

**Nevada Department of Education
Nevada State Board of Education
October 02, 2024
2:00 PM**

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	Virtual	YouTube Link

Draft Summary Minutes of the Board Meeting

Board Members Present

Felicia Ortiz, President
Dr. Katherine Dockweiler, Vice President
Tamara Hudson, Board Clerk
Rene Cantu
Maggie Carlton
Tate Else
Tim Hughes
Michael Keyes
Angela Orr
Mike Walker

Board Members Absent Excused

Stephanie Goodman

Department Staff Present

Jhone Ebert, Superintendent
Ann Marie, Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement Office
Lisa Ford, Chief Strategy Office
Christy McGill, Deputy Superintendent for Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement
Megan Peterson, Deputy Superintendent for Student Investment Division
Barbara Bidell, Education Programs Professional
Angie Castellanos, Administrative Assistant
Jeff Briske, Educator Licensure Director
Felicia Gonzales, Consultant to the Superintendent
Joan Jackson, Education Programs Professional
Mandy Leytham, Education Programs Professional
Julie Wooten-Greener, Public Information Officer

Legal Staff Present

David Gardner, Senior Deputy Attorney General

Audience in Attendance

Tricia Braxton, Community Member
Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association Staff
Spencer Flanders, Tri-Strategies
Mary Pierzynski, Nevada Association of State Superintendents
Arthur VanderVeen, New Meridian

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance, and Land Acknowledgement

Meeting called to order at 2:01 P.M. by President Felicia Ortiz. Quorum was established. President Ortiz led the Pledge of Allegiance and provided a land acknowledgement.

2. Public Comment #1

Jessica Jones, Chair, Hickey Elementary SOT, provided public comment regarding agenda item 12. Ed Gonzalez, Hickey Elementary School SOT, provided public comment regarding agenda item 12. *(A complete copy of the statements are available in Appendix A)*

3. Approval of Flexible Agenda

Member Dockweiler moved to approve a flexible agenda. Member Cantu seconded. Motion passed.

4. President's Report

President Ortiz mentioned that Member Keyes was recently elected to be the executive president for the National Student Board Association. She also went on to say that she would like to recognize that it is Hispanic Heritage month and mentioned that she is the first Latina serving in the role as State Board of Education President. She mentioned that at least 50% of the students in Clark County School District and about 30% of students in the State of Nevada are of Latino Hispanic descent. President Ortiz also elaborated that last month she attended the Latitude Conference in San Diego, CA and she mentioned that she learned from this conference that according to the GDP report US Latinos are the 5th largest economy in the world and made a quick point to mention that another report mentioned that 25% of all children in the United States are Latino.

Board Member Updates

Member Keyes mentioned that he was really excited about the opportunity and being able to highlight Nevada.

Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) Updates

NSHE report was not provided since Member Goodman was absent excused.

5. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Ebert shared with the Board that the Department hosted the Summit Learning on September 12th. She went on to say that they had over 200 business leaders, educators, and students. Also, that on September 13th the Department had 22 out of the 23 proposed regulations pass through the Legislative Commission. She also mentioned that on September 16th the Department released the Nevada report card.

Superintendent Ebert also reflected on recent accomplishments, including the first gathering of Nevada Department of Education staff since the pandemic on November 19th and 23rd. The event, held in Carson City and Las Vegas, allowed staff to reconnect and realign on the department's vision, emphasizing the "Portrait of a Learner" framework.

Superintendent Ebert highlighted Nevada's recognition for the PPP program, which started with seed money and has since become a national model. He also celebrated the successful distribution of over \$2 billion in ESSER funds, ensuring they were used effectively to support students across the state.

In September, the department launched and celebrated Pre-K initiatives, recognizing exceptional educators like Leah Todd and Adriana Salas. Todd was honored after her principal nominated her, while Salas

received praise at the Early Head Start program at UNR.

Superintendent Ebert concluded by acknowledging finalists Suzette Goosetree, Lauren Hanson, and Milagro Guardado, celebrating the dedication of Nevada's education staff.

Yesterday, Superintendent Ebert attended two celebration events, and the day before, she attended one at North Pine Crest Academy, where the school was awarded \$100,000 for gym fitness equipment. The grant was presented by Jake Steinberg from the National Foundation.

In Las Vegas, Gunderson Middle School was also honored with a \$100,000 fitness center grant. A representative from Gunderson was present at the event. Superintendent Ebert congratulated both Gunderson Middle School and Segway Middle School for receiving the grants.

Superintendent Ebert participated in an event celebrating Hispanic Heritage. During the event, she had the honor of presenting an award to President Ortiz, who was recognized as a leader in the community not only for her work in education but also for her contributions in the public sector and as an entrepreneur, uplifting others across the state. Superintendent Ebert expressed her pride in having President Ortiz as a leader and extended her congratulations once again.

6. Consent Agenda

Member Hughes moved to approve a flexible agenda. Member Cantu seconded. Motion passed.

7. Information, Discussion, and Possible Action on the Direction for the 2025 Statewide Plan for the Improvement of Pupils (*Information, Discussion, and Possible Action*)

The Board received information on the direction of the [2025 Statewide Plan for the Improvement of Pupils](#) including the key plan components that will be utilized to effectively measure the improvement of student achievement outcomes. Presented by Lisa Ford, Chief Strategy Officer and Kris Huffman, Strategic Consultant.

Lisa Ford, Chief Strategy Officer for the Department of Education, introduced the presentation on the next steps for Nevada's statewide improvement plan, Step 2030. Joined by Christopher Huffman, the Department's strategic consultant, Chief Strategy Officer Lisa Ford, explained that the plan builds on feedback from the Nevada State Board of Education and aims to improve student outcomes based on six months of work.

Chief Strategy Officer Lisa Ford outlined that the plan, required by Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS 385.111-113), mandates an annual submission to improve public school achievement. The plan includes data analysis, strategies for academic improvement, and measures to ensure students are ready for college- and career. It also requires staff accountability, a timeline for implementation, and progress tracking over five years.

Additionally, the plan must align with the State Board's responsibilities to set goals, review the plan, and suggest revisions. Beyond legal compliance, Chief Strategy Officer Lisa Ford emphasized that the proposal also seeks to establish shared expectations for education improvement and adapt to the evolving landscape of public education.

Chief Strategy Officer Lisa Ford emphasized that the effectiveness of the State Board of Education relies on clarity in its vision and goals, as well as the mission and values of the Nevada Department of Education. These elements serve as the foundation for the department's work, ensuring that all students, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or location, are prepared for college, careers, and can make positive

contributions to their communities.

Chief Strategy Officer Lisa Ford noted that the department's values are integrated throughout its work, not isolated, and that they, along with the State Board's vision and goals, guide the Step 2030 plan. These principles underpin the plan's strategic intention to improve both programmatic and fiscal opportunities to advance student achievement and educator effectiveness.

