

# Nevada Commission on Mentoring

Meeting Minutes  
Friday, January 15, 2021  
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

*Meeting Location: Due to the COVID-19 response and in accordance with Governor Sisolak's Emergency Directive 006; Subsection 1, this meeting was conducted via Zoom.*

**Call to Order:** Dr. Maxwell called the meeting to order on Friday, January 15, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

**Roll Call:** Ms. Cota conducted a roll call. **Quorum was not established** (5 Members present in the beginning of the meeting)

**Commission Members Present:**

Dr. Michael Maxwell  
Dr. Douglas Garner  
Coleen Lawrence  
Ms. Katie Membreno  
Karl Catarata

**Late in Attendance:**

Michael Flores  
Courtney Moore

**Others Present:**

Rose Cota, NDE Staff  
Gabby Lamarre, NDE Staff  
Sarah Nick, NDE Staff

### **Approval of Flexible Agenda**

The Commission **did not acquire quorum** and therefore could not vote on approval for any objective in this meeting.

### **Welcome and Introduction**

Dr. Maxwell informed the Commission that since all had introduced themselves prior to the meeting, and quorum was not yet established, the Commission would move onto Agenda Item 7 while waiting for additional members to join the meeting.

### **Approval of December 11th Meeting Minutes (Information/Discussion/For Possible Action)**

Quorum was not established; therefore, no vote was taken on approval of the December 11th Meeting Minutes.

### **Public Comment #1**

Dr. Maxwell asks if there is a public comment in the North or South?  
Rose Cota Stated there are no public comment at this time.

### **Chair's Report**

Dr. Maxwell informed the Commission that on December 18th, he attended the meeting with the Children's Commission. Dr. Maxwell discussed the presentation he gave at the meeting regarding NCOM, purpose and intent, legislation that created the NCOM, and changes from AB 235. Dr. Maxwell informed the Commission that the Children's Commission expressed interest in NCOM remaining involved with the Children's Commission. Dr. Maxwell informed the Commission that much of the discussion with the Children's Commission hinges on NCOM's work as the mentoring Commission but explained that mentoring is not currently one of the strategies being used in youth and development as mentoring is not thought of as a part of education or social services. For that reason, Dr. Maxwell explained that it is the purpose of NCOM to affect that change in perspective. Dr. Maxwell informed the Commission that he wants to open the conversation under the Chair's report to discuss the state of the Commission, to discuss SB76, and to allow NDE the opportunity to discuss SB76. Dr. Maxwell informed the Commission that its response needs to be crafted for SB76.

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Sarah Nick, NDE, informed the Commission of her desire to receive its feedback regarding Senate Bill 76 as well as feedback regarding how NDE can best be of service and how statute may be updated to allow all Boards, Commissions, and Councils to work in the least restrictive legal environment. Ms. Nick informed the Commission that there is currently a posted draft and NDE is in the process of convening with Boards, Councils, and Commissions in the creation of an amendment so that the intent of SB76 and its drafted language align. Ms. Nick indicated her support for changing the word "abolish" in the bill as it does not reflect the intent of Senate Bills. Ms. Nick indicated that while educating children must be done under the advisement of the communities being served, the current structure under which Boards, Commissions, and Councils operate on emphasizes appointments, open meeting law, and submission of annual reports. Ms. Nick explained the vision of NDE, which aligns with NCOM, is that Boards, Commissions, and Councils can be driven by student outcomes and providing resources into the organizations daily supporting students inside the schools, and indicated to the Commission that SB76 can be a vehicle to accomplish this. Ms. Nick stressed the importance of oversight and accountability for Boards, Councils, and Commissions and informed the Commission that NDE looks to all existing members to provide that accountability along with the US Department of Education, the state legislature, and the Nevada State Board of Education. Ms. Nick informed the Committee that the implementation and intent of SB76 would be for Councils and Commissions to meet when student outcomes require the meetings and to work in the way the Councils and Commissions see best.

