

**Nevada Department of Education  
Nevada State Board of Education  
September 04, 2024  
2:00 PM**

<b>Office</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Meeting</b>
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	<a href="#">YouTube Link</a>

**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  
Stephanie Goodman  
Tim Hughes  
Michael Keyes  
Angela Orr  
Mike Walker

**Department Staff Present**

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 2:00 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**

Mary Pierzynski, Representative, Nevada Association of School Superintendents provided public comment regarding agenda item 11.

*(A complete copy of the statements is available in Appendix A)*

**3. Approval of Flexible Agenda**

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

**4. President's Report**

President Ortiz welcomed and introduced Regent Stephanie Goodman as the new appointee to the State Board of Education.

**Board Member Updates**

Member Cantu mentioned that Nevada State University opened a clinic for children's mental health and new programs to train mental health professionals. Also mentioned a collaboration between Jobs for Nevada Graduates and AT & T to provide laptops for students.

**Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) Updates**

Member Goodman provided the NSHE update to the Board. She mentioned that additional supports for certification and other non-degree programs for community colleges; recent summit on wildfires and mitigation strategies for communities from the Desert Research Institute; UNLV welcomed 32,000 students this semester, and UNR is celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> year; voicing support for workforce development initiatives and potential collaboration.

**5. Deputy Superintendent's Report**

Deputy Superintendent Ann Marie Dickson provided the Superintendent's Report and mentioned that the new school year has begun, and Superintendent Ebert has attended numerous first day celebrations at schools across the state. She went on to mention that on August 24-25, Nevada Future of Learning competency-based rubric training took place, culminating in a draft rubric. She also mentioned that the Department is undergoing a comprehensive efficiency assessment to identify potential improvements and efficiencies to processes and services to stakeholders.

**6. Consent Agenda**

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

**7. Information, Discussion, and Possible Action regarding NAC 388.430 age requirements (*Information, Discussion, and Possible Action*)**

The Board reevaluated the proposed changes to the age requirements that apply to the Developmental Delay categorical eligibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act IDEA.

Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement Office, Ann Marie Dickson and Education Programs Director, Julie Bowers presented proposed changes to the [Developmental Delay \(DD\) Eligibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#). Director Bowers mentioned that currently, Nevada's eligibility range covers children from three to five years old, aligning with eight other states and territories. She mentioned that the proposed change would extend this eligibility up to age nine, in accordance with IDEA's provisions.

Director Bowers mentioned that potential impacts of this change include an increase in the number of students who may be deemed eligible under the DD category, even if they do not qualify under other categories. And continued to say that this extension could also lead to challenges in predicting the effects of DD eligibility beyond age five, as current data on this issue is not available.

Director Bower mentioned to the Board that a survey of school districts revealed that 88% supported extending the eligibility age to nine, 8% preferred extending it to ages seven or eight, and 3% opposed any change. The remaining 1% favored a change but wanted to adjust the criteria.

The Board recommended conducting up to six months of additional research to better understand the impacts of this proposed change. Concerns were raised about delaying the decision and the need for more data.

**The Board has requested that this agenda item be brought up in the future with additional data for further consideration. Board will revisit NAC 388.430 Age Requirements Revisions at a Later Board Meeting.**

**8. Information, Discussion, and Possible Action Regarding Creating a Subcommittee for the Review Process for Adopting Textbooks** (*Information, Discussion, and Possible Action*)

The Board discussed and explored the potential action to form a subcommittee for the review of the process.

**Board created a subcommittee for the Review Process for Adopting Textbooks. Member Hughes, Member Cantu, and Member Hudson volunteered for the Subcommittee. The members will set times to meet and come back to the State Board of Education with the information.**

**9. Information and Discussion Regarding the Commission on School Funding** (*Information and Discussion*)

The Board received information on the [Commission on School Funding](#), including a discussion of the [definition and implications of at-risk](#) as it pertains to funding allocations. Presented by Guy Hobbs, Chair, Commission on School Funding and Megan Peterson, Deputy Superintendent for Student Investment Division.

