

# Review of District Developmental Delay Age-Eligibility Surveys

NDE State Board of Education Meeting  
May 13, 2026



# Problem of Practice

By age 6, have students identified under IDEA category of Developmental Delay had sufficient time with quality Tier 1 instruction in the general education environment supported by IDEA services to clearly demonstrate age-appropriate knowledge skills and abilities to be meaningfully found eligible or not eligible for continued services under IDEA that support quality Tier 1 instruction?

- If not, would students benefit from an additional year or 2 under IDEA category of Developmental Delay to receive sufficient IDEA services to then be meaningfully found eligible or not eligible for continued services?

# Timeline of DD Age Change Discussion

- Nevada's State Board of Education initiated the conversation about changing the age criteria for the Developmental Disabilities Category
- At the State Board of Education Meeting on May 1, 2024, Office of Comprehensive Student Services (OCSS) presented an overview of the federal rules and the potential effects the DD age change may have on local school districts, students and families
- On September 4, 2024, the discussion continued with some additional information being provided by OCSS. The Board voted against making an age change and asked that 6 more months of data be collected about the topic

# Timeline of DD Age Change Discussion Cont.

- December 2024, OCSS brought the topic to the Special Education Directors for further discussion and data exploration
- At the November 2025 Board Meeting, the data collected from the district Special Education Directors and staff along with additional information that was shared with the Board. The Board asked again for more targeted data and that the topic be revisited in March 2026.
- OCSS has sent out two surveys (one qualitative survey and one quantitative survey) to district and other partners to help gather data regarding the areas that the Board has requested

# NDE Board of Education Presentations

- [May 1, 2024 SBE presentation and discussion](#) included Survey results and District data
- [September 4, 2024 SBE presentation and discussions](#)
- November and December 2024 District and Practitioner Discussion and Data Exploration
- [November 12, 2025 SBE presentation and discussion](#)
- February-April 2026: In consultation with Board Leadership, developed and administered Qualitative and Quantitative surveys.

# How the Surveys Were Built

These surveys were designed to capture district data from SY21-26 alongside clinical and educational insights to evaluate how extending the age eligibility for Developmental Delay affects enrollment, resources, and student outcomes.

## District Data Survey

4 sections:

- Students that age out of DD and not continue SPED at age 6 (8 questions)
- Students that age out of DD and immediately continue SPED (17 questions)
- Students that age out of DD and continue SPED before age 10 (53 questions)
- Preschool seats in districts (10 questions)

## District Feedback Survey

6 sections:

- District Viewpoint (11 questions)
- Clarifying current Practices (4 questions)
- Impact on Students and Families (1 question)
- Systems and Capacity (10 questions)
- Data and Decision-Making (4 questions)
- Policy and Alignment (4 questions)

# Quantitative Summary

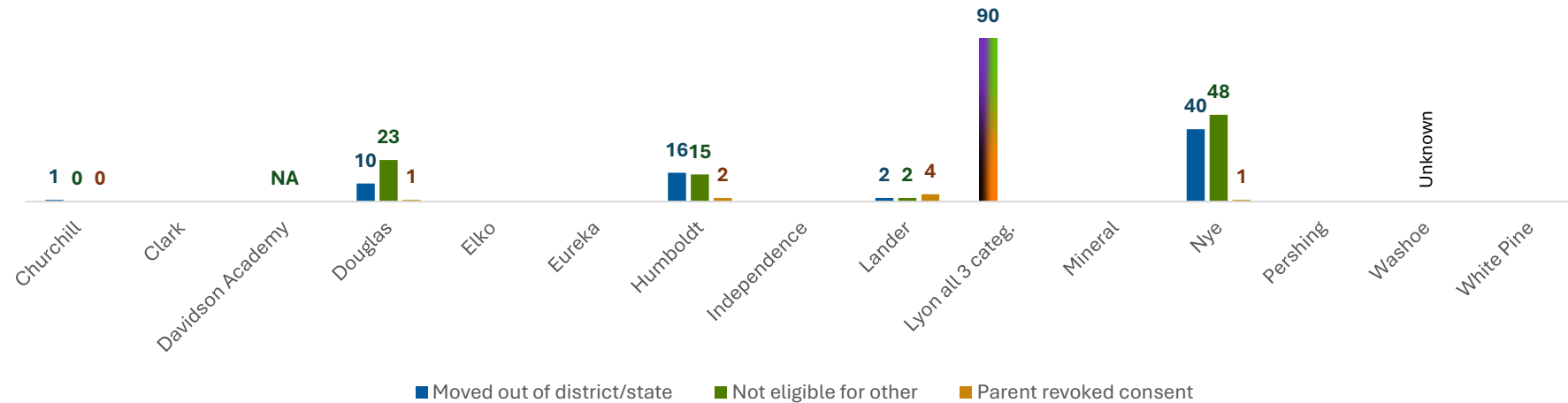
**There is no statewide statistical pattern that can be established with the limited quantitative data provided by the district**

- Results not statistically reliable:
  - Lack of standardized definitions and business rules for analysis
  - Reliance on manual data extraction and matching across datasets
  - High risk of error and inefficiency in current processes
- LEAs do not have this data, and this is why:
  - Lack of longitudinal reporting within existing systems
- Some small highlights - #'s and story (Nye) (Washoe)
- Because of data void- lean into qualitative info

# Quantitative Summary

- Of the districts that had data to report:

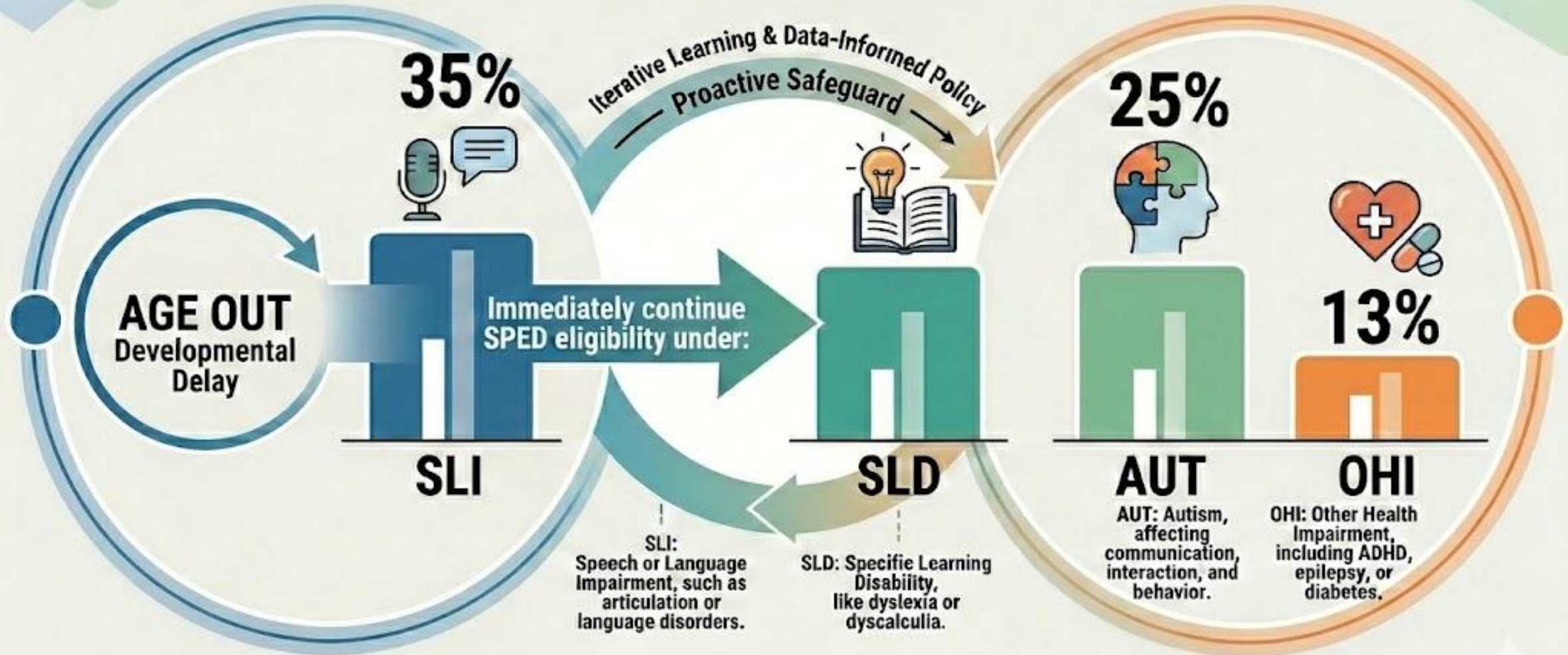
N count: In School Years 2021-2026, of the students with Developmental Delay who's eligibility did not continue, how many did not continue because they: Either moved out of district/state, were not found eligible for any other category, or parent revoked



# Nye County School District Story



Students that aged out of Developmental Delay immediately continue SPED under SLI (35%), SLD (25%), AUT (25%) and OHI (13%) eligibility categories.



\*Based on quantitative insights from SY21-26 district data (qualitative context bridge).

# Nye County School District Story – Infographic Story

- Students aging out of Developmental Delay most commonly continue Special Education services under Speech or Language Impairment (35%)
- Specific Learning Disability and Autism each represent 25% of continued eligibility categories
- Other Health Impairment accounts for 13% of transitions following Developmental Delay eligibility
- The data suggests many students continue to require specialized supports after aging out of Developmental Delay, reinforcing the importance of proactive monitoring and data-informed transition planning

# Washoe's Story: DD Eligibility Transition



## Washoe's Story: Developmental Delay Eligibility Transition (Ages 3–9)

Most students that age out Developmental Delay immediately continue SPED (Special Education) under: SLD (49%), SLI (23%), OHI (13%) and AUT (9%) eligibility categories.

A PIPELINE OF STUDENTS (ages 3–5)

AGE OUT DD (Developmental Delay)

SLD (49%)  
**49%**



**SLD** (Specific Learning Disability), like dyslexia or dyscalculia.

SLI (23%)  
**23%**



**SLI** (Speech or Language Impairment), such as articulation or language disorders.

OHI (13%)  
**13%**



**OHI** (Other Health Impairment), including ADHD, epilepsy, or or diabetes.

AUT (9%)  
**9%**



**AUT** (Autism Spectrum Disorder), affecting communication, interaction, and behavior.



### Expert Survey Consensus

Surveys of school psychologists and clinicians show consistent professional consensus supporting the qualitative impact of mobility over inconclusive numerical gaps.



### The Data-Informed Policy Safeguard

In the absence of conclusive statewide data, this trend signals that extending eligibility prevents service gaps during student mobility, a key strategy for proactive risk management.

# Washoe's Story: DD Eligibility Transition – Infographic Story

- In Washoe County, nearly half of students aging out of Developmental Delay continue Special Education eligibility under Specific Learning Disability (49%)
- Speech or Language Impairment represents the second largest transition category at 23%, followed by Other Health Impairment (13%) and Autism (9%).
- The distribution of eligibility categories suggests that many students continue to demonstrate ongoing educational and developmental support needs beyond the Developmental Delay age limit
- Survey feedback and district trend data support the importance of maintaining continuity of services and reducing potential service gaps during eligibility transitions
- The findings reinforce the value of proactive, data-informed policy planning and ongoing monitoring of student outcomes across eligibility categories.

