



NEVADA LEGISLATURE JOINT INTERIM STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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

DRAFT MINUTES

June 15, 2022

The seventh meeting of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education for the 2021-2022 Interim was held on Wednesday, June 15, 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 or 775/684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:

Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop
Assemblywoman Alexis Hansen

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

Assemblywoman Melissa Hardy – excused

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Jen Sturm, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division

Alex Drozdoff, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division

Jennifer Ruedy, Deputy Research Director, Research Division

Christina Harper, Manager of Research Policy Assistants, Research Division

Sarah Baker, Research Policy Assistant, Research Division

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

Adam Drost, Principal Program Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division

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*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 seventh 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 meeting and testimony guidelines.]

First, I would like to notify members that on June 10, 2022, the Legislative Commission approved the Committee to hold three additional meetings. As you know, we were originally scheduled and approved for eight meetings. We had one additional meeting in May to discuss school board governance, and we will schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss the information and recommendations received during that meeting. Finally, we will need to hold one additional meeting past the August 31, 2022, deadline to consider the State Board of Education's report concerning providing instruction on the Holocaust and other genocides pursuant to [Assembly Bill 231](#) of the 2021 Session. The report is not due until October 1, 2022. The Committee will thus have to hold one additional meeting to receive this report and to consider possible recommendation to this. I also requested permission to submit one bill draft request (BDR) after the September 1, 2022, deadline in case the Committee would like to request legislation related to any recommendations resulting from that report.

Because we were tasked with additional studies and our meetings are already full, instead of adding an additional four hours on to one of our meetings, we requested additional time. We will finish all our meetings, except for the October 1, 2022, meeting, by the end of August; that was approved last Friday by the Legislative Commission.

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. If anyone is here in Las Vegas, who would like to make a comment, please come forward.

Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association (NSEA):

The NSEA, the voice of Nevada educators for over 120 years. Nevada classrooms continue to be some of the most overcrowded in the nation. The NSEA has long stressed the importance of smaller class sizes. Common sense tells us, and research confirms, the number of students in a class makes a real difference for students and teachers alike. For students, smaller class sizes can help close the racial achievement gap, lead to earlier identification of learning disabilities, improve high school graduation rates, improve student behavior, and allow for more engagement and lessons. For educators, smaller class sizes

improve educator morale. It allows for more individual and differentiated instruction, less time on paperwork, and stronger classroom management as teachers become more aware of individual students' strengths and weaknesses. This is critically important in Nevada with some of the highest concentrations of students who are English learners and are struggling with poverty.

While rapid growth fueled Nevada's large class sizes in previous decades, the lack of sufficient funding for school districts has locked in these large class sizes. For decades, Nevada is right 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) lists nearly 2,400 vacant positions with over 1,500 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 reaching an average class size of 20 students per class in core academic subjects. Time for 20 also means a 20 percent increase in educator pay and at least \$20 per hour for the workers who make our schools run. This is the right-sized response to our educator shortage, and we can get educators the pay they need to make ends meet.

One-time retention or signing bonuses are a nice gesture. But as prices are climbing faster than at any point in the last 40 years with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) now at 8.3 percent, we need to get serious about raises for educators that keep up with the long-term cost of living. Even when inflation comes down, prices still usually go up. Last week, the Economic Forum received a report from the Fiscal Analysis Division, LCB, showing state revenues outperforming projections by 25 percent or close to \$800 million. This news comes as our education system is hemorrhaging staff. Educators and our students need bold action and Nevada has the resources, \$800 million sitting there to make a big impact right now. It is Time for 20. (Agenda Item II)

Dennis Potthoff, Ph.D., Dean, School of Education, Nevada State College (NSC):

I have the honor serving as the Dean of the School of Education at NSC and also, I am co-chairing a statewide Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) Nevada Department of Education (NDE) Teacher Pipeline Task Force with Jessica Todtman from NDE. I appreciate the opportunity to share a few ideas. First of all, I do want to recognize there is attention being given, I am aware of five different groups right now that have generated 40-plus recommendations in the area of teacher recruitment and retention. There is work being done and there are also bold actions happening. The University of Nevada, Las Vegas's (UNLV) work on moving teacher aides and paraprofessionals into teaching licensure, teacher academy high school projects, College of Southern Nevada's (CSN) substitute teaching partner—we have got some good things happening. But I want to share five things.

First, this is my eighth year here—I am starting my eighth year. This is the most urgent year; we have had, clearly, in my eight years. It is never going to be okay to not have enough teachers for our kids. Urgency now. Second thing, I am convinced that we have got to find a way to locally grow more of our teachers. Over the last decade, teacher enrollments around the country have dropped more than 35 percent. The tradition of Nevada hiring two-thirds of its teachers from other states is not going to work anymore. It is not working as well as it did. The third thing is, we have recognized barriers to teaching; we know everything from the testing, the cost, there are a number of barriers related to teacher supply, recruitment, and certainly retention that the previous speaker spoke to many of those already.

The fourth thing is recognizing the duality of the problem. We have got to recruit more. Our colleges, our institutions in Nevada have to find a way to recruit and graduate more. But we also, as a state, have to retain more. It is a dual problem and I think the recommendations in front of you from these various groups probably need to have a balance of recruitment-related ones and retention-related ones. There are two huge issues here on the table. Both are important. The fifth thing is that we know that there is no one strategy to fix this. We need multiple strategies to address this issue. The recommendations you are going to see are widely varied. We need to get a group of them that collectively could make a big impact on this.

The last thing is we have the dilemma of the immediate right now, great urgency right now, but also a dilemma of long-term commitment. We need to go all in for programs that will ensure that the State of Nevada can locally grow more of its own teachers for the future. So that is your challenge to figure out the combination of those immediate and long terms.

Brenda Pearson, Ph.D., Clark County Education Association (CCEA):

Good morning, Chair Denis and Committee members. The CCEA bargains for over 18,000 licensed educators in the CCSD and is the largest independent teacher union in the state and in the country. The presentations being heard before this Committee today are aimed at creating a public education system that drives student success. But the success of each recommendation hinges fully on licensed teachers being in every classroom across Nevada through attraction, recruitment, and retention efforts. Class size reduction, the expansion of pre-K programs, and the achievement and data-based outcomes only occur with a robust teacher pipeline. This is a teacher's market and Nevada needs to be competitive and attract high quality and diverse educators across our state. In 2016, CCEA increased its starting salary for teachers to \$40,000, a difference of \$6,000, which increased the numbers of teachers entering the CCSD and reduced the teacher vacancy rate to nearly 500. Two weeks ago, the CCSD and the CCEA agreed to raise the current teacher-based salary to \$50,115, an increase of nearly \$7,000, in order to both attract and recruit teachers to the profession. At the same time CCEA increased the top salary to over \$101,000.

Nevada must remain competitive to attract and recruit educators to our state. At the same time, Nevada must work to retain our experienced and committed educators serving in schools across our state by increasing their salaries. Although each educator in CCSD will receive a retention bonus of \$5,000 during the Academic Year 2022–2023, this one-time money does not impact their overall salary. The Committee must work to retain our current educators by ensuring that funding is dedicated to increasing existing teacher salaries. Funding is necessary and Nevada must think strategically through a multiyear plan that will increase our teacher pipeline while chipping away at high class sizes. Each presentation before you today can become a reality with the substantial and strategic investment in our schools. The CCEA appreciates the work and dedication of this Committee, and we stand ready to assist in whatever we can.

Chair Denis:

Thank you. Is there anyone else wishing to give public comment here in Las Vegas? Not seeing anyone, is there anyone in Carson City wishing to give public comment?

Hawah Ahmad, CCEA:

Good morning, Chair Denis and Committee members. The CCEA looks forward to the presentations concerning evidence-based evaluation methods to improve our student outcomes, the analysis of class sizes and teacher workforce, and teacher recruitment and retention. But as we listen and review the recommendations, the CCEA would like to stress the importance of the development of good data systems that promote data collection, storage, access, sharing, and analysis to connect our research questions with evidence—to ensure that our strategic plan moving forward bridges the gap between our education delivery system and workforce development—so that our current industry needs are met.

Additionally, CCEA must stress the importance of follow through on these recommendations with measures for accountability and transparency. We know that sometimes shedding light on the data might be a little scary, but we must understand our educational environment through both quantitative and qualitative measures that help define where we are now and where we can move forward. To do our part, the CCEA is working hard with our researchers to ensure that the next legislative session has research with recommendations needed to align the K through 20 education delivery system with our current and future industry needs taking into account obsolete industries. As CCEA continues with our Nevada workforce development pipeline assets map study, we must emphasize that alignment between K through 20 and the job market is pivotal in making sure we can achieve our goals of an equitable workforce and an economically diverse Nevada. This of course starts with our teacher recruitment and retention pipelines. As always, we stand ready to help in whatever way we possibly can to assist. We are excited about the presentations today and we are excited to start getting into the “nitty gritty” on our study.

Chair Denis:

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

BPS:

The public line is open and working; however, 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 MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2022

Chair Denis:

I will now go to the approval of the minutes for the meeting on April 20, 2022. Does anyone have any changes or corrections? Do we have a motion to approve the minutes of April 20?

SENATOR DONDERO LOOP MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING ON APRIL 20, 2022.

VICE CHAIR BILBRAY-AXELROD SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED. ASSEMBLYWOMAN HANSEN WAS ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.

**AGENDA ITEM IV—APPOINTMENT OF TERINA CASERTO TO THE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INTERIM STUDY CONCERNING THE USE OF THE NAME, IMAGE, AND LIKENESS OF A STUDENT ATHLETE
([ASSEMBLY BILL 254 \[2021\]](#))**

Chair Denis:

Let us go to the appointment of Terina Caserto to the Committee to Conduct an Interim Study Concerning the Use of the Name, Image, and Likeness of a Student Athlete. As you may recall at our first meeting on January 20, we appointed members to the Committee to Conduct an Interim Study Concerning the Use of the Name, Image, and Likeness of a Student Athlete. We then approved the chair and the vice chair appointments. One of the positions on the committee is now vacant. So, today I would like for the Committee to consider the appointment of Ms. Terina Caserto to fill the open position and represent NSHE on the committee. Are there any questions?

VICE CHAIR BILBRAY-AXELROD MOVED TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF TERINA CASERTO TO THE COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INTERIM STUDY CONCERNING THE USE OF THE NAME, IMAGE, AND LIKENESS OF A STUDENT ATHLETE.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MILLER SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED. ASSEMBLYWOMAN HANSEN WAS ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.

AGENDA ITEM V—PRESENTATION CONCERNING THE STATEWIDE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

Chair Denis:

I want to make a brief comment. Up until now we have tried to focus on specific broad categories at each one of our meetings and we have had a lot of different reports and presentations. Today we have a little bit of a “mixed bag,” of some very important issues. We are excited to hear the different reports that will be given today.

We will start with a presentation concerning the statewide implementation of competency-based education. We have Ms. Lillian Pace from KnowledgeWorks here. We also have Dr. Summer Stephens via Zoom. I appreciate this presentation, it is near and dear to my heart since it is the bill that I brought to the last session and one that we have been working on for several years to allow, especially for some of the kids that need the ability, to be able to move at different paces. This will allow for that. We are excited to hear the presentation this morning. Welcome Ms. Pace and when you are ready, go ahead.

Lillian Pace, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, KnowledgeWorks:

Thank you, Chair Denis and to all the members here today for taking the time to listen to this presentation. We are excited at KnowledgeWorks about the work unfolding in the State of Nevada. We are excited to share an update here today. By way of introduction, we are a nonprofit organization that partners with policymakers and practitioners to reimagine the teaching and learning environment to support more personalized and competency-based education systems. My colleague Julianna Charles Brown is joining from Carson City as well. She has been deeply involved in the work here in Nevada and will be available to participate in the question-and-answer period.

I am going to do a little bit of foundation setting on what personalized and competency-based learning is, and then I want to make sure I provide a brief update of the work that is unfolding in Nevada. (Agenda Item V A-1) (Agenda Item V A-2) In order to start on what personalized competency-based learning is, we have to start with the why, and in order to do that, we need to look at what is not working with our current education system.

If you look at the pie chart, we see that 84 percent of students in the nation are graduating from high school. This is phenomenal; this is definitely something that we should be celebrating. But if you look at what happens to those students once they leave our K-12 systems, a different story begins to unfold. Twenty-eight to forty percent of students are placing into postsecondary remedial courses and of those students who are placing into those remedial courses, fewer than fifty percent are actually completing the courses. We hear a similar story from our workforce partners who say that there are significant skills gaps for students who are entering the workforce and entering into these entry level positions without the ability to engage in teamwork and problem solving. This is consistent here in the State of Nevada where we see a fabulous 81 percent graduation rate. Yet 53 percent of students are placing into post-secondary remediation. This means we have an honesty gap in this country and here in the State of Nevada. When we hand students a diploma, when they walk across the stage, we tell them they are ready, but what this data suggests is that not every student is ready.

That brings us to personalized and competency-based education. Now, you probably noticed that this combines two terms: "personalized learning" and "competency-based education." This is not new. This is evolving two concepts that we have seen at play in classrooms around the country that have promise, but when paired together, we have a chance to close achievement gaps and provide a meaningful education for students.

I will start with personalized learning. Personalized learning means that we are providing engaging learning experiences customized to each student's strengths, needs, and interest. We see this at play in classrooms that are implementing approaches like project-based learning, and science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) education. Students are engaged, they are pursuing their passions, and it is wonderful. There are no systems and structures in place to ensure that those students have mastered all of the knowledge and skills they need before they move on to the next piece of the curriculum.

On the flip side, we have competency-based education. This is focused on making sure that students have demonstrated competency of concepts and skills regardless of time or pace before they move on to the next piece of the curriculum. Unfortunately, with this approach, if you do not have personalization, sometimes students might not be as engaged or passionate about their learning experience. We talk about an approach that brings the best of both worlds together, in a personalized and competency-based education system. This definition that you see here on the screen was created by practitioners all over the country who are running this type of learning environment and they settled on seven essential elements. If you walk into a classroom that is embracing this approach, you are going to see students who have agency over their learning. You will see assessments that are used in a timely way to provide those customized learner supports. Students do have the opportunity to progress upon mastery. There are flexible learning paths so that students are pursuing their passions, oftentimes in partnership with the community. There are strategies and systems in place to ensure equity. This is not about accelerating the students who are getting it fast and creating bigger gaps. There are intentional strategies to ensure that we are closing gaps. And there is a focus on both the academic and the social emotional learning targets because we know from our workforce and our postsecondary leaders that

both are essential for success. At KnowledgeWorks, we have spent a lot of time helping different audiences understand how this looks different from the traditional education system. We have a lot of different resources, and I am happy to follow up with those, but in the interest of time, the one you are looking at is meant to compare and contrast a traditional education classroom on the left with a personalized and competency-based education system on the right.

I will pick a couple of these to illustrate. If we look at learning pace, which is the second item; in a traditional classroom, we know that all students are learning the same content at the same time from an instructor at the front of the classroom, typically. It does not matter if the students need a little additional time, when, often, a pacing guide might say it is time to move on, we move on, and that tends to lead to gaps in knowledge for some students. In a personalized and competency-based system, advancement happens at each student's own pace and with appropriate supports. So, if students need additional time, the learning supports are structured in a way to accelerate and catch that student up.

Let us look at the second one, which is at the bottom: the grading policies. We know in a traditional system that grading happens at fixed times. We receive grades at the end of quarters and at the end of the year. We know that grades are very subjective. Oftentimes, we do not know what an "A" in one classroom or district means compared to an "A" in another classroom or district. In a personalized and competency-based system, grades are reflecting whether students have mastered competencies and there are opportunities for students to improve over time. So, if we get to the end of the school year and a student has a certain number of competencies they have not mastered, instead of holding that student back and making the student repeat an entire another school year, we can more efficiently focus on the areas where the student needs additional supports and provide acceleration to ensure that they catch up to their peers.

A couple other things that personalized and competency-based learning is not—it is not mandated. If you mandate anything, it does not succeed, right? This is something that is organic that educators are coming to because they believe in this. As I mentioned, it is not new, bringing together concepts that have been at play in schools for many years. It is not a check box of activities, so students do not walk in with a checklist. These are meaningfully designed educational experiences for students. As I mentioned, it is not time based, it is learning based, it is not adult centered, it is student centered and it is never done well unless the community is deeply engaged in the process.

I want to flag a couple of other myths that we hear sometimes emerge in this work. It is important to dispel these early on. First, I will flag this one: "Well, students will just spend all day on a computer or tablet." We used to hear this myth a lot, before the pandemic; we have not heard it as much since. The reality is that this approach is absolutely relation-based. Technology is not dependent in this model. Some teachers decide to bring technology in as a tool—as an additive to help extend their instruction. But we have personalized and competency-based learning classrooms around the country that are not using technology at all. So, it is not an essential element. It is certainly something that can be helpful.

The other one I want to flag is this notion that "it just is not possible to personalize instruction for all learners." This notion that "it can be really hard on a teacher." We have actually found that teachers love teaching in this model. They find that when you are intentional about how you structure the school day to create intervention periods, to provide more teacher collaboration time, that it is possible to customize learning for every student.

I will share a little bit of data in a second that shows that teachers are more satisfied when teaching in a personalized and competency-based learning system.

I wanted to share some of that evidence. These are studies that have been conducted over the past seven or eight years. This field of personalized and competency-based learning is early, this is something that KnowledgeWorks is deeply committed to building the evidence base for. We are excited about the partnership that we are embarking on with NDE because it does include a component to study and evaluate the work for educators who are excited and ready to embrace this model. I did want to flag some of the studies that have been done already. In personalized and competency-based environments, we are seeing higher math and reading achievement. We are seeing students catch up to peers faster. When students are given additional time on a topic or the opportunity to retake exams, math confidence increases. In performance, students are meeting performance levels at a quicker pace. Student engagement is increasing. As I mentioned, we are seeing greater teacher satisfaction, and there is less student burnout when students matriculate into postsecondary education.

I have talked a lot about what needs to change at the classroom level, but it would be negligent of me not to mention in this particular environment that there are policy obstacles that need to be addressed as well. When we talked to our innovators on the ground who are trying to do this work, we hear any number of items. Our policies are designed heavily around seat-time and so it can be difficult to build personalized and competency-based learning systems without improvements to the items you see here: accountability; assessment; graduation requirements; funding systems; and higher education requirements—sometimes, that is more perceived by parents concerned that if everything is changed up in K–12, “will my students still be able to matriculate into a traditional college path?” We hear that sometimes. Teacher certification and teacher of record, if we are changing staffing structures, we might need to think differently about some of the ways that we are thinking about teaching roles.

