

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NEVADA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

April 18, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Office	Address	City	Meeting
Department of Education	2080 E. Flamingo	Las Vegas	Room 114
Department of Education	700 E. Fifth St.	Carson	Board Room
Department of Education	Virtual/Livestream	n/a	n/a

DRAFT SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Katherine Dockweiler, President

Tamara Hudson, Board Clerk

Tate Else

Tim Hughes, Vice President

Annette Dawson Owens

Susan Neal

Dr. Tricia Braxton

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT EXCUSED

Angela Orr, Danielle Ford, Evana Lan

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT

Lisa Ford, Chief Strategy Office

Christy McGill, Deputy Superintendent for Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement

LEGAL STAFF PRESENT

Greg Cloward, Senior Deputy Attorney General

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order at 9:14 A.M. by **President Dockweiler**. Quorum was established.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT #1

No in-person or online comments

3. APPROVAL OF FLEXIBLE AGENDA

Motion to approve a flexible agenda. Vice President Hughes seconded. Motion passed.

4. WELCOME AND OPENING ACTIVITY

President Dockweiler and Vice President Hughes

Quick reflection question: “If you had a magic wand, what would be the thing you would change in public education in Nevada?”

Discussion included: increased equitable access to resources; more simplistic approach and a focus on improving classroom instruction; universal pre-k; connecting and preparing all students to their future career pathways; and giving students more flexibility in learning in order to pursue their own interests.

5. PRESENTATION ON UPCOMING ASSESSMENT DECISIONS, IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINES, AND THE STATE BOARD’S RESPONSIBILITIES

Presenter: Peter Zutz, Director, Office of Assessment, Accountability, and Data Management

Topic of presentation: upcoming procurement process, context of the State Board’s authority and role in the RFP process, preparing for future State Board’s inputs and actions related to assessment decisions. [Full presentation may be viewed under the April 18, 2026 “Meeting Materials” on the State Board of Education’s website.]

Director Zutz provides a graphic organizer showing the procurement process: NDE seeks input for assessments; Assessment workgroup provides input on components in an assessment; State Board provides input on components; State Purchasing facilitates the RFP process for NDE; State Board review’s the RFP Committee’s recommendation; if approved- recommendation goes to the Board of Examiners for review, if not approved-the entire procurement process begins again.

Director Zutz provides another graphic organizer- the RFP Estimated Timeline. Highlighted for significance is June 24, 2026, the due date for the State Board’s approval of Scope of Work and Evaluation Factors. Director Zutz explains that this is significant because the work with a vendor can take 6-12 months, so with an approval date of 06/24/26 then the Start Contract/Functional Production Date would be in December or January. However, if the approval date drops to 07/24/26 then production would drop to February. If the approval date slips to August, production gets pushed to March 2027, and there might not be sufficient time to meet the needs of districts for proper training and implementation of the new assessment.

Member Orr (Written) Question 1: The last time Nevada adopted assessments, the high school test was separated from the grades 3-8 test. Is it possible for us to move forward with an adoption of an assessment for grades 3-10? Can we adopt a state assessment for grade 10 to show growth over time as well as college and career readiness?

Director Zutz: The Federal Department of Education requires each state to assess students in specific grades in specific content areas. So, for our summative, grades 3-8 must be assessed and reported annually for English Language Arts and Mathematics. States are also required to administer assessments and report results for all students in high school. Nevada adopted a common 11th grade approach with the ACT, which complies with the federal requirement to assess all high school students in ELA and Math. Director Zutz was unsure if a grades 3-10 configuration exists or not but will look into it.

Member Orr (Written) Question 2: Is it possible to have a presentation from experts in the field on the differences between through-year and summative assessments? I would like to request that the board have a full understanding of the differences between the two as well as an understanding of which states are using which type of assessment.

Director Zutz: Through-year is the aggregate of interim assessments throughout the year to produce a summative score. To comply with federal law, we must administer and report summative results. The idea of a summative is a single test at a point in time, usually in late Spring, that measures the acquisition of skills and knowledge by our Nevada students. The important thing about that is the summative is aligned to Nevada academic content standards. The summative demonstrates alignment of instruction and that acquisition of skills and knowledge by each student on a single assessment versus through-year; which would be 3-5 or more separate assessments administered throughout the year. At the end of the year, you would have to statistically and thoroughly calculate those 3-5 scores into 1 score and submit that to the feds. Some states have implemented the through-year assessments, some have reverted to the single Spring assessment, and some have continued with the through-year but have changed the original test design. I will have to do some research and report back with more specific and clear information.

Member Orr (Written) Question 3: Will the State make any consideration of changing the vendor for the assessment during this time? Do we need to keep DRC as a vendor? Are there other vendors that could offer data processing for schools in a shorter timeframe?

Director Zutz: Our current and long-term vendor is Data Recognition Corporation (DRC), and they are one of the vendors that administer the Smarter Balanced Assessment, but the Smarter Balanced Consortium develops content, they do not administer the assessments or report the results. When we go out to RFP we're not going for a specific vendor, rather the focus is on getting the best possible, high-quality assessments for Nevada's students.

Dr. Wakefield advises that the things really important to the board need to be included in the scope of work for the RFP and need to be named clearly when the board has that opportunity.

VP Hughes asks: Does Smarter Balance apply or does the actual technical vendor? Do you select them as a package or do you select them as separate, where it's like here's the assessment tool, and then here's the entity that administers it.