# Breakdown of Exit Reason for Nevada

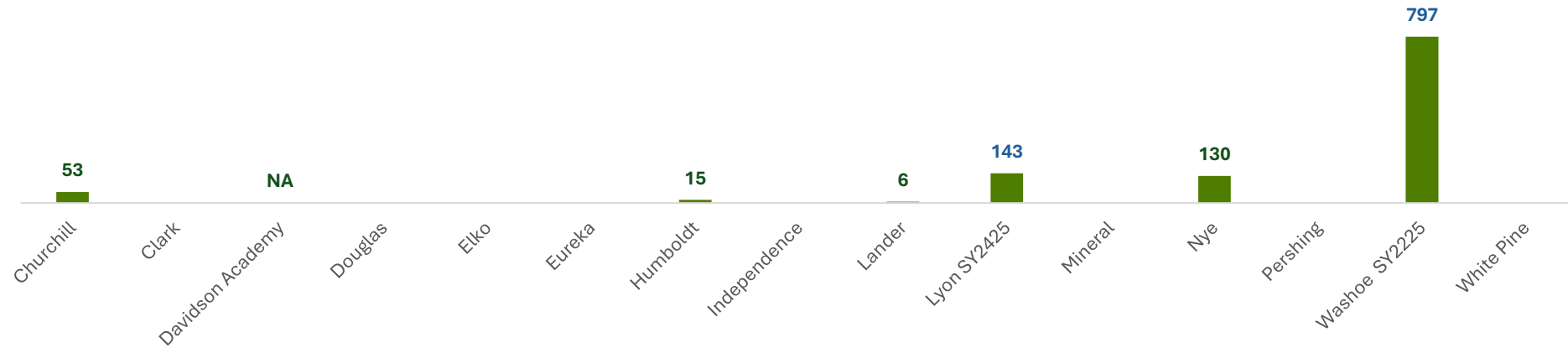


# Breakdown of Exit Reason for Nevada – Infographic Story

- Districts identified multiple reasons why students exit Developmental Delay eligibility at age 6 without continuing Special Education services
- The most common reasons include not qualifying under a new disability category, reevaluation results not meeting eligibility criteria, parent refusal of continued services, and student mobility across districts or states
- Some students transition to general education settings with MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) services and ongoing academic monitoring
- The findings highlight the complexity of eligibility transitions at age 6 and the importance of consistent reevaluation practices, family engagement, and transition planning
- Student mobility and variation in eligibility outcomes reinforce the need for statewide monitoring and clearer longitudinal tracking of student pathways following Developmental Delay eligibility.

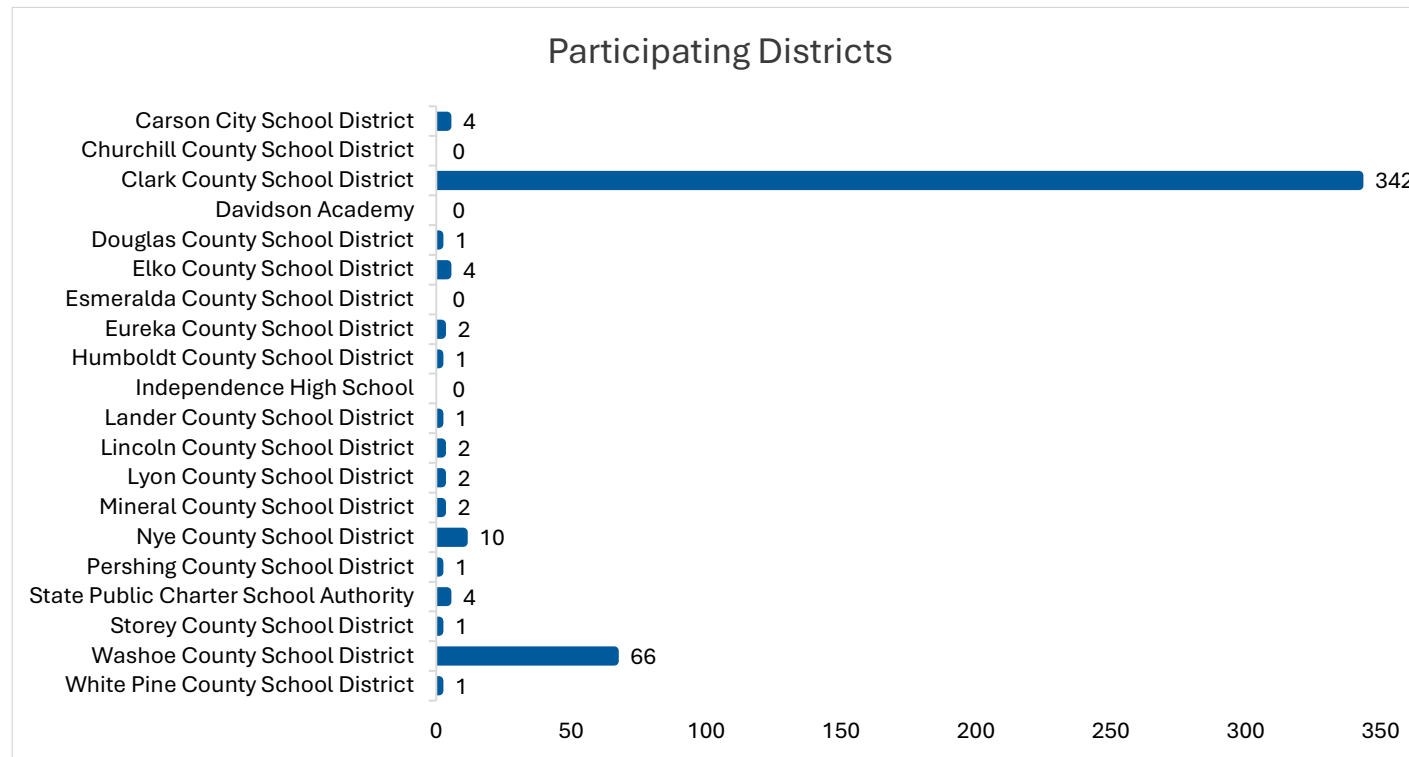
# Quantitative Summary Continued

N Count of students identified under Developmental Delay that immediately continued in special education under a different eligibility category at age 6, in School Years 2021-2026



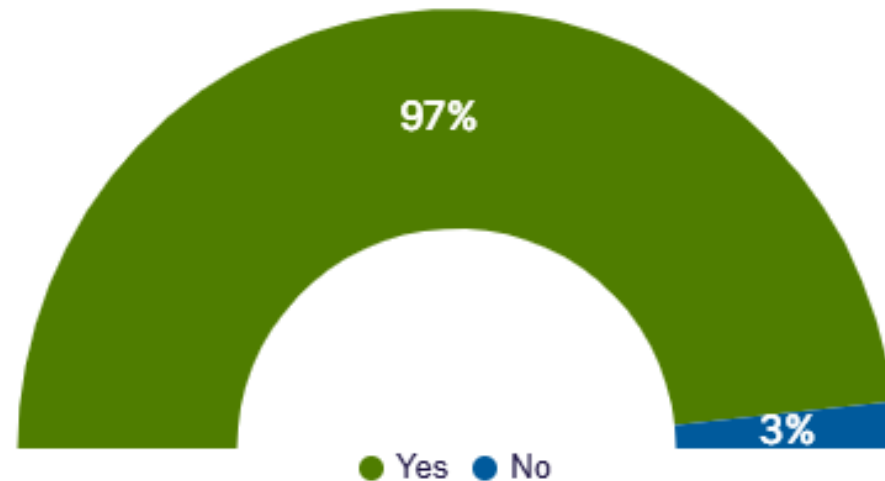
# Qualitative Survey Summary

- Total Respondents: 444



# Qualitative Summary: Improve Student Outcomes

- **District Viewpoint:** Question 1: In your opinion, would increasing the Developmental Delay age translate into meaningful changes in student outcomes?