Chair Maxwell opened the discussion, inviting Commissioners to share their thoughts as to how NCOM can and/or should operate under the guidelines.

Karl Catarata explained to the Commission that shortly after joining the Commission, he began collecting stories from students regarding how specifically they had been impacted by COVID-19 and how they were attempting to receive mentorship during the pandemic with a planned outcome of collecting a repository of student stories that can be delivered to the state. Mr. Catarata questioned abolishment of the Commission, other Councils, and Commissions in terms of next steps for mentoring standards for NDE and other alternatives to abolishment of the Commission.

Chair Maxwell indicated his desire for clarification of NDE's vision for supporting NCOM if the Committee was not going to be abolished.

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Sarah Nick indicated that the proposal of NDE had been to consolidate Councils and Commissions under the department and opportunities would be beholden to things like open meeting law and quorum. Ms. Nick reiterated the idea that if Boards, Commissions, and Councils are moved under the department, they will remain in existence but will be given the latitude to meet when student outcomes demand meetings and to implement their strategic plans and goals as they see fit because that allows collective work to prioritize what is being accomplished in mentoring. Ms. Nick explained that NDE is working with all its Boards, Commissions, and Councils to capture a core vision regarding this amendment and despite dislike of the word, "abolish," agree with where the language is heading as Boards, Commission, and Councils would now be part of NDE, allowing them to convene at will, meet and accomplish goals on their own timelines, and/or maintain statute.

Karl Catarata indicated his understanding of the word "abolish" as legal terminology as well as his belief that the final outcome should be student results. As such, Mr. Catarata indicated his willingness to compromise, but not concede, on the potential amended role of the Commission as a task force or initiative going forward if need be.

Coleen Lawrence asked Gabby Lamarre if there would be any change in NDE's support level of staff and meetings if the Commission moved under NDE as a task force rather than a Commission.

Gabby Lamarre indicated that NDE has not yet gotten far enough into the process to evaluate the future level of support and indicated her belief that NDE would likely try to have the process be more efficient and streamlined, but would still be able to provide some level of administrative support.

Sarah Nick indicated that an earlier draft of SB76 does renew supports and explained that if Councils, Commissions, and Boards were streamlined so as to no longer have to submit minutes or annual reports, the same amount of hours would no longer be required to continue the Commission's annual activity. Ms. Nick requested that the Commission bring forward any potential future limitations, such as the inability to meet without a shared Zoom account or physical meeting space, so they could be addressed, taken into consideration, and included early in the process to ensure the Commissions ability to continue their work for student outcomes.

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Chair Maxwell indicated his concern that no alternative to the word "abolish" has yet been included in the language as it appears that SB76 could abolish the Commissions and give discretion to NDE, and NCOM would then have no legislative means to ensure support to meet its charge.

Coleen Lawrence asked if there was any thought process on the NDE side to align social/emotional learning and other outcomes or if the bill was primarily looking at the resource side of the committees.

Sarah Nick informed the Committee that student needs in Nevada will always outpace how quickly statutes can be updated. Ms. Nick informed the Commissioners that this bill will allow latitude to the Commission to impact social/emotional learning as it sees fit by choosing their own direction and implementation rather than having to take direction from the department. Ms. Nick informed the Commission that by drafting this bill, NDE was looking for a solution to change the structure so that Boards, Commissions, and Councils exist because of their leadership role in informing the state on best practices.

Courtney Moore requested Chair Maxwell to clarify the structure of governance, and to whom the Commission reports, the state or NDE.

Chair Maxwell explained that AB144 and AB235 establish NCOM as an advisory Board to the governor but also assigns NCOM to NDE as administrative support in the statute. Chair Maxwell informed the Commission that NCOM has never had a direct line to the governor despite the fact that NCOM is a governor's advisory Board.

Courtney Moore asked for confirmation that NDE provides support services and staff for NCOM but not oversight and governance.

