# NEVADA LEGISLATURE
# JOINT INTERIM STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

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

## MINUTES

**February 17, 2026**

The first meeting of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education for the 2025–2026 Interim was held on Tuesday, February 17, 2026, at 9 a.m. in Room 2134, Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 1, Nevada Legislature Hearing Rooms, 7120 Amigo Street, Las Vegas, Nevada.

The agenda, minutes, meeting materials, and audio or video recording of the meeting are available on the Committee's meeting page. The video recording may also be found at https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Video/. Copies of the 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 Marilyn Dondero Loop
Assemblymember Melissa R. Hardy
Assemblymember Erica Mosca

### COMMITTEE MEMBER ATTENDING REMOTELY:

Senator Angela D. Taylor, Chair
Assemblymember Selena Torres-Fossett, Vice Chair
Senator Lori Rogich
Assemblymember Selena La Rue Hatch

### COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

Assemblymember Alexis M. Hansen (Excused)

## LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Jennifer A. Sturm-Gahner, Deputy Research Director, Research Division
Alberto Quintero, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division
Angelina Garcia, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division
Crystal Rowe, Assistant Manager of Research Policy Assistants, Research Division
Stef Sandoval, Research Policy Assistant, Research Division
Asher Killian, Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Cameron Newton, Senior Deputy Legislative Counsel
James Malone, Principal Program Analyst

*Items taken out of sequence during the meeting have been placed in agenda order.*
[Indicates a clarification.]

## AGENDA ITEM I—OPENING REMARKS

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, everybody. Welcome to the first meeting of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education. My name is Senator Taylor and I have the pleasure of leading us during this joint session along with my Vice Chair, Assemblymember Torres-Fossett. Let us go ahead and get started according to our agenda.

We will begin with public comments. Let me just say this too. Thank you for those in the north and for those presenters, hopefully, who may even have flown to the north and then have to be in your hotel rooms on Zoom. The roads just have not accommodated us. They are not as bad right now. Actually, they are getting worse from my understanding.

It will be snowing all day and driving through Washoe Valley, and over that bridge coming back will be treacherous. We got clearance from LCB [Legislative Counsel Bureau] to be virtual here in the north. Thank you for a quick pivot for everybody. We will go forward and hopefully get everybody in, and maybe even get those staff members. Thank you, staff, for being there. The building is closed, and you are there holding it down as usual, doing such an amazing job. We thank you all for that. We are going to start with our public comment.

***Mr. Quintero:***

Chair Taylor.

***Chair Taylor:***

We are going to start with roll call. I do not. Yes?

***Mr. Quintero:***

For roll call, please?

***Chair Taylor:***

Yes. We are going to, I was going to say I do not see that on the agenda, but I just said we are going to start with a roll call, so let us go ahead and do that. Staff member? I do not see who you are. So thank you, staff. Let us go with roll call.

[Roll call was taken and reflected in the members present.]

My understanding, we did not hear her but my understanding though is that Assemblymember Hardy is there?

***Assemblymember Hardy:***

Yes, I am. I forgot to put my mic.

***Chair Taylor:***

Okay. Out of practice. You get rusty, you get rusty over these few months Assemblymember.

Then, please mark Assemblymember Hansen absent, excused.

## AGENDA ITEM II—PUBLIC COMMENT

***Chair Taylor:***

Now we would jump into public comment to see if there is any public comment as we start this meeting. I do not know if there is— I was going to say there is no one here in Carson, but we do not know. We will go to Las Vegas and see if there is anyone there in Las Vegas for public comment. Broadcast?

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

There is, Madam Chair.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you so much Senator. Please go right ahead when you are ready for public comment. Please make sure you state your name and please spell it for the record. We want to make sure our records are accurate. Please go ahead when you are ready.

***Chris Daly, Deputy Executive Director of Government Relations, Nevada State Education Association (NSEA):***

The Nevada State Education Association, the voice of Nevada educators for 125 years (Agenda Item II). Over the past few weeks, NSEA has been surveying educators across the state to find what changes they would like to see made next legislative session. Ninety-four percent of respondents want NSEA to continue our Past the Plan campaign with 56 percent indicating an importance of 100 out of 100. The mandate is clear: seriously, pass the plan.

Last session, education funding was effectively kept flat with the $2 per pupil increase. School districts across the state have been struggling with the effects. Washoe faced an $18 million deficit this year. Last week, we learned CCSD [Clark County School District] plans to surplus 1,200 positions to address a $50 million shortfall. Carson City, Churchill, Douglas, and Elko are facing deficits as well. These cuts translate into larger class sizes, staffing reductions, school consolidations, and fewer opportunities for students. Flat funding also makes it nearly impossible to bargain for educator raises, which tops our survey's list of possible uses for education funds. Class size reduction and coverage for increasing health insurance costs are next.

Educator safety remains a top issue for our members, who would like appropriate recourse for educators who are assaulted and to retain the ability for educators to remove disruptive students. The top teacher priorities in the classroom are ensuring adequate prep time and elimination of student data in their evaluations. For aspiring educators, pay per student teaching is the top priority, and you will be hearing from education students about the economic hardships they face.

Educators across the state are strongly against the use of public dollars for private school vouchers and want to see more accountability for charters, requiring all charter teachers to be licensed, including for electives topped that list. Finally, worker protection scored very, very strongly across the board with protecting PERS [Public Employees' Retirement System], protecting collective bargaining, and the development of a decent, affordable health care option for retirees. leading that section.

NSEA has been working with local affiliates and chapters on related ideas for bill drafts and we look forward to working with this Committee to move those ideas forward to the 2027 Legislative Session. Thank you very much.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you so much, Mr. Daly. Is there anyone else there in Las Vegas? I do not see anyone, so we will go to the phone lines. Broadcast [sic]?

***Audio Visual Hearings (AVH) Unit, Administrative Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau:***

Thank you Chair. To provide public comment, please press *9 now to take your place in the queue.

Chair, we have no public comment callers.

I am sorry, they just raised their hand. One moment, please.

***Terry Boroff, Member of the Public:***

Good morning. Sorry, it took me a moment to raise my hand. I am speaking today regarding potentially paying student teachers through scholarships and grants. I am the proud parent of a future teacher who graduated from White Pine High School in 2023. Because of dual credit opportunities, she will graduate from UNR [University of Nevada, Reno] this May after just three years, with two bachelor's degrees in secondary education and agricultural science.

She is currently a student teacher in Eureka and makes a 155-mile round trip drive from Ely each day because she cannot afford housing as an unpaid student teacher. She was fortunate to receive the Teach Nevada Scholarship and is eligible for the Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching grant. However, the funding for that still has not been dispersed. Although the grant was intended to support this academic year, it was not released by the state for funding until the Board of Examiners meeting in December, and here we are mid-February with no funds distributed at the university level.

While I understand the processes take time, student teachers are left waiting months for financial support they were counting on. I fully support efforts to compensate student teachers, especially in rural districts where housing and lost income create real barriers. These programs are important, but they must be funded and dispersed in a timely and reliable manner.

If we are serious about strengthening Nevada's teacher pipeline, particularly in rural communities, we must remove the financial barriers that stand in the way. Creating scholarships is important, but funding them predictably and on time is essential. Thank you for your time.

***AVH:***

Chair, there are no additional callers at this time.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you so much and thank you caller. We appreciate you jumping in to share those comments.

## AGENDA ITEM III—REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE'S DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

***Chair Taylor:***

We will continue on the agenda. Our first order of business, which is a review of the Committee's duties and responsibilities. We have Mr. Alberto Quintero who is a senior policy analyst for the Research Division in LCB. He will take us through that. Mr. Quintero? We also have Jennifer Sturm-Gahner who is a regular here with the Education Committee, please. If the two of you will go ahead when you are ready.

***Mr. Quintero:***

Thank you, Chair Taylor and Committee members. My name is Alberto Quintero, and I am joined by my colleagues, Angie Garcia via Zoom and Jen Sturm-Gahner in Las Vegas. We will be serving as the Committee's policy analysts during the interim. Just as a reminder, as nonpartisan legislative staff, we can neither advocate nor against any proposals that come before the Committee. Our role is to assist the Committee as a whole and each member of this Committee as individual members of the Legislature. We also provide research and policy assistance to help you make decisions about the issues reviewed and studied by the Committee.

Before you and online in the meeting materials is a copy of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education Committee Brief for the 2025–2026 Interim (Agenda Item III A). To provide a brief overview, pages 1 through 2 of the Brief provide a list of Committee members and LCB staff and an overview of the Committee's powers and duties. There are two things I want to highlight on these pages, and those are the Committee's authority and responsibilities and the allocation of bill draft requests (BDRs). The Committee has jurisdiction over issues that fall under the purview of the Senate and Assembly Standing Committees on Education from the preceding regular session of the Legislature and may evaluate, review, and comment upon issues relating to education within Nevada.

Additionally, the Committee may request up to ten bill draft requests on issues that address education for the upcoming 2027 Legislative Session. Please note the Committee can also include letters or statements in its final report.

Page 3 contains the Committee's six meeting dates throughout the interim and references appendix items that provide a summary of the past Committee action and education legislation recently passed by the Legislature during the 2025 Legislative Session and 36th Special Session. My colleagues will go deeper into those appendix items in a little bit.

