

Nevada Accountability Redesign: Summary of Themes from Qualitative Data

Background and Methods

This memo draws on two sources of data that informed the work of the Metrics Subcommittee on Accountability Redesign (SAR) to develop a District Performance Framework (DPF). The first is the Nevada Accountability Constituent Survey. This survey relied primarily on selected-response items but also included a small number of open-ended questions. This memo summarizes responses to those open-ended items; we provide an overview of the quantitative results elsewhere. The second data source is a set of six interviews with Nevada educators and leaders. Below, we describe our approaches to analyzing these data.

Open-ended Survey Questions

We conducted a separate thematic analysis for each of the eight open-ended questions (omitting the demographic/background questions). A Center team member reviewed all non-blank responses, and we iteratively identified common themes using a generative AI-assisted coding process. Responses were coded using a multi-label approach, meaning a single response could be assigned to one or more themes, or in some cases no theme. After the initial coding, we reviewed the theme definitions and response assignments to verify consistency and accuracy. For each theme, we selected a small number of verbatim quotes to illustrate common patterns in the data.

Interviews

To supplement the large-scale survey data, we conducted interviews with six individuals who represented key constituent groups (Clark County Education Association, Nevada State Education Association, Nevada Association of School Superintendents, Opportunity 180). Interview questions addressed participants' perspectives on the design of NDPF, their understanding and use of NSPF, and perceived challenges and opportunities related to accountability in Nevada.

Purpose and Limitations

This analysis is intended to provide a high-level overview of the major patterns reflected in the qualitative data. It is important to acknowledge some limitations. First, thematic analysis necessarily involves judgment in defining themes and assigning responses. Different analytic decisions (e.g., identifying more or fewer themes, collapsing or separating related ideas) could have resulted in somewhat different categorizations. Second, individuals who chose to respond to the survey—and especially those who provided open-ended responses—are unlikely to be representative of all educators, families, or other constituents across Nevada. Finally, the interviews reflect the perspectives of only six individuals across a large state. As a result, these survey and interview findings should be interpreted as descriptive of respondents' perspectives rather than as generalizable to the broader population.

In this report, we first provide a cross-cutting summary of themes based on analysis of all eight open-ended questions and interviews. In an appendix, we present illustrative quotes for each open-ended survey question, organized by question-specific themes.

Cross-Cutting Thematic Analysis

Overview

Across all eight open-ended questions and the interviews, respondents consistently returned to a set of system-level concerns about fairness, purpose, and usability of Nevada's accountability system. Although questions addressed different topics (district accountability, Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) use, portal reporting, redesign priorities), responses converged around shared ideas about what accountability should measure, who should be held responsible, and how accountability systems should support improvement rather than compliance. Importantly, respondents rarely rejected accountability itself. Instead, they expressed concern that current approaches misattribute responsibility, oversimplify performance, or fail to capture meaningful educational outcomes.

Below, we describe eight themes that were extracted from the full set of open-ended survey responses. We supplement the survey data summaries with relevant examples from the interviews. These themes are framed as recommendations, but they are based exclusively on the survey responses and should not be interpreted as reflecting the Center for Assessment's views.

1. Accountability should reflect factors within district and school control.

A dominant pattern across survey responses was concern that districts and schools are evaluated based on outcomes substantially shaped by forces outside their influence. Examples of such factors included student attendance, student motivation, family engagement, poverty, mental health, and transiency. Survey respondents frequently argued that accountability systems should distinguish between school or district effectiveness on the one hand and community or family conditions on the other.

Multiple survey respondents also mentioned the importance of holding *students* accountable for their performance, especially in the secondary grades. They repeatedly emphasized student effort and engagement, attendance responsibility, behavioral expectations, and parental involvement. Many comments explicitly contrasted district, school, or teacher accountability with the absence of student or parent accountability.

Interviews reinforced this concern and added important contextual detail. Leaders described structural constraints such as limited staffing capacity, fiscal instability, subgroup size volatility, and restricted program offerings. Several noted that small student populations can prevent schools from earning points due to minimum n-size rules, regardless of actual performance trends. Others described attendance, mental health challenges, and economic pressures affecting families in ways that are not easily addressed through school-level interventions.

At the same time, one interviewee acknowledged the importance of maintaining outcome transparency while arguing that weighting and technical design features require refinement rather than elimination. Together, interviews suggest that concerns about factors outside educators' control reflect objections to attribution of performance exclusively to educators, rather than a rejection of accountability itself.

Although it is virtually impossible to create performance measures that are completely free of influence of factors outside educators' control, it is important to recognize that accountability systems can lose both utility and legitimacy when responsibility is assigned without corresponding control. Responses suggest a widespread perspective on educational outcomes as involving shared responsibility.

2. The system relies too heavily on a narrow set of academic achievement metrics.

Across nearly all survey questions, respondents questioned the central role of standardized assessments in determining ratings or accountability outcomes. Common concerns include tests as snapshots in time, incentives for teaching to the test, limited measurement of complex competencies such as critical thinking, validity threats stemming from low student motivation, and excessive instructional time devoted to testing. Many respondents advocated alternatives such as portfolios, performance tasks, multiple indicators, and qualitative evidence of learning.

Interviews provided concrete illustrations of this concern. Leaders described tensions between college-placement assessments and the needs of students pursuing career and technical education pathways. Some emphasized that universal ACT administration sends a college-centric signal that does not resonate with all students. Interviewees also pointed to the need for schools to cultivate a wide range of competencies to ensure college and career readiness, though one interviewee acknowledged the lack of existing measures of such competencies.