Coleen Lawrence confirmed that Commissioner Moore is correct.

Courtney Moore indicated his uncertainty regarding grounds for abolishment, realignment, or reconfiguration. Moreover, Commissioner Moore indicated his belief that there is more of an issue with fiscal resources given the toll the pandemic has taken on businesses, Commissions, and organizations in the last year and thus indicated his desire for latitude given the issues that have arisen because of COVID-19. Commissioner Moore indicated the desire to learn the grounds for abolishment and

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expressed his displeasure that NDE did not first approach the Commission to start out with a collaborative relationship rather than a notice of abolishment. Commissioner Moore informed the Board when looking at the current state of public school districts in other states, Nevada is consistently in the bottom ten to 15 percent and asked why NDE would consider taking over NCOM when they have the larger challenge of an underperforming school district to address. Commissioner Moore concluded by asking NDE members to clarify the meaning of "as student's needs" and does that indicate that NCOM then needs to be on call.

Chair Maxwell concurred with Commissioner Moore's frustration with NDE not reaching out to NCOM and explained that NDE had, in fact, met with NCOM in the late fall and indicated their support of NCOM, but that SB76 completely refuted the discussion at the meeting in the fall because there had not, at that time, been any discussion of SB76. Chair Maxwell indicated that this appears to be a signal from NDE and from the outside that mentoring in Nevada is unimportant. Chair Maxwell indicated his concern that if the legislature were to pass SB76, NCOM could then disappear.

Douglas Garner indicated his sadness at what has occurred and what is occurring and concurred with Commissioners Catarata, Lawrence, Moore and Chair Maxwell. Commissioner Garner brought to the Commission's attention that there is currently a mental-health crisis going on and mentoring of any kind is an urgent need. Commissioner Garner indicated that following the passing of Assemblyman Thompson, NCOM no longer got the support it had enjoyed under his guidance and things have been going downhill since. Commissioner Garner explained that NCOM had reconfigured and hired on new members and taken measures to keep NCOM afloat.

Coleen Lawrence indicated to the Commission that currently some of NCOM's money falls under GOED and that mentoring is currently very strong with workforce development. Commissioner Lawrence indicated that the larger issue is that from a government standpoint, nobody appears to want to own mentoring. Commissioner Lawrence opined that if SB76 does come out and the Mentoring Commission is abolished, it will not go over well and as such, Commissioner Lawrence informed the Committee that she intends to not allow the Commission to be abolished, particularly now, in the time of COVID, when mentoring is so critical. Commissioner Lawrence expressed her opinion that if the Commission needs to move out from under education to somewhere else due to a lack of resources, she would be supportive of

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that. Commissioner Lawrence encouraged the Commission to be proactive rather than reactive as their session is coming up very quickly.

Chair Maxwell indicated that after hearing the NDE representatives explain SB76, there still appears to be no defined role and thus suggested that it is incumbent upon the Commission to determine next steps. Chair Maxwell indicated the need of the Commission to find a new champion comparable to Assemblyman Thompson to have its needs heard and met politically with the legislature because without a legislative representative, the Commission may suffer as it will not have a voice to offer an alternative to how it wants to be established.

Courtney Moore opined that this is not about what's best for students but about what's best for the optics of NDE and indicated that he is not willing to work under NDE. Commissioner Moore further indicated that what the Commission wants is for NDE to allow it to operate autonomously. Commissioner Moore opined that if NDE were interested in how this Commission could continue, NDE would have come to the Commission with a plan for how to incorporate with the Commission, or with an alternative. Commissioner Moore further questioned if NCOM was disbanded, what NDE's plans were to continue the mentorship work.