If you look at the bottom of page 3 and on page 4, you will see a noninclusive list of items the Committee is required to conduct and be put forth in front of the Committee due to various statutes and recently enacted legislation. Each of these mandated activities includes a summary and a reference to the relevant statute or enacted legislation requiring the topic. Topics range from accountability to charter schools to public school funding and school curriculum some of which is listed in today's agenda.

The bottom of page 4 provides resources that may help the Committee conduct it is work such as relevant audits, publications, and reports that multiple entities are required to submit. This includes reports relating to higher education, pupil-to-teacher ratios, professional development and training, and more. A more detailed list of reports can be

found using the links in the brief and in the meeting materials supplementing this document.

Further, pages 5 and 6 provide a short description of several pre-K through 12 and higher education entities in Nevada, which include the newly created entities such as the Public Education Oversight Board, which was created by Senate Bill 460 of the 2025 Legislative Session. With that, I will pass it over to my colleague, Angie Garcia. Thank you.

***Ms. Garcia:***

Thank you, Alberto. Appendix A of the Committee Brief includes the final status of recommendations for legislation from the 2023–2024 Interim Education Committee. The matters addressed in these BDRs include provisions concerning higher education, data and accountability, school governance, early childhood learning, school personnel, and work-based learning programs. While one BDR was enacted into law, some provisions from several other BDRs are included in bills passed by the Legislature, including one bill that was ultimately vetoed.

Appendix B of the Committee Brief reviews major education legislation passed by the Legislature during the 2025 Legislative Session and 36th Special Session. This is not intended to be an all-inclusive list, and I will not be reading through each of the measures listed in the section during my presentation. However, I will highlight a small selection of legislation.

Beginning with SB 460, this is an omnibus bill that implements a variety of education reform in areas such as accountability, education personnel, governance, student achievement, and other related areas. The bill also makes a number of appropriations over the 2025–2027 Biennium to carry out its provisions, including $12 million for grants supporting early childhood literacy and readiness programs.

In regards to measures concerning student data protections and safety, the Legislature passed several bills including AB 494, which prescribes the steps to be taken if the federal government repeals all or part of certain laws and regulations; AB 48, which revises procedures related to the treatment of students involved in incidents of bullying; and SB 177, which provides for certain requirements for students experiencing homelessness or who are in foster care. Additionally, the Legislature passed SB 444, addressing school district policies on electronic communications devices. Later today, the Committee will be hearing updates on these policies from some school district officials.

On the topic of school accountability, operations, and infrastructure, AB 462 creates the Career Pathways Oversight Committee within Nevada's Department of Education (NDE) to set metrics, evaluate program success, and oversee dual credit offerings. The Legislature also considered the establishment of procedures by which a pupil may attend a public school outside of their zone of attendance through the passage of AB 533.

A number of measures regarding student athletes also came before the Legislature, including SB 293, which allows students to enter into contracts to receive compensation for the use of their name, image, and likeness, as well as SB 305, which would have required the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association to adopt and post regulations for the process of designating a sanctioned sport and would have designated lacrosse as a sanction sport. The bill also would have established the Subcommittee on Interscholastic Activities of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education; however, that bill was ultimately vetoed.

With regard to school personnel, AB 49 allows school districts to hire certain teachers who are licensed in another state on a provisional basis.

Finally, in regards to higher education, AB 345, requires the Board of Regents of the University of Nevada to develop a public dashboard tracking certain student outcomes. The bill also requires the Board to conduct a study during the interim relating to financial and food insecurity among students in NSHE [Nevada System of Higher Education] institutions.

That concludes my overview of Appendices A and B. I am happy to provide additional information on any of these bills following the meeting. With that, Madam Chair, we are happy to answer any questions.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you so much. Ms. Garcia, please forgive me. I forgot to mention that you would be joining us today. She is a newer member of our staff team, and we really appreciate it.

Any questions, Committee members? Any questions at all? Yes, I see our Vice Chair.

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Thank you. Over the last couple of legislative sessions, I know we have been following the implementation of bills, and I have been following the COPS, the Commission on Professional Standards, pretty closely over the last couple of months. I have noticed that some of those bills are really not put into regulation until much later. Do we have any timeline on when the bills from this last session, where they are at in the current regulatory process, and even maybe the legislation from 2023? There was, specifically, a bill that I had worked on in 2023 that I think recently was approved by COPS. It kind of made me wonder where the legislation from this last session is in the regulatory process.

***Chair Taylor:***

That is a really good question. Mr. Quintero, can you help us with that? As the bills are passed, we know they have to get regulations. Is there, do you happen to have an update, or is there a way we can get one so we can see where they are in the process with the Legislative, with the Leg Review Committee?

***Mr. Quintero:***

Thank you, Chair. Yes, we can follow up with an update on recently passed legislation, and where they are with their respective entities in regards to regulations.

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Thank you.

***Chair Taylor:***

Fantastic. That is a good question because sometimes it does take quite a bit of time, and that way we can follow up and see if there is something we need to jump into a little bit more. Thank you for that.

Other questions or comments for our Committee staff? Yes, Assemblymember La Rue Hatch.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Thank you so much, Chair. I just had a question on the reports. I was looking through all of the reports that are due to us and to school districts, and it is 29 pages of reports, which is quite something. I know that last session, we worked on some legislation to limit that, so I just wondered if any of these reports will be limited from our work last session or if these are just the ones that are left over after we eliminated some of them last session?

***Chair Taylor:***

Another good question. I think any reports that were eliminated based upon when the legislation went into effect. If it went into effect immediately, then those reports should not be included. Am I right about that, Mr. Quintero?

***Mr. Quintero:***

Yes, that specific supplement document provides a noninclusive list of all the currently required education reports and also the ones that were amended or created from the previous legislative session (Agenda Item III B).

***Chair Taylor:***

So that means if they are, if we pass legislation to eliminate some, then they would not, they are not currently required, so they would not be on that list. So even after elimination, it looks like we are still at 29.

***Mr. Quintero:***

That is correct.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Thank you so much, Chair.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Mr. Quintero. Other questions, comments? Vice Chair?

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Sorry, a quick follow-up because if I remember correctly, in SB 460, there was, the Commission on Innovation Excellence is tasked with providing a recommendation on which reports should be eliminated. Is that correct? Am I right to remember that is included in SB 460, with the goal that eventually the Commission would come back next session with a recommendation of reports that are maybe no longer necessary or that they are proposing to consolidate?

***Chair Taylor:***

I think I remember that as well, that recommendation would come back and hopefully be helpful. Again, Mr. Quintero, I believe, I do not remember all of 460, but I read it a couple of times. I believe that remained in there, so that should be the case.

***Mr. Quintero:***

Thank you for the question, Chair. Correct. There are provisions in SB 460 that require the review and the recommendations of reports, education reports. That should be coming this interim in regards to recommendations from that Commission.

***Chair Taylor:***

Well, that is great and if it comes to us this interim, then we will be able to take a look at that report and those recommendations and then act accordingly. Good, good stuff.

Other questions or comments? Seeing none.

## AGENDA ITEM IV—OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL TRENDS IN EDUCATION LEGISLATION AND POLICY

***Chair Taylor:***

We will move on in the agenda. Thank you so much. We will go to the overview of our national trends in education. I believe we have Ms. Fischer and Mr. Torres who will be joining us, from ECS [Education Commission of the States].

***Adrienne Fischer, Principal, ECS:***

Yes, Chair Taylor. I am actually going to let my colleague, Mr. Torres, introduce us and kick us off real quick, and then I will take over and go over the legislative trends.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Torres. Welcome. Thank you for being here.

***Isaiah Torres, State Relations Strategist, ECS:***

No problem at all. Thank you, Adrienne. Chair Taylor, and members of the Committee, I just want to say thank you for the opportunity, for us to have the opportunity to present on 2026 trends in education policy. I am the State Relations Strategist for the beautiful State of Nevada.

I just wanted to give brief remarks and just say that we are going to be providing an overview about who ECS is and the work that we do. Then, we are going to dive into some trends, and then we are going to talk a little bit more about some school accountability trends as well. I am just going to kick it over to Adrienne Fischer, and again, thank you so much for the opportunity.

***Ms. Fischer:***

Thanks, Isaiah. Thanks for joining us over there in Vegas. I guess I drew the short straw, weather-wise, up here in Carson City. Bear with me for a second. This is the first, I have not tried sharing my screen with just one monitor in a while, so please let me know if it is not doing it correctly. Are you all able to see the PowerPoint?

***Chair Taylor:***

Yes. We can see it. Thank you so much.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

We see it.

***Ms. Fischer:***

Great. Sorry, I am just trying to pull up my notes.

***Chair Taylor:***

Senator Dondero Loop confirmed that they see it down south as well, so we are in—

***Ms. Fischer:***

Thank you so much, Chair Taylor. Good morning to members of the Committee as well. We have been asked to give an overview of some of the state policy trends that we have seen over the past year (Agenda Item IV). There is myself and Isaiah.

For anyone who is not familiar with ECS, we are a national education policy organization that has been serving state policymakers in all 50 states for more than 60 years. We are nonpartisan and cover the full spectrum of education issues, from early learning all the way through postsecondary and the workforce. We believe in the power of learning from experience, and we help states work through complex policy problems by sharing our deep knowledge of research and best practices and learning from other states to help policymakers make better informed decisions about what might work best in their specific state context. We do this in a variety of ways. We research and report on trending education topics and are often invited to talk to groups like yours to share how states approach education policy issues and offer ideas for states to consider.

