



## **NEVADA LEGISLATURE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

*(Nevada Revised Statutes [NRS] [218E.605](#))*

### **SUMMARY MINUTES May 22, 2020**

The fourth meeting of the Legislative Committee on Education for the 2019–2020 Interim was held on Friday, May 22, 2020, at 10 a.m. Pursuant to Section 1 of Governor Steve Sisolak's [Emergency Directive 006](#), there was no physical location for this meeting.

The agenda, minutes, meeting materials, and audio or video recording of the meeting are available on the [Committee's meeting page](#). The audio or video recording may also be found at <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Granicus/>. Copies of the audio or video record can be obtained through the Publications Office of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) ([publications@lcb.state.nv.us](mailto:publications@lcb.state.nv.us) or 775/684-6835).

#### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Assemblywoman Brittney Miller, Chair  
Senator Moises (Mo) Denis, Vice Chair  
Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop  
Senator Keith F. Pickard  
Senator Joyce Woodhouse  
Assemblywoman Maggie Carlton  
Assemblywoman Michelle Gorelow  
Assemblywoman Jill Tolles

#### **LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:**

Jen Sturm, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division  
Kelly S. Richard, Senior Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division  
Christina Harper, Assistant Manager of Research Policy Assistants, Research Division  
Asher A. Killian, Senior Principal Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division  
Amanda Marincic, Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division

*Items taken out of sequence during the meeting have been placed in agenda order.*

## **AGENDA ITEM I—OPENING REMARKS**

Chair Miller called the meeting to order. She welcomed members, presenters, and the public to the fourth meeting of the Legislative Committee on Education. Chair Miller reviewed virtual meeting and testimony guidelines.

## **AGENDA ITEM II—PUBLIC COMMENT**

James Frazee, Vice President-Elect, Clark County Education Association (CCEA), submitted written testimony regarding Clark County School District (CCSD) administrators' refusal to hire qualified licensed educators ([Agenda Item II A](#)).

Chris Daly, Deputy Executive Director, Government Relations, Nevada State Education Association (NSEA), presented written testimony ([Agenda Item II B-1](#)) on educational challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, and surveys on parental support for teachers amid the COVID-19 pandemic ([Agenda Item II B-2](#)) and the impact of COVID-19 on educators ([Agenda Item II B-3](#)).

Marie Neisess, President-Elect, CCEA, addressed school administrator accountability concerns ([Agenda Item II C](#)).

Alexander Marks, Communications Specialist, NSEA, expressed concern with the COVID-19 pandemic's economic impact on education. He understands there will be budget cuts and less individual teaching, but a return to school is critical for students, teachers, parents, and the community.

## **AGENDA ITEM III—APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETINGS ON FEBRUARY 20, 2020, AND MARCH 9, 2020**

**MOTION:** Senator Denis moved to approve the minutes of the meetings held on February 20, and March 9, 2020. The motion was seconded by Assemblywoman Tolles and approved unanimously.

## **AGENDA ITEM IV—PRESENTATION ON SCHOOL CLOSURES AND DISTANCE LEARNING PLANS IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Jhone Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada's Department of Education (NDE), reviewed the *Path Forward Plan Responding to COVID-19* ([Agenda Item IV A](#)). She outlined actions taken by NDE with regard to accountability, assessments, educator licensure operations, federal waivers, Governor Sisolak's two emergency directives related to schools, and guidance to districts and schools. In closing, Ms. Ebert outlined the six goals in the *2020 Statewide Plan for the Improvement of Pupils (STIP)*.

Dr. Mary Pierczynski, Ed.D., representing the Nevada Association of School Superintendents (NASS), submitted rural school district survey responses regarding COVID-19 school closures, online learning plans, communication with students and families, efforts to address the needs of students with disabilities, and challenges associated with the shift to distance learning ([Agenda Item IV B](#)). She said NASS members emphasized that NDE has worked well with school district superintendents and has provided prompt responses to questions and concerns.