The underlying theme across these responses is that many constituents believe current measures such as ACT and SBAC scores are insufficient proxies for learning quality or school effectiveness.

3. Growth-oriented measures contribute to system fairness.

Closely related to testing concerns is strong support for evaluating student progress rather than absolute performance levels. Survey respondents repeatedly emphasized that starting points matter and improvement should be recognized even when proficiency remains low. This theme frequently intersected with equity discussions, particularly regarding Title I schools, rural districts, high-mobility populations, and special education and English learners. Respondents also noted the lack of growth measures for high school and recommended exploring whether such measures might be possible to incorporate into the system.

At the same time, a small number of respondents pointed to perceived drawbacks associated with growth measures, including their potential to underestimate effectiveness of schools

serving large percentages of high-achieving students. Some respondents also noted that the methodology behind current growth measures was difficult to understand. The interviews reinforced both the general enthusiasm for growth measures and the recognition of their potential limitations including the opacity of the methods and the possibility of bias against high-performance students and schools.

Together, the responses addressing growth and unequal starting points point to a widespread view that fair accountability requires recognizing improvement within context rather than uniform comparisons. These results suggest potential benefits of clear communication about the strengths and limitations of these measures, along with constituent-friendly explanations of how they are calculated and what inferences they support.

4. The system should recognize a variety of postsecondary pathways.

Across questions related to outcomes and redesign, respondents consistently argued for expanding definitions of success beyond four-year college preparation. Recurring recommendations include stronger career and technical education (CTE) pathways, trade preparation, entrepreneurship skills, employability and communication skills, local labor-market alignment, and long-term employment outcomes. A few respondents also mentioned civic outcomes.

Interview data strongly reinforced this theme. Leaders described accountability metrics as disproportionately aligned with four-year college readiness, even though many students pursue technical training or direct workforce entry. Interview participants mentioned career endorsements, industry certifications, and employability skills as central to school missions but insufficiently reflected in ratings. As noted above, however, one leader cautioned that developing high-quality, scalable measures of broader competencies is complex and resource-intensive, and this interviewee expressed skepticism that such measures could be incorporated into accountability systems.

These responses indicate that the system is sometimes perceived as sending a message that college is the most (or only) valued postsecondary outcome and that constituents would value a system that reflects multiple pathways aligned with student interests and community needs.

5. Accountability should support improvement rather than penalizing schools.

Survey respondents frequently described current systems as punitive, compliance-driven, susceptible to gaming, and burdensome for educators. Many called for a more supportive approach to accountability. Respondents recommended building into the system targeted assistance, earlier intervention, recognition of positive practices, and reduced reporting burden.

Several interviewees offered relevant details. One described star ratings as stigmatizing labels that demoralize staff without providing actionable guidance. Others expressed frustration that accountability determinations are not consistently accompanied by

resources or technical assistance. One interviewee highlighted funding cliffs tied to star ratings that may create instability, while another described perceptions that low ratings create openings for charter expansion without additional district support. An interviewee suggested a specific way in which the state could support districts in schools, recommending that Nevada identify high-quality instructional materials and best practices for implementing them.

The main implication of these responses is a need to ensure that, to the extent possible, accountability ratings are accompanied by guidance and resources to address areas of need. Doing so will help build constituent support for the system.

6. Transparency, clarity, and usability problems limit system value.

Across questions about the Accountability Portal, NSPF, and reporting, respondents emphasized difficulty understanding or using accountability information. Common concerns include unclear star calculations, overly complex dashboards, fragmented data systems, lack of plain-language explanations, and limited comparability tools.

Interviews reinforced these concerns. Leaders reported that teachers and principals struggle to explain how ratings are calculated. Some indicated that families misinterpret star ratings as simple indicators of grade-level proficiency and that growth metrics were particularly difficult to communicate. Leaders also described reporting burdens, especially in small districts with limited administrative capacity.

To support informed decision making, it is important that the systems used to report accountability data are designed in ways that ensure usability and interpretability for relevant constituent groups. The responses offer several promising ideas for creating and implementing a useful, accessible reporting system.

7. Structural differences between districts and charter sponsors complicate comparability.

Respondents repeatedly noted that Nevada districts differ substantially in geography, population mobility, funding access, staffing availability, and program offerings. Many suggested rural versus urban metrics, contextual adjustments, or peer-group comparisons. Respondents also pointed to differences between charter schools and traditional public schools, with some asserting that the NSPF assigned overly positive ratings to charter schools. Interviewees offered similar perspectives, mentioning small-n subgroup issues, limited programmatic flexibility, and constrained staffing as barriers to comparability.

Any district performance framework will need to account for differences in governance, size, and other conditions. The responses summarized here suggest potential benefits of providing opportunities for districts to supplement the common framework with customized indicators that reflect local contexts and areas of emphasis.

8. Redesign Should Address Coherence and Capacity.

Across survey responses, constituents urged the state to approach accountability redesign deliberately and incrementally rather than pursuing wholesale structural change. Respondents expressed concern about unfunded mandates, inconsistent or unclear data collection requirements, duplicative reporting burdens, and conflicting accountability signals. Others questioned the feasibility of incorporating new indicators without a standardized, state-supported data infrastructure to ensure consistency and comparability. Together, these comments reflect a desire for coherence and implementation feasibility.