I want to give a quick preview of the work that is unfolding here in Nevada. You are extremely familiar with the seeds of change, so I will not spend much time on that, but obviously the competency-based education pilot launching in 2017 was a big seed of change to support this work followed by the network and the Blue Ribbon Commission for a Globally Prepared Nevada (the Blue Ribbon Commission) that was launched during the pandemic to reimagine and think differently about the future of teaching and learning here in Nevada—then the codification of some of those recommendations with [Senate Bill 215](#) (2021). KnowledgeWorks was extremely fortunate and honored to enter into a partnership with the NDE to support the state and its stakeholders who are interested in exploring and imagining what is possible with personalized and competency-based learning. In doing so, our first step was to join in fall 2021, an intensive research process of the state's policy system aligned to a state policy framework that we have built after studying these systems across the country. We anchor that analysis deeply in Nevada's context, and we provide a list of opportunities that stakeholders can think about and consider as they begin to decide what is the right path for Nevada in this work.

We also held a visioning convening with a group of diverse stakeholders to think about how teaching and learning environments should look and feel and the five elements you see there were the characteristics that rose up to be the highest and most valued for those stakeholders. They want to see inclusive environments, flexible, connected, relevant, and collaborative. This visioning convening sets the groundwork for where we want to go with this work. We are in the process of creating a future of learning visioning guide that any stakeholders can use in their community to have similar conversations. Then we took the

information from the visioning convening, and that opportunity analysis, and we opened it to the public and held an action planning process. We invited any and all stakeholders who wanted to attend to come to learn about this work, to explore the information, opportunity analysis, and begin to prioritize opportunities for the state moving forward.

There were 260 unique participants in that process. Many attended multiple meetings, and it culminated in a summit on May 17, 2022. We are in the process of finalizing an action plan that we will share with NDE that will provide that “North Star” for the work ahead. What we learned in that process, and this will not surprise anyone here, is that stakeholders at all levels of the system, they want change, and they are also exhausted from the past two years. Yet they want a system that works more cohesively, that is centered around a shared vision, but a vision that involves those closest to the work.

Lastly, they want to develop shared goals together. You are going to hear a little bit about some of the work emerging—the action planning process. This notion of wanting to create a portrait of a graduate for Nevada. What are the essential characteristics that we think any student in Nevada graduating from the K–12 system should exhibit to be ready for success in postsecondary and in the workforce? And then how do we begin to create a set of aligned competencies that make clear the learning expectations that educators can use to make that a reality in their learning environments. And lastly, there is a desire for a shared network, a space to learn to push and support each other as we explore practice and policy together.

Next steps, we are excited. We are helping NDE move towards a formal launch of the Nevada Future of Learning Network this fall. This is building on all the good insights from those stakeholders in that action planning process. Again, that desire to create a network where they can learn together around policy and practice. You will see that this network anchored in that portrait of a Nevada graduate will have a school-based network that is focusing on the school visioning and that the school systems change works. So, a place for districts and educators who are interested in exploring what this might mean for their learning environments to come together, as well as a state network where the state is moving forward with the visioning and beginning to explore what system change components are needed to align and support those educators on the ground. The hope is that by bringing these two networks together that we can break down the silos that often exist in states between practice and policy and create a more efficient system that is designed to support student learning.

I am able to take questions. I did want to share contact information. As I mentioned, my colleague Juliana Charles Brown, who has been a leader in this work here in Nevada, my contact information, and Jon Alfuth, who is our Director of State Policy and works closely with legislators. Any of us would be happy to follow up with anyone after this.

Chair Denis:

Dr. Stephens, do you want to go ahead? And then we can ask questions.

Summer Stephens, Ed.D., Superintendent, Churchill County School District and President, Nevada Association of School Superintendents:

Good morning. Thank you to KnowledgeWorks for the wonderful information and thank you, Senator Denis. I have had the pleasure to work with Senator Denis quite a bit over the last couple of years, and we did a presentation together recently on this very topic.

The follow up that I want to give—and that was a fantastic overview of personalized competency-based learning—I wanted to provide additional context for the Committee on things that are happening in the state at this time. I will tell you that I have spent my entire professional career as an educator pursuing this work. I must be at about “year 24ish” in 3 different states. And so, I have been fortunate to be in situations and districts that have allowed us to pursue this work. It is something that is not everywhere. We do know that through the pandemic things became clearer to people about the need to move this direction, and I am excited that we have this opportunity to do so, and we want to capitalize on any work that has already been done in our state—the passions, interests, and attitudes that are already developed in the state. Then ask all of you to think through how we can move forward as quickly as possible to ensure that we have all the right structures and policies in place to allow districts to be able to create the conditions for learning that are the outcomes of personalized competency-based education.

My background has been about this work for my entire career. I got into things, and it started around standards, right? I had an exceptional opportunity as an up-and-coming educator. My college program was fully embedded in the concept of standards-based education. With that in mind, I did not know any other way than to have clear goals for kids and then have kids meet those goals and standards in whatever way necessary. Every student worked at his or her own pace and produced different kinds of documentation for meeting those set standards. And again, that was 24 to 26 years ago when I was still a student in college. From that fast forward, I worked in a state that utilized locally developed assessment for federal reporting. We had local assessment that was designed through extensive training and support through our state to have locally based assessment that was rigorous, relevant, and embedded to measure what kids could do related to standards for federal reporting. I was fortunate to grow up in that environment as an educator.

As I progressed through, I had exceptional opportunities to participate at the national level with personalized learning. Those are the things that I was able to bring with me and that is why I looked for the school district that I am now in—Churchill. That is what drew me here was that they were getting into what the Nevada Legislature had adopted as the competency-based education network. They had just applied to that. They were doing the Nevada 21 work at our middle school, the middle school that applied to the Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN) and was going to move forward with that. That is where we took off in Churchill. The next year and a half then we played as a whole district to the C-BEN and continued our work along with schools in Washoe County and a school in CCSD through that process. I am not sure if you have the report yet—the final report for the C-BEN? I will say that certainly it was a fantastic opportunity to embark on, I appreciate the legislation around it in the sense of being able to convene and have an avenue to pursue some things. It was certainly though fraught with challenges, including the makeup of the required individuals who had to be on the committee. This resulted in, from my opinion, in the course of the short time that we were in—about two and a half years—the inability to have a quorum most often in our meeting schedule. The work of that committee, the outcomes of that, I do not think were as fruitful as they could have been in a different scenario. I think while well intentioned, it did have some flaws and those are the things that we want to address moving forward because of the need for support for competency-based education. I refer to KnowledgeWorks’ role and this umbrella idea, helping us craft and shape with all of you, with the NDE, all of the districts, the legislation needed, and any potential policy changes needed to allow schools to move forward.

In our district, we have been moving forward for several years, and Ms. Pace made mention of the portrait of a graduate work, and I know the State Board of Education has talked a lot about that as well. You will see that all over the country. That is work that is pertinent and

sound to this idea around what I think most Nevadans would want to see. What is our outcome? Where are we trying to go with kids in school? Who do we want to send out into the world? In our district, one of our strategic themes is ensuring that all learners are life ready, whatever that is, whatever your next steps and paths are for your future story. We have developed something called our profile of a learner and we purposely call it that instead of a portrait of a graduate, because we want it to apply to everyone from our pre-K learners to our 5th graders, to our high school seniors, to our staff, to our parents. Ours is comprised of six attributes and the pandemic set us back a little way, but we are coming back through. We have recently done some re-commitment to our profile and are now moving forward, being able to help students develop their future stories around it with the components of that, and to start to collect artifacts and evidence around their success towards those attributes.

Again, one of the pieces that we would advocate for is an accountability system in the state that supports the use of the attributes or the dispositions from something like the portrait of a graduate. States like North Dakota are already doing that—a key component of what does it mean to be successful in education and learning in Nevada. Some of the schools, like I said in the C-BEN, we had schools working with the Marzano Group, we had schools that were working with big picture learning with some other groups besides KnowledgeWorks. We have five school districts in Nevada that currently work with an organization called Modern Teacher: Douglas County, Lincoln County, Lander County, Humboldt County, and Churchill County. There are other organizations, Altitude Learning and Ed Elements along with KnowledgeWorks; there are a lot of resources that schools are already tapping into in Nevada, and I think one of the things from the presentation that we heard is again a piece for all of you to think about, as we think about policy, as we think about future of funding, is the network. The network is going to be extremely important for all of our districts, for NDE, for the State Board of Education, and for all of our communities to be able to grow together, to move forward together. Just like the Blue Ribbon Commission started out a couple of years ago, it was a network of people that were able to come and share ideas, we had students, we had district people, we had parents, we had community partners, we had business and industry leaders, and legislators. We need all of those same people to be in the network that are able to come together and work together on the ideas around personalized, competency-based education—the ideas around the portrait of a graduate. And then helping us put our energies into that direction and start looking at the “stop doing” list. Because many of the things that we have in legislation, that we have in school district policy, are what we have always done.

These are the times that we have to start asking the tough questions and putting things on the stop doing list and asking ourselves why do we do these things? And how do they help our kids develop their future story? How do they help them demonstrate who they are, what they have learned, what their skills and talents are? That is the beauty of this network that is being proposed and the district superintendents are excited about the potential of what that can look like. They want to be at the table along with NDE and their staff. The beauty of the network also is that schools who are doing work, it is not asking them to put that work away, it is asking them to bring the work that they are already completing to the table and figure out how they can share that with others and learn from others who might be doing slightly different work.

So, we look forward to whatever is in the next part of our journey. I can tell you that in Churchill County, the list that was shared about the different attributes that make up a competency-based personalized learning experience, those are the things that we are striving for collectively as a system. Those of you that met me before, you know I like to “go big or go home.” So, we are “the whole system in” and we all have our profile learner

attributes, we focus on those. We are now, next school year, going to be in K–8 in competency-based reporting. We have a lot of room to still grow and do that better.

We are still working with our high school, with the vision around that, because that is a tough tradition to change. Recently, all of the superintendents of the state had a lot of conversation with the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) and UNLV and talked more with them. I think we are all in the same space about beginning to understand how do we start transitioning secondary and postsecondary to a place of learning versus grade point averages? American College Test (ACT) scores, we are advancing on that conversation, and making sure that learning is the constant and not time being the constant variable. That we play with time and some of those other things, but rather that learning is the constant, that learners are at the center of everything that we do, and that we move forward with what we know works and you saw some of what works.

I have a lot of personal examples of where competency-based education has been extremely impactful, extremely successful, and it takes time, but it is possible. I stand for any questions and certainly I am sure KnowledgeWorks, as well, would entertain other questions. Our districts are ready to be part of this work and to move forward.

Chair Denis:

I am going to start with the first question, and I think both of you have talked about it. But in order to do things differently than we have done before you have to have people that can do that. I think Superintendent Stephens alluded to it with UNLV and UNR, if a teacher wants to teach a competency-based model, that is not generally what they teach them in the curriculum. What things are happening so that they know those are even options, and that those things could happen?

Superintendent Stephens:

I will address it in several ways. The superintendents did speak directly with the schools of education, as well as NSC. I know that NSC was here earlier, giving public comment. We did speak, for the first time, about the expectation that we have as districts, about the teacher education programs, that we do need to have more meetings now, we need to have more engagement together so that we are ensured that the folks that are coming to us through training have those skill sets that we are looking for. Obviously, we are doing that in our district, as well as these districts that I named and other districts as well. Professional development is important because the majority of people in schools today did not learn to teach in a way that focuses on competency-based models; we have a lot of professional development to work on. The regional professional development organizations, the RPDPs, that is one of the things I know that they talk about and are working towards being able to provide to districts.

Internally, school districts are working through that—working with higher education. A great example (and I know the pipeline conversation comes up a lot) is ensuring that our kids that go through teaching and training programs in high school are also working through those elements and ensuring that the standards that are in the curriculum there reflect the idea of competency-based education and not the traditional approach that has been used for a long time. Ensuring that multiple models are taught to our students and that students have an opportunity to learn those and see those in action even at the high school level.

I will tell you one of the things that I have watched and witnessed is when students get a taste of having been in a competency-based system, they want more of it. They start asking

the next teacher, if they go into a classroom and the teacher is not using that model, they will start asking for it or they will start asking the tough questions to that adult in the room. We want to be poised in districts and in higher education that we can provide the professional development and learning opportunities for those teachers to be able to be prepared because the kids are going to ask the questions, and we need them to be able to pivot and provide kids those opportunities. That would be what I would share from my perspective.

Julianna Charles "Charlie" Brown, Director of Systems Transformation, KnowledgeWorks:

I had the great pleasure of supporting the facilitation of the network that is being launched in the next school year. I will also offer that network is a real place where we are hoping to house a lot of professional learning opportunities for educators across the state. In addition to collaborating with higher institutions for our pre-service teachers, we know that there are a lot of educators for whom this is a big leap, and we understand that. We want to provide them both the support and the space to process what this shift means for them in their classroom. And so, as a part of that we have a lot of different opportunities within the network for all levels of readiness and multiple entry points. If you have an individual teacher who is interested in understanding what personalized competency-based learning is, there is an avenue for them within the network, we call those our exploring modules, those are fully asynchronous modules where they can start to get those foundational elements of what this shift means for them in their classroom.

The next piece—and this is the piece that we are launching in the next school year—is a cohort of schools that are going to be working together. Those schools are going to get both individual coaching at the school and district level, as well as opportunities to network with each other to say, "Hey, we maybe tried this in our math classrooms, in our districts, how did that change work in another district, in another classroom?" That opportunity to network with other professionals who are working on the same changes. We also think of the network as a place both where we are thinking through these important systemic shifts as well as some of that direct support for educators for making the change.

Chair Denis:

Then to tie onto that, we talk about the teachers learning how to do this. What is happening with the administrators because if you do not have the support, the teacher might want to do some amazing things, but if they do not have the support, what are we doing there as far as the training for them?

Superintendent Stephens:

The same exact things. Making sure that we are building conversations around it, as they have talked about the network—that they are part of the network as well. In our district, they have been part of our learner-centered framework efforts from the beginning. They are directly tied to all of the sessions that our teachers are in. We have additional sessions that are leadership team trainings and providing professional learning opportunities for them. I would throw in; part of the training too is for kids and for families as well. We provide various education for the children and for families, and that is the part that is our next phase of continuing to improve upon. Because again, school looked the same for most people who are 21 years of age and older, and a lot of us did not have those models. We think we know what a "C" means and in that earlier presentation, we were talking about we do not know what an "A" is because it means different things in every single situation

where it exists. Parents though have, over time, associated a grade with some meaning for themselves. That is what they know, and not that it might have even treated them well in school, the grades that they received, that is what they know.

It does take education and conversation to ask some poignant questions to children and to families and give them all the right tools, so they understand what the new models mean, the new grading models and the approaches. It is around us changing the mindset. For most of us, we want to tell kids and people that it is okay to take a risk. It is okay to take a chance to try things, but our system has not allowed that. Failing has been very negative. The only way our brain grows, and changes is to fail. The brain has to do that because that is how change happens—this is a process. The competency-based process allows for us to focus more on the learning process than on the grading, reporting, penalty, and those things that schools traditionally have been about.

I would throw out those three areas for administrators. The same thing has to happen for teachers. We have a competency-based, in theory, evaluation tool, but it tends to be more of a punitive, “I got you.” It maybe does not even act like that, but in the mindsets of people, that is how it feels. We have to start using it more like a tool to help people grow and adapt and change and shift and use it that way. That will help educators move forward, and principals, the same way. I, as their evaluator, need to use that as a growth opportunity, not as a “gotcha” type of situation.

Chair Denis:

I appreciate you putting the training in for parents and others. I remember in one of the meetings—one of the superintendents was talking about trying to implement this and that the biggest thing was that some parents were upset that their child would not be a valedictorian because they did not know how this would fit in with the model of grade point average (GPA) and those kinds of things. I think when we focus on, how do we help each child and student learn, I think we have a way to go, but I appreciate all the work that you are doing.

Assemblywoman Miller:

I have some questions based on the presentation, there seems to be a consolidation of the idea of a competency-based learning and personalized-based learning. Again, competency-based learning (and you referenced the legislation that was passed last session that reduces or eliminates the need for seat-time) is based on individual student performance. But as it has been brought up already in this presentation, alluded to by yourself, as well as Superintendent Stephens, education is inundated, if not over legislated, with requirements. It is an education system based on test scores, standards, and curriculum. So, when we are talking about competency and then individualized challenges, and I know that in education there is always the idea of things that sound great and new and shiny, but as an actual classroom teacher myself, it is always the practical day-to-day pragmatic approach to how does this actually work and look.

Clark County is the fifth largest school district in the country and Washoe County has probably become in the top 50 of school districts in the country. I say that because often people forget that Washoe County is an extremely large school district as well. And so, when I have spent most of my career with more than 45 kids in each class period, we are talking about 45 individualized lesson plans, 45 different kids doing different things; when there is still the requirements of standards, there is still the requirements of testing, there is still basic requirements of what everyone expects students to have when they finish school,

so I am looking for some clarity with that. I have been going through the website and I do not find the information that I would anticipate would be there on the KnowledgeWorks' website.

Also, can you talk about, I have not seen exact numbers, but successes and things with other teachers and districts. Can you tell us where and how many of these districts across the country, what are the sizes of their districts and what are the makeups? Because again, even right now hearing things that happen in a rural school district in Nevada, compared to our two largest ones, that are not just large for Nevada, they are large for the United States. If you could briefly and succinctly describe that, please.

Ms. Brown:

A couple of pieces that I would address. I appreciate the question about the nuances needed to implement this in very large districts as well as very small districts. We know that the State of Nevada has a range of learning communities that encapsulate what we see all across the country. So, we are trying to appreciate that and appreciate that each district is going to need a contextualized approach. I had the great fortune to start my career in the New York City Department of Education doing this work and carrying forward much of what we learned in districts of that size.

What we see works is this networked approach because we understand that in a district like Clark County, you are not going to be able to mandate a single grading policy that works in every learning community, right? But what tends to work, as it relates to implementation, is to offer what we see as best practices as they get implemented across the country. Give educators and school leaders and district leaders the space to consider those practices, hold them up and say, "Are these the best learning practices for our community?" Then engage the community in those conversations as well. Will this work for us? Will this fit for us? How can we design this in a way that works for what we do? And then how can we find relationships with other folks in Clark County? Other folks, maybe between Clark County and Washoe County, who are experiencing things at a similar scale and learn from each other. So, we do know that mandating this in a large district or in a large system will not work. That is why we are leaning on that network learning approach as a key implementation strategy for this work.

The other piece of your question that I will address before passing it over to Lillian, is the conversation about the relationship between standards and competencies and the appreciable fear that educators have that we are adding on something new to what they are already responsible for doing. I think that is a fair concern. The way that we think about what competencies can do for the curriculum is providing a frame to make a lot more sense of the learning that is already happening.

What we know in many classrooms is that educators are responsible for a very large number of standards that may not have a clear relationship with each other. What competencies can allow us to do is to create a frame for different learning opportunities to say, "Okay, maybe we are thinking about critical thinking today." In my history classroom, I may be thinking about the First World War; in my science classroom, I might be thinking about biology; but I also understand that I am doing critical thinking in both of those environments. It is actually providing the connective tissue for learning experiences that teachers are already responsible for, and what teachers report is in those environments, it is a lot easier to collaborate across classrooms and make sense of the work that they do as one connected learning experience between different disciplines; between different grade

bands. That is how we see the value of competencies is by creating that coherence. That makes the whole series of learning that we are taking students through more coherent.