Today, this presentation will be grounded in the education policy trends from 2025, and I will also be briefly covering some content related to SB 460 its provisions related to accountability. I should mention that I am very much borrowing expertise from my colleagues on the policy team to compile these trends. While I will be happy to answer questions at the end of the presentation, if it is not something I can answer in the moment, I will follow up with my colleagues and get back to you with that information.

How do we determine these legislative trends? Obviously, we track a lot of legislation for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. We summarize every education bill that is enacted or vetoed. We also answered over 400 unique information requests, which are questions that we receive directly from constituents like yourselves about key policy issues. That gives us a unique insight into the questions and priorities on the minds of policymakers. We also analyze Governors', State of the State addresses, executive orders, state ballot initiatives, task force reports, and other sources of state activity to determine these trending topics.

Stemming from that, I will give a brief overview and a couple of state examples for the top six trends that we saw in 2025. Obviously, this is not an exhaustive list, simply the topics that are most frequently being addressed at the state level.

I will dive right in with our first trend, which is teaching. Teaching continues to be one of the top five issues year over year. While many of the challenges that teachers are facing are not new, we did see some continued expansion of those ongoing trends. States continue to expand and create new grow-your-own programs, as well as teacher residency and apprenticeship programs, to better prepare aspiring educators, with many of these programs and initiatives coming at no cost.

One emerging trend here is stipends and other means of compensation for student teachers to ensure that completing clinical experience is not an undue barrier keeping those qualified future teachers from the classroom. We have also seen efforts to support teachers more broadly to improve working conditions, like expansion of maternity leave, paying teachers for taking on additional courses outside of their required course load, and providing teacher supports in classroom management and discipline.

In order to support literacy and numeracy efforts, we have seen many states expand support in preparation programs or professional development to teachers already in the classroom to prepare them to implement these new curricula.

Another trend that continued in 2025 is attention to compensation. States looked for ways to raise teacher pay and incentives to both recruit and retain teachers at various points in their careers. A couple of examples here. In Tennessee, they created the Future Teacher Scholarship to provide teacher candidates with $3,500 per year for up to three years. It allows transfers between eligible institutions without losing the award. In Washington, legislation directed the Professional Educator Standards Board to establish a process to approve teacher residency programs in an effort to attract new candidates to the profession.

Moving on to K–12 funding, while I will be focusing on state policy trends in the K–12 funding space, I do want to take a moment to address the federal context since it has had an impact on how policymakers are navigating decisions at the state level. As I am sure you know, a couple of weeks ago, a bipartisan budget bill was enacted that largely maintains level funding and does not include the cuts or consolidations that were proposed by the administration. While the bill does not prohibit some of the changes to the Department of Education that have been proposed, like shifting programs to other departments through interagency agreements, it does require the administration to involve Congress in any future changes. While this gives states some breathing room regarding funding levels for this fiscal year, policymakers are still operating with some uncertainty about the future.

In the past few years on the state level, we have seen some states enact major reforms to their K–12 funding formulas. In 2022, it was Tennessee. In 2024, it was Mississippi and Colorado. In 2025, Alabama adopted a new formula called Renewing Alabama's Investment in Student Excellence, or the RAISE Act. I will talk more about that in a moment. States also adjusted additional funding allocations for certain student populations. States often change funding levels allocated for specific student groups, but this year we also saw changes in how states identify those students for extra funds.

Finally, states continued to make investments in teacher recruitment and retention, particularly emphasizing the importance of competitive starting teacher salaries.

To give a little more detail about the RAISE Act that Alabama passed last year. The Act invests an additional $165 million in state funds for the first year of implementation and introduces new student weights for English learners, students with disabilities, students from low-income backgrounds, gifted and talented programs, and charter schools. The Department of Education will offer a professional learning series for district leaders that provides guidance on how to budget at the district level. This will be important because the new formula provides a lot more flexibility in spending choices at the local level. The RAISE Act also established two bodies to oversee implementation of the formula. The Accountability and Implementation Board will monitor the progress of school districts in reaching their goals for student achievement and to ensure that funds are spent effectively. The Review Committee determines the effectiveness of the program and recommends revisions for continuous improvement.

Another example from New Mexico, it became the first state in the country to use state income tax records to allocate need-based funding. The state launched this initiative in 2021 when they adopted the Family Income Index to provide targeted intervention services. But last year, they enacted legislation to use the index to allocate the at-risk aid in their K–12 funding formula. The state developed this index with collaboration across three state agencies—the state departments of education, taxation, and human services. Most states currently use participation in federal benefit programs like SNAP [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program] and TANF [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families], or Medicaid to identify students living in poverty. This approach can result in an undercount of students due to the barriers to program enrollment and lack of knowledge about eligibility. New Mexico's example provides a unique approach that does not rely on that federal data or enrollment in federal programs.

Our next trend here is school choice. As I mentioned earlier, every year ECS covers the Governor's State of the State addresses and analyzes them to identify education policy trends. 2025 was the first year that school choice made it into the brief as one of the top trends. At least 21 Governors highlighted school choice efforts in their addresses, making it one of the leading themes across states. Some of the other trends that we have observed over the last year for charter schools, we saw a lot of states looking to address charter funding, governance, or accountability. Several states have been expanding public school choice by removing limitations on open enrollment or requiring districts to adopt open enrollment policies. Some states have begun using universal school choice to refer to programs with universal eligibility. Several states have either established new programs or expanded existing programs to include universal eligibility so that they are open to all students with no eligibility restrictions by income or other characteristics. However, as a cost management feature, many of these programs do prioritize awards, or reserve a portion of awards, for certain students based on these characteristics.

A couple of examples here. In New Hampshire, SB 97 amended the existing open enrollment policy to allow parents or guardians to apply for student transfers to any school inside or outside of their district, and no superintendent may refuse an intradistrict transfer for any reason besides lack of capacity at the school. In Texas, SB 2 implemented a sweeping new education savings account that is universal but prioritizes students with disabilities who are a member of a household with annual incomes below 500 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. The program was allocated $1 billion and will include homeschool students, although those allotments will be smaller.

While we are on the topic of school choice, I did want to give a quick update on the Federal Education Tax Credit. As I am sure you all know, the first federal school tax incentive, which will be a credit of $1,700 for donations to approved scholarship granting organizations, will be offered beginning in 2027. Those rules are still being drafted by the Treasury. Next steps for states really are not clear yet. Quite a few states have begun opting in. This map shows the most recent numbers as of about ten days ago. Twenty-eight states have announced that they will opt in, only four states have explicitly said that they will not participate, and 18 states have yet to announce a formal decision. I have included a link in the slide deck to the map that is being maintained by Education Week. It is being regularly updated, so it is a good resource to check as this unfolds.

Moving on to student health trends. In this health and wellness space, the state legislative trends for recent years more or less continued, with policymakers looking to provide a broad array of supports for student mental and physical health. In mental and behavioral health, states explored ways of expanding mental health screenings, broaden the availability of resources to address mental and behavioral health, and sought to expand the school mental

health professional workforce. In physical health, states continued to expand the services and resources allowed to be provided in schools, including expanding types of medication and treatments that can be provided in school settings. A number of states also looked to grow protections for student athletes, upping requirements for concussion protocol and cardiac emergency response plans related to student physical activity. For meals and nutrition, policymakers worked to define healthy meals. In some cases looking to reduce additives in school meals or encourage locally sourced foods in schools. States also expanded free meals, either broadly or to certain student populations.

Some examples here. From Louisiana, they are now allowing any city, parish, or local school board to offer mental health screenings for all K–12 students in the first semester of the school year. If those screenings indicate a potential mental health condition, the bill requires schools to notify parents or guardians and provide a list of resources available to students in the school or community. The bill also requires parental consent for those screenings. In Arkansas, they are now required to provide all public-school students with a breakfast at no cost, regardless of the student's eligibility for federally funded free or reduced-price meals, beginning with the current school year.

Next up, I will go over some trends in postsecondary. We will see a mix of familiar topics but a few more refined approaches in the past year. The first category is related to postsecondary affordability, where we saw states continue to address high-demand workforce needs by offering student loan repayment or debt relief programs for fields like teaching and health care. We also saw Legislatures address policies in the area of academic programs and credentialing, especially for teacher credentialing, with legislation updating requirements for those programs based on recent policy changes. At least one state added requirements for certain early childhood teachers. We also saw some bills aimed at addressing low enrollment in programs by requiring institutions to evaluate and eliminate programs with low participation. Finally, we saw several states looked to adjust funding systems that incentivize outcomes. States continue to emphasize value and a return on investment for students in postsecondary institutions and systems.

Couple of examples here. From Oregon, SB 784 requires that statewide standards for dual credit programs now include agriculture, forestry, and natural resource programs to incentivize workforce entry for those hard to, high need positions. In Arkansas, HB 1512 requires, beginning in the upcoming 2026 School Year, the incorporation of a return-on-investment metric into the productivity-based funding model for state-supported institutions of higher education, including both two- and four-year institutions.