## Impact of Extended Eligibility on Student Outcomes

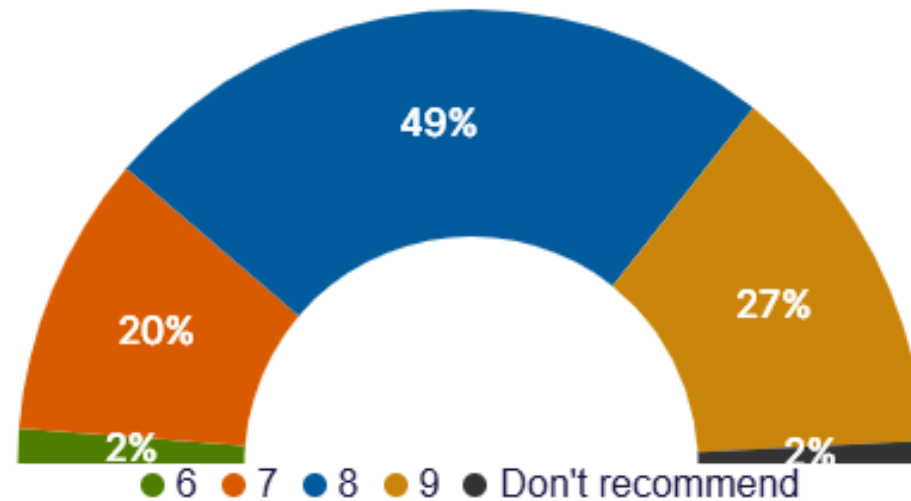
- Provide additional time for intervention and skill development during critical early learning years
- Allow for more comprehensive data collection and observation of developmental patterns
- Reduce misidentification and premature labeling under more restrictive disability categories
- Ensure continuity of services, preventing gaps in support
- Support more accurate, data-driven eligibility decisions

## Limitations of Extended DD Eligibility on Student Performance

- Delay access to specialized supports aligned to a specific disability
- Potential of over-identification or prolonged labeling under a broad category
- Keeping students in special education longer than necessary would potentially limit the exposure to general education environments
- Increase the risk of mislabeling or overuse of the DD category
- The need for stronger implementation of general education supports (e.g., MTSS) prior to special education identification

# Qualitative Summary: Age Recommendation

- **District Viewpoint:** Question 5: At what age would you recommend changing the Developmental Delay eligibility age?



# Support for Changing The Eligibility Age

## Increasing the eligibility age:

Provides more time to accurately identify and support student needs before eligibility decisions are finalized

Prevent service gaps, ensure continuity of support, and reduce inefficiencies associated with repeated evaluations

Ability to avoid premature or inaccurate labeling

## Increasing the age would better align with:

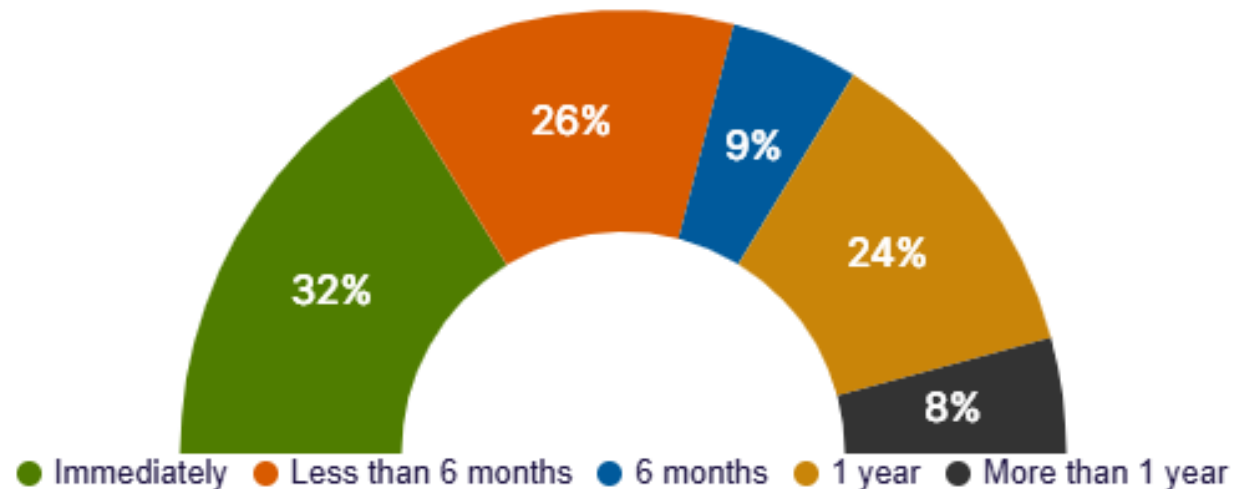
Developmental research, which shows variability in early childhood development

IDEA flexibility, which permits DD eligibility up to age 9

Practices in other states where higher age limits are common

# Qualitative Summary: Systems and Capacity Impact

- **Systems and Capacity Question 2:** In your opinion, how long would your District need to adjust Practices if the Developmental Delay age changes?