To shape the plan, Chief Strategy Officer Ford highlighted three frameworks that reflect the current state of public education in Nevada:

1. The portion of a Nevada learner's work—focused on developing the mindsets and skills needed to apply academic knowledge across various learning modes.
2. Accountability metrics from SB98—designed to tie state resources directly to student and educator performance through annual indicators.
3. The Nevada Way—Governor Lombardo's three-year plan focused on education and workforce initiatives, aimed at improving accountability, expanding alternative education opportunities, and aligning workforce training with business needs in Nevada.

These frameworks serve as the guardrails guiding the development of Step 2030. Chief Strategy Officer Lisa Ford then handed the presentation over to Strategic Consultant Kris Huffman to discuss the structure of the plan.

Kris Huffman, Strategic Initiatives Consultant for the Nevada Department of Education, explained that the principles and frameworks presented earlier guide the development of Step 2030, the department's new five-year strategic plan required by NRS. He acknowledged that the work is complex and ever evolving, as it must adapt to changes in Nevada's educational landscape.

Step 2030 is structured around three primary targets, each with two to three specific initiatives developed through statewide data analysis to address system improvements. Each initiative has clearly defined successful metrics, including intended outcomes, action items, and deliverables that drive the work. The plan also includes timelines that track progress and identify upcoming milestones, with department staff assigned to oversee each initiative.

In addition to the initiatives, Step 2030 incorporates annual performance indicators—specific, measurable data points that are evaluated annually alongside other reports related to academic, workforce, and fiscal progress in Nevada. While the performance indicators assess student and educator outcomes, the initiatives represent the department's actions to influence those results.

Strategic Consultant Kris Huffman then introduced the first target of Step 2030: providing equitable access to high-quality pre-K through 12 learning. This will be achieved through three key initiatives: ensuring all students can access educational opportunities across the state, using data to support instructional decision-making by educators, and expanding specialized programs and services. These include early childhood education, college and career readiness coursework, school-based mental health services, and programs for students with exceptionalities such as gifted and talented education.

Strategic Consultant Kris Huffman outlined the second and third targets of Step 2030. Target 2 focuses on strengthening educator development, retention, and recruitment, emphasizing that student growth and achievement depend on having supported and invested educators. This will be achieved through initiatives aimed at expanding retention and recruitment efforts, as well as enhancing professional development and technical assistance for educators.

Target 3 centers on strategically investing in student learning by making optimal use of state and community resources. Efforts under this target include improving fiscal efficiencies by guiding student spending and supporting effective grant implementation and program sustainability.

Strategic Consultant Kris Huffman explained that each target in Step 2030 is paired with specific annual performance indicators to track progress. Although not all indicators were listed in detail, they are aligned with Senate Bill 98 (2023), which mandates performance metrics for districts. Many of these indicators overlap with those in the "Acing Accountability" plan, denoted with an asterisk.

The overall success of Nevada's public education system depends on three key areas: equitable access to high-quality pre-K through 12 learning, the development and retention of effective educators, and strategic fiscal investment in student learning. Huffman stressed that focusing on these areas, with measurable actions, will amplify excellence, equity, and success in Nevada's education system, aligning with the State Board of Education's goals.

He also mentioned that the department is working on internal measures to develop concepts for Step 2030 and will continue this work throughout 2024. This includes compiling data, activities, and deliverables for the 2025 calendar year to provide insights into upcoming projects.

The proposed timeline for moving forward includes hosting community workshops in November to gather input on the draft language, as well as developing data collection methods for the targets and initiatives. Final calibration meetings and briefings are scheduled for December, with a formal presentation anticipated in January 2025.

Member Angela Orr raised a concern that monitoring reading achievement for grades 3 through 8, a long-standing priority, was missing from Step 2030. While she understood that this wasn't part of the Governor's Accountability plan, she emphasized that the board sets its own priorities. Member Orr asked for an explanation as to why literacy performance for grades 3 through 8 was excluded from the plan.

Chief Strategy Officer Lisa Ford clarified that literacy 3 through 8 was not removed from Step 2030; action steps related to it are still included in the plan. She offered to explicitly include it if the board prefers, noting the process is flexible.

Strategic Consultant Kris Huffman explained that 3 through 8 literacy data will be included in the implementation guide as a key metric, though it isn't explicitly highlighted in the performance indicators since most metrics align with the Governor's Acing Accountability plan.

Member Tate Else raised concerns about sections 1.22 and 1.3 of the Governor's plan, which focuses on state oversight of school districts and expanding school choice. He emphasized that these are major undertakings requiring extensive discussion and questioned if they would be included in Step 2030, noting that if such actions were simple, the board wouldn't be in this position.

Superintendent Ebert clarified that Step 2030 focuses on academics and does not address the structural aspects of school choice, which are part of the Governor's plan. She highlighted that Step 2030 includes priorities like literacy, workforce development, and mental health, all of which are tied to education and can be found in the final framework.

Member Katherine Dockweiler asked where mental health support and well-being factors are addressed in Step 2030, as they are mentioned in the framework documents included in the presentation.

Strategic Consultant Kris Huffman explained that mental health services are embedded in various aspects of the plan, particularly in the first target of providing equitable access. This includes multi-tiered systems of support, social-emotional learning, and additional supports at different tiers. While mental health is a key part of the work, it is not explicitly called out in the performance indicators currently. However, it is implied within the framework, and Strategic Consultant Kris Huffman assured that the department is working on refining how it can be measured in relation to student improvement.

Member Dockweiler acknowledged Strategic Consultant Kris Huffman's assurance but then inquired about the number of SMART goals associated with the 11 performance indicators across the three targets.

Member Michael Keyes noted that he did not clearly see how the Nevada Portrait of a Learner was represented through the targets and initiatives. He asked if it would become apparent later in the process, possibly when SMART goals are created, and requested clarification on how the Portrait of a Learner influenced the development of the plan.

Strategic Consultant Kris Huffman explained that Step 2030 was developed using the Nevada Way, Acing Accountability, and the Portrait of a Nevada Learner as guiding frameworks. While a crosswalk to explicitly tie these frameworks to the plan would be helpful, the initial focus was on student improvement through targets and performance indicators. Huffman emphasized the need for flexibility as some elements are still in development and suggested integrating the Portrait of a Learner in later stages, such as in SMART goals.

Member Cantu moved to approve the framework and asked the Department to proceed with developing the plan based on the mentioned framework. Member Carlton seconded. Motion passed.

8. Information and Discussion Regarding the Procurement Process for Selecting the Read by Grade 3 Assessment (*Information and Discussion*)

The Board discussed and reviewed the state procurement process for the selection of the Read by Grade 3 assessment.

Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement, Ann Marie Dickson, Administrator for the Office of Assessment, Data, and Accountability Management, Peter Zutz, and Shawna Jensen, Director of Teaching and Learning shared a PowerPoint presentation with the Board, [The Read by Grade 3 Assessment Request for Proposal \(RFP\)](#) and shared with the Board the [RFP Development Form](#).