Kristen McNeill, Ed.D., Superintendent, Washoe County School District (WCSD), presented an update on COVID-19 efforts ([Agenda Item IV C](#)). She highlighted communication with students and families, community outreach, plans to address employee concerns, measures taken to ensure food security, online learning plans and guiding principles, including those for students without internet access or devices, and use of social media to reach families. Dr. McNeill said she is proud of all WCSD staff for their hard work and the support they have provided to students and families.

Christopher Bernier, Ed.D., Chief of Staff, Office of the Superintendent, CCSD, emphasized CCSD's focus on the safety and health of educational personnel and students. He outlined the following:

- Sanitation efforts at schools;
- Meal service offered to CCSD families;
- Availability and expansion of broadband internet access;
- Efforts to locate students who have not been contacted during online learning;
- Postponement of high school graduation ceremonies;
- School reopening and summer school plans; and
- Utilization of various communication avenues.

Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA), provided an update on SPCSA's COVID-19 responses ([Agenda Item IV D-1](#)). She outlined SPCSA's guiding principles as: (1) clear guardrails; (2) consistent communication; and (3) flexibility. Ms. Feiden referred to two memorandums on school site closures ([Agenda Item IV D-2](#)) and ([Agenda Item IV D-3](#)), and a list of frequently asked questions and responses from SPCSA-sponsored schools ([Agenda Item IV D-4](#)). She also discussed communication protocols, coordination of meal deliveries, plans going forward, and lessons learned from this transition to online learning.

Further discussions ensued on the following concerns:

- Data on the number of students who receive hard copy learning packets, those who receive instruction via online learning, and those students without digital devices;
- Availability of digital devices and plans to provide a device for every student;
- Avenues to locate students who have not been contacted during online learning;
- Challenges and successes of online learning;
- Options for students to access broadband internet;
- Creative graduation ceremonies and graduations for small schools with social distancing measures in place;
- Process and timelines of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020, H.R.748—116<sup>th</sup> Congress (2019–2020);
- Performance and student enrollment limits for online charter schools;

- Minimum standards for teacher-student contact within online learning;
- School work and grading during online learning; and
- Guidelines for teachers and students to collect their personal belongings from schools and classrooms.

## **AGENDA ITEM V—DISCUSSION REGARDING EFFORTS TO ADDRESS NEVADA'S CHRONIC STUDENT ABSENTEEISM**

Chair Miller referred to the publication [Chronic Student Absenteeism](#), January 2020, available on the Research Division, LCB's webpage.

Christina (Christy) McGill, Director, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, NDE, referenced the chronic absenteeism presentation and outlined NDE supports and strategies for schools and districts ([Agenda Item V A](#)).

Alberto Quintero, Education Programs Professional, Office of Parental Involvement and Family Engagement, NDE, presented information on chronic absenteeism and truancy absences, reasons why chronic absenteeism matters, and why students are chronically absent ([Agenda Item V A](#)). He provided a [link to Attendance Works](#), a national and state-level initiative whose mission is to advance student access and help close equity gaps by reducing chronic absenteeism.

Peter Zutz, Administrator, Office of Assessment, Data, and Accountability Management, NDE, reviewed data by district, grade level, and student groups; the impact of chronic absenteeism on student proficiency; and the relationship between accountability and chronic absenteeism ([Agenda Item V A](#)).

Rechelle Murillo, MSW, LSW, Department Coordinator, Intervention Department, WCSD, submitted information on WCSD's attendance systems and intervention practices ([Agenda Item V B](#)). She reported on a proactive approach to targeting and reducing chronic absenteeism and truancy with multi-tiered systems of support.

Mary Pierczynski, previously identified, presented survey responses from rural school districts on student chronic absenteeism, both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the implementation of new approaches to reduce chronic absenteeism ([Agenda Item V C](#)).