At the same time, opinions diverged regarding the degree of change needed. Some respondents argued for modest refinements to existing frameworks rather than reinvention, emphasizing compliance requirements and federal acceptance. Others called for more substantial redesign, particularly of testing components, and advocated for inclusive processes such as task forces of educators and parents to guide changes. Interviews reinforced these ideas with leaders describing reporting fatigue, confusion over business rules and calculations, and limited administrative capacity to absorb additional frameworks or data collections. Several interviewees stressed that accountability redesign must be accompanied by practical tools, funding, and technical assistance, cautioning that new systems layered onto existing burdens risk further eroding trust and usability.

Adopting a new NDPF and, eventually, a revised NSPF, will inevitably involve some disruption and challenges. Thoughtful design, accompanied by a communication and engagement strategy that encourages continuous input and system improvement, should help mitigate these challenges.

Cross-Theme Synthesis

Taken together, responses suggest that constituents are not primarily debating whether accountability should exist, but rather what accountability is for and how it can be designed and deployed to support rather than detract from the provision of high-quality educational experiences. Across questions, respondents described a preferred system that is fairer in attribution of responsibility, broader in defining success, supportive rather than punitive, transparent and usable, attentive to local context, and aligned with real-world student outcomes. A consistent throughline is the desire to move from a system perceived as measuring compliance and test performance toward one that guides continuous improvement and prepares students for diverse and uncertain futures.

In the Appendix, we provide illustrative responses for each of the open-ended questions, organized by question-specific themes.

Appendix:

Illustrative, Unedited Quotes from Open-ended Survey Questions

Question 14

“Other” responses to: Would you recommend holding districts accountable for the following aspects of student performance? (157 non-blank responses)

Student and/or Family Accountability

- In the case of attendance the district needs to have consequences for the student and parent NOT the school/teacher. Retain the student, implement Saturday school, summer school (that is actually skill based, not FUN)
- Parents or guardians should be held accountable too.
- Grading policies that mirror expectations found in the workplace related to late work/attendance
- The District needs to be accountable for how they keep putting the responsibility on the schools to raise these kids. I think Parenting classes for parents should be required before they can reenroll. Behavior issues are at least half of the problems that impede learning in the classroom.
- We speak often about District/School/Teacher accountability but not about student accountability. Where is that survey?

Accountability Design

- Some of these areas need to be in consideration of small charter school options, like every charter school may not offer art classes because that is not the niche they focus on, so accountability systems should be flexible enough at the school level to highlight their area of focus and not penalize them because they don't offer a specific area.
- There could be a measure on school attendance, which is different than measuring Chronic Absenteeism. At my school attendance is above 90%, but CA is approx. 26%. We should be awarding schools with higher attendance rates and not penalizing for CA when so much of CA is attributed to factors beyond a school's immediate control.
- I do think that a test is a good measure, but I believe that we put far too much emphasis on math and ELA. We test science, but it is mostly a reading test. So what we get is teachers who are teaching to all of these tests. Since the tests only measure some skills, the other skills are not emphasized.
- Stay focused on the role of the district. Post secondary work is driven by many factors outside of the districts control and should not, unless it is actual coursework, be measured as part of a districts success.

Resources and Operations, and Finances (including financial literacy for students)

- It is the Legislators who have consistently and inadequately funded NV public schools for decades who should be held accountable for student performance. Non educators making policies without addressing the largest class sizes in the US

- Some programs are not available to rural (IB, AP, languages) due to lack of instructors, funding, student count, etc., and should therefore not be evaluated on a district level.
- Districts should be held accountable for maintaining a transparent, line- item budget that clearly shows how public money is being managed in public schools
- High school needs educated on the real world, eg. bank accounts, writing checks, paying bills, balancing money, budgeting, life skills

Student Supports and Well-Being

- Social emotional health and well being, school safety
- Maintaining a clean, safe environment for learning
- Social emotional learning, character building, AI
- Mental health and wellness
- It is beneficial to give them social emotional skills, so they have the tools to adapt and be resilient. As a parent, I know it is my place to do this teaching, but I also know parents don't see the challenges kids face and would have a hard time then providing that education at home.

Postsecondary Readiness

- Basic skills that ensure our students may successfully transition from their academic career to a responsible and self-sufficient citizen within any community.
- Preparing for the Trades and real-world skills for students
- Employability / College Readiness indicators. Are the graduates able to find a job / are they able to seek out higher education?
- Reading, Writing, and Math...also which schools do not prepare students for college so they have to go to remedial college courses
- Critical thinking skills verse test performance I believe should be the bigger goal. Critical thinking and communication skills are fundamentals to professionalism. Also, Civics (without an agenda) is an important of American education.

Equity and Special Populations

- Eliminate Star rankings. They demonstrate systemic inequity and discrimination.
- IDEA and civil rights compliance for special education students
- Better inclusion of SpED students with typical peers

Question 17

Please use the space below if you'd like to provide additional input on district accountability in Nevada. (277 non-blank responses)

Funding and Other Factors Perceived as Outside District Control

- A while back funds were diverted from rural schools (mostly northern schools) to other schools. What this diversion of funds didn't take into account is that rural schools have

needs that schools in more populated areas do not. The funds that were taken from rural schools need to be given back.