Deputy Superintendent Ann Marie Dickson emphasized the various ways data can be used in education, stressing its importance for both information and accountability. She shared her perspective as a former elementary school teacher and principal, noting that students, from a young age, are aware of their data, goals, and progress, which continues throughout their education. Parents also play an active role in understanding and using data, as teachers across the state regularly present and explain it to them.

Deputy Superintendent Dickson highlighted that educators use data daily to inform instruction and drive outcomes, whether formative or summative. She shared her experience as a principal, where summative data, such as star ratings, was not a surprise because she had been closely monitoring her school's data throughout the year. Data, she explained, includes not just academic performance but also social and emotional factors, which are critical to school improvement.

At the district level, data helps determine support for schools, such as school improvement plans and professional development. Deputy Superintendent Dickson also noted that the state uses data for accountability, as required under ESSA, and for providing technical assistance, particularly in areas like

science and reading.

She concluded by asking the board members to consider the data presented that evening from a state-wide, big-picture perspective. She introduced Shawna Jessen, the new Director of Teaching and Learning, and Peter Zutz, Administrator with the Office of Assessment, Data, and Accountability, to present further details on a request for proposal related to the Read by Grade 3 initiative.

Peter Zutz, Administrator with the Office of Assessment, Data, and Accountability provided an overview of the RFP process for the Read by Grade 3 assessment. Some board members were involved in previous RFPs, such as the selection of high school assessments, while others were new to the process. The presentation outlined the steps involved and the timeline for the RFP, which includes collaboration with the state procurement office.

The procurement process has flexibility, but there are strict guidelines to follow. The timeline needs to be completed by the start of the 2025-26 school year, with a contract finalized by June 30, 2025. The team is aiming to meet this deadline but acknowledged the challenges in ensuring that educators are fully prepared for the new test before the school year begins.

Member Hughes raised concerns about the timeline, noting that teachers would need to implement the new test in August or September without prior knowledge of it. She asked if it was possible to expedite the RFP process to finalize the contract earlier. Administrator Peter Zutz responded that while there is some flexibility, the procurement process must be thorough to ensure the state gets the best solution. He reassured that state procurement offers options like sole source contracts or extensions to ensure compliance and business continuity.

Member Orr also inquired about the possibility of extending a contract if necessary, noting that similar situations had occurred in the past. Administrator Peter Zutz confirmed that extensions are possible under state procurement rules, which provide flexibility in cases like this.

Further, there were suggestions to improve the RFP document. Member Orr recommended that acronyms like "R3" (Read by Grade 3) should be defined at the start of documents to ensure clarity. She also emphasized that the new assessment should be criterion-referenced and bias-tested to align with the third-grade standards, reflecting the goal of competency-based learning.

Member Angela Orr also proposed that the test should not be entirely computerized, as some students may not be familiar with using a computer or mouse. Lastly, she stressed the need for appropriate accommodations for multilingual learners to ensure they could take the test without added stress, ideally with supports to help them become literate in multiple languages.

The RFP process is moving forward, but key details will continue to be adjusted based on feedback and logistical constraints.

Member Orr raised concerns about the RFP timeline, questioning whether it could have started earlier to allow for a March contract date, which would give schools more time to prepare before the new assessment is implemented in July. Deputy Superintendent Ann Marie Dickson acknowledged that an earlier start could have been possible but explained that the department had wanted to ensure sufficient feedback from various stakeholders before proceeding. Deputy Superintendent Dickson also mentioned that districts had been kept informed about the process, even though the final assessment might still be uncertain until the RFP process is completed.

Deputy Superintendent Ann Marie Dickson confirmed that board members would receive the draft document from the meeting and could provide feedback individually. She also clarified that feedback could be sent directly to her, rather than requiring a group discussion.

Member Dockweiler asked for clarification regarding the language requirements of the test, specifically whether it would be offered in multiple languages for English learners. It was confirmed that the test itself must be in English, but supports, such as directions, could be provided in other languages to assist multilingual learners.

Overall, the board discussed the timeline for the RFP process, ensuring sufficient input, and addressed concerns regarding language supports and document access.

9. Information and Discussion Regarding the Read by Grade 3 (*Information and Discussion*)

The Board received information on [Read by Grade 3 Timeline](#). Presented by Ann Marie Dickson, Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement, Joan Jackson, Education Programs Professional, and Many Letham, Education Programs Professional.

Joan Jackson, an education programs professional on the Nevada Department of Education's Read by Grade 3 team, was joined by colleague Mandy Leytham and Deputy Superintendent Ann Marie Dickson to share a timeline of presentations provided to the State Board of Education. These presentations addressed questions posed by the board during their June 12th, 2024 meeting, as well as next steps for future action.

The Read by Grade 3 team first presented to the board on January 10th, 2024, covering key components of Nevada's Read by Grade 3 program, including statutory responsibilities, language assessments (Smarter Balanced and NWEA Map Growth), identification of students qualifying for intensive instruction, and retention directives under NRS 392.780 (effective July 1, 2028). The presentation also featured updates on the Nevada State Literacy Plan and input from literacy specialists in the field.

During the April 29th Subcommittee Special Board meeting, additional details were provided, and on June 12th, the team answered further questions related to retention policies, alternative assessments, and good cause exemptions.

Key questions from the June 12th meeting included inquiries about the current uniform assessment, the possibility of different cut scores, and alternative assessment options. The NWEA Map Growth assessment is currently used for grades K-3, but a cut score for promotion has not been established. Discussions about alternative assessments included considerations for assessments in other languages and the possibility of a matrix approach.

The board also sought clarity on the good cause exemptions, particularly regarding special education students and English language learners. In response, it was noted that the board could establish regulations to define ambiguous terms, but case-by-case decisions for exemptions would not fall within their purview. A Read by Grade 3 Task Force, including state and national experts, has been established to provide options for the board to consider.

Another key question addressed how to account for students who may not have received appropriate instruction or intervention. While AB 400 does not address this directly, the Nevada Educator Performance Framework, established by the board, includes measures to evaluate instruction and intervention. For students identified for intensive instruction, a growth plan must be created by licensed educators in collaboration with parents or guardians, ensuring that intervention services are provided until proficiency is achieved.

The presentation also emphasized the importance of monitoring growth through plans that include specific interventions and intensive instruction to support students' reading development, in alignment with NRS 392.755 and NRS 388.159, which outline the requirements for literacy specialists in schools.

Literacy specialists must possess a broad set of skills, including the ability to enhance student literacy, collaborate with school principals, and facilitate professional learning. They play a crucial role in supporting educators as they develop and implement individualized learning plans for students, as mandated by NRS 392.755. When effectively utilized, literacy specialists ensure that educators receive the necessary support for delivering targeted interventions, and that students receive tailored instruction to meet their specific needs.