Finally, moving around to early care and education space. The first trend we are seeing is workforce and provider supports. We know that ECE [early childhood education] infrastructure is still struggling to meet demand, and with federal funding no longer providing supplemental support, states are stepping up to help sustain both the ECE workforce and the providers who employ them. States are working to make the workforce entry into the ECE more attractive by improving compensation and creating better career pathways for current and future members of the workforce, removing both administrative and financial barriers for providers by providing grants or subsidies and supporting quality improvement to help providers achieve a high standard of care.

Several states have been working to increase access to early care and education programs and services. We have seen states implementing categorical eligibility for childcare subsidies for members of the ECE workforce, examining subsidy and reimbursement rates to reflect the cost of care, and looking for ways to improve efficiency, such as reforming zoning regulations and creating coordinated enrollment systems. We have also seen a lot of

momentum over the last several years to change how early reading is being taught, with most states enacting one or more policies requiring early reading instruction to focus on evidence-based practices. Those strategies include requiring school districts to adopt curricula aligned with the science of reading, providing targeted interventions, and integrating those principles into teacher preparation programs and professional development modules.

We have also tracked at least 14 states that have enacted legislation aimed at supporting early numeracy development. These policies tend to follow a similar structure to early literacy, including training and professional development, coaching, high-quality instructional materials, and tutoring and interventions.

A couple of examples here. In Arkansas, they passed legislation in 2025 to allow ECE workers to join the state teacher retirement system. While these employees will not receive a state contribution, this is an important step in improving access to basic benefits that most ECE workers do not currently receive. In Connecticut, they created the Early Childhood Education Endowment, which will subsidize state-funded childcare and pre-K programs to reduce costs to families. The Endowment will support programs across the birth-to-five continuum, combining some preexisting programs to expand access, and streamline the eligibility and application process.

That wraps up our legislative trends section. I now want to move on to policies around accountability that I was asked to look into as it relates to Senate Bill 460 that was enacted last year.

First, the changes that were made to district accountability in adding districts, along with schools, to receive their own accountability rating. We looked into this and found that at least nine states also have separate accountability ratings for school districts. This goes beyond the required report cards that all states do for districts and schools. This is actually a separate accountability rating system like the one created in SB 460. These frameworks usually mirror those of school accountability rating systems and use measures of achievement and growth across student subgroups. We did not find any examples of states that give separate accountability ratings to charter authorizers.

Another policy from this bill I wanted to address is inclusion of an educational service agency (ESA). These are common across the nation, with at least 39 states operating some form of an ESA, but the governance structures and purposes vary quite a bit. Most states allow ESAs very broad powers with a lengthy list of possible activities. Some of those might mirror those established in SB 460, but they are typically determined, which services to provide are typically determined at the regional or local level.

I did want to mention that the ESAs in Texas seem to be maybe the closest corollary to what you have created here in Nevada. ESAs in Texas are regional. There are 20 of them across the state and each is operated under authority of a board which determines how their services will be targeted to districts and schools. Broadly speaking, they are charged with assisting school districts in improving student performance, enabling districts to operate efficiently, and implementing initiatives as assigned by the Legislature or Commissioner. They are often involved in activities like creating and implementing improvement plans and providing technical assistance, professional development, or coaching. While ESAs are highlighted by the Texas Department of Education, sorry Texas Education Agency as an important resource in school improvement, they are not a regulatory arm of the state. District participation in those activities is voluntary.

Finally, I was asked to look for any state examples that resembled the Public Education Oversight Board that was created in the bill. Whiles I did not find examples that were quite the same as the powers and duties established in Nevada, I did find as few states with oversight bodies related more generally to accountability.

The Colorado Accountability, Accreditation, Student Performance, and Resource Inequity Task Force was created by legislation in 2023 to analyze and make recommendations to improve the state's accountability and accreditation system. In response, to that Task Force's recommendations, legislation passed last year amended the school improvement plan process and creating a permanent accountability work group to provide feedback and recommendations to both the Department of Education and the state board.

In Idaho, the Accountability Oversight Committee (AOC) was created as an ad hoc Committee of the State Board of Education. The AOC is tasked with recommendations to improve effectiveness or make other necessary changes to the statewide accountability system. Each year, the Committee submits a recommendations report to the state board.

In Maryland, the Accountability and Implementation Board was established to oversee a 10-year implementation plan of the state's Blueprint for Maryland's Future that was enacted in 2021. The Board's duties include monitoring implementation of provisions of the Blueprint at the district level and providing technical assistance. The Board is empowered to withhold funds from districts deemed not in compliance with their implementation plan.

Definitely some interesting and unique accountability provisions in SB 460. We look forward to hearing more as the implementation process unfolds. Chair Taylor, that concludes my content this morning. I am happy to take any questions from the Committee members.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Ms. Fischer. Very comprehensive. It is always good to hear from ECS to see what else is going on out there. Any questions from members? Members have any questions for Ms. Fischer?

I see Vice Chair Torres-Fossett.

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Thank you. I know you hit a little bit on the issues with enrollment and the decline in enrollment. Can you talk about some of the key factors that are impacting lower enrollment in schools across the nation?

***Ms. Fischer:***

Yes, and I am happy to have our school finance expert follow up. I am sure he has something prepared on this. It is a confluence of factors. I think the overall birth rate has gone down, and there is a lot of data to back that up. Most areas have seen declining birth rates in that space, and we are expecting that to continue most places. It does vary a little bit geographically, but for the most part it is a trend that we are seeing pretty much nationwide.

Some of the school choice policies, I think, potentially have an impact. I have not seen data yet to evaluate the extent to which that is driving some of the enrollment decline. I do think that most of what I have seen has pointed more to the birth rates as being the primary

driver of that. But like I said, I will follow up with Chris Duncombe and see what his most recent information on that is.

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Thank you. Any information too on how states are responding to that would definitely be helpful. I know that is a very pertinent conversation that we are having here in Nevada, and so I would love to see how other states are responding to that.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Madam Vice Chair. That second question was going to be my follow-up question. Any information on how states are responding would be very helpful.

I do have a question, but are there any other questions from members before I ask mine? Okay. Seeing none.

My question was, you mentioned and when you were talking about trends, Ms. Fischer, you mentioned teacher residency programs. Would you elaborate on that a little bit? What does that look like? What are you finding? What do you see?

***Ms. Fischer:***

Yes, I do believe we may have a resource on this that I can share with you. Essentially, its enabling those candidates to complete all the requirements for their degrees without worrying about how they are going to pay for their needs as they are trying to complete that. It is not the same as an apprenticeship, I know that, but I am not an expert in the teacher field. It is similar but different than an apprenticeship. But I am happy to share our resources on that with you.

***Chair Taylor:***

If you would do that, that would be great. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Senator Rogich, I see you have a question, please.

***Senator Rogich:***

Thank you, Chair. I have a quick question going back to the funding formula under Alabama. Could you briefly discuss a little more with regard to the formula that they have started with regard to the new weight? For example, if you have a child is a English learner student and then also a special education student, will the weight be different, or is there a new formula in place that a child would receive both weights if they qualify in both categories?

***Ms. Fischer:***

I would have to look to see specifically what those weighting rules are in Alabama. Typically, it is possible for a student to qualify for multiple weights. For example, if they are an English learner and they are from a low-income background. My guess would be that this would be a situation where they can combine those weights, but I can double-check on that for you as to how it works in Alabama.

***Senator Rogich:***

Thank you.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Senator. Seeing no other questions, certainly if you will just raise your hand on Zoom, Committee members, make sure I do not miss anyone.

Okay, seeing no other questions, we are going to thank Ms. Fischer for being with us, and Mr. Torres as well. Thank you for that introduction. We appreciate it Ms. Fischer. Thank you for flying in, so sorry about the weather. Like you said, short straw. It happens rarely, but it does happen.

***Ms. Fischer:***

Well, thank you, Chair Taylor. You know what, in Colorado, we have kind of forgotten what snow looks like, so it is nice to be reminded that it still exists.

***Chair Taylor:***

Yes, it does. This is baby snow compared to what you get in Colorado. This is a dusting.

***Mr. Torres:***

I apologize, Chair Taylor. I was just going to say that I would be more than happy to follow up with all the requests and information follow ups. I can send that over to Jen, if that is okay. I really, again, appreciate the opportunity. I also want to thank our members of our ECS Commissioners, Senator Dondero Loop, and Assemblymember Brittney Miller, and Assemblymember Torres Fossett. Thank you for your service and thank you for the opportunity again.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Mr. Torres. Yes, thank you for closing that loop. If you would not mind giving those materials to our staff and then they can be distributed to the members, that would be great.

## AGENDA ITEM V—PRESENTATION ON THE STATE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN NEVADA (*NEVADA REVISED STATUTES* 385.230), INCLUDING AN UPDATE ON GUIDANCE TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS CONCERNING ASSEMBLY BILL 4 AND ASSEMBLY BILL 6 OF THE 36TH SPECIAL SESSION, AND THE REVIEW OF COST ADJUSTMENT FACTORS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS (*NEVADA REVISED STATUTES* 387.1215) AND THE METHOD FOR CALCULATING THE ATTENDANCE AREA ADJUSTMENT (*NEVADA REVISED STATUTES* 387.1218) FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE

***Chair Taylor:***

Agenda Item V, hearing from our new state Superintendent, Dr. Wakefield, presentation on the state of education in Nevada, including various updates and items. I will not read the full agenda item, but it is good to have Dr. Wakefield before us for the very first time. We look forward to hearing from you from the Nevada's Department of Education.
Dr. Wakefield, please go ahead when you are ready.

