience engaging, challenging, and personalized learning environments, early career exploration, and graduate with options supported by a future-ready accountability system.
- Nathan Driscoll outlined the meeting schedule:
    - **November 2026:** Virtual meeting for data briefings.
    - **December 2026:** In-person meeting to deliberate and affirm policy recommendations.
    - **Spring 2027:** Virtual meetings during the legislative session to fulfill data review responsibilities.
    - **June 2027:** In-person meeting to finalize the report to the legislature.

6. NEVADA BRIGHT SPOTS-ELKO COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT *(Information and Discussion)*

The Commission received a presentation from Elko County School District detailing their district-wide implementation of the *Portrait of a Learner* and competency-based learning progressions.

- **Presented by:** Superintendent CJ Anderson, Principal Chrissie Blanchard (Spring Creek Elementary), and Katie Pongrekun (Teacher, Elko High School).
- **Presentation Highlights:**
    - Spans 17,000+ square miles across 7 distinct communities. Centered on the core question: *"Are we being as intentional about who our students are becoming as we are about what they are learning?"*
    - Developed four core competencies: Capable Communicators, Creative Problem Solvers, Responsible and Engaged Learners, and Trusted Leaders.
    - Implemented Version 4 learning progressions across K–12 and crosswalked existing site/district systems (SPP, NEPF, Read by Grade Three, STEM literacy pilots) into the Portrait framework.

Questions Asked by Commission Members & Detailed Discussion:

- **Question on Student Input & Experience:** A member asked what students have said about Version 4 during field testing, how they provided input, and if they are excited about it.
    - *Response:* Principal Blanchard shared that students love hands-on competency-based learning (PCBL) and often do not even realize they are learning. Teacher Katie Pongrekun noted that student councils will be engaged during the second semester to co-design student leadership within the high school learning model. Superintendent Anderson added that students at Convocation expressed how these competencies help them as student leaders, volleyball teammates, and older siblings.
- **Question on Rural District Coordination:** Senator Dondero Loop asked how Elko County coordinates across its geographically spread-out, distinct communities.

- *Response:* Superintendent Anderson explained that they prioritize in-person attendance while always providing virtual options, ensuring representation from all seven distinct communities (Owyhee, West Wendover, Wells, Jackpot, etc.) across grade levels and content areas on all committees.

- **Question on Systemic Complexity & Policy Recommendations:** The Vice Chair asked what practitioners would take off their plates or do less of to allow this work to flourish.
    - *Response:* Superintendent Anderson emphasized reducing state compliance reporting, over-testing, and frequent instructional interruptions. Teacher Katie Pongrekun highlighted the time burden of non-instructional tasks (attending 50+ IEP/504/ELL meetings annually, attendance phone calls) and stressed protecting instructional time. Principal Blanchard questioned what testing should look like under PCBL and noted that change requires time before reflecting on standardized metrics.
- **Question on Streamlining Administrative Tasks:** Sandra Kupfer questioned why the district/state still requires Student Learning Goals (SLGs) when MAP data already exists and tracks student growth.
    - *Response:* SLGs represent an antiquated evaluation box-checking requirement that could be eliminated to streamline teacher workload without losing growth data.

Action Taken: Item presented for information and discussion only; no formal action taken.

7. CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS *(Information, Discussion, and Possible Action)*

The Commission reviewed and deliberated on the June 2026 report recommendations and September synthesis document across three core strands.

Strand 1: World-Class Teaching and Learning

Questions Asked by Commission Members & Detailed Discussion:

- **Question on Framework Scope:** Janice Case asked to what extent having a single learning model is sufficient versus establishing a public framework for sharing processes and bright spot struggles across districts.
    - *Discussion:* Members supported establishing a shared framework/repository to illustrate iterative processes rather than imposing a single prescriptive model.
- **Question on Order of Operations:** Tim Hughes asked if the Commission was jumping too quickly to adult learning frameworks before establishing a deep, shared vision of student classroom experiences.
    - *Discussion:* Members agreed that concrete student experiences and classroom design principles must be clearly defined before designing adult professional development.
- **Question on Legislative Urgency & Timeline:** Senator Dondero-Loop and members asked about the exact timeline and sense of urgency needed prior to January/December given election cycles and legislative submission deadlines.
    - *Discussion:* Members affirmed the urgency of settling core decision points prior to December, so draft policy language is ready for the upcoming legislative session.
- **Question on State vs. Local Autonomy:** The vice chair asked what should be shared/standardized statewide versus what should remain locally designed.
    - *Discussion:* Members concluded that high-level commitments and design principles should be set centrally, while local sites maintain full flexibility over design and implementation.
- **Question on Rural District Inclusion:** Superintendent Anderson asked how rural districts can be involved in initial policy design to prevent reliance on post-hoc waivers and exemptions.