The "good cause" exemptions also include the use of a student portfolio, which must demonstrate proficiency in reading at grade level through mastery of academic standards beyond grade 3. The board has the authority to create regulations that clarify what must be included in these student portfolios.

Next steps for the board involve convening a Read by Grade 3 Task Force, which will address various questions related to NRS requirements, including parent notification, school intervention services, and intensive instruction. This task force will also consider the good cause exemptions, including the portfolio work, and will make recommendations for further research and action.

The first meeting of the task force will take place soon, and it is expected to be in operation for about a year, until 2025, due to the complexity of the work and the questions that need to be addressed.

At this point, the team invited any further questions.

President Felicia Ortiz suggested that the board should wait until the appropriate method for assessing proficiency is determined before proceeding with the decision on the RFP for an assessment. Deputy Superintendent Ann Marie Dickson noted that the current RFP had expired, and in accordance with state purchasing requirements, the team was moving forward with the RFP process. Superintendent Ebert expressed some confusion, asking for clarification on whether the board was expected to develop a cut score prior to proceeding with the RFP.

Mandy Leytham explained that AB 400 defines the subject area of reading, which includes phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, and vocabulary. These five components of literacy instruction form the foundation for assessing students in grades K-3. However, it was acknowledged that the board has not yet determined whether the assessment should be conducted across all grades K-3 or just in specific grades.

Joan Jackson clarified that the board has several options: they can choose one assessment for all grades K-3 or select different assessments for each grade or specific grade bands (e.g., K-1 and 2-3). All students K-3 must be assessed, and the criteria for the assessment would need to be clearly outlined in the RFP to guide vendors in their responses.

Deputy Superintendent Ann Marie Dickson concluded that the team was gathering input from across the state to help determine the best approach and would work with state purchasing to ensure the correct wording was used in the RFP based on this feedback.

Member Hughes asked if the literacy plan had been officially released yet. He acknowledged that it had been discussed as work in progress but wanted to know if it was now publicly available.

Deputy Superintendent Ann Marie Dickson responded that the literacy plan is "out in the world" but not officially finalized. She explained that feedback is still being collected, and the plan will soon be presented at NASS before being brought back to the State Board.

10. Information and Discussion Regarding the Read by Grade 3 and MAP Assessment Data (*Information and Discussion*)

Ann Marie Dickson, Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement, and Scott Peters, Director of Research Consulting at NWEA, gave a presentation regarding the "Read by Grade 3" program and the [Measure of Academic Progress \(MAP\) assessment](#).

Director of Research Consulting at NWEA, Scott Peters began by introducing himself, noting his background as an educational measurement professor and a middle school reading specialist. He provided an overview of the "Read by Grade 3" program, which aims to improve student achievement and ensure all students are proficient readers by the end of third grade. The partnership between the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) and NWEA has been in place since 2017, with MAP Growth being administered in K-3 schools. The assessment is optional for kindergarten students in the fall, though most participate. The program primarily focuses on students scoring at or below the 40th percentile, identifying those in need of intensive intervention.

MAP Growth is an interim assessment typically administered in fall, winter, and spring. It is a computer-adaptive test, meaning the difficulty of questions adjusts based on student responses. NWEA has a robust norming process to ensure student performance is contextualized compared to a nationally representative sample. Peters noted that NWEA is currently updating these norms to account for changes in demographics and learning trajectories since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Director of Research Consulting at NWEA, Scott Peters explained the two main ways test scores are interpreted: norm-referenced and criterion-referenced. Norm-referenced interpretation compares student performance to peers, without directly assessing specific skills. For example, a student scoring at the 40th percentile is better than 40% of their peers but behind 60% of them. This does not reflect their specific academic abilities but places them within a distribution.

On the other hand, criterion-referenced interpretation focuses on whether students meet specific skill-based standards. For instructional purposes, this type of data is more useful as it helps educators understand what students can do and what areas need improvement. Director Peters shared an example of a linking study that connects MAP Growth performance to the state's summative assessments, such as the SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium). The 40th percentile on MAP Growth corresponds to the lower range of grade-level proficiency on the SBAC, indicating that students at this level require additional support to reach proficiency.

In conclusion, the 40th percentile cut-off is used to flag students who need extra assistance to improve their reading skills and reach grade-level expectations.

Member Hughes asked a quick question regarding the 40th percentile, seeking clarification on its significance. He inquired if, theoretically, the 40th percentile might become less concerning if students' performance improved overall, thereby raising the bell curve. He noted that this would be a result of the norm-referenced nature of the assessment.

Director of Research Consulting at NWEA, Scott Peters responded, explaining that the 40th percentile remains constant because the comparison is not made to the current school year alone, but to prior data sets.

In this case, the data is based on three years of historical information. Changes in a single school year wouldn't shift the 40th percentile. Director Peters also addressed the larger issue of whether state norms should be adjusted post-COVID, noting that there has been resistance in the assessment community to renorming data based on post-COVID standards because that would lower the benchmark. He explained that after COVID, the performance gap widened, especially at the lower levels, though the top-performing students remained relatively stable.

He also clarified that while the 40th percentile doesn't change mathematically, the skill level associated with it may shift if the distribution of scores changes. For example, if a wider portion of students perform at lower levels, the 40th percentile would represent a lower level of proficiency. Director Peters noted the importance of deciding whether to update norms to reflect post-COVID realities or to continue using pre-COVID norms.

Member Dockweiler confirmed that the 40th percentile itself doesn't change, but individual performance and proficiency levels can shift depending on the overall distribution of scores. Director Scott Peters added that states could maintain stable cutoffs over time, but there is always variability in performance due to changing student populations and circumstances, such as the post-COVID recovery.

The discussion then shifted to other aspects of the data, where Director Scott Peters noted positive progress across all student subgroups, including gender, race, ethnicity, and special education status. He highlighted that despite the challenges of the post-COVID era, Nevada's students showed consistent improvement in reading proficiency.

Director Scott Peters also acknowledged the challenge of catching students up to pre-COVID norms but celebrated the growth, particularly in kindergarten, where the most significant improvements were seen. This progress may be attributed to the fact that some kindergarteners were just entering critical literacy development stages during the pandemic, giving them a fresh start after school closures.

Finally, he emphasized that the results were consistent across all subgroups and that professional learning opportunities for teachers continue to support the effort to improve student outcomes through the Read by Grade 3 program.

11. Information and Discussion Regarding the Release of the Nevada Report Card Including Indicator Data from Acing Accountability (*Information and Discussion*)

The presentation from Peter Zutz, Deputy Superintendent Anne Marie Dickson, and Dr. Guinness Kaplan covered a range of assessment results for the 2023-2024 school year, including Smarter Balanced assessments, Nevada Science assessments, Star ratings, and accountability data.