Mike Barton, Ed.D., Chief College, Career, and Equity Officer, College, Career, Equity and School Choice Unit, Office of the Deputy Superintendent, CCSD, outlined the following initiatives:

- Successful pilot program in 15 high-absenteeism schools to redefine how to approach chronic absenteeism and offer assistance to students and families;
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Clark County and The Harbor - Juvenile Assessment Center to provide data, resources, and to hire attendance navigators to work with school attendance officers to identify and provide assistance to absent students, and decrease exclusionary practices;
- Insert into CCSD's strategic plan a focus on chronic absenteeism and realignment of the school social worker program with a proactive approach; and

- Improve school campus climate to ensure each student feels welcome.

Rebecca Feiden, previously identified, stated the SPCSA-sponsored charter school absenteeism rate is approximately 8.4 percent and the SPCSA continues to work to improve absenteeism rates. She stated that charter schools see higher levels of absenteeism with students who are eligible for the free and reduced lunch subsidy. Ms. Feiden detailed that as SPCSA disaggregates the data and looks for trends in high rates of absenteeism, communication and outreach is adjusted proactively with the addition of social work and counseling staff, attendance incentives.

Dialogue continued on the following:

- Ensure that students do not slip through the cracks with online learning;
- Track choice-absences, wherein a student chooses not to attend school for vacations;
- Communicate the importance of in-school attendance; and
- Traditional vs. year-round school schedule attendance rates.

## **AGENDA ITEM VI—DISCUSSION CONCERNING SCHOOL SAFETY AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

Marilyn Villalobos, Legislative Education Staff Network Coordinator, Research Analyst II, National Conference of State Legislatures, discussed campus safety in concert with the [Clery Act](#), Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1990 (Clery, 2018), a consumer protection law that aims to provide transparency around campus crime policy and statistics. In order to comply with Clery Act requirements, colleges and universities must understand what the law entails, where their responsibilities lie, and what they can do to actively foster campus safety. She outlined school safety measures in higher education into five general categories: (1) police departments; (2) reporting; (3) crisis support programs; (4) emergency preparedness; and (5) prevention. Ms. Villalobos provided examples of recent bills introduced in other states focused on safety in higher education. She also discussed Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance for the reopening of higher education institutions in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adam Garcia, Vice President of Public Safety Services, and Director, University Police Services, Southern Command, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), gave an overview of the services provided by University Police Services ([Agenda Item VI](#)). He stated the Nevada System of Higher Education employs a Clery compliance officer, and the annual security report is available on the universities' websites. Mr. Garcia reported he has consolidated police services in both the Northern and Southern Command, and that doing so has improved campus safety and created a cost saving for the universities. In addition, he said Southern Command was awarded \$500,000 in grant funding, conducts campus outreach events and safety trainings, and consolidated all emergency notification systems. However, Southern Command continues to struggle to attract and retain experienced and trained officers.

Todd Renwick, Assistant Vice President, and Chief of Police, University Police Services, Northern Command, University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), presented information on the Northern Command police services and consolidation ([Agenda Item VI](#)). He described the MOU with counties and cities wherein there are university operations. The MOU addresses crime reporting, sharing services, and working together on cases related to the universities. Chief Renwick reported the Northern Command received a \$300,000 grant to begin in-depth

violence against women training with the campus community, local police, and university officers. In closing, he stated University Police Services are community service-oriented, proactive, and have immersed into the campus and surrounding community.

There was discussion on the following issues:

- Violent incidents that occur in the classroom or residency dorms;
- UNR and UNLV are very safe campuses; and
- Resources to deter sex trafficking on university campuses.

