



# **NEVADA LEGISLATURE JOINT INTERIM STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

*(Nevada Revised Statutes [NRS] [218E.320](#))*

## **DRAFT MINUTES**

**May 18, 2022**

The sixth meeting of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education for the 2021-2022 Interim was held on Wednesday, May 18, 2022, at 9 a.m. in Room 4401, Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 3138, Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada.

The agenda, minutes, meeting materials, and audio or video recording of the meeting are available on the Joint Interim Standing Committee's [meeting page](#). The audio or video recording may also be found at <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Video/>. 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 IN LAS VEGAS:**

Senator Moises (Mo) Denis, Chair  
Assemblywoman Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod, Vice Chair  
Senator Carrie Buck  
Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop  
Assemblywoman Brittney Miller  
Assemblywoman Clara (Claire) Thomas

### **COMMITTEE MEMBER PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:**

Assemblywoman Alexis Hansen

### **COMMITTEE MEMBER PRESENT REMOTELY:**

Assemblywoman Melissa Hardy

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:**

Jen Sturm, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division

Alex Drozdoff, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division

Jennifer Ruedy, Deputy Research Director, Committee and Policy Research Services

Christina Harper, Manager of Research Policy Assistants, Research Division

Asher A. Killian, Chief Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division

Adam Drost, Principal Program Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division

*Items taken out of sequence during the meeting have been placed in agenda order.*  
[Indicate a summary of comments.]

## **AGENDA ITEM I—OPENING REMARKS**

### ***Chair Denis:***

[Chair Denis called the meeting to order. He welcomed members, presenters, and the public to the sixth meeting of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education.]

Ms. Harper, can you please call the roll? [Roll call is reflected in Committee Members Present.]

[Chair Denis reviewed virtual meeting and testimony guidelines.]

## **AGENDA ITEM II—PUBLIC COMMENT**

### ***Chair Denis:***

We will start with public comment.

[Chair Denis reviewed public comment testimony and submission procedures.]

I will begin with those wishing to make public comment here in Las Vegas.

### ***Bill Hanlon:***

As the Committee on Education, you know that we have two major concerns. One is school safety, and the other is academics. With respect to school safety, let us be clear: when students do not have teachers who know the content or explain it in understandable terms, students tend to act out, and that affects school climate and safety. (Agenda Item II A)

I want to talk about academics, specifically math, which is required for success in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) subjects that we say are important. Nevada has experienced a documented shortage of math teachers for over 35 years, since 1985. That fact alone sets students up for failure. Having said that, as you know, the rules of math do not make sense when standing alone. You cannot divide by zero for instance. Why? Because your mom said so. Any number to the zero power except zero equals one. What is that about? When you divide fractions, you flip and multiply. Was that made up in a bar after three pitchers of beer after midnight? When you add integers, sometimes you add, but sometimes you subtract, and when you subtract integers, you change your sign and add. But sometimes you subtract. If you do not give kids a six pack of beer when you are 12- and 13-year-olds when you are teaching that is probably child abuse.

The greatest difference in upper-level math courses and elementary school math is vocabulary notation. Linking concepts and skills makes learning a lot easier for students and allows teachers to review, reinforce, and address student deficiencies as well as increase student comfort levels by using familiar language. For instance, when we add decimals, when we line up the decimal point to fill in a zero, that is finding a common denominator and making equivalent fractions. When we add the numbers, that is adding the numerators. When you bring the decimal point straight down, that is bringing down the denominator, the Pythagorean Theorem, the Distance Formula, the Equation of a Circle and trig identity are all the same formula just written differently because they are being used in different contexts. If you want to make math difficult, we teach these topics in isolation.

Students often ask, "When will I use this?" We tell them the test is on Friday. The real question is, when do you not use it? For example, the circumference of a circle: if, you put the wrong size tires on the car, you change your odometer or speedometer reading and you are learning about a parabola. What is a paraboloid? It is a flashlight, satellite dish, et cetera. You know, we teach exponential functions, but we do not relate that to accumulated interest.

Adding to the issues students face with less than qualified teachers, school administrators supervising these teachers know a lot less math and cannot help them, and some local superintendents are not making academics a priority. The professional budgets have been cut approximately in half over the last 15 years. We are in a time when students need help more than ever. It is past time to not only restore those budgets but to increase them, so our students have a chance to succeed with teachers who know their content, know how to teach that content, and have resources to support that. Outside of parents, teachers are the most important part of education. We need to invest in their professional knowledge.

***Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association (NSEA):***

The NSEA has been the voice of Nevada educators for over 120 years. Today's agenda is packed with critical items impacting Nevada schools: restorative justice and student discipline, mental health, and professional development. Last month, NSEA testified on educator safety in the wake of the horrific event at Eldorado High School. However, none of these issues on today's agenda can be adequately addressed unless Nevada effectively deals with the staffing crisis impacting Nevada school operations across the state. (Agenda Item II B)

Unfortunately, there is no sugarcoating it. The state of public education in Nevada is dire. For decades, Nevada has ranked near the bottom of states in education funding and quality. Now, with the additional challenges of the last two years, we have an unprecedented shortage of educators to teach our kids and make our schools run. The Clark County School District (CCSD) alone lists over 2,000 vacant positions with over 1,400 of those licensed Nevada needs bold action to address this crisis. It is time to adequately fund public education in Nevada. It is time to respect and retain our experienced educators. It is time for 20. Time for 20 means a 20 percent increase in educator pay and at least \$20 an hour for the workers who make our schools run. Time for 20 means reaching an average class size of 20 students and core academic subjects.

Let us consider the severity of the situation for Nevada educators. Today, the Economic Policy Institute reports that public school teachers are paid 19.2 percent less than similar workers and in occupations. According to the National Education Association's *Ranking of the States*, Nevada public school teachers make nearly \$7,500 below the national average and \$27,000 a year less than neighboring California teachers. Nevada has some of the largest class sizes in the country, with some of the highest concentrations of at-risk students and English learners.

Meanwhile, a substitute teacher shortage has left countless classrooms with no teacher at all, forcing remaining staff or even our lieutenant governor to cover additional classes. A chronic bus driver shortage has caused serious delays, sometimes stranding students for hours. Multiple districts have cancelled routes and adjusted schedules to try to mitigate this issue. Thousands of education support professionals across the state earned significantly below a living wage as low as \$10 to \$11 an hour. Inflation data shows prices are climbing at the fastest pace in 40 years, with the Consumer Price Index now at 8.3 percent for Western states. Home and rent prices have also skyrocketed across Nevada, with average

rents up over 20 percent in the last year. Time for 20 would address many of the causes of the educator shortage and go a long way to improve school climate and culture, giving Nevada a chance to address the other serious issues impacting our schools. Educators across the state and our students need bold action now.

***Raul Pastrana, Private Citizen:***

I am a father of three kids who attend Legacy Traditional School, which is a charter school. I am here to speak on behalf of the parents who are not here, but mostly for our kids who do not have a voice, especially at this type of meeting. My daughter is a first grader, and she had bathroom issues for over a month. We took her to the doctor and took care of it, but my daughter refused to go to school. We have been asking my daughter, "Why you do not want to go?" and we found out yesterday that it is because there is a kid who is scaring the other kids.

Now the charter school goes all the way to eighth grade. We found out a couple of days ago that a fifth grader molested another kid, and at this point, we do not know if it was my daughter or another kid. Can you imagine your kids going through that? We received calls every day from the school. We must bring not one change or two changes for my daughter to be in the classroom because every day she refused to go to the bathroom.

The other issue I am bringing to you, and I have the evidence right here, is for my son, who is autistic. Right now, he is in sixth grade, and this is the work that he is doing at home with our ADA therapist. I can also show you work that he does out of school. No one is paying attention to what he is doing in the classroom. We have the draft of the individualized education plan (IEP) that was given to us before the meeting and the IEP we had before coming to the legacy school. It used to be 37 pages long because we had an advocate, but suddenly, it was about 15 pages long. We never agreed to cut my kid's IEP. They cut the hours and they even cut the aid assistant that my kid had through English, math, and other classes.

This happened recently, not at the beginning. It is almost at the end of the school year. This is the difference when someone is with my kids. Once again, he is autistic, and they cut every single possible assistant that my kid could get. We asked for assisted technology a year and a half ago, right after we moved in. I get it. Perfect. Not a problem. How can we do it? I even called several people to help them out. They refused, and today, a year and a half later, we asked for the report. Where is the report? Where is the assistant technology evaluation? The explanation: we do not know. What do you mean, you do not know? It was misplaced. We cannot find it. My kid was given a computer and that computer, but it was not even blocked. We found out from my kid that he had full access to everything. Thank you.

***Chair Denis:***

Is there anyone in Carson City who wishes to give public comment?

***Marla McDade Williams, Private Citizen:***

Today, I wanted to bring attention to an issue at a local high school where the graduating class is prohibited from adorning their graduation caps and being threatened with not getting their degrees or being able to walk across the stage with their graduating class if they do not comply with the guidance. I feel the way the school went about making this prohibition did not allow for public participation, as it appears to be a decision made by a

select group of teachers without public notice. It may have been a violation of the Open Meeting Law. However, the bigger issue is that I believe prohibitions like this do not serve to recognize the cultural, celebratory aspect of graduation for kids and their families. This is a time for them to showcase their uniqueness and celebrate this milestone in their lives. It should not be a time for them to be resentful of the school at which they are graduating. Everyone sacrificed in these last two years, and with this first in-person graduation is being marred by a policy that is not inclusive and does not recognize the different cultures of students.

As recently as last night, I was forwarded to voicemail from someone at the school telling graduates they were prohibited from using leis as part of their adornment. Statements like that feel discriminatory. These policies target Native students with beaded caps and eagle feathers, Polynesian students who have immense pride in the leis they wear during this time and other students who show pride in their culture during their graduation ceremony.

As recently as last session, legislation was enacted that prohibited employers from requiring employees to have certain hairstyles. These laws are needed because there is a cultural disconnect. I would ask you all to consider immediately providing guidance to the 17 school districts that allows for Nevada graduates to show their uniqueness on their caps and in their adornments, including cultural items that have become a part of the celebration, which is a practice that has been going on throughout the United States for years and years. Graduations will start occurring over the next two or three weeks, and I feel it is important for the Legislature to lead on this issue. In the long term, I would ask for consideration of legislation on this issue as well.

***Chair Denis:***

Thank you. Let us go online, anyone wishing to give public comment, if Broadcast and Production Services (BPS) could connect them.

***BPS:***

To participate in public comment, please press the raise hand in your Zoom window or \*9 on your phone to take your place in the queue.

***Nikki Haag, Private Citizen:***

I am testifying today on the new guidance that was given to the graduating class of Douglas High school in Minden, Nevada. Less than a month before graduation, the seniors were informed that to participate in the graduation ceremony, seniors' caps must be free of any decoration. As a Native American, it is a practice that has been going on for years to have your cap beaded for your graduation ceremony. As a parent, I planned for my son, who is a member of the Walker River Paiute Tribe, to have a cap beaded before graduation, as I did last year for my older son, who graduated from the same school and was allowed to wear a decorated cap at the graduation ceremony.

After being told by school administration they were not allowed to decorate their caps, my son asked if it would be okay for him to wear his beaded cap because it was a great honor for him, and a lot of hard work went into it. He also expressed that it would be an extreme disappointment if he was not allowed to honor his culture. My son was told no decorations are allowed this year and this applies to all students. They appreciate what the declaration means to him and suggested he honor his culture by wearing something under his gown or around his neck, so it is not a cap or a gown decoration. In my opinion, you are now asking

him to cover up his culture and not be proud of his heritage. This could be viewed as discrimination.

I would like to ask this body to provide items not only to this school district but to all districts in Nevada that will allow seniors to express themselves for their graduation day. After all, this day is about them and the accomplishments they have made, whether they show their expression by decorating their cap for the university they will attend, their culture, or their own unique style, they should be allowed to celebrate their day.

***Chair Denis:***

Thank you. Let us go to the next caller.

***Dr. Brenda Pearson, Clark County Education Association (CCEA):***

The CCEA represents the over 18,000 licensed educators in bargaining with CCSD. We are the largest independent teachers' association in the state and in the country. We look forward to the discussion on the agenda for today's meeting, and we support and encourage this Committee to find ways to support the health and well-being of students and school personnel. (Agenda Item II C)

However, as we conduct ourselves in this meeting, we cannot forget the safety of our educators. We appreciate the upcoming presentations on restorative justice and student discipline issues. It is not a secret that violence against educators and violence in schools has escalated, and our biggest concerns over improper implementation and training of restorative practices bills has occurred. The CCEA has cautiously supported the passage of restorative practice bills.

We know that a change from a progressive discipline plan to restorative practices requires foundational knowledge and a robust system of supports including training and coaching to ensure proper implementation. Our teachers currently feel that the implementation or lack thereof of restorative practices is so varied across schools that it fails to get to the root cause of the issues to provide healing and coping mechanisms for children. Instead, many of our processes focus on the aftermath of negative conduct.

Additionally, the lack of accountability that has accompanied previous bills has prevented our educators from buying into the idea of restorative practices. We do not have time to risk the lives of our educators to determine if our trial-and-error implementation of restorative practices is working. We must work together to provide safety to our educators and through legislative and regulatory changes that fund all schools with the resources to improve both the implementation of restorative practices and mental health supports for our staff and students. The CCEA appreciates the work and dedication of this Committee, and we stand ready to assist in whatever we can do to bring our state forward.

***Chair Denis:***

Do we have anyone else on the line who wishes to provide public comment?

***BPS:***

Chair, the public line is open and working but there are no additional callers at this time.

***Chair Denis:***

Thank you. We will close public comment.

### **AGENDA ITEM III—APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETINGS ON MARCH 16, 2022**

***Chair Denis:***

We will go to our next item, approval of the minutes for the meeting on March 16, 2022. (Agenda Item III)

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING ON MARCH 16, 2022.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN THOMAS SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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### **AGENDA ITEM IV—DISCUSSION CONCERNING THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF PUPILS AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

***Chair Denis:***

We are now going to move on to the discussion concerning the health and well-being of pupils and school personnel. We are going to start with a presentation by Superintendent Jesus Jara from CCSD, representing the Nevada Association of School Superintendents (NASS), and after he is done, we will take questions.

Welcome, Dr. Jara. We are grateful to have you here. We have been trying to get all the superintendents in so we can meet them all and everybody gets to see them.

***Dr. Jesus Jara, Superintendent, CCSD:***

I am not only here on behalf of NASS, but I am also going to give you a little bit of the district perspective here in CCSD. Back in October of 2020, in CCSD and the State of Nevada, we were trying to figure out the Coronavirus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, and I still recall the conversations with our local health officials here like Dr. Fermin Leguen, District Health Officer with the Southern Nevada Health District, and at the county about how we might decrease the number of COVID-19 cases.

The conversation started around the impact of learning loss, and then we started looking at the mental health needs of our children and our staff. I want to make sure that our focus is not only our students, but also our staff. We were also engaging in conversation with Governor Sisolak after we lost a 9-year-old child to suicide. At that point, we realized we needed to look at a comprehensive approach to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CCSD School Board of Trustees immediately contracted with Panorama, a universal screener here in Clark County, and I am going to give you some numbers that span from Fall 2020 to February 2022. In that time, with the investment we made due to the second American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds we received from the federal government, 224,106 surveys were completed by students and 45,673 of our children raised their hand



asking for assistance. Our staff has made 79,000 referrals and done 71,000 virtual wellness checks throughout the pandemic, and we have also done 185,460 in-person wellness checks. That means that our staff has gone into children's homes, not only using Panorama, but also on GoGuardian, which is our Chromebook management software, and we have also done 1,846 suicide protocols in CCSD. This is one way for us to get into universal screening.

Every 1 of the 366 schools in CCSD initiated what we call the multidisciplinary leadership team (MLT), which includes principals, assistant principals, school counselors, psychologists, social workers, safe school professionals, and nurses to identify the student and family needs in our schools. One of the things that our teams investigated while making some referrals and providing support was the availability of our services, the length of the wait list, and language and cultural needs. Obviously, we wanted to make sure we were able to communicate the insurance needs and capacity. We also investigated transportation, social determinations of health needs, and the social stigma about receiving community services, so that is part of the entire look into the school.

After assessing the needs and the support systems allowance with our schools, our MLTs then followed up with our students, staff, and community partners. We have also been partners with Care Solace, which is what we call the concierge support for our families. It is not only for our kids, but also for our families and for the entire community, and it is a free 24/7, 365-day-a-week multilingual care coordinating service. It helps families eliminate the red tape with insurance companies and health substance and use treatments, so they coordinate for our students, our families, and others who use it across the entire community.

I know that the Legislature has invested in the Harbor. The county has as well, and we use the Harbor as a juvenile assessment center that houses community partners. We staff along with the county for on-site providers who offer community programs and support including counseling, mentoring, tutoring, cognitive behavioral support systems, and case management for up to 60 days post-intake, and the Harbor staff follow up with our community and our students on a weekly basis.

We have also instituted tele-therapy across the district by partnering with Hazel Health and PM Pediatric, two different services provided to our students to address mental health needs and well-being through remote access to therapists during the weekdays at no cost to the family. This is another investment we have made using the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) dollars we received from the federal government. Our students received immediate services based on the consent and availability from their parents. Our staff support includes the Panorama as well. It is available to them, and they can participate as well.

Something we continue to hear from our principals, and you have heard from public commenters today, is that the lack of workforce that we are facing not only here in CCSD, but across the state, has left us in a crisis mode, so we need to provide support. We have a very comprehensive approach to providing mental health support for our students, but we also need to expand these supports for our staff as well.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any questions from Committee members specific to CCSD?

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

I think we all agree there is not enough to meet the needs of our students right now, but part of the reason for the staff shortage is the unmet needs of the staff as well. People forget that the staff are involved in the trauma and the violence and everything that is going on, whether as witnesses, victims, or participants if they must break up the fight. They are the ones who must deal with whatever issues are going on in the school or classroom.

Can you define what this Panorama program is and how staff will know it is available? How many staff have been able to receive services from this program? Is this the only opportunity for staff wellness? There seems to be a big concern about the care and wellness of staff.

***Superintendent Jara:***

Panorama is a universal screener. I would have to get you the exact date it was made available to staff, but once it was available, I took it as well. I would have to bring the details back to this body about how it was rolled out individually to schools when we send it out to our community. It is a survey that, once completed, puts you in a red, yellow, or green category. We then deploy support not only for our students but for staff. It is a survey that allows you to raise your hand if you need support.

We also have an employee assistance program for support that the board invested in through our insurance for our support staff. When we were dealing with the crisis at Eldorado, I contacted Superintendent of Public Instruction Jhone Ebert to provide some assistance and support for our crisis team. We have been in crisis there and it raised several questions. How do we provide other money to support our crisis team at all schools? That is something that is lacking. When we are looking at the investment of our federal dollars, how do we amend it to support our staff? From your question, I am hearing that we need to do a better job in communicating that these resources are available for staff as well. Care Solace is another one that is available for all.

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

Yes, you did hear that correctly that we do need to do more for the staff, but with that, is there anything in actual response? I know that there was a time when, if something happened in the school or the classroom, a crisis response team often would be there that afternoon, if not the next day to help the students process through what they experienced. We often forget that even if it happens to a few students or a group of students, all the students are there exposed to it and witnessing it, and yet there has been a lack of crisis response teams. I wonder, is that still a practice the district employs? What is there in addition to Panorama, which is a survey?

***Superintendent Jara:***

It is a universal screener.

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

It is a universal screener, but when there is an instance of crisis or trauma, what is in place for those staff and students to come in and meet those immediate needs? Is there a crisis response? Is there counseling? Is there something available to staff? Also, like the military, employees are often concerned about any kind of counseling or mental health services they

may receive from their employer because they are concerned that information will be shared with their employer. Can you speak on that as well? Again, my first question is about crisis response teams and what immediate actual care and response exists for staff, and my second question concerns how employees can feel secure in knowing that there will not be crossover between healthcare providers and their employer.

***Superintendent Jara:***

What I would tell you is that the crisis response team is available for staff. We have had multiple cases, like the one at Eldorado, where the crisis response was not only for the individual teacher and the entire school, but also for staff. We have had many crises in schools, like deaths from natural causes, that we submit and send to the crisis team as well. That is where the request and Nevada's Department of Education (NDE) adding more support becomes important, because our crisis team has been overloaded as well. That is available for staff. As far as crossing over of data or sharing information, as you know, that is a Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) violation, and we do not receive any of data from the support networks.

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

I would like to see much more crisis response. Incidents you speak of like death, whether of natural cause or victimization, should not be the bar for crisis.

***Superintendent Jara:***

I am giving you examples. We need more staff. We need more bodies. We need more psychologists, and as a matter of fact, tonight on the agenda for the board is a partnership with Nevada State College (NSC) in my conversations with President DeRionne Pollard that we are putting a full-time equivalent position at NSC so they can help us increase school psychologists in CCSD. We absolutely need more staff; I could not agree more.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any other questions specifically for Dr. Jara and CCSD?

***Assemblywoman Hansen:***

I am not sure if you can answer this, but maybe Assemblywoman Miller can, or somebody who is in the trenches as staff teaching: as far as adults go, do the health benefits that staff and teachers receive offer mental health services for them through their insurance?

***Superintendent Jara:***

I am not an expert on the health side of things, and maybe Assemblywoman Miller may know from a teacher's perspective, but I know that we are increasing the capacity of an outside group that partners with CCEA to provide support. That is part of what the Care Solace system does; it is a concierge treatment for students and adults, and it matches their insurance with a health provider and then provides that handoff to health providers in your plan who can offer support. As far as the details, whatever plan the individual employee receives or signs up for would be according to their benefits. I am not the expert, but we can certainly get that information to you.

***Chair Denis:***

Does that answer your question?

***Assemblywoman Hansen:***

That is a good start. I will follow up offline.

***Assemblywoman Thomas:***

I hear often how we are assessing the relationship between COVID-19 and mental health issues. Does CCSD have scientific data regarding the linkage of COVID-19 and mental health issues of our students or teachers?

***Superintendent Jara:***

Do I have that data? No, I do not. We have not done a research study around it. We are looking at learning loss, and we can identify that with student data in the presentations that we have done in the past. The board has identified goals for the district to increase due to learning loss. We are looking at individual case counts and different components, but we have not yet done a research study around the impact of COVID-19 as it related to mental health.

***Chair Denis:***

This afternoon, we are going to have an interesting discussion on mental health from a student's perspective, so maybe you will get your answers there. Does anyone else have questions?

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

How are these programs you have in place interacting with programs that might be run by a vendor or a nonprofit? I have recently seen news stories on Hope Squad and have been involved with Hope Means Nevada, which is a team group. Those are two that I know about. How do those interact with that?

***Superintendent Jara:***

The data is used within the MLTs in schools with some of these programs. Some of our partners do not operate across all our schools, so it will be very specific to a particular school and will be channeled or funneled through the MLT teams within the schools, and they will be responsible for triangulating the data to support students.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any other questions? Seeing none, we will now hear from Dr. Paul LaMarca on behalf of the Washoe County School District (WCSD).

***Paul M. LaMarca, Ph.D., Chief Strategies Officer, WCSD:***

I am going to talk about bridging mental health with student learning. It is going to be focused on students, but I will try to make some comments at the end of the presentation regarding adults in our buildings. (Agenda Item IV A)

We know there are a variety of stressors in the environment at home and in school affecting students every day, and students will cope in different ways. They may have poor attendance, demonstrate disruptive slips into substance use, or have difficulty regulating their emotions, and all of these are associated with poor academic performance. To optimize student learning, students must feel safe, welcome, and valued, and when we approach building a community in which they sense those things, we are supporting all these areas: attendance, behavior, mental health, and academics.

We use a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework to couch our services. Tier one includes all the strategies and practices that are provided to all students, tier two is for interventions for students who are not responding to these core practices, and then if students continue to struggle, we move into tier three, which is more specialized regarding a student's needs.

I will walk through some of the strategies we use, and again, you are going to see things within this list that may seem more related to behavior or attendance, but they support mental health as well. I will also point out some of the ones that are more specific to mental health.

Based on legislation, we are working with Handle with Care. We have trauma-sensitive practices within our classrooms and a very robust social-emotional learning curriculum throughout our K–12 lessons. We have general counseling support for all students, and we also provide mental health awareness and school safety lessons, which are designed to destigmatize mental health. We provide suicide prevention curriculum and signs of suicide, or SOS, screenings at certain grade levels. This is provided to all students.

At the tier two level, which is when we begin to intervene when a student is not responding well, some of the things more directly related to mental health are small group counseling that might be provided by school social workers, counselors, or mental health professionals; mentoring for students; and what we call 'check in, check out.' This is a process for our students where the moment they walk into school, they check in with a trusted adult, and before they leave for the day, they check out with that adult so we can constantly support that child.

If we still see students struggling, we get more intense in terms of our interventions. This can include one-on-one behavioral support, therapeutic support, substance abuse programming, violence intervention programming, case management, and third-party referrals. Obviously, we use threat assessments in rarer circumstances or in circumstances that call for that.