***Victor Wakefield, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, NDE:***

Thank you very much, Chair Taylor. I am just checking my audio here and visual.

***Chair Taylor:***

We have both your audio and video. I see your face, and I hear your voice, so we are in business.

***Superintendent Wakefield:***

All right, then let us get this show on the road. First of all, flew up here last night to spend time with you in person, so it is funny to get a snow day but it reminds me of growing up in Michigan, where snow days were part of life. Eager to spend time with you in person. Thank you for the opportunity to present today. I took this opportunity seriously as a chance to introduce myself to this important Committee. I am joined, previously it was going to be in person now on Zoom, by Deputy Superintendent for Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement, Christy McGill, and in Las Vegas by Interim Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement, Lisa Ford.

In terms of the way we will spend our time today, I plan to share a brief introduction with the Committee; provide headlines from the 2025 Annual Accountability Report, which we supplied to the Legislature on January 30; share updates on major points of legislative implementation; and, per your request and our outreach, provide a few recommendations to consider as you embark on this interim (Agenda Item V).

Before we dive into the data, I want to take a moment to introduce myself, and I will do that by sharing NDE's core beliefs. I am here today presenting because I started my career as a middle school ELA [English language arts] teacher in a low-income community. I witnessed both the barriers that limit opportunity and what is possible when students are given the expectations, support, and love that they deserve. Teaching changed my career path and led me to Nevada 15 years ago, to lead a large teacher preparation program and ultimately to policy work on the State Board of Education and the Guinn Center. Across many roles, I have seen just how essential education is for expanding opportunity for students, for strengthening our communities and workforce, and to the prosperity of our great state. Education is essential right for our state's future. As I was interviewing for the role, also I consistently heard that there were many promising initiatives, pockets of innovation, and bright spots that were pointing the way toward where we needed to go, but there was not a coherent statewide plan that helped unify all of these efforts and speak with one voice and one sounds around where were going. We see that as our work ahead at NDE.

I will also point briefly to the third bullet on this slide. As you all probably know better than most, all of our budget, policy, and high-level conversations have be rooted in what is actually happening with teachers and students in classrooms. High-quality teaching and learning matter most.

I have been on a statewide listening tour meeting with superintendents, trustees, educators, my favorite are student panels, and community partners. I have seen so many bright spots that point the way toward the strategic priorities. I am going to share these formally at our March State Board meeting. Tune in there, if you would like. I wanted to preview these high-level priorities with you today because the Annual Report that we are going to speak from and share data from are the basis for these priorities. For the strong

foundations, empowering pathways, and equipped educators that all students deserve. It also underscores the need for informed families working as partners in education and more streamlined and aligned systems. Which I have heard a lot about in my conversations.

For today's presentation, I will cover headlines from this year's Annual Report. We are seeing improvement in several areas, that is a headline I would like us all to keep in mind as I got through data, but we are also confronting persistent challenges as a state. This is a moment for honest assessment and focused acceleration. My updates are organized by the three targets that we have; this is our Statewide Improvement Plan, our 2030 plan. The three targets I would summarize as: (1) measurable student outcomes; (2) strong educators; and (3) aligned systems and resources. That is going to be the frame that I use for today's data report.

Target One centers on foundational learning, early literacy, numeracy, high school readiness, and meaningful pathways, especially for students furthest from opportunity.

Let us begin with the pre-K growth we are seeing. Nevada has made historic investments in early childhood education, and we are seeing measurable momentum. NDE has significantly increased access to state pre-K seats, and importantly, quality remains strong as we grow. Eighty-six percent of programs rated through QRIS [Quality Rating and Improvement System] earn a three-, four-, or five-star rating. Students demonstrated a 43 percent average increase in developmental growth from fall to spring. To enable this progress, NDE has revised the Nevada pre-K social emotional standards to strengthen whole child wellness and development. Given that the Committee had asked specifically for an update on pre-K this morning, I have asked Director Michael Mitchell to be available in Las Vegas, if we have any detailed questions that we can follow up on when we move into part three of the presentation.

In terms of third to eighth grade proficiency, there have been recent incremental gains. But as you can see from this chart, student achievement remains a significant challenge for our state. Current assessment results show that most tested grades still have a majority of students performing below grade level standards. In mathematics, third grade, which is our highest performing tested grade, at 46.4 percent proficient. Proficiency declines significantly in math, as you can see on the left side of the chart, as students move into middle school. And you think about that gateway of algebra and math for pathways and for high school, that is concerning.

In English language arts, performance is stronger, but it is still uneven. Seventh grade is the highest, as you can see at 51 percent grade level. There is also significant gaps below this data when you look at subgroups. One comparison point is that only 14 percent of our English learners in 3 to 8 are proficient, compared to 46 percent on average in ELA. There is also a 23 percent proficiency gap of you look at Title I versus non-Title I qualifying schools.

Although the trends are improving, statewide performance has yet return to pre-pandemic levels, which underscores the continued need for sustained focus on high quality instruction, early literacy, and targeted academic support. To respond to these needs, NDE has launched a comprehensive PK–12 literacy plan aligned with the science of reading. It is implementing 2025 legislation focused on literacy interventions and educator preparation, which I will get into later when we talk about implementation.

If we move to the high school level, you can see that left chart is really a sign of progress and something to celebrate. The graduation rate increased by nearly 5 percent year over year. CTE [career and technical education] concentrators, graduated at nearly 99 percent

this past cohort. However, if you turn to the right side of the chart, only three in ten of our students are earning the college and career ready diploma, which is short of that 50 percent goal the State Board has set. That is that bottom dark blue bar. Graduation must increasingly signal readiness, not just completion. This is why access to specialized coursework and CTE opportunities is a major focus for us at NDE. Enrollment in those programs did increase and is close to 50 percent statewide. To support this area, NDE has supported districts to expand career and technical education, increase dual credit access, and we are encouraging districts to expand internships, apprenticeships, and real-world learning. There is also a new Committee, the Career Pathways Oversight Committee, created by AB 462, designed to strengthen that alignment between Nevada's K–12 system, postsecondary institutions, and the workforce needs.

In terms of performance and improvement efforts, you will see that there is a new circle on the chart. The blue one on the left. SB 460, which I will speak about in more depth later, reshapes improvement planning, introducing the district improvement plans for the first time and a district performance framework. The earliest district designations under this new system would occur in the School Year 2027–2028. So we still have some time there, but we have to do all the buildup and the infrastructure and design for that. Implementation is really complex, and we are being very deliberate. NDE is working with the Center for Assessment and the Metric Subcommittee to refine scoring indicators that align with the Acing Accountability Initiative that is out in the field.

State and federal accountability policy requires that Nevada provide the Nevada Report Card and manage a system of school improvement and school ratings. The Nevada School Performance Framework provides state designations of one to five stars, something that you all are likely familiar with. Overall, Nevada has seen positive trend in the past year, reducing the number of one-star schools and increasing the number of four- and five-star schools. Those are indicated by these gray bars in the chart.

Innovation is happening all across our great state. We find bright spots that point the way. The Department is partnering with districts to scale standards aligned, personalized, and competency-based learning. This work is aligned in Nevada's Portrait of a Learner. It shifts the focus from seat time to demonstrated mastery. In partnership with national experts, efforts are underway to define and develop measurable, durable skills for grades 9 through 12, things like critical thinking, collaboration, communication. I will highlight also the Nevada Transition Roadmap here, which supports youth with disabilities ages 10 to 24. The goal is smoother transitions from elementary to secondary to post-secondary education, training, and importantly, independent living.

None of this is possible without strong educators so I am going to move into our second and third target. These are a bit shorter. In terms of the educator workforce, vacancies across the state have decreased by about 26 percent. A large change from 2,881 to 2,141 this past year. Leaders that I have spoken to attribute this to compensation increases and also expanded entry pathways. Some folks have asked me whether enrollment declines have driven the change in vacancies, but as the graph shows here, the total number of instructional teachers, that middle gray section, is growing incrementally. I do think that is important data to answer that question as well. We do see continued shortages in hard to staff schools, subject, and rural areas.

There have been so many deliberate efforts to strengthen the workforce, many legislative efforts. I will not cover all of this table, but I wanted to provide it for the Committee and for the public. SB 81, from 2025, enacts surveys of public-school employees as a tool to assess and improve workplace climate, conditions, and human capital systems. This is really

critical. The educators I have spoken with in my listening tour have shared concerns around things like workload, burnout, student behaviors, and growing expectations placed on them. Having formal mechanisms, like surveys, to better understand educator perspectives will help ensure that our efforts are comprehensive and effective. To date, Nevada strategy has focused on building and diversifying the pipeline, reducing barriers to entry, improving compensation, and strengthening working conditions.

To highlight just a few initiatives currently underway here. The Teach Nevada Scholarship reduces financial barriers for pre-service candidates. The Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching Grant provides stipends to pre-service candidates, recognizing that unpaid student teaching is a significant obstacle in that trajectory. The Teacher Apprentices Program expands pathways, including paid pre-apprenticeships, fast track bachelor's degrees for paraprofessionals, accelerated master's licensure programs for career changers. I would sum it up as—together, these type of initiatives allow us to grow our own talent, while attracting mid-career professionals into the classroom.