## **AGENDA ITEM VII—PRESENTATION ON NEVADA'S EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS, INCLUDING UPDATES ON [SENATE BILL 84](#) AND [ASSEMBLY BILL 194](#) PASSED DURING THE 2019 SESSION**

Marty Elquist, Chair, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (NECAC), stated [AB 194](#) (2019) required an annual summary of NECAC's activities. The *NECAC's Strategic Plan 2018-2021* was updated in December 2019, to ensure the plan was aligned with birth through third grade. The *Strategic Plan* and its summary are available on NECAC's webpage. She recognized Anna Severens, Education Programs Professional, Office of Early Learning and Development, NDE, and Tina Springmeyer, Director, Child and Family Services Department, WCSD, as instrumental in the *Strategic Plan's* development.

Ms. Elquist outlined NECAS's early childhood's four guiding principles and six objectives, with the overall goal for early learning to strengthen the complex system of early learning to provide every child and family with high quality early childhood education and development. She emphasized the importance to meet the emotional needs of students in order to meet their educational needs.

Patti Oya, Director, Office of Early Learning and Development, NDE, gave a presentation on Nevada's pre-K funding history to include federal grants and matching state funds ([Agenda Item VII A](#)). She indicated that children are screened when they enter and exit the program, and explained that the age equivalency data proves the program works. Ms. Oya reviewed national pre-K recommendations, and Nevada pre-K priorities and concerns.

Jared Busker, Interim Executive Director, Children's Advocacy Alliance, delivered information on the Alliance, the benefits of high-quality early learning programs, and the status of Nevada child care facilities since the COVID-19 pandemic began ([Agenda Item VII B](#)). For the 2021 Legislative Session, he recommended a committee BDR to study the barriers to open a child care facility, ways to maximize federal funding, and streamline programs and reporting. Mr. Busker also suggested the following: (1) align systems and supports for families across the state; (2) create a state level cabinet position to ensure all funding received is being used effectively; (3) ensure children receive high-quality child care; (4) expand private partnerships; (5) provide for up to a year of paid parental leave; and (6) utilize all federal funding available.

There was discussion on possible English Learner Head Start program grant funding.

## **AGENDA ITEM VIII—PUBLIC COMMENT**

Autumn Tampa, education support professional employee, CCSD, asked education support professionals be included in plans to reopen and day-to-day operations of CCSD schools.

She addressed concerns for COVID-19 high-risk employees, as well as employment issues for educational support professionals ([Agenda Item VIII A](#)).

Sarah Adler, Nevada resident, expressed appreciation for Chief Renwick's positive methods to assist victims of sexual abuse and assault, and acknowledged the efforts of the Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence.

Jen Sturm, previously identified, read into the record four written public comments received via the Committee's email:

- Andrea M. Connolly, Principal, Nevada Learning Academy (NVLA), CCSD, indicated that NVLA is a public online school hosting grades 6-12 within the CCSD, and is not charter school program ([Agenda Item VIII B](#));
- LeAn Shelton, ECE Consultant, Advocate, and Coach, expressed concern that early childhood special education students are not receiving hands-on services during the COVID-19 pandemic ([Agenda Item VIII C](#));
- Kathy Yoder-Bass, Principal, The Hills Preschool, submitted remarks regarding private early childhood education child care providers. ([Agenda Item VIII D](#)).
- Cindy Gonzales, Nevada resident, expressed support for early childhood education educators and facilities ([Agenda Item VIII E](#)).

The following written testimonies were submitted for the record:

- Denise Tanata, Vice President of Community Impact, United Way of Southern Nevada ([Agenda Item VIII F](#));
- Greta Jensen, Nevada resident, ([Agenda Item VIII G](#));
- Gaylen Christean, Nevada resident, ([Agenda Item VIII H](#));
- Corinne Martin, Nevada resident, ([Agenda Item VIII I](#));
- Nevada Parents for Online Education ([Agenda Item VIII J](#)).