We firmly believe that everyone in the school setting can provide support around mental health, from our bus drivers and nutrition workers to our teachers. We also have staff that are designated more specifically around mental health. Not every school has all these staff members, but many do, and we have a safety team in every building. This includes social-emotional learning specialists, behavioral technicians, counselors and crisis counselors, safe school professionals. We have more school social workers, which is a critical resource for us, as well as substance abuse prevention specialists and mental health professionals, which is a specialist school counselor, school psychologists, and even our nurses are often supporting mental health needs.

Sometimes, there is a conversation about how much the school should do versus the community, and this is a community-wide issue, but we do not have the choice not to

support mental health needs. The students are in our classrooms and for them to learn, they must be in a good place to do that.

Having said that, we have strong partnerships with our human services agency, Juvenile Services, the Office of Suicide Prevention, and family courts, and we also have great partnerships with several nonprofit agencies. I will point out Children's Cabinet, Renown Hospital, and Awaken. We work with Communities in Schools, and I know they do that in Clark County as well. We have family resource centers that are designed to support basic needs such as food or housing insecurity. We also have many partnerships with the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), and many more school-based, co-located therapeutic services, though this is an area that we hope to expand.

I will say with respect to adults that many of the strategies that I listed under tier one that are centered around building community are supports for adults as well as students. When you are building a community, it is a working community as well as a learning community, so we do provide a lot of support around social-emotional learning for our adults. At tier two, for the last couple of years, especially because of the pandemic, we have provided weekly peer support groups for teachers through partnerships with private therapists. The format has mostly been virtual, so that creates some barriers to that support, but we are going to continue that into the future. There is a definite need.

At tier three, when there is a crisis, our crisis response teams respond to students, but they are also there for the entire staff. Our crisis response team includes some specialized crisis counselors and our emergency services folks. We have partnerships where we will bring in pets and do different things and then do some case management when people require additional services. Employees can also take advantage of our employee assistance program when they have very specialized needs, and that is not something that is shared with an employer. I would be happy to answer any questions.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any questions from Committee members? Seeing none, we will move on to a presentation from NDE.

***Christy McGill, Director, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, NDE:***

Superintendent Jara and Dr. LaMarca did wonderful jobs explaining the mental health situation and the MTSS framework. I am going to discuss the importance of school-based health. I want to pause and highlight the great work that has happened in our schools with our school nurses, the importance of the team to support teachers, which we call the specialized instructional support personnel ratios, and the efforts the state is doing to increase the capacity of school-based health services. (Agenda Item IV B)

We affectionately say that our districts are the A-team, and the Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment is the B-team. We get to be there for the adults and help look at capacity building, bringing resources, and connecting them to trainings and evidence-based practices when needed. Across the nation, moving school health services into our schools brings better outcomes, both academically and around health and wellness, because we are focusing on the health and wellness of our students in a least restrictive environment.

When it comes to school-based services, youth are six times more likely to engage in services if they are done at school. This has meant huge growth, especially in behavioral health as a result of COVID-19 that is being done at our schools. In fact, most children throughout the United States get their behavioral and mental health in our school systems. Also, we are looking at increased collaborations with our Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to create shared policies, protocols, and guidelines for school-based behavioral health systems.

I would like to give a quick shout out to our school nurses and how important they are. This year, because of recovery funds, we were able to secure a nurse at the state level who was able to work with all our chief school nurses throughout the districts, and we found this increased communication important to be efficient when addressing the pandemic and make sure that communication was going both ways, so if something related to COVID-19 was not working at the district level, would know sooner than later.

Also, school nursing became and has continued to be an equity strategy, meaning that kids who have health needs get to go to school, because our school nurses are there and able to help them manage their diabetes or whatever health concern that they are currently negotiating. We are honored to work alongside our school nurses and the amount of work they put in through the COVID-19 pandemic was incredible. They looked at testing for COVID-19, they worked on clinical laboratory improvement amendments grants, implemented testing strategy, reported positive cases, and did contract tracing. They worked hard throughout the state to make sure that their schools stayed open, and again, I think in some ways they are our unsung heroes. If you can take a moment to thank a school nurse, it would be greatly appreciated.

I am going to discuss the need for support personnel in schools, especially around behavioral and mental health. One of the things we want to ensure is that our teachers do not feel alone and that they do not have to meet all these needs. You heard Dr. LaMarca talk about multi-tiered systems of support and that is what that is. It offers that team approach, but to have that, we need the workforce and people in schools.

I would like to give a quick review of the work of this body. [Senate Bill 89](#) (2019) looked at developing nonbinding recommendations for the ratios of people to specialized instructional support personnel (SISP), which include school counselors, psychologists, and nurses, all those people who can support teachers. The Nevada State Board of Education then adopted the nonbinding recommended ratios and kept the federal guidelines, for example, the ratio for school counselors is 1 to 250. Last year, [SB 151](#) (2021) legislation was passed to ask our two biggest school districts to share their plans and how to increase these ratios.

Those ratios are great litmus tests to see how well we are doing. I will talk about the resources that are coming up to improve these ratios, so I wanted to start with a baseline. For school counselors in our two largest school districts, you can see the percentages of ratios met. You can also see that despite the pandemic, our districts have improved their ratios in some of these areas. For school psychologists, we are not as far along as with school counselors, and the same is true for school social workers, so we have a way to go. For school nurses, we have slightly better ratios. This is our litmus test to show if we are making progress throughout the years. This is going to be your baseline, and we can refer to these in ongoing presentations.

As we seek to improve these SISP ratios, we have been looking at several things, namely the workforce and other ways of funding. We looked at states that have been seeking other pots of money, not just educational dollars, to fund these people. One of those is Medicaid

billing beyond the educational programs. Nevada is a free care state in that two years ago, Nevada Medicaid and NDE worked together to do a plan amendment to expand the ability for districts to bill for Medicaid. Our goal is to look at when services are done in districts that are eligible for Medicaid billing. Instead of using educational dollars for those, we use Medicaid or other dollars. We will continue to work with the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) to locally grow more educators and address school-based behavioral health shortages.

I would like to talk about our local efforts right now. Again, you saw the baseline and so we will be able to measure how we are doing compared to previous years. One is a grant from the U.S. Department of Education that looks at school-based mental health services workforce development and totals \$10 million over five years.

We have partnered with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and NSC to assess the recruitment and re-specialization strategies to see how we can get people into our schools. There are grants to both these NSHE institutions and our districts to do this. We also looked at awarding funds to districts and charter schools to support hiring incentives, relocation stipends, and field placement incentives for current university and college systems. Our career and technical education (CTE) dual credit programs are looking at growing our own, and if we can get our students interested in these fields, they are more apt to stay and return into our school systems as well. We cannot forget our CTE strategies.

We considered setting aside the state allotment of the school emergency relief funds to offset some of the mental health concerns that our districts were expressing. Nevada's Department of Education has invested \$7.5 million to hire additional school-based mental health professionals and \$1.7 million to hire MTSS coaches. You heard Dr. LaMarca talk about the reason we need that system in place in our schools so that we can intervene early when problems first start to arise either with our staff or our students.

I want to quickly cover our Trauma Recovery Grant. This grant works with our districts and our providers throughout the State of Nevada to offset any costs of trauma services for our students, especially as they are coming out of the pandemic, so that students have choices around the resources they need, even if they are not covered by insurance, do not have citizen paperwork, or are underinsured. Many of our students, especially in rural Nevada, have high deductibles and are thus underinsured for mental health and trauma services, and this grant helps fill that gap. We are well above 500 students statewide who have been served through these funds at the time this presentation was made.

Nevada Project AWARE is \$9 million to deeply implement the tier two and tier three services that Dr. LaMarca talked about in Washoe County, Carson City, and in the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA). Again, we are seeing that if the services are provided at the school, students and families are far more likely to use them, so this grant looks at piloting how we can deepen tier two and tier three services. Washoe County got on board quickly and has pilot schools, as did Carson City and the SPCSA, and our state mental health partner is the Office of Suicide Prevention to expand training. We are looking at collaborative partnership goals and asking what kind of support we can offer our districts when they are looking at deepening tier two and tier three services. All in all, over the last two years, we looked at \$25 million in discretionary funds to increase school-based mental health professionals, \$5 million in discretionary funds for MTSS, \$3 million in restorative practices, and the ongoing \$1 million SafeVoice implementation and enhancement.

Social-emotional learning is a tier one support. At the state level, we want to make sure we make it easy for districts if they want to deepen their work in this area, so we highlight what



the districts do, and if we have a few standout districts or schools, we can connect them with other districts that may be starting to implement social-emotional learning. We look at training, online resources, and coaching as well. Regarding outcomes to date, during the pandemic years, we had 688 educators enrolled with 263 completions, and we also have a team working on the state standards to see how we can embed the social-emotional competencies into our state standards.

Next steps, first, we will continue to deepen the relationships and communication between NDE, DHHS, and our districts. I think you heard some concerns around the crisis teams, so in June, we are going to bring together CCSD and the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) to discuss a project that will come before the Interim Finance Committee (IFC) in August to look at expanding the community side of the mobile crisis teams to go into CCSD to help them open their schools again. That has not yet been approved, but that is coming, and the request is for an additional \$2.4 million to do that immediately to help CCSD in their efforts of bringing in those crisis teams into the schools. We are also looking to build Medicaid for free care. Again, if the schools are implementing services that are billable, we want to make sure we are not using educational dollars for that. And lastly, to sustain that chief nurse position at NDE so that we have that increased communication and efficiencies that we gained during the pandemic.

I want to leave you with some potential returns on investment. If the district has decided to bill Medicaid for school-based mental health services—this is not including nursing or anything else; this is for mental health services—over a four-year period, \$147 million could be recouped based upon some initial allocations on Nevada Medicaid. If you look at CCSD, \$49 million could be recouped, and this is important when we want to help the districts support and sustain the mental health services, they have put in place using those recovery dollars. We need to work quickly in about two years to get this up and going so this money can help support when the recovery dollars leave. I am happy to answer any questions.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Are there any questions from the members?

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

My questions in these meetings generally center around the difference between what is said is happening and the reality of what we see in the schools, so that continues to be a challenge. I am glad to hear that Washoe County is implementing Handle with Care—that is good news—but when it came to sizes for supports for our students, be it social workers, counselors, nurses and so on, you mentioned with class size ratios that one of the requirements from past legislation is that the two largest school districts were supposed to submit plans on how they would try to get within those recommendations.

My first question is, did NDE receive those? If you did, where are those available for us to review? There was also previous legislation where the Nevada State Board of Education had the ability instead of to use the term that was used at the time, 'rubber stamping' class size waivers for those in kindergarten through third grade. Where has the implementation around that ability been exercised as well?

***Jessica Todtman, Deputy Superintendent for Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement, NDE:***

To clarify on SB 151, in consultation with LCB staff, it was identified that districts had to submit their baseline data by February 1, 2022, but their initial implementation plans will not be due until October 1, 2022. and I will defer to Director McGill for the other part of your question.

***Ms. McGill:***

Could you restate the second part of your question again? I am not sure if I completely understood the question.

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

Yes. We know that class size impacts safe learning environments and the ability to keep that environment physically and emotionally safer for the students. A few sessions ago, back in 2017 or 2019, there was the ability under our class size rules in Nevada for kindergarten through third grade where, if they exceeded those class sizes, they had to get waivers that were approved by the Board of Education instead of just 'rubber stamping' them. Schools would also have to put in a plan and a strategy around getting within those recommendations. I was wondering if that has ever been implemented.

***Ms. Todtman:***

Our team that oversees the class size reports and waivers is not present today, so we will follow up with you on that response. My apologies.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any other questions?

***Assemblywoman Hansen:***

I have a question about efforts by DCFS to strengthen their Clark County mobile crisis teams to work alongside CCSD crisis teams. Can you help me understand how it functioned before this help and what it will look like with this additional strengthening?

***Ms. McGill:***

Currently, there are two mobile crisis teams, the school-based crisis team in CCSD and the community-based crisis team, and both have been incredibly stretched, so there have been times when they have run out of mobile crisis teams. This increase will do two things. First, it will be better co-locate the two teams, so we are looking at ways the community mobile crisis teams could co-locate, integrate, and work well together. They have been working together as a team, but we are looking at ways to deepen that. Second, it will increase the amount of community-based mobile crisis individuals coming in to CCSD. Again, this is all a draft, it has not been approved yet, but it is coming before the Committee in August, but those are the current draft plans.

***Assemblywoman Hansen:***

Do we have a financial number? Did you mention one for IFC?

**Ms. McGill:**

It is tentatively for \$2.4 million.

**Chair Denis:**

Does anyone else wish to ask questions? As we go through these questions on this topic, we still have representatives here from WCSD and the SPCSA, so if we have any questions for them, we can ask them.

We are going to move on to the next part of the discussion, which is a presentation from the Nevada Association of School Psychologists (NASP).

**Jessica Shearin, Ed.S., President, NASP:**

I am excited to talk to you today about the school mental health overview of Nevada. School mental health is very nuanced and complex issue and there are many things that contribute to the mental health crisis that we find ourselves in today. Some of those things are class sizes and racial trauma that students and communities have experienced. I will be giving a broad overview but know that I cannot discuss everything. I am happy to answer any questions once we get to the end. (Agenda Item IV C)

There are a couple of things that I would like to talk about that contribute to Nevada's mental health crisis. We have limited resources available. I have some data from Mental Health America, and based on that most recent data, Nevada ranks at the bottom of the list—51<sup>st</sup> for youth and 50<sup>th</sup> for adults when it comes to high prevalence of mental illness. A higher prevalence puts us more at the bottom of the list, and we also rank very low when it comes to mental health supports available. We are consistently in the bottom 10 percent of states when it comes to our prevalence of mental illness and our availability of resources.

One thing that also contributes to that is workforce shortages. We see high workforce shortages in our school-based mental health professionals. Currently, Nevada would need approximately 820 school counselors, 740 school psychologists, and 1,400 school social workers to meet our nationally recommended ratios. With our numbers being that off, there are needs that are going unmet.

For example, school psychologists work to identify disabilities and interpret data, schoolwide school counselors work with large and small group counseling, school social workers work as home school community liaisons, and all three of us school mental health professionals work with direct and consultative mental health supports. Obviously, our roles extend far beyond that, but those are some examples of things that must either be done on our own personal time or are not being done for every student.

I also wanted to include that community-based mental health shortages affect us as well. The national average is to have 30 psychologists and about 15 psychiatrists for every 100,000 residents. Currently, Nevada has approximately 14 psychologists and 9 psychiatrists for every 100,000 residents. Again, needs are not being met in schools or in the community because of these workforce shortages.

I mentioned that we are significantly far away from meeting our recommended ratios, but how does this affect students and families? As of 2017, 14 percent of youth have experienced a mental illness of some kind. Of those, about 64 percent did not receive any treatment, and among youth who did receive treatment, about 75 percent accessed those

supports and schools. If we think about this in an average class of 30 students, at least three students will have a mental illness. Of those three, two of them will not receive treatment and the one who does receive treatment will likely expect the school to support them in receiving that treatment. That means there are a significant number of students in every school who are not receiving the support they need.

I would like to talk about the effects of the pandemic. The distancing we all had to go through has increased levels of anxiety, and after over a year of quarantining, distance education, and physical distancing, we are all experiencing some increased levels of anxiety, both adults and youth. Educators have had to be more flexible than ever to adjust to ever-changing procedures and unexpected class, school, and district shutdowns or quarantines, all while feeling the pressure to close the achievement gap and feeling as though they must be the first line of defense for student well-being. Teachers have a lot on their plates.

All of this culminates in increased behavioral concerns, increased levels of challenging feelings, and increases in student and educator absences. I would like to mention a mental health adage that has become popular over the past several years: you cannot pour from an empty cup, and let me tell you, our cups are empty. We are asking educators to pour from empty cups. We are asking students to pour from empty cups. Throughout the school year, I have observed some challenging emotions for students and staff.

As an example, this year alone, I have had to do more suicide interventions than I typically do for elementary-aged students related to state testing. Students feel so overwhelmed by the weight of this test that they feel that maybe suicidal ideation is their only way out. Because our staff is spread so thin, it makes it difficult to pour from our cups, to build lasting and meaningful relationships with our students, which is the first and most important piece when it comes to student well-being and mental health. It makes it difficult to practice empathy and patience with students struggling behaviorally. We forget that behavior is a form of communication, and we are all communicating to each other that we're struggling. We have all lived a collective trauma and have not had time or resources to process this.

I know the presenters before me have talked a lot about responses across the state, but I would like to speak a little bit about my experience as a school-based mental health professional and how I see these different resources affecting students and educators. Our community resources are critical. As I have mentioned several times so far, school-based mental health professionals cannot do this alone, but I often find that community resources offer very specific supports to communities and may not offer global mental health resources. They may be specific to a certain area or difficult for rural communities to access.

There are various grant funded programs across the district and across the state. These provide amazing opportunities for cutting edge programs to be implemented at schools, but eventually, those grants run out, and if the school or the district cannot allocate funds to continue paying for them, they may lose the progress that they have made. I also find that grant-funded programs are not necessarily equitable. Why should students at a school in Henderson with a specific grant have access to amazing programs that students in North Las Vegas do not have access to? That example is specific to Clark County, but that issue spreads across the state.

Connections between school and community providers are also essential. Dr. Jara spoke about Care Solace, and it is a resource that I have relied heavily on. I have had educators, students, and families come to me to ask for referrals to community resources, and that has been an amazing middleman to connect people to the resources that they need in the

community. However, this resource has no control of availability; they can make the connection, but they have no control over the length of the waiting list. It is a nice start.

There is an opportunity to bring remote providers to the schools. For example, I know some of my schools are utilizing Hazel Health. This has been a great short-term solution to provide tele-therapy in schools. Students can access those at the school. The sessions are limited, which is similar to the supports that may be available in the school through counselors and social workers. I do want to say that there is no one solution or one program that will solve all our problems, but without consistent financial support to mental health programs, all of these are short-term solutions.

I would like to talk about possible causes for workforce shortages. We are short thousands of people, and there is no pool out there of school mental health professionals waiting for a job. We know that we have the choice, and we can go wherever we want, because there is a shortage just about everywhere. We have a hard time in the State of Nevada across all districts. In rural districts, they may be able to offer more competitive pay, but there is a high turnover, and they rely heavily on contractors from what I have heard from my colleagues. In urban districts, our pay is less competitive, which also leads to high turnover. In Clark County alone, I know we frequently lose professionals to neighboring states and districts, because they can give their answers about hiring faster and they are able to offer more competitive pay. Both urban and rural districts have a similar problem. The supply of mental health professionals does not match the need for mental health supports.

I want to mention that for school psychologists, that is who I can speak the most to because that is who I represent, the current sole training program in the state at UNLV produces approximately 12 graduates annually, of which about 4 enter the workforce in Nevada. With these retention rates of recent Nevada graduates, it is unlikely that we will ever close our gap, so we need to do something different.

As a school psychologist, I do not want to talk about problems without talking about possible solutions. One of the things that I think we need to do is fund and invest in pipeline development and higher education training programs for school psychologists. We cannot rely on 1 program to close the gap of 700 professionals in a time that will address our mental health crisis. I also want to address that with so much of our state being rural and our universities being solely in more urban areas, we need to expand access to higher education for rural communities.

I think it is important that we invest in evidence-based mental health and wellness programming. A major piece of our mental health crisis is that we are missing prevention. We have talked a lot today about crisis response, which is critical, but we need to start thinking about prevention because we will never catch up with our crisis if we do not start working on preventing it. Again, I want to say that there is no one size fits all program that is going to fix this, but the more we invest in higher education access and evidence-based mental health supports and giving schools and districts the funding that they need to supply those programs to their schools, we may see more prevention efforts. I am happy to take any questions.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any questions from Committee members?

***Assemblywoman Thomas:***

When you talked about possible solutions, you mentioned evidence-based mental health issues. How do we know about those issues unless we do a study to find out if there is a possible solution? What is the linkage for mental health crisis in our schools? To have that evidence and data in front of you would help a lot, but I have not heard anyone ask for funding for a study.

***Ms. Shearin:***

That is a great point, and I know there are different catalogues of evidence-based therapies and practices for supporting mental health and social-emotional learning, but it is important to invest in research in our state. We should be focusing on what works for Nevada, what works for our students, and while evidence-based can equate to research-based, it could mean exploring what works for our students, and that is an important piece as well. I do not necessarily have an answer or solution for how to solve that, but I agree.

***Assemblywoman Thomas:***

Thank you for agreeing, but to put a star next to that, not only should we be looking for evidence-based mental health solutions, but also to define it. Are we looking at different communities? What are the issues that affect our children and our staff? I know you do not have the answer for that, but I am putting that out there for the record. It should be a study.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any other questions?

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

It is apparent that you are in the buildings living it and working it, and your presentation is very authentic, sincere, and accurate. I also appreciate that you started with statistics from 2017, because we know that COVID-19 gets blamed for a lot of things that have been happening here for quite a while. The Coronavirus Disease of 2019 may have uncovered and exacerbates some things, but we know when it comes to class sizes, over-testing, and racial bullying, I appreciate you acknowledging those issues as well as suicidal ideologies and attempts with our youth and even our adults here in Nevada. Again, these are not new issues, nor is COVID-19 the cause of them.

As you acknowledge from the mental health professional side, and we have all different forms of educators in school buildings that have been screaming forever that there is no academic success or progress without dealing with the mental health and the behavioral side of students. In your professional opinion and your experience and observation, how much of a factor do you think this is? Nevada often gets blamed for being 49<sup>th</sup> out of 50, and of course there are so many different categories that states are evaluated on, but even looking at our mental health when you talked about the ratios we should have in our state, how much of that do you contribute to? What you mentioned about suicidal ideation among elementary students because of testing is alarming. Could you speak a little more on those issues?

**Ms. Shearin:**

With mental illness and mental health crises, it can often be difficult to link causation. Like you said, we cannot necessarily link any growth to the pandemic. Observationally, it seems like things are getting a little bit worse, but as Assemblywoman Thomas mentioned, we do not have research to back that up. Even with my observations about students in elementary school expressing suicidal ideation around testing time, I cannot say that it was the test that caused that ideation, but there may be underlying issues and the stress of the test could have correlated with heightened challenging feelings. Feel free to jump in and tell me if there is anything else you would like me to add.

**Assemblywoman Miller:**

You are answering it according to your professional expertise, and that is fine. The other part of the question was, and let me phrase it this way, if we can improve our ability to address these issues. Sometimes these discussions make it sound like mental health issues are caused in the schools, and we know that is not true, but the schools are the number one responder for most students and families. Educators know when students are acting out their behavior, whether it is disruptive, violent, or internal—because mental health crisis can also be exhibited internally where it does not affect anyone else—all of those impact the academic environment for themselves and others. Do you see a correlation where academic achievement would increase, if we, as a state could address these mental health issues, behaviors, and concerns in our students?

**Ms. Shearin:**

Yes, I 100 percent agree with that. I have supported teachers in the past with classroom management, and the first thing I tell teachers is that students will not learn if they are behaving out of control. If they have challenging feelings or are not paying attention, they are not learning, and if a student is experiencing trauma, they are distracted and they are not learning. If a student is depressed or anxious, they are not learning, so if we can support them and at least give them coping strategies throughout the day to allow them to support and advocate for themselves, I believe we will see an increase in academic success as well. I am always a huge advocate that school is not just for academic learning, it is also for learning how to treat each other, how to behave, how to interact in a productive society. So yes, I think that we will start to see that, if we truly invest in mental health in the community and the schools.

**Assemblywoman Miller:**

A quick follow up for LCB. A bill came out of interim from last year that required an inventory of all the testing being done in the state; NDE was to do an evaluation and then put some parameters around the schools requiring testing in addition to state and federal requirements. I wonder if either the NDE or LCB wanted to respond to that. At what date would we get an update on that process?

**Ms. Todtman:**

Nevada's Department of Education has convened a working group to carry out the expectations of [SB 353](#) (2021). This is not under my division, but I do believe we owe you recommendations in February of next year during the next session, but I will confirm and circle back if I am incorrect.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any other questions? Seeing none, I believe that concludes the discussion concerning health and well-being of pupils and school personnel. Before we move on to the next agenda item. I am going to take a five-minute break.

## **AGENDA ITEM V—DISCUSSION ON RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AND PUPIL DISCIPLINE ISSUES**

***Chair Denis:***

We will now move on to a presentation on the discussion on restorative justice and pupil discipline issues. I know this has been a big issue that we have talked a lot about this year, especially coming out of the pandemic.

***Ms. McGill:***

I am going to cover what restorative justice is and is not, the highlights of restorative justice practices and implementations, and the key role MTSS play in the implementation of restorative practices. I will also give an overview of the student outcomes of schools that are implementing the multi-tiered systems of supports. (Agenda Item V A)

What is the definition of restorative justice? A couple of key points to remember are that restorative justice sets expectations to hold students and staff accountable for their actions, including consequences, to repair the harm and restore relationships. Restorative justice teaches expected behavior rather than punishing negative behavior and gives schools more tools to respond to student behavior without preventing schools from using exclusionary discipline. If restorative practices seem familiar, many of us have had the blessing to be disciplined by grandma, who taught you and explained why you should do things differently and those kinds of things.