Ms. Pace:

I will add on to those great comments. I appreciate your question. It reminded me of one of the key learnings in the presentation about people who are ready for change, but they are also exhausted from the last two years and there is this sense of fatigue out there, particularly from educators, like, "Is this the next thing?" And so, I think that the part of the network is designed, as Charlie was articulating in her example, how do we help educators see this as an evolution of the good practices that they are already doing? You walk into any great educator's classroom, you are going to see rich differentiation of learning, right? And so, how do we help them build and strengthen those practices and scale them across the school building.

I also wanted to mention that you brought up for me, the importance of why we need to be thinking about the changes to practice at the same time that we are thinking about the changes to the systems. What we are finding in all of the states that are embarking in this work is that you have these early innovators on the ground, these phenomenal district leaders, these educators that get it and they are passionate, and what they are actually doing is they are building this new approach in a parallel track to the traditional requirements that they still are held to—all the things that you mentioned. Over time, it is going to be important for policymakers to partner with those educators to create more cohesive alignment to the work. Now, that does not mean that the state should right now go and mandate a whole new approach for all of that, as I shared earlier, that does not work. We want to create pathways for those that are interested in doing it, but not require it for everybody in the state who is not ready. It is going to be about, what are the enabling pathways within policy, within these requirements that we can begin to evolve to make it easier for the innovators that are trying to do the work.

Assemblywoman Miller:

Follow up Chair. One quick comment, I would like to say, because I know we forget to acknowledge the work that is already been happening here in Nevada, but actually this sounds very similar to what some of our international baccalaureate (IB) elementary schools, at least in Clark are doing. It is not that this work is not occurring at all with some of this individualized approach, but of course always the concern about making sure that students are getting the standards.

I did not hear an answer for the question about which states and how many states. I guess for me personally, I am trying to determine that. You say you are not a computer company, but I am trying to determine what type of company you are. Are you a consultation company? That is what I am trying to determine. If you could tell us how many states and how many districts, which states, which districts and if not, if you could follow up and submit that to the Committee, that would be great.

Ms. Pace:

I apologize for not answering that question the first time through. At KnowledgeWorks, we are partnering with, on the policy side, up to about one dozen states. We have about five states where we are partnering on both policy and practice. In those cases, we have a state-level partnership where we are building that network, where we are bringing a wide

range of districts and schools into the fold in that work. I am happy to follow up with the information on those.

But what I will say, is that we also recognize at KnowledgeWorks, that it is important to stay focused, to go deep, and to get it right in the places that we are doing the work. There is demand all over the country for this. As Superintendent Stephens shared, there are a lot of other organizations that are emerging to support this work. Over one-third of the states in the country have now developed profiles of graduate or are in the process of developing them. There has been, as Superintendent Stephens mentioned, a tremendous amount of energy as a result of the pandemic. This desire to use time differently. Our students are behind, how do we get more efficient? We are getting calls weekly from new places who are looking to explore this. At KnowledgeWorks, our work can range from the very small rural districts in North Dakota to Ector County, in Odessa, Texas, which is a larger district. And as Charlie mentioned, there are other places, big districts that have begun to do this work as well. So, our job at KnowledgeWorks is to contextualize our approach in partnership with the stakeholders. What do they want to design? How can we help them make that a reality? Using the knowledge that we know about best practices and teaching and learning; we can follow up with a better detailed scope of where this is at play across the country and in districts.

Assemblywoman Miller:

Thank you. I would appreciate that.

Assemblywoman Thomas:

Thank you for the presentation, it was very insightful. I appreciate it. I have a question, even though Assemblywoman Miller was looking at my notes, so she was able to ask all of those questions that I was concerned with, but the one question that I would like to know, I believe it was on slide eight, what jumped out at me was the flexibility learning path. If you can give an example of that? I am not a teacher, but I am a mom and a grandma, and I would like to know what that entails.

Superintendent Stephens:

KnowledgeWorks obviously has their perspective on what they shared because that was not my presentation, but I would love to share with you some of the ways that we utilize that terminology here in Churchill County. And what has been done in the past with some other things. In terms of flexible learning paths, certainly there is not one way to get to a standard or a competency demonstration. Right now, we have one test that we say at the state level, when we take the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), that is the test that says, we know standard 3.2 or whatever. How you get there though is dependent at your school. We would even go as far to say that that one SBAC test is not flexible. So, to have a true flexible learning path, you also need some flexible way to demonstrate your learning at the end.

Here in Churchill County, during the time of instruction, this is the process that we are in instead of having the teacher having one set of lesson plans (even with a differentiated approach that some kids might do this, and this group might do that). Sometimes the students have an opportunity to share. For example, in order to meet these standards, I would like to do this learning opportunity. It is taking into account project-based learning opportunities where kids ask their own questions. We are challenging them to tag standards to those questions and then demonstrate their learning for those standards for the

classroom through their work and every student might be pursuing a different question—a different big question that they are trying to ask.

None of the work that is happening, none of the research that is happening—looks the same. We have high school algebra classes that the teacher gives students multiple options of ways that they can learn the material. Then there are different ways they can practice the material and there are different ways that they can demonstrate their learning of the material. That is a flexible path. Another flexible path could be a traditional class, the class meets every day and the instruction occurs in different ways, and it goes on for the course of a quarter or semester. A flexible option too could be, if you had a different structure where a student could take a certified nurse assistant (CNA) class, for example, you could either take it through the college that goes Tuesday and Thursday nights all semester, or if you have some flexibility, you could have a model in a learning path where the students take it for two weeks all day long and go out and do their clinical and then go on to the next thing. Our online learning already does that because kids can do one class at a time versus having to do all six or seven in a traditional schedule. Those are some of the things that I have had experience with currently in terms of flexible paths.

An additional one would be, you can demonstrate your learning by being a page or an intern at a legislature and learn a lot about government and demonstrate your learning for government class; or you can be in government class and do a lot of the traditional learning that is happening in that particular class, both of which are very flexible and different work-based learning. Those are my experiences that I would associate with flexible learning. KnowledgeWorks may have completely different or additional things that they would share.

Ms. Pace:

I will pull out a couple of themes that I think are important. You know, we talked about learners having agency over their educational experience, instead of students walking in and knowing that they are going to follow the exact same list of projects as every single student sitting in that class. Imagine if the student has an opportunity with their teacher to co-design, pulling their interests into it, looking at some different ways. Everybody is still working towards the exact same set of competencies. There is an evaluation rubric that everybody knows. We know what the expectations are that we need to meet at the end of the day, but we want to bring the passion and interest of the students into that learning experience. This is why we have to think more creatively about how we leverage community partners in this work, because oftentimes, and you saw this coming up in the visioning work, people want more connected and relevant classrooms. We often think about learning happening inside the four walls of a school building, but it does not always have to be that way. There might be these vibrant, work-based learning or internship programs, other opportunities that students can pursue, that can start to set them on a pathway into future workforce opportunities.

Superintendent Stephens also brought up another piece. If we are thinking about time differently, that also means that we can honor learning experiences that might not happen, that might happen outside of a traditional learning experience. The easy example we hear used in state legislatures all the time was, “If my student is participating in the city orchestra, do they really need to keep taking that music credit when maybe they want to go really deep in an extended math program or something?” I think it is being intentional about what the student is passionate and interested about within the same framework of learning expectations for all.

Chair Denis:

Is there anyone up north wishing to ask any questions? [There were none.]

Thank you for your presentation today. I appreciate all the work you are doing to talk about education in a different way.

AGENDA ITEM VI—PRESENTATION CONCERNING EVIDENCE-BASED EVALUATION METHODS TO IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES

Chair Denis:

We will now go on to our next item, which is a presentation concerning evidence-based evaluation methods to improve student outcomes. We have Gabrielle (Gabby) Lamarre from NDE here, as well as Sara Kerr from Results for America (RFA). When you are ready, come forward with all your presenters.

Seng-Dao Yang Keo, Ed.D., Chief Strategy Officer, NDE:

Good morning, Chair, and honorable members of the Committee. I am honored and proud to introduce the next two presenters. Ms. Lamarre is the Director of the Office of Student and School Supports and the federal liaison for the NDE. Ms. Kerr is the Vice President of Education Policy Implementation for RFA. Together they will share how the NDE has worked with educators and leaders across the state and nation to create the conditions for and strengthened capacity to ensure that public education funds are used on what works to improve student and school outcomes. Using and building evidence data and research at all levels within classrooms at the district and state levels is what high performing, inclusive, and healthy education systems do to provide continuous improvement, particularly for the students, teachers, administrators, and families we serve.

Sara Kerr, Vice President, Education Policy Implementation, RFA:

Good morning, Chair Denis, and Committee members. Lovely to be here this morning with you. I am going to introduce myself and give you background on who we are at RFA and talk about the work we do nationally, as well as the work that we have done in partnership with the NDE. Then I will hand things over to my colleague Gabby Lamar to talk in more detail about the work that has happened over the last number of years, as well as the work that they are planning for the future. That is a little bit of a roadmap of where we are going to head.

I have had the great privilege of working with NDE since 2018. I am pleased to be here today to speak with you about the importance of investing in an evidence-based policy as a mechanism to ensure better, faster, and more equitable outcomes and opportunities for students and families.

Let me start by sharing more by way of background about RFA. (Agenda Item VI) Results for America, for those of you who are not familiar, is a bipartisan nonprofit based in Washington, D. C. that was established to help government leaders at all levels and across sectors harness the power of data and evidence to make progress on important social and economic issues. We believe at RFA that we can and will create stronger and more equitable systems and communities if policymakers regularly seek out and use data and evidence in partnership with their stakeholders and importantly, “asterisk” in partnership with community members on the ground to inform policymaking and practice.

Since our founding ten years ago, RFA and our coalition have helped to shift more than \$19.7 billion at the federal level towards evidence-based programs that deliver better results for residents and communities in close partnership with more than 275 cities and counties and 36 states. As you can see, on the map in front of you, this includes working closely, as I mentioned, with the NDE over the last several years, as well as working with the City of Las Vegas through RFA's What Works Cities initiative.

I will share more about how we work at RFA. We have three main strategies as an organization for realizing our vision of a more just and equitable society that works for residents, or in the case of education, which is the area I oversee, students. First, we define what "good" looks like, for how government can effectively use data and evidence to drive improved outcomes. We do this primarily through what we call standards of excellence. This is really setting a "North Star" for what government can and should be doing as it relates to data and evidence. We then partner with government to build their capacity to regularly and rigorously do this work. This is how we first came to know the NDE when they joined our first cohort of State Education Fellows, a number of years ago, and I will share more about that in a moment. Finally, we uplift and celebrate the excellent data and evidence-driven work happening at the federal, state, and local levels.

More about our education work. Like our work overall at RFA and those three pillars, our education efforts focused on the same three levers: standards of excellence, implementation, and mobilization. And across all of our education work, we are committed to helping states, school districts, and schools build the conditions for learning and improving and ensuring that we are investing limited resources that we have available to us in ways that will create better and more equitable opportunities and outcomes for students.

As I mentioned a few moments ago, one of our most important strategies is building capacity, both the skill and the will of state education agencies to use and generate data and evidence. We do this capacity building primarily through our State Education Fellowship, a first of its kind network of senior programmatic and research leaders that worked with us and each other to design and co-create and implement policies and practices that accelerate the role that data and evidence and continuous improvement play in improving student and school outcomes. A key focus of the Fellowship over the last number of years has been supporting state leaders and increasing the share of federal and state funds being spent on results-driven, evidence-based solutions and ongoing evaluation activities, acknowledging that the more we invest in policies and practices with evidence of effectiveness, the likelier we are to see improved outcomes.

All of us sitting here today have been impacted in ways large and small by the pandemic. We at RFA are grateful for the historic investments that the federal government, and state governments, by the way, have made in supporting state and local recovery efforts. Like so many helper organizations sitting outside the proverbial arena, we have been focused over the last two-plus years on helping states make smart evidence-aligned investments in the wake of an incredibly disruptive public health crisis. We view investments made by state agencies in particular as critical to recovery efforts overall and want to draw connection between investments made in students and families, and goals for building a highly skilled, well compensated workforce. Because we at RFA know, like you know, that a big driver of a strong workforce is a sound foundational education. We closely align our education and workforce efforts at RFA so that we can help as many states as possible realize their interconnected goals of well-prepared students ready to step into and thrive in high-wage, high-quality, meaningful jobs with dignity.

We know these are important goals for you here in Nevada and we look forward to ongoing partnership with NDE to ensure the federal funds that they have received are invested in ways that are making a difference for students and families in the broader community. I want to flag that beyond the moral imperative of this work to ensure that public funds are being invested wisely and are having their desired impact. The federal education relief funds, as you likely know, do have a set of requirements for states, including requirements that states prioritize funding in highest needs areas, invest funds in evidence-based programming, including programs that address disrupted learning, that offer summer learning opportunities and afterschool programming. And there is a set of requirements to evaluate the impact of those investments. These requirements taken together send an important message about the current administration's belief that if we invest funds in evidence-based equitable ways, we are more likely to see the results that we are seeking.

In order to make use of the significant federal recovery funds and help states meet the requirements that I summarized briefly, we have and will continue to work with state education agencies, including NDE to build awareness of and capacity to do this work well. We believe based on the work we have been doing here in Nevada and with states like it around the country, that the will among states to build a culture of data and evidence use is quite strong. However, in order to realize their vision, states need more support and investment in their capacity to use data and evidence to ensure the success of those investments, improve student outcomes, and build more equitable systems that work for all students. We want every state to have the resources and capacity to regularly collect and use data about their Emergency and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) investments to understand whether and to what extent those investments are making a difference for students, for teachers, and for families. I firmly believe that our collective success in realizing those goals, in particular for students, hinges on our ability to do these things well.

Finally, as I noted earlier, RFA works with dozens of states and has a great privilege of doing so, and I want you to know that the work of the NDE sets it apart from its peers in important ways. Results for America has recognized Nevada's commitment to data and evidence-driven decision making since 2019, when NDE was first included in our annual State Standard of Excellence, as a leading example of a state's use of evidence in grant programs. The NDE has consistently gone above and beyond the federal requirements directing additional funds where possible and where allowable, toward strategies that we know have a track record of working for students in areas like literacy (as one concrete example) and as it relates to strengthening our lowest performing schools across the state. Nevada was again recognized through our State Standard of Excellence in 2020 and in 2021 again for its leadership in this area. In 2021, it was also included as a promising example of a state investing in data infrastructure in honor of its investment in the Nevada P-20 Workforce Research Data System.

We are confident at RFA that Nevada is well positioned to maintain and even strengthen its data and evidence efforts and believe a path to getting there is deepening the investments being made in the state's capacity to do this work well. Thanks for the opportunity to speak about RFA's work overall and more importantly, the work we have had the pleasure of doing over these years with the NDE. I will now hand it over to my colleague Gabby Lamarre to talk more about what is happening and what the department hopes to see happen in the coming years.

Gabrielle (Gabby) Lamarre, J.D., Director, Office of Student and School Support, NDE:

Thank you. I am going to be walking us through how Nevada has been creating the conditions for all of this evidence-based work. (Agenda Item VI) Again, work focused on using data, evidence, and research to improve and drive student outcomes. We are so grateful for your support in this arena. These are a couple of examples of how we as a state have realized the importance of this shift to evidence-based interventions. We are so grateful, again, for your support here. We have highlighted [AB 7](#) (2017) and [SB 178](#) (2017). You all know these well so I will not go through these, but you will see there that specifically for AB 7, changing that language from scientifically-based to evidence-based and then also in SB 178, requiring that those funds were used on programs and services that were evidence-based. Basically, what we are saying as a state is that we are spending money on our funding and public dollars, and as Sara was saying, on interventions and practices and strategies that have worked, that have proven to be successful.

Here is a graphic of the part of the continuous improvement on process and embedding evidenced-based strategy within that. This graphic has been taken from our colleagues at the Ohio Department of Education who have been deeply engaged in this work, but it is really emblematic of the work that we have been doing in Nevada. The focus here is not solely on requiring or having our school districts or our schools list documentations for example that they are completing, such as their performance plans, which we will get to in a second, but that they are using evidence-based interventions. It is not about compliance. When we talk about this work, we are talking about selecting, based on this context, capacity to implement. We are ensuring that when these interventions are being selected that we are planning for implementation. Once we implement, we are monitoring our progress and we are examining, evaluating, and adjusting, as needed and if needed. This truly is a means of advancing equity in education and closing opportunity gaps because we are not allowing interventions and strategies that we have not been successful to continue. But instead, we are saying we are going to look at the data and we are going to make decisions based off of what the data is telling us, and we are not going to continue an intervention because for example, we might have a hunch that it might work in the future. We are in this continuous improvement process and with that we are pivoting when needed.

We will go through some examples of how we are actualizing this work in some of the statewide work across the state. We did embed this in our school performance plans and as you can see there is a visual where our schools do need to list their evidence level for any strategies that are aligned to their needs, saying they are going to implement after they go through the needs assessment and the root cause analysis. We have also provided guidance on this with some resources that we have embedded within our guidance and this evidence-based intervention component will be embedded within the district performance plan development as well.

Another example is with supporting districts to support their schools in strategic budgeting. We have been working over the past few years, embedding evidence-based interventions and that continuous improvement cycle within grant applications. We have compelled districts to use their funds on interventions activities that have been proven to be successful. We have also provided technical assistance on evaluating those interventions to determine that they are having a positive effect and if not, then readjusting as needed. We have asked our districts in various grant applications to then include and discuss how they will go about monitoring and evaluating their interventions.

I will also say that we are encouraging and providing technical assistance and guidance to our school districts to use their funds on rigorous evaluations. As an example, a couple of years ago, we did have one local education agency (LEA) reach out to us for support in this area and they were able to partner with some researchers to do a rigorous evaluation on an intervention that they had in some of their lowest performing schools. And so, with that data they are able to then decide what next steps might need to occur. That is one example of how we are encouraging our LEAs to engage in this continued improvement process.

Here, I know it is quite small, but here are a couple of visuals of the examples. In one of our applications in the prioritized needs and goals sections, we do ask our districts to consider whatever evidence-based interventions and strategies were identified to help you close the identified gaps that you have seen through your needs assessment and root cause analysis. What is the likelihood of success implementing those interventions. So again, looking at their capacity to be able to implement. We do provide evidence-based level resources. As you can see, another example there, when we look at a funding that is used to support safe and healthy students, we do ask them to describe their evidence-based interventions and include a narrative about how those funds would then directly align with the needs in their needs assessment. Those are a few examples, and I wanted to show how we are actualizing this in some of our grant applications throughout the state.