Chair Maxwell concurred with Commissioner Moore and indicated his dislike for NDE's perspective in this matter. Chair Maxwell further commented that NDE had not defended NCOM's need for funds when the funds were redirected back to the governor for COVID. Chair Maxwell stated that he did not see a need for Sarah Nick from NDE to remain on the call any longer as it was clear that the Commission is unhappy with SB76 and are unhappy with the inflammatory language of the draft and are unhappy that there is no guidance in SB76 as far as NCOM. Chair Maxwell suggested that next steps for the Commission is to spend their energy focusing not on fighting NDE, but on the things that need to be done in order for NCOM to remain in place and benefit organizations state-wide. Chair Maxwell further opined that NCOM appears to be the most undervalued Commission.

Sarah Nick thanked the Commissioners for speaking candidly. Ms. Nick further informed the Commissioners that NDE also is not supportive of the language in the current draft of SB76 and the intent of NDE is not to abolish any existing councils and commissions. Ms. Nick further informed the Commission that NDE does not file its own bills and has to be careful regarding what can be shared with stakeholders as

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these are the governor's bills. Ms. Nick indicated that if SB76 were at its best, it would allow for Commissions to run with their own charge.

Douglas Garner asked Ms. Nick if she would be able to share future changes in the language with the Commission.

Sarah Nick indicated that because she serves the state superintendent of public instruction, she shares language as she's permitted by both LCD Legal and the state superintendent, but she does intend to be as transparent as she is allowed to be. Ms. Nick further indicated that NDE is currently redrafting SB76, hence the importance of the input from the Commission regarding the bill.

Michael Flores indicated his willingness to work with the point person for SB76 at NDE and Senator Dennis on the language in the draft and indicated his desire to be as effective and supportive as possible. Commissioner Flores further indicated his support for a meeting with NDE, Chair Dennis and other appropriate Commission members to explore options.

Chair Maxwell indicated his support for Commissioner Flores to move forward with the necessary steps to begin discussions regarding SB76 and its implications for NCOM. Chair Maxwell indicated that he had already reached out to Assemblyman Jason Frierson for support and would be reaching out to Senator Dina Neal and Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Marino. Chair Maxwell encouraged all the Committee members to get the message out to their networks that NCOM needs to be supported both in statute and financially.

Karl Catarata indicated to the Commission that in the interest of combating this bill and figuring out what the necessary avenues to do so are, he has already shared the Commission's concerns with the SB76 with both public and private-funded organizations and stakeholders.

Michael Flores asked Ms. Nick where they could be most helpful as a Commission.

Sarah Nick indicated to the Commission that she has heard from many perspectives that what's written in SB76 does not and suggested that perhaps the structure provided in NRS for the Boards and Commissions also has not been working. Ms. Nick further indicated that the intent was to allow the Commissions to exercise them



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purpose and give them the latitude to accomplish their strategic plans rather than focus on administrative work. Ms. Nick indicated that it is important to make sure that the bill creates clarity that affirms NCOM's great work and ensures that it continues. Ms. Nick asked the Commission to communicate their vision of how not to restrict Boards and Commissions with things like annual reporting requirements, quorum, and open meeting law because those things are not evidence-based to achieve greater mentorship outcomes, as well as communicate how to ensure that the Commission has all the support it needs. Ms. Nick concluded by agreeing with Commissioners Moore and Lawrence that now is not the time to signal that mentorship is not needed as the state is in crisis.

Chair Maxwell indicated that he would like to work with Ms. Nick regarding SB76 to ensure that it puts the Commission in a place to be able to reach its goals and encouraged Ms. Nick to reach out to him to schedule a time to begin this process. Chair Maxwell indicated to the Commission that he would like to schedule an additional time within the next two weeks to touch base as to what has been done to move forward with NCOM's goals and charges. The Commission decided on a date and time of 9:00 a.m. on January 18th for further discussion of this subject.

Chair Maxwell indicated to the Commission that the agenda for today's meeting would be the agenda for the next scheduled NCOM meeting.

**Public Comment #2**

Dr. Maxwell asks if there is a public comment in the North or South?

Rose Cota Stated there are no public comment at this time.

**Adjournment**

Chair Maxwell adjourned the meeting.