Much of the elements of restorative practices are not new. Restorative justice does not prevent educators from defending themselves or protecting students in the case of a violent attack. It does not prevent educators and administrators from suspending or expelling students or enacting other disciplinary measures as necessary. Restorative justice practices do not leave students to their own devices nor remove any accountability for their actions.

To give you some quick highlights of the restorative practice implementation, this has been in our legislation for the past two sessions and even though it is not new, it can look like different practices in each one of our schools. It is behavior change, and when you are looking at complicated behavior change in adults, it takes anywhere from two to five years for an initiative like this to start to take hold.

With that in mind, we did look at how we could get resources and trainings to the field as quickly as possible in the middle of the pandemic, so we went with a no wrong door approach to training. We wanted to ensure that there was money from our ESSER funds to support districts with their own training, and we as a state also wanted to bring in national trainers to offer training of trainers so that we increase the capacity of our districts to train their own people. That is where we are now. By July 2022, Nevada will have a statewide cadre of approximately 30 trainers who can offer International Institute for Restorative Practices for education training. We hope they then turn around and start training the people in their schools. We will continue to work with national experts and offer training statewide.



I want to discuss MTSS. Restorative practices take hold if a school currently has some foundational work and MTSS and social-emotional learning. Multi-tiered systems of support considers how we use data to make decisions and teams with people to make those decisions and enact systematic implementation and progress monitoring. When you roll out something like restorative practices, you want to know if it is working and what data we should be sure to collect to make sure it is working. If it is not, we can course correct.

We also look at a tiered continuum of supports. Restorative justice is not a silver bullet, so it needs to be paired with the appropriate mental health supports. When we talk about school safety issues happening in our schools right now, it is an ecosystem of things occurring, for example, as we heard this morning, not enough adults in our building, or too few mental health resources paired with students coming back and not having access to resources during the pandemic. We look at regular screening. The CCSD did a wonderful job talking about the importance of screening our students to make sure we are intervening sooner than later, before problems come up and we have discipline issues. And then also looked at evidence-based interventions. When students and staff have problems, we have ways to meet and address those problems.

Who is implementing MTSS implementation right now? Over 10 districts and 149 schools are currently using this system, and that is low, because that number looks at which schools are implementing MTSS with fidelity. You could have schools implementing MTSS that are still getting good outcomes that may not be reaching full fidelity. This system also encompasses 99,000 students and 41 trainings.

We work with UNR to provide training, coaching, and assistance around MTSS and the implementation of restorative practices. It takes time to train for and roll out systems like MTSS and restorative practices because you need to look at that training one series making sure schools feel confident looking at their data, so they are making decisions that best meet their school's needs.

Restorative practices have a whole lot of tier one work, engaging into the community of the school and the community that school lives and works in to make sure they are meeting the needs of their students. For tier two, you have targeted interventions, then there is tier three, and after that, there is a coaching series. This is a multiyear approach, and it takes time.

We are seeing some positive impacts in schools that have taken the time and rolled out these initiatives. Schools using MTSS are measuring outcomes, so 90 percent of schools are looking if their implementation is working for students and then looking at the quality of those data systems and then also the district capacity and readiness to implement MTSS.

One of the roles that our State Technical Assistance Center at UNR plays is to help schools evaluate whether they are having positive student outcomes. In attendance rates and chronic absenteeism rates, even though they went up or down in the COVID-19 years, schools that were implementing with fidelity had less of a fall and fewer issues to deal with. The same is true with disciplinary incidences. Schools that are implementing have had fewer incidences than schools that were not implementing, and the same thing goes for bullying.

One of the next steps is acknowledging that complex initiatives like this take time, so we need to make sure that we have the resources that districts need to roll out something like this successfully and make sure that these strategies meet the needs of varied schools.

We must also continue to address the misconception of restorative practices that they solely relate to school discipline. They relate to the relationships built, and you cannot repair a relationship that you did not have, so restorative practices in schools are about creating those relationships up front. We are all humans, and conflict happens, so when conflict happens, we can teach how to negotiate that conflict, and how to repair the situation when you make mistakes amongst humans.

Another goal is to continue to align MTSS with restorative practices. If we take restorative practices off its backbone, then you are not getting the data, you are not getting that full robustness of making sure you are aligning your social-emotional learning with your mental health supports, whether it is tier two and tier three, and again, focusing on that tier one. Nevada's Department of Education will support schools and districts to address staff safety concerns and support the repair of harm and relationship building through restorative practices.

We want to make sure we have this network of adults who can support each other when struggles start to happen in our schools. What does that look like? We have created some communities of practice so that if schools are starting to struggle with restorative practices, they can come in and talk to other schools that may be a little bit further along in the process, making sure that principals have time to talk and learn from each other, and making sure that we have training and that we are looking at evidence-based practices and bringing resources to the table by seeking out not only state dollars, but also federal grants when they come up so this can be implemented. We want to make sure that we are sustaining MTSS and scaling up improvement interventions to support improved outcomes. I wanted to make sure that we did touch on those improved student outcomes with Nevada's implementation of MTSS.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any questions from Committee members?

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

Thank you for starting off by clarifying the misconceptions of what restorative justice and practices are. Hopefully, the more communication and discussion we have around it, people will have a better understanding of what it is and what it is not. Regarding the actual data that is provided on pages 11 through 13, we are dealing with such imperative issues like attendance, violence towards staff, bullying, weapons, violence towards other students in these statistics. Could you give a more accurate view of what the statistics are?

The buildings themselves shut down March 13, 2020, which means we only have data for three quarters of School Year 2019–2020, because for the last quarter, students were not physically in the buildings. We also have stats for SY 2020–2021, but students did not enter the school buildings for most of that year, though it varied across our 17 school districts and our charter schools. Most students in the state, in Clark County schools, had the ability or choice to physically enter the buildings again in March of 2021, but at that point, schools were not at full capacity. We have not actually seen all our school buildings at full capacity until this SY 2021–2022.

I have concerns with the data because it is not accurate. Especially if we are talking about acts that are happening directly in schools, but most students have not been physically in school for literally a calendar year, how does that impede the data? I know that SY 2021–2022 will be more accurate, and it will be the first time we see the racial bullying

stats according to [Assembly Bill 371](#) (2021). Could you speak more and give us a better idea of what this data would be or why we are using these years when students were not completely in the buildings.

**Ms. McGill:**

You said it perfectly regarding the problems with the data. I could not have said it better, and I probably should have started out by acknowledging that with the pandemic, we have major issues with our data. You addressed all the challenges very clearly. Here are some of the opportunities to learn. You are right. I, too, am looking forward to this year's data coming in and we will be able to have that for you. The schools help us gather that data, and I believe it will be available after September; we will be able to bring that to you and show it to you as soon as we get it.

The reason we started with 2017 is because that is when we got a discretionary grant from the federal government to start deeply evaluating this work. Living by discretionary grants is no fun, but that is why you see it start in those years. I am also looking forward to seeing what things looked like before the pandemic, during the pandemic, and then coming out of the pandemic. We will have that data for you more completely in the next couple of months as it starts to roll in. The same goes with our climate data, and I am going to go into detail on that topic in the next presentation. You hit the nail right on the head, and in some ways, we can look at the differences and those variables with the data within those years. We are all anxiously waiting to see what it looks like.

**Chair Denis:**

Are there any other questions? Seeing none, we will move on to the next part of this presentation from Paul LaMarca with WCSD.

**Dr. LaMarca:**

We are going to talk about school discipline practices. I would like to start by saying where I want to end. As an educator, I feel that there is sort of a false narrative out there that we have replaced exclusionary practices or traditional disciplinary practices with restorative practices. These are not opposites; they can work together, they do work together, they should work together, and hopefully I can help explain that. I will also culminate my remarks with a couple of suggestions regarding legislation. We do think that there is some well-meaning legislation that has had some unintended impacts, including creating a sense of a lack of safety, and I think that is fueling this false narrative. (Agenda Item V B)

In WCSD, when we think about a philosophy of school discipline and learning, our business is to educate students, and education is the primary protective factor for students as they mature into adulthood. Keeping students engaged through relevant and differentiated practice is critical. Still, at times, kids will behave in ways that is disruptive to the learning environment, affecting either their own learning or the learning of other kids in the classroom. When that occurs, we very definitely must hold them accountable for that behavior. When there is a victim, we must repair that harm for that victim, and we do need to do things to support the student to change that behavior, and we need to restore the community, and all those things are part and parcel of restorative practice.

We do have a restorative discipline plan that has been required and approved by the state, and we have included, for your review, a couple of excerpts from what we call our behavioral matrix. We provide schools with guidance regarding the types of consequences

that should occur based on the behavior and the strategies that we would use to support students. We probably list about 30 to 40 of these in our matrix, and I have included physical fighting and threats to students and staff. Within this, you will see that we recommend both restorative practices and exclusionary practices when that is necessary. Exclusionary practices such as suspension are needed when there are safety issues; they are not meant to be punitive, but instead to make sure that we have a safe learning environment.

When we talk about exclusionary practices, I will briefly mention three that are regularly used in remedying problems within the school environment. We have in-school suspensions. There is legislation allowing teachers to temporarily remove students, and this occurs quite often, usually when there are repetitive disruptions within the classroom environment affecting all students. These tend to be very short-term out of the classroom in-school suspensions.

We also have out-of-school suspensions, usually in the range of about one to five days, and these occur when there is an acute need for safety, so if there is a physical fight between students that results in injury, there is often an important need to keep separation until we can restore peace.

We have what are called interim educational alternative settings (IEAS) and these are longer-term suspensions. These are the suspensions defined in legislation as ranging up to 90 days and expulsions ranging up to 180 days. For these, all students can return to their traditional buildings at least within our district. We use those for habitual discipline problems, threats to safety, and what are colloquially defined as “big three” major events: possession of a dangerous weapon, battery on staff or students, and distribution of drugs.

We review this data on an ongoing basis with our board of trustees, and to respond to the previous question asked of Ms. McGill, at this point, we tend to compare 2019 to 2022. We have not seen significant increases, but we are not through the entire SY 2021–2022. At this point, our principals all have access to a data warehouse where they are required to review this data on an ongoing basis, which provides a lot of information for their internal planning purposes.

I want to briefly touch on some restorative practices, and I think Ms. McGill talked about the fact that we are looking at them as a reaction to disciplinary problems, but they are also just as or even more important to building community. Things like morning circles, social emotional-learning strategies, the use of positive behavioral intervention services, and trauma-informed practices are all practices that basically build a community.

You see things like discipline at the door and informal or formal conferencing, and these are more of what you might call a tier two response to a negative behavior that attempts to restore order. We also have district intervention assistance teams, transition support, and step-down programming. These are systems-level restorative practices where there is a problem or disruptive behavior and we have to problem solve to support a student through safety plans, or we transition them, for example, from a detention center back to a traditional school. How do we do that to make sure that the student is successful or give them every opportunity to be successful? There are a host of other practices we could talk about.

We do believe that there is some well-meaning legislation, and we are supportive of restorative practices, but we do think there are some aspects of that legislation that have had some unintended consequences. Two sessions ago, [AB 168](#) (2019) changed the big

three—possession of a dangerous weapon, battery, and distribution of drugs. Prior to that change, for a first offense, it was an automatic exclusion to an interim alternative educational setting, and it provided a superintendent an opportunity to make an exception if there were extenuating circumstances. With the change in legislation for battery and distribution, that only occurs after a second offense. We think that creates a sense of a lack of safety, and if you revert that, a superintendent still can make exceptions to that alternative placement, which is not necessarily a bad thing.

I would also bring your attention to [SB 354](#) (2021), passed during the last session. We support the bill in principle. There is a provision that disallows a student living in transition, or homeless, or a student being served through foster care for being suspended for more than a single day. We understand that, and again, our philosophy is that kids need to be in front of high-quality teachers in order to learn, so we want to minimize exclusion. However, as I stated, our short-term suspensions of one to five days are for purposes of safety, so we need to keep those children safe as well. The only way you can suspend a student for longer than 24 hours is if the principal can prove that the child's living circumstances did not contribute to that behavior, which is not something that a principal can prove. We think there are potential unintended consequences. We have every desire to identify kids who are living in transition, so they get appropriate services. These restrictions might create an unintended consequence where they will not be identified. I will now turn it over to C.J. Anderson.

***C.J. Anderson, Superintendent, Elko County School District and the Nevada Association of School Superintendents (NASS):***

I have been in Elko County for a few years, and on April 12, 2022, I was officially appointed as superintendent. Thank you to everyone for your dedication to our schools and for your time spent listening to our concerns. Prior to being the superintendent, I was a school principal as well as the school improvement director with our district. You have heard from WCSD about how they work with discipline and restorative practices in their schools. I am speaking as a representative of NASS, and I want to let you know what is happening in some of our other districts around the state, including Elko County School District regarding student discipline and restorative practices.

Throughout my remarks, I am going to mention the issues superintendents have cited or have reported, and with the help of other members of NASS, we have gathered some informal data to share with you. Since returning from COVID-19, superintendents are reporting that they have not only seen an increase in disruptive behaviors, but also an increase in the seriousness of behavior issues, especially among very young children after returning to in-person education. Some surmise that it is almost as if they have forgotten what social norms are expected in school and in other social settings.

Districts reported that these behaviors have included a myriad of things, even severe instances such as throwing desks and chairs, striking other students, and hitting and/or throwing items at staff that cause injury. Districts have also reported that they saw an increase in the number of students in possession and use of controlled substances. At several middle schools, there were reports of a rash of students bringing knives, not necessarily as threats, but potentially part of a breakdown in norms; increased incidence of physical aggression, sometimes seemingly unprovoked; and school threats at the secondary level were mentioned by multiple districts. Districts have reported a significant change in motivation on the part of students from an academic standpoint. These very concerning behaviors are contributing to an increasingly negative perception from the public and from

within our own staff ranks, as Dr. LaMarca mentioned earlier about the safety of our schools for both students and for our staff.

That ties in with our discipline and restorative practices. Without going into too much detail, prior to my arrival in Nevada, restorative practices were a very significant part of my role as an administrator in Texas, and I underwent roughly seven years of training and experience in the day-to-day practice of how to use restorative practices. I am happy to say that I believe in them wholeheartedly and I have seen them be effective at an individual administrative level as well as the school level. I wanted to share my insights there and how I connect that to the concerns that we are seeing in some of our districts throughout the state.

The vast majority of site administrators—and when I say vast majority—90-plus percent of school administrators—want and are willing to ensure the majority of the well-intentioned points found within the bills we have in Nevada. We believe in the power of early intervention, utilizing behavior plans, and we recognize that students are safest and in the best place when they are in our schools with us, so we do not take exclusions lightly. We agree that truancy and attendance issues in and of themselves do not warrant exclusion. We know that naming a student a habitual disciplinary problem is a lengthy process to be used for intervention purposes rather than a goal to be accomplished, and we also support the utilization of discipline data to root out inequities in our system and help guide decision making for how we can better our practice through professional development and other efforts to make necessary changes at all levels. We believe in and support the right to due process for students and families when it comes to cases of expulsion.

The principles and thoughtful processes of restorative justice are essential to making sure we consider all intervention options for students prior to resorting to suspension or expulsion. In my experience, those practices are most effectively carried out when schools and districts are required to examine their practices through the usage of data and are given the tools to better their practice and then, in turn, are also held accountable to answer for their practices and describe changes that will be made.

I will not go into the litany of things we do in Elko County from a site-basis or a district-basis on how we implement these practices, but I echo Dr. LaMarca's sentiments of what they do in the WCSD, where it is not a total change away from progressive discipline, but rather an integration of accountability and restorative practices all with the main goal of reducing recidivism and intense student behaviors that cause unsafe environments in our schools. Other districts that I talked with have said the same thing, they have all implemented restorative practices along with the disciplinary practices. Most of them did cite the need for more training and for ongoing training. It is not a one-time thing, and as I mentioned during my years in Texas, every year, there was training, and we continue to revisit and get better at that. Districts report they have had both positive and negative results using those restorative practices.

Regarding some of the challenges we are seeing, I want to echo other things that have been said, because I feel like we all want the same thing. We support the sentiment and the goals that are trying to be met when it comes to restorative practices, but we have noticed that within the short timeframe between when the bills were signed in 2019 and then became effective a few weeks later, districts were barely starting to learn how to interpret those things, never mind put them into practice. Across the state, districts relied on various legal interpretations of what AB 168 and others required districts to do, and that resulted in restorative practices being varied from place to place.

Some districts felt that some behaviors are naturally and logically a much better fit for restorative practice than others. It seems that from a day-to-day standpoint with less impactful situations like verbal squabbles, disagreements, not being a good friend, theft, and other things that are lower levels, we have pretty good outcomes with restorative practices. However, when it comes to fights or the big three, a lot of times you would still use restorative practices, but not the same types of things you would use for lower-level incidents. In the end, most districts agree that violence should never be tolerated, and the districts polled cited the need to secure immediate consequences for all instances of violence.

In general, from a daily practice perspective, blanket restrictions placed on schools or districts have proven to lead to unintended and detrimental side effects to the behavior management and safety for the entire school and for the student population. Examples of some of those restrictions or mandates are the age restriction for 11 or older, maximum days of suspension in certain scenarios, timelines for appeals for hearings, and requirements for having to have a behavior plan prior to an exclusion. Those are all things that, while well-intentioned, can lead to inconsistent, untimely, impractical, and other negative implementations of practices.

I want to reiterate that I wholeheartedly believe that a student's age, disciplinary history, disability, seriousness of behavior, safety risks, student living circumstances, usage of restorative practices, and other factors are all elements that have to be considered by an administrator determining the level of intervention, but the mandating or the requirement of any of those individual things essentially removes the professional judgment and the knowledge of an administrator of any given situation. Maybe my only exception to that statement is that when it comes to students with disabilities, there are other governing laws that require we do that to make sure it is not a manifestation of that disability.

We have talked among the other superintendents about this, and I am not going to present you with specific suggestions like exact wording, but from a suggestion standpoint, there are several specific issues frequently cited as significant problems for school districts in effectively implementing restorative practices. One is the age restriction, and another is the co-called 'big three,' and we wholeheartedly support WCSD's suggestion about how to handle that. Also, throughout some of the bills, there is qualifying language which restricts educators' ability to appropriately apply consequences. More clarification of definitions is needed for different types of suspension and how suspensions versus expulsions are treated, because those are massively different things from a practitioner's standpoint. I want to say once again that we wholeheartedly support the sentiment here and want to make sure our students are in our schools and receiving the help and support they need that our restorative practices can provide for them.

***Chair Denis:***

Thank you. What questions do we have for them?

***Assemblywoman Thomas:***

I need some clarification. I do appreciate you going through the understanding of restorative practices, and when we are referencing the 'big three', is it an understanding that the superintendents would like to not include restorative practices when it comes to a big fight or any kind of violence that results in battery? Do we want to immediately proceed to expelling a student or students for egregious behaviors?

***Dr. LaMarca:***

I will try to answer your question, and then perhaps Mr. Anderson will want to add some comments. No, for a fight, we are certainly not recommending that we immediately go to a placement at an IEAS or an alternative setting. The 'big three' includes having on campus a dangerous weapon, battering staff with injury, and distributing or selling drugs, not possession of drugs. Prior to 2019, for those three events, a student had to be removed and placed in an IEAS. Superintendents could make an exception to that if there are extenuating circumstances, and we believe that we should revert the language back to that for those three types of events.

That does not mean restorative practices would not also be used. When kids are sent over to our interim placements, we find out a lot of information about them. There is typically lead up to the event that causes the removal. There are fractured relationships, they are struggling academically, and they may have exhibited other behavioral issues, so there is a need to provide restorative strategies to strengthen their ability to cope and repair relationships, because they are going to return to that campus. The point is that some of these traditional measures can work well with restorative measures.

***Superintendent Anderson:***

As the severity or the seriousness of behaviors increases, I think that includes the need for more judgment and an awareness of the scenario. In my experience, when you have certain things that take place due to legislation or due to anything else that essentially restrict or tie someone's hands in regards to timelines and how they address the situation, you are removing an essential component of restorative practices, which I believe is to allow the person administering both the discipline and providing the restorative practices to pursue and explore all available options to support that student with the most appropriate types of interventions, be they disciplinary or restorative in nature. When certain restrictions are in place that prescribe when a district or school can or cannot do something, you are removing an option and potentially the ability to address the situation in an appropriate manner.

***Assemblywoman Thomas:***

Thank you for that clarification. I do appreciate it. I am worried about checks and balances. That is a big concern I have.

***Assemblywoman Hansen:***

Superintendent Anderson, when you mentioned you had some experience with the Texas model of restorative justice, did they have more of a suggestion-based approach to this rather than a one-size fits all mandate? I want to know how it compares.

***Superintendent Anderson:***

To be perfectly clear, my experience in Texas largely comes as a vice principal or assistant principal—as we call them there. At that point I was not in the nitty gritty of legislation, I was managing students and discipline and that sort of thing at a campus. For frame of reference, my district had roughly 130,000 students, it was fairly large, and I was at a large campus. I do not recall many mandates being part of any of this at all. The only thing that took place on a regular basis was the analysis of data at both a campus level and the district level, so that was the major responsibility.



Assemblywoman Thomas mentioned the need for checks and balances, and I feel like that was the way we did have those checks. We did not go through the motions of, okay, here is our data and that is what it is, and now we know it was okay. We would also ask ourselves what steps we should take to make sure those inequities cease to be or get closer to a median. We had very few mandates other than that. We shall dedicate the resources, the time, the training, and the data analysis to make sure we are doing everything we can to remove those inequities.

***Senator Buck:***

I have been an educator for 30 years. I remember positive behavior supports, love, and logic, which looks like restorative justice, where you teach kids about consequences inside the school. However, when it reaches a threshold where it threatens staff and students, we need to leave this in the hands of professionals. How does this work in conjunction with the bully law, or is it conflicting?

***Superintendent Anderson:***

Oftentimes, there can be overlap with bullying. As you know, not all bullying results in physical aggression or the 'big three' per se, but I think there is a lot of overlap in many of the same strategies that you would use to teach students about the societal impact of their words, actions, and decisions. Many of the things you would do to help them process through a bullying scenario are the same things you would do to process through fighting, or theft, or something else where you are trying to teach the greater impact of the behaviors in which students are engaging. The bullying laws that we have in place do have their own requirements regarding levels of consequences, so there is overlap, but I would not say it is as much as you might think for some of the aggressive things, because my experience has been that most bullying is not physical.

***Dr. LaMarca:***

Superintendent Anderson talked a moment ago about the professional judgment of the administrators making these decisions, and there are certain restorative practices you probably would not recommend be used with bullying victims. You do not want to revictimize the victim, some more common practices such as restorative conferencing have to be done very carefully given the situation. So that is to the point of providing latitude for school administrators to make these critical decisions to support kids.

***Senator Buck:***

My problem is, if we are looking at the restorative justice classroom, where do kids go if they are bullying, if they batter a staff member, if they are under 11? Where do they go? Back to class? Where does this happen?

***Dr. LaMarca:***

It depends. The legislation is clear that every attempt should be made to keep them where they are and support them there, and plans should be created in order to do that. If the school team determines that the plan cannot be carried out because of safety concerns, then there is some latitude. For example, while we cannot send a 10-year-old or younger to an interim alternative education placement, under extraordinary circumstances, the law does allow for them to be moved to a different traditional setting. In-school suspension might be a temporary location to create some separation so appropriate strategies could be implemented to repair the harm that has been caused. It is really a case-by-case situation.

As the impact, the physical and emotional impact heightens, then there is probably a greater need to remove than otherwise.

**Senator Buck:**

I agree.

**Assemblywoman Miller:**

As we have this discussion, I am hearing the concerns of both my legislative colleagues, one being about checks and balances, another being about our main goal of keeping everyone in the building safe and, of course our educators who are presenting. I am not great at remembering bill numbers, but I am great at remembering bill content, so if the LCB will help me with this if we need to reference a specific bill number. I appreciate what you said, and the question that was brought forward, that not all fights are the same. Not all bullying is the same. Not every instance is the same. Even when we have students bring weapons to school, it is often with different intent, so that ability to use judgment based on the circumstance is important, but we must also balance it with checks and balances. A lot of this came out of inequities that were being prescribed to specifically Black and brown students, so in the criminal justice world for adults, we need to ask ourselves how we can balance public safety while making sure that discipline is applied consistently based on the incidents.

I believe it was 2019 that we put forward a committee bill requiring the schools to report to NDE, there was to be an evaluation of the actual incidents that occurred in schools and what those consequences were. The intent of the bill was to have some consistency in the description of the bill. For instance, let us take a tardy. We know that if a student is marked tardy, that tardy could be defined differently from teacher to teacher in the same hallway, let alone in different grade levels, different buildings, different districts. So first, let us get a handle on whether we can all agree on what a tardy is, and then decide what those consequences should be for that tardy. Creating that consistency between not just classroom to classroom or building to building, but also within our own state.

I was wondering if we have an update on if that has been done, because I think it is key information that is missing as we are having this discussion about being able to give our schools the ability to have that professional judgment. It also gives confidence to communities and families as well that these things are being consistently delivered. Does either NDE or LCB have an update on that?