Another resource that we have for our districts and our schools in this area of work is what we call our Evidence-Based Interventions for School Transformation List. We started this list several years ago in 2017 and it has been regularly updated since. This was created because we realized that with the shift from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and with these new evidence-based requirements, that we needed to provide not only guidance but to begin doing the hard work for our districts. This serves as a resource of interventions that have already been vetted, if you will, and reviewed for their evidence base. We do partner with UNLV's College of Education and some researchers there who have been great partners in this work to conduct these rigorous reviews and then to determine (based on national standards) what level of evidence-base these interventions meet. We are proud to say that we have updated that list a couple of months ago, and it is again a resource for our districts. They are not required to use these, but basically, we want to say, "Here are some evidence-based interventions in math, for example." I think we have some family engagement on there—Student Centered Learning (SCL) interventions. We have been working over the past few years expanding that. When it first started, it was focused on a couple of topics and now we have expanded that. We are excited about that.

Some additional guidance, technical assistance, and professional development that we have provided across the state: we did host an equity and evidence convening. This was a statewide convening focused on implementing and sustaining evidence-based practices and interventions. It included discussions around equity in schools and how we can best serve our students across the state through the implementation of data, research, and evidence. Some additional statewide sessions that we have had are included below. We have had sessions on the Evidence-Based Interventions for School Transformation List and diving deep so that our school districts truly understand what is all of the back work that goes into determining whether an intervention is actually evidence-based. We were able to do a couple of deep dives, statewide, for our districts, also evaluating research and evidence. So again, we talk about that continuous improvement process. It is not about selecting/identifying but ensuring that you are monitoring progress.

We have had sessions on contextual considerations in selecting evidence-based interventions, and all of these sessions have been based off of feedback that we are hearing from our districts about what they would like more and need more support on so that they

can best support their schools. We heard feedback that they needed some additional guidance and support on, for example, “I have this situation, I am looking at this evidence-based intervention on this resource, that you gave us, NDE; but how do I know or what should I be thinking about to determine whether it may actually be successful in my context?” We had a “deep dive” session there. We also had another session about the evaluating for continuous improvement. We most recently had a session on addressing learning change or learning loss with evidence-based strategies and ensuring that our districts are doing what works when it comes to that, especially with all of these educational opportunity gaps being exacerbated due to the pandemic. We are continuing to provide ongoing technical assistance and guidance during ongoing meetings, convening, for example, with different programs. We have either bi-weekly, monthly, or quarterly meetings, and we are continuing to provide guidance and information to our districts during those meetings as well.

As far as next steps for this work in Nevada, we are thrilled with how far we have come and know that we have some ways to go here. We are going to continue to update our Evidence-Based Interventions for School Transformation List, and we are definitely going to continue to provide guidance and technical assistance to our schools and school districts. I want to spend a few minutes on—we are super excited about this. This is a “What Works Nevada Clearinghouse” for education, and this is something that our team and some other states have been doing. Ohio is an example, and I can certainly share with you that link, so you can see what our vision is for Nevada and of course it will be tweaked to Nevada's context. But if you can imagine a statewide resource that has all of the information, guidance, and tools that districts and schools will need to help them do this work. Oftentimes we do the technical assistance, we define the guidance, and then we know that we transition in roles. And so, districts for example might say, “I am new, and can you train me on this?” This would be a resource that districts and schools can consistently go to that will have information and diving deep into the evidence-based interventions, continuous improvement cycle, that visual that I shared earlier with you. They will be able to have a national and local level evidence-based interventions support to ensure that we are using funds on interventions that have been proven to be successful. It will help our educators make evidence-based decisions so that they can provide equitable access to quality services for students. It would be embedding a systemic, rigorous review process and transparent reporting when it comes to evidence-based interventions. It will help build our evidence-base here in Nevada. We know that there are a lot of great interventions and services that are going on across our districts. A district will be able to say, “We want this to be evaluated, this is our package, we think it has been working for our schools, we have seen great outcomes and we would like this to be evaluated for evidenced-base and see where against the national standards it might meet.” It will help us build our evidence-base here in Nevada.

I am excited about the potential for this work. That is a big picture, one of our major next steps and where we are hoping to go. Here is some contact information for our Office of Student and School Supports, myself, along with my wonderful teammate Dr. Tina Winquist. If you have any questions, we are happy to answer them for you.

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

I am sure we will have questions. I did not realize I was going to be taking over for the Chair for a moment. I have a few questions, and I will go ahead and start with mine and then move on to my colleagues.

Let me start out with RFA first. I am looking at the map that you have that says where you work. I am looking in Nevada and obviously you are working with NDE and then it looks like you are working with cities, I am guessing Reno and Las Vegas?

Ms. Kerr:

Las Vegas has been historically the main city we have worked with through a separate initiative. I oversee our education work, which runs an initiative called the "What Works Cities," that focuses on the same sort of data and evidence-driven policymaking but anchored in cities rather than in state agencies and school districts.

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

Can you tell me the difference between "What Works Cities," "What Works Cities Certification," and "SEA Fellows" because I am not sure I understand?

Ms. Kerr:

Results for America is an organization nonprofit, as I mentioned, bipartisan, that works across levels of government. We do work at the federal, state, and local level, as well as across sectors. We have specific issue areas in which we work. The work that we do at the local level, the main vehicle for that work, is our "What Works Cities" initiative. That work focuses on setting a standard for what is good government that is embracing practices consistent with good use of data and evidence, what that looks like, and then supporting leaders in each of those jurisdictions—it could be a city, it could be a county—to progress towards that standard that we have set. We have a set of, I think, 20 something criteria that we use to define what good data looks like, a set of standards, and then support cities in graduating through those standards. Then assuming they progress, they are eligible to receive certification at various levels.

The work we do at the local level is "issue agnostic". It is supporting good government. Every city is going to have its own set of priorities. Every mayor for example, is going to have an agenda that they are pursuing; and we support the use of data and evidence as a vehicle for achieving the goals they have set. I will say a little bit more about the work we do on the education side, which is an example of an issue area that transcends federal, state, and local levels. At the federal level, RFA advocates for strong data and evidence policies with the federal government, with the United States Department of Education, and in Congress. We played a big role in securing the ESSA evidence provisions that were referenced in my presentation that I know have influenced the way that states, including Nevada, have designed their programs and ways in which they are spending money.

At the state level, our primary vehicle is our State Education Fellowship, in addition to state standard, which is a version of that local standard for cities that I articulated. What do state governments need to be doing and how should they be behaving if they are embracing data and evidence. We apply that to the education sector through our Fellowship program. It brings together a network of what we have worked with, probably close to 15 or 16 different state education agencies over the last 5 years, into a single network that supports them to adopt and implement policies and practices that are going to advance better data, use, better data generation, and better use of evidence to drive decision making. And again, relatively agnostic to "the what." We think of ourselves as the "how people." We believe that if we embrace and use data and evidence, and generate and build evidence over time, we are going to be better positioned to make good decisions on behalf of students and pursue whatever goals agencies and school districts have set.

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

If I could follow up. In the other states that you are in, is it typical that you would work with the state agency and then cities and not work directly with the school district—CCSD or WCSD? Because I feel, especially with the City of Las Vegas, we are looking at about 700,000 people as opposed to 3 million in the Clark County area. Is that typical?

Ms. Kerr:

It is typical. There may be a sense of disconnect between some of the work that we are doing on the education side at the state level and some of the work that RFA, as an overarching organization, is doing with cities. Like any organization, we have different sets of initiatives and we do collaborate where it makes sense that the work that we are doing with state agencies, for example, or with the NDE, while there is some connective tissue, it is separate from the set of work that is happening in Las Vegas. So yes, to answer your question, it is common in the states that we have been working in that we may have state education agencies that are working with our workforce, investment boards that we are working with, and then separate work happening in a subset of their cities and counties. There is some connective tissue, but it is pretty distinct from each other.

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

Do we have other questions for Ms. Kerr in particular?

Assemblywoman Thomas:

My question has to do, and all through both presentations, I keep hearing evidence-based. My concern is lived experience especially when we are dealing in low-performing schools. When you are collecting this data for low-performing schools, are you considering the lived experience? Because we know that sometimes that evidence-based data can be skewed. If you can answer that question for me?

Ms. Kerr:

I will start and then Gabby, you can build off what I offer. First of all, I deeply appreciate that question and it does not come up enough in my opinion. It is helpful to think about ways in which, as we talk about data driven, evidence-based work, we can “off the bat” set common definitions. For example, when I think about evidence-based and talk about evidence-based strategies or approaches or data-driven efforts, in my own mind, that means not causal impact evidence or quantitative evidence. That means widening the aperture to include qualitative data and evidence, which I would extend to include significantly importantly lived experiences of those who are closest to or impacted by the policies and practices. And so, the RFA, together with our partners in state agencies and in school districts—when we talk about building or generating evidence—we are actively promoting and supporting efforts that are much broader and wider than commissioning an impact evaluation that might randomize students, and five years from now, help us draw some conclusions about whether a literacy program or a math program may have worked. We are saying we want to cocreate policies that we know are going to be meaningful and matter to our students, and that we have mechanisms in place beyond causal impact evaluations to help us understand if the policy changes, or practices that we are putting into place, are working. Not, “Did they work?” but “Are they working?” I think that is an important question. We do take a broader approach to defining data and evidence based in our work.

Ms. Lamarre:

Yes, I completely agree, that is important. I can see how throughout the presentation, it made it seem like we are only focusing on one aspect of this work, but certainly the qualitative data and the lived experiences—embedded in that work is also the lived experience. When we talk about the planning for implementation and looking at our capacity, that is looking at what is going on in our schools with our school context and seeing do we have the capacity, and do we have the time and the resources to buy into, to even be able to do this? I think that goes back to lived experience. Then certainly when we have examining, reflecting and adjusting, some of that storytelling, some of those experiences and aspects definitely would come in there as well. Yes, it is definitely about both.

Assemblywoman Thomas:

Thank you for those answers.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

Thank you for the opportunity to ask the questions and for being here and for your presentation. I want to make sure that I understood it—2017 is when the legislation took place, that outlined what was to be done. Have you been working with NDE since 2017? I think this is to Ms. Kerr.

Ms. Kerr:

Yes, I believe 2018 is the first point in time that we began to work closely with the NDE. Previous to that, we, as an organization, were doing work nationally and constantly examining the practices and policies that are being put into place; the NDE was on our radar. I believe 2018 was the year in which we first became closer partners and the NDE was able to join the first cohort of State Education Fellows that we launched.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

A follow up, Vice Chair? I have been a “broken record.” I keep referring to some of our statewide statistics. I do want to compliment the NDE for having a wonderful portal for the public to look at so we can get an idea and dial down to schools, districts, statewide proficiencies in English language arts (ELA), and mathematics. If you are working with them, maybe if not here, but offline, we could have a follow up.

I had stumbled across this based on a couple of other hearings we have had. I go back to 2016 and 2017 and look at our statewide results; I understand that we are grouping lots of things together and there are lots of different things, but we have to start somewhere. I have gone to some rural areas who have different populations, but I am seeing a lot of the same concerns about lower proficiencies. Let us start with this: 2016 to 2017, we have high school proficiency in ELA at 73 percent, that seems good; graduation rate is right around the same; and math proficiency in 2016, is about 55.6 percent. This is a year or two after the \$1.3 billion, infusion tax increase for education in the 2015 Session. We see these numbers, then we go to the next year, and I do not even go to the Coronavirus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19) years, one year we do not report and the next year—it is bad. So, to be fair, then you go to 2017 to 2018, it precipitously drops. It gets cut by one-half almost. Our math dropped from 70 percentile down to the 26.3 percentile. And the reading, ELA dropped from 73 percentile down to the 45 percentile. That year things dropped

dramatically, and I do not have an explanation for that. Perhaps since this is what you do as evidence-based, we could find an answer to that.

Then when you progress to the last year before COVID-19, the 2018–2019 pre-COVID-19, is 47.6 percent in ELA statewide and 26.3 percent in math. I am talking high school in these numbers. I guess my request would be for all the evidence-based research, could we get—maybe the answer is out there. I have only been here since 2019. If we could have some understanding of those numbers? Then based on working with NDE, what are we doing to get it down to where it is helping our students or helping those teachers and helping those districts with all the evidence-based research that is going on. That is a huge ask.

Ms. Lamarre:

At NDE, we are constantly looking at our data and looking to see how we can best support our districts to support their schools and their students with this. I think we will perhaps need to follow up because I want to make sure that I am addressing all aspects of your question. But what I can say is that when we look at the data, and I think this goes back to the question about ensuring that we are embedding the lived experience. To your point, we would have to look more strategically at the data, quantitative and qualitative, and look at some of the stories behind that and see exactly why we are seeing the numbers that we are seeing. What I will say is that when we, beginning with the evidence-based interventions and embedding that with anything with education, it will take some time to then see that out in (and I think what you are referring to is) our end of the year assessments, our SBAC data and so what we are doing and all that we share today is helping to build those conditions.

But surely as a nation, we have some ways to go. We have seen some, and you have heard stories about, some of our districts that have been using some of the evidence-based interventions working with a certain evidence-based partner, for example, saying, we see this in our numbers right now, we think this is exactly why, but it is also about continuously monitoring and doing that rigorous evaluation process. Of course, COVID-19 derailed a lot of things because we were planning actually to do, with a partner who also is great in this work—Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West) at WestEd—who has provided guidance to our districts; we were planning on doing a statewide tour and getting to the school level for these a little bit more. That was supposed to happen at about 2020–2021; with the pandemic, we were not able to do that. So we are getting through it now. We are looking at what we can do to get more down to the school level with these and providing the guidance and support that our schools truly need as well and helping our districts do so.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

Thank you and I do understand that. So certainly, when you can get back offline and share that information with our Committee, it would be greatly appreciated. In regard to that shared experience, I went to some other counties—I went to Churchill County, and I went to Elko County—I represent six counties. I have a large section of Washoe County and five rural counties, and those numbers kind of follow. These are in counties that are getting net proceeds of mining tax money as well. So, please, if I did not indicate that, I would love to have you look at those other counties so that I understand it is all-inclusive with the state numbers. Thank you for the time. I understand it is a big ask, but we look forward to hearing back from you.

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

If you would get that information to the Committee and we can make sure that we send it to the Committee members.

AGENDA ITEM VII—PRESENTATION ON EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM COSTS AND EQUITY UPDATES

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

Next, we are onto a presentation on early learning program costs and equity updates. Please begin when you are ready.

Patricia Oya, Director, Office of Early Learning and Development, NDE:

Thank you. I am happy to introduce Judy Ennis and Greg Hill from WestEd who are here to provide an update on their work examining the cost of quality pre-K in Nevada and the equity of the \$8,410 per-seat cost methodology that we began using during the School Year (SY) 2022–2023. This is a two-year study that was approved at the close of the 2021 Legislative Session. I will turn it over to Judy and Greg.

Judith Ennis, Senior Engagement Manager, WestEd:

Good morning. I will be speaking today with my colleague, Greg Hill.

Greg Hill, Jr., Global Information Specialist (GIS), WestEd:

I am pleased to be here.

Ms. Ennis:

It is our privilege and our pleasure to speak with you all today. You have had a very packed agenda and we appreciate the opportunity to share our current progress with our study with you.

We have for you here an overview of what we hope to cover with you this morning during our brief time with you. We are going to give you an overview of our project and a progress update, share some emerging findings with the emphasis on emerging, we are very much in process, and will do a preview of upcoming activities before we get to questions and answers (Q&A) ([Agenda Item VII](#)).

To introduce WestEd, we are a nonpartisan resource organization. We are headquartered in California, but as you can tell by the name WestEd—we work heavily within the West. We have a long relationship here in Nevada. If interested, we can detail some of the other projects, I have heard you ask in some of the other presentations today, what our colleagues may be doing here in Nevada right now, but we are focused on our study at the moment.

Our team is with us here in spirit and by text, if needed, if questions come up. You only have two of us represented today. I am the project director. I work in early childhood fiscal cost modeling, as well as in education policies at large in both the K–12 space and in the early childhood space. You can see we have a number of team members here: Marian Knotts; Lucy Hadley; Mel Wylen; and John Diaz, who are not with us in person, but

they are contributors to this work, and we are proud to represent their efforts to you today. Greg Hill to my right is our GIS on the project.

We have been invited to do this study because as you are all very aware, Nevada is a changing space; you have urgent priorities facing your education space in terms of the teacher shortage in the K–12 arena and all of that is also happening in the early childhood sector. Our focus here though is on modeling costs for Nevada Ready! Pre-Kindergarten (NRPK) by thinking about what it looks like at the site level and bringing that information to bear on what the cost model looks like from the state level. This is in a moment of great change. Early childhood is reeling from the impacts of the pandemic, and there has been a significant amount of stretching and straining on the part of early childhood educators and caregivers to meet the needs of their children who may be experiencing trauma and illness at home resulting in absences, enrollment changes, and moves. All of that has an impact on what is happening at the site level, and we want to understand that context when we think about what it truly costs to provide pre-kindergarten from the site-level perspective. So that is our charge. Within that, we have had our official beginning in January 2022, and we have been running at a steady clip since then. We have much further to go with the work for this two-year project.

An overview of where we are in our process: the early stage of review, we engaged in document review, looking at different sources of publicly available data to understand some of the context of local communities and to establish a set of case study regions that we will detail in a moment.

Where we are right now is in that second bucket—engage, where we have been working for the past two months on a survey and on doing regional focus groups to understand the perspectives of site-level administrators. The goal of that segment of our work is to come up with a cost ranges report in late summer. We are working on that right now; it is forthcoming. We are going to share some emerging findings with you, but the details of that will be outside of the scope of today's presentation. Up next, after we finish our cost ranges, we are going to shift to working with an advisory group to develop findings and recommendations for the Office of Early Learning and Development (ELD), and that is going to continue from the end of the summer through 2023.

We are going to get into more detail. These are three anchoring research questions. As you know right now, \$8,410 is the per-child amount. What we want to understand is what is the range of cost points above and below the \$8,410. And what are the factors that create that range? What is the gap between how much Nevada spends and the cost from that site level perspective? That last piece is what we are going to focus on in our next phase: who has served and not served, and why, within a mixed delivery system? When I say mixed delivery system, I am referring to the range of settings that children experience care. It could be a center, it could be within a local education agency (LEA), or it could be a family home childcare. In our pre-K, we are focused on ages four and five. These are our five case study locations. We have established these through a process with our partners in the ELD and in this process, we had a number of criteria that we were looking at.

We wanted to land at the end of this, in 2023, with a sense of the ranges, of the regional differences within Nevada. Las Vegas is extraordinarily different from other parts of the state, as you all well know. We wanted to choose regions that represent what is happening in terms of mining—the impact of the mining industry. The differences between the major population centers such as Las Vegas, Reno, and Sparks to other areas that are these large geographic regions with pockets of population density within it. We also want to make sure we had demographic representation across the state. Where is there tribal concentration?

Where is there not? So, with all of these in mind, we went through a process of breaking it down and we settled on these five. Now the \$8,410 is statewide. The reason we wanted to go with case study locations is that we believe that in order to understand the answers to our research questions, we need to get as close to the ground as possible. What is the experience from the perspective of site administrators with their day-to-day budgets?

Here are some of the data collection activities that we have in play now or have coming up. We have completed our regional focus groups, but there will be more coming up in the future, as well as our survey. At the top level there, you see the advisory group that I mentioned before; we will share a little bit more about that later because that is in the next phase of our project. Some of the data sources that we have used include census data, the NDE and LEA data for NRPK, as well as looking at state plans, guidance, and program websites.