## How much time will districts need to implement the changes?

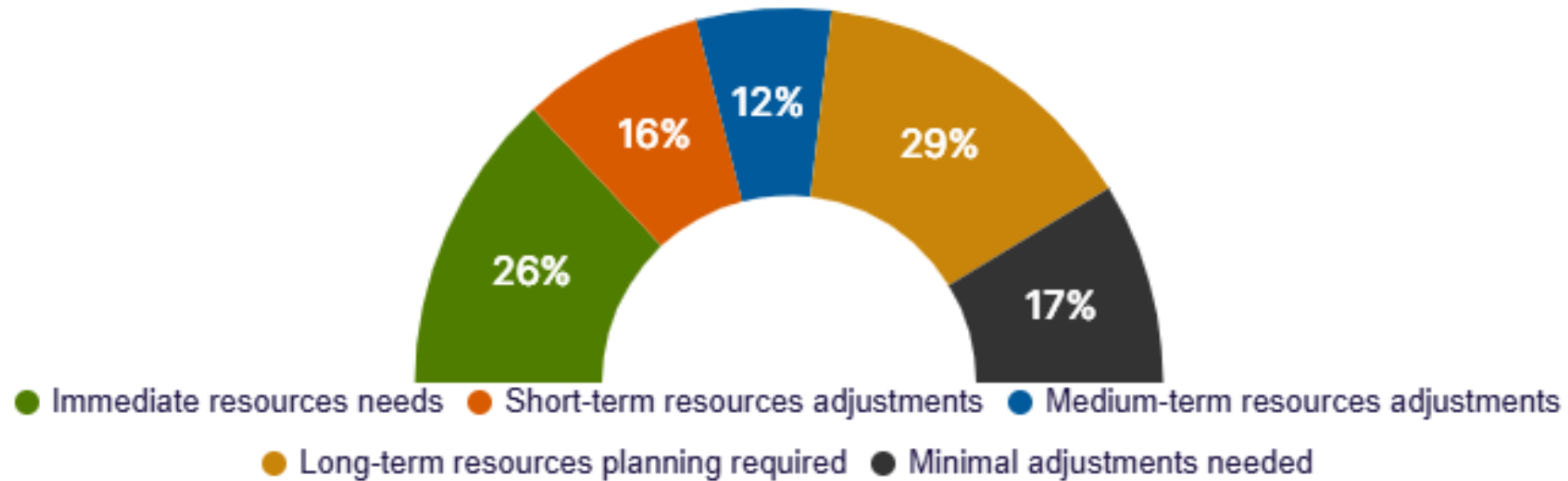
- Because respondents could select multiple timeframes, the results represent distribution of perspectives, not a single timeline per answer
- At the district level, responses are distributed across multiple timeframes reflecting varied operational timelines
- Both large and small districts reported varied implementation timelines, reflecting differences in readiness, capacity, and planning approaches rather than a single consensus timeframe
- Few districts selected longer timelines as the dominant response: Douglas, Humboldt, Pershing and White Pine County

## What will Districts Need to implement changes into practices

- Clear guidance on updated eligibility criteria, procedures, and state regulations
- Training on evaluation practices, progress monitoring, and data-based decision-making
- Understanding developmental milestones and distinguishing DD from other categories
- Instructional strategies and integration with MTSS/RTI frameworks
- Collaboration across multidisciplinary teams and communication with families
- Updated documentation, forms, and compliance expectations
- Ongoing professional development, coaching, and implementation support

# Qualitative Summary: Systems and Capacity Impact

- **Systems and Capacity Question 6:** What level of Resource implications should the Board be aware of?



## How will this policy change impact district resources ?

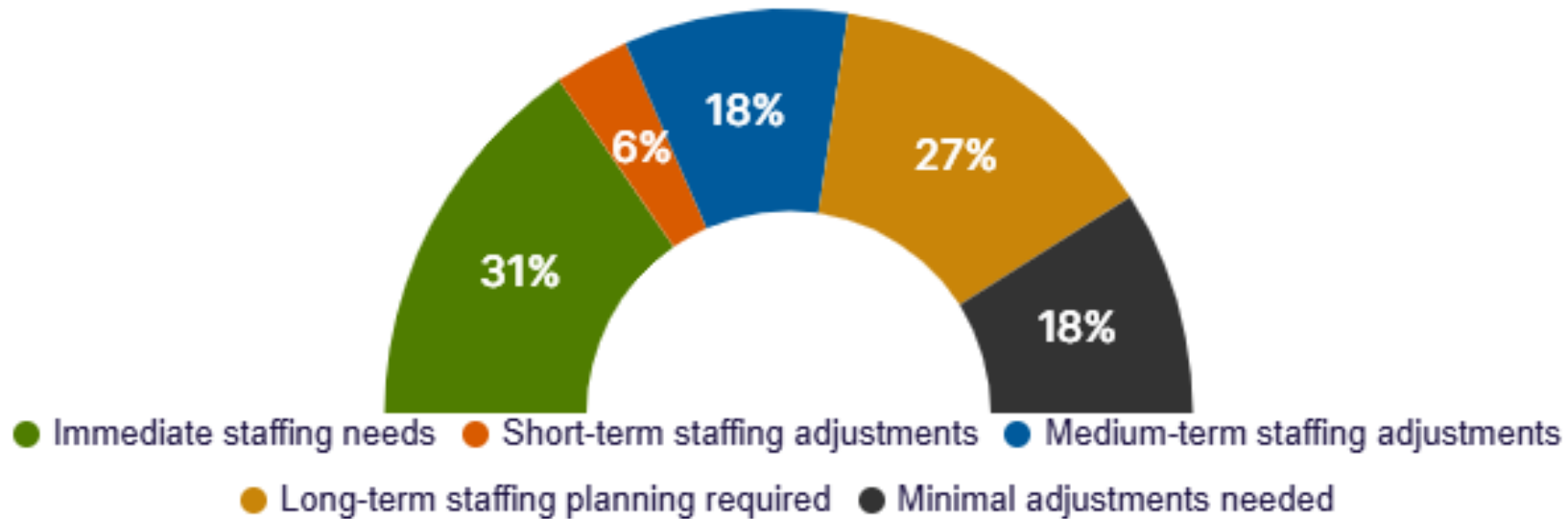
- Because respondents could select multiple answers, results reflect a range of anticipated resource implications rather than a single level of impact
- Resource needs span multiple levels suggesting a phased implementation approach rather than concentrated in a single timeframe
- Both large and small districts identified varying levels of resource needs, reflecting diverse and overlapping implementation considerations and no unified consensus

## What resources will be needed to implement the policy change

- Increased staffing needs across special education, related services, and support roles
- Higher caseloads and service delivery demands in early elementary grades
- Expanded need for evaluation, progress monitoring, and administrative support
- Additional instructional materials, intervention programs, and classroom space
- Professional development, updated procedures, and system alignment
- Short-term and long-term planning to ensure sustainability and compliance

# Qualitative Summary: Systems and Capacity Impact Continued

- **Systems and Capacity Question 9:** What level of Staffing implications should the Board be aware of?