**Ms. McGill:**

I think you are referring to [SB 89](#) (2019), which was to try to codify disciplinary. A working group went through and helped codify those disciplinary for the districts. It was a long time coming, looking at the things you said, so we would be comparing apples to apples. It is an ongoing process. We are closer now than we were before comparing apples to apples, but as new things come into the disciplinary realms such as restorative practices, that work needs to continue. Agreement on that and being able to look at that across the different districts is important and the work group is continuing.

**Assemblywoman Miller:**

Is there a way we can get some information on the working group; like the members, the dates, reports, and the information they have produced? Because I think it is important,

especially now, moving forward with including that within this whole discussion. Can we get that information?

**Ms. McGill:**

Absolutely.

**Chair Denis:**

Are there any other questions? Seeing none, we will now move on to the next agenda item.

## **AGENDA ITEM VI—PRESENTATION CONCERNING SCHOOL SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AND INITIATIVES**

**Chair Denis:**

We will now move on to a presentation on school safety requirements and initiatives.

**Ms. McGill:**

This presentation will cover a few items. We are going to be looking at the SafeVoice Tip Data; bullying and how it is being addressed, some of the concerns that were brought up earlier today; school safety updates; and school discipline data with the criteria that the data is accurate, but it has been disrupted by the pandemic. You will see a big swing and lower amounts of data discipline because during the pandemic, many of our kids were at home instead of in our schools. I want to point that out right now, and the same thing can be said for school climate data. We saw a big reduction in students taking the school climate survey, because many of them were at home instead of in our schools. We will also look at some next steps. (Agenda Item VI)

SafeVoice is operated as a collective impact project, and it is only because of the collaborative work that this remains an asset for all our students, staff, and families. It is a partnership with Nevada's Department of Public Safety, who man a 24/7 chat and phone line for any school safety concerns. They use a platform called P3 or Global, and it connects to every single public school and charter in the state, so when a school safety concern comes up, if it is a life safety issue, it can immediately be forwarded right to the community law enforcement agency if necessary, and it can also go to the schools themselves.

We are also looking at how to make SafeVoice even more collaborative by looking at how to incorporate the community mobile crisis teams, especially in off-hours when our schools are not in session or during the summer. We want to make sure there are adults that can reach out to our students and ensure their safety if it is not an acute issue.

Regarding the number of tips that we saw between 2021 and 2022, and there are swings of data depending upon if the schools were in or out of session. Typically, our tips are reduced when school is out of session because many of the tips around bullying or school complaints and those kinds of things are no longer an issue.

I do want to point out some trends that happened inside and outside the pandemic years. You can see the trends on this graph in which the blue line represents 2019, the year before the pandemic hit, green is 2020, when many of our schools started close, and then 2021 in orange. In that first year of the pandemic, our most common tip was for suicide threats, but when schools started to reopen, the threats of suicide went down. In 2019, bullying was our main tip by far.

What we see is that when school is in session, some of our ways to intervene early are no longer there, and we saw that in the pandemic as well. We were not getting to the kids early, because they were not there in schools, they were not reporting concerns about their peers, so it got all the way to the point of suicide threats. I also want to point out that when teachers and schools are complaining that they had a lot of upheaval this year, you can see that in 2021 the most prevalent tips were the planned school attack, threat to students, and assault and battery. The difference in proportionality is right there.

Bullying prevention and response is a key component of our office and in our quest to make sure that we are doing a good job, for quality improvement, lessons learned inside the pandemic, and as we come out of the pandemic. One of the things we have learned over the years of implementing the bullying law, [AB 371](#) (2021), and we have learned this from teachers and school administrators who implement it—is that it is arduous. The parental notification of bullying and the safety plan are the most important components, so one of the recommendations coming from the field is to keep those two things immediate so that parents are notified, and a safety plan is put in place whether bullying has been substantiated. Then we can move on to the investigation to allow more time than the two to three days currently allowed.

Regarding school safety updates, one thing that the pandemic did bring out is the importance of a threat assessment so that when a school does have a planned school attack or when a student reports that their friends or themselves are feeling suicidal, our schools and districts have ways to respond to threats. They already do, but we want to make sure the process and training are up to date with as many of the updates and evidence-based practices and any new learnings that have come along.

We are looking at refreshing training around threat assessment to schools that volunteer and need that refresher. Many of our smaller districts do not get threat assessments often, which is a great thing, so we plan on creating a cadre of district-to-district support that when those things do happen, a district that does have a team that deals with threat assessments more often can lean in and help that district through their threat assessment if they need help.

Also, the Statewide Committee on School Safety started by Governor Sandoval continues to meet. One of their main concerns is to look at the school safety situations and make recommendations. They have been listening to staff, students, and community stakeholders about community concerns around school safety, and they will be making those recommendations late this summer.

Funding has been released for bullying prevention and training, and as required in [NRS 388.253](#), all district, charter, and private schools are required to submit their emergency operations plans to the Division of Emergency Management by July 1, 2022. Districts should also implement site-based safety inventories and use federal relief funding for upgrades to buildings and grounds if needed.

Moving on to the school discipline, for 2021 the data is accurate, although it has been disrupted by the pandemic. We had many of our students at home, so the numbers are at much lower levels than you would typically see during a normal school year. As required, and as has been asked in the past by this body, we started to disaggregate our discipline data through expulsion, suspension, and enrollment to make sure that the discipline can be looked at by race and ethnicity. This is to ensure that our system does not have disparities, and as you can see, we do have some disparities that the districts and the state need to work on together. We also look at school discipline by gender and through special

populations, breaking it out into the same three categories of expulsion, suspension, and enrollment. In addition, we track both suspensions and expulsions by incident type, and you will notice the really low numbers, once again, because of the interruption of the pandemic. Violence to other students is outpacing all other incidences.

Not only do we want key stakeholders like yourself and our districts to look at the discipline data, but we also hope that they look at their school climate data. That is the only way students can have a voice into letting adults know how they are feeling about their school experience. Prevention efforts should include educating students and all school employed personnel about the warning signs and risks. This will allow the schools to make plans for how to reduce those risks.

The school climate survey looks at four different social-emotional realms: relationships between pupils and parents; cultural and linguistic and linguistic competence asking if students see themselves in their teachings and learnings in their schools; emotional and physical safety; and their own social-emotional academic development.

A quick note about the impact of COVID-19 on school climate survey results. We did see a reduced number of students taking the school climate surveys compared to other years. We are expecting this year will have an increased number of responses, and we will be looking at those trends between our pandemic years and our non-pandemic years and be able to bring that data to you as soon as we get it. The surveys are closing for this year.

As Superintendent Ebert pointed out, we did add a staff survey this year because of so much of the turmoil that we were getting reports about from staff. It is important to make sure that we include staff voices so that in the school improvement processes, districts and schools have data that not only reflects the school and the students' voices, but also their staff voices as well to plan around.

The school climate data can also be disaggregated by populations. This is how our students perceive cultural and linguistic competency, and you can see the differences between the different populations. Anything in the 300 to 400 range is favorable, and anything over 400 is most favorable. There are some disparities around how our different populations in the State of Nevada see and perceive school climate. This helps our schools craft their school improvement process to make sure the climate is good for all students.

Regarding the school climate constructs, physical safety last year was well within the most favorable state with many of our kids coming and going from home and school. Both the emotional safety side of things and relationship also went down a little in the pandemic year.

These are the data disaggregated by population, and it is nice that this line is getting flatter as we go, but you can still see that some of our populations, specifically American Indians, do not have the same experience and perception of the climate as many of their peers. Emotional safety is significantly lower than physical safety.

And finally, this body asked us to include gender identity. Students who identify neither male nor female have some of the lowest climate scores than any other population of our students. They do not feel as physically or emotionally safe, and in fact, we are getting low, almost under that 300 mark, but we want to make sure we are well above that 300 mark. To give you an overall feel of the response rates for students, we had a 67 percent response rate for students. Usually, it is in the 80 to 90 percent response rate before this COVID-19 year.

For next steps around school safety, the Governor's Committee on School Safety will publish recommendations in August, and they will continue to hear concerns about both student and staff safety. Again, NDE looks at school safety in a very holistic manner, so it includes mental health, climate, discipline—all those measures we talked about today.

We plan to progress monitor staff and student climate results for improvement. This is important to make sure that we use the investments wisely, or as Superintendent Ebert said, ask ourselves what levers we can look at to make sure we are making a difference. We want to be able to monitor the school climate survey results, and if the money we have invested is resulting in positive results for students and staff in the climate's working and learning conditions.

We will continue to strengthen SafeVoice response features for threat assessment and student well checks. One of the things we learned through the pandemic is that schools and law enforcement relied on each other for student well checks especially around mental health. What does a good mental health well check after hours conducted by our law enforcement agencies look like? How do the law enforcement agencies communicate and make sure that communication is strong between schools and law enforcement agencies?

We are going to continue to monitor school discipline data to ensure student and staff safety while also reducing discipline disparities. There is tension here because we want to make sure that staff and students feel safe, and it is possible to also make sure that discipline disparities are not occurring while we are focusing on school safety.

We will continue and enhance communication with districts for training and resource needs around school safety. I believe it was Dr. LaMarca who brought up the issue of clarifying the role of bullying and conflict in our regulations and maybe in NRS. We have found that there are complications around bullying and conflict that are complicating restorative practices. Like he said, you do not want to have a restorative circle with a bullying victim, but it is perfectly acceptable if there is mutual conflict. It is important to define those two things and make sure they are clarified so schools feel supported and have that clarity to move forward with making sure students are safe it comes to bullying and discrimination and they are addressing the human need to teach how to deal with conflict. .

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any questions from Committee members?

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

First, I would like to make a brief comment. It is heartbreaking that our students who identify neither as male nor female feel so unsafe. It is also interesting that today we heard public comment about our native and indigenous students not being able to wear cultural clothing and dress during graduation, and that is another category that scored lower in some of these emotional safety categories.

I am not trying to minimize the results, but when you parse out all the grades from grades 5 through 12, we see a dip between grades 6 and 7, and by looking, we can say, yep, now they are teenagers, so they are dealing with the problems and concerns of being teenagers, whereas in grades 5 and 6, there is a lot more protection and sometimes connectedness with our parents, teachers, and one another in schools.

In Nevada, grade 6 grade is legally still considered part of elementary school, but in some districts, it is in the elementary buildings, and in some districts, it is in the middle school buildings. Because this was a statewide survey, I wonder if we have examined and tried to extrapolate sixth graders in an elementary building as opposed to sixth graders in a middle school building, what those scores would be.

**Ms. McGill:**

Let me go back to the data to see if that is possible. It is a confidential survey, but we do have school tags and we want to make sure that schools have their own data so that they can plan around it. That would be interesting. I do not think we have posed that cross-measure before, so let me go back and see if that is possible. .

**Assemblywoman Miller:**

Great, thank you for that. I know no one wants to hear me say where we should be placing sixth graders, but if there is some data to support what is healthier for our sixth graders, I think we should look at it.

**Assemblywoman Hansen:**

This is very insightful. I am a huge fan of SafeVoice. It provides so much good data for us to try to understand what is going on and it is important that the kids and their families have a place they can reach out to, appreciate that great work. When we get into the school climate and those analyses, yes, some of the things are disturbing for sure, but when we ask kids to fill out these surveys, are they saying they do not feel safe at school? Do the school statistics maybe support that fear they have?

When I think of the youth today, they are so connected to social media, which has a huge influence on all of us. Shout out to the documentary on social media. How do we know that when they are filling these surveys out, their answers are not indicative of the discord they might feel being by tuned in so much to what is going on everywhere in their world versus what is happening and what they are feeling and experiencing in their schools? Does that make sense?

**Ms. McGill:**

Yes. I can give the LCB the questions so you can get a feel for what we are asking them, but they are specific. We do try to tie it to the school environment, but the community environment absolutely does leak in. Nothing about climate is black and white. It is a real ecosystem, and it makes that team approach necessary between schools, districts, and communities to look at these issues. I will make sure you get a copy of the questions so you can get the feel for what kinds are asked. We do try to ensure they are responding to the perception of the school.

**Assemblywoman Hansen:**

I remembered the name of that documentary: The Social Dilemma. Also, as the mother of eight children who were once teenagers, I think some of this data did reflect that when students enter the teen years, we see some of this data moving a bit regarding their emotions, the variable of this in their life and how their emotions that day play into it.

I think it is super important that we are asking kids these questions, but again, I want to be fair to the schools by acknowledging that these kids might be answering these questions

based on other factors. It could be a red flag that the school needs to look at what is going on there, but I also would hate the school to feel like this is indicative of their climate there when other factors do not necessarily prove that out. I would appreciate that data.

***Ms. McGill:***

Yes, you are completely data literate. This is only a point in time of how students feel on that day, so part of the school improvement process is looking at other pieces of data as well. I think you are hearing from students today and listening to students and staff is important. We try to triangulate these surveys with other data like how they are doing academically and discipline issues, this is one piece of that triangulation.

***Chair Denis:***

We will close out this item.

## **AGENDA ITEM VII—PRESENTATION REGARDING THE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE OF NEVADA (THE INSTITUTE), THE PUBLIC EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

***Chair Denis:***

We will now move on to a presentation regarding the Leadership Institute of Nevada from the Public Education Foundation (PEF).

***Brian Myli, Ed.D., Vice President, The Institute:***

The Institute sees the possibility, potential, and hope that exists in every Nevada student. The Institute believes that developing the skills and agency of leaders enables them to build the teams, schools, and school systems that create student success. Our vision at The Institute is to cultivate communities of innovative, insightful, and principled leaders who champion ideas that changed the world. Our mission is to identify, develop, and retain exceptional leaders in education, build innovative and entrepreneurial communities that include leaders from the public and private sectors, and drive significant, systemic improvement in public education.

***Judi Steele, President and CEO, The Institute and Cofounder, PEF:***

I am going to go over this story with you about how in 2008, the PEF began to look at where we wanted to put our dollars. It was during the Great Recession, and we looked at investment. Where was the most important place to focus the money, we have received from the private sector and from grants? We took a hard look at that and decided it was in leadership. But why leadership? We all know principals and leaders that have been underfunded, that do not necessarily have all the resources, but do wonderful things for boys and girls. We also know leaders that have great resources and that have been given lots of opportunity, and that those schools do not perform as well as they should. We decided it was important to focus on resources, human talent, and retention of the good to great people in our system across the state.

If you look at our story, I am not going to discuss all the things we accomplished from 2010 to 2014, but we did everything here in terms of reviewing the literature, looking, and talking to stakeholders across the state, so this project was developed to help link ideas that leaders should look at for the state and share ideas and best practices across the state.



We were lucky enough to get dollars from the state, which we provided matching dollars, and we started with \$100,000 from the state. (Agenda Item VII A-1)

I would like to go through the work with you. We started to read, to rethink, how do we give great executive leadership training? How do we identify great leaders? How do we grow those great leaders? And then we kept track of retaining them in the state. We talked before about the fact that we do not have enough people in schools. We cannot find them, but we have great people in the schools who often leave because they are frustrated, or they feel that they are not meeting the goal of why they intended to be in schools. The work we do introduces them to great leaders around the country, though leaders and practitioners, and takes them through a cohort, which is eight to ten months experience where they go in-depth learning from great thinkers. The whole idea is to look at mindset, to help people begin to think differently about their work.

We recognize that schools and universities do a great job at the pedagogy and methodology. How do you teach math? How do you teach reading? How do you structure a classroom? But what we need is great thinkers—great strategic thinkers—great people who can look at change like we are encountering today. How do you look at schools and children? How do you look at resources and technology? How do you use that more efficiently in different ways? How do we hear the community? How do the people begin to engage the community? We are looking for the best and brightest in the state, which we have been lucky to find, and there are many more. We have helped those people learn different things from business thinking, best business practice to best education practices, and we have created a cohort of people.

If we now look at not just the work that we have done, we went through another major problem in our country dealing with COVID-19, but that became an opportunity for us to examine what we are doing and what we need to do differently, or what the times require of us, so we looked and we accepted what needed to happen and adapted. We did not stop our programming, we did online programming, we still had an online state summit. We started talking about how we do hybrid, how leaders have multiple generations of people, how they keep them working together for young people, how communities began to look into the building of a school or classroom of a school and see things they liked and they did not like and how educators had to respond to that, et cetera.

One of the other great things we did at the PEF is recognize that this was the time to revisit what the Foundation was doing. We had two buckets of work: one was immediately meeting the needs of the CCSD, because the district had many critical needs, and the other was transformational, since we were building and scaffolding for the state's great people to do the thinking needed for the future.

We realized that both of those are equally important, but they also respond to different audiences. The work we were doing statewide was to look at how we learn from different pockets in the state, how we leverage the resources, and how we inspire and encourage people to do better. The PEF's major goal was to help CCSD, so it was very clear to us, and looking at the times and what was required that we should spin off, that it would be an opportunity for both organizations to put heart and soul into their primary purposes.

We established the spinoff plan. We hired people to help us think this through. We incorporated in March 2022, and I moved over in this new role to capture some of the greatest minds in the community. We are now inviting people from northern Nevada, and we did some work in rural Nevada. We are trying to link the brainpower and talent and grow

the talent for the times, which is not something everybody chooses to jump into, but we believe that it is critical.

We launched a social-emotional learning pilot with partners from the University of Nevada Medical School and other partners across the state—that you will hear about in a minute. We are also continuing to look at our summits, because we have a very active alumni network that will only get stronger. We have almost 300 people who have graduated from our executive leadership program and over 300 teacher leaders. We believe there is a tipping point, and at some point, you will have enough people with a mindset for growth, engagement, and agility that I think we will have great leaders forthcoming who will be able to deal with what happens as the state grows. We are co-developing a strategic plan that allows us to be agile and respond more quickly than most bureaucracies can to what is put before us.

***Dr. Myli:***

I would like to share with you our core programs at The Institute, which include our regional leadership summits and round tables, our Executive Leadership Academy, our Teacher Leader Academy, our Alumni Engagement Network, our Digital Leadership Institute, and our Healthy Minds = Healthy Schools social-emotional learning (SEL) series. Each of our programs reflects the following: to expose Nevada's education leaders to new ideas and ways of thinking; to shift mindsets around problem solving for adaptive educational challenges; to effectively convene stakeholders from throughout the Nevada landscape, bringing in nationally recognized leaders and respected local leaders; to treat school leaders and teacher leaders with respect, trust, and professionalism; and to respond to changes in the education landscape with agility.

I would like to take a moment to highlight three of our programs and to provide you with a brief overview of each, beginning with our Regional Leadership Summits. Our summits are public-facing events held once annually in southern Nevada and once in northern Nevada, and I am very proud to say that recently, we held our inaugural rural summit in Elko. Historically, education leaders, business leaders, elected officials, and stakeholders from across the state have been invited to attend each event featuring the nation's top education practitioners, scholars, and business leaders. Summit topics are timely and relevant issues for schools and districts across our state, and participants are exposed to new ideas, entrepreneurial thinkers, and next best practices intended to motivate, inspire, and foster awareness of innovative problem solving.

The next program I would like to highlight is our Executive Leadership Academy. Before I jump into that, I am very happy to see many alumni of our program in this room or folks who have participated as business or community leaders in our program. We launched the executive program in 2011, working with partner school districts and schools across the state, both urban and rural, to identify, develop, and retain the top good-to-great leaders. It is our goal to strengthen mindset and skills, strategic problem solving, advocacy, resources management, and engagement. The mindset concept is important, and you will hear more about that in a moment.

We want to cultivate a professional network of like-minded leaders. The program is unique in that we invite leaders from the business government and nonprofit sectors to participate. The cohort is not just education leaders, it is cross-sector, and that is by design so that we can engage in deeper problem solving. We have partnered with Georgetown University whereby participants may earn a certificate in education leadership and management from

the McCourt School of Public Policy, and our culminating experience in the executive program is our capstone project. I would be happy to talk more if time permits.

I would like to share with you a testimonial video:

As leaders, we think we are expected to know what we are doing. We are expected to be able to have some answers, maybe not all of them, but some answers to be able to guide and lead. I think here I am in my building; I think I am doing a pretty good job, and then I come to a training like this or one of these weekends where we are spending 15 hours learning a specific topic, and then I find out, wait, I have never even looked at the world from this angle, I have never even looked at student achievement, budgeting, family engagement, planning, or innovation from that mindset. I think that is where the inspiration comes from me. I can look at it and say, wow, I have never looked at this before from this lens.

We did some transformative work with an educational leader named A.J. Crabill, who I think many people will tell you was a transformative experience, and I think he helped us develop the recognition that we have the capacity to address any challenge that comes our way, which sounds easy. And yet, when you are in a situation where there are so many complex things happening, it is easy to lose sight of the role that you have in making the outcomes be what you want them to be.

As leaders, I feel we always need to be growing and working on our craft, and the world is changing around us and for the most part, education has not changed a whole lot. I believe it is up to us as leaders to seek out opportunities to grow ourselves and to also build that leadership capacity within our own buildings, but also within our district and within our state.

This program and this leadership cohort has shifted my ability to think of who I will be in 10 years, not necessarily where. To me, it is way more about who I am as a person and a leader rather than some position or some location or some title. I think it has increased my ability to look at myself and say, well maybe I can do this. Now, with this mindset, who knows what I am capable of. I thought before, 'well, under the current situation, this is where I think I fall, this is where I think my mindset is,' but then you bring in the new mindsets, and it broadens that and opens that up to two different possibilities.

The next program I would like to draw your attention to is our Teacher Leader Academy. We launched in 2015, a few years after our executive program, and you will hear that the model is very similar to our executive program. That is by design. We worked with principals and schools in the CCSD to identify, develop, and retain the top good-to-great teacher leaders and other licensed education professionals. I think the key word in this piece is 'retain.' We are going to talk a little bit more about that in a minute.

Like the executive program, our goal is to strengthen mindset and skills in problem solving advocacy, resources, and engagement, and we empower our teacher-leaders to amplify their voices and their agency. We cultivate a network of like-minded professionals and like the executive program, the culminating experience is a capstone project. I would now like to share with you a testimonial video featuring a few of our teacher-leaders:

I kind of felt like I was in a rut and especially with the last two years of the pandemic, I was questioning myself. Am I making an impact? Am I making a difference? Being with other teacher-leaders and seeing the professors that have been coming and attending the sessions have really reaffirmed my reasons for why I should continue being in the field and continue making the impact I hope I am making.

It is essential that we put our resources into developing professionals. And if you do not develop the professionals, how can you expect the students who receive our services to grow and thrive? I think you are planting seeds that are going to continue to grow, because the things I am learning through participating in this program, not only am I bringing back into my classroom, but I am also bringing them to the teachers' lounge, I am bringing them to staff meetings and bringing these ideas to the peers who I talked to every day. I think it is a ripple effect, so if I am the drop of water, it continues to go out and go out and go out and reach other people.

It is like to build a new family. But then as you are building that family, you are discovering something new within yourself. I like that, and I love that. And I will tell anybody that was considering this program to do it. If you have the time, make the time and do it, because it is life-changing and career-changing and not just for you, but for our students, too.

I would now like to turn things over to my colleague, Ramona Esparza.

***Ramona Esparza, Vice President, The Institute:***

Let us celebrate our impact. What does all this mean? The programming has been provided over a decade reaching far throughout the State of Nevada with over 4,500 community business and educational leaders, and that impact has been far reaching. Looking at the capstone projects, I would like to honor the hard work that has been done by many of those cohorts, some of which has been moved to legislation and you voted on it. We had a principal in our last cohort of nine, Shelly Crawford Cruz, who put forward her capstone project [SB 352](#) (2021) to remove barriers for paraprofessionals who want to become licensed teachers, ensuring that we grow our own. That is one example of a capstone that came to fruition and is making an impact for retention and growing those individuals to be in the classrooms with our students.

Lastly looking at our alumni network, we survey and collect data after participants complete the programming, and over 98 percent say that they are better leaders as a result. I am going to share a personal anecdote. I was a second-year principal, and I was in cohort four in the executive leadership academy, and I want to describe to you the mind shift that happens for a young principal who did not realize at the time what I was signing up for. Transforming a school that was underperforming shifted my thinking and accelerated my ability to open equity and access for my school community. I am retired happily after 28 years of serving in the district, but glad to now be a part of this team and eager to share with you the offerings that we provide.

Another thing I did that I do not know if I would have done otherwise is helped co-found a nonprofit organization called the Nevada Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (NVALAS). It is a state affiliate to try to diversify the pipeline of leadership to ensure that students see individuals like them in the classroom and other roles within a school setting.

One of the things I am very passionate about, and we heard it quite often today is, and we heard it loud and clear from our current cohort of leaders in the Teacher Leader Academy and the Executive Leadership Academy: they are not okay. Their emotional and mental health and well-being is affected because of COVID-19 and the trauma the students and staff have endured. We saw urgent requests for SEL strategies and learning, so we pivoted, as we do, and we partnered with both the UNLV School of Integrative Medicine under the direction of Dr. Annie Weismann and with the nonprofit Mindful SEAD under Dr. Deb Oliver.