- *Discussion:* Stressed iterating through pilots in both large and small/rural districts before writing rigid legislation.

- **Question on Commission Scope & Role:** Facilitator Janice Chase asked what specific role the Commission should play in moving recommendations forward.
    - *Discussion:* Members affirmed that the Commission's primary role is convening cross-sector stakeholders (higher ed, districts, industry), monitoring pilots, and analyzing existing policy effectiveness.

- **Question on Parent & Community Engagement:** Sandra Kupfer asked how parents and communities can be brought into the co-creation of education policy early rather than after decisions are made.
    - *Discussion:* Members discussed potentially expanding parent representation on the Commission via policy recommendation and ensuring local visioning actively involves parents and industry partners.

Strand 2: Next-Generation Career Pathways

Questions Asked by Commission Members & Detailed Discussion:

- **Question on Existing Middle School Exploration:** Assemblywoman / Member asked how many middle schools in Nevada are already engaging in career exploration to avoid top-down mandates.
    - *Response:* Nathan Driscoll noted that initial mapping of advising capacity and barriers is included in support materials, though comprehensive school-by-school data collection is ongoing.

- **Question on Legislative Evidence & Funding ("May" vs. "Shall"):** Vice Chair and members asked what level of evidence or maturity is helpful to convince the legislature to fund programs, and how to navigate phasing from Phase 1 to Phase 3.
    - *Legislative Response:* Senator Dondero Loop and members detailed the difference between policy and finance, recommending flexible statutory language ("may") supported by categorical grants before enacting strict statutory mandates ("shall").

- **Question on State Board Role:** the Vice Chair asked about the role of the State Board of Education in clarifying minimum components for middle school career exploration.
    - *Discussion:* Members supported combining State Board guidance, accountability metrics, and district guidance tools.

- **Question on Statewide Mandates vs. Local Flexibility:** The Vice Chair asked how much should be required statewide versus left as local opt-in flexibility.
    - *Discussion:* Members emphasized local flexibility due to vast differences in district populations and financial resources (e.g., Eureka vs. Clark vs. Carson City).

- **Question on Per-Pupil Funding Intersection:** Dr. Kenneth Varner asked about the intersection between per-pupil funding allocations and newly added state mandates.
    - *Discussion:* Members cautioned against unfunded mandates that force compliance without quality, emphasizing the need for dedicated categorical funding.

- **Question on Diversifying Delivery Access Points:** The Vice Chair asked if policy should authorize multiple delivery avenues (AI, career coaches, industry partners) beyond traditional counselors.
    - *Discussion:* Members strongly agreed that flexible design options are essential to expanding advising capacity.

- **Question on Outcomes vs. Paper Compliance:** Nathan Driskell asked how the Commission should address gaps in student advising systems where students struggle to access academic plans.
    - *Discussion:* Commissioners agreed policy should focus on whether students actually comprehend career pathways rather than enforcing paper sign-off compliance.

Strand 3: Measuring What Matters

Questions Asked by Commission Members & Detailed Discussion:

- **Question on Pilot Sequence:** Senator Dondero-Loop asked if the Commission needed to review the SB4 pilot structure before proceeding with assessment policy recommendations.
    - *Action:* Prompted taking Agenda Item 8 out of order to clarify pilot scopes. Commission Agenda moves to **Item 8** and continues back to **Strand 3: Measuring What Matters** once presentation and discussion is over.
- **Question on Alternative Assessment Pilots:** The Vice Chair asked how the state can measure competencies in conjunction with academic skills and what the Commission should do regarding alternative assessment pilots.
    - *Discussion:* Members identified opportunities to align with District Performance Framework (DPF) district-selected measures and the State Board's three-track literacy assessment options (core test, portfolio, alternative assessment).
- **Question on Embedded Pilot Assessment Data:** Chair Charlton asked if the SB4 pilots contain explicit assessment pilots.
    - *Clarification:* Facilitators clarified that while SB4 pilots focus on teaching/learning and career pathways, they naturally embed assessment data through student portfolios and exhibitions of learning.
- **Question on Curriculum Review Agility & Timelines:** The Vice Chair asked about the state's legislative process and timeline for reviewing curriculum and standards (addressing the historical 7-year adoption cycle).
    - *Response:* Thomas Greene (NDE) noted NDE is presenting on standards and instructional materials alignment to the State Board next month. Senator Dondero Loop explained that the 7-year cycle was historically established due to district textbook purchasing budgets, though digital and AI pathways are updating standards continuously.

Action Taken: Detailed feedback collected for facilitators to synthesize into a revised draft recommendation document for the December meeting.

8. UPDATES FROM THE FIELD-SB4 PILOT PROCUREMENT OVERVIEW *(Information and Discussion)*

The Commission received an update on the formal competitive procurement process conducted under Senate Bill 4 to operationalize learner-centered, competency-based education pilots.

- **Presented by:** Thomas Greene, Chief Strategy Officer, NDE; Janine, Center for the Future of Learning (CFL).
- **Procurement & Pilot Overview:**
    - A $1.3M+ contract (through June 30, 2027) was awarded to the Center for the Future of Learning (CFL) in partnership with NCE and Getting Smart.
    - Selected 4 pilot sites across Nevada:
        1. Spring Creek Elementary School (Elko County) – PCBL / Mastery-Based Progressions.
        2. White Pine Middle School (White Pine County) – PCBL / Mastery-Based Progressions.

3. Desert Oasis High School (Clark County - Comprehensive) – Career-Connected Learning & Portfolios.
4. White Pine High School (White Pine County) – Career-Connected Learning & Portfolios.

Questions Asked by Commission Members & Detailed Discussion:

- **Question on Priority Alignment:** Member Hughes asked if vendor action steps are based on older Commission priorities and if vendor plans will change if Commission priorities shift.
    - *Response:* Thomas Greene and Chair Charlton clarified that priorities remain aligned with the overarching vision (PCBL and career-connected learning); today's work refines the next phase of policy recommendations that the pilots will inform.
- **Question on Vendor Independence Guardrails:** Member Hughes asked what guardrails are in place to ensure vendor pilot work does not unduly influence the Commission's independent policy role.
    - *Response:* Thomas Greene stated NDE conducts bi-weekly progress monitoring; pilot data acts as one transparent data point to inform, not dictate, Commission decisions.
- **Question on System Integration:** A member asked if pilots are attempting to connect with existing state systems (e.g., Read by Grade 3) or piloting standalone models.
    - *Response:* Janine (CFL) confirmed pilots are integrating PCBL directly into Read by Grade 3 literacy instruction at elementary sites.
- **Question on Market Value Assets:** A member asked for clarification on "Market Value Assets" (Getting Smart model) and whether they assist students in securing post-graduation employment.
    - *Response:* Janine (CFL) defined Market Value Assets as community-determined credentials and client-connected projects that demonstrate graduate employability.
- **Question on Reporting Feedback Loops:** A member asked if pilot progress and milestone reports will come directly back to the Commission.
    - *Response:* Confirmed that milestone reports will regularly loop back to NDE and the Commission.
- **Question on Demographics & Scalability:** Commissioner Hughes asked how representative the 4 pilot sites are of Nevada's overall student demographics to ensure scalability.
    - *Response:* Janine (CFL) noted the sites represent urban vs. rural, small vs. large options, and comprehensive high schools at varying entry points.
- **Question on Multilingual Learner Representation:** Commissioner Hughes asked if the Multilingual Learner (ELL) population is well represented in the selected schools.
    - *Response:* Janine (CFL) acknowledged the push and committed to ensuring pilot practices are applicable to ELL student populations.
- **Question on Educator Relief:** A member asked if anything is being taken off teachers' plates during these pilots.
    - *Response:* Janine (CFL) noted stipends and site-level time protection are provided for participating educators, with site leaders managing local trade-offs.
- **Question on Clark County High School Model:** A member asked if the Clark County high school site is a comprehensive high school or a magnet school.