I apologize for having to go with a disclaimer so early in the presentation, but we want to say clearly that we intend to refine these results. We are working on this in real time. So, if there is a piece of this, you say, “We would like to hear about that again in six months,” we intend to bring that back to you. These findings are given to you in good faith that they are as valid as we can make them at this time.

Our survey—I do not know about you, but I am exhausted by responding to so many survey requests. We were delighted with the number of responses that we got into us. This was a signal of the interest in the field to some of the questions that our study is wrestling with. We got approximately 135 responses but many of them were incomplete—some started, they closed it, and they started again. We counted the 64 complete nonduplicate responses at this time, and within that, we would like to say that we would like to reach back out to the individuals that started their response and did not finish it, because we want to hear from them. But for now, we are pleased with the response of 64 for the purposes of our study at this time. We got strong engagement across the state on different site types back to that mixed delivery system I was describing earlier. You can notice at that breakdown at the top that we have non-NRPK as well. You might be wondering why we would be interested in that if our focus is on NRPK.

To understand the cost model for NRPK, we need to see and understand the context NRPK is working within in terms of the opportunities that families have in Nevada to place their children in other types of settings that may not be part of NRPK. How different is the experience of the educator in that space if they have the choice of working in a NRPK site to a non-NRPK site in terms of compensation and in terms of length of the workday, et cetera. Some of those questions, we view to be quite germane to understanding the range above and below for the \$8,410 amount.

Here are some of the cost categories that we investigated via the survey, which we then dug into a little bit deeper in our regional focus groups. You can see that number one is personnel hourly wages. That is absolutely the largest part of any site-level budget: paying for the people. But there are a number of other monthly totals that we want to understand: salaries and benefits, rent versus mortgage, if that applies for an LEA, for example (and we will talk about that momentarily) utility supplies, and COVID-19 expenditures. When we think about the cost model, I want to draw your attention to that point because we know that there are isolated COVID-19 expenditures that are in place right now—extra personal, protective equipment (PPE), for example, extra cleaning supplies—that we hope is going to go out of the budget in time. But still, to understand the current moment, we have included that and want to understand its impact on the overall experience of administrators, licensure liability insurance, all of these things that shape the budget and expenditures from

the site perspective. There were a number that we did not ask about in the survey that our focus groups helped us to elevate as a priority for us to understand.

What you see here are a set of threads that we are currently chasing. For example, maintenance and infrastructure, we were aware that infrastructure would be a big expense, but we were not aware of how big this impacted site-level budgets for some of the site administrators that participated in our focus groups. Some of the range here caught us off and so we are following this one more closely because there is a unique element running aside in Nevada, which is the power of the sun on your equipment outside and the frequency with which you need to replace it in order for it to maintain high quality and safety for kids. That is an example of a unique regional difference in Nevada that we want to understand as a factor within the cost model.

Professional development assessment and technology. When we are talking about technology here, this is what is happening in the educators' hands, when they might be taking notes on observations and/or for sign in, sign out for families to come in and other types of tracking throughout the course of the day that could be happening during a program. There are other pieces there that site administrators were sharing with us that were expensive that we want to understand—\$8,410 across the state, and we have already talked about the regional differences. What you see here is some of the ranges on rent that we heard from sites so far. And again, we want to get more specific on this. But as you can see a range of \$600-\$20,000; that is a major range. So, there are differences here between sites that are based at an LEA where they are not thinking about this component versus those that are an independent center. If they need to expand or are considering expansion and increasing their square footage. This has a major shaping effect on their ability to do so is the cost of rent and overhead.

We are going to give you a sense of what we understand right now to be the ranges and salaries over the past couple of years, so that we could understand that pre COVID-19 moment to right now. As you can see here, right now, our NRPK salaries are fairly stagnant in Clark County, even though based on everyone's talk of the price at the pump right now, inflation is an issue, and there are workforce supply pressures that are happening around this current salary level. In Washoe County, year-to-year is a little bit lower compared to Clark County. Even though there is a major population density area with many different types of industries there. and high numbers of young families. Nye County is a little bit lower compared to 2019, and we would like to understand this piece in particular, so we are looking into that. If I am going to go quickly on these, I am happy to go back when we get to Q&A, of course.

Our focus groups first, I would like to say thank you to anyone who might be listening, who participated in the focus groups because they were unbelievably informative for our team and the level of engagement that came from site administrators who have many other pressures in their day-to-day to join us for these focus groups was deeply appreciated by our research team. We held eight sessions. They ended at the end of May, so we are still going through the process right now of theming all of the comments. We used a data protocol, but of course, if someone had something that was not expected in our interview protocol, we heard that and brought that into our process in order to understand their unique perspectives from their site levels, wherever they are within the state. We had about 40 participants total, and we are hoping to come back to some of them later as we go further into the process to either verify or re-define validated findings of the study from their perspective.

Here are some of the key things we have heard so far from those focus groups. Number one, and this is also represented in the rest of your agenda today, recruiting teachers has been a challenge because of the pay. That is the perception shared by the administrators. Losing teachers to retail jobs or other opportunities that pay more per hour is a consistent pressure on these sites. That can make the difference between children getting off the wait list and staying on. There are also difficulties within the grant timing. This is not a large margin operation and the timing of when the money comes does not always match the cycles that they are under in terms of enrollment, movement of families, and the needs of staff. That is one that we would like to understand a little bit more. It is not explicitly related to the cost model but still something that came up consistently. Lastly, right now to be eligible for NRPK is related to the 200 percent poverty level. There were some that shared, they needed to turn families away where they cannot access, they cannot find care for their four- and five-year-olds, they cannot find the educational experience that they are looking for because of their eligibility. However, one of the reasons why we are designed using the case study regions is that while there is a commonly held perception nationally that more rural equals higher percentage of families experiencing socio-economic distress because of the mining industry, more rural does not necessarily equate with lower incomes for the families. That is an interesting piece of that regional difference within Nevada that we want to understand as we explore this more deeply. Because even if there are NRPK sites that are in those areas, but they are not eligible because they are above that threshold; their children are still not getting the opportunities that the family desires.

Another piece that we wanted to share with you within this, from our participants, was that we heard consistently, and I want to say that we were not asking for this in the protocol, was the quote that you see on the screen here, and I will read it for those that perhaps are in the back and did not bring their glasses. "The children that went through the NRPK program had higher school readiness both academically and in terms of their social emotional development. We know this program has a high positive benefit for children and families." The individual that shared that (we abbreviated it slightly) was a school-based site administrator in one of our focus groups. But that is representative of many of the comments that we heard from both within NRPK and without. Four- and five-year-olds are a very narrow slice of population. As you all know, data moves slowly in terms of when it is posted and made publicly available. These children age without concern for whether or not we are capturing them in our data models.

The four- and five-year-olds that are captured on the screen here have already aged out of our slide deck. So, when we say the data is incomplete, we would like to pinpoint that we are working with a very small slice of the population and sometimes the access is not there for terms of the publicly accessible data. The broad story here though is that there is a clear demand that exceeds current supply. There are regional variances to that and that depends on population pressure; it depends on a number of things. But we want to share with you that the total population in 2020, for four- and five-year-olds that would be eligible, that are in the age range for NRPK, is approximately 77,000. Within that, the total population that are less than 200 percent of poverty, which means that they meet the eligibility requirements, is about 33,000. That is about 43 percent within poverty. I hope that those statistics give you a sense of the group that we are talking about within the state.

Looking ahead, we are in the phase right now of establishing the ranges for the cost model. We are aiming to have that preliminary modeling done at the end of the summer. Then we are going to move into understanding how our model intersects with issues of access through our conversations with the advisory group and through returning to the participants of our focus group and our survey respondents. Our project close date is for summer 2023, and we have quite a lot of work to do before we get there. Right now, we are focused on

completing the analysis of that survey data and reconnecting with participants to clarify. As I mentioned, we had 135 that opened and gave us partial information and closed. We are going back to them to understand their details. Then the engagement with the advisory group is scheduled to begin in the fall.

We are happy to answer any questions that you may have, and again I want to reiterate our gratitude for this opportunity to share our study with you.

Assemblywoman Miller:

Thank you for this presentation. My question is very basic. As you are working on the cost analysis, we know when it comes to teacher pay, this is a major issue on why we are losing and there is no pipeline. Let us say it the way it is. But it is even, I think, more crucial when it comes to early education and people do not realize that these groups of students, this early ed, four to five, is another specialized group of students and is not captured necessarily in the same way as K through 12 licensing. But again, it is imperative that we have licensed and trained teachers. Of course, there are many people who would love to work with that age group. But again, because of economics, cannot. My first question and you can briefly respond is, because again, some of the pushback we often get is, "Well, if we do this, who is going to do it? Where are the teachers? We do not have enough teachers anyway." And for class size it is always, "Well, we do not have enough teachers anyway," instead of "Well, let us get to the root of things."

I know right now we would not have enough teachers to do it; we would not have enough early education certified individuals to do this. Can you briefly explain or describe for us how much their pay impacts the ability to attract and retain these early certified professionals, as well as will those costs to bring that salary up to market value to what would attract and retain, will that be included in your studies—in your recommendations?

Ms. Ennis:

Yes, compensation I think is a headline in every state in the country right now for the K–12 teacher shortage and also for early childhood educators and childcare providers. I think the whole spectrum is experiencing issues in terms of what is the appropriate pay scale for this desperately needed and highly impactful work. I deeply appreciate your question. I would say that within our cost model, we are looking at what the ranges are regionally, and we will take the input of the advisory group who, we were hoping to have the advisory group be a set of experts that are at the system level within Nevada, as well as those that are site administrators to participate in that discussion about how much of an impact compensation has in their experience of recruitment and retention. I think it is critical to hear as much as possible from those that are working on the ground about this question.

I think, and I am making an assumption, that the reason for your question is that there is the question of—is compensation so low? We did hear that in the focus groups from some of our participants already, that compensation is a reason why we cannot retain our educators, and they are getting jobs elsewhere. There are also ranges within the settings of what individuals are paid. If you are LEA-based, that is a different pay scale than if you are working in the center or another setting. We are looking at all of those factors, and we aim to provide our best possible recommendations as informed by the advisory group, in addition to our research.

Assemblywoman Thomas:

Thank you for the presentation. One of my “gut feelings” and the reason why I ran for office is this subject of pre-K. I am an advocate for pre-K. The question that I have for this panel, your data that you have collected—is that from just childcare facilities? Did you go into CCSD with their program to collect this data or is it regulated to childcare facilities? That is my first question.

Ms. Ennis:

Thank you for sharing that you are an advocate for pre-Kindergarten. Our data sources, we use publicly available data. I am going to also defer to my colleague here in a moment if there are any other details on this. We focused on gathering information from current site administrators for the survey. We also looked at census data statewide and information provided by the ELD. So, the NRPK, what we are focused on, is quite narrow, and when we say childcare, that can be broader. So, through the course of our study, we want this to be contextualized within a larger set of age ranges. We are narrowly focused on the four- to five-year-old age group served by the NRPK program. I hope that answers your question. Please, if I did not answer it, I would like to clarify.

Assemblywoman Thomas:

That was not quite the answer. I wanted to make sure that we are getting that data, the data that I am hearing, I am not sure if we are looking at the complete program for pre-K, especially when we are talking about salary. We know that childcare facilities cannot compete with the salary scale. I would like to know whether or not this is a narrow data collection from the childcare facilities instead of the entire program.

Ms. Oya:

The study does look at the CCSD NRPK program, the data from the school district, and Washoe County or Nye County, the areas that we picked. We do look at the school district data as well as any childcare programs that have NRPK seats in them. That is our work with the United Way of Southern Nevada; whether we have some pre-K seats in childcare, we have some pre-K seats in LEAs. I think that is what they refer to as a mixed delivery system. And so, we do look at both.

One of the things in NRS is that childcare centers do have to pay near equivalent, and it is not quite an even match of dollar for dollar, but they have to pay at the rate of their local school district because we know that childcare centers generally do not pay as much as a school district. We do have that written into NRS. The problem is, if they are not as highly qualified as a school district teacher, we do require a bachelor's degree or that they are working towards a bachelor's degree, then they have to make the same pay. I think the problem with childcare though, as you know, your concern is that then infant-toddler teachers look at their pre-K counterparts and say, “how come they are making as much as a school district teacher?” And that really causes more inequity than we wanted. But we took that lead from our federal partners, when we received that big federal preschool development grant, that is where the wording came in, that they pay at the same rate as their local school district.

Assemblywoman Thomas:

Thank you. I appreciate that answer.

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

Thank you for the presentation. Ms. Oya knows that I am quite passionate about this issue too, as I have served in a volunteer role as president of Family-to-Family Connection for, I think, for the last 12 years or something like that. Family-to-Family Connection for those of you who are not aware was founded in 1998. I talked about the importance of zero to five, right? I feel like I am beating my head against the wall when I talk to folks about early childhood, whether it is, we were fighting for full day kindergarten a few years ago when many people thought it was basically babysitting. And pre-K, I feel like I have to “beat my head against the wall” to make people understand the importance of that and that is where my next question to you lies.

Obviously, there is a need for this, but are you finding from parents in particular or what have you come across—I think you are anticipating my question of the importance. Do people realize the return on investment in investing in pre-K? I will leave it at that.

Ms. Ennis:

I know the previous presentation you have is about evidence-base. There has been continuous research on the impacts of a high-quality educational experience for pre-kindergarten age children and for educational experiences for children in care and multiple settings from birth and on. The impact in terms of cognitive development, social emotional development, and school readiness, which is one of the primary elements of the NRPK program. The evidence here is strong, and the research goes deep across many settings, many years, across demographics, and across program type. The research community is quite unanimous about the positive impacts of having children experience a high-quality preschool and early childcare experience.

However, I would say that parents can tell you from their own perspective what the impact is in terms of their ability to maintain work for themselves, to have their child establish peer-to-peer relationships, meet other parents, and be connected to their communities. The benefits of that type for families in terms of consistency in their community and day-to-day routines is well documented. But the question about whether or not we have heard that? We have not yet talked to parents in this study. I want to be clear about that. What I shared there is the broad perspective from the research base on why pre-kindergarten matters and why it matters to families. But in our study, we did not have any parents specifically within our focus groups at this time. We very much want to hear from parents, especially if you want to understand access and the reasons for why parents choose one setting over another, but that has not happened yet. I do not want to misrepresent our findings in that regard.

However, the other aspects that I shared in terms of the broad base for why it is important to your question are clear, and we will be happy to share any further information with you on the reasons behind the statement I gave with a follow-up summary document.

Chair Denis:

We are at the point in our agenda now that we are going to take a lunch break.

AGENDA ITEM VIII—PRESENTATION REGARDING DATA INSIGHT PARTNERS' ANALYSIS OF CLASS SIZES AND TEACHER WORKFORCE

Chair Denis:

We will now go on to a presentation regarding Data Insight Partners' analysis of class sizes and teacher workforce. We have Nathan Trenholm here with us from Data Insight Partners.

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

Good afternoon, Chair Denis, Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod, and honorable members of the Legislative Committee on Education. I am pleased to have the opportunity to introduce our next two presentations. First, as you know, the Data Insight Partners will present an update on their analysis on educator workforce and class size. Information resulting from NDE's partnership with Data Insight was previously shared with the Senate Committee on Education during the 2021 Session.

Thanks to the support of the Interim Finance Committee, we are pleased to be able to enter a second phase of the work on which Nathan will provide an update today. I do want to caveat that at this time, the analysis of the data that you will see in the presentation from the SY 2021–2022 is limited to CCSD. The CCSD should be commended for their transparency around workforce data. They present regular reports and staff separations during their board of trustees' meetings. These data are not currently available from other districts in the state. While CCSD is critical as it represents the majority of the state, it does not tell the whole story and that is why the continued investment in educator workforce data analysis and systems is so important. We are looking forward to having a dynamic workforce data dashboard to represent the entire state soon.

Their presentation will be followed by a report from your Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory (TRRA) Task Force. The department is extremely proud of the work conducted by the task force to bring together recommendations from different stakeholder groups, including teachers, principals, human resource officers, and higher education partners; as you heard from Mr. Potthoff today. Chair Smithburg from the task force has a thorough presentation prepared, and in the interest of adhering to requested timelines, I want to emphasize two things that are available in the documents provided but not highlighted in her presentation. First, the task force report includes links to data research and examples that support the recommendations. In addition, the task force had four months in which to complete this report, and they recognize that some of the recommendations would benefit from greater details, unanticipated costs, and they would be happy to conduct further analysis at your request. With that, I will hand it over to Nathan.

Nathan Trenholm, Founding Partner, Data Insight Partners, LLC:

Chair Denis and Committee members, I am honored to be here today to talk to you about the Nevada teacher workforce, specifically what we know, what we do not know, and what we still need to know. What we know is that the most important factor affecting student learning is the classroom teacher and that is what drives this work. This analysis is the idea that we want to ensure every student has access to a high-quality full-time teacher. Our time together here, what I am going to go over first is, I am going to talk about the highlights from the Nevada Class Size Report that we shared last year to both the Senate and Assembly Committees on Education. (Agenda Item VIII) We are going to talk about the current trends that are going on right now in the teacher workforce and then the work that

lies ahead. Last year we presented a Nevada Class Size Comprehensive Analysis to both the Senate and Assembly Committees on Education. It was probably one of the largest analyses ever done on the teacher workforce and class sizes in Nevada. One of the things that we highlighted was that NDE has recommended class sizes for grades 1 through 3, they recommend class sizes of 15; and for grades 4 through 12, they recommend class sizes of 25.

One of the big questions was, how does this align with what our students are actually experiencing. Looking at data from SY 2019–2020, what we see in this chart is the average class size experienced by students in grades 1 through 5 and then the core subject areas of English, math, science, history, and secondary. What we see is in every grade and subject, the average class size experienced by students is larger than the recommended class size by NDE. The big question is, how many students were in a class size larger than the recommended class size? This is what the average student experiences; how many students were actually impacted by this. We found over 374,000 students who are sitting in class sizes larger than the recommended class size. In other words, nine out of ten students had a class size larger than that recommended by NDE. So how many teachers did we need at that time if we wanted to get to the recommended class sizes? For the core subject areas, Nevada needed over 3,000 teachers to meet those recommended class sizes.

One of the things we looked at is national ratios to confirm that this was a conservative estimate. When we looked at national class sizes, if we wanted to get to the national average, we would have needed almost 10,000 more teachers. So, for the core subjects to get to recommended class sizes, we needed over 3,000 more teachers. That was based on data, again, from SY 2019–2020. The question is, what has been happening with the teacher workforce since that report came out?

Unfortunately, there is no national repository that tracks what is happening with the teacher workforce in regard to attrition and keeping teachers, and there is no statewide database either. What we have been able to look at is, the CCSD puts out a report that lists all the licensed teachers who are leaving the district and they put that report out with every board meeting. We have gone into their board documents for every regular board meeting for the last decade and downloaded those portable document formats (PDFs) and processed all that information and put them into a database so that we could analyze the data to see what has been happening with the teacher workforce in Clark County.