We have two separate cohorts. It is a five-part series, and we provide exclusively for leaders, administrators, and teachers. In this series, we are showing them SEL competencies of self-awareness and self-management and having them understand and develop better decision-making skills. Most important are the strategies for them to take care of themselves as educators and leaders. We often hear the adage on an airplane that you are supposed to put an oxygen mask on yourself first in order to take care of others, but leaders do not do that; they put themselves last. For us to have healthy schools, we must have healthy adults, and we heard that all this morning.

We are collecting data and seeing immediate results, because even based on that pre-service data, the participants who chose to come to us from our alumni network were almost 60 percent Title I schools. Additionally, through that data, we have seen that they lack the understanding of how to use the strategies of mindful practice, but because of our experts sharing their research, which is based on science, we have anecdotal and other collected data from those leaders and teachers to say that these strategies are making a difference.

We had a principal share with us that she had not felt like she could take the time for herself, and now through these strategies of mindful practice, she is even implementing it throughout with her staff, who are naturally bringing it into the classroom with the students, and that was the effect we were hoping for. We hope to continue to offer these kinds of supports because they are essential right now. I will now turn it back over to Judi Steele.

***Ms. Steele:***

We could do none of this without number one, the State of Nevada that gave us \$100,000 in 2011—that we matched. Since then, with all these donors and partners, we have raised and spent about \$9.6 million to provide these programs over the last 12 years. The state has continued to give us money, and your contribution has been approximately \$1.5 million. We have dollars that come from tuition, about \$1.3 million dollars, and the rest have been private sector grant dollars.

We know that this is the right thing to do. We believe, as I think many of us know, that we have great people in this state. Many of them are not sure where they fit or get discouraged because they are not sure where to take their passion. We want them to stay in our state and find ways to improve our public schools, and that includes reaching out to, engaging people, and helping our children and their families learn.

I would like to end with the closing statement and then we will open to any questions you would like to ask us (Agenda Item VII A-2). Investing in our school system leaders and ensuring that they are supported has never been harder or timelier. As Nevada and the rest of the country strive to recover from the effects of a global pandemic, our teachers will need the investment in capacity—which is what we do, capacity building—community, and the support of the community, and the ability to advocate for the changes they know need to take place. We are here to support them in the same way they are here to support our

children. We thank you for the years that you have supported us, and we look forward to continuing to help teachers and administrators on their leadership journeys in the future.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any questions from Committee members?

***Senator Buck:***

I agree with you. Leaders make or break schools and districts. A lot of times, we are siloed in Nevada. As a proud alumnus of The Institute, I know that the experience was invaluable to me in 2014 as I was transitioning from C.T. Sewell Elementary School to Pinecrest Academy of Northern Nevada. I look at things differently in that I do not see problems as excuses but rather as opportunities, and I seek ways to enhance that. One of my favorite speakers was Marguerite Roza on school budgets and school funding. She is tremendous talent and great to bring in.

I wonder, what other speakers or topics have you leveraged thus far in your next cohort? Do you have a thought partner to address culture and climate for school leaders in districts and schools? As we are seeing, teacher retention is an issue in our state, so if the leader makes or breaks the school, how are you addressing that?

***Dr. Myli:***

Two faculty we have utilized in recent years for this issue are Ryan Smith out of LA Unified and A.J. Crabill out of the State of Texas. Ryan focuses very heavily on self-understanding as a leader, while A.J. focuses on the climate and culture of the building and makes a statement that until adult behaviors change, children's behavior will not change. You as a leader must focus on yourself and how you impact your stakeholders and community and find ways to partner and to build bridges with your community to ensure positive climate and culture. We kick off the Executive Leadership Academy with those two instructors strategically so that we can understand ourselves and how we impact our school or district community.

***Senator Buck:***

Thank you for pushing the status quo.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there other questions?

***Assemblywoman Thomas:***

I do not have a question, but I want to tell you that I enjoyed your presentation and I love the acronym LION, because we need that for our students and for our community. I also love that you are approaching this issue from the top down, because a lot of people are doing the reverse by working from the bottom up, and change should happen from the top down. I want to say thank you. I appreciate you.

***Chair Denis:***

I have appreciated being able to see some of the cohorts and come speak to them over the years, as well as to work with Shelly this last session on that bill. It is such a simple

concept, and yet it is going to make a huge difference. I am glad you are training up leaders to be able to provide those solutions and follow through with them. A lot of people have great ideas, but they do not always put them into practice, but you are giving leaders the necessary skills to do that.

***Ms. Steele:***

For the record, I want to recognize NDE for their partnership with us over the years, whether it was former Superintendent Dale Erquiaga or current Superintendent Jhone Ebert. We have always worked together to look at what the state needs and to align ourselves with the state's direction. I want to say thank you very much to them.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

I have a comment. As part of the cohort that Ms. Esparza was in, I think the thing that is important is that we recognize that this is a separate type of a leadership experience. A lot of people want to say, well, we have leadership training in the school district, or we have leadership training at UNLV or wherever they go to school. This is separate, above, and beyond, and a different perspective. It is not in place of other training, it is a different level, and it is a whole different experience, so when people say, well, we do not need that—I do not think they understand the level of thought process that you go through with people who are all there for the same reason: to better their leadership experience. It is important to understand that this is a separate and total experience that may, in fact, combine itself with other leadership training you do. This is something you do in addition to expand your horizons. Thank you all for what you do, because I have seen how hard you work.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any other questions or comments? Seeing none, we will move to the next agenda item.

## **AGENDA ITEM VIII—PRESENTATION ON MENTAL HEALTH AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS FROM THE PUPIL PERSPECTIVE**

***Senator Roberta Lange, Senate District 7:***

We want to spend some time talking to you about mental health in K–12. Sitting next to me is Robert Barsel, a student at the Meadows School. I know in the last legislative session, we did a lot of work on mental health for K–12, and I think this is going to take it a step further. We look forward to having future conversations with you, NDE, teachers, constituent groups, and educators. We hope that out of this Committee we could get a recommendation moving into the upcoming 82<sup>nd</sup> Session.

***Robert Barsel, High School Pupil, The Meadows School:***

I would like to start off by going into my background. When I was five-years-old, my father died suddenly from a heart attack, and because of this, I was placed into both group and individual therapy. I stayed in group therapy for about six years, and when I turned 12, I was then trained in a yearlong process to become a peer support facilitator. After that, I started running groups for about four and a half years across the greater Nevada area, and the groups were entirely grief-focused exclusively for children who had lost a parent or sibling. However, I realized that these tools could be used by everybody, so I spent a few summers and redid the curriculum to make it more generalized so everybody could use it.

I have been working at a few different organizations, such as Nevada Youth Network here in historic Las Vegas, which is an organization to offer support to underprivileged communities of color, typically by helping kids with their homework, and at Project 150, an organization that helps unhoused youth by giving them food and clothing and running workshops. I also lead groups at my school, the Meadows, which, though it has a very different socioeconomic background, there is still a large amount of need.

In the past four and a half years, I have helped around 100 kids between the ages of 4 and 18 to articulately identify their emotions, use healthy coping skills, and understand the tools they need to overcome difficult social and emotional issues in a school environment.

I realized that I wanted to reach more people, so I decided to look at more of a legislative approach, and that is why I feel so strongly about incorporating this into school curriculum so it can reach as many kids as possible. Additionally, after the pandemic, the isolation that impacted all people had an even more profound impact on children and their mental well-being. I will present some alarming Nevada-specific statistics from pre-COVID-19 that have only gotten worse.

Finally, part of the bill proposes information including the signs and symptoms of mental illnesses in high school grades. This component of the proposal has become very near and dear to me recently because after going through a few rounds of neuropsychological testing, I was diagnosed with the generalized anxiety disorder, and despite having many years of experience, both in support groups and teaching kids how to look at their own emotions, I was still entirely oblivious to my own condition.

I would like to start with a definition of mental health: it is best thought of as the way a young person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors affect their life. Mental health is a spectrum. In the same way that every individual experiences physical health as a continuum from well to ill, every individual has a mental health experience. As with physical health, mental health changes at different points in individuals' lives based on both biological and environmental factors. When mental health deteriorates substantially, mental illness may also be involved. (Agenda Item VIII)

What is mental illness? Mental illness is any condition that impacts a young person's thinking, emotions, and mood such that it interferes with their daily functioning at home and in school. A few common examples include attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), general depressive disorder (GDD), generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), and various eating disorders.

In December of 2021, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a rare public health advisory on the mental health challenges confronting youth, warning and calling to action about what he called an emerging crisis exacerbated by pandemic hardships. He cited that youth were already facing a mental health crisis before the pandemic, and it is now a critical issue that demands immediate action.

To further demonstrate the need for this. I would like to share with you some mental health statistics. Most people are wondering, with the 2019 statistics being so bad, how has the pandemic impacted Nevada's youth? Per the presentation by the Division of Family Services on [March 24, 2022](#), at the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Health and Human Services hearing, admissions to the UMC Pediatric ED for behavioral health emergencies have increased by 65 percent in 2021 since 2019. Over the same period, the length of behavioral health stays has also increased by 17 percent. Hospital leadership reports that the increase in behavioral health patients and the acuity of patients has led to significant levels of staff stress and burnout. They also indicated the Children's Mobile Crisis Response



Team Hotline has received 46 percent more calls since 2019 and has served 24 percent more families.

On a national level, early data indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic is further exacerbating children's mental health needs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that beginning in April 2022, the proportion of mental health-related emergency department visits among all pediatric emergency department visits increased by 24 percent for children 5 to 11 and 31 percent for children 12 to 17. In addition, pre-pandemic feelings of sadness and hopelessness have already been on the rise from 2019 with about a 12 percent increase. Middle schools have also been experiencing an increase in sadness and helplessness, increasing by 5 percent from 2017 to 2019.

I would like to go over a few of the ways that undertreated or untreated mental health concerns can impact young people at school. For example, they can have difficulty controlling attention during learning tests and trouble completing their homework, and these can lead to frequent absences from school due to illness and school avoidance, troublemaking and or maintaining friendships, and difficulty following school routines and norms, resulting in suspension and sometimes expulsion. Promoting mental health and wellness leads to higher overall productivity, better educational outcomes, lower crime rates, stronger economies, lower healthcare costs, and an overall improved quality of life.

How does mental health affect the larger community? According to the American Psychological Association, as of 2014, mental illness among today's inmates is pervasive, with 64 percent of jail inmates, 54 percent of state prisoners, and 45 percent of federal prisoners reporting mental health concerns. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 20 to 25 percent of the unhoused population in the United States suffers from some form of severe mental illness. Crime, homelessness, and children's inability learn while in the classroom have all been tied to higher incidence of mental health.

Most efforts have been reactive through hiring more school counselors, imprisoning the mentally ill, funding homes for the unhoused, offering substance abuse reform programs, and the list goes on. I propose a proactive measure where we arm our next generation with the knowledge and skills to help them deal with life's difficult times, recognize mental illness in themselves or others, and support efforts to get the help they need as they would if they had a problem with some physical condition.

I would like to review the most recent *Commonwealth Fund Scorecard on State Health System Performance*, which ranks Nevada as 50<sup>th</sup> in the nation for providing children with needed mental health care and 51<sup>st</sup> in mental health when compared to the rest of the nation per Mental Health America. Nevada was given an overall grade of D+ on the Children's Mental Health Report Card and a grade of F in the following categories: access to care, substance abuse, juvenile justice, and emotional disturbance.

Finally, all of Nevada's 17 counties are designated as mental health providers shortage areas. In addition, among the approximately 539,000 students in Nevada's K–12 system, 42,000 of them have experienced a major depressive episode, and 28,000 of those students did not receive any treatment for their problems. This is a massive jump from 2019, if I remember correctly, when about 23,000 students experienced a major depressive episode.

Symptoms of depression and anxiety have also doubled during the pandemic, with 25 percent of youth experiencing depressive symptoms and 20 percent experiencing anxiety

symptoms. According to the Surgeon General's 53-page advisory. There also appears to be an increase in negative emotion or behavior such as impulsivity and irascibility associated with conditions such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). According to the CDC Household Poll Survey, in early 2020, Nevada ranked fourth in the nation, with 37 percent of adults reporting symptoms of depressive disorder or anxiety disorder.

What is the prevalence of mental illness among young people? Many mental health conditions start during adolescence, and half of the individuals living with mental illness experience onset by age 14. This number jumps to 75 percent by the age of 24. Approximately one in five school aged youth experience impairments in life functioning due to a mental illness. The most prevalent mental illnesses are ADHD, generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), and global development delay (GDD). Half of mental illnesses emerge during or before adolescence and three quarters emerged before the age of 25, meaning that mental illness places a disproportionate burden on young people, yet fewer than half of young people with mental illness receive adequate treatment.

What is the impact of mental illness? When left untreated or undertreated, coping with the pain of mental illness can contribute to self-harm, including thoughts of suicide, which is now the second leading cause of death for young people ages 10 to 24. In early 2021, emergency department visits in the United States for suspected suicide attempts were 51 percent higher for adolescent girls and 4 percent higher for adolescent boys compared to the same period in early 2019. Fortunately, the earlier mental health concerns are detected and addressed, the more likely the young person is to avoid the onset or progression of a mental illness and the core related side effects.

Right now, in Nevada, there are simply not enough mental health professionals to address the problems. For example, the school psychologist ratio is 1 for every 1,866 students, while the recommended ratio is 1 to 500. The school social worker ratio is 1 in 8,730 though the recommended ratio is 1 in 250, and the school counselor ratio is 1 in 544, while the recommended ratio is 1 in 250. The funding necessary to meet these minimum standards far eclipse the cost of including curriculum to teach our students basic coping skills and empowering them so that they are responsible for their own mental health. Even if we were to meet the psychologist, social worker, and counseling staff requirements in schools, Nevada healthcare still falls short in every discipline of behavioral health providers.

Right now, Nevada's language for mental health education is incredibly lacking. For example, in kindergarten, the only requirements are to identify different emotions and list the ways a person shows emotions. In fourth grade, the requirements are to identify physical and psychological responses to stressors and recognize how expression of emotions can vary across individuals and situations. And finally, in high school for all four years, the only requirement is to investigate the relationship between mental health and physical health and analyze the ways to decrease the risk of self-harm or suicidal behaviors.

From my own experience, I recently completed the requirements for high school, which consisted of 3 days of 30-minute sessions. My school's counselor talked to every sophomore, and though we got all the grades together, it was hard to pay attention because there are so many kids in one room. Yet those 3 sessions of 30 minutes covered all 4 years of the requirements for mental health education.

Topics I would like to cover in the legislation are defining signs and symptoms of common mental health challenges, promoting mental health wellness and protective factors, teaching healthy coping skills and recognizing unhealthy ones, and destigmatizing mental health

issues so it can be easier for students to discuss with each other and recognize earlier if they may have some mental health conditions.

I would like to emphasize why mental health should be part of a school curriculum. Mental health is something that everyone must deal with at some point in their life. This might be getting help with mental illness, helping someone else, or dealing with stressful moments and challenges. Schools need to be portraying mental health as equally important and crucial as physical health, and that starts with making mental health education a required part of education across all schools. The best way kids are going to learn to understand mental health is to educate them.

To quote California Senator Anthony Portantino, who passed legislation relating to mental health in schools in October 2021, "Education about mental health is one of the best ways to increase awareness, empower students to seek help, and reduce the stigma associated with mental health challenges."

Schools are ideally positioned to be centers of mental health education, healing, and support. Children spend more hours at school than they do at home. Public education is the most efficient and effective setting for providing universal mental health education to children and youth. Historically, health education on subjects such as alcohol, tobacco and drugs, the early detection of certain cancers, and HIV have become required because they were seen as public health crises. The mental health of our children and youth has reached a crisis point.

I would like to reiterate how improving mental health can benefit everyone. Promoting mental health and wellness leads to higher overall productivity, since it has been shown that having increased mental wellness directly correlates into higher productivity in a work setting, better educational outcomes, lower crime rates, lower health care costs, improved family life, improved quality of life, and a subsequent increase in lifespan.

A few different states have addressed teacher curriculum. Since 2016, New York has invested \$1.5 million into developing a website offering curriculum options for their various school districts. While there are some free resources, such as recommended books for introducing mental health as a subject matter for English, we could offer funds to utilize their website. In addition, California has a very robust curriculum that breaks down how mental health should be taught, going all the way from kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

While it is early in the process, I firmly believe that this would have a far-reaching economic impact on the State of Nevada by decreasing homelessness, incarceration, and substance abuse problems. Where Nevada could be at the forefront of improving the mental health of not only our students, but of everyone in the greater Nevada community. I am open to any questions you might have.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any questions from Committee members?

***Senator Buck:***

Thank you for your well-done presentation. Has this been mandated at the Meadows? How do you implement it at the Meadows private school?

**Mr. Barsel:**

The only things that have been mandated, or all that we discussed, was going over what mental health is, and how to prevent suicide, but beyond that, there are no requirements. In our health class, we have no discussion about mental health.

**Chair Denis:**

I would like to ask a clarifying question: you are recommending that it be included in curriculum for students?

**Mr. Barsel:**

Yes, I am recommending that it would be including curriculum for the students in a health class setting or in lower divisions, including overall curriculum.

**Chair Denis:**

Well, they do not do the health class every year, right? Students would only do that once during their high school career.

**Senator Lange:**

I think what we would like to do is get this out to let you know that we think it is important for students, but we would work with NDE on where it would be best placed within the curriculum.

**Chair Denis:**

That is great. You have time to look at that to see how it would work, and you need to have the curriculum for the teachers to be able to teach the students.

Are there any other questions or comments? Seeing none, well done on your presentation. That is great information, and it is helpful for us, especially as we talk about these issues in relation to other items. It is important to understand the issue, and I think this has helped us to understand that.

## **AGENDA ITEM IX—OVERVIEW CONCERNING TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN NEVADA**

**Chair Denis:**

We will now go on to a presentation giving an overview concerning teacher and administrator professional development programs in Nevada.

**Sarah Negrete, Ph.D., Director, Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (NNRPDP):**

I am joined by my colleagues, Dr. Chelli Smith, Director of the Southern Regional Professional Development Program (RPDP) and Jared Partition, Assistant Director in Las Vegas. In Carson City, we have Sarah Cunningham, Director of the Northwest Regional Professional Development Program (NWRPDP), and Assistant Director Annie Hicks. We are pleased to be here today with you to share some information about the RPDPs. We were

provided some bulleted questions or items to address, and we believe we have done so in this presentation. (Agenda Item IX)

To give you a short background about the RPDPs. We were established in 1999 during the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the Nevada State Legislature. We are governed by two bodies, one a regional governing board and another a statewide coordinating council, and you can see in the graphic on the right the colors of each of our regions. The Northeast covers all the green districts. The Northwest covers all the pink districts, and the South covers all the blue districts. Throughout the presentation, you will find that we are coordinated in our statewide efforts, and we hope to point some of those aspects out as we go. We provide services to all traditional public schools and charter schools in this state.

You could say that the RPDPs work in three very broad categories. The first is meeting district requests for services. A district and/or a school leader will contact us and ask for assistance in providing professional learning in a topic or content area they see a need for either in their school or district. We also fulfill legislative mandates. For example, when financial literacy is expected to be rolled out into schools and school districts with educators, we work carefully and closely with NDE to make sure that those programs of study are put together well and offered synchronously and asynchronously in some cases. We support individual teachers and administrators by offering workshops and courses they can choose to opt into. Those courses might lead to an endorsement, or they might be an area of interest for the teachers to grow in, and it might be that we are coaching or modelling teachers who reach out to us for additional support. We have some specific examples coming up later where we put these projects in more targeted focus for you.

The professional learning training sessions we offered in 2021 totaled 1,999, so we were one shy of a nice round 2,000. We break our training or professional learning opportunities into three categories. The first is instructional training, and that includes any presentations, workshops, or university courses we hold for educators. The observation and mentoring category includes coaching, classroom observations and feedback, and modeling or co-teaching in the classroom with our educators. Consulting includes when we are invited to sit in on curriculum committees, for example, at a school or district level, we provide some professional conversations around specific content or topics, and when schools and districts ask for our assistance in helping them plan professional learning for their own projects.

In 2021, we served 22,070 teachers and 3,117 administrators in Nevada. I would like to point out that we have only 35 full-time staff and 11 part-time contracted staff members, so we work hard to serve as many people as we can, and as you will see, we also work hard to demonstrate results with the work that we do with our educators.

Regarding educators' perceptions of the impact of professional learning on instructional practice, each of the RPDPs gives the same evaluation upon the completion of our work with a group of educators, and you can see from this data that our participants believe their learning is adding to their knowledge of standards and their skills in teaching subject matter. It does improve their teaching skills. They believe that they do use their knowledge and skills when they return into the classroom and put them to use, and we are training in such a way that it helps educators meet the needs of all students.

We always allow educators to provide open-ended comments on the evaluation, and you can see that the comments, we are pleased to share support. The strong data on the previous slide where a five is the highest score on the Likert Scale, and we score close to five in each one of these categories, and our anecdotal feedback supports that.

To give you a more in-depth example of how our work is focused, this is a state licensure course requirement for all educators, a multicultural education course that the RPDs provide an opportunity for educators to take, and our data indicates that we have statistically significant increases on 14 of 26 measures of dispositions of those teachers who take our courses. This is measured through a valid and reliable instrument, and we give this assessment both before and after the three-credit course. We are proud of the fact that we are not only focusing on content, but very much focused on the results as well.

In addition, a family engagement course is required of educators through NDE's licensure, and we provide that opportunity for our educators as well. We have seen statistically significant increases in participants' self-reported confidence in family engagement activities because of their participation in this course. Educators feel more comfortable reaching out and understanding how best to reach out and what kinds of opportunities there are that make the most impact with families.

Other programs we have developed based on legislative requirements include creating financial literacy modules and computer science modules. Southern Nevada took the lead on those modules, but we all use them in both asynchronous and synchronous ways throughout the year. They are available to educators at any time, and they can choose to log in and use those materials. We also use those materials in synchronous sessions where we walk through and create a course around the modules so that teachers are receiving professional learning hours for that.

We have provided computer science training through collaborations with the NDE and some private partnerships, and we shared the multicultural education and family engagement opportunities. We are very focused on results. In year two, our Computer Science Ambassadors Project showed that students' pre- and post-assessment scores increased from 40 to 60 percent in what they were assessed by their teachers. It was an inquiry project model where the teachers put some things together in their classrooms and then the teachers themselves showed statistically significant increases in their own knowledge after participating in our computer science work.

Endorsement programs we offer allow teachers to add endorsements to their licenses. We offer different endorsement opportunities statewide including ELAD, reading specialist, GATE, a library media specialist, and a computer science endorsement. We offer both the introductory and the advanced opportunity for our teachers, and we partner with our higher education institutions to make sure that our teachers received transcripts with those credits to submit. You can see results of those programs that we have collected over at least 2021.

In terms of statewide collaboration and communication, we collaborate frequently with NDE and many of our staff members and ourselves sit on NDE committees. When requested, we engage in regular meetings with Superintendent Ebert, Deputy Superintendent Moore, Director Dave Brancamp, and we have a liaison between the statewide coordinating council, Heather Crawford Ferry, with whom we work as well. We have lots of collaborations with the NDE.

We, as the directors of the RPDs, meet monthly so we can effectively coordinate and collaborate on professional learning within the three regions and across the state. We meet and coordinate with several of the educational organizations that you heard from today. We work a lot with our superintendents and have worked in collaboration with the PEF as well. We work frequently with our superintendents and building leaders and have partnerships with UNLV and Southern Utah University so that we can offer those credits for the endorsement courses.

When we create and plan professional learning in our respective regions, we always use the Nevada Professional Development Standards grounding the work. Since our inception in 1999, we have followed the National Learning Forward Standards for professional learning, and I think during the 79<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, Senator Woodhouse led a task force on professional learning, and one of the results of that was creating the Nevada Professional Development Standards that were expected to be used by all professional learning providers in the state. That grounds our work when we are asked to provide professional learning by our districts.

In addition, even if our requested work is not specifically about the Nevada Educator Performance Framework, we embed and connect the instructional practice standards in as many areas as we can, because we always want to make that connection between content and pedagogical moves. As often as we can, we want to explicitly connect what they are learning to the instructional practice standards they are working on in their classrooms.

In terms of RPDP funding, this is a historical graphic of the funding for the RPDPs beginning with the 2007–2009 Biennium and ending with the current biennium, and you can see there that funding took quite a fall, then another fall, and then it was restored a bit and has remained quite flat throughout the last several biennia.

We were asked to speak about funding challenges, and one of the challenges we face is that as unions continue to negotiate for teachers' salary increases—and rightfully so, we are not opposed to those at all—we are on a fixed income, so each time a union negotiates a salary increase, we are obligated to those salaries, and yet our budget never changes. We are continually fighting that attrition of staff because we need to meet the expectations of those negotiated agreements, which sometimes results in operating funds, which would be number one, and then it results in us not being able to hire for vacant positions, which ultimately leads to a reduction in staff. One of our biggest challenges is thinking about how best to meet the needs of our teachers and our educators in our state while maintaining those salary increases on a flat budget.

Finally, I have included the contact information for all of us and we are here to answer questions.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any questions from Committee members? I do not see any. You either did a great job or it is late in the afternoon, or both. The information provided was wonderful.