## How would this policy change impact staffing needs

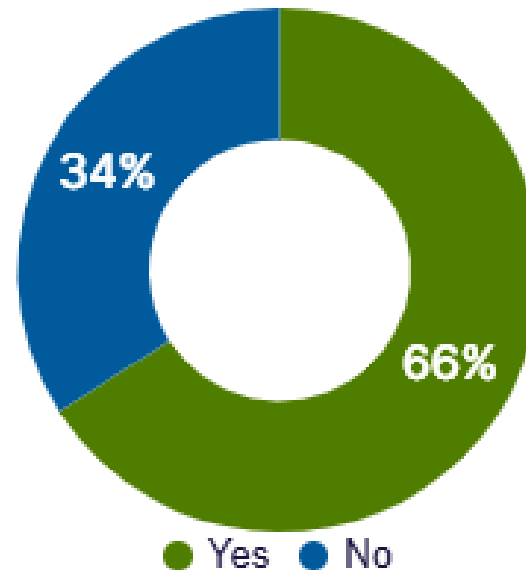
- District responses reflected both immediate and long-term staffing needs, suggesting ongoing capacity challenges and the need for sustained workforce planning
- Large districts such as Clark and Washoe reported varied staffing impact levels, with no single consensus
- Small and medium-sized districts also identified multiple staffing impact categories, reflecting diverse local considerations

## What staffing needs need to be considered to implement this policy change

- Increased caseloads for special education teachers and related service providers
- Need for additional staff (teachers, aides, psychologists, SLPs, OTs, etc.)
- Greater demand for evaluation teams and multidisciplinary coordination
- Existing staffing shortages and recruitment/retention challenges
- Need for adjusted staffing models, caseload guidelines, and workforce planning
- Potential short-term increases with possible long-term efficiencies

# Qualitative Summary: Data and Decision-Making

- **Data and Decision-Making:** Question 2: Do you anticipate that a change in the Developmental Delay age would impact identification rates or service delivery?



## Impact on Eligibility and Identification Rates

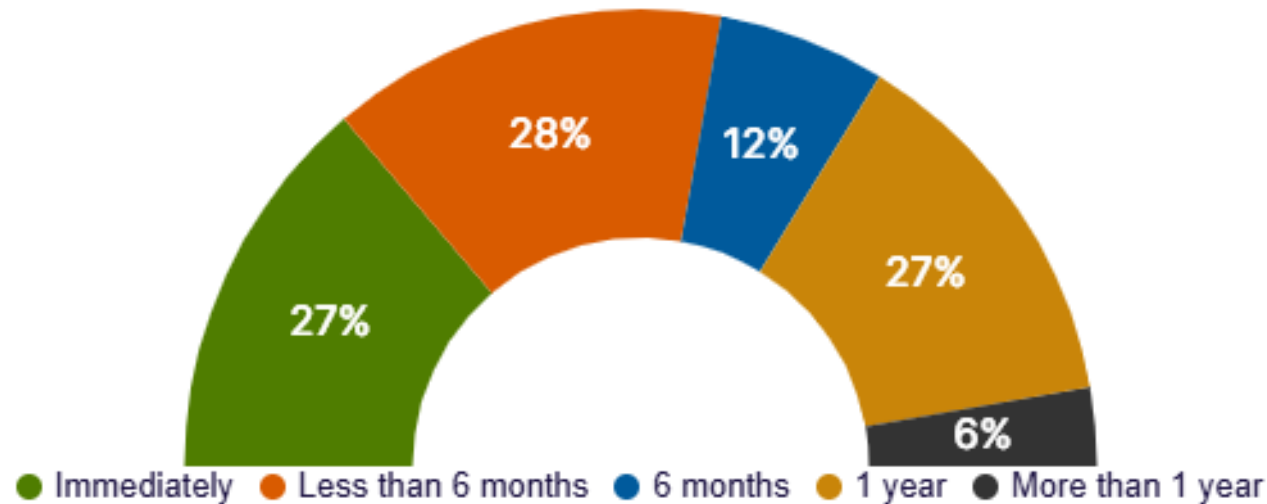
- District responses generally align with the statewide trend, with many anticipating impacts on student identification and service delivery
- Large districts such as Clark and Washoe mostly anticipated impacts, though responses showed internal variation
- Small and medium-sized districts reflected mixed perspectives, with some anticipating impacts and others reporting no expected changes (Eureka, Lincoln, Mineral, and Storey)

## Consideration Potential impact on eligibility

- Increase in identification under the DD category in early elementary grades
- Delayed or reduced identification under more specific disability categories
- Improved accuracy of eligibility decisions through additional data and observation time
- Extended duration and continuity of services for students
- Increased demand for services, staffing, and resources in early grades
- Potential long-term reduction in intensive services due to stronger early intervention
- Risk of overidentification or prolonged use of the DD category if not carefully monitored

# Qualitative Summary: Policy and Alignment

**Policy and Alignment: Question 2:** In your opinion, how long would your District need to adjust Policies if the Developmental Delay age changes?



## How will the change in policy impact the districts?

- At the district level, responses are distributed across multiple timeframes, reflecting varied policy adjustment timelines based on local context
- Large districts such as Clark and Washoe, and medium-sized districts reported mixed policy adjustment timelines, indicating readiness but no single consensus timeframe
- Most small districts anticipated needing between immediate implementation and up to 6 months for policy adjustments

## What types of policy changes will be needed:

- Updating eligibility criteria and evaluation/reevaluation procedures
- Revising IEP processes, documentation, and service delivery guidelines
- Updating special education manuals, forms, and data systems
- Providing staff training, guidance, and professional development
- Enhancing communication with families about eligibility and services
- Aligning transition planning and progress monitoring practices
- Ensuring compliance with state and federal requirements