Guy Hobbs, Chair of the Commission on School Funding, and Megan Peterson, Deputy Superintendent for the Student Investment Division, provided a detailed overview of target per-pupil funding under the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan (PCFP). Chair Hobbs highlighted that in 2022, the per-pupil funding under the PCFP was \$10,204, compared to the national average of \$15,591. The recommended funding level is \$15,718 per student. He also noted that the legislatively approved estimated per-pupil amount for 2025 is \$13,368. Additionally, Chair Hobbs presented a 10-year phase-in plan for per-pupil funding and compared it to the national average.

In the discussion, Chair Hobbs explored potential funding sources and fiscal reforms for the State, including property tax. A separate presentation on property tax scenarios is available here. The discussion also covered sales and use tax considerations, noting that 38% of the minimum statewide rate benefits education. There is ongoing interest in either increasing the sales tax rate or broadening the tax base to enhance educational funding. For detailed explanations on revenue generation through sales tax and potential strategies for broadening the tax base, please refer to this presentation.

Chair Hobbs outlined that the Commission still has several deliverables, including completing funding recommendations and addressing reporting and accountability issues. A key aspect of the accountability

work involves analyzing reporting efficiencies and leveraging existing data to develop frameworks for accountability and return on investment. The blueprint for this accountability and reporting focus is expected to be finalized by November 15, 2024.

Additionally, Chair Hobbs noted that the funding for different student groups—such as English Learners, at-risk students, and GATE students—is fully supported, provided that the base per-pupil funding is adequately funded. He also highlighted two key cost adjustment factors: the Nevada Cost of Education Index and the Attendance Area Adjustment.

Board members raised concerns about potential changes to student metrics, graduation scores, and definitions of “at-risk” students. These concerns, along with questions regarding the intended use of graduation scores, were addressed during the subsequent question-and-answer session.

**The topic of grad scores will be brought back at a future board meeting.**

#### **10. Information and Discussion Regarding an Interim Route to Certification for a Special Education License** *(Information and Discussion)*

Director of Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement provided the Board with an [update](#) on proposed changes to the process that would allow existing teachers in school districts and charter schools to apply for an endorsement in special education. He mentioned that under the new proposal, these teachers could be assigned to special education roles for up to three years while completing the necessary coursework for their endorsement.

The next steps in the process include a public hearing at a Commission meeting to review and potentially adopt the [regulation](#), submission of the proposed updates for approval during the State Board's October meeting, and final adoption consideration by the Legislative Commission in November or December.

#### **11. Information and Discussion Regarding the Smarter Balanced Assessment and the Northwest Evaluation Association for the School 2024 – 2025** *(Information and Discussion)*

The Board will receive information on the [Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Adjusted Blueprint and the Northwest Evaluation Association Pilot for school year 2024- 2025](#). Presented by Ann Marie Dickson, Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement and Peter Zutz, Administrator, Office of Assessment, Data, and Accountability Management.

Deputy Superintendent Dickson and Administrator Peter Zutz discussed the NWEA pilot project, conducted in collaboration with the Nevada Association of School Superintendents. They mentioned that this initiative aims to address the challenge of not having timely student performance data to guide instructional decisions.

Member Else mentioned that many districts utilize NWEA assessments, which teachers are familiar with for informing end-of-year evaluations and outcomes.

Deputy Superintendent Dickson mentioned that thirteen districts are considering participating in the pilot. And mentioned that Clark County School District, Washoe County School District, and the State Public Charter School Authority, would not be participating in the pilot program. She also mentioned that the pilot has met the minimum student thresholds required, and a grant application for the NWEA summative pilot has been submitted to the U.S. Department of Education, with further details expected in October.

Board members raised concerns about sample sizes, scheduling, communication with families, teacher training on data interpretation, equity issues, and ensuring the pilot aligns with a broader strategic plan.

Additionally, Deputy Superintendent Dickson and Administrator Peter Zutz discussed the Smarter Balanced Adjusted Blueprint. They highlighted that SBAC assessments are aligned with the Nevada Academic Content Standards, providing consistent statewide data. They elaborated that these assessments help educators gauge how well their instruction supports student performance, and they offer a uniform measure of student readiness across grades 3-8 for various post-secondary options while meeting federal assessment requirements.