## **AGENDA ITEM X—PRESENTATION ON THE NEVADA INSTITUTE ON TEACHING AND EDUCATOR PREPARATION (NITEP) PROGRAM INCLUDING ITS SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES**

***Chair Denis:***

We will now go to a presentation about the Nevada Institute on Teaching and Educator Preparation (NITEP). We have Senator Joyce Woodhouse here as well as Dr. Kenneth Varner.

***Former Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Senate District 5:***

Dean Danica Hays is unable to be here today, but Dr. Kenneth Varner is on Zoom. I am going to do a short intro and then he is going to share the program with you.

I am Joyce Woodhouse, former Nevada state senator from Henderson. I am here today to share with you a bit of history and the value of NITEP. We all are aware of the teacher pipeline issues facing Nevada, as well as our nation. During the last week of the 79<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, as Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, I received a call from then-Governor Brian Sandoval who asked if I would meet with some of his staff the next morning on an idea for legislation that could address that issue. Of course, I said yes, and thus was born [SB 548](#) (2017) providing for the establishment of and an appropriation for NITEP.

The measure provided for a grant program that would set forth a highly selective and rigorous program for the education and training of teachers, conduct innovative and extensive research concerning teaching approaches and methods, and evaluate, develop, and disseminate those approaches. The program is open to prospective students within and outside of Nevada, and we purposefully wanted to encourage Nevada students to pursue this opportunity. The legislation also directed the program to address the demographics and diversity of our students here in Nevada.

The UNLV College of Education was the recipient of the grant, has met all the challenges of this new program, and is now reaping the success of its first class of students graduating from NITEP this year. Along the way, they dealt with budget cuts, restoration, more budget cuts, and then the pandemic, which added challenges that none of us had ever envisioned. I am so proud of the UNLV College of Education, former Dean Kim Metcalf, our present Dean Danica Hays, and Dr. Varner. They have truly made this a successful program, one that will continue to grow and provide the best prepared teachers in Nevada.

Several weeks ago, I was invited to a preliminary graduation of this first group of students graduating from NITEP and UNLV ready to go into classrooms to share their expertise, training, and passion with their students. During that afternoon, several of the graduates came up to me with their personal stories, and I will share a couple of those. One said, "This program saved my life, and now I am going to share myself and my knowledge and experience with my math students. I cannot wait for August." Another student said, "I am so happy that I was recruited from California to UNLV. It was the best decision I have ever made. I will be teaching kindergarten students and I have a contract at the school where I worked with the students and the teachers during my years here at UNLV." Two other students shared that they were math and science teachers, and we are excited to begin their careers as educators, and we had a great conversation on the need for STEM and STEAM educators. These testimonies certainly drive home the value of NITEP, and the work being done at UNLV.

Before I turn it over to Dr. Varner, I would like to note that afternoon started at noon and went to after 3:00 p.m. It was in the lobby of the PEF. That room was clear full of students because they had invited the graduating class as well as the second group, the third group, and the fourth group that are on the pathway to becoming teachers. It was electric hearing from those students, seeing them interact with each other, having them interact with those who had been invited in to see what was going on. It was something that I will treasure all my life to see this first graduating class and the students who are coming behind them and how excited they are to enter the teaching profession.

I would like to ask Dr. Varner to share how they have embraced this program, enhanced it based upon the needs of the education community, and their plans for moving forward. They have additions to this program that we had not envisioned when we wrote the first bill, so I applaud them for their innovation. When I met with them a couple of months ago for a



briefing on the program, I was overwhelmed with what they have accomplished and their passion preparing for our students to serve as the educators of today and tomorrow.

I would like to turn the podium over to Dr. Varner, who is in Eastern Europe. I believe one of the reasons why he is there is to talk about this program to educators across the ocean. We are thrilled to have him on Zoom today to tell you all what this program has come to be and what we hope it will continue to go forward for the future.

***Kenneth J. Varner, Ph.D., NITEP Facilitator, College of Education, UNLV; Professor and Director of the Gayle A. Zeiter Literacy Development Center, UNLV:***

I am in Croatia, and it is a little bit before 1 a.m. It is a pleasure for me to be able to speak with you today. Part of my visit here is related to NITEP, and I was able to work with their faculty and doctoral students last week and help them to envision a similar program here as they look to address teacher shortages and some of the common issues we have. I will be giving a keynote lecture on Friday that will incorporate elements of our successes and challenges with NITEP and the global landscape. (Agenda Item X A-1) (Agenda Item X A-2) (Agenda Item X A-3) (Agenda Item X A-4) (Agenda Item X A-5)

Senator Woodhouse already gave a history, but I wanted to say for us that NITEP is living in four eras. The first era was the initial word and shifting leadership, so as Senator Woodhouse explained, through its creation in the first few years, there were several faculty members involved who had come and gone from the project. Era two, we would call the reengagement. I started with this project in 2020, and I am going to focus most of my time on the changes and approaches that we have used since then. In the last legislative session, there was both uncertainty as it appeared that NITEP was being cut from the budget and then came back, and some of the things that we did in between to try to help create a sustainable program. Today, we are a multi-institutional approach and NITEP, through that uncertainty phase, was able to partner with the Nevada Educator Institution on Preparation, Retention and Research (NEIPRR), which I can talk about a little bit later, in partnership with NDE.

I wanted to share about the demographic diversity of our cohort. Seventy students have worked through the program with us so far. Our first 19 are graduating this year, and we are going to be bringing in 45 new fellows next year. Of our 70 students who are currently in or about to graduate, about 66 come from underrepresented groups, the largest group being Latinx, followed by African Americans, folks who identify as multiracial and other nonwhites, and Asian and Asian American. About 34 percent are from historically represented groups. Forty-five percent are first generation college attendees like me. When I think about my own preparation to becoming a teacher, a program like NITEP did not exist where I was and would have helped quite a bit, so we are proud to have so many participants come from a first-generation background.

Right now, we have about 39 percent that are graduating, 37 percent will be continuing in the next year, and then we have some inactive folks and that is for a variety of reasons that we can talk about afterwards. We expanded to have senior mentor fellows, where we brought in doctoral students who want to work in teacher preparation and teacher pipeline to work with our students and give them fellowship through NITEP as well.

With the looming budget cut in the last session, we began working with NDE to find some alternatives to make sure we could at least close out the cohort we were working with even though we were hopeful to be able to expand. We were able to secure some extra funding for the establishment of NEIPRR, and that allowed us to expand and partner with both NSC

and UNR. Starting next year, 45 new fellows will enter NITEP, 15 from UNLV, 15 from NSC, and 15 from UNR, and we anticipate that with the graduates and the new folks coming in, that will be at 85 percent participants from underrepresented populations.

To give you a sense of the faculty involvement at UNLV and our community partnerships, over 4,500 hours in the last two years have come from faculty time working on logistics and mentoring that involved over 25 faculty and staff. We were able to sponsor 10 research mini grants led by 15 faculty members. These mini grants are unique and special in that they allow a research opportunity for the NITEP fellows working with faculty on questions related to the recruitment, preparation, and retention of teachers that they are interested in. We also have 15 unique partnerships with 7 different organizations: The Public Education Foundation, Colegio Concepción San Pedro, CCSD, Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth, Spread the Word Nevada, Nevada Partners, MGM Resorts, and of course the College of Education.

In the last two years, participants have spent their time making an impact in Nevada. Over 11,000 hours of actual fellow engagement have occurred in the last two years, and just short of 4,000 of those are in what we call educational engagement pathways, which give fellows the opportunity for about 40 to 50 hours a year of extra educational involvement in things that they do not typically get through their practicum settings in the universities. We are trying to give them creative, unique opportunities to practice their craft, work with students and families, and build their capacity while they still work on the traditional parts of their programs.

We added a community engagement component to make sure we give back to Nevada, and over 2,000 hours were spent giving back through community engagement pathways where community partners identified the needs that NITEP fellows could help fulfill, and that has been interesting. Over 600 hours have been logged in the research fellowships for the students who wanted to participate in the research with faculty on the mini grants.

We developed a micro-credential as an offshoot of this, which allows any teacher in Nevada to be able to develop themselves beyond what they get in the program, and the entire focus of the first set of micro-credentials is on supporting students and families in Title I settings. Our fellows were able to engage over 2,200 hours there. We have also provided them with over 800 hours of professional development cumulatively across the group.

We have four Saturday sessions a year when we bring in scholars and speakers from all over the United States coupled with local experts in the same areas of expertise, and they do both keynotes and hands-on, breakout style working groups with all the students in NITEP. That gives you a little sense of how we are engaging our fellows, but also their impact in terms of service to the larger community.

Each year, we receive \$750,000, and I wanted to give you a sense of how that is distributed. We take the stewardship part of this work very seriously. About 40 percent have gone to fellowships that directly aid the students to allow them to stay enrolled in their programs. The salary and benefits allow us to have the faculty members and the community partnerships to support the students.

One of the early challenges we noticed that we wanted to fix was that we did not want this to be a scholarship program where students are given money. In fact, we want this to be about their engagement and preparation in ways that are unique, and in order to do that, we have surrounded them with the support of faculty and staff.

We have invested around \$237,000, or 16 percent of our budget, into these mini grants, which are looking at dynamic issues and questions related to the recruitment, preparation, and retention of educators in Nevada. We have invested around a little over \$200,000 into their professional development. Lastly, about 5 percent goes toward other miscellaneous things like technological needs that do not easily line up into a single category.

We have broken the program up into six components. We have an educational engagement component, their pathway each year, and that changes, so in their first year they come in and learn how to listen to community stakeholders through working with parents, community principals, teachers, and kids to understand how they see and understand education and how that can influence their own philosophy of teaching.

We have a tutoring program that works with MGM partnership. We have an ELAD partnership that allows our students in their third year to develop skills with English language acquisition and development. In the fourth year, we tie into a lot of the things you have heard today for lots of other groups, focusing on teacher, student, family, and community mental health and well-being. We want to make sure that as part of the retention, we do not just prepare them well within the program but help them think through some of the challenges they might encounter, including how to maintain wellness for themselves and understand mental health components.

For community engagement, we have a variety of options, and those are by year in the program, so each year, there is a set pathway. Students choose each year what they want to do based on their passions and interests from a set of options they are provided. We had a school that identified a need and requested we run a homework hotline, so every day for a couple hours, we have students who are there helping kids who can connect through Zoom and get help with their homework. It is another way to extend their skills while providing community engagement. We also have community engagement through writing partnerships with children, the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth, et cetera.

Regarding professional development, we want to see them engaged as scholars themselves and thinking about critical issues and education, so we have days where large names in education can come in after they have read their works in our classes, and they get a chance to interact. We have also wanted to extend that, and through live streaming and some other mechanisms, we were able to make that available to any teacher in Nevada who wants to come and benefit from that with us. We are trying to create a larger dialogue through NITEP.

As for the research projects, each student who chooses this option receives an additional stipend, and along with that, they work with a faculty member for 30 hours each year on a research project, but they are not there merely to help, they are coinvestigating the project with the faculty and learning research skills. When it is time to present the work of these research projects, it is not the faculty but the students who present, and it is interesting to see them talking about complex statistics and interesting qualitative approaches to doing research that you do not typically hear undergrads doing. Their confidence makes them teachers who are going to go into the classroom, who have a research mindset, and who want to use data to inform their practice, which is great.

We spend a lot of time mentoring: faculty mentoring, student-peer mentoring, graduate student mentoring, and community mentoring partnerships are all important to us. As I shared earlier, we also offer micro-credentials that allow asynchronous online engagement that they can keep coming back to as alumni of the program, which will be free to them

their entire teaching career if they want it, and which we can also make available to other teachers.

I would like to discuss what we perceive as our four strengths. We have focused on recruitment that matters and considered unique and novel ways to think about who is in the K–12 classrooms in Nevada and how can we recruit students who want to be teachers and want to get that support, who will match that demographically, and who are ready for the challenges, the opportunities, and the wonder of working with Nevada students.

We focused on preparation, making this not a grant that is about a scholarship, but a grant that is about enhancing the portfolios, skills sets, and ideas that will prepare them to be leaders and classrooms from day one. We believe that is what is happening. That is our students' mindset.

We also are thinking about retention. We do not want to invest all this money, time, and energy into teachers who want to leave after the first year, so we are thinking about retention not as a three- or five-year goal as is typical in a lot of the retention literature but trying to make these folks want to be Nevada teachers for a lifetime and that our focus is on moving Nevada forward.

We also think a strength of the program is responsible stewardship. We spend down to the penny now. Since 2020, initially there were some challenges there, but we want to be responsible stewards of this money, maximizing the student experience and finding unique, novel, and creative ways to engage our students while also benefiting the larger communities that we serve in Nevada.

Regarding our challenges, we had some challenges in reworking NITEP from what had been often thought of as a scholarship program in its early days to this complex, multimodal, many pathways happening at once, lots of interaction program that gives students these skills and experiences. Stable funding has been a challenge from the beginning, and given how the Legislature works in two-year cycles, it has become difficult to envision how we can take first-year students into the program without being able to assure them that they will be able to complete the four years of the program. That has forced us to try to think of more novel ways of doing this, but it remains a challenge, and trying to find a stable mechanism to ensure that the funding is there and that allows us to completely work with cohorts is an ongoing commitment.

The Coronavirus Disease of 2019 was an interesting challenge that in some ways helped us make these shifts in reworking NITEP. It allowed us to create partnerships through digital means that we would have never had access to. Our ELAD partnership is in Chile, so we work with a bilingual school in Chile and our teachers work with the students and teachers there to do this cool interactive thing where they are learning about multiple cultures, about how to work with English language learners, but they are then applying that back in Nevada in a way that is cool and interesting, and that would not have happened as easily if it were not for COVID-19. Our challenge now is making sure our fellows desperately wanted to be in-person as much as possible, so now that we are back to in-person activities, we are balancing off the in-person activities with continued online engagement.

From our perspective, we want to keep moving Nevada forward, so we are interested in ways to tie this in with our paraprofessional pathways, as you have heard from others today. Six of our students this year were part of a cohort of paraprofessionals who were able to join NITEP and who are pursuing their degrees. We are interested in how the lessons

and the work that we do in NITEP can fuel these multiple efforts statewide and ensure that we have great teachers in Nevada. I am happy to address any questions.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any questions from Committee members?

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Thank you for joining us from afar. Since you are halfway across the world or maybe all the way around the world, are you finding that other countries or areas have programs like this? You said you were working with Chile, for example. Are we able to build something like this with other countries and learn from their expertise? I know there are some world class education systems out there.

***Dr. Varner:***

Absolutely. My personal area of research is in what we would call 'glocalization,' which is bridging the global with the local, rather than globalization. For me, Croatia is an international context, but for the people here, it is their very local home. In all the partnerships we have, and we think about our Chilean work, it is interesting that for our students, there are these common challenges and opportunities, and what we are finding is that when our university partners find out what we are doing with NITEP, they get excited. It is a different context, but they have the same challenges.

They also have incredible strength in things that we do not necessarily always think enough about, so through these synergies and partnerships, Nevada being a good partner in Chile and helping our Croatian colleagues think about how they develop this themselves, help us then think about how we meet Nevada challenges with a broad set of perspectives that include not just Nevada but beyond. I absolutely see the strength of these partnerships and relationships helping us. I think that we have also given them some inspiration as well.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

I personally think this is a cool program, so thank you.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any other questions? Seeing none, I would like to make a comment. I think anything that we can do that helps motivate teachers is important. We do not provide enough help for them and having something where we can recruit good teachers and give them enthusiasm to want to be in the classroom is great. The work you are doing is so important.

I am not hearing any other questions, probably because it is late. One of our opportunities during the interim is to find out about all these different programs so that as we move forward, we are not duplicating things but rather supporting programs that work and finding out the other areas that we need to improve. It is so important to see the work that you are doing and the support we have been able to provide for that.

## **AGENDA ITEM XI—DISCUSSION ON EDUCATIONAL STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES INCLUDING UPDATES ON STAFF SHORTAGES**

***Summer Stephens, Ed.D., Superintendent, Churchill County School District and President, NASS:***

You are going to see a lot of great documents after lunch, and we wanted to convey that we will probably second everything that is said. We recently met with representatives from higher education about teacher, staffing, and other support staff pipelines. You already heard about our other providers like psychologists, social workers, and mental health providers and how we move those folks up into the ranks. You are going to see great information from the NDE's presentation regarding all the opportunities that exist.

Here in Churchill County, and I believe in Elko County as well, we are one of the recipients of the CTE teacher pipeline grant coming up this next school year to hire a teacher to train in the CTE programs. I am teaching that class this year so we could get it started. We had nine students with 100 percent retention, and two are graduating while the rest are moving up. We will have 42 new students coming in, but I cannot teach 3 sections next year. We are excited to give them dual college credit, and that is what everyone is trying to do so we can get them out into the field with enthusiasm and excitement for this profession we love and know is awesome for people to enter. We are grateful there are so many recruitment opportunities for the education profession.

We know there is legislation in NRS for our critical fill situations, and we want to continue to be able to fill our needs not only with the professional licensures but also our licensures with bus drivers and other areas. We are desperate to fill all our staffing vacancies in our schools. You all work in all kinds of fields, and everybody needs employees, and we are in that same situation in schools. We need school safety and security staff available to help students, we need to be able to cover duty assistants, secretarial pools, office support, accounting, and our maintenance and custodial staff. You heard a great public comment at the beginning, and we must continue to look at those ways.

EdWeek had a report last week that looked at salaries, and Nevada falls in the middle of actual average salary when you look at what they posted, but when you look at over the last two years, Nevada is one of three states that is going backward in keeping up—one of three, out of all the states. We know we have some challenges to face.

My district is preparing our budget for next year, and looking at our ending fund balance, I am going to be at 4.01 percent ending fund balance with what I am presenting to my board next week. That is literally at the bare minimum of what I can have. I have those ESSER funds, and that is great, but it is going to go away. That is going to be our long-term challenge, with inflation and all of those pieces, but we have to keep looking for solutions. The people who are going to present to you have fabulous ideas.

We are out there recruiting and growing our own instructional assistants, paraprofessionals, people in other jobs to become teachers, we are growing our teachers into leaders, our leaders into central office folks, and we are going to keep doing that. We are getting our safe school professionals who were community health workers, who can go on now to get their master's degree of social work. We keep growing people because that is what we do. Here in Churchill County, everyone always learning is our mission. I think that is everyone's mission in schools. We thank you for all the support you can keep giving to our districts in any way possible, and we are grateful to the presentations that are going to

come after lunch. If people have any questions for me specifically or anything that you want me to take back to NASS, I certainly will entertain that at this time.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any questions or comments we would like her to take back to the other superintendents? I know this is a huge issue and we have started some things that are going to help, but that is only a start. We must do even more.

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

In response to the request of anything that we would like you to take back to your superintendents, if we had ever had any efforts on retention, we would not be in this predicament right now. As you know, we are doing all these backflips and thousands of things to try to get people in the door, lowering the standards, all without acknowledgement of the real lack of money. When we look at having some of the largest class sizes in the country, we need to consider where that salary goes. When we look at support staff, we forget to include in the conversation that while the general public assumes that support staff is probably working eight hours a day and getting paid for 50 hours a week, sometimes they are not; in some cases, they are getting paid for 3 hours a day for 180 to 185 days out of that year.

But the bottom line is what we have heard educators—and that includes everyone in the school building—say for decades now: working conditions and pay. While superintendents do not have as much control over the pay and salaries, though I believe maybe they could, I think superintendents absolutely have control over so much of working conditions. That is what I would ask for you to take back to your fellow superintendents. Making sure that our staff is supported, that they are treated respectfully, and that the countless things that are put on everyone's plate that do not actually align or directly support student achievement, whether that is academic or social achievement and development, that those things are removed so we can get to the core of the real reason why educators are there in the building for the social and academic growth. If you could take that back in a nutshell, that would be great.

***Superintendent Stephens:***

I certainly will do that. I have been here before this Committee three times now for three months in a row, so you are probably tired of hearing from me. I think we are on the same page in that regard. We must stop adding all this stuff and get to the heart so that we can remove all of that from the plates for sure. We are like-minded in that regard, and I certainly will take that back and make sure that it is known, because that is what we all want to focus on.

***Chair Denis:***

We appreciate you being able to come back each time. We respect your opinion and those of your organization as well as all the other stakeholders we have been trying to involve in these discussions. Are there any other questions? Seeing none, we are going to take a lunch break.

***Chair Denis:***

We are back on the record, and we are still on agenda item XI.

***Jeff Briske, Director, Office of Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement (EDLiFE), NDE:***

It is my sincere pleasure to present to you NDE's supports for recruitment and retention of Nevada educators. This was quite an educational journey for me, as sometimes we are so focused on our own work that we oftentimes, even with cross-office collaboration, do not see the many additional projects and supports that our colleagues are doing in their respective offices. I am sure there are some pieces of this multifaceted puzzle that are still missing, and I hope that this living document is as informative to me as it will be to you. (Agenda Item XI).

First is an overview of NDE's public bodies and work groups around recruitment and recognition efforts that include recognition, elevating voice, development, and support. I will discuss each of these areas in more detail. Each one of these is color coded to show how they are funded: we have blue for state funds, green for federal funds, purple are Title IIA funds, and the gradient boxes are braided funds.

The first public body is the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Task Force created in [AB 276](#) (2019). Membership includes 3 teachers from Clark County, 2 from Washoe County, and 1 from each of the 15 rural school districts for a total of 20 teachers. Their charge is to make recommendations to the Legislative Committee on Education in even years and the LCB in odd years. There are other groups across the state that focus on recruitment and retention issues. This task force has reached out and received presentations from several of these groups.

The second group is the Teacher Pathways Task Force. Membership here includes NSHE deans, department chairs, district superintendents, and directors of human resources. Their charge of the group is to collectively rise to the challenge of expanding the number and increasing diversity of licensure-ready pre-K–12 teachers annually who complete their teacher programs.

The third group is Nevada Coalition for Educator Recruitment and Retention. Historically, NDE, like many other education agencies, has not been deeply involved in efforts around recruiting and retaining educators. We have leveraged ARP dollars to designate a full-time position responsible for designing the initial coordinating system for NDE to support the recruitment and retention of educators. This position leads this group to ensure that the coordinating system is designed with input from stakeholders. Membership here includes human resource representatives from across the state with the charge of identifying challenges, discussing current strategies districts are using, and collaborating with the department to help define our role in the statewide efforts.

The department convenes additional workgroups for a variety of specific topics, including the development of an exit and working conditions survey, implementation supports for the Nevada Educator Performance Framework, and a web page redesign specific to recruitment and retention. There are also a variety of programs and grants supporting recruitment to the profession. They are the Teach Nevada Scholarship, Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching, Nevada Institute on Teaching and Educator Preparation, Nevada Educator Preparation Institute and Collaborative, Nevada Institute on Educator Preparation, Retention and Research, and our teaching and training grow-your-own programs. I will go over each one of these in more detail.

Two of our largest grants, the Teach Nevada Scholarship and Incentivizing Pathways, thus far have been awarded to 815 people who identify as white; 885 who identify as non-white;



138 declined to answer; and some institutions who have received funding are still reporting. This is a table summary that shows the funding source amount and impact of teachers created or on their way to certification to date. We could roughly extrapolate the student impact as well by taking each number that represents a teacher or soon-to-be teacher and multiplying by the number of students the teacher will impact.

The Teach Nevada Scholarship Grant started in the fall of 2016 with the purpose to provide scholarships to those seeking initial licensure. The requirements are to agree to study specific areas and to teach for five years, three of which must be in a Title I school.

The Incentivizing Pathways to Teachers Grant started in the fall of 2021 with the purpose to provide direct financial assistance to students who are within three years of completing their program. This grant also supports a staff position who works with stakeholders to develop that statewide coordinating system of recruitment and retention. We have also worked with NSHE institutions to expand this program to assist candidates who are enrolled in social work, mental health, counseling, and school psychology preparation programs.

The Nevada Institute on Teaching and Educator Preparation welcomed its first students in 2019 with a multifocal approach, including enhanced preparation through programming research and knowledge dissemination.

The Nevada Educator Preparation Institute and Collaborative is a comprehensive collaborative aimed at providing undergraduate and graduate level professional engagement translating research to practice. This program emphasizes a reinforced grow-your-own approach that highlights and values equity and diversity while providing accelerated pathways for initial licensure.

Each grant is important, but I especially like the Nevada Institute on Educator Preparation, Retention and Research grant because it supports development of both pre- and in-service educators while engaging communities and facilitation of next generation research. This grant provides a three-year opportunity for educator development, focus on culturally sustaining and relevant approaches to mitigating learning loss, responding to COVID-19, and recruiting and retaining strong educators committed to the needs of Nevada. The other reason why I especially like this grant is that it is shared by three major prep institutions, creating opportunities for shared faculty and student research, collaboration, and fellowship.

Supported by our Office of Career Readiness about Learning and Education Options, teacher and training programs currently exist in Churchill, Clark, and Washoe Counties. This grant supports the expansion into rural and urban schools, which will bring greater access to more students. These grow-your-own programs afford students the opportunity to earn up to 24 semester hours of education and core coursework before entering the workforce as a paraprofessional in schools and gives them a jump start with their teacher prep program, thus graduating and obtaining their teacher credential sooner.