The third target is around strategically utilizing resources to support student learning. It is about funding systems, enrollment policies, and operational decisions. This one, I am going to take a sip of water because we are going to talk enrollment trends in a second here.

As alluded to in the last presentation, districts across Nevada, large and small, are facing mounting pressure from declining enrollment and fiscal uncertainty. Over the past five years, the state has lost roughly 28,500 students, and enrollment is projected to continue declining maybe 1 to 1.5 percent annually. Because Nevada funds schools on a per-pupil basis, fewer students mean reduced revenues. At the same time, districts carry significant fixed costs, in terms of facilities, transportation, staffing, contractual obligations. Rising benefit and retirement costs are also adding structural pressure to district budgets and planning. As payments adjust quarterly based on enrollment counts, some districts have experienced budget instability and are drawing down on reserves. Districts are responding through things like attrition, service consolidation, facility adjustments; but this is a statewide challenge that requires continued coordination.

At NDE, we support districts through forecasting, fiscal analysis, and we administer the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan (PCFP). The Commission on School Funding, which we support, is reviewing enrollment methods, funding strategies, student weights, attendance area adjustments, and the Cost of Education Index. You had two specific questions for me in your request for this presentation related to the PCFP adjustment, so let me cover those briefly.

First, in terms of attendance area adjustments, the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan provides an adjustment for higher per-pupil costs of operating schools in low-density areas. NRS 387.1218 addresses attendance area adjustments to ensure pupils in low density areas receive equal educational opportunities as pupils enrolled in higher density areas. Based on the Commission on School Funding recommendations, this is from their November 2024 report, NDE is developing a mechanism to allow for consideration of attendance area adjustments for extenuating circumstances. That is something we are currently working on right now and plan to have posted for districts in the coming weeks or months. Criteria and review protocols are under development.

The other area you asked specifically about was the Cost of Education Index. NRS 387.1215, requires the review of the Cost of Education Index, which is a potential multiplier reflecting regional labor and cost differences. Although the Cost of Education Index has not yet been fully implemented, the Commission continues to review and refine metrics used in

its calculation. The next update is planned in their March 2026 meeting. So that is something to keep track on as well.

A little more data to cover, then we will move to the path forward. Another focus at the state level has been on chronic absenteeism, that includes student attendance and engagement. As you will see from these charts, chronic absenteeism decreased significantly, nearly 10 points in just two years, and 70 percent of schools have actually reduced absenteeism. So this is broad a positive trend.

The Department is working with community organizations to support student attendance. We acknowledge that absenteeism remains a complex issue. It involves multiple factors. It includes family engagement, socioeconomic factors and access, school engagement as well. I have heard from principals and district leaders, some concerns around using chronic absenteeism in the School Performance Framework that trying to understand the underlying concerns. They have heard that might be something out of a school's locus of control.

At NDE, we also have focused data collection efforts related to contributing factors to student engagement, such as rates of suspension, expulsion, disproportionality in discipline, school climate, and engagement systems. We have had some great presentations to our State Board around these issues in the past few months. As I have been new to the role but trying to learn everything that I can about our work.

My last section here is looking ahead. This work cannot be done alone by NDE. District leaders, educators, families, Legislators are all essential. I will provide two updates on our path forward: (1) SB 460 implementation; and (2) some recommendations for the work of this Committee, per your request.

I have got my SB 460 slide here. This was, as you know, a significant piece of legislation. I have been joking that it is the length of The Great Gatsby, if you want to know the page count. It was intended to provide a comprehensive update to Nevada's K–12 system. The main pillars that are displayed here are around advancing early literacy, modernizing the educator workforce, strengthening accountability, and providing more comprehensive district supports. Seeing Nevada advance a bipartisan omnibus education bill was actually one of the signals to me that education was a key priority for the state, part of what drew me back to the Silver State. I am going to highlight a few of the biggest pieces of implementation underway as I know that is important to this Committee.

For early literacy, NDE has developed science of reading, professional development guidance, approved courses, launched the PD [professional development] application process for professional development providers, and created the NEPF [Nevada Educator Performance Framework] crosswalk. Also related to early literacy, NDE is working to increase those NRPK [Nevada Ready! State pre-K] seats. We are trying to grow by 2,100 seats in FY [Fiscal Year] 2027 and are working with subgrantees now to determine the allocation of those additional pre-K seats.

There are also some policy and funding elements in SB 460 related to pre-K that I will highlight. SB 460 appropriated $4 million in pre-K facilities expansion, which grows to $5 million next year, and $12 million next fiscal year for early childhood literacy and readiness grants. These are a big deal.

SB 460 also expanded eligibility for high–need populations as it relates to pre–K from the Nevada Ready! program. The State Board of Education has a regulation hearing on February 25 about to this. It includes expanding eligibility criteria for pre–K funding to

include rural communities, children in foster care, children with incarcerated parents, children facing homelessness, and children in attendance zones with one- and two-star schools. This way we can expand seats in a strategic way.

The accountability work is also underway. SB 460 includes aligned accountability systems at a classroom, school, and district levels. This includes creating the first district performance framework. We have assembled an all-star committee to help us with that design. The committee represents a number of members of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence, because we saw that overlap being very important.

There are two main work products. The first a new district performance framework. The second is a refined school performance framework, so that star rating I talked about earlier. We are going to take a hard look at that and make updates and refresh that.

The other thing that was asked of our group as we were preparing, were some updates on Assembly Bills 4 and 6 from the 36th Special Session. At NDE, we issued a Guidance Memo, 26-01, regarding Assembly Bill 4 and Assembly Bill 6. That was on January 23, 2026. The Guidance Memo clarified the impacts of legislation on education.

Assembly Bill 4 included clear guidance regarding law enforcement access to public school campuses, including school resource officers and SafeVoice reporting. The Guidance Memo further provides extensive resources that we had previously circulated—so we put them all back in one place to make sure school districts were able to have support as they develop district-level policies, and have all the resources we have access to regarding student safety and privacy.

Guidance regarding Assembly Bill 6 included resources for student information security, including FERPA [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act] training, along with clarifications regarding certain terms, such as instructional programming and services, to refer to supportive services and programs that were contemplated within state education statutes and regulations.

In terms of NDE actions, one last thing to highlight on AB 4 and AB 6. To get my other notes screen here. I apologize. Too many screens up right now. I am so sorry. There we go. We sought clarity and received a response on January 28 from LCB that confirmed that all the partners involved in the SafeVoice program were not affected by AB 4. SafeVoice provides a critical service in protecting student wellness, and preventing violence, and saving lives. So that was really important that we made sure SafeVoice was able to operate as it has been.

We are also committed to responding to the needs of our districts. At the early February NASS [Nevada Association of School Superintendents] leadership meeting, we engaged in an agenda item based on our memo that we had shared with the field and asked if any further clarification was needed from superintendents. At that point, the NASS leadership shared that the guidance was helpful and sufficient. So that is an update, per your request, on AB 4 and AB 6.

My last slide here are just a few recommendations. Thank you so much, for the question around what recommendations NDE might have for you during the interim session. I will cover these, and that will conclude our presentation. We have five.

First, systematically support schools, educators, and students. This is important. We do not want accountability systems to just be punitive or just share data. We want them to actually

drive improvement and use this time to also deepen our state's investment in the multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) to ensure timely interventions and sustained improvements.

Secondly, we want to keep student achievement at the center of all we do. We want to ensure effective implementation of early literacy efforts, from pre–K expansion to educator preparation programs. This remains essential, and there is more work to do around policy and implementation. We also maintain a strong focus on numeracy and foundational math skills. There has been a literacy conversation, but we also need to have a similar one about mathematics. High–quality instructional materials aligned to Nevada's academic content standards should be the norm statewide. Literacy and numeracy are not optional. They are foundational upon which deeper learning depends.

Thirdly, we really need to expand readiness pathways. We should continue expanding career and technical education aligned to high-demand, high-wage careers; increase access to dual credit work-based learning; strengthen advising system so that more students graduate truly ready to enroll, enlist, or be employed; and graduation needs to be a signal of readiness—not just completion.

Fourth, we want to advance innovation in a disciplined way—with pilots, with testing to scale things like competency-based and personalized learning. We need some clear guardrails and measurable outcomes as we pursue that.

Finally, resource prioritization is going to be huge for the state and continue to be huge. So continue targeted investments like pre-K, early literacy, workforce—creating that educator workforce. We need to also revisit some of the funding formula elements in light of the enrollment trends—things like the hold harmless rules. Then we need to expand schools' use of Medicaid billing, for example, to relieve some of the local pressures.

In a close, if we can stay focused, aligned, disciplined, and be good partners together, we believe we can really accelerate outcomes for Nevada students. Thank you for the privilege of presenting our report and recommendations today with you. We are here to follow up with any questions for me or my colleagues. Thank you.

***Chair Taylor:***

All right. Thank you, Dr. Wakefield. Again, welcome. You clearly hit the ground running, so thank you for taking some time to, I guess, fly back here, in the north and still be here with us. We do have several questions, and I know you have some staff members here. Thank you, Ms. McGill. I already see your camera on, ready to go. Thank you for that. We do have several questions and so we will just make some rounds here a little bit.