**Next steps include representatives from NWEA and NASS addressing areas of concern and questions from the Board, to take place at a future board meeting.**

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

The Board will receive an update on the progress of the Read by Grade 3 initiative.

**The Board pulled this item from the agenda and moved it to the October 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.**

**13. Future Agenda Items**

- Successful outcomes achieved by the State Board of Education
- Dual Credit Programs by NSHE
- Clark County School District's Exit/Transfer Teacher Survey
- Clark County School District's Reorganization Compliance Report NRS 388G
- Statewide Plan for the Improvement of Pupils update
- ESSER update
- Northwest Evaluation Association and Nevada Association of State Superintendents
- Grad Score/Infinite campus
- Read by Grade 3 updates (pulled from today's meeting to October's agenda)

**The Board added the following items to the future agenda: Northwest Evaluation Association Pilot presentation and Grad Score/Infinite campus.**

**14. Public Comment #2**

Brenda Beckwith, President, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, submitted written comments regarding agenda item 7.

**15. Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned at 6:46 P.M.

**Appendix A: Statements given during public comments**

1. Mary Pierzynski, Representative, Nevada Association of School Superintendents, provided public comment regarding agenda item 11.
2. Paige Beckwith, President, Nevada Association of School Psychologists, provided public comment regarding agenda item 7.

**Appendix A, Item 1: MARY PIERZYNSKI**

Madame President and members of the State Board of Education, it's a pleasure to be here this afternoon. I would like to address item number 11 on your agenda today by simply reading a brief message from the Nevada Association of School Superintendents and Adam Young, who is the president of NASS.

At this point, NASS has come before you for the last two years to share concerns about adapting assessments in our state in order for data to be more meaningful for families and useful for educators. When NASS became aware of the possibility of piloting a system that could potentially move districts closer to that goal, we felt it was important to take action. We are deeply grateful to the NDE staff for working with the districts interested in this pilot. We are aware that this is not an action item today but wish to express our support for the districts opting in. We are eager to change the way assessment is viewed in our state. While the pilot is certainly not the end goal, it does present an opportunity for positive steps to occur. We appreciate the State Board's support in fostering innovation in our state. Thank you very much.

**Appendix A, Item 2: BRENDA BECKWITH**

Hello. My name is Paige Beckwith, and I am the President of the Nevada Association of School Psychologists. I would like to thank the board for considering a change to the disability category of Developmental Delay and for gathering information from invested parties across the state. Since school psychologists are the main evaluators for special education eligibility, we have a particularly important perspective in this consideration for change. The Nevada Association of School Psychologists created a unique survey for our membership to gather their input regarding changes to this eligibility category and guide our input and recommendations to this board.

Most of our respondents believe that the age for DD eligibility should be raised. However, there is a lack of consensus on what that age should be. There was support for the ages of 7, 8, and 9, with ages 8 and 9 being selected as the most popular choices. Of note, almost half of our respondents recommended changing it by grade level instead of by age, with the end of first grade being the most popular recommendation.

Our respondents provided insightful and passionate comments as to how the current DD classification has impacted their practice and students. Something that stands out as happening often is that students are turning six at the beginning of kindergarten or even in PK, so the team does not have adequate time or data to make informed decisions about what the student truly needs. Many express that the age of six does not allow the student to have adequate learning experiences to determine whether there is a learning disability.

We do share some concerns with raising the age. They include concerns over the fiscal impact and how this may further impact shortages of special education teachers and other personnel. There are concerns about whether this would cause a significant increase in special education referrals in lieu of building strong intervention systems. Additionally, this could cause students to be placed in a more restrictive environment than they need.

NVASP would like to see the board consider not only a change in the age of developmental delay eligibility, but a change to the eligibility requirements. The number of children meeting DD eligibility criteria is significantly higher these past few years. We do not believe that more children are exhibiting a true developmental disability but rather delays based on lack of exposure. Perhaps increasing the criteria to require a child to demonstrate a delay of at least three standard deviations in one area or a delay of at least two standard deviations in two areas would be a better indicator of a disability in the area of developmental delay.

Thank you again for your time and attention. NVASP is happy to collaborate with you in any way we can on this issue.