The school-based mental health grant is supported by the Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment. This grant supports the development, building, and expansion of preparation programs as well as direct financial support to candidates to complete their program.

The department is developing an educator talent pool of recommended individuals that includes national board-certified teachers and previous award winners to participate in active workgroups or public councils and to identify additional educators that may be eligible for statewide recognition like the Nevada Teacher of the Year, the Milken Educator Award,

the Recognizing Inspirational School Employees Award for support staff, the Purple Star and Blue Ribbon School Awards, and content area Presidential Awards for Excellence. Of note, there is a steady increase in the number of rural educators applying for and being nominated for these recognitions.

As key stakeholder groups, the primary purpose of the Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Cabinet (STAC) and Principal Advisory Cabinet (PAC) is to provide insight and feedback to the NDE on initiatives and opportunities. Members also expand their understanding of each NDE office as well as the NDE's mission, vision, and goals.

The Nevada Digital Learning Collaborative supported by the Office of Standards and Instructional Support started in June 2020 with 85 digital engineers statewide from district, charter, and private schools to build resources and support for teachers to shift everyday instruction into the digital world that includes online, blended, and in-person instruction. After the initial build, the collaborative has grown and continues to provide resources, mentoring, and coaching supports to make digital learning part of everyday instruction regardless of the actual learning environment.

The Nevada Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (SEAD) Center is a system-wide and statewide community of educators developing social, emotional, and academic development skills that reinforce equitable environments and student success. The Center provides state-funded training and coaching, guest speakers, statewide community practice, support groups, a resource library, daily wellness sessions to develop and strengthen the relationship between academics and social-emotional skills that reinforce equitable and human-centered educational environments. We have resources, trainings, and materials for better understanding performance standards that include courses, webinars, in-person visits, and conferences as well as crosswalks and resources for school district and capital improvement plans.

Early childhood education professional learning opportunities are ongoing for program directors and school leaders, and additional sub grants were given to the Nevada Association of School Administrators to fund their Education and Excellence Institute and to the Clark County Public Education Foundation to fund their leadership academies.

Supported by the Office of Student and School Supports, this grant funds three networks: the Leadership Network to make data-driven decisions and ensuring access for all students, the school improvement network to support individual school needs, and the rising leader's network to support and increase the diversity of leaders and to create more culturally responsive systems, promoting stronger student outcomes.

Finally, some support highlights from the EDLiFE Office, including reciprocity of licenses, meaning that if a teacher applies from another jurisdiction or country and they have a valid standard license that specifies the endorsement area, they can obtain a same or similar license in Nevada. A major project that our team has nearly completed is the development of qualification sheets that decipher the sometimes-complicated regulation language that can be used by teacher candidates, current teachers, and college advisors to determine required coursework and qualifications for each license or endorsement type.

On the regulatory side, at the Commission on Professional Standards, we are moving forward with [SB 352](#) (2021) allowing school psychology interns and paraprofessionals to remain employed while completing their programs to certification as well as [AB 225](#) (2021) allowing alternative means of demonstrating competency. The Commission has workshopped mentorship endorsements for both teachers and administrators that are

aligned with current career ladder programs at district and prep institutions, and on the licensure side, we offer mobility for teachers through expanded opportunities for adding endorsements in middle and high school content areas and the popular alternative route to certification for special education. This truly has been a joint effort across all offices and divisions in our department, as well as collaborating with our educational partners, digging deep, creating innovation, and lifting each other up for our Nevada students.

***Chair Denis:***

I am going to start off with a question. You talked about incentivizing pathway to teaching and providing tuition assistance and student teaching stipends to students who are currently enrolled in traditional pathway preparation programs. Can you explain how that works? The other day, I was talking to somebody about that, and the student teaching is always a big thing that comes up and we passed a bill last session that provides some help for people who are working in the district, but for people who are in these traditional programs, what does that consist of when they get help in this way? The big thing with student teaching that they must be doing that full-time, so they cannot be working and doing other things, so it is a big sacrifice. How do these stipends work to help teachers in the traditional programs?

***Mr. Briske:***

I love that question, because the only way to move Nevada forward is to provide free tuition for teachers and paid student teaching, and incentivizing pathways to teaching does provide paid student teaching in a sense. We offer tuition assistance, they can receive at any time during their last three semesters, and during their student teaching semester, we grant them up to \$8,400 to help cover that cost. They can use that \$8,400 any way they wish, whether it be for tuition, living expenses, gasoline, food, transportation, whatever they need, because we realize that we would like those student teachers to be able to concentrate on the students in front of them, learn their craft as best they can, and not have to worry about having a second or third job to support them and their families.

***Chair Denis:***

How many people are being helped? How many qualify for and are receiving this tuition assistance? I agree with your statement that if we want more teachers, we must provide all the help that they need to be able to do that. And, you know, the student teaching is one area that, you know, the tuition to incentivize them to do it are all things that that we could do.

***Mr. Briske:***

As I mentioned before, with Teach Nevada and Incentivizing Pathways together, I had 815 people who identify white and 885 who identify as nonwhite, so roughly 1,700 students have been helped, and if I remember correctly, half of that was from the Teach Nevada Scholarship. The other half was Incentivizing Pathways to Teachers. I would estimate close to half of that or around 850 people have already received help with this Incentivizing Pathways to Teachers grant.

***Chair Denis:***

That is 850 throughout the state?

**Mr. Briske:**

Yes, that is correct.

**Chair Denis:**

So how many do we have in those education programs? I wonder what percentage of the folks are in a traditional program.

**Mr. Briske:**

Out of those universities that did apply, we were able to grant all their requests. Those included UNR; UNLV; NSC; and Great Basin. Western Governors University applied for one semester, and the University of Phoenix I believe applied for eight scholarships because they have a presence here and they train Nevada teachers on those applications. I asked for them to give me the number of teachers they currently had in their program, and we were able to grant all their requests. So out of the 850, I would say that is probably how many they currently have in that program in the final three semesters.

**Chair Denis:**

For anybody going through this now, student teaching would not be an issue? Are all 850 of those people getting stipends?

**Mr. Briske:**

Yes, and I want to put a qualifier on that. Because of financial aid restrictions, some students hit their ceiling for cost of attendance, and some of those stipends had to be reduced.

**Chair Denis:**

Are there any other questions?

**Assemblywoman Thomas:**

My question has to do with the retention part of this conversation. We have a lot of educators for whatever reason with their principals that have been let go. What are we doing to rehabilitate those educators who, for whatever reason, have been out of CCSD for reasons other than violence or something serious? If they left because of personality differences, when they want to go on to another school, they must take the baggage with them of explaining why they were let go in the first place. A lot of times they were written up unjustly. I think I heard the number of over 1,000, so what are we looking at as far as educators, especially in CCSD? We have educators who can do the work who we have let go. How do we get them back into the system?

**Ms. Todtman:**

To our knowledge, CCSD is the only district that posted separation information to any public information whatsoever. Through the data they make transparently available, we are aware that over 1,500 educators have separated from the district this year. With that said, we do not know whether they were let go or whether they departed; that is not information that we would be privy to, and the matter of people being employed or not is of local control, so that is not something that we would engage in specifically.

***Assemblywoman Thomas:***

Thank you for that answer. I also have data indicating that human resources (HR) has submitted that information to me about educators that CCSD has let go, so I would suggest for the record that you please look at HR and ask them.

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

I echo the sentiments that the focus needs to be on retention, so I am going to ask specific questions about retention. With these plans or programs, what are the measurable, quantifiable goals you have in place? How do we know that these plans are working? Is there a goal for how many teachers will be trained? Is there a goal for how many will enter the profession in our Nevada public schools? What is the goal around retention? The statistics and everything else we see right now literally say that no matter how many teachers we train today, they will not be here three to five years from now. Does NDE have goals for that? Otherwise, we stay on this hamster wheel. What are those measurable goals?

***Ms. Todtman:***

As I noted, CCSD is the only one who posts this type of data, so we do not have a way to track teacher retention in the state—period. That information is not currently available. However, we have recommended to the Chair for his consideration for June that Data Insight Partners has been contracted by us to try to build that data system for the state and create a public facing data dashboard. They would be happy to provide that update about what those plans look like and the timelines at a future meeting, or we can provide informationally if that presentation is not of interest.

To that specific question of who is in our higher education system right now, who may be ready to graduate, who may be licensed already, none of that data is something we have. If we request that information from the institutions of higher education, which we sometimes do, they can let us know who is in their pipeline within reason, but they do not collect that data consistently at a system level; that is institution by institution. In addition, we get static data about educator assignments with Count Day, which of course can fluctuate after October 1. We are working on building those data systems, but we do not have measurable goals because we unfortunately do not have benchmarks at this time.

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

My question was, what were your goals? We set goals before we collect data. My question for the NDE is, what is your goal? Is there a goal? That is a yes or no question. And then secondly, what if you have those goals? How will you know that these programs or the department is being successful? Is there a certain number of people you plan to train and measure how many enter our Nevada public schools? It should not be data before goals, it should be goal before data.

***Ms. Todtman:***

No, we do not have goals because we do not have benchmarks, and when the department undertakes school setting processes, as we do in our five-year strategic plan, we do it based on benchmarks.

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

That is the opposite of what happens in the schools.

My next question is regarding retention, and there seems to be very little. I see the retention efforts of enhancing career ladders and expanding opportunities for endorsements, but honestly, when I read “expanding opportunities for endorsements,” that literally says more time, more work, more money for an educator to expend in order to get that endorsement. We know that for many years, educators keep saying the same thing, that the key factors to retention are pay, working conditions, and respect. When we hear educators who are leaving saying these are the three main categories. How do they align with retention efforts? There does not seem to be an alignment between what the educators are saying that they need and what is happening. Again, if we know we are losing most people between three and five years, what is being done to maintain those people between that five- or ten-year mark when they have that experience.

***Mr. Briske:***

I do agree with you. I hear that all the time: pay, working conditions, et cetera, and again, as Deputy Superintendent Todtman explained, that is a local control issue. We can implement as many things as possible to remove barriers to licensure and endorsements. We have already done for those teachers who already have a K–8 license, they can take a content exam and then automatically get a middle school or secondary endorsement area for that. They do not have to do additional coursework for that, they need to show us that they know the content, then they can move right into that teaching position and be licensed.

***Superintendent Ebert:***

I would like to expand on the questions and the conversation that was had here this afternoon, especially around recruitment and retention. As our staff indicated, we are building out a data system so that we have more and better information to make decisions. When we look at the data that is already out there, prior to the pandemic, we had 2,300 teachers annually that either retire because have done great service and they get to retire, or people leaving the profession.

The Nevada System of Higher Education has been producing 800 teachers within that same time frame. Through that data as well as national and local data, when you participate in higher education and do your student teaching, you are likely to teach 20 miles from where you did your student teaching. Using those two pieces of data, the goal of our grow-your-own program is to create the pipeline. We have been working with NSC specifically, and they have done a phenomenal job teaching and training that you saw earlier.

I loved hearing Superintendent Stephens talk about how she is teaching those courses right now making sure that when they graduate from our institutions, those teachers do their student teaching in our schools. They will stay with us. That piece—making sure that when teachers enter the profession, that they stay here with us, they know their communities, they have families—is how we are building out with these funds that we have that are one-shot in nature. We hope that we will be able to demonstrate to all of you that they will be funded down the road. That is the data that we use to build these programs, and the goal is to have additional educators who would not have been here in our system, and we will be able to report that back to you.

For retention, quite frankly, we struggle at the NDE because we are the policy people within the state. What policies and levers do we have as the NDE to support school districts in retention? That has been an issue in our state. I was with the folks from Harvard last week who came to southern Nevada in 2016, looked at the data, specifically in CCSD, and the data showed that it is a retention problem. Southern Nevada does not have a recruitment problem; it has a retention problem. Those pieces that we know like pay, working environment, lower class sizes, if we had a magic wand, we would absolutely do that. We have been removing those things systematically over time, taking things off teachers' plates, and making sure they have the supports to be successful. We are mindful of what the department can do and what the school districts have control of to make sure their teachers are retained.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

I continue to get emails, and I am sure we all do, that reference reciprocity of license and the issues like how long it takes to get the license. I recognize some of those are local issues and some of those are state issues. Could you clarify that?

The second part to my question is about retention of employment, where they have to stay and work. Is there any thought or discussion about them having to work longer than two years, possibly three or four? We all know that we lose most of the teachers between the first and fifth year, and while we may not want to go all the way to the fifth year, the first two years when you go through the unconsciously unskilled program then the consciously unskilled program, you must teach for three years before you get there. Has there been any discussion about asking teachers to teach longer in the payback program? With some of the law school scholarships, veterinarian scholarships, and with Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), some of those are either five or ten years even, and while we may not want to go all the way out, I certainly think three or four years is reasonable.

***Superintendent Ebert:***

On the reciprocity, I will tell you that I am proud of the team. Deputy Todtman and Mr. Briske have done a phenomenal job in continual research. When you hear something that there is not, please send them our way. To your question, someone wrote an article the other day that said it took a substitute teacher four months to get their license, and I immediately turned to the staff and said, "What the heck?" This should not be happening. They pulled it up. It was not four months, but four weeks. I do not know how an article gets published like that. We have the date the person entered their information as well the date that it was issued.

In terms of marketing, especially this time of year, I guess we need to get out there—the department, the team, and the rest of our staff are working seven days a week to make sure that the districts can hire teachers and get their licenses quickly. The law does have components of the specific coursework for parent involvement and family engagement, so even though we have reciprocity, I think that gets conflated. Sometimes we take all the coursework—we say, hey great, you can be a math teacher, but they still have the provisional because they are required by law to take that course. Sometimes people get confused because it is not full reciprocity; you do have to take the course that has been mandated by the State of Nevada. I am proud of the team.

I also want to give a shoutout to Director George Togliatti of Nevada's Department of Public Safety, because I call him quite often. All the background checks go to their work, and they

do it by hand, and I know thank you as a Legislature approved funding for them to automate, but he has been a very good partner in understanding when we need to have the background checks done for educator licenses or nursing licenses, whatever the case may be. He does prioritize those over other licenses that are for recreational uses. I want to give a shoutout to them because they have been very responsive.

***Mr. Briske:***

I believe the second part of your question was the claw back and how many years it takes. Currently, the Teach Nevada Scholarship has a five-year requirement. You must teach in a Nevada public school for at least five years, three of which must be in a Title I school, along with some other parameters around effective evaluations, et cetera. As far as the claw back for the Incentivizing Pathways to Teachers Scholarship, most recently, for the last two application periods, we have a claw back there of two years where they must agree to teach at least two years, and if they do not, they would have to pay back 25 percent of what of what we gave them.

***Senator Buck:***

You have such a comprehensive approach to recruiting. Along with my colleagues, I am concerned about the retention piece. I know that you have a tremendous database of every single license for teachers and administrators. Maybe you already do this, but would it be possible to do surveys so you can look at facts when it comes to districts' climate and culture, salaries, and various other data trends. An exit survey per se. I know that it is questionable on who reports on whether they exit or not, but this would be a great way to get the data, because you do have a great database of teachers, substitutes, staff, principals, et cetera.

***Superintendent Ebert:***

We have done climate and culture surveys with students, and this is our first year collecting that data. It was on an opt-in basis, and I asked staff if it was still open, but it is not. We closed that opportunity to start to collect that data and we will be able to report it back to you.

***Assemblywoman Hansen:***

You made a comment that I want to make sure I heard right, and then maybe you could expand on it. You mentioned that there are some things the state has taken off the plate of teachers. There are things the districts require, and there are things that the NDE and we here at the Legislature do. Was I understanding you right when you mentioned as part of retention, trying to help them, that maybe we lighten their load where we can? Is that what I understood you to say? If so, what are those things that have happened recently?

***Superintendent Ebert:***

Yes. In thinking about how we do our work with educators, the first one that comes to my mind is conversations we have had with our staff in having teachers come in for professional development and the timing of the work that we do with teachers, especially during the pandemic, making sure that work is not during specific times. During the pandemic, we also worked with the federal government to make sure we had flexibility with assessments and other reports that were due. The reporting is at the district level, but the assessment is at the classroom level, and we wanted to make sure we are not over-burdening teachers at that point in time. I was thinking of the end-of-course exams as well. Those were covered



under the state emergency declaration, but now that is being lifted, so we are in a position where we may have to reimplement those. Those are other types of things we were able to remove during the pandemic because of emergency, but now it is going to be added back, and so we are going to try to bring it back off the plates of educators and children. We can develop a list for you also on other items.

***Assemblywoman Hansen:***

I know even before the pandemic, my conversations with teachers and family members who are in the teaching profession, there is a load that has been put on teachers like paperwork, all kinds of things that do take away from teaching time. As we look forward to the next legislative session, the NDE and the Legislature should be mindful to question the kinds of things we are asking the school districts to do, which then trickle down to the teachers and get in the way. I know these things are vitally important, but us learning to discern which are necessary and if it is worth the time it takes away from instruction time for students and busy paperwork for teachers who are juggling a lot. I appreciate you keeping an eye on that, and maybe we can all work together to do that analysis when we think about bringing legislation forward in the next session.

***Chair Denis:***

Unless there are other questions, I think we are going to move on. That was a great presentation. It is something that we all think about and need to do something about, so hopefully we got some good ideas from this discussion that we can use as we move forward.

**AGENDA ITEM XII—PRESENTATION ON SCHOOL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT PERFORMANCE PLANS**

***Chair Denis:***

We will now move on to the presentation on school and school district performance plans.

***Gabrielle Lamarre, Interim Director, Office of Student and School Supports, NDE:***

I am going to be providing an update on the school performance plan and district performance plan as part of our redesigned continuous improvement process (CIP). A little over a year ago, NDE partnered with UPD Consulting, our partner out of Washington, D.C. They were selected through a competitive process comprised of both district and state leaders to help facilitate this redesign of the CIP in which we have been engaging. The student performance plan (SPP) and district performance plan (DPP) redesigns are part of a larger redesigned CIP, because we truly wanted to ensure that we were not simply updating documents, and that it was a systems-wide level redesign with a focus on getting better at getting better. (Agenda Item XII)

The CIP is a process informed by continuous improvement theory and research along national and local improvement best standards. We have anchored are learning in data, and we are consistently focusing on equity, maintaining an improvement mindset, and committed to collective growth. This is really the foundation behind this redesign.

I am going to talk about the SPP progress and update. As a reminder, per state law, all public schools are required to complete and submit to NDE a SPP. There is also federal requirement for our comprehensive support and improvement schools, which are the lowest 5 percent of schools based on index scores per our Nevada School Performance Framework. They must have a Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) plan per federal law,

and so must our Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) schools, which have large opportunity gaps between student groups.

The SPP is to serve as a school's roadmap and guide on the school's goals and action steps they will take to reach those goals and ultimately improve student outcomes. The first year for utilizing this redesigned school performance plan process was this current school year, so SY 2021–2022. The SPP and the SIP process are focused on strategic planning and strategic budgeting around that planning to align with a school's goals and action steps to improve student outcomes.

The redesign was jointly created by NDE and school district leaders with input from stakeholders across the state; we did have focus groups, meetings, and opportunities for community members, including school leaders to provide input on what this new process should look like, and these were some of the common themes. We realized that the community, school district leaders, and school leaders wanted comprehensive schools and clear processes.

We had feedback that the previous process was unclear and not done consistently. We know that these plans were not living and breathing documents. We also received feedback that the final tools and guidance needed to reflect national and local research and best practices as well as shared values around equity. Again, improving upon the process, we did hear from the community that this was not the case for the previously designed process.

We heard that stakeholders, particularly our school districts and our schools who would be directly using these tools, wanted to feel confident around using them and to ensure that there was a late foundation for using aligned and consistent languages, forms, and processes. As I mentioned briefly, these should be living documents used for authentic improvement efforts. They are not done for compliance purposes but are truly strategic and meaningful. Another common thing we heard from stakeholders was the need to ensure that there were strong working relationships when using these tools built on trust, transparency, and mutual goals. These were key pieces of us working through this process.

Throughout this process, there have been three main teams comprised of both district and state leaders: a design team that has been able to put pen to paper to create these updated tools, a strategy team that helps guide and direct the work and provides feedback to the design team, and a design collaborative—a larger group of stakeholders to review and prototype and provide feedback on the process. That was comprised of State Education Agency (SEA) and local education agency (LEA) leaders, and they are continuously engaging in the feedback process from their school leaders and bringing that feedback to those three teams so that we can get school-level feedback as well.

Currently, the CIP is comprised of three 'acts,' as we call them. This framework has been decided on collaboratively with state and LEA leaders. Before I dive deeper into this framework, I want to point out that although this framework has been used, districts do certainly have autonomy and flexibility to then adjust this in alignment to their current context. The processes that are in place to meet and to go through each one of these acts may look a little different per district depending on their context.

Act one is what we call 'setting the course,' and this is where the school will organize their continuous improvement or CI team and go through the current landscapes. This is where their needs assessment and cause analysis take place, and this Act culminates in the development of the school's performance plan for the year.

The next Act is navigating the course, and this is where progress monitoring occurs. The school CI team will monitor the SPP roadmap and goals, share progress updates with the school community and the stakeholders, celebrate what is working, and adjust what is not working.

The last Act is reviewing the journey, so after a year of implementing the plan, the CI team would evaluate the goals and strategies in the SPP roadmap, identify key points from the journey to determine what they should continue doing, and identify areas of improvement for the next part of the journey, which would be the subsequent school year.

Each Act has different events, and currently there are nine events in total. Act one includes events one through five, Act two includes events six to eight, and Act three, event nine. Our strategy and design teams are currently in the process of seeing how this can be streamlined a little bit better based on stakeholder feedback process consisting of a survey and an additional meeting the CI teams were invited to attend.

We have also provided tools and resources to help our schools and districts with this redesigned process and support them throughout the process. We have had statewide trainings, resources, guidance, and tools and have been providing technical assistance as needed that is differentiated and targeted depending on the school district's needs.

All the tools and resources live online in what we call a padlet. There are specific tools and guidance documents for each one of the events to guide our district leaders to help them best support their schools with this redesign, and all of this is updated as items change. We have received great feedback that this is a great and helpful resource for districts and schools to refer to as needed.

Where are we now in terms of next steps for the SPP? Both the design team and the strategy team continue to meet on a regular basis to finalize the SPP based on lessons from this year and school leader feedback. The finalization of the SPP is tentatively scheduled to be completed at the end of this month, and that is tentative because we want to make sure we consider school leader and stakeholder feedback and include new information and contexts as we continuously improve. Then NDE will send out a memo to the field with finalized changes and updated resources and tools. That is tentatively scheduled to be released in early June and will go out to our LEAs, who will then distribute to their schools using their own internal processes and systems. The next SY 2022–2023, SPPs are going to be due to NDE in the fall of 2022. Those are next steps for SPP, and that wraps up the SPP progress update.

I do have a few slides on the DPP or district performance plans. This is a little less further along than the SPP work, because based off stakeholder feedback, they wanted the design and strategy teams to focus on the SPP. That is what we have been doing, and due to capacity, we were unable to do those both simultaneously as we had originally planned.

Per federal law, school districts and LEAs that received title funding under our Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) must have a district plan that addresses specific components, and it is approved by the NDE. In terms of state law, the hope for the DPP, like the SPP, is to streamline some state and federal requirements so each district is not having to create multiple plans but instead have one streamlined plan that meets all the state and federal requirements.

The DPP could also be used to help our school districts to meet several state law education accountability requirements. On the school level, DPP serves as the school districts'

roadmap that is going to address the needs of their schools and outline their goals and specific action steps that the school district would take to improve student outcomes, and, like the SPP, this is reviewed and updated regularly. The redesigned DPP process will be in collaboration with the school and district leaders, and we will continue the design team, strategy team, and design collaborative to ensure we are getting that feedback to make these tools as useful and streamlined as we can.

I would like to talk briefly about the difference between the DPP and a strategic plan. We know that districts have their strategic plans, and those are usually five-year goals, so the DPP seeks to be a more specific and detailed plan that will then help each district get to the goals that have been outlined in their strategic plans.

I also want to talk about the currently proposed design elements of the redesigned DPP that have been shared and discussed with both the design team and the strategy team.

One element is 'flow,' which encompasses having an annual calendar for order of operation that should be very clear to all. The second design element is 'direct,' meaning the most effective models direct districts and in turn schools to focus on a few common priorities. The third one is 'cohere,' meaning that what teachers do at the classroom level directly connects to plans for school district and state improvement. The fourth is 'focus' on measured change and student, teacher, and school level outcomes. The fifth one is 'study,' meaning we should allow schools and districts to study the quality and effectiveness of implementation through progress monitoring at the district level. The sixth element is 'adapt,' meaning that we should be able to allow for local flexibility for each LEA and district context. This last element is one that our strategy and design teams added, because we only had five design elements initially. The district planning process is the umbrella over the school planning process, and the district planning process should be considering the needs of the schools as part of that continuous improvement process.

Regarding next steps for the development of the redesigned DPP, the design and strategy teams will continue to meet regularly to build out the DPP components and processes. Initially, the idea had been to finalize the SPP while simultaneously building out the redesigned DPP, but per design team feedback, they felt like they should focus on rolling out and finalizing the SPP for the next school year and then focus on the DPP redesign.