- *Response:* Janine (CFL) confirmed Desert Oasis High School is a comprehensive high school, selected specifically at CCSD's request to test building career pathways from the ground up without pre-built magnet infrastructure.

9. Update on the Revision of the Statewide Plan for the Improvement of Pupils (STIP) *(Information and Discussion)*

The Department of Education presented an update on the 5-year strategic revision of the Statewide Plan for the Improvement of Pupils (STIP).

- **Presented by:** Tom Green, Chief Strategy Officer, Nevada Department of Education.
- **Framework Overview:**
  - Draft plan structured around 5 strategic priorities: (1) Strong Academic Foundations (expanding Pre-K access from 18% to 50%, Grade 3 reading, Grade 8 math), (2) Empowering Pathways, (3) Equipped Educators & Leaders, (4) Informed & Connected Families, and (5) Aligned Systems (District Performance Framework and streamlined improvement plans).
  - Public comment period extended through the end of November 2026.

Questions Asked by Commission Members & Detailed Discussion:

- **Question on Statewide Vacancies:** The Vice Chair asked if there are truly still 2,000 teacher vacancies across the state.
  - *Response:* Thomas Greene confirmed data team figures show ~1,900 to 2,000 vacancies statewide and committed to providing a deeper breakdown.
- **Question on NSPF Enrolled Metric:** The Vice Chair asked about the origin and historical trend of the metric "percentage of students enrolled in a highly rated school on NSPF."
  - *Response:* Thomas Greene noted it reflects upward trends of schools advancing 1–2 stars and serves as an aspirational metric for improving school environments rather than moving students.
- **Question on Pre-K Access Specifics:** A member asked about the specific goal around Pre-K access (universal 4-year-old Pre-K vs. childcare combinations).
  - *Response:* Thomas Greene stated the aspirational 5-year goal is to expand eligible high-quality Pre-K from 18% to 50%, subject to legislative fiscal appropriations.
- **Question on Survey Outreach Targets:** The Vice Chair asked if specific stakeholder groups (parents, students) are underrepresented in STIP survey responses where Commissioners can assist.
  - *Response:* Thomas Greene welcomed survey distribution across all broader community and key leadership spheres of influence.

10. Stakeholder and Constituent Engagement Strategy *(Information and Discussion)*

The Commission briefly reviewed strategies for commissioner-led constituent outreach between January and June 2027 using structured engagement toolkits to gather regional feedback on draft policy recommendations.

Action Taken: Item presented for information; detailed mapping deferred to upcoming meetings.

11. Synthesis, Action Items, and Next Steps *(Information and Discussion)*

The Commission reviewed key meeting takeaways and confirmed upcoming meeting schedules.

Tasks & Action Items Identified for Next Meeting:

1. **Policy Recommendation Synthesis:** Facilitators (NCE/CFL) to synthesize meeting dialogue into a revised draft of statutory policy recommendations for asynchronous review prior to the December meeting.
2. **Funding & Capacity Data Gathering:** Facilitators and NDE to collect additional data regarding middle school career exploration funding pathways and cost deltas.
3. **Portfolio Assessment Crosswalk:** Facilitators/NDE to crosswalk existing state and district portfolio assessment initiatives.
4. **Standards & Curriculum Review Briefing:** NDE to present updates on instructional materials, BDR alignments, and standards review processes at the next meeting.
5. **Data Clarifications:** NDE to provide detailed breakdowns regarding teacher vacancy data (~1,900–2,000) and Pre-K fiscal projections.
6. **STIP Survey Distribution:** Commissioners to distribute the STIP public comment survey link across their constituent networks.
7. **December Meeting Finalization:** Leadership to finalize the save-the-date for the in-person December meeting (targeting Dec 1–2 aligned with NASS).

12. Public Comment #2

The second period of public comment was opened by Chair Charlton.

- **Carson City / In-Person:** No public comment was present.
- **Las Vegas / Online:** No public comment was present.
- **Written Submission:** No written public comments were submitted.

13. Adjournment

Chair Charlton thanked Commission members, staff, and members of the public for their participation.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:21 PM.