- From my perspective as an educator, it's hard to say a school/admin team/educators should be "scored" on things they cannot control. Absenteeism, student engagement, test scores, etc are aspects of education that center much more around home life and parenting. If parents don't value education, their children probably don't either... If Nevada wants to improve education, the laws need to hold parents responsible for their actions and the behaviors of their children.
- From what I've seen children don't care about learning and educators are noticing this. It has created chaos in schools where teachers are no longer able to actually teach but instead are spending their time redirecting behaviors of children in the classroom.. Children do not fear consequences for their actions anymore and teachers are treated poorly these days for behaviors that cannot be managed by teachers alone.
- I think parents need to be more accountable for their children when it comes to attendance, behaviors, and work completion.
- Attendance should not count toward the NSPF at all, schools cannot control this especially at the elementary level.
- Please take into consideration the impact of student-to-teacher ratios & teacher vacancy rates when evaluating student performance/outcomes.

Measures and Weighting

- Things like standardized tests are simply a snapshot in time for a student that take little to no outside factors into account and to hold districts/school accountable for those scores is irresponsible. Holding schools accountable by using metrics like graduation rates is an issue, because these things can be manipulated. They can potentially lead to things like simply passing students even if they are not prepared, can't read, etc. I think the only true measure of a student's learning and preparedness is through methods like portfolios, exit interviews, performance tasks, etc.
- Nevada school district accountability should rely on trust, high teacher professionalism, and "intelligent accountability" rather than standardized testing or rankings. Accountability should be driven by self-evaluation, with teachers using formative, narrative-based assessments to monitor student progress. The focus should be on equity, support, and student well-being (social-emotional, whole-child). We have a tremendous amount of data, and proven models of success using "intelligent" accountability. It's time Nevada implements this approach, and do right by our students, teachers, and community at large, for the wellbeing of all Nevadans and for its future prosperity.
- Student growth should be the main accountability aspect for school ratings. SBAC is only one assessment and does not measure the growth. NWEA is more suitable since they take it 3 times a year and students are able to show growth since they are also familiar with the assessment.

Transparency, Communication, and Burden

- The Star Rating is confusing because there are no recommendations on how to raise a school's star rating or information on exactly where the star data is taken from. To the greatest extent possible, school districts should not be held accountable for things over which they have little control or influence (student behavior, attendance). While this can and should be reported on, districts should NOT feel like they can't discipline students because of the rating system.
- While I believe the district to be accountable for all the things student related, I think it is important not to burden the district with so many tests and reports due. We know what needs to be done, but when we are spending hours a week on reports rather than on students that's a problem.

Career Readiness and Pathways

- Students are being passed on so we don't get in trouble for failing students, but then they don't do well on standardized tests and fail out of college. Why don't we allow students to spend more time on fewer standards but learn them better?
- Proper placement during high school for possible career options

Equity, Fairness, and Context

- Post-Covid, we need to take some focus off of absenteeism especially if parents are communicating with the school about their child's absence. Families are keeping students home more often for illness and schools should not be penalized for those absences. If absenteeism must be a factor in the NSPF, it should focus on Truancy, not medical absences or absences due to family circumstances. In Clark County, we have high incidences of transiency, homelessness, and students in foster care that directly impacts their attendance which is outside the control of the school and district.
- It is very unfair on districts that are seeing an influx of transient type families moving in and out of the district. High schools that rcv students the last 1 or 2 yrs should not have their performance data negatively impact the school's performance rating.
- We are so transient that it hurts when we lose students that we have been working so hard to close the gaps. There needs to be accountability, but resources are also needed.
- Don't punish schools and districts who have a lot of kids who have special needs or are learning English. We move to places we can afford and new families come each year. A school that welcomes new kids learning English every year maybe won't show better scores each year because they are teaching new kids each year.

Question 20

For which of the following decisions have you used the information provided by the NSPF? (73 non-blank responses)

Responses to this question did not lend themselves to thematic analysis. Many respondents used this space to express dissatisfaction with NSPF rather than to indicate decisions for which they used the NSFP. For example:

- The NSPF, like all "surveys", can be manipulated and cheated-on so the data gleaned from the nsfp is unreliable. Schools and districts should not be held accountable for things outside their control, like curriculum choice, student wellness and ESPECIALLY ATTENDANCE.
- Nothing, the calculations are almost impossible follow, the numbers never match the state results, so it is really more like an autopsy and you can't do anything about it.
- It was used to review teachers in clark county and took an excessive amount of time on the part of the teacher that could have been used on student focused activities.
- NEPF is a compliance framework for districts. As a teacher, I map out NEPF domain language to what I do in the classroom. Everything is anchored in student growth.

Other respondents referred to a variety of NSPF uses and in some cases mentioned concerns. For example:

- To inform the decision to work at a school
- to improve climate by celebrating increases
- Used to determine where we moved when we came to Nevada
- to use in decision about employment location
- to see how we stack against other schools in the district
- professional development - family engagement & multicultural education classes
- To guide data driven instruction. The issue is that the data does not always show the work.
- It was used to review teachers in clark county and took an excessive amount of time on the part of the teacher that could have been used on student focused activities.

Question 24

If you selected "Yes" above (*Do you believe the star ratings leave out important information?*), please indicate what information is missing. (539 non-blank responses)

Assessment Limitations (overreliance on single tests, weighting, fairness)

- Accurate assessment is missing. Graduation rates aren't useful because of rampant grade inflation. We graduate hundreds if not thousands of students who are functionally illiterate because we've abandoned standards. And standardized testing on tests that students know they don't need to pass (for example, the ACT) provide invalid proficiency data because students (especially non-college bound) have no incentive to try.
- I don't think they take into consideration where the students are starting from compared to where the schools are taking them. Also, I don't think schools should have their rating decreased for students who do not test but attend the school. What is the reasoning behind that? Can the schools control the parents? There is much more than academics alone. Are these students college ready and taking college classes in high school. Most of our high school is taking college classes. Doesn't that automatically make them "college ready"?
- The amount of attendance contracts created with parents, the amount of check ins done with students with chronic absenteeism, the amount of supports offered to parents who

have a chronically absent student, and the amount of supports parents decline so even if the school did not earn many points in attendance, the effort to correct a parent problem is noted.