What we see here in this chart (Agenda Item VIII) is the cumulative number of licensed staff who say that they are leaving the school district from August through July, so this is the average over the last decade, essentially. Each dot here represents how many teachers have said they are leaving in that month and the months prior. It is adding up throughout the year to the point of July—that is the total for the whole year. What we see is that licensed staff slowly start to say they are leaving throughout the school year. Then by April, we see an acceleration of when teachers start to say they are not coming back the next school year. This is what it looked like last year during COVID-19. So, from August through February, this was the slowest pace that teachers have left the CCSD in the last decade. Then in March, the vaccine came out, the economy started to open back up and all of the sudden, we saw a spike in the number of licensed staff who said they were leaving the district, to the point that at the end of July, it was above average for the year. So, the million-dollar question was, is this the pent-up demand of teachers who are going to leave or was this the new reality?

This is what it looks like this year. As of the beginning of June, over 2,100 teachers and licensed staff have said they are leaving the CCSD, this is far above any other prior year.

We have another report that will be coming out this June, so this number for June will go higher. There will be a whole other report in July, so it will go even higher still, and we have already far surpassed the highest that we have ever had in an entire year. That data is based on the separation reports and on us going in and manually trying to add up all the names on the list, but we can verify what we are seeing, what is happening this school year is not typical. The CCSD also puts out a report that shows the employee count by employee groups for every month. One of those employee groups is licensed staff and teachers. If we look at that data over the last five years, this is the number of licensed staff in Clark County from October to March, right in the core chunk of the school year. What we see is during the school year, typically, the CCSD is gaining teachers throughout the school year. This is what it looks like this year. What has been happening this year with the teacher exodus in Clark County is not like anything we have ever seen before.

What do teacher and licensed staff separations look like across the country? I am going to reiterate, there is no national database of this information. All we can do to try and gather this information is to look for news stories of what is happening in other states and districts. Here was a news story from Houston where the Department of Education in Texas had put out a report that said their teacher attrition rate was at a low and was the lowest it has been since 2011. They also said they had 2,000 more teachers' certifications compared to the prior year. So, their teacher pipeline was growing, and they were retaining more teachers in Texas. In Chicago, they started the school year with a 3.3 teacher vacancy rate. In a report from *Chicago Chalk Beat*, they said this is a stronger staffing position than they had in previous years and throughout the school year, their teacher vacancy rate was going down—they were hiring teachers throughout the school year.

In Washoe County, a report by *News Four*, reported that WCSD said their teacher turnover rate was lower than the national average. In an article in "The 74 million" (<https://www.the74million.org>) which is an online education news site, there was an article by Chad Alderman, Policy Director, who works in the Edunomics Lab at Georgetown University, and he said "There is no big quit in K-12 education." In the article, he said, "According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, while turnover rates are setting new highs in the private sector, they look pretty normal in public education." We have not seen any evidence that there is a massive teacher exodus happening nationally across the country. Where does this perception come from? Because if you are like me, you have been hearing over and over that there is a massive exodus of teachers.

Last year, at about this time, the RAND Corporation put out a report based on a survey they did in January and February of last year. The key finding of that report was that nearly one in four teachers said they were likely to leave their jobs by the end of SY 2020-2021. Now, that never actually happened, but that is what people said they were going to do, but then that is not what they actually did. Again, because there is no national repository of any of this information, this survey ended up carrying a lot of weight over the last year, and it was a survey of what people said they were going to do, not what they did. And so that news story that used this survey continued to morph over the last year.

Here is a headline from *CNBC News* right after the survey came out that essentially said what the survey said, which is, "one in four teachers are considering quitting after this past year." And they cite in the article that there was survey data from the nonprofit RAND Corporation that suggests now one in four teachers are considering quitting. Well, by the time the next school year started, this story started to morph and now we have the headline that describes the survey, "Why so Many Teachers Are Thinking of Quitting" *The Washington Post Magazine*. But when you read the article, they now start implying teachers are actually quitting. Teachers are not the only American workers taking part in the so called "great

resignation," implying that there is a great exodus of teachers, but the only data that article references is the RAND survey saying people are thinking about quitting. By February, there is an article from *Newsweek*, "America's Teacher Exodus Leaves Education System in Crisis." And the data that they cite in the article again is the RAND Corporation survey from a year earlier that says people are thinking about quitting but their headline is "The Teacher Exodus Leaves the Education System in Crisis." If you read on in the article, they spoke to someone from Fairfax County about the teacher exodus, and that person said, "Teacher retention rates have held steady, and we have not seen a significant attrition rate. We are currently less than 1 percent shy of being fully staffed."

That is the data they reference in a headline that was titled "America's Teacher Exodus Leaves Education System in Crisis." Just last month, *The Hill* (<https://thehill.com/>) published a story that said, "Teachers are quitting in droves: Appreciate them before they all disappear." Now in this article, they say data from across the country indicates that teachers are leaving the profession at a faster rate than before. In the article, there is a data link. You can go look at the data that they are referencing. If you click that data link, it takes you to a story from Denver ABC 7 that says, "district data suggests teachers are leaving the profession in unprecedented droves," just like the article said. But if you read that article, what it says is, nationwide there is not a single database that tracks this information and the one person who they spoke to said he is not convinced teachers are quitting in unprecedented droves due to the pandemic. Now, the article also went on to say that there were higher vacancy rates in Texas and the rate of retirement in Michigan was up. But retirement rates are not the overall teacher attrition, and vacancy rates are not necessarily equal to teacher attrition, especially in this school year.

Over the last year, U.S. education has dumped hundreds of billions of dollars into education. In this time period in particular, you could have a whole lot more positions created without the bodies to fill them, increasing your vacancy rate without losing any more teachers. Case in point, in L.A. Unified in Los Angeles, a report came out from the partnership for Los Angeles schools called "*Closing the Equity Gap in School Staffing*." They said that L.A. Unified had over \$6 billion in state and federal relief funds. They used part of that money to create 7,000 new positions. In this report, they said, "Unfortunately one-half of these positions remain vacant three months into the school year." So, this is a case in point where you could have 3,500 new employees while increasing your vacancy rate because you could not fill the other 3,500 positions. The fact that you see vacancy rates going up in and of itself does not tell you anything about whether or not teachers are actually leaving. Now, I cannot tell you from this information whether or not Los Angeles is experiencing increased teacher attrition, but I do know they have higher vacancy rates because they have created more positions.

While we have seen no evidence that there is a massive exodus of teachers during the school year, like what is happening in CCSD, we do see an issue with teacher morale and would expect a higher-than-average teacher attrition to happen between this school year that is finishing up and the start of the next school year. What that means is this will make teacher recruitment more competitive than ever. Over the last decade the teacher pipeline has shrunk by over 30 percent. There is 30 percent less people completing education preparation programs than there was a decade ago. In Nevada, we rely on over 60 percent of our teachers to be trained out of state. So as that pipeline is shrinking, that we so heavily rely on, and as those other states are also having trouble finding new bodies, whether they have a teacher exodus problem or not, all of this is going to make it more competitive and difficult to find new teachers for the next school year.

The work that lies ahead. The report that we provided to the committees last year was essentially a snapshot in time on what was happening with Nevada's teacher workforce. What were the class sizes that students were experiencing, and what we are trying to do moving forward to build systems that allow us to investigate what is happening with class sizes, student experiences, and the teacher workforce in essentially real time. So strategic questions that we would like to be able to answer almost immediately would be things like what is happening with Nevada's teacher workforce right now? What are the class sizes our children are experiencing right now? How many students have a long-term substitute right now? What does the teacher pipeline look like right now? And what obstacles do we face going forward? How will we make it a reality that we can essentially answer these questions in real time?

Some of the work that we will be doing for NDE is building the data infrastructure to make this possible. One of the things that we will be working on is connecting the Online Portal for Applications and Licensure (OPAL), which is the teacher licensure system, with infinite campus—the student information system. Essentially, we can start to say how many students have access to a teacher who is a full-time teacher, who is licensed in their subject area, who has experience in that area. Right now, without that connection, we can see there is a person's name there, but we have no way to know if that a long-term substitute. Is that a licensed teacher? Those questions right now are difficult to answer in real time.

Another thing that will be working on with NDE is to create a statewide course catalog. Right now, every school district and charter school can use infinite campus in the way that they want, and their naming conventions for the courses have virtually nothing in common. Some schools might even put the name of the courses and the teacher's last name. So even a simple thing like, "how many kids are in a math class right now?" is not something we can simply answer. By creating a statewide course catalog, essentially what we are not attempting to do is to force other places to change their catalog, but rather can we align your courses to this course, so we know, what is a math course. What is an advanced placement course. We can start to answer questions about access to different coursework, to teachers' experience in those types of courses and things like that.

Finally, we will be working to improve data sharing with NSHE. We have met with all of the different NSHE organizations to talk to them about this project and things that would be helpful for them. Then also, how do we help the department get information on what is happening with the teacher pipeline? So, things that we will be working to build into this project to support NSHE, things they have said that they would like to know, for example, what is happening with people who complete their programs. Are they retained in the schools that they stay? Are they retained in the state? What are one of the things that they are having trouble with, so that maybe you can start to adjust your program to prepare people for those first couple of years of teaching when we see such high attrition rates. Maybe we hear that it is a classroom management problem. So, you are focusing more on that in the prep program, so that people are prepared for the first two years.

What some of this work will hopefully allow us to do and to share with other stakeholders is these reports, charts, and graphs that were essentially a snapshot in time in the first report became essentially live databases. Charts like this, where we are trying to look at, what are the class sizes our students are experiencing, we can start to look at in almost real time and filter those charts by student demographics, school, subject area, or whatever topic of interest you are interested in investigating. We will be able to look at things like students access to experienced teachers. And again, that could be something that you can start to filter out by student demographics or specific subject areas. We will start to build things that help us predict where we are going to have more demand in the teaching workforce.

What we saw in this chart was essentially, what is the attrition rate of teachers by the age of the teacher. We know that once teachers hit the age of 55, the chances that they are going to be leaving soon accelerate. They are approaching retirement age, so more teachers are going to be retiring, than maybe teachers in mid-career who are in their early 40s. If we know that there are certain positions where there is an aging staff, we will need to communicate to NSHE to say, hey, these are the areas we suspect we are going to have a lot of demand in the next five years. The idea here is to bring clarity to Nevada education's most urgent issues through this work. That is all I have to share with you today. Thank you for your time.

Chair Denis:

Thank you. I always like when we can look at the question and look at the data to see if it supports that. That is great. Are there any questions? Yes, Assemblywoman Thomas, go ahead.

Assemblywoman Thomas:

Thank you for the presentation. I do appreciate it, but I do have a couple of questions. One is based on the data that you stated in the beginning, how Data Insight is comparing Texas and Chicago with the rate of teachers staying there. What I did not see is the "why." To bring up that data to say that teachers are staying in Texas at a slower rate than any other place, and in Chicago as well, then we can compare it to why we are perhaps in Nevada losing teachers at a higher rate. Does your data support that?

Mr. Trenholm:

No, I do not know why. I also know again, to go back, those were reports that we could find; again, there is no national repository of this information, and on top of that, there is no qualitative information to support what data we can go out and try and find. There is definitely a shortage of quality data on the teacher workforce in this country.

Assemblywoman Thomas:

All right, so then with what you presented to us, and we do not know the reason why, Texas or Chicago, we cannot compare those areas of why we have a lack of retention here in Nevada, if we do. What I am surmising from your presentation is that with all these other articles that came out, that perhaps this is not true; that we are not having a higher rate of teachers leaving our state. That is concerning to me because I am sure the data shows that these teachers are not coming back. They have handed in their resignations. My question is, does your data support those findings that you quoted us as saying that the articles are incorrect? Perhaps, not giving us a full sense of what is happening in Nevada?

Mr. Trenholm:

I am not sure I quite understand your question. The articles that I was referencing were to say, "We are seeing a massive exodus of teachers in the CCSD. Do we see any evidence that it is happening elsewhere? That that is a national thing that we know is happening?" We did not find evidence nationally that this is consistently happening around the country. I am not suggesting that any of the articles we found, as far as what is happening in Texas and what is happening in Chicago, are incorrect. The articles that are shaping the national narrative—they are relying on a survey of what people said they were going to do. What was incorrect there is to assume that the survey was data on what people actually did. That survey was not data on what people actually did. That was data on what people were feeling

and thinking. There is, I would say, clearly a teacher morale issue in this country right now. And some of the data that you saw, I presented to a conference about four weeks ago in Boston for Harvard where there were education researchers and leaders from all over the country. I shared some of the data that was in here, as well as other national data that we saw, and when I shared what was happening in Clark County, there was an audible gasp in the room. There were people from all across the country, and that was the consensus of that room. I do not have data to back this up. I can tell you the consensus of that room is there is not a national teacher exodus happening right now. There is a national teacher morale problem happening right now.

The purpose of this is shaping a narrative that the survey was not meant to support. There is no national data to contradict what people said they were feeling. What data we have, you can try and do Google searches, and ask who is reporting this in real time? And that is what brought us to the Texas report. That is what brought us to Chicago periodically reporting to the media throughout the year what their teacher vacancy rate was. I hope I got to your question of what the different purposes were of what I was sharing.

Assemblywoman Thomas:

Thank you. I understand the different purposes. I do not want it to seem like you are saying that the media gave misinformation out about the teacher exodus. That is what my big concern is that people listening to this may get the impression that we do not have a teacher shortage in Nevada.

Mr. Trenholm:

We have a teacher shortage in Nevada. If I gave the impression that we do not, I did not intend to. In fact, I am trying to relay the opposite. There are people who are saying, "This is a national problem. There is nothing we can do about this. It is all the pandemic." I am saying, no, we have a problem here. This is a problem we need to deal with, and we are not seeing it at the scale of what is happening; it could possibly be happening elsewhere, we have not found the evidence yet. We have the evidence it exists and is happening here right now.

Assemblywoman Thomas:

I appreciate that clarification. Thank you.

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod

Thank you for this presentation. I pulled out your first presentation that shows that we have a teacher shortage, and it is a problem. And then I appreciated you going down the "rabbit hole" area, channeling your "inner John Oliver." Thank you for that. My question is, obviously we want to know why. We know it is morale. Are you suggesting or has there been at the—I watched as much as I can of the CCSD trustee meetings; have they talked about exit interviews? Are we capturing that debt? I say anecdotally, we know it is morale, but I have always been under the impression, and I think it is the correct impression, I have not sourced my data, but that most people will, even if salaries are lower, if they feel appreciated in their job, they will stay. We hear all the time: it is salaries. I do not know a single teacher who does what they do for their salary. All the teachers I know, with the exception of very few, are dedicated, are there for the kids, are there for the right reasons. That went all over the place, but thank you, and anyone who doubts that we have a teacher shortage, it is right there.

Mr. Trenholm:

I cannot tell you exactly why. What I can tell you from the reports that we pulled from the board documents over the last decade is in those reports, what it lists is: the teacher's name; where they work; what their position was; when they started; when their end date is; and their reason for leaving. In their reason for leaving there might be 15 to 20 options they may be choosing from. It could be, they are going to work in another district; it could be retirement; it could be they are dissatisfied with the district. We do not have very granular information from that to tear apart. But I can tell you that the number of teachers who are leaving because they are dissatisfied with the district is way above what historically it has been—way above. And then teachers who have left to go work in other districts has spiked up. Retirement is up. But as far as getting to the granularity of action, we do not have that information from those reports.

Chair Denis:

Next is Assemblywoman Miller, and then we will go to Senator Buck.

Assemblywoman Miller:

Thank you for your presentation. This is where I have to take a deep breath for a moment because since I came into the Assembly when I was first elected in 2016, this has been an alarm that I have been trying to set off the entire time, that we will run out of teachers; there will not be enough teachers; and that we will lose them. You heard me today say there is no pipeline. The only correction I would make to what you said about not having enough qualitative information about why teachers are leaving—there are about 30,000 to 40,000 people in this state that are happy to tell you exactly why they are thinking about leaving, and I think you know that and appreciate that.

Another alarm I have been trying to ring since I came into the Assembly is about class size. And even the very first page of this pamphlet with the class size recommendations came from a bill I wrote my first year. I am also a Clark County school teacher, and so coming in and realizing that one of the first issues is, we did not even have recommendations in the books of what a class size should be; that is why when there were classes of 50 or 60 kids, there was no parameters to say, this is a problem. I am grateful that finally, there is going to be some work around some of the other class size bills that have passed. In 2019, [AB 304](#) required school districts to publish the actual class size numbers per class, which never happened, because as you know, we look at class size averages, and it gives an average, but it does not say that your student, your child, is in that class with 40 or 50 students.

It also required, because we know with class size reduction, that schools could approach the State Board of Education and ask for class size waivers. And even though they had discussed it as well, those things had been rubber stamped. That bill enabled them to require that school districts include a plan of action on how they will deal with their class sizes, not an automatic waiver. Last Legislative Session, in 2021, [AB 266](#) also, because I see it in your materials as well, that jobs should be (well, not exactly) but the law says that jobs should be posted based on what it needed that would apply with those class size recommendations. That is why there is a difference between if you say that there probably should be 10,000 more teachers, because again, if you have the largest class sizes in the country, knowing that you will put 40 to 50 students in there is a problem.

Also, the way that class size should be figured out, not including all licensed teachers, but the actual classroom teachers. As well as, and I saw you referenced it in here, the link that one district put in to comply with AB 266, that is not robust or full compliance because it is just a link. Again, we need to know how many classes are being led by full-time substitutes covering vacancies and alternative route to licensure (ARL) as opposed to licensed teachers. And that data, I just looked it up, has not even been updated since the beginning of the year, and we know that has changed. Nor did it say which subjects, which classes, which schools, which students were impacted. This has been an ongoing problem. It is not new; it is getting worse.

My question to you is because there also are attempts, and again, I am glad to hear that you are working with infinite campus to do some structural things around that; but when you are looking at it, because we know it is not just salary, it is also working conditions. We know it is not recruitment, it is retention. Have there been any considerations or thought given to how these things are impacted when there are actually policy changes or laws made that are not fully, robustly implemented by either the districts, the schools, or even the department?

Mr. Trenholm:

I am not sure that I quite understand the question, but a purpose of this would be to get to the answers to the questions you are asking in the report that CCSD has put up that I think you are referencing. There is a law that they are supposed to report how many actual long-term substitutes they have. And they have a report on their website that says, whatever the bill is, like AB 266, and then it says "469," and that is not helpful to anybody. We do not know, was that a specific day? Was that how many worked at any point during the year? Is that high schools? Is that predominantly elementary schools? Is that predominantly special education? We have no idea.

There is the intent of these laws, where we need information that can inform us about if the actions we are taking will improve the experience of our students and our children. Are the actions we are taking improving those experiences? That is what we care about. We do not care about the number that they can aggregate and put 465. And so, the idea here is to get to the intent. Who is being impacted by this? How are they being impacted by this? Is it the access to the teachers? Is it the class size in which they are sitting sharing the teacher? As we implement different programs, are we seeing the metrics change the way we intend them to? So, whether it is something to try and recruit teachers, maybe you are doing something to forgive loans for teachers? Are we actually seeing more people apply? If you are doing something to increase morale, are we seeing the percent of teachers who move schools or leave the profession, are we seeing that drop? Where are we seeing a drop? Where are we seeing it drop the most significantly?