Director Zutz: They are separate, but they do become subcontractors on the main contract. I want to remind the board that we're not going out to RFP for simply the 3-8 ELA and Math. Our current contract with DRC includes the Nevada Alternate Assessment, a proprietary assessment developed for our 1% most cognitively challenged students. They also developed a proprietary assessment based on Next Generation Science standards for Nevada to fulfill and comply with the federal requirement to assess all students in science in elementary, middle, and high school. It's not just the 3-8 ELA and Math; it's quite a large contract. There's a lot of custom development.

Member Orr (Written) Question 4: What is the timeline of implementation by districts of a new assessment after it is chosen? What is the NDE role in supporting the professional learning for educators about the change? Can we ask for professional learning to be included in the RFP?

Director Zutz: Yes, yes to all of those. We're hoping to have a signed executed contract by January; we believe January provides sufficient time prior to the commencement of the 27-28 school year to roll out a new assessment as well as familiarize the testing professionals in our schools and districts on any new

platforms or applications or solutions they would need.

President Dockweiler Question: In the past we have had members from our board participating on the RFP review committee. Can you remind us what that process is like should anyone from the board seek to serve again?

Director Zutz: NRS lays out very clearly in state procurement who can serve on the evaluation committee and in what role, there are certain requirements. I would like the time to come back with the specific NRS language.

VP Hughes reminds the board that they have to consider time limits as well. He thinks it is smart to do a reminder of how these tests are designed and what they're intended to do, but that they're going to have a very tight turnaround to do the knowledge building, have the discussion, and actually align on criteria.

6. REVIEW, PRIORITIZATION, AND ALIGNMENT OF THE STATE BOARD'S VISION AND GOALS.

VP Hughes provides a recap of the 2021 adoption of the Vision Statement and Goals [located on the State Board's Website], which focused on aligned opportunities, jurisdiction, and collective motivation.

Discussion centered around the challenge of knowing which goals or measures are the most important due to all of the different documents out there specifying different measures and goals; and members discussing their own ideas on focus areas, such as early literacy, universal pre-k, increase vocational opportunities, getting students ready for the "real world," soft skills, and mental health.

Dr. Wakefield advised the board that his first thought is always outcomes- academic foundations, literacy, and math-things that are measurable. He also reminded the board that the Statewide Improvement Plan (STIP) is currently being updated, and that he is invested in unifying, clarifying, and coherence across all entities to ensure there is one set of priorities at the state level.

Concerns expressed around funding, not meeting current goals yet adding more, school districts being forced to choose what they want to prioritize versus following the board's recommendations, need for being proactive- 3rd grade literacy and 8th grade math proficiency goals are already too late, ensuring that with long-term outcomes (diplomas) the goals and horizon/timeline are feasible.

VP Hughes proposes they agree on a bucket list of items they're interested in and get clear on the board's jurisdiction around those items. Suggested priorities: 3rd grade literacy, universal pre-k, 8th grade/elementary math, CTE expansion across the state, and a process goal around efficiency/alignment.

Member Braxton asks about the State Board's jurisdiction over mental health, mental health concerns and issues, and is there an overlay as opposed to looking at mental health as one particular category. VP Hughes agrees that mental health is tied in with the barriers/challenges of the categories he suggested, however, in previous conversations they determined the board has little jurisdiction in this area. Deputy Superintendent Christy McGills advises that there is nothing directly in NRS, but that it is possible to partner and plan with the Nevada Health Authority to come up with a coordinated school mental health plan and bring in partnerships so that schools and districts do not have to do it all on their own.

MOTION made by Member Owens to move forward with the 5 priorities proposed by VP Hughes, SECONDED by member Hudson. Motion passed.

VP Hughes clarifies that they will come back to those 5 priorities with more data, more specifics around the

board’s jurisdiction, hopefully narrow down the focus, and set numerical specific goals aligned with NDE and STIP priorities.

***Convenience Break* Board reconvenes at 11:28 a.m.**

7. STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT AND LEGISLATIVE ALIGNMENT TO ADVANCE BOARD’S GOALS

Member Braxton provides a summary of the Legislative Subcommittee’s meeting on April 2, 2026, which included discussions around the silver state governance, AB 584, SB 460, and the revised SB 460.

Member Else shares the 4 invest priorities of the Nevada Superintendent Association: focus on modernizing or maximizing the educational system to ensure that resources are fully and appropriately distributed for maximum student benefit; streamline SB 460 components to more effectively and positively impact school district operations and student success; improve the principles of Read by Grade 3 to ensure the use of research-based practices; and invest in the expansion of sustainable high-quality pre-kindergarten systems.

VP Hughes asks Member Else to talk more about Read by Grade 3 and their advocating priorities.

Answer: The main priority is the retention piece that goes into effect in 2028. Retention has a huge impact on their systems and students’ mental health, and they would rather support a system that provides earlier intervention rather than playing catch up. Being proactive and catching these students prior and trying to provide interventions and remediation earlier and focusing on the foundational literacy is more important. President Dockweiler advises the board that they do have the jurisdiction, responsibility, and authority to establish the retention cut score as set in statute and will do so.

MOTION made by President Dockweiler to advance the 5 potential goal priorities they had previously mentioned; to advance consideration of budgetary and administrative support; to advance the request for designated BDR; for the State Board of Education to look at multiple pathways for educators to demonstrate competency; and for intentionality of accountability language that gets written into state statutes. SECONDED by Member Braxton. Motion passed.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT #2

No in-person or online comments

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Member Braxton requests a legislative update at the next meeting.

Dr. Wakefield and Lisa Ford inform members that in response to previous feedback, members have been emailed a packet of Legislative briefing documents in advance of the upcoming hearing meeting on April 22nd.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 11:58 a.m.