Programs and Opportunities

- Various successes of a school both inside and outside of the academics, such as: Sport opportunities and results (for example: if a football team makes it to State, why not include that), Club opportunities and results (for example: if a Science Olympiad Team places first, why not recognize that), MAP score results, How often police are needed on campus for crimes, etc.
- The day to day programming that is taken place. Also, there are schools winning NSHE competitions and other items and it is not even recognized within the star rating.

Resources & Staffing

- The star rating should rate the teachers and principals not just whether the school offers honors classes. They don't look at the success rate of the students in those classes. Our school offers them but the kids put in the class are not qualified to be in the class and the principal forces it.
- Schools are not funded in the same ways, certain schools are harder to staff than others, communities of schools are very different and if a school is going above and beyond for students because they have less support at home, schools are being marked down due to that lack of performance

School Climate, Safety, and Well-Being

- School culture. I've been at a school with a higher rating but the culture was horrible just more parent involvement. Now I'm at an amazing school but the framework doesn't reflect that. Our students are low but we are doing amazing things with them
- Students living in trauma situations. Parents dealing with an addiction, influencing student learning. Divorce. Mental illness within families Hunger Lack of support at home
- Climate surveys are monitored in the framework, but carry no point value (and we have opt in requirements, which do not help).

Context and Equity (demographics, poverty, mobility, special pops) (n=104)

- The transiency in many schools makes it difficult to get an accurate picture of the school's performance. Many schools have an extremely high transiency rate making comparing data difficult.
- Schools in neighborhoods with poverty have lower star ratings. Title 1 schools need to be evaluated with a scale that takes poverty into account.

Growth and Student Progress

- The NSPF does not adequately account for improvements in scores from one year to the next. The amount of improvement necessary to increase a star rating is disproportionate and does not adequately celebrate school improvement.

- High School star ratings fail to account for the growth of students at school, holding all schools to the same benchmark despite schools teaching diverse populations with different strengths.

Question 25

Please use the space below if you'd like to provide additional input on the NSPF (228 non-blank responses)

Measures, Weighting, and Index Construction

- too much emphasis on state and star testing - students get bombarded with testing, and get bored. In addition doing the same tests regularly, many students do NOT try their best, especially on the computer.
- When you have a value rating with only 5 steps, the category "1" indicates the lowest possible, thus a complete failure. However, using a range of 1-100 provides much larger visual perspectives. For example, a "60" is not the lowest possibility & doesn't provide the same perspective or psychological impact as a "1". There is nothing less than 1, except "0".
- The ES school point allocation table is unfair for Title I schools. The ES points are harder than MS points. Look at the huge difference in star ratings based on type of school. Also, notice the science-it's horrible in ES, slightly improves in MS, and is better in HS...yet ELA and Math proficiencies drop. There is an issue with the actual test.

Communication and Use

- We have used the NSPF for evaluations but I have never seen any data from them. I have met with my Principal before my observation and signed the form b4 the observation, but haven't talked with my Principal after my observations in the past few years
- If CCSD schools function within 'site-based decisions' on a large scale of operations, the application of the NSPF should ALSO be a site-based decision.
- The NSPF ratings are not used to decide where to enroll, because you cannot enroll anywhere you wish. Unless you have certain privileges or exceptions, your locked in to the school you're zoned for. So what does it matter to the average person what school's rating is if we do not have choice

Growth and Multiple Measures

- How does the student grow. Expecting all kids to grow at the same level is a problem. How much is the growth, did they grow 6 months in a 9 month school year, 3 months in a 9 month school year? Not did they meet an arbitrary number that no one understands.
- There is too much emphasis on growth. It has become a way to game the system!
- Needs to account for inequities in resources. Our independent charter does not receive any Title II or Title III funds and our students' performance is compared to schools across the state who all receive that funding... Would like to see broader set of indicators around student performance.
- I would love to see measurements of student engagement (or efforts thereof)

- Please measure schools base on their efforts in executing classes/after school programs AND not on how they are managing students behavior or graduation rates.

Supportive vs. Punitive Approach

- Absenteeism is included on the NSPF; however, there is currently no district-level support or accountability for families with chronic absences.
- The rating system is truly about what schools or districts can figure out ways to “game the system” and make target areas to get points. It does not increase student achievement in the state, but rather presses schools and districts who want to “look good” to make the data work. The system also fails to account or value for schools with diverse demographics of learners and ultimately puts more pressure and intensity on staff who are already trying to support intense needs of their students, and then trying to figure out how the school doesn’t get in NSPF jail due to low star rating.
- District should support most needy schools with highest number of long term substitutes Put all learning strategists, coordinators, project facilitators back in the classroom Students should be priority #1
- It seems that the star rating system perpetuates problems. Schools with low ratings get less funding. It should be the other way around, since those schools need the most help

Fairness and Context

- I don't like the high expectations for the Special Education department to do well on the NSPF. Some of it is almost impossible and it is also somewhat determined by the Special Education Programs you have at your school - The more programs, the more difficult it can be to meet goals. Same with newcomer ELs.
- There are amazing teachers at low star rated schools. I don't think that the stars tell the whole story, but the districts and media put it out there as the end all be all.
- Schools that do not have EL populations do not get points for EL. This automatically appears as a 10 point deficit and one that they'll never earn as they just don't have the population. This is a real dynamic in a lot of the rural counties. The system is designed for Clark/Washoe counties to the detriment of rurals.
- We need to stop comparing student groups against each other. There should be a set number for all student groups to reach, then compare how close they are to that "mastery" or "proficient" number. The division creates animosity between the groups - at all ages - even adults.