The Smarter Balanced assessments are a federal requirement for students in grades 3 through 8, assessing proficiency and participation annually in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. The presentation showed high participation rates, with many districts exceeding the 95% federal minimum requirement, indicated by districts marked in black. It was also noted that Nevada saw improvements across various student groups in ELA and Math participation rates, with notable increases for Black, American Indian, and Alaska Native students.

Proficiency in ELA increased slightly by 0.3 percentage points from the previous year. By race and ethnicity, all groups showed improvement, with Black students showing the largest increase of 1.3 percentage points. All student groups except English learners showed gains in ELA proficiency. Similarly, Math proficiency improved every year since the pandemic, with a 1.3 percentage point increase from the previous year. Asian and Black students saw the largest gains in Math proficiency, with increases of 2.2 and

2.1 percentage points, respectively.

The discussion shifted to accountability data, where one member raised concerns about a large positive discrepancy in economically disadvantaged students' performance, questioning whether this trend should be celebrated or scrutinized. Administrator Peter Zutz acknowledged the concern and promised to investigate and report back later. Superintendent Ebert agreed, mentioning that there is an increase in free and reduced lunch students may have contributed to the rise in that subgroup.

Science assessments in Nevada showed a significant drop in proficiency rates, especially for Grade 5 students, which led to questions from several members. They inquired whether the test had been redesigned or if changes in teaching practices may have impacted the results. Administrator Peter Zutz confirmed that the test design had not changed but expressed concern over the drop and agreed to investigate further. Member Orr suggested that science tests are closely linked to reading comprehension, and the lower science scores could reflect broader issues with reading and data literacy.

The presentation also covered the Nevada Star ratings, a tool used to measure school performance, before moving on to a discussion about future accountability measures.

Throughout the presentation, there was recognition of the need for more data literacy to help the public better understand the nuances behind the numbers, and to ensure that the achievements of students and teachers are accurately reflected.

Dr. Guines Kaplan, the Education Program Supervisor of the Accountability Team at the department, provided an overview of the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) components for elementary, middle, and high schools, and presented the most recent STAR ratings data.

The presentation briefly reviewed the NSPF frameworks for elementary, middle, and high schools. Each school level is assessed across five indicators, with variations in focus and weighting specific to each grade level. Dr. Kaplan explained that these indicators are combined to calculate an annual index score for each school, which is then used to determine the school's STAR rating. The STAR rating is directly tied to the index score, with each rating level corresponding to a specific range of scores.

To clarify the rating process, Dr. Kaplan provided a reference for the score ranges associated with each STAR rating level. These ranges were informed by policy descriptors developed by stakeholders and are available on the NDE website. She also mentioned the department's in-depth training sessions with school principals and district leaders, aimed at empowering schools to use this knowledge to drive improvement. During these sessions, schools receive detailed explanations of their NSPF measures, helping administrators understand the reasons behind their ratings and strategize for improvement.

Dr. Kaplan then presented trends in STAR ratings across the state over the past four years, highlighting key changes between the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years. Observations included a slight increase in the percentage of five-star and four-star schools, a decrease in three-star schools, and a concerning rise in one-star schools. The percentage of two-star schools remained stable, while fewer schools were classified as "not rated" due to insufficient data. Questions from training sessions included factors contributing to the rise in one-star schools and strategies to support schools in improving their performance.

Finally, Dr. Kaplan provided a breakdown of the 2023-24 STAR ratings by school level, revealing variations in performance. High schools had the highest percentage of five-star schools, while elementary schools had the highest concentration of one- and two-star schools. Middle schools showed a more even distribution across the middle range of STAR ratings. She posed questions about the factors contributing to

these variations and how the department can better address the specific needs of each school level, particularly elementary schools, and ensure equitable opportunities for all students.

Administrator Peter Zutz, in response to Member Orr's question, clarified that Nevada is required by federal law to report high school proficiency and participation in science, English language arts, and math. There is a uniform assessment tool used to report this data. However, he noted a distinction between elementary, middle, and high school, particularly with the emphasis on growth in elementary and middle schools, which was emphasized during the development of the system in 2016-2017. Districts had requested a stronger focus on growth rather than achievement. In high school, growth is replaced by the graduation rate, in line with feedback from the districts. Peter affirmed that the aim was to align accountability measures with this framework.

Deputy Superintendent Ann Marie Dickson then provided an overview of Nevada's K-12 education system's investment rubric, which had been shared with the members. The measures include early learners (K-3), growth and proficiency in grades 4-8, career and college readiness, graduation rates with an Acccr diploma, and workforce measures. The rubric also includes the use of evidence-based instructional materials and district performance plans, which allow districts to set innovative goals, such as focusing on social-emotional learning or career and technical education (CTE).

Deputy Superintendent Dickson emphasized that while some measures overlap with previous data, such as in the state's academic accountability system, the intention was not to burden districts with redundant data collection. The new system measures K-3 for the first time, while continuing to use existing data for grades 4-8, and it focuses on different purposes. Superintendent Ebert further explained that the K-3 data is new and not an overlap with the state's SBAC assessment. The goal was to set a higher standard by focusing on individual student growth, rather than simply comparing proficiency levels. She noted that the additional funding provided in 2022 has helped schools implement necessary changes in teaching methods and resources, but it takes time for those improvements to yield significant results.

Superintendent Ebert also discussed the need for data transparency and the challenges of implementing new resources. While additional funding was made available, it takes time to train teachers and roll out new instructional models. She expressed optimism that the next round of data would show significant progress due to the extra year of implementation.

A discussion followed about the potential confusion for parents and community members, as multiple systems (like the NSPF and the acing accountability system) are in place. Member Orr questioned whether the measures would eventually merge, noting the need to simplify the system for clarity. Superintendent Ebert responded by stressing the importance of using existing data and avoiding new assessments that could overwhelm schools. The goal was to ensure the system is fair and reflective of real improvements, particularly as schools continue to adjust to the new funding and resources.

In closing, Member Orr asked about accountability measures for districts that don't perform well under the new system. Superintendent Ebert explained that the primary accountability mechanism is transparency. Data on curriculum resources was particularly revealing, showing that not all districts were aligned with state standards, which had not been exposed previously. The next step, Superintendent Ebert said, would be to engage superintendents in conversations about how to improve performance based on this data. While there are no immediate punitive consequences for underperformance, the system encourages transparency and dialogue to drive improvement.

The discussion centered on accountability at the district level, not individual schools. Superintendent Ebert emphasized that while accountability involves teachers and administrators, the ultimate responsibility lies

with superintendents, who are accountable to school boards. The data, though difficult at times, is necessary to align the system and drive progress.

Member Orr questioned whether the only real consequence of poor performance data was a school board potentially firing a superintendent. Superintendent Ebert confirmed that the system mainly serves to increase transparency, with no formal state-level penalties for underperformance—local decision-making remains the primary mechanism.

Deputy Superintendent Ann Marie Dickson added that although rubrics for evidence-based instructional materials exist, there is room for improvement to ensure better alignment and consistency with state standards.