The DPP beta is going to be based like the first version, so the tentative timeline for that development is by the end of the summer. That timeline could change depending on stakeholder feedback, moving the process along, and capacity, but like there was for the SPP, the redesigned DPP will be piloted to some districts so we can get stakeholder feedback and then refined before a state rollout as part of the continuous improvement process. We know that even though it will be rolled out statewide, there will be that continuous feedback loop to ensure these are useful and valuable tools our districts are using for authentic district improvement. I am happy to take any questions.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any questions from Committee members?

***Senator Buck:***

As far as implementation, we get the results back from SBAC, and I assume we are using interim assessments as well as SBAC assessments. What does the timeline look like for full implementation of this program?

***Ms. Lamarre:***

As I said earlier, with the redesigned SPP, we wanted it to be a living, breathing document regardless of when it is submitted to NDE. Right now, the due date for that is November 2022, but we are in discussions with our school districts who are receiving feedback from their schools about adjusting that timeline. Regardless of when it is submitted to us, we know it is a snapshot in time for the school, because the school is constantly using interim assessment maps. It is not focused on SBAC data. That is something we heard clearly from our district, who heard from their schools; so, schools do have the flexibility to use interim data they think is the best indicator of their students' progress, and they should be continuously updating the SPP.

***Senator Buck:***

I have one other question as it relates to compliance. In doing these things for years, I found that it is best to make them as simple as possible, so they are not compliance-related but rather more about getting to the root issues and submitting quality work. What are the plans to share best practices? Say there is a school that puts together a stellar plan that equates to results. What are the plans to share that information?

***Ms. Lamarre:***

The team is currently in communications on that. Shared exemplars are something we heard from our district leaders that their schools were requesting. This is a new process, and now that everyone has been through the process for this current school year, we wanted CI teams to feel like they were owning the process, not like they were being kept inside a box. Now that we have gone through this iteration, we will be sharing some examples of what an exemplar could look like, but also making it clear that we do want our CI teams to make this their own. The real fun and improvement lie in following the process, and that can look different for every school. We have not yet done so, but the plan is to share that information.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any other questions? Seeing none, we will move on to the next presentation.

***Superintendent Stephens:***

I also serve on some of those committees that Gabrielle Lamarre was talking about. Superintendent C.J. Anderson has also been participating in some of this work. I do not have a lot to add specifically, but I did want to follow up on some of that was shared and say thank you to NDE for their work on the process. I think what is exciting about the new process is that it works to align and minimize the silos amongst the work that we do to move us toward a competency-based, personalized learning conversation we are currently having and tie some things together.

I would like to make two points in relation to the work. Our district was part of the initial pilot, and we had three schools that participated in that work along with schools within other school districts, and we were able to provide a lot of feedback. We are now in this beta work in providing the feedback, so that has been great. The NDE and UPB have been very responsive in trying to make sure that, as Senator Buck mentioned, it is not a compliance task, it is about improving. We are trying to honor what we are bringing forward as hurdles or hoops and get rid of those impediments as best we can.

On behalf of superintendents, school improvement specialists, school principals, folks who work in grants, and the staff in buildings, I would like to share that one of the challenging things for us relating to school improvement and assessment is the misalignment between the budgeting cycle, the assessment cycle, and this reporting cycle here in Nevada.

This work is continuous, so that is fantastic, but right now, part of the work involves coming together to gather data, or we are getting the data now, as with our Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) results, for example. Then everybody leaves for the summer, and in some districts, because they do not have funding to bring people in over the summer or people need time to regroup and care for themselves, analyzing what has happened over the course of the year oftentimes does not happen until the fall, well after the time when we should be deciding what supports, resources, and strategies we need to put in place for the next year. The budget is due now for the resources we will need in August, and then we must wait until November to tell you what our plans are. It is a weird cycle, so we need to think about that as we move forward as a state so we can try to align these elements in a way that makes sense and allows us the space to adjust and adapt. Also, grants are great to support resources for our needs related to the things we come across as we do this work in improvement, but sometimes we cannot spend our funds until we can revise a grant or until it gets approved at the various levels, so sometimes that creates a bit of a roadblock.

I would like to respond to the question asked about sharing best practices. This work is tied in with the work happening around the competency-based personalized learning conversations and how that is progressing from the Blue Ribbon Commission moving forward. Whatever communities of practice or networking opportunities we can create in our state in addition to those exemplars of actual documents are going to be so important and key for all our school districts.

We love the support that we can get from the Legislature. Anything that can help us run those networks or those communities of practice that help staff, teachers, principals, and district staff engage with one another, creating opportunities to do that in whatever ways are possible to fund those, to get people together in whatever ways are possible to talk and share with one another so they are not seeing the paper version, but engaging in dialogue. We would support anything you can support moving forward for school districts. I know C.J. Anderson is possibly still in the room, and if he is, I would ask if he has anything else from the NASS perspective to share at this time.

***Superintendent Anderson:***

I would like to add two things. Number one, I cannot speak highly enough about the organization of the rollout of this effort. As a principal, I was one of the pilot schools in Elko County last school year, and then I had the opportunity to manage it from the district level as the director of school improvement, and now I am still doing that as superintendent. I have noticed that prior to a mass 'here is how we are doing it' there was a ton of thought put into it, there was a lot of conversation, and the resources that were provided in support, that rollout was exceptional, and I think it is part of the reason I am very supportive of it. I think a lot of people were able to latch onto it, we have seen good preliminary feedback from administrators and schools in our communities in Elko County. I encourage any effort we are trying to put forth at the state level, and this type of thoughtful rollout is wonderful, and it is much appreciated by NDE and their consulting partners.

The other comment I would like to make is regarding Senator Buck's question about using exemplars and finding schools that are having success. With so many other things, to have

success in these types of efforts, especially in a new beta rollout, to understand that these things do take time, and any meaningful change will take time as we adjust to how to incorporate that and I look forward to seeing how other schools are having success, but success, whether it is organizational or individual, looks different for different people depending on their circumstances and goals. There is a lot to be considered when thinking about what an exemplar might look like.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any other questions? Seeing none, we will now move on to the next agenda item.

### **AGENDA ITEM XIII—OVERVIEW CONCERNING BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COUNCILS STAFFED BY NDE**

***Chair Denis:***

Next is a presentation from NDE providing updates on boards, councils, and commissions staffed by their department.

***Superintendent Ebert:***

Our intent today is to share that during the last legislative session, we put forward [SB 76](#) (2021), which was a streamlining bill to request to do our work more efficiently. We were asked at that point to come to this body and present to make sure the legislators have an idea of the depth and breadth of the work, boards, and commissions that the NDE has been tasked with. (Agenda Item XIII)

There are almost 60 groups that we support and or serve on. For many of them, resources were not allocated to do this work, so their existing staff do this work. One example is Jayne Malorni, who is phenomenal. She is the person on our staff who oversees social studies for the NDE, and she also oversees all the world languages: French, Spanish, Paiute, et cetera. Jayne is one staff member who serves over two curriculum areas, and our goal and mission in the state are to produce citizens who are proficient in the core content areas as well as electives. I give her as an example because she is one person covering two content areas for the entire state and she is overseeing the Holocaust group and financial literacy as well as the multicultural standards.

Of these 60 groups, some of them meet monthly and some of them meet quarterly, so the NDE is staffing at least 240 meetings. And as you are aware, we follow all the required protocol, staffing, minutes, posting, making sure that committee members are present, and we have a quorum to be able to do the work.

That is an overview of why you have this presentation and, as Chair Denis said earlier, to look across the entire landscape of the state and consider how we move forward. When we think about the decisions that need to be made moving forward, there are many pages here, but I asked Deputy Superintendent Todtman if she would go through and highlight a few of them. We stand ready to either go deeper on some of the boards and commissions, or we can take questions offline if you so choose.

***Ms. Todtman:***

I am going to provide some updates on the statutory groups in which NDE is required to have a representative. As of the latest round of governor's appointments. The NDE representative designated to the Nevada Council on Food Security is now Dr. Pamela Juniel.

In addition, Deputy Superintendent Jonathan Moore is participating on the Composition and Selection of School Boards Working Group convened per [AB 495](#) (2021).

As Superintendent Ebert noted, the rest of our presentation provides brief overviews of the boards, councils, and commissions facilitated by NDE, which I may sometimes refer to as boards. I will focus on a few to give some examples of the type of work that happens.

First, I will discuss the Commission on School Funding. As you know, this was convened per [SB 543](#) after the 80<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session. An update on the pupil-centered funding plan and their work is expected at your June meeting with the Chair's permission. In response to a letter of intent from the legislative session, the Commission has been hard at work meeting monthly, including this Friday, May 20, 2022. Their letter of intent from the Legislature includes work on reviewing the Nevada Cost of Education Index, reviewing, and comparing students eligible and identified as at-risk, a review of dual enrollment programs, approval of online schools and the distinction between those operated by school district or charter schools, and a review of the funding provided for transportation and food services. If you look at their recent agendas or have had the chance to attend their meetings, you will see they are working diligently on those items, and since are only able to meet between July 1 of an odd year and September 1 of an even year, they will be providing you with a report by September of this year to inform the next legislative session.

Next, I will give an update on our Perkins V Governance Team. This is an example of something that is not in state statute but is a federal expectation on stakeholder engagement. This is a great example of a group that convenes when necessary. Our Perkins V Federal Plan has been approved, and when we need to make amendments or updates, we reconvene this group.

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is an example of a federal commission that is statutorily required, and you will see there that it notes the legislative authority in the Federal Register. We are honored to be able to work with this group to support the important needs of our students with disabilities and the districts and schools that serve them.

Superintendent Ebert mentioned the Subcommittee on the Holocaust and Other Genocides, which is an example of work that we started directly in response to the legislation passed in this most recent legislative session that we are working on. I serve as the superintendent's designee to this group. We convened for the first time in March and are currently working on a survey that would identify the assets existing in our schools around this kind of education so we can make sure that we are building off groundwork that is informed.

Superintendent Ebert also mentioned the State Financial Literacy Council, and I would love to give her an opportunity to talk about their work since she is actively participating.

***Superintendent Ebert:***

I sit on this committee. It is a wonderful committee made up of public-private partnership and I would like to share two events, and again, huge kudos to Jayne. One was the event Green Our Planet in Summerlin in which almost 50 schools participated, and the students brought produce that they had grown over several weeks and sold it to the public. It was great for financial literacy, science, and mathematics entrepreneurs. It was a wonderful event, and we should send you the YouTube video we created.



That event was born out of this work with the Financial Literacy Counsel as well as this morning, there was an announcement that Bank of Nevada's John Guidry and the First Independent Bank donated \$300,000 to develop curriculum that will be made available for students and families across our entire state. It will be up on NDE's website. We are also building coursework within the statewide learning management system called Canvas so students can go and watch videos, work with our local experts to develop these videos, and then take an assessment as we move forward. All this work will culminate and be in alignment with the Seal on Financial Literacy, so we are excited about this work in this committee.

***Ms. Todtman:***

I will be shifting to the last section of our presentation, which focused on other advisory groups facilitated by NDE. I want to clarify that this is not a complete list of efforts around instructional materials and standard setting, for example. Those are ad hoc groups that are convened inclusive of our stakeholders and then disbanded when the work is complete, so this is not all the work we are doing right now. These are all the groups that are broadly addressing our portfolio.

We are very proud of our work with the Blue Ribbon Commission for a Globally Prepared Nevada and we were proud to work with Chair Denis on [SB 215](#) from the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislative Session. The Blue Ribbon Commission is an excellent example of how NDE can pull together a representative and diverse group of stakeholders on an ad hoc basis to inform a defined task, and how we can do so even without statutory language. We are also proud of their work as it has laid the groundwork for the personalized competency-based learning work being led by NDE with stakeholders. We have been proud to host stakeholder engagement sessions throughout the past couple of months to move forward.

Much like our Perkins V Committee, the ESSA Advisory Group is one that is reconvened when we are considering updates to our state plan. Director Briske covered some of these teacher groups, but I do want to note that the Nevada Educator Code of Ethics Advisory Group should not be included in this section of the presentation. This actually expired by limitation on June 30, 2019 and should have been otherwise labeled.

As we mentioned earlier, the SB 353 working group has been meeting and includes district testing directors and other stakeholders to address the requirements of the legislation and make recommendations for potential regulation to the State Board of Education. They will be prepared to present to you on their work during the next legislative session. That rounds out a very brief overview at the end of the day. We will be happy to dive in deeper to answer any questions or follow up with you as necessary.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any questions from Committee members?

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

I am curious with these because I have had some people ask about these groups or they have made comments, and I need to send them these meetings. Are these all listed on your website as far as when they meet?

**Ms. Todtman:**

All the ones that are subject to the Open Meeting Law, like the statutory bodies, have a page on our website with the meeting materials page. If you are familiar with, for example, the State Board of Education or any of these commissions will have a very similarly laid out website. For the stakeholder groups we convene that are not subject to the Open Meeting Law, they have a page on our website that explains who they are, what they do, and who is on it, but they will not always have the meeting dates because they are not open to the public.

We are working under Deputy Superintendent Moore's leadership to set up a standing form that would allow stakeholders to indicate that they are interested in participating in a workgroup if we are convening one going forward, so that we are not only working through our traditional means to get representatives but making it broadly available to constituents to signify that they are interested in the work and then we can reach out to them when there is an opportunity.

**Senator Dondero Loop:**

Thank you. I may follow up with you on a couple of these.

**Chair Denis:**

They have got a lot of groups. If you look through, they list all of them, but she only highlighted a few. As I understand it, the bill you brought last time was to try to streamline, so as you read through some of these, you will see if they have been meeting or not. In some cases, they still meet, but the function of that could now be taken over by the State Board. Is that correct?

**Superintendent Ebert:**

Yes, and in fact one of the committees in here which you are very familiar with because we both served on it, The Commission on Educational Technology, was spun up specifically when Governor Miller set aside \$60 million to put technology into classrooms. That was set up in the 1990s for a specific task, yet the Commission still was on the books. I am proud and thankful for the Sunset Committee, and they sunset that group today while this group was meeting. I think looking at timeliness, task specific, like what is it that we want this specific group to do, and having it time-bound gives everybody commitment, passion, they know what their goals are, they get to meet, and then the work either shifts to the NDE or as a body you make a determination, you know that the work that they started is not done yet, so they need to continue.

**Chair Denis:**

In the specific case of the Technology Commission, when it was created, we did not really have an emphasis on technology and so you needed a group that could focus on that. Now education is centered around technology, so that is something that should be handled by the State Board of Education because if they are not, they should be talking about those kinds of things.

**Ms. Todtman:**

We are not redoing SB 76, but as our staff have been looking at the commissions and task forces that they support, we have noted some of the inconsistencies, for example, in how

they are appointed; some of them are appointed by the governor, some by legislators, and some by the superintendent, so we want to make sure that those all make sense and are getting done.

Some of the commissions have funding for travel and some do not, so some can meet in person while others cannot. Some also make per diems available to the members, but some do not, so that will also affect the ability of a teacher, for example, to take the day off and to have substitute coverage. This is not very consistent because these commissions have all been established at different times by different leadership, and that is something we are looking to address as well.

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

I understand the inconsistencies. Some elected members are paid full time salaries while some are not, so we understand that. I do have a question about the website. I see a couple on the NDE website listing all the different boards, commissions, and task forces there are a few that have some asterisks with them. Are those new boards and commissions? They have asterisks, but they do not have hyperlinks, so are those new or under development? Can you explain which one?

***Superintendent Ebert:***

Can you give me a specific example?

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

I am referring to the Dual Credit Task Force, the Nevada Instructional Materials Steering Committee, and the Teacher Pipeline Task Force. I believe those are the only three.

***Ms. Todtman:***

Those are pending the updates, and I can get that status to you. As you noted, those are the ones we are hoping to upload the materials for, but they have not been prepared at this time.

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

When you say you are updating the materials, do you mean updating the minutes? Have these task forces had meetings? Are there members?

***Ms. Todtman:***

Right now, the Dual Credit Task Force was co-convened by the Superintendent and the Chancellor of NSHE. They finished the first phase of their work, so we would be able to present the information about who served on it and their report. It is well linked on the NSHE webpage, so I will talk to our team about duplicating what they have shared because all those materials were probably shared with the Board of Regents.

The Instructional Materials Steering Committee I unfortunately cannot speak to, but again, they are not subject to the Open Meeting Law, so when we talk about updating, it would be, what do they do, what is their purpose, who serves on it, and any public facing reports they have created. The same goes for the Teacher Pathways Task Force: we can provide the membership as well as their current public facing materials. They most recently presented

last week to the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force, so we can cross link those public materials.

***Assemblywoman Miller:***

But like you said, the Dual Credit Task Force would have complied under NSHE with the Open Meeting Law.

***Ms. Todtman:***

It was convened by us, so it is not subject to the Open Meeting Law because they were making technically recommendations under the law to an executive, but they did make public facing recommendations, and we will be happy to crosslink those. That happened at the December meetings of the Board of Regents.

***Superintendent Ebert:***

From that committee, there was policy that NSHE had to change to support K–12, so we went to the Board of Regents and did that presentation, and they changed policy.

***Chair Denis:***

Are there any other questions? Seeing none, we will go ahead and finish that item and move on to public comment.

**AGENDA ITEM XIV—PUBLIC COMMENT**

***Chair Denis:***

We will start public comment here in Las Vegas. Is there anyone in Las Vegas wishing to give public comment?

***Superintendent Ebert:***

I want to take a moment to thank all of you for all the work you do. We cannot be successful in our work unless you are successful, and to support you in the work that you are doing as we all move forward. We know we have a lot of work to do with teacher retention and how we work with the school districts. We know we have a lot of work to do with students now with the opportunity that they did not have to learn.

I mentioned earlier that I was at a conference at Harvard last week, and if you read the article, they noted in the body of the work they published last month, that a school that is not high-poverty will take about 12 weeks to catch up to where they would have been had we been face-to-face, but in a high-poverty school, that number is 28 weeks. So even though we are talking about doubling down tutoring and employing all those interventions, it is not going to be enough based on this research unless we extend time, and it cannot be optional. Some families will opt into extended day, but some cannot opt in, so if we extend the school day, extend the school year, look differently about time, I believe that our students will gain the knowledge in math, literacy skills, and other necessary subjects to be successful.

I am also thankful you had this time today and to all the presenters. I was proud to hear them talk about our collaborative work. The NDE has worked very hard because we had the reputation of not listening and being very top down, but every time I heard one of

the presenters say that they were collaborating with us—I did not pay them to say that—it was from their experiences and from their heart, so I am thankful for that. Thank you for what you do because I know what your paycheck says for doing this work.

***Chair Denis:***

Thank you. Is there anyone else? We do not have anyone else here. Let us go to Carson City. Is there anyone in Carson City wishing to give public comment?

***Assemblywoman Hansen:***

No, there is no one here.

***Chair Denis:***

Broadcast Services, could we go online to see if there is anyone wishing to give public comment?

***Annette Dawson Owens, Children's Advocacy Alliance:***

I am so grateful for all of you in the long day that it has been. This is one of our most favorite meetings and we appreciate you being here all day, but we want to express our support of the investment in mental health and well-being of our students and teachers. Specifically mentioned today were many great programs: The Hope Squad, the Harbor, the Leadership Institute, competency-based learning, and financial literacy. We know that successful implementation and understanding of restorative practices is also important. We too are concerned with the climate and culture in our schools and its relation to teacher retention and recruitment.

We advocate for partnering to give educators the help, support, resources, and practices they need to shore up their mental health and well-being. We hope those may also account for licensing and renewal credits and that this knowledge can translate to [unintelligible] well-being, but their academic performance. We are so grateful for your engagement and all the wonderful things that you are doing to ensure the success of our students.

***Chair Denis:***

It is good to know that for somebody, this is one of their favorite meetings. I know they are long, but everybody is so passionate when it comes to education. Does anyone else wish to give public comment?

***BPS:***

Chair, the public line is open and working. However, there are no more callers at this time.

***Chair Denis:***

I want to thank everybody who was here today, both our presenters and the members. An archived version of today's meeting will be available online. Our next meeting is currently scheduled for Wednesday, June 15, 2022. Thank you all for being here today; I appreciate staff and all the work they do.

## **AGENDA ITEM XV—ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Christina Harper  
Manager of Research Policy Assistants

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Jennifer Ruedy  
Deputy Research Director

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Jen Sturm  
Senior Policy Analyst

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Alex Drozdoff  
Senior Policy Analyst

APPROVED BY:

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Senator Moises (Mo) Denis, Chair

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

## MEETING MATERIALS

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
Agenda Item II A	Bill Hanlon, Nevada Resident	Written Comments
Agenda Item II B	Christopher Daly, Nevada State Education Association	Written Comments
Agenda Item II C	Dr. Brenda Pearson, Clark County Education Association	Written Comments
Agenda Item III	Jen Sturm, Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB)  Alex Drozdoff, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division, LCB	March 16, 2022, Meeting Minutes
Agenda Item IV A	Paul M. LaMarca, Ph.D., Chief Strategies Officer, Washoe County School District	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item IV B	Christy McGill, Director, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, Nevada Department of Education	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item IV C	Jessica Shearin, Ed.S., President, Nevada Association of School Psychologists	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item V A-1	Christy McGill, Director, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, Nevada Department of Education	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item V A-2	Christy McGill, Director, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, Nevada Department of Education	Restorative Discipline Plan Guide

<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	<b>PRESENTER/ENTITY</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Agenda Item V A-3	Christy McGill, Director, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, Nevada Department of Education	Student Disciplinary Quick Guide
Agenda Item V A-4	Christy McGill, Director, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, Nevada Department of Education	Nevada Department of Education Guidance Memo #19-08
Agenda Item V A-5	Christy McGill, Director, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, Nevada Department of Education	Nevada Department of Education Guidance Memo #22-04
Agenda Item V B	Paul M. LaMarca, Ph.D., Chief Strategies Officer, Washoe County School District	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item VI	Christy McGill, Director, Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment, Nevada Department of Education	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item VII A-1	Judi Steele, President and CEO, Leadership Institute of Nevada and Co-Founder, Public Education Foundation  Brian Myli, Ed.D., Vice President, Leadership Institute of Nevada	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item VII A-2	Judi Steele, President and CEO, Leadership Institute of Nevada and Co-Founder, Public Education Foundation  Brian Myli, Ed.D., Vice President, Leadership Institute of Nevada	Leadership Institute of Nevada Closing Statement



<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	<b>PRESENTER/ENTITY</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Agenda Item VII A-3	Judi Steele, President and CEO, Leadership Institute of Nevada and Co-Founder, Public Education Foundation  Brian Myli, Ed.D., Vice President, Leadership Institute of Nevada	Leadership Institute of Nevada Board of Directors
Agenda Item VIII	Robert Barsel, High School Student	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item IX	Sarah Negrete, Ph.D., Director, Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program  Sara Cunningham, Director, Northwest Regional Professional Development Program  Chelli Smith, Ed.D., Director, Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item X A-1	Former Senator Joyce Woodhouse  Kenneth J. Varner, Ph.D., NITEP Facilitator, College of Education, UNLV; Professor and Director of the Gayle A. Zeiter Literacy Development Center, UNLV	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
Agenda Item X A-2	<p>Former Senator Joyce Woodhouse</p> <p>Kenneth J. Varner, Ph.D., Nevada Institute on Teaching and Educator Preparation (NITEP) Facilitator, College of Education, University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV); Professor and Director of the Gayle A. Zeiter Literacy Development Center, UNLV</p>	Draft NITEP 2021-2022 IMPACT Report
Agenda Item X A-3	<p>Former Senator Joyce Woodhouse</p> <p>Kenneth J. Varner, Ph.D., Nevada Institute on Teaching and Educator Preparation (NITEP) Facilitator, College of Education, University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV); Professor and Director of the Gayle A. Zeiter Literacy Development Center, UNLV</p>	NITEP By the Numbers
Agenda Item X A-4	<p>Former Senator Joyce Woodhouse</p> <p>Kenneth J. Varner, Ph.D., Nevada Institute on Teaching and Educator Preparation (NITEP) Facilitator, College of Education, University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV); Professor and Director of the Gayle A. Zeiter Literacy Development Center, UNLV</p>	NITEP Network and Program

<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	<b>PRESENTER/ENTITY</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Agenda Item X A-5	Former Senator Joyce Woodhouse  Kenneth J. Varner, Ph.D., Nevada Institute on Teaching and Educator Preparation (NITEP) Facilitator, College of Education, University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV); Professor and Director of the Gayle A. Zeiter Literacy Development Center, UNLV	NITEP 2020-2022 Strengths and Challenges, and Opportunities
Agenda Item XI	Jeff Briske, Director, Office of Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement (EDLiFE)	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item XII	Gabrielle Lamarre, Interim Director, Office of Student and School Supports, Nevada Department of Education (NDE)	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item XIII	Jhone Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada Department of Education  Jessica Todtman, Deputy Superintendent for Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement, Nevada Department of Education	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item XIV	Darlene Anderson, Private Citizen	Written Comments

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