Transparency and Clarity

- I think the cuts between star ratings should be better explained (why they are not evenly distributed; why some star rating points are narrower than others, etc.).
- It has never been explained to me how each star is assigned to each school.
- The indicators for the star rating are really confusing and complicated. Parents just want to see a 5 star for where their children are going. They don't look at the details because it's to confusing to read.

Question 28

“Other” responses to “What would help you to better use the school and district reports on the Nevada Accountability Portal?” (74 non-blank responses)

Responses to this question did not lend themselves to thematic analysis. Several responses echoed previously shared criticisms about the NSPF, including perceived flaws in the measures and concerns that the system unfairly penalizes schools for factors they can’t control. Other respondents offered identified problems related to the usability and interpretability of the reports, with some offering suggestions for improving these reports:

- If I don't know the first name of the school's namesake, I can't find the school. Add a search feature so I can enter what I do know and find what I am looking for.
- How do they get the star ratings specifically? Do you make it easy to find that information?
- There are too many variables for each school that is not reflected in the star ratings so you have to take them with a grain of salt and understand you’re not seeing the whole picture of the school but a “standardized” representation of it.
- It is extremely difficult to get a simple demographic description of a school before looking at analytic reports, and you need the former to better interpret the latter.
- Explaining exactly how the points are aggregated for each area.
- Data calculations that are easy to explain, rather than requiring pages of explanation (i.e., the Nevada Growth Model).
- Further breakdown and explanation of the points and how they are earned.
- An easy way to see how on level or advanced students at any school are performing.
- It is extremely difficult to get a simple demographic description of a school before looking at analytic reports, and you need the former to better interpret the latter.

Question 29

If there is information you’d like to see added to the Nevada Accountability Portal, please describe that information here. (103 non-blank responses)

Responses to this question did not lend themselves to thematic analysis. Approximately a dozen respondents recommended broadening the reported indicators by adding measures related to school climate and safety, student well-being, postsecondary outcomes, and school staffing information. A similar number suggested more information about the performance of specific student groups. As with the responses to Question 28, several respondents noted areas for improvement in clarity and utility of the information. For example:

- Trends over time. Yes I can see one Academic Year report but how does this vary? What was the ELA and Math proficiency for the last 5 years? Share that info as a graph so we can see - is the school improving, plateauing, or worsening? The data interaction board allows for tabular data presentation over years, but I don't think your average parent will find this and figure out how to use the dashboard. I can because of my educational

and professional background. Allowing for these data to be presented as figures vs. tabular will help.

- All NDE data in ONE location, not coming from multiple offices, on multiple dashboards, measuring multiple things. If we get overall data on school enrollment, then participation, enrollment, retention numbers should be for all things, not just "academics". If we have to submit a report on any data point to ANY NDE office, that data should be available in the NDE Accountability Portal.
- The Nevada Report Card site is pretty friendly, but once you attempt to pull disaggregated data the "Data Interaction" system is very difficult to work with and get straightforward data from. Also, demographic comparisons are not easy to find even in the main Nevada Report Card especially when looking at percentages vs. n-counts, etc.
- Ability to compare districts. Recently I went through Douglas staffing levels and compared to other similar districts. It would be nice to have a compare option to see results side by side.
- People don't want a novel to explain things. Make it short, simple, in plain English. Too many words and people don't read them - they skip to the color graphs and try to understand from there, creating misinformation and confusion.

Question 32

"In the space below, please feel free to provide other suggestions for how education accountability in Nevada could be improved." (309 non-blank responses)¹

Accountability System Design and Governance

- Set the expectations and then let school figure out their secret sauce to success. Get rid of all the legislation and report after report policy after policy plan after plan. They are not making any schools more successful. Right now each level just blames the next for the lack of success and proficiency is not getting any better. Allow the schools to adjust and make changes to reach the goals set and if they fail to do so then step in with supports or reform for that specific school or district not the state as a whole. We cannot legislate ourselves to better schools. It is a huge waste of public funds and does nothing for the actual growth of the students. Set expectations, high expectations and let the schools rise to meet them.
- I request that schools and Districts not be penalized for chronic absenteeism, especially in elementary, unless the State decides to hold parents and guardians legally accountable. Our hands are tied.
- Nevada is a uniquely diverse state. Comparing districts and schools amongst each other may not always be a realistic measure as such. It may be beneficial to have separate metrics for rurals versus urbans and even different metrics within those categories.
- More site visits to see what actually is happening, lower stakes- so the more you know about a school the better you can assess what that school offers. Ask teachers more of

¹ The content of responses to Question 32 varied to a greater extent relative to the other questions, probably in part because of its open-ended wording and its placement at the end of the survey. To reflect that variability, we included a larger number of quotes here than we did for previous questions.

what they need, stop demanding more data before you understand the needs of that school, that area of town, the students being served.