We are going to start with Assemblymember La Rue Hatch. Please go ahead. I know you have several, so please feel free.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Yes, thank you so much Chair. No surprise there that I have many questions. Thank you so much, Dr. Wakefield, for being with us. My first question comes from page 16 of your presentation on the recruitment and retention efforts. As a teacher myself, one of my biggest concerns is how many teachers have to go into debt to become a teacher because they have to spend an entire semester unpaid. I think that is a huge barrier to entry. I think it is a huge part of why we are struggling with retention. I see there are some programs

here that are paying stipends to folks to do student teaching. I wondered if you could speak to how much they might be receiving, how many people might be receiving these stipends, and ways that we can expand that so that more folks are being compensated for their internship.

***Superintendent Wakefield:***

Thank you for that question. I am going to ask Deputy Christy McGill to share some of the details of that program. I know it is a partnership with our NSHE partners as well.

***Christy McGill, Deputy Superintendent for Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement Division, NDE:***

All right. Thank you. I actually have Director Briske here, who lives and breathes this every day. So, Director Briske, please proceed.

***Jeff Briske, Educator Licensure Director, NDE:***

Yes, thank you for the question. Regarding the stipends through Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching program, it really depends on the unique financial aid needs of each student. We do give out scholarships based on applications from each approved education provider. Again, they would look at, again, the unique needs of each student of their entire financial aid package. I believe some of the universities are paying up to $8,000, that would go into the student accounts for that scholarship grant. We could always use a lot more money for the Teach Nevada Scholarship. I understand starting in 2027, all the scholarships will be combined, but there is always more requests than what we have in funding. Thank you.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Could I just follow up? Does that include the Teacher Apprenticeship Program? I think it says it includes paid pre-apprenticeship. If someone could speak to that.

***Mr. Briske:***

Sure. The apprenticeship program is run through two of our universities. UNLV [University of Nevada, Las Vegas] has an apprenticeship program for early childhood, special ed, and elementary. UNR has it for early childhood. That is separate funding. The apprenticeship programs, they do use our scholarships as part of that package, but they also have separate funding for that.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

So, we do not have any numbers of how many people are taking advantage of these programs?

***Mr. Briske:***

I do not, but I can follow up both with UNR and UNLV and get back with staff.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

That would be great. Thank you so much. Chair, do you want me to go on to my next question, or do you want to go around?

***Chair Taylor:***

No, please go right ahead. I know you have several.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Thank you so much. My next question has to do with chronic absenteeism. I think that is slide 19, and I appreciate that it has gone down by 10 percent in the last two years. My question is if we could get some more historical data. I know that several years back we changed the requirements. It used to be, if you did not meet 90 percent attendance, you could not receive credit. I am not sure what year we switched that, but I would love to see how chronic absenteeism changed based on that requirement when we no longer made it mandatory to attend school. I wondered if you could just speak to, have you looked into that? Have you seen anything? Have you heard anyone bring up that issue?

***Superintendent Wakefield:***

Thank you so much. I can assure you that the definitions that are being used on that slide are consistent. I can share that is, you know, the rules were there the same. I think that your question would include both changes to definitions and then also I would highlight just the pandemic's impact around chronic absenteeism nationwide. In our state, I know that these rates grew significantly, of course, with associated challenges of engagement. We may need to follow up with you on the specific question regarding rule changes. I will see if Deputy McGill has any insights on hand and on the ready.

***Ms. McGill:***

Two things occurred. One, right after the pandemic, of course, we did, the Legislature passed a law around mental health and health saying that if you did have proper documentation, that it would not impede the chronic absenteeism rates. So that was a change. Then, two sessions ago, there was another change around religious holidays. Those were the two main legal changes that may indeed impact the data that you are seeing.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

To clarify, I am not speaking about those absences, not counting against chronic absenteeism. I know that when I first started teaching, which was back in 2014, if a student was absent more than 10 percent of the time, they automatically failed the course, unless we filled out paperwork to say, "No, we think that they should and here is the reasons," and we sent it to the district, and they had to approve it. But sometime, I think, in the last five or six years, that requirement went away. My understanding was that was a legislative change. That it was a top-down change. It might have been an NDE change. So, if someone could look into that and see when that change was made. I am specifically talking about if you missed more than 10 percent of school, you cannot pass the course for that year. I know that you do not have that maybe on you, but I would love to see when that change was made and what kind of impact that change has had on chronic absenteeism.

***Superintendent Wakefield:***

We are very happy to do that. It is something of high interest for me personally. What we will also do is make sure that any federal reporting and data requirements, any state-level policy and regulation requirements, or districts—because sometimes districts also employ their own policies as it relates to engagement and attendance—so that we try to clarify an answer that gives you all three of those altitudes.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Perfect. Thank you so much. My next question is about pre-K, so I will scroll up to that. I think you said that we have 8,537 students in those pre-K seats right now. I just wondered, first, who are we counting in that number? Is it just through a specific program? Are those students in any pre-K program? Does that include Head Start? Also, do we know how many students are pre-K age in the state that are not in that program?

***Superintendent Wakefield:***

Thank you so much for the question. Our data that we shared was specific to the actual NDE administered Nevada Ready Pre-K. But I asked Director Michael Mitchell to be on hand, who is our expert related to early learning and the whole ecosystem, and those sort of numbers. I will have him come to the table in Las Vegas to share a response.

***Michael Mitchell, Education Programs Director, NDE:***

Currently, there are 6,437 state pre-K seats allocated. Those are exclusively Nevada Ready Pre-K seats. The 8,537 is what the allocation will be for FY 2027. Typically, we use the Nevada State Demographer's website to collect information about four-year-olds, five -year-olds in the state. I believe that number is approximately 32,000 is the estimate for students in the state. When we give those percentages of students served, it is the Nevada Ready Pre-K number divided by whatever number we get from the Demographer, which obviously changes year to year. It is not inclusive of, perhaps like, general ed programming, early childhood special education, Head Starts—which are not part of that state program or other community-based organizations that are not included in there.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Okay, to clarify, that 32,000 then is what we believe may be the total need for pre-K seats if we were to have a universal program. If we did something like 32,000, that covers everybody?

***Mr. Mitchell:***

So that would be for four-year-olds in their last year before kindergarten. Other states and counties that have implemented universal pre-K, it tends to be that their high number of enrollment seems to be around 70 percent. Parents may opt into other programs. They may opt out of pre-K. So that would be the total number of kids in the state, but the total number we would need to achieve universal pre-K would, we would probably targeted about 25 or 30 percent lower than the Demographer's estimate for the given year.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Well, thank you so much, and thank you, Chair. That is all I have for now.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you so much. Again, just as a reminder, please make sure every time you speak, please make sure you state your name again for the record. Just as a reminder, everyone. Thank you so much, Assemblymember La Rue Hatch.

Assemblymember Hardy, I believe you have a question?

***Assemblymember Hardy:***

Thank you Chair. Hello Dr. Wakefield and welcome. My question is on slide 9, about the grade 3 through 8 proficiency scores. You touched a little bit on how it goes down about 20 points between third grade and eighth grade for math. You mentioned most of that is when they are introducing algebra and those more difficult math concepts. Then the English between sixth and seventh grade, it goes up about 11 points, and then it goes back down 10 points from seventh to eighth grade. Do you have any information you could give us as to why it goes up 10 points and down 10 points? Any information about why the math scores go down, and then if you know, once they get to high school, does it rebound or does it stay the same? Because, I think, being on this Committee as long as I have been, since 2019, we are always concerned about proficiency rates and then graduation rates, and we are always excited when we see the graduation rates go up. However, when you have percentages of proficiency under 50 percent that is really concerning. If you have any more information that you could share with us, that would be really appreciated. Thank you.

***Superintendent Wakefield:***

My headline framing is that we feel clearer around what is going on with math and the stair stepping decline performance than we feel about the ELA—which I would put as more of a consistency question, consistency around implementation of effective science of reading methods, consistency of implementing the highest quality curriculum and instructional materials, consistency of professional learning. That has been something that has come up very regularly in my listening tour has been the state has made some progress on policy.

There is a real commitment from districts and schools. In fact, I heard from some superintendents saying, "The legislation is great. It is actually what we have been working on for the past few years." So, we are already working on that related to the science of reading.

With math, the idea of unpacking our standards, understanding where those content gaps lie, and doing that kind of real tier one interrogation of what is happening for young people in terms of the content, curriculum, and experience with their teachers is a critical question we are asking at NDE. I think math also has a very tight connection with content knowledge. I heard from one school leader who was doing a lot of math work, they had heard from the staff, they wanted to invest in a stronger curriculum. The curriculum they selected, and this is a shout out to the Carson City School District and my visit there, actually was very explicit about not only how to teach math concepts, but what they really mean, ensuring that every educator, especially when you got to that middle school level, just had deep fluency at the conceptual level, all of that background knowledge around math as it begins to get more complex and rigorous. I would just share that, we are, this is a big priority for me. This idea of strong academic foundations is one of those five priorities I named up front.

You ask another question around what happens as our young people transition into high school. The rates are even more concerning when it comes to proficiency at the high school level. We use ACT [American College Testing] data right now, as a state, to assess that. I have also heard that may not be the best metric from superintendents and district leaders across the state given timing of that administration, given student motivation. I would frame the high school question as very concerning, and also some questions around do we have the best signals in our system. That is why one of our priorities for NDE is going to be asking that question, "What are the proper assessments and ways that we ensure that we really know where those learning gaps are, how to address them, and make sure that our

young people are ready for the pathway of their choice, college, career, enlistment, a life of success." Please follow up if there is more detail I could answer, but that is, those are a high-level response to your question.