Member Else expressed concern that the data could be misinterpreted and create a negative perception of districts, despite their efforts. He noted that while districts might not meet the academic measures, they are making progress and facing significant challenges. He warned against the media using the data in a way that unfairly vilifies schools and school leaders.

Superintendent Ebert agreed, acknowledging that data can be misinterpreted, especially in rural communities, and noted the difficulty of presenting such data to school boards and communities. She highlighted that while districts may not meet all the benchmarks, they are making progress, especially in light of post-COVID challenges. She stressed the importance of positive messaging to avoid misrepresentation of school efforts.

Finally, Superintendent Ebert noted the significant \$2.6 billion funding boost in education but emphasized that Nevada still is behind the national average in per-pupil spending. Despite improvements, Nevada faces challenges in providing equitable resources compared to other states like New York, where funding and support services are significantly higher.

Member Carlton expressed a desire to be prepared for the inevitable negative reactions that will arise when the report is released. She emphasized the need to be able to respond with positive highlights from the report, especially regarding the gains made. She suggested that while bad news tends to get the most attention, it's important to present the good news as well. Member Carlton asked for assistance in pulling out key positive points from the report. She requested a single-page rebuttal sheet with bullet points on the report's highlights, particularly focusing on growth, so that they could effectively respond to inquiries and ensure a balanced view of the district's performance.

The response was to prepare this single-page summary, highlighting the positive gains and growth, to help address any negative feedback and ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the district's achievements.

12. Information and Discussion Regarding the Regulatory Authority of the State Board of Education Outlines in R065-22 to Oversee and Enforce Compliance with the Reorganization Mandates of Large School Districts (*Information and Discussion*)

Superintendent Jhone Ebert briefed the Board on the potential budget shortfall within the Clark County School District, outlining the steps the State Superintendent is taking to address the issue. She also reviewed the Board's statutory authority in relation to the situation.

Superintendent Ebert mentioned that there has been significant press regarding the Clark County School District's budget, prompting repeated questions. Prior to writing a memo to Interim Superintendent Larson Mitchell, a call was made to inform her about these questions. The board wanted to ensure that they had the

opportunity to understand their authority, which had been outlined in a previous approval almost two years ago. This approval, from the Legislative Commission on September 27th, 2022, gave specific purview to the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC).

Deputy Attorney David Gardner briefly explained recent changes made during the 2023 session to 3D HE, which governs the reorganization law. The three main updates include: (1) Principals now have the authority to vote on operational plans, which include budget approvals. These plans must be approved by 75% of the relevant parties, and if not, the Superintendent has the final approval. (2) Carryover amounts, previously required to remain allocated for their original purpose, must now be used within a certain time frame. If unused, they are eventually returned to the state's general fund. (3) The enforcement mechanisms for compliance now involve both the Superintendent and the state board, ensuring accountability.

The Superintendent has the authority to enforce compliance with this law, starting with issuing a notice of non-compliance if there is a violation. The Superintendent can also demand a corrective action plan, with 22 lines of authority for enforcement under both 3D HE 580 and 3D5175. In addition, the body clarified that the Superintendent could appoint a compliance monitor who would gather information and provide reports, working on behalf of the Superintendent and attending high-level meetings within the district.

The law requires the district to provide data when requested by the Superintendent, and they have until tomorrow to comply with such a request. The law also provides the Superintendent with the authority to request reports and monitor compliance, reinforcing her power to enforce transparency and accountability within the Clark County School District.

Deputy Attorney David Gardner concluded by stating that while the board has clarified the Superintendent's powers, it could always issue more regulations or clarifications as necessary to address any concerns that may arise.

There has been discussion about whether the Clark County School District is encouraging schools to use their carryover funds to cover budget deficits caused by accounting errors. The concern was raised during a meeting, and Deputy Attorney General David Gardner clarified that, under Nevada law, carryover funds are restricted and must be used within the school precinct where they were generated. They cannot be used by the central district or to cover any shortfalls beyond their designated purpose.

Deputy Attorney David Gardner explained that, while carryover funds are restricted, they can be used to cover a deficit within the same school precinct but cannot be transferred to other schools or used outside the precinct. This is because carryover funds are meant for specific uses within the school, and there are protections in place to prevent misuse, including a legislative requirement that local school precincts must account for carryover funds as a restricted balance.

There was some confusion about the term's "carryover" and "reserves." Carryover funds are unspent funds from the previous year that are carried over to the next, and they are not considered reserves. In contrast, reserves are separate funds set aside for emergencies or unexpected expenses. In the case of Hickey Elementary, for example, carryover funds were used to cover a budget deficit, but they remained restricted to the school's use.

Additionally, Deputy Attorney David Gardner emphasized that the central district cannot force individual schools to use their carryover funds for purposes not aligned with their designated use, such as to cover a shortfall created by the district. Furthermore, recent legislation (SB 543) includes protections to prevent local school precincts from being forced to use carryover funds to cover obligations that the central district is responsible for, further safeguarding the use of these funds.

In response to another question, the board discussed the necessity of having insurance funds, such as for cybersecurity and legal expenses, to cover potential deficits. It was noted that some districts are part of pools that cover these risks, but each district has discretion over how they allocate their budget for such purposes.

Superintendent Ebert provided an update regarding the ongoing audit of the Clark County School District's budget, specifically addressing the central office budget and the funding flowing to schools. The audit is aimed at resolving questions about deficits, particularly in cybersecurity and legal fees, which have reportedly exceeded projections. Superintendent Ebert noted that the Governor had requested an expansion of the audit to ensure a deeper investigation of these issues.

The audit includes two main areas: (1) the central office budget and its deficits, and (2) how the 85% of funds allocated to schools by the state legislature were spent. The Superintendent emphasized that the funds were directly provided to the district, and how those funds were utilized after that point is under the district's jurisdiction. The audit aims to determine if the funds were spent as intended and to identify any mismanagement.

Superintendent Ebert also clarified that the January 15th budget deadline was not arbitrary, but instead a date agreed upon by both the Nevada Department of Education and the Clark County School District, based on the necessary approvals that need to take place.

In terms of action, if non-compliance is found, the Superintendent has the authority to appoint a compliance monitor to work with the district. The cost of this monitor would be borne by the district, not the state. If the district does not correct its deficiencies within 180 days, the board would be notified and required to take further action.

Regarding the use of carryover funds, Superintendent Ebert stated that schools are expected to use these funds for their intended purposes. If it's found that a school like Hickey Elementary had to use carryover funds to cover a shortfall due to errors, the Superintendent could issue a plan of correction requiring the district to reimburse the school.

Deputy Attorney General David Gardner added that while the Superintendent has the authority to require corrections, the district might still need to provide a justification if it disagrees with the findings or refuses to comply. The process of correction would involve a demand for a plan of action, with the school district having a set amount of time to comply.