If I understand the questions correctly, the intent of this project is exactly to get to the point of, are we providing information that actually informs and promotes discussion? Do we have clarity on where we are trying to go, and are we making progress to get there? Because so many of the reports, which you already alluded to, like average class size; we took the number of licensed people employed and we took the number of students enrolled, and it is 21; I do not know what that means. You could simultaneously improve that metric or that metric could get worse, and the experience of students could change, could not go in the same direction.

For example, you could have a grade level with 100 students and 4 teachers and on average, everyone has a class size of 25. Well, if it turns out that you are going to make a

self-contained class with 3 students, are the other 3 teachers splitting 97 students? Then all of a sudden that 25 to 1 is actually, what kids are experiencing, 33 to 1. The reality of the experience can be completely different from some reported metric where someone is trying to be in compliance by giving you a number. What we are trying to do with this is say, what are our kids experiencing, and are we improving those experiences? Is that helpful?

Assemblywoman Miller:

Yes, and thank you for that because that is exactly why those requirements are in there—to get to the actual reality of what is happening when we know it is opposite. When parents, students, and educators are looking at the data, and they are going, this is not at all what is occurring. But you are absolutely right, it is about quality, because you can go right next door to a different classroom depending on the makeup of that classroom, it is not just about the numbers. I would also like to say that it is not just Clark County because Washoe County also has—the class sizes may not be as extreme, but still is outside of those ideal ratios. Our rural districts have an easier time in most cases because of less students, but they can also experience that as well if they have staffing issues.

I do not want to take up all of the time, but when it comes to the work that you are prepared to do, I would ask that you keep educators at the center of this work because one of the biggest issues in education is that we are not listening to the actual licensed, skilled, experienced experts in the field. The people that are trained, skilled, and experienced in it and doing it every day have not just the insight, but often the solutions. I tell people regularly when people say we do not know what to do, you can literally walk into any teacher's lounge in any school because that is all they are talking about is what we can do to improve things. I would hope that you keep Nevada educators that are currently there in the field at the center and make sure they have some role in this work.

Senator Buck:

Thank you for your presentation today. It sounds to me at least from what I can allude is that the RAND survey was completed by CCSD teachers because they actually are leaving and following through with that. I am wondering as far as the exit surveys, is it possible to do exit surveys through NDE because they have the list of teachers and their emails in which we can get accurate information on why teachers are leaving in our state? Exit surveys would allude to: is it discipline issues; increased behaviors; teachers not feeling safe; was it the vaccination mandate that threw medical freedom out the window for our licensed staff and licensed educators? Also, if it is class sizes, is there any information on what Florida has done in ensuring that there are lower class sizes in coursework and how that has increased student achievement? If it is salaries, is there any information on an analysis across the country from cost of living to teacher salary? Maybe that is something that we could look at too.

Mr. Trenholm:

To the exit survey, the NDE, from my understanding, have completed the creation of an exit survey, and I think that now they are in the planning phases of how they are going to roll it out and execute it. Ms. Todtman may be able to speak more to that.

Ms. Todtman:

Yes, that is accurate and as a preview, the Nevada State TRRA Task Force will be sharing recommendations and work we have been doing around a morale survey. To Assemblywoman Miller's point, there is a big difference between once you are already gone

and how we could keep you while you are still here. We are looking at both avenues of work because we think they are both equally important to retention and to improving the climate.

Chair Denis:

Is there anyone up north wishing to ask questions? I am not hearing any. We appreciate your report today. Thank you for being here with us.

AGENDA ITEM IX—PRESENTATION ON THE NEVADA STATE TEACHER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ADVISORY TASK FORCE 2022 REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ([NRS 391.492](#))

Chair Denis:

We are going to move on to a presentation on the Nevada State TRRA Task Force 2022 report and recommendations.

Tammie Smithburg, Chair, TRRA Task Force:

Good afternoon, Chair Denis, Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod, and honorable members of the Committee. In addition to being the Chair of TRRA Task Force, I am a representative of the Elko County School District (ECSD). The Task Force members are honored to have been provided the opportunity to engage in this work and to share our findings and recommendations with you. Today, I am going to be sharing a presentation (Agenda Item IX A-1) that provides an overview of the recommendations developed by the Task Force since our last presentation in 2020.

Over the past year and a half, the Task Force worked closely with a variety of educational stakeholders, experts, and the NDE team to create the very robust report you have today (Agenda Item IX A-2). The report contains the details and data on each recommendation, and I will refer to it throughout today's presentation. As you may know, the Task Force began with the passage of [AB 276](#) during the 2019 Legislative Session. We were tasked with addressing the challenges of attracting and retaining teachers in the State of Nevada. Each even-numbered year, we present a recommendation to you. The Task Force's responsibilities are outlined in [NRS 391.496](#), and we are looking forward to hearing your feedback on the 2022 report. We will be providing the updated report to the LCB in February 2023.

This slide shows the requirements to become 1 of the 20 members of our task force. We have 7 members that have returned for another term and 13 new members as our appointments for this year. The group is diverse and includes members with a wide range of experience levels, grade levels, and subjects taught. Each district is represented per statute. We have three from Clark, two from Washoe, and one from each of the other counties. The Task Force met several times since February of 2021 to review the data and research, and began developing our recommendations. We knew that higher education educators, district human resources (HR) personnel, principals, and teachers had developed workgroups to address the challenges related to both recruitment and retention and asked that they share their recommendations with us for our consideration. We accepted their recommendations, and we worked to refine them and combine them where they were able to overlap. The Task Force members formally adopted each recommendation before you today. It is good to know that many of the recommendations we had already developed were in alignment with what our partner groups were also recommending. In the

appendices of the report, you can review the recommendations that came from each of the groups in detail.

This slide provides an overview of the report's contents. We organized the report to help the readers easily navigate this information. A simple list of recommendations in alphabetical order by focus areas starts on page six. There are links within the document. If you click on the link of the recommendation, it will advance you to the full details in the report. All recommendations are numbered and sorted in alphabetical order. The way they are presented should not be construed as prioritization. This slide shows the anatomy of each recommendation. The Task Force would welcome the opportunity to work with you to develop more detailed cost, goals, and objectives for any of the recommendations you may be interested in advancing during the 2023 Session. I want to highlight that each recommendation contains a link to a shared Google.doc folder, which you can find with relevant news articles, research, and data to support all our findings.

I will now share a brief summary of the recommendations by focus area. Please note that the details for all these recommendations are found in your report. The data focus area consists of four recommendations that will either provide workforce data or ensure readily available data for legislators, the NDE, districts, schools, and other educational stakeholders to use and to make informed decisions to positively impact teacher recruitment and retention. The details of each of these recommendations can be found on pages eight through ten of the report. Retention cannot be effectively addressed without knowing why the educators are leaving. The recommendation is to provide funding for NDE to contract with a third party to develop, implement, and analyze the results to teachers exiting their school district in our state, regardless of the reason of the exit. We were encouraged to see a legislative proposal for a statewide exit survey through [AB 418](#) (2021) during the last session, though it did not pass. This year's report includes additional details and clarification about this exit survey. We would like to continue to be actively involved in this process.

The next recommendation is a study of educator workload. The recommendation is to commission a study to evaluate educator workload including statutory and regulatory requirements. The Task Force believes that employee satisfaction is hindered by fatigue and excessive workloads. The study would provide clear information on the redundant requirements within statutes, regulations, and policies to reveal the true status of an educator workload in all Nevada districts and charter schools to guide the necessary changes to reduce the unnecessary workload. Such changes would enhance employee satisfaction and promote retention.

Recommendation 3 is about the need for a workforce data portal. The recommendation is that the Legislature would invest funding to sustain the educator workforce supply and demand portal currently being developed using federal relief funds. Easy access to accurate up-to-date data will improve the ability for NDE, NSHE, legislators, schools, districts, teacher candidates, and educators to understand the challenges and opportunities related to Nevada's educator workforce and make decisions accordingly. Funding will be used to support the ongoing development and training for a number of the data portals.

The next recommendation is about working conditions. The working conditions survey was recommended in 2021. The recommendation this year is to allocate funding for the NDE to contract with a third party to develop, implement, and analyze a statewide working conditions survey to current employees. The 2022 Task Force reiterates that we are not only needing to understand why teachers leave, but waiting to find out why they exited, is too late. As a state, we need to take a proactive measure to gather the data to prevent the

teacher loss. Some of you may be thinking, "But do we not already have a climate survey? Why do we need a working survey?" Well, actually, the Task Force asked these questions as well. We did a "crosswalk" between the Nevada school climate survey and those found in the North Carolina working conditions survey. We found only a few questions about teacher working conditions are even included in a school climate survey at this time. A climate survey addresses topics including physical and emotional safety, relationships, and cultural and linguistic competence. A working survey includes topics such as administrative support, time spent on job-related tasks, quality of facilities and resources, and access to relevant and professional training. They measure two different sets of perceptions. A valid and reliable teaching working conditions survey, implemented every other year, can provide a complete understanding how teacher working conditions affect student achievement and teacher retention. In order to ensure that every educator has a supportive environment necessary to help our students achieve, we need to know what those working conditions actually are.

Recommendations 5 and 6 can be found on pages 10 and 11 of the report. The next focus areas are messaging, branding, and transparency. The recommendation is to allocate additional funds to NDE and districts for frequent public branding/messaging that promotes recruitment and retention of educators via advertisement with social media, news outlets, et cetera. The Task Force is again recommending that as a state we make a perception of teaching profession a priority. Consistent, positive branding and messaging impacts public perception and will help all Nevada districts to attract top talent. These funds would be used to support the creation of professional quality videos, public service announcements, and social media posts to promote recruitment and retention in Nevada.

The other recommendation in this focus area is the Nevada Aspiring Educator's initiative. The recommendation is that the Legislature would invest in a series of events and support for aspiring educators, specifically pre-service educators or potential future educators. This is distinct from the current mission of the NDE, districts, schools, and institutions of higher education as it focuses on those that are not already enrolled in the preparation program or those who do not already hold a license, who would benefit from tailored information and mentorship as they consider pathways to careers and education. When someone is considering teaching as a career, in researching which path is best for them in Nevada, the task is actually daunting, with multiple groups, programs, and services to navigate through. A single hotline for support where future teachers can call to have all the questions answered, from financial aid to course load, from certification requirements to résumé assistance, would significantly help candidates navigate becoming a teacher in our state.

Our next focus area is removing barriers. All the recommendations in this group aim to address barriers to entering the profession that we know from available quantitative and anecdotal data are affecting our workforce. Recommendations 7 through 11 can be found on pages 12 through 16 of our report.

Recommendation number 7 is to allocate funding for the Department of Public Safety to support prioritization of public background checks for educator licensure. The next recommendation is that the Legislature would invest, through an increase of funding, the education to support the initiatives and programs that are currently being funded through the state and with federal ESSER funds, which include but are not limited to support for tuition scholarships, clinical experience stipends, and other costs related to education preparation, which may include the cost of assessments required for licensure. The cost of tuition is increasing and is a barrier into getting high quality, diverse candidates into educator preparation programs. The proposed solution is to continue to support the state

funded programs, such as Teach Nevada scholarships, and provide ongoing support for ESSER fund initiatives like the Incentivizing Pathways for Teaching.

Recommendation 9 is to provide funding to create and manage zero-interest loans for in-state tuition for teacher preparation programs. This recommendation actually addresses the need to increase the number of students enrolling in the education preparation programs. The Legislature would create a zero-interest loan program for students to attend an in-state teacher preparation program to be paid back by teaching at a public school in Nevada. For each year the teacher stays in the classroom, a portion of the loan is forgiven. Should the teacher leave before full repayment, they would owe the remaining balance, but at zero interest. This should not be confused with Recommendation 12, which addresses the student loans being paid by current classroom teachers.

Another perceived barrier is the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators Test. The recommendation is to address the Legislature to commission and fund a study of Nevada's licensure requirements, including the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators Test to identify whether it is a barrier to locally growing a more diverse educator workforce and to ensure the competency requirements are reasonable indicators for candidates' future effectiveness as an educator. We do want you to know the Task Force does not want this test to be removed as a requirement at this time. We feel strongly that teacher quality expectations need to be maintained. However, there is enough anecdotal evidence to suggest that this test may be a barrier to licensure. The study is needed if Nevada is to make an informed decision regarding this exam.

The cost and availability of housing has been discussed often at our Task Force meetings. Our recommendation is for the Legislature to provide State General Funds to supplement the current funding structure to support the Home is Possible for Teachers program. The Home is Possible for Teachers program does not currently receive any state dollars. They are fully fee funded, which limits the program's ability to impact educators on the larger scale. Providing dedicated funds will allow the Nevada Housing Division to not only increase the zero-interest loan amount for down payment assistance but will also increase the number of teachers they can award to.

The next focus area, found on pages 16 and 17 of our report, is all about salary, compensation, and benefits. Recommendation 12 is providing funding outside the State General Fund to create and manage a student loan forgiveness reimbursement program for teachers after they have taught at least five years in a public school classroom in Nevada and who continue to teach in classrooms in Nevada. This loan forgiveness program would be dedicated to state grant funds to reimburse currently employed public school teachers for payments made on student loans. The Task Force recommends setting a yearly maximum per teacher amount in conjunction with a lifetime cap on funds for each teacher for what they could receive. This is different from Recommendation 9 as this is for those already teaching.

An additional solution that could positively impact both recruitment and retention is to increase our Public Employees' Retirement System of Nevada (PERS) benefits. The official recommendation is to implement PERS incentives such as, but not limited to, 90 percent after 30 years of service. This would equalize the benefits for all educators. One of the ways to potentially address the intent behind this recommendation is to increase the multiplier used to calculate benefits and make the years of service requirements the same for all educators. Currently, there are three different sets of benefit rules. For example, for the members enrolled prior to 2010, the multiplier is 2.5 for years prior to 2001. After 2001, the multiplier is then 2.67. For members enrolled between 2010 and 2015, the multiplier is

2.5, but for members enrolled after July 1, 2015, the multiplier goes down to 2.25. The Task Force realize that this is a very complex issue, and we look forward to a further communication and conversation regarding this recommendation.

The last recommendation is focus areas to allocate additional funds to implement a statewide minimum salary scale for licensed teachers to include an annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) in line with the cost-of-living indices. The purpose of this recommendation is to increase teacher salaries and to ensure that teachers' standard of living is maintained or improved. The data included with this recommendation shows the continued decline in Nevada teacher salary compared to other states when adjusted for the cost of living and regional inflation. Nevada started out ranked number 8 in the nation for teacher salaries in 1970; and now in 2021, we were ranked number 40. This means that a teacher in 1970 had a much higher standard of living and purchasing power than a teacher in 2021. Nevada's teacher salaries have not kept pace with the COLA.

The last focus area of the four recommendations is the strategic use of funds. This can be found on pages 18 through 21 of our report. One could argue that all the recommendations are about the strategic use of funds. However, Recommendation 15 is that the Legislature should invest in expanding the ability of career and technical education (CTE) teaching and training programs in Nevada's high schools, including covering dual enrollment tuition for students and potential staff support at NSHE institutions to sustain partnerships related to the program, about expanding Nevada's Grow Your Own programs. This is crucial to increasing the number of students entering and graduating from teacher programs. If Nevada is going to have a diverse educator workforce that meets the demands of our student population, we need to actively recruit our own students to the profession by supporting and increasing access to teacher training and CTE programs.

Recommendation number 16 was recommended by all of the stakeholder groups. It is a complete compilation of solutions to recruitment and retention that needs to be adequately funded and flexible, depending on the needs of each individual district. The recommendation is to: increase the allocation of funding to education and prioritize the use of the funds; for administrative professional learning to provide targeted training for administrators and building systemic support for educator efficacy and increasing job satisfaction; the hiring of educators and specialists to provide essential wraparound services to students; to develop our sustained mentor programs in which experienced teachers build the skill development of inexperienced teachers and their own leadership skills in the process; to support district-led affordable housing/rental assistance to educators; to support district-led recruitment and retention efforts that would include additional personnel or other resources to help build district capacity to effectively recruit and retain teachers; and to support educator pipelines, retention incentives, career ladder options, and other resources.

The Task Force wants to thank the numerous presenters and content experts, workgroups, NDE, and WestEd. We stand ready to assist in the implementation of any or all of these recommendations and look forward to collaborating to positively impact the recruitment and retention of teachers in Nevada. Thank you for your time. I am available for any questions. We also have staff from NDE to help answer questions as well.

Chair Denis:

Great, thank you. A lot of information and a lot of suggestions. Are there any questions?

Assemblywoman Miller:

Outstanding presentation, thank you. I am very impressed with this, especially with this being the second cycle of the Task Force, but impressed with the work and what you all came up with. Again, that is why I support having educators at the center of coming up with the solutions because you are the experts. Excellent work.

My question is, I am wondering because I was not able to participate in any of the meetings this cycle, if the issue of licensure fees came up? Not the testing and requirements for educators to obtain their license, but the fees. I started doing some research lately and saw that educator fees, compared to other professional licensing fees in the state are, again, a little "out of whack," when it comes to other professions where the professionals even make more money than teachers. I was wondering if the license fees ever came up. Because going back to what one of my colleagues said earlier, about, it is not always teacher pay, we know it is teacher working conditions and workload, and of course teachers' working conditions are students' learning conditions. So, with the survey, what work do you plan to do around teacher workload. You talk about redundancy, will there be a specific focus too? I know myself as an educator, I can give you a list right now of at least 20 things that have absolutely nothing to do to enhance or improve student academic or social development but are required. So, will there be a focus and an emphasis on those things that not only are redundant but absolutely have no impact on students' academic or social learning or development?

Ms. Smithburg:

The working conditions survey—to answer that question—the focus was class size, professional development (PD), and how well our schools are looking. The working conditions survey, we were talking about feelings, opinions, and perceptions. I would hope that we would be able to nail some of that down as well. To answer your question about the price of licensure, yes, it was bounced around and talked about in several of our meetings.

Assemblywoman Miller:

So, it was discussed, but not the consensus to present it as a recommendation? Thank you. For those who cannot hear, the Chair is nodding her head and giving us a thumbs up.

Ms. Smithburg:

To clarify, we talked about it, we all agree that it is something that needs to be looked at, and we wanted to start somewhere.

Senator Dondero Loop:

May I make a comment? It really is a comment. Thank you for this work because being someone who spent 30 years as an educator, some of these things and ideas have been around for a long time, and they were not acted upon for lots of reasons, sometimes good reasons, sometimes reasons that were not so great, but we do know that it is impacted. We also know that, in my experience, that teachers who are listened to and valued, with these suggestions, are more likely to stay. And so, when you talked about, and I agree with Assemblywoman Miller, when you start talking about how much schooling you have to have (I was under another system other than what is going on now), and you could not make a dime more unless you had your master's degree. Then you have to have your master's degree to do another master's degree program—and so, it went on and on. There are many jobs that never require one more degree, and yet their pay is commensurate upon their

performance, or upon their workload, or whatever it may be that they have there. I think all of this is important and a good start. Thank you to your group that worked on this. It is with much appreciation.