- All the SBAC or MAP or iReady data show is whether or not the student can achieve, but doesn't take into consideration anything else about the student. The test doesn't tell you if that student stayed up all night because their baby sister was sick, or if they were too busy trying to work a job so their family has food on the table. All it shows is if they can sit through a 3-hour test. What if that student or family for that matter, don't take school seriously or worry about grades or achievement?
- Accountability and the education of star ratings go hand in hand. I do believe we can explore the idea of teacher retention at schools as part of the factors of star ratings. In Clark, we are a transient city, families move around a lot but when they are looking for the next area they want to settle down in they look at star ratings. I believe if we include the stability the school has with its staff and educators, it can make a difference on getting families interested in that school.
- For high school graduation scores, the actual reading, writing, and math abilities of all students graduating.
- More site visits to see what actually is happening, lower stakes- so the more you know about a school the better you can assess what that school offers. Ask teachers more of what they need, stop demanding more data before you understand the needs of that school, that area of town, the students being served. High stakes tests do not assess rigor. How a student performs on one day of long testing should not be the main factoring in a star rating. Adults would not be able to perform accurately under such circumstances. Asking our kids to do so is unfair.
- Students can be a great source of anonymous information regarding how a school is doing to prepare them for their future. Perhaps a student survey could be included in the data collection process.
- Formal educators are not the only ones responsible for the education of children. We must include other factors like community involvement, parent involvement, and the environment. All these factors affect the way a child learns. After all, "it takes a village to raise a child". We are but a small part of the big picture. Schools are a tool for parents but should not have the sole responsibility to educate children. Education is a serious pursuit that all involved should be striving to achieve for their children.
- Trustees are not at the center of these systems; district administrators and principals are. That should change.
- Is it possible for education accountability in Nevada to be transformed in a way that helps guide district/school planning, without being weaponized, and for the accountability measures to be transparent and understandable to a broad range of stakeholders for shared decision-making and continuous improvement?

Teacher Workforce and Professional Support

- Accountability and the education of star ratings go hand in hand. I do believe we can explore the idea of teacher retention at schools as part of the factors of star ratings... if we include the stability the school has with its staff and educators, it can make a difference on getting families interested in that school.

- PROVIDE TEACHERS WITH WHAT THEY NEED! If you're insistent on grading a teacher based on SBAC scores, a teacher should have the opportunity to see which questions their students are most often missing, so that they can adjust and adapt to better assist their students.
- Funding. I am a member of an SOT group and we are reviewing the elementary schools budget and having to come to the conclusion that regardless, we will have to get rid of a teacher for next school year. And classes already have over 30 students in them. Funding needs to be priority for Nevada schools.
- In addition to proper education, there also needs to be a focus on counseling and mental health support provided to students. These kids deal with more than I ever imagined possible for students, most of it often unfair and without choice. If a student is struggling with mental health issues and lack of acceptance and self-worth, they are less likely to succeed in a school setting due to a lack of support and motivation. All aspects of student life must be considered when assessing the success of a school and educational facility.
- Accountability is only effective if those expecting accountability provide necessary and effective support. The Department of Education does have a responsibility to make sure districts/schools are compliant, However, compliance is not necessarily student-focused and certainly not often effective in supporting those who need help. I hope the new accountability system provides a framework where the Department of Education provides continuous support and recognition of the good things happening in schools and that they can positively impact schools and districts who are struggling long before there are punitive measures.
- Charter schools add a significant value to the education Nevada. Teachers also try to contribute with their best efforts. So, all of the teachers should be treated equally especially in professional development programs as all of us care about children.
- The world is constantly changing. Our student populations are changing. We need to look at accountability from a broader lens; one where old criteria may no longer be relevant. Are our students ready for local employment as well as a global job market? Do our student have the communication skills and technical skills to thrive in a rapidly changing system? Are we providing fast-track options for students who really want to learn and succeed? Or are we holding back some of our top learners because they make our statistics look better? Is education personalized for every learner? Are we fostering leadership and teaching that failure forward means growth and possibly new understanding? Are we looking at hard skills as well as soft skills as indicators of success or growth? We have to broaden the way we look at education and accountability.

Growth, Equity, and Contextual Fairness

- Anything that can improve educational equity for the students in different schools/districts would be the most impactful. For example, more outreach to families in impoverished areas who don't have resources to support their child's learning.
- Through all the important information, do not forget to adjust for special education.
- IEP scores should not hurt school test scores, absences with notices sent home or parent teacher conferences should not be held against the the school rating.

- we need more special needs job readiness programs and help for placement
- Please look into not penalizing schools, and more importantly special education students for earning an adjusted diploma
- Equitable measures based on what a school provides. Ensure Title 1 schools have an equitable opportunity to succeed. It is not equitable to compare students who live in poverty with their non-poverty peers. Focus on attendance, not chronic attendance. Consider other reliable measures of Student Engagement. Align with the Portrait of a Learner, rather than state-assessments.
- I think teachers should be evaluated on student growth. I think it is important to take note on how far the teacher was able to get in the curriculum for that school year.
- In my opinion, there must be more emphasis with NV tribes with this survey and with education as a whole.
- With respect to high schools my worry as a parent and observer is the infiltration of drugs, bullying and gangs. In other words the negative social forces that derail youth from their life opportunities.

Funding & Resources (including facilities, staffing)

- There is also the financial aspect, I am tired of going broke because I need equipment and materials for my class (my husband isn't too happy about it either!). If you want to retain good teachers in Nevada (I'm not saying that I am one, but I do know what they go through), you need to provide them with what they need! Rather than taking more and more of what they need (time and money), you are constantly adding expectations (more and more expectations, trainings, and needs...many of which should be the responsibility of the parent!).
- Funding. I am a member of an SOT group and we are reviewing the elementary schools budget and having to come to the conclusion that regardless, we will have to get rid of a teacher for next school year. And classes already have over 30 students in them. Funding needs to be priority for Nevada schools.
- Be more specific when it comes to comparisons. Achievement varies across the state and is very much rooted in access to resources in the school's community.