Member Dockweiler raised concerns about the impact of financial mismanagement on schools like Hickey Elementary, asking if they could recoup the funds they used to cover a shortfall. Deputy Attorney David Gardner confirmed that if the funds were improperly used, the Superintendent could mandate a correction and potentially reimburse the school.

Finally, Superintendent Ebert responded to questions about at-risk English language learners, indicating that once more information is gathered, further questions will be asked to better understand and address the situation.

Deputy Attorney General David Gardner stated that if the Clark County School District refuses to comply with the law, his recommendation to the Superintendent would be to file a lawsuit and seek enforcement through the court system.

13. 4:00 PM Public Hearing to Solicit Comments on Proposed Regulation R096-24 Pertaining to NAC 385.015 Regarding the Use of a Pupils Social Security Number (*Information, Discussion, and Possible Action*)

At 6:36 p.m., the board began a presentation and potential action regarding proposed regulation R096-24, which seeks to revise provisions related to the student identification numbers assigned to pupils enrolled in public schools. Administrator Peter Zutz, Administrator of the Office of Assessment, Data, and Accountability Management provided an overview of the proposed regulation.

Administrator Zutz explained that this change was requested as part of an effort by all state agencies to update regulations, particularly those that are outdated or redundant. The current regulation is based on a practice that assumed school districts would assign a number or use students' Social Security numbers as a unique identifier. However, the department has not used Social Security numbers for over a decade. All such numbers have been purged from both state and local education agency systems, and they are no longer requested from parents.

Since the implementation of Infinite Campus, all student identifiers, known as State Unique IDs (SUID), are assigned by the statewide Student Information System. These identifiers remain with a student throughout their public-school enrollment, even if they leave the state and return years later.

The proposed regulation aims to simplify the process by aligning it with current practices, ensuring that all students will receive an SUID that uniquely identifies them while attending public school in Nevada.

After Administrator Zutz finished his presentation, the board opened the floor for public comment. No public comments were received in either Carson City, Las Vegas, or via email.

President Ortiz moved to approve the Proposed Regulation R095-24 Pertaining to NAC 385.015 Regarding the Use of a Pupils Social Security Number. Member Dockweiler seconded. Motion passed.

The hearing was officially closed at 6:39 p.m.

14. 4:10 PM Public Hearing to Solicit Comments on Proposed Regulation R095-24P Pursuant to the Requirements of NRS 233B.0603 (*Information, Discussion, and Possible Action*)

At 6:39 p.m., the board heard a presentation and took possible action related to proposed regulation R095-24, which amends the location for submitting a copy of the crisis response plan for the renewal of a private school license. Barbara Bidell, Education Programs Professional from the Office of Student and School Support provided information on the proposed regulation.

Barbara Bidell explained that the regulation would specify that the crisis response plan should be submitted to the Nevada Division of Emergency Management in the Office of the Military when a private school applies for license renewal. The proposed change removes the previous requirement that the plan be submitted if it was revised during the preceding term of the private school license. Under the new regulation, the plan must be submitted annually as part of the re-licensing process.

The regulation amends NAC 394.235. A workshop on this proposal was held on April 22nd, with no questions or participants in attendance.

The board then opened the floor for public comment. No public comments were received in Carson City, Las Vegas, or via email.

President Ortiz moved to approve the Proposed Regulation R095-24P Pursuant to the Requirements

of NRS 233B.0603. Member Dockweiler seconded. Motion passed

The hearing was closed at 6:41 p.m.

15. 4:15 PM Public Hearing to Solicit Comments on Proposed Regulation R099-23P Relating to the Adult and Regular High School Diploma (*Information, Discussion, and Possible Action*)

At 6:42 p.m., the board heard a presentation and took possible action on proposed regulation R099-23, which revises certain eligibility and course requirements for graduation from a public high school. Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement Ann Marie Dickson, along with Director of Career Readiness, Adult Learning, and Education Options Craig Statucki, provided information regarding the regulation.

Director Statucki explained that the proposed changes are necessary to align the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) with revised statutes, following requests from the Legislative Council Bureau during the 2023 legislative session. The revisions affect requirements for students to earn adult, advanced alternative, college and career readiness, and standard diplomas. The changes also modify coursework requirements to align with existing Nevada Revised Statutes.

The regulation has undergone several revisions. It was initially presented in workshops and hearings, including a February 2024 workshop and subsequent hearings in April and June of 2024. Modifications were requested, including changes to career and technical education credit and the effective start date, which was initially proposed for the class of 2027. After further feedback, the Legislative Commission deferred the regulation and requested it be revised to start with the class of 2029.

The board received another draft for consideration, with the effective date now proposed for the class of 2029. Director Statucki invited questions from the board.

Public comment was then opened. In Carson City, no public comments were received. In Las Vegas, Mary Pierzynski, representing the Nevada Association of School Superintendents, expressed support for the revised regulation. She emphasized the importance of clarity for students and stated that any changes should apply to students entering high school as freshmen, currently 8th graders, who would graduate in 2029.

No further public comments or board questions were made.

President Ortiz moved to approve the Proposed Regulation R099-23P Relating to the Adult and Regular High School Diploma. Member Dockweiler seconded. Motion passed.

The hearing was closed at 6:47 p.m.

16. Future Agenda Items

- Dual Credit Programs by NSHE
- Clark County School District's Reorganization Compliance Report NRS 388G
- ESSER update
- Northwest Evaluation Association and Nevada Association of State Superintendents

Member Dockweiler proposed two future agenda items for consideration. First, she requested that quarterly updates regarding the progress of the STIP (Strategic Plan) be added once they become available, as mentioned by Kris Huffman. Second, she requested an update on the work of the committee involved in the adoption of curriculum, since this topic has been raised multiple times in previous board meetings.

Additionally, Superintendent Ebert mentioned to the board that a special meeting of the State Board of Education, the Commission on School Funding, and any interested legislators would be scheduled to discuss the graduation score and Infinite Campus, which have been frequently mentioned and are legislatively mandated. The meeting is proposed for October 28th or 29th, with the aim of addressing key issues that impact the work of all involved.

17. Public Comment #2

The public comment portion began with a call for comments from those attending in person. There were no comments from Carson City, but one public comment was received in Las Vegas.

Ed Gonzalez, a community member of the Hickey Elementary School Organizational Team, addressed the board. Speaking as an individual, he expressed his appreciation for the conversation on the financial issues raised earlier. He suggested that the AB 469 subcommittee be reconvened to review these matters, as similar financial concerns had been raised during previous meetings when regulations were passed.

Mr. Gonzalez specifically pointed out discrepancies related to the 85/15 rule. He noted conflicting figures in the district's reports, with one column showing that 79% of funds were allocated properly, while another stated 95%. He explained that the district's standard had previously been defined during the 2019 legislative session, and Assembly Bill 469 did not count certain transfer responsibilities, such as landscaping, toward the 85/15 rule.