## **AGENDA ITEM IX—ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Christina Harper

Assistant Manager of Research Policy  
Assistants

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Jen Sturm

Senior Policy Analyst

APPROVED BY:

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Assemblywoman Brittney Miller, Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## MEETING MATERIALS

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
<a href="#">Agenda Item II A</a>	James Frazee, Vice President Elect, Clark County Education Association (CCEA)	Written testimony
<a href="#">Agenda Item II B-1</a>	Chris Daly, Deputy Executive Director, Government Relations, Nevada State Education Association (NSEA)	Written testimony
<a href="#">Agenda Item II B-2</a>	Chris Daly, Deputy Executive Director, Government Relations, NSEA	Survey
<a href="#">Agenda Item II B-3</a>	Chris Daly, Deputy Executive Director, Government Relations, NSEA	Survey
<a href="#">Agenda Item II C</a>	Marie Neisess, President Elect, CCEA	Written testimony
<a href="#">Agenda Item IV A</a>	Jhone Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada's Department of Education (NDE)	Written plan
<a href="#">Agenda Item IV B</a>	Dr. Mary Pierczynski, Ed.D., representing the Nevada Association of School Superintendents (NASS)	Survey results
<a href="#">Agenda Item IV C</a>	Kristen McNeill, Ed.D., Superintendent, Washoe County School District (WCSD)	Microsoft PowerPoint presentation
<a href="#">Agenda Item IV D-1</a>	Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA)	Microsoft PowerPoint presentation
<a href="#">Agenda Item IV D-2</a>	Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, SPCSA	Memo dated April 1, 2020

<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	<b>PRESENTER/ENTITY</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item IV D-3</u></a>	Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, SPCSA	Memo dated April 24, 2020
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item IV D-4</u></a>	Rebecca Feiden, Executive Director, SPCSA	Frequently Asked Questions document
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item V A</u></a>	Christina (Christy) McGill, Director, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment; Alberto Quintero, Education Programs Professional, Office of Parental Involvement and Family Engagement; and Peter Zutz, Administrator, Office of Assessment, Data, and Accountability Management, NDE	Microsoft PowerPoint presentation
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item V B</u></a>	Rechelle Murillo, MSW, LSW, Department Coordinator, Intervention Department, Washoe County School District (WCSD)	Written testimony
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item V C</u></a>	Mary Pierczynski, Ed.D., representing NASS	Survey results
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item VI</u></a>	Adam Garcia, Vice President of Public Safety and Director of University Police Services Southern Command, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and Todd Renwick, Assistance Vice President, and Chief of Police, University Police Services Northern Command, UNR	Microsoft PowerPoint presentation
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item VII A</u></a>	Patti Oya, Director, Office of Early Learning and Development, NDE	Microsoft PowerPoint presentation
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item VII B</u></a>	Jared Busker, Interim Executive Director, Children's Advocacy Alliance	Written testimony

<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	<b>PRESENTER/ENTITY</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item VIII A</u></a>	Autumn Tampa, educational support professional employee, CCSD	Written testimony
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item VIII B</u></a>	Andrea M. Connolly, Principal, Nevada Learning Academy, CCSD	Written testimony
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item VIII C</u></a>	LeAn Shelton, ECE Consultant, Advocate, and Coach	Written testimony
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item VIII D</u></a>	Kathy Yoder-Bass, Principal, The Hills Preschool	Written testimony
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item VIII E</u></a>	Cindy Gonzales, Nevada Resident	Written testimony
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item VIII F</u></a>	Denise Tanata, Vice President of Community Impact, United Way of Southern Nevada	Written testimony
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item VIII G</u></a>	Greta Jensen, Nevada Resident	Written testimony
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item VIII H</u></a>	Gaylen Christean, Nevada Resident	Written testimony
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item VIII I</u></a>	Corinne Martin, Nevada Resident	Written testimony
<a href="#"><u>Agenda Item VIII J</u></a>	Nevada Parents for Online Education	Written testimony

The Summary Minutes are supplied as an informational service. All meeting materials are on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Library/About/Contact/feedbackmail.cfm>.