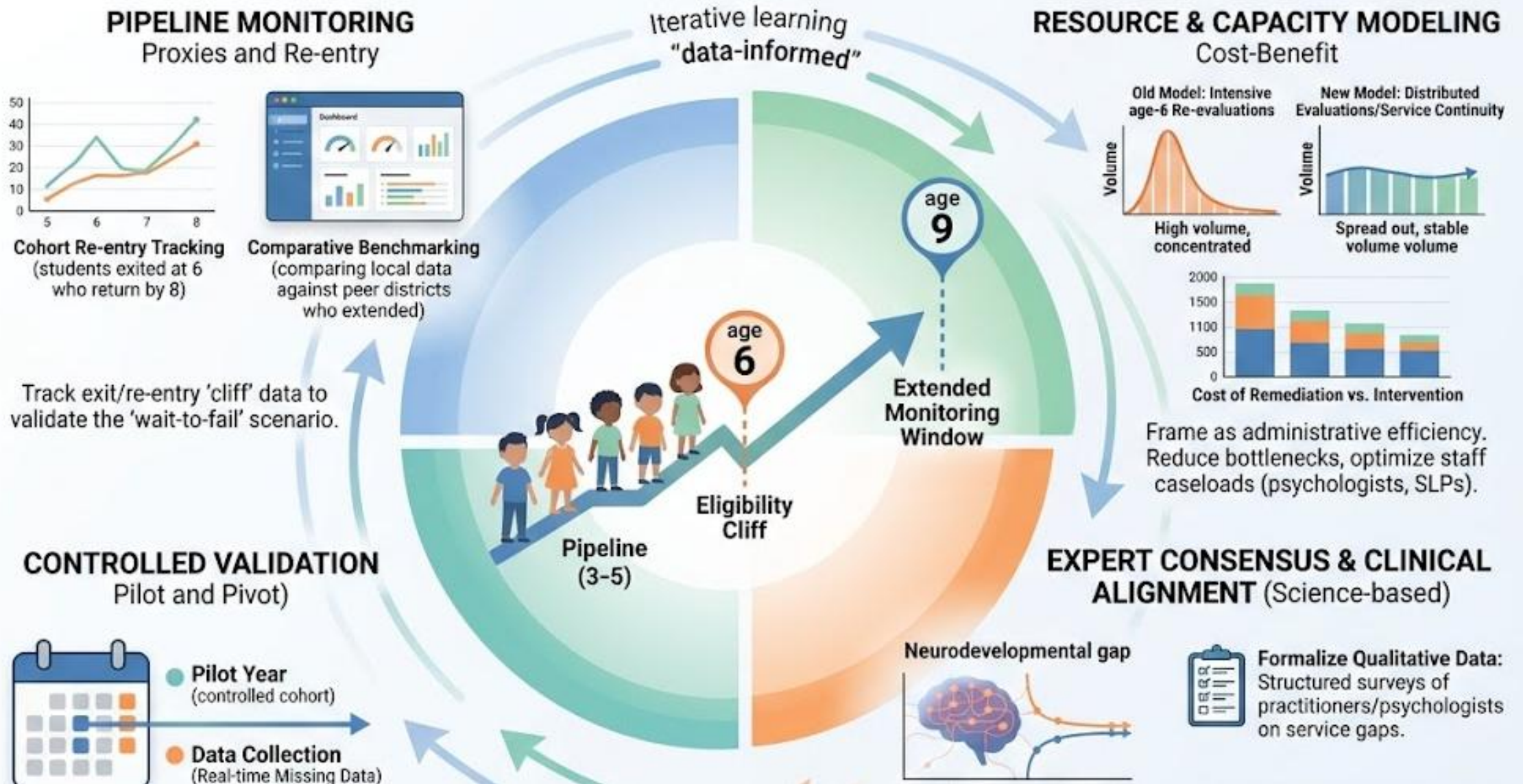
# What Does All of This Data Say?

In the absence of conclusive statewide numbers, the qualitative feedback from clinical and educational experts serves as the primary evidence for change. This data highlights a consistent professional observation: "a more flexible age threshold prevents premature exits and provides the administrative stability needed to accurately identify student needs as they mature, effectively bridging the gap where quantitative data is currently silent."

# Developmental Delay Eligibility to Age 9



## DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY ELIGIBILITY TO AGE 9.



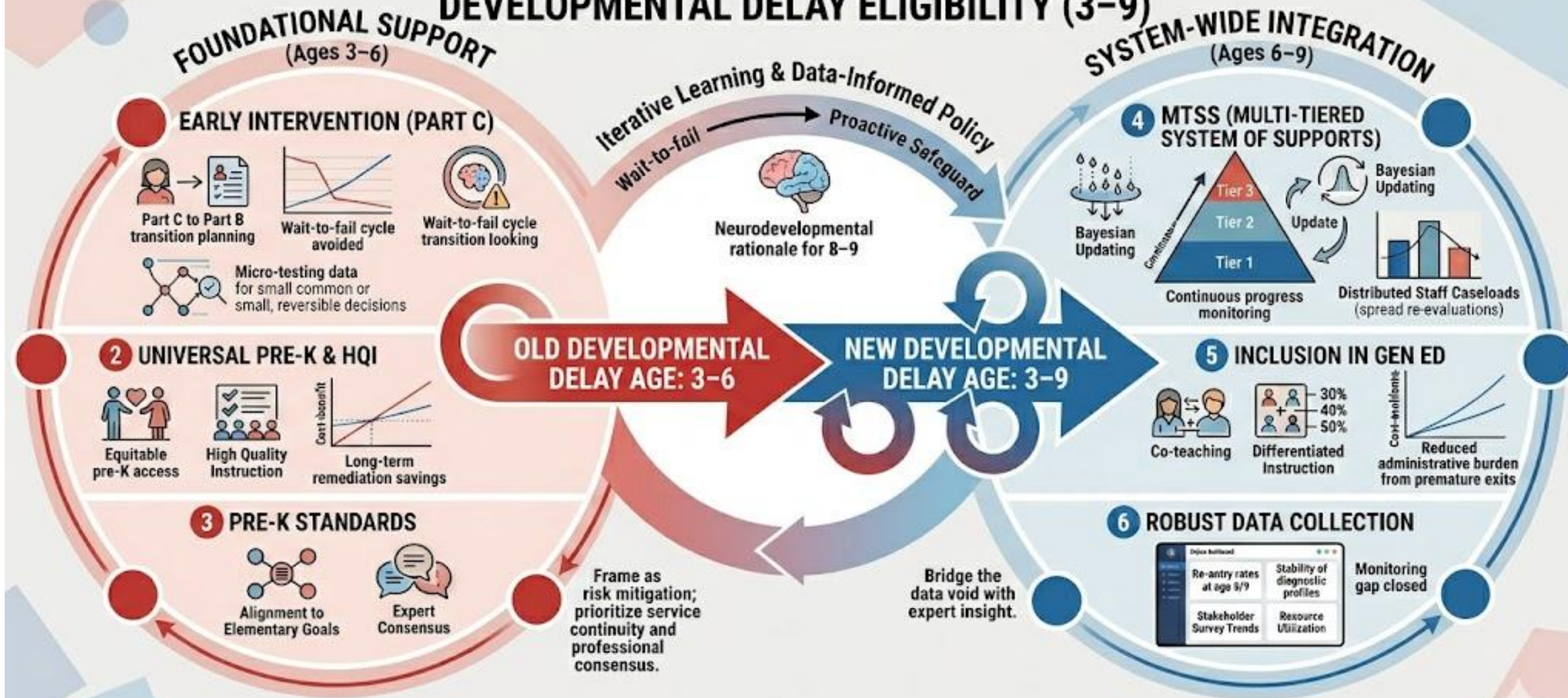
# Developmental Delay Eligibility to Age 9 – Infographic Story

- The proposed extension of Developmental Delay eligibility to age 9 focuses on proactive monitoring and data-informed decision making
- The framework addresses the “eligibility cliff” at age 6, where some students may lose services despite ongoing needs
- Tracking re-entry into Special Education may help identify potential “wait-to-fail” patterns
- Resource modeling suggests the extension could reduce evaluation bottlenecks and distribute workloads more evenly over time
- Pilot implementation and ongoing data collection are emphasized to support informed statewide decision making.