Chair Denis:

Anyone else in the north? Yes, Assemblywoman Hansen, go ahead.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

Thank you for being here. Wow, a lot of work, and I greatly appreciate the information. A couple of things—you cited the teacher pay statistic nationally and I am sorry, I do not know if it was footnoted. Can you tell me where that came from? I was looking at some of my own and I wanted to make sure I have got the right one.

Ms. Smithburg:

I have NDE with me. I do not remember what page that is. Can either Ms. Collins or Ms. Charles help me please.

Kathleen Galland-Collins, NDE:

Yes. We do have that. It is in the appendix of the presentation (Agenda IX A-1). There are a couple of slides and we do see where that information comes from. It is in the appendix of the presentation. There are two slides at the end that give you the data limitations and tell you where that information comes from. It is from National Studies on Average Teachers' Salaries from across the nation. Then we adjusted those salaries and ranked them by cost of living and inflation and came up with that ranking from 8th to 40th.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

Thank you. Yes, I see the appendix. I appreciate that because I did not pay attention to that at first. I had looked and the National Education Association (NEA) said in 2021, that for average starting pay, we were 21st in the nation on average. I was distressed when I heard we were in the 40th. Now granted, I so appreciate what teachers do and that seems low to me. With that being said, I also did notice that the teacher pay gap that was cited in the NEA statistics said it is an 83 cents teacher pay gap compared to other college-educated professionals. This is, I think, what distresses me and I am curious how, if you have a feel or a pulse from teachers, and we have some wonderful ones here that serve on this Committee, that I have great respect for, so maybe we could get some feedback from them as well.

I am distressed that other college educated professionals make more and that the gap is significant. And then yet it seems like in our state, and it is probably very similar in other states, in order to make more, you have got to further your education, which again costs more money to do. I am going to bring up the "m word"—merit pay, wondering how our teachers themselves feel about it. We own a private business and my plumbers do not all make the same wage. I am wondering, do we, at some point, look at that? That these teachers, we pay them more if they get more education, but do we pay them more for other things? Do we compensate them? I know I have daughters who are nurses, and they get certain amounts of incentives to work graveyard shifts or take on some other additional things that are more of a challenge. I have a son in the military, he gets combat pay. (And I am sure you have done this; I have only been here since 2019.) At what point do we start to say, okay, our teachers are up against these sorts of things and they almost max out.

I have a relative who teaches in the CCSD at an at-risk school that has been there for years. She does a wonderful job, but she maxes out. At some point, do we visit this, and again, I would like to hear what the teachers think about the idea of merit pay because not all teachers are the same, just as all plumbers are not the same. Everybody is different. Some people put more effort into their work, some have conditions that are different.

Ms. Smithburg:

What I have heard in my district and what I have experienced, I cannot speak for all teachers, but what I have heard and what I have experienced is we see a lot of, "Here is \$5,000 or \$10,000 for new teachers." Yet, you have these teachers who sit here, and they do not get the \$5,000 and yet they are there year after year. Our principal retired after 34 years. She had been at one school. She started as a teacher and worked all the way up. I do not know how merit pay would work, but I do know that a lot of the incentives are always, "Let us throw them at the new teachers" and sometimes I think we need to throw them at the teachers that have been there.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

Thank you for that and I completely agree. This is more rhetorical. What is the pushback on us paying teachers by merit? Maybe we can get the answer today, maybe we do not, but I certainly do think it is worth visiting as an option.

Ms. Smithburg:

Again, in my own experience, but I think what it comes down to is the evaluation and the evaluator and who is going to get it? And yes, the evaluation has been built by the NDE and Nevada Ready, but it still can be one sided or if maybe you and your administrator have a tiff or maybe you had a bad day. It is all based on one, and I think that is the issue.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

Thank you. That is fair. The main concern would be it is too subjective then. Thank you for letting me think out loud.

Senator Buck:

A lot of the recommendations of the Committee are valid. Being an educator myself, I think sometimes we fall shy in training teachers in what the actual benefit is with PERS. We have one of the best retirement systems in the country, when we are able to retire after 35 years, or 30 years, or 25 years, if you buy out 5 years, those that can. I think we do not do the best with educating our educators and especially the ones coming in or those that are maybe in the 10-, 15-, 20-range of years and saying that "hey, you hold on to a little bit longer and you get this." It is at the expense of already 29.75 percent employer-paid/state taxpayer-paid. I am wondering if there has been any talk about informing educators of this amazing benefit that we have in this state. That states like Tennessee, and there are so many, that do not have that to this level.

Ms. Smithburg:

I am not quite sure what the question is.

Senator Buck:

I am wondering, have we spent a little time educating about what currently we have as a benefit.

Ms. Smithburg:

I can only speak on what I have experienced in my district, but they bring in PERS representatives and they talk to us. You have to sign a paper saying what day you are talking to them. So, I think so.

Senator Buck:

Because it is 29.75 percent per employee. So that means if I make say \$100,000, I get another \$29,000 that is potentially going into an account that I am going to later be able to collect. That information is so valuable to teachers. I think that oftentimes we are not the best in our districts and in our schools educating staff about this tremendous benefit that we are able to benefit from.

Chair Denis:

Thank you. That is interesting. My wife is a teacher, and she was listening to a Zoom meeting that was talking about the PERS retirement, and I agree, I think that it is something that, if they realized that benefit, I think that is something that we have that a lot of states do not have. But I think the unfortunate thing is when they are brand new and that is when you are trying to recruit people, they do not think about that. That is the unfortunate thing. They do not think about the benefit that they are going to get later on. But when you talk to people that have retired, they talk about how great it is. If we could figure out a way to do that, I think that would give us something that other people do not have.

Are there any other questions?

I appreciate, especially as a legislator, a list of recommendations from people that are doing this. Because you know, we, a lot of times go to different meetings and people talk about all kinds of things, but they do not give us real specific things. Thank you for this great work. There are some amazing things going on here, and I know that we have legislators here that are listening and looking for things that we can do to make education better. Thank you for bringing those forward and if we do not have anything else, thank you for that presentation.

AGENDA ITEM X—PRESENTATION CONCERNING THE ROLES AND CHALLENGES OF SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Chair Denis:

We will go now to a presentation concerning the roles and challenges of school counselors. We have Keeli Killian connected via Zoom.

Keeli Killian, Governmental Affairs Chair, Nevada School Counselor Association (NVSCA):

Good afternoon, I also work in the school counseling department for Washoe County. My colleague, friend, and "partner in crime" Kristin Barnson from CCSD could not be here. I am

going to go through this presentation, and then I hope we can have a discussion on some of the challenges that we have been facing this year.

A review of the mental wellness and how school counselors impact that for students (Agenda Item X). What we have been working on is relationships, especially during COVID-19 and post COVID-19 when kids have been back in school. This has been extremely important because they have had so many challenges. There is a famous quote from Bruce Perry, who is a leading trauma expert, that says, "The best intervention for trauma is anything that increases the strength and number of relationships in a child's life." So, our school counselors have been working hard on this these past few years.

We also have been working on this hierarchy of needs. Our students, as many of you know, have been through so many challenges with their families related to health and economic hardship, just their basic needs being met. School counselors have worked on this bottom part of the hierarchy of needs to meet some of the basic needs to help families. Then we move into safety and belonging so that they can be successful in school. This has come to light these past few years because before we did not have some of these challenges that we have seen during the pandemic.

School counselors are part of a larger group, so we are school-based mental health professionals. We work with school counselors, school psychologists, and safe school professionals. We all have roles and responsibilities related to supporting students. I do want to point out and thank Senator Dondero Loop. In July 2019, we passed [SB 319](#) that helped to define the role and responsibilities of school psychologists, school counselors, and school social workers.

A couple of bullet points to review what we do as school counselors related to mental health. We work in three domains. As a reminder, we promote academic, career, and social emotional success for all students. We deliver instruction that promotes positive and healthy behaviors, things like prevention lessons, coping strategies, and conflict resolution. We provide appraisal and advisement, helping to address their academic, career, and social emotional needs, and things like goal setting. We also work towards recognizing and teaching recognition of some of the warning signs related to mental health challenges, mood changes, changes in school performance, attendance, and increased discipline concerns. We provide short term counseling and crisis intervention. We do focus on mental health and situational concerns; so that list is long, but things like grief and difficult transitions to help support students.

A little bit of information on what does it take to become a school counselor. We have a minimum, a master's degree in school counseling. For example, the current program at the universities is you need three years to get through the master's program and that is full-time with no breaks. So, it is quite robust. We also have specialty training in education and mental health. We do work in a multi-tiered system of support to meet academic, career, social, emotional, and mental health needs of all students. Then we implement comprehensive counseling programs to meet the needs of all students. This is unique to school counselors. Part of our training and building of comprehensive programs is that we build programs for all students, and this is different than a lot of other school mental health professionals. It is a big job, and we have standards and competencies to help us do that.

This is an example of our multi-tiered system of support framework. At the bottom you can see our domains that we work under: academic, college/career, social emotional, and within social emotional is where we would work for improving and working with students with mental health. Imagine all kinds of students and what their needs are and trying to meet

those needs within this tiered system of support. The first tier, we are trying to provide some core foundational instruction prevention programs. Then, as we use data and other information, we move up to decide which students are getting which supports. A little bit about comprehensive school counseling programs. These are data-driven programs, and they are based on the American School Counseling Association national model. We have standards that we use called mindsets and behaviors. We have a robust school counselor evaluation based on the framework—the national model. Some of the things that we try to accomplish are ensuring equitable access to rigorous education for all students that includes developmentally appropriate curriculum. We use our standards within that and one of the goals is trying to close achievement and opportunity gaps. We look at data to make decisions, and we always try to improve student achievement, attendance, and discipline.

Some of the other things that we do related to mental health are provide referrals to our community resources and agencies where we cannot provide some of those services. We always help to do a “warm handoff” and bridge those supports for our families. We try to work with students and families on an individual level to see what they need, what can they access, and how to best help them get there. We also provide training to assist teachers, administrators, families, and community stakeholders about mental health concerns and challenges, and we provide resources and information. So, working with our stakeholder’s hand in hand, then we advocate, collaborate, and coordinate with school and community stakeholders to connect the students and families to mental health services.

We work under two umbrellas; we have direct services and indirect services. Our direct services are instruction in the classroom. We do facilitate small group interventions, one-on-one counseling, short-term counseling, appraisal, and advisement. So again, the large group to smaller group to an individual service. And then our indirect services are collaborating and consulting with our teachers, administrators, and family community agencies to support student success.

These are some slides on different district resources. We have done a lot of work in different counties. I did put up some national resources for school mental health. These are important to us. We work with the American School Counselor Association. We also work with the Mental Health Technology Transfer Center; they have provided training and support for our school counselors through our conferences and with NDE. We also receive support from the National Center for School Mental Health.

I wanted to get through that quickly because I know you have been here a long time, and we have had a tremendous amount of support from our legislators, especially I wanted to give a shout out to Senator Dondero Loop, who has been our biggest advocate for school mental health and school counseling. She has helped us pass legislation related to reducing ratios and defining roles and responsibilities. The NDE has also adopted ratios for school mental health professionals. We have a lot of great things that have happened in the past few years, and we have also experienced many of the challenges that I think you have heard and will be hearing from educators around being able to provide supports.

A little bit about some of the challenges that we have faced this year. Counselors have not been able to fully implement comprehensive school counseling programs. They have been a little bit underwater with being in response mode to all of the student needs, as many other educators have experienced. What I mean by that is they have been subbing in classrooms. They do not have enough support from other school mental health professionals. For example, we have a counselor who has 730 kids and no other support, so that makes it difficult to implement comprehensive programming.

Also, we have a school mental health grant for our state. We are one of five states to receive a school mental health grant. We have a lot of money to try and work on workforce development, recruitment, and retention. But for example, in speaking with the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), they have a robust school counseling program, and they are turning away candidates because they do not have enough professors that meet the requirements for their accreditation. So now we are not able to graduate enough students to help fill some of these openings that we have. Our ratios are extremely high, and we are trying to ensure that our school counselors can provide the services that they should be providing. We are still facing challenges like testing, their subbing in classrooms, and their lunch duty is two to three times what a typical teacher might have. We do not have enough people. I hope I gave you a little bit of a picture in a concise, few minutes here.

Chair Denis:

You did, thank you. Are there any questions in the north?

Senator Dondero Loop:

I am going to push the kudos right back because you do the hard work, and so we thank you for doing all that with our kids as we have been in this most unusual time. And we face the same thing with, we have the same discussion with the teachers. Not enough, large loads, how do we keep people, how do we get people into the profession? I look forward to working with you more and thank you for all you are doing and give our best to Kristin. Thank you.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

I found the presentation very enlightening and also worrisome in the sense that I know that you are overburdened. I was looking at the comparison to get myself up to speed. I have a daughter who is a licensed mental health professional with a private practice. I was trying to remember my school counselor versus school psychologists because I know to be a school counselor, you have to have a master's degree and to be a school psychologist, a master's degree. Of course, there are some other things in there, and again, I am trying to think outside the box, if we have a shortage of school counselors, is there some way, I know with my daughter's master's program, the clinical hours are extremely burdensome—they are very heavy. And so, are we having a shortage because, and I do not want to detract from the quality of our school counselors, but is that a stumbling block that there is such a requirement in these master's programs that it is harder to get? Is that what is causing us to have difficulty in the pipeline?

Ms. Killian:

I think it could be many things. We have educators and teachers who want to get a master's degree in school counseling. It makes it hard to work and then try to go through a master's program at a traditional university. They do not have the same flexibility as some of the online programs and then you have to do all of those hours additionally, so it can be very challenging to get all of that done. And just the length of some of the programs, we do push potential school counseling candidates towards accredited programs because we want to make sure that they are prepared and that they meet the requirements for licensing. Some of the things that we have talked about, Kristin and I and other members of NVSCA, is looking at alternative routes. Is it possible for counselors to start without having some of those classes and do provisional licensing where we can get them in and put them with supportive teams.

We would never put them in a situation where they were alone, and then they could work towards some of those other requirements. I think we are working on some things with licensing through NDE now for interns to get in and start working and get paid—again with some of the supportive teams, but it is a long haul to get some of these degrees, and the amount of hours, and the kind of hours that you need. Yes, I think it is challenging and it may turn some potential candidates away for all of the school mental health professions.

Assemblywoman Hansen:

I am glad to hear, certainly, that you are way ahead of my thought process. That you are working on this to find some creative ways maybe to enhance especially teachers that want to do this—for them to get some sort of credit for the experience they have being with students. Thank you, that gives me some hope, that you are certainly working hard. As we have heard from Senator Dondero Loop, we appreciate your efforts. Thank you for that information.

Assemblywoman Thomas:

Thank you for the presentation. Very impressed with the information that you shared with us. I do not have a question, but I was hoping to get your feedback on presenting this Committee with the solutions. It is always great to hear what the problem is and to get written down solutions. What you think and what your colleagues believe that could be the answer to some of these trying times, especially the double duty and triple duties that you are doing; and how to create a pipeline. If it is using those teachers that want to advance into counseling, that would be great. I would love to see that in written form so that when we talk about it, we can go back to it, if that is possible?

Ms. Killian:

Thank you for that information. I think we can come up with some information or proposals that would help to increase the workforce and turn out high-quality candidates for school counseling. You have to be prepared to work in this job. I would be happy to work with NVSCA and my colleagues because we have been having these conversations. There are states and districts around the country who have been working on these things, and so we are not alone. We have a large support group, especially with the American School Counseling Association where we might be able to come up with some information that is helpful to the Committee.

Assemblywoman Thomas:

Thank you. I appreciate that.

Chair Denis:

Any other questions? Thank you for being with us this afternoon.

AGENDA ITEM XI—PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Denis:

We will go on to our second to the last item on the agenda, which is public comment.

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

Is there anyone in Las Vegas who would like to give public comment? Not seeing anyone here, is there anyone in Carson City?

Assemblywoman Hansen:

No, there is no one here.

Chair Denis:

BPS, is there anyone online?

BPS:

The public line is open and working; however, there are no callers at this time.

Chair Denis:

I want to wait a few minutes to be sure there is no one waiting.

BPS:

Thank you, Chair Denis. The public line is open and working; however, we have no callers at this time.

Chair Denis:

We will go ahead and close public comment at this time.

A couple of closing remarks. I appreciate all of the folks who presented today. We received good information. We have gotten amazing information on all of the different presentations that we have had so far this year. An archived version of today's meeting will be available online. I would like to remind all of you that the work session of the Committee is currently scheduled for August 17. We might need to adjust that, but right now we are scheduled for August 17. We are still asking for any recommendations for Committee action be submitted in writing no later than Thursday, June 30. Please see the "Solicitation of Recommendations" that is posted on the Committee's webpage for detailed information about submitting those recommendations. We do want to hear from you. We have had a lot of different presentations and want to make sure that if you do have a request of this Committee, that we could consider for taking up in our meeting and at the work session in August.

Our next meeting has been re-scheduled for Friday, July 29.

The following written public comments were submitted for the record:

- Bill Hanlon (Agenda Item XI)

AGENDA ITEM XII—ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Harper
Manager of Research Policy Assistants

Jennifer Ruedy
Deputy Research Director

Jen Sturm
Senior Policy Analyst

Alex Drozdoff
Senior Policy Analyst

APPROVED BY:

Senator Moises (Mo) Denis, Chair

Date: _____

MEETING MATERIALS

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
Agenda Item II	Chris Daly, Nevada State Education Association	Written Comments
Agenda Item V A-1	Lillian Pace, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, KnowledgeWorks Julianna Charles "Charlie" Brown, Director of Systems Transformation, KnowledgeWorks	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item V A-2	Lillian Pace, Vice President of Policy and Advocacy, KnowledgeWorks Julianna Charles "Charlie" Brown, Director of Systems Transformation, KnowledgeWorks	Nevada State Opportunity Analysis, January 2022
Agenda Item VI	Gabrielle (Gabby) Lamarre, J.D., Director, Office of Student and School Support, Nevada's Department of Education Sara Kerr, Vice President, Education Policy Implementation, Results for America	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item VII	Judith Ennis, Senior Engagement Manager, WestEd	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item VIII	Nathan Trenholm, Founding Partner, Data Insight Partners	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item IX A-1	Tammie Smithburg, Chair, The Nevada State Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory (TRRA) Task Force	Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item IX A-2	Tammie Smithburg, Chair, The Nevada State Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory (TRRA) Task Force	Nevada State Teacher Recruitment and Retention Task Force Report – June 2022

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
Agenda Item X	Keeli Killian, Governmental Affairs Chair, Nevada School Counselor Association	The School Counselor and Student Mental Health Report
Agenda Item XI	Bill Hanlon, Hanlonmath	Written Comments

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