He recommended that the board review these issues and consider using the AB 469 subcommittee as a mechanism to address such concerns.

18. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 6:46 P.M.

Appendix A: Statements given during public comments

1. Jessica Jones, Chair, Hickey Elementary SOT, provided emailed public comment regarding agenda item 12.
2. Mary Pierzynski, representative, Nevada Association of School Superintendents, provided public comment regarding agenda item 15.
3. Ed Gonzalez, Hickey Elementary SOT, provided public comment regarding agenda item 12.

Appendix A, Item 1: JESSICA JONES

To President Ortiz, Superintendent Ebert, and members of the State Board of Education:

This letter is to express the Hickey Elementary School Organizational Team's (SOT) concern about our school's recent decrease in our state allocation in At-Risk and English Learners funds for the current school year. We are asking the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent to investigate this matter further. When our SOT met on September 25th, we were concerned about how the recent CCSD budget situation would affect our school budget. While we were prepared to have a conversation about absorbing the \$5,700 increase in the average teacher salary, we were surprised when our principal informed us about another major budgetary problem we were facing. Even though we saw a small growth from our projected student enrollment, we experienced a 25% decrease in our At-Risk funds and a 10% decrease in our English Learner funds. The combined decrease in At-Risk and English Learner funds at Hickey Elementary is more than \$272,000. This cut in our state-allocated At-Risk and English Learner funds was higher than the \$5,700 increase in the average teacher salary in our school budget. Hickey Elementary has nearly 1.3 million dollars in carryover funds as it is difficult to fully staff our school, and we have many teacher vacancies. Due to this, our school was able to cover this cost without having to cut any teaching or support staff positions. Yet it felt like our budget was getting hit twice. One was a budgetary issue from CCSD in the \$5,700 increase. The second seemed to be a budgetary issue from the state in cuts to our At-Risk and English Learner funds.

This left our SOT confused as the fall strategic budget cycle is normally where minor adjustments are made to school budgets by SOTs based on student enrollment on count day. We were left wondering if the cuts to our At-Risk and English Learner funds were a state issue or another budgetary problem caused by former CCSD Chief Financial Officer Jason Goudie. While Hickey Elementary was facing cuts, the situation was very different at our feeder high school (Sunrise Mountain High School) which saw At-Risk and English Learner funds increase by \$200,000 despite student enrollment being a few hundred students below projection. This has left our SOT members dumbfounded as Sunrise Mountain High School is located next door to Hickey Elementary and serves the same student population. We have heard from SOT members at other high schools in CCSD that they received a significant increase in At-Risk and English Learner funds from the spring projections to the fall. We have also heard from SOT members at other elementary schools that they have seen a decrease in At-Risk and English Learner funds from the spring projections to the fall. Needless to say, we are looking for answers to how this could happen. Based on these concerns, these are the questions we are asking the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent.

1. Were the At-Risk and the English Learner weights in the Pupil-Centered Funding Formula allocated correctly from the state to the CCSD?
2. Has there been a change in the formula or allocation model since January relating to At-Risk and English Learner funds?
3. If the At-Risk and English Learner funds were allocated correctly to CCSD, what scenario outside of student enrollment could cause a drastic decrease in these funds to elementary schools and a significant increase in high schools?
4. Once the state allocation for At-Risk or English Learner is received by a school district, can the school district use their own criteria for what qualifies as an At-Risk or English Learner student? Can a school district use its own internal formula to allocate At-Risk or English Learner dollars differently to a school?

Once again, we are asking that the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent look into the matter of the recent decrease in our state allocation in At-Risk and English Learners funds to give us and other schools a better understanding of what happened. We would like answers to ensure this kind of situation does not happen again, in the future.

Sincerely,
Jessica Jones

Chair - Hickey Elementary SOT

Appendix A, Item 2: MARY PIERZYNSKI

My name is Mary Pierzynski,

I am representing the Association of School Superintendents in Nevada, and we have previously commented on this and testified that we support any graduation requirements being effective for the incoming freshman class, which consists of our current 8th graders. They would be graduating in 2029.

It's much clearer and cleaner for the students to know what their path to graduation is once they are in school, and that should not be changed.

So, our testimony remains the same.

Thank you.

Appendix A, Item 3: ED GONZALEZ

Thank you, Madam President, Members of the State Board of Education, Superintendent Ebert. For the record, my name is Ed Gonzales, and I am a community member on the Hickey Elementary School Organizational Team.

I'm here today in place of my chair, who is a teacher and is still in class at this time, just as one of your members is. The reason we submitted the letter is because we are confused about what has been happening with the at-risk and English learner funds.

What I should clarify is that this confusion is based on the projections from January, not from the last fiscal year. In January, we had a certain amount of funding projected, and then when we received the September allocation, the amounts were lower. We were told that the population at Sunrise had dropped, but their numbers had increased.

To continue from the letter, we also heard from other SOT members from other high schools that they, too, experienced changes in the allocation of at-risk and English learner funds, from the spring projection to the fall. Additionally, other elementary schools have reported similar decreases in funding from January to September. Given these concerns, the Hickey Elementary School Organizational Team voted to ask the following questions to the State Board and the State Superintendent:

1. Were the at-risk and English learner weights in the people-centered funding formula allocated correctly from the state to the Clark County School District (CCSD)?
2. Has there been any change in the formula or allocation model since January regarding at-risk or English learner funds?
3. If the at-risk and English learner funds were allocated correctly to CCSD, what factors, aside from student enrollment, could explain a drastic decrease in funds for elementary schools and a significant increase for high schools?
4. Once the state allocation for at-risk or English learner funds is received by a school district, can the district use its own criteria to qualify students for at-risk or English learner funding? Can a district use its internal formula to allocate these funds to schools?

A concern raised at our meeting was that we didn't receive a clear explanation. Based on our review of the record and other materials, my understanding is that the allocation criteria involve 75 different factors, some of which are proprietary or confidential, meaning they are not transparent. This lack of transparency is a concern shared by other schools as well.

There is also concern about the significant difference between the January projection and the September allocation. We would like to know what could explain such a drastic change, beyond the simple fluctuation in student enrollment.

Additionally, I have a general concern regarding recent news coverage. Has the Superintendent provided clarification on item 12, and can we be assured that the information being presented is accurate? Some of the recent reporting has caused undue fear among parents and confusion among teachers, especially in light of the teacher shortage. I don't believe any teachers are at risk of losing their jobs, but misinformation can have a serious impact, causing unnecessary anxiety.

Regarding the issue of surplus staffing, if student enrollment decreases, the process is clearly defined in the contract, and there are options available for teachers to transfer to other schools. No one is losing their job. Finally, I'd like to emphasize that, despite the funding cuts or changes at Hickey Elementary, we did not lose any teachers, support staff, or hours. We were able to absorb the \$1.3 million funding reduction and, to be honest, we would have made the same decisions even if the numbers had been different.

Thank you, Madam President.