College/Career Readiness & Pathways (CTE, credentials, workforce, postsecondary)

- If CTE is a focus since not all kids need to go to college to be successful. Help CTE students and teachers by having testing guides and support. Preparing kids for CTE is not only the skills and knowledge they learn in the classroom and at job sites, but the type of questions that will be asked on the assessments to determine if they have mastered it. ACT/SAT/ASVAB have study guides by teachers and students walk into the CTE assessments blind. This does not prepare any of them for success.
- Equal preparedness for a trade should be weighed as much as for college.
- They need to learn how to start their own business, or practice starting businesses. AI is taking a lot of jobs, so they need to be able to utilize AI to have a free workforce at their finger tips. Things are about to change a lot in the next couple years, and a lot of jobs are going to go.

- Not all students are college-bound and the ACT is not designed to determine the success of every student. It's disingenuous to use these types of metrics to judge students who want to go into the military, to the trades, or straight into the workforce.
- I'd like to see a survey of what the local business/industry folk say about graduates coming from these specific schools added to the report card--like a Yelp section.
- There are huge differences between southern and northern Nevada and the data that is used should be relevant to the areas. Clark County has jobs for students that do not necessarily require a high school diploma let alone a college degree. Why are we measuring college readiness? We need to focus on getting our kids ready for the community they live in and teaching them skills that apply to their lives.
- I don't see how you actually measure some of your measures. You might track: How many students actually graduate from those programs. How many of the graduates maintain gainful employment for 1, 5, 10 years. I just don't know how it would be possible to collect the data.
- Some of the metrics you identified for high school outcomes are important, but extremely difficult/costly to measure consistently and with fidelity. Others can be sliced in ways that are more or less meaningful. For example, CTE course credits alone are far less informative than a coherent accumulation of credits in a specific field that is evidence that students have mastered a particular career "major" to the extent that they have achieved a meaningful and valuable industry credential. Similarly, CTE completion by students who also achieve AP or dual credit distinction and then go on to a four year college distort the data. Both are good outcomes, but we're "double counting" our high achievers and not focusing enough on graduates who don't enroll in four-year institutions. This is particularly important given that most of our justifiably lauded CTE programs are within selective magnet schools with the kinds of opaque and exclusionary admissions policies that we frequently accuse charter schools of using. Magnets should use the same form of public lottery system that the law says charters are supposed to use. We need to be far more focused on access for all kids and on measurable outcomes based on high standards versus watering things down.
- In terms of measures to assess high schools, data collected from recent graduates would provide valuable insights. Responses to questions such as, "How well and in what ways did high school prepare you for college courses/work force?" could be used to inform school performance plans and star ratings.

Approaching Redesign with Caution

- The problem with the previous questions about what is and is not important is NDE understanding that they have to provide districts with ways to collect that information, reliably. It is unfair for NDE to continue providing unfunded mandates, points of collection, when we don't have a way to collect that data. How would a district collect data related to college GPA when they have already left the institution with confidence that the numbers are right, when they are being held to a standard number? Post-secondary won't provide that data to us, so how do we get it, is NDE going to provide a standard way to collect it so districts aren't responsible for reporting their own data with NO standard or expectation of how the number was developed? How will

consistency and equality of reporting across districts be maintained? How will loopholes be avoided?

- There are too many / will be too many accountability systems (NSPF, NDPF, Acing Accountability, NV Report Card). Frameworks / data collections should be aligned as MUCH as possible to minimize duplicative yet slightly different data collections (right now some of these have similar yet slightly different requirements that result in multiple data collections for different frameworks). It all then becomes very confusing and the messaging/accountability signals are diluted. Please please ensure there is overlap where one data collection could be used multiple times. It is already difficult to accurately complete the large number of different data collections that seem to increase in number every year and will likely increase even more with the addition of the NDPF.
- I do not believe we need a wholesale change of the NSPF, potentially tweaking by looking at things like zipcode comparison vs. statewide norms, etc. Also, the priority to me should be to get the district system off the ground and begin to shift some responsibility for big system issues like attendance for example to be more holistically improved upon as opposed to retooling the school system entirely while building out the district system.
- I am beyond fatigued with education accountability.
- I highly suggest shifting focus to refining and tweaking the frameworks that Nevada has in place for schools instead of creating another framework. Schools are often confused with the business rules and calculations of the NSPF already. I would hate for them to worry about ANOTHER performance framework that they would have to learn. Please strongly consider!
- The current system is, for the most part, in good shape. Allow small modifications as the system continues. This would ensure the NSPF continues to align with Nevada values. It allows us to try things and remove/amend if it doesn't work. I think we allow the NDPF to reflect the NSPF, i.e., the NSPF should be an aggregate/roll up of the NSPF. We should utilize the YID field to include students in this system. We should NOT reinvent the systems because we know these are acceptable by US ED and they are MEASURABLE. Many of the discussions happening involve many things that are not directly measurable and would like not be accepted by US ED. We really should keep it simple as it is really a compliance tool.
- NSPF really needs an overhaul. The amount of instructional time lost spending weeks administering SBAC testing is significant for no return on the time. The cost of standardized testing for no return on that financial investment. I think we can do a much better job putting our heads together developing a more relevant and useful framework. Please develop a task force of site level educators and parents to redesign the NSPF.