# Integrated Ecosystem for DD eligibility



## INTEGRATED ECOSYSTEM FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY ELIGIBILITY (3-9)



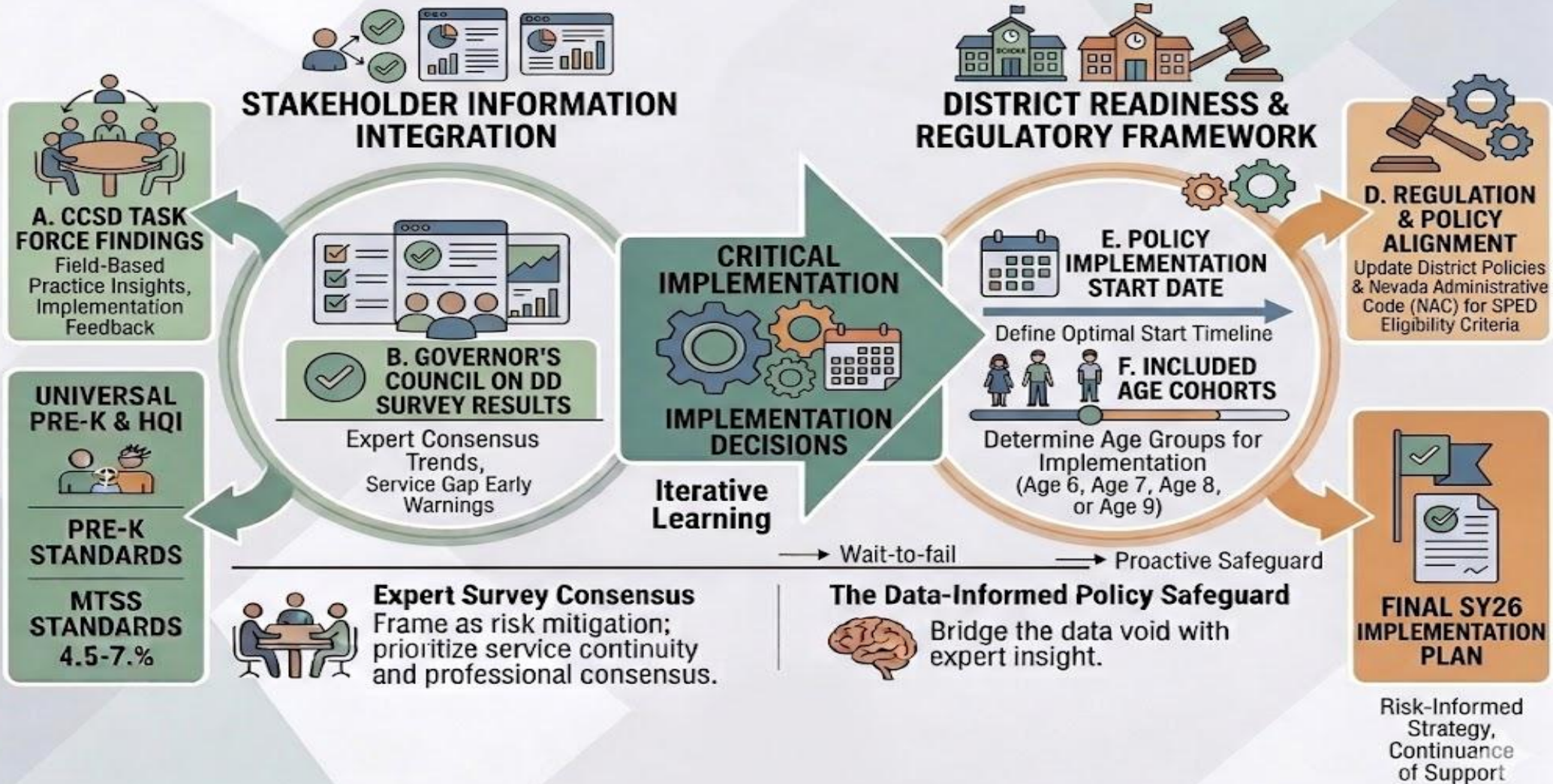
# Integrated Ecosystem for DD eligibility – Infographic Story

- The proposed model creates an integrated support system connecting early intervention, Pre-K services, MTSS, inclusion practices, and data collection across ages 3-9
- Extending Developmental Delay eligibility to age 9 may reduce “wait-to-fail” gaps and support smoother transitions between services
- The framework emphasizes continuous progress monitoring, inclusive practices, and distributed staff workloads
- Robust data collection and stakeholder feedback are central to evaluating long-term student outcomes and policy effectiveness.

# Strategic Implementation Roadmap



## STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP: DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY ELIGIBILITY EXTENSION NEXT STEPS



# Strategic Implementation Roadmap – Infographic Story

- Stakeholder Information Integration
  - Uses field-based feedback, implementation insights, and expert consensus to guide planning
  - Incorporates CCSD task force findings, Universal Pre-K and MTSS standards, and Governor’s Council on DD survey results
- Critical Implementation Decisions
  - Applies iterative learning and data-informed decision-making
  - Transitions from a “wait-to-fail” model toward proactive safeguards
- District Readiness & Regulatory Framework
  - Defines implementation timelines and determines included age cohorts (ages 6-9)
- Policy & Operational Planning → Final SY26 Implementation Plan
  - Aligns district policies and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) requirements
  - Develops a risk-informed implementation strategy
  - Supports continuity of services and statewide implementation readiness

# Questions



# Thank You



Contact Information



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