***Assemblymember Hardy:***

Thank you and thank you, Chair for the indulgence. I appreciate that there is a focus on this, that we try to find out where the gaps are, especially as they get into high school, because I think we all agree what we want most is that we are graduating young adults that can go out into the community and be successful, whatever that looks like. Math and reading are the basic things that they need to be successful and contribute, and not end up in a pipeline of destruction, and that they can be successful.

I appreciate your work on this and all of the districts, and not just continually talking about it. "Well, yeah, this is bad. These rates are really low." But actually trying to find solutions and bringing them back to us of policies we can pass that will help, and just everybody working together for these young people's success. Thank you.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Assemblymember. We are going to our Vice Chair. Do you have a question or two?

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Superintendent, for the presentation. It is great to see you again. I had a question just following up on our conversation regarding AB 4 and AB 6 from the Special Session. If you could just talk about the implementation timeline for that piece of legislation. I know that we have had a number of constituents and advocacy groups reach out to us about that, so I just wanted to follow up on that conversation.

***Superintendent Wakefield:***

Absolutely. We have been in an action tracking, as we do with any legislation that happens in a regular session or special session, to understand, is there any work that NDE needs to hold in terms of regulation setting, clarifying guidance, communicating with all of our schools. That is what led to the January guidance memo that we shared that basically clarified and recapped that this legislation enshrined the practices that were in place largely across the state, and we put all the resources in one place for districts.

I will ask Deputy McGill to share any more detail or thoughts around the SafeVoice Program or any other pieces that we have been working on as a department to ensure that we understand our responsibility and are helping to move forward with the legislative intent in all the ways that we can.

***Ms. McGill:***

Thank you. One of the things that we did was immediately start to partner with our UNR and UNLV partners. We did put together, in October, a training that really wanted to hone in when safety comes first, crisis management, and safety planning in schools to make sure that schools were ready. Not only if young people were fearful, that we had processes in place. We have over 400 people attending these trainings, so we were really proud of that.

We have more sessions coming, rolling out that I can definitely send out to you all. One is really talking about FERPA, and what that means and then ensuring that everyone has the tools they need, again, to remain safe. But we really wanted to ensure that people knew that we needed to still uphold that safety net and really talked about respect, talked about ensuring bullying. We also worked with our districts to come up with a very streamlined, but improved, bullying tool and discrimination tool to make sure that districts had what was expected in place. That was based off of last legislative session as well.

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Can I just have a follow up from that Chair? Because I think what is not being said, though, is that the legislation was specific to immigrants and how we are supporting immigrant students, especially in a time of political turmoil. What is going on across the nation? I have had the opportunity to talk to school leaders from Minnesota and legislators from Minnesota about some of the incidents that are happening there. The question that I have as a policymaker is how do I know that we, as a state, are prepared if that were to happen. If we were to see what happened in Minnesota happening here in Nevada, how do we ensure that we are prepared, and do we have the systems in place to prevent that?

I think I would like a little bit more specifics because we are not talking about bullying. We are not talking about racial-based discrimination. We are talking specifically about how we make sure that immigrant students feel safe on our campuses. I know that there has been a lot of confusion in our community about whether or not our schools are safe places. Now more than ever it is important that the NDE communication is very clear with our communities, and that it is obviously available in multiple languages so that students then and families can feel comfortable and safe continuing to go to school. I do believe that the policies are in place for students to be safe and welcomed onto our campuses and that our staff and families are safe on our campuses. But I think that NDE has a responsibility of helping make sure that information is very clear and then also preparing school leaders because there have been a lot questions in the administrative world about how do I make sure that my kids are safe. As a school leader, when you go onto campus your main concern is, my students are safe and they are there to learn. I want to make sure that information is being communicated clearly to our students and families.

***Superintendent Wakefield:***

Thank you very much, Vice Chair Torres-Fossett, for that comment. It speaks directly to the guidance memo and resources that we have sent out, including the Nevada Office of the Attorney General's (OAG) model immigration policies, the OAG's Know Your Rights, immigration—both for individuals and businesses, OAG immigrant rights resources. The general description of our memo and our work around ensuring regulations were updated was how I approached the initial question, but appreciate the very specific nature of your follow-up and that is work we take very seriously at NDE.

The statute was focused on school districts, so we are also figuring out what NDE's role and empowered role is in offering that sort of support. We would welcome further collaboration. That was why I mentioned bringing this up multiple times with our NASS superintendent leadership group and wanting to make sure that everything we can do is ensuring the safety, especially considering the climate for immigrant students today. I really appreciate your follow up.

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Thank you. I appreciate that.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you so much, Dr. Wakefield. I think it is important. I think we all want the same thing. We all want our students, staff, and the families as well to feel safe on our campuses. If there are things that we can do, continue to do, as Vice Chair said, there are certainly some policies in place. If there are things that we can continue to do, or should be made aware of, then we want to be a part of ensuring the safety of all of our students. Those things that we are talking about can all be a part of addressing them, whether it is proficiency, whether it is absenteeism, or anything like that. We appreciate that. Thank you, Vice Chair, for that follow up as well.

We will continue on, and I believe Assemblymember Mosca has a question as well, maybe two.

***Assemblymember Mosca:***

Yes. Thank you so much, Chair. It is great to see you, Superintendent Wakefield. I echo my colleagues' congratulations and thank you, for really just diving in.

I really appreciate, on page 22, the recommendations thinking about our role in the interim hearing and what potential policies could come up.

My question was on the expanded pathways, which I think is really important. When you ask people, what is the purpose of education? I know we passed legislation in the past to help with removing background checks as a barrier. We also had the bill for CCR [college and career readiness] to be opt out versus opt in. Would love to hear, just on the record, what other barriers are you seeing for number three, for expanded pathways for our students in Nevada. Thank you.

***Superintendent Wakefield:***

Thank you. Across the many district visits that I have been embarking on, I just have seen exceptional CTE, dual credit, and hands-on learning driving engagement and results. It has been really powerful to see that these programs, when students find their pathway or something of interest, even if they are exploring multiple, it seems to really help solve the motivation and relevance challenges that we also see in schools, impacting attendance, impacting chronic absenteeism as well, but access remains uneven across the state.

I have heard specifically around resourcing barriers, some regulatory barriers, and then operational barriers. Operational might be student—the programming of the day for students, especially at comprehensive high schools. Do they have enough open slots, and do offerings, if they are not at a more specialized school, actually match to when they might have open slots on their schedule to have those introductory and then deeper pathways type courses that can help light that fire for them or give them that sort of sense of direction?

I think that one other thing that I will name is, that while districts are managing enrollment declines, and thinking about fiscal, I believe as a state, we need to safeguard these types of programs to the best of our ability. Not see them, maybe as we have in the past, as extras or outside of the core set. Instead of one pathway and some alternatives, we need multiple

pathways that have the kind of resourcing, programming, assessment that really centers them as being part of our strategy for Nevada schools.

Lastly, I will share that I got to join the DECA [Distributive Education Clubs of America] students at their annual conference, and I was very pleased to see the impact of past legislation that allowed state funding to go to some of those CTSO [career and technical student organizations], some of those organizations that actually make CT [career and technical] programming come to life. I sat down with students at a high school in Washoe. It was Debbie Smith CTA [Debbie Smith CTE Academy], and they actually shared how important it is to not only have the courses, but also to be able to do the associated activities, to really be able to do the sort of pathways and pipelines.

I know those are general thoughts. I am working through a process to figure out if there is specific policy or budget recommendations related to this. But expanding pathways to more students, helping some of these crown jewels of our system in terms of the CTE programs and magnet schools scale and grow, I believe is going to be what it takes for us to really see progress against the high school goals that we have and just enable more young people to have the kind of opportunity that they deserve to have.

***Assemblymember Mosca:***

Thank you. I think as you dive into those specific policies, would like to be kept updated. Thank you, Chair.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Assemblymember. I do have just one question remaining. My colleagues have done a really good job of checking some things off of my list, so thank you colleagues. I know, Dr. Wakefield, as we welcome you here, you have been on the job like ten minutes, so I appreciate you being here and answering these important questions and that you are diving right in.

My only remaining question is around slide 19. We have spoken a little bit about some chronic absenteeism. We have not really gotten into the suspensions and expulsions, and that is something that is really important to all of us. That is something that, as Deputy McGill will know, has been on my radar since I have had the honor of serving in the Legislature. You shared that you got reports back from districts in terms of those numbers. You did not share much about what you received. I am very interested in, are we are still seeing the same type of disproportionality. Are there still clarifying policies or even regulations that need to be put in place? I still often hear that teachers are still unclear, students are still unclear, and that things—depending on who you speak to and what campus I am on—that there is not a lot of clarity. If you can shed some light on that—what you are finding and even the type of work that is still ahead of us, that would be very helpful. Thank you.

***Superintendent Wakefield:***

Chair Taylor, could you clarify just what you mean at the unclear point? So that I make sure to answer the question or pull in the right staff help? What did you mean by students are unclear?

***Chair Taylor:***

Just in terms of what it takes to be suspended, those types of things. What is that behavior? What should happen before you get suspended and while you are suspended, in terms of educational opportunities still, should you be suspended? Again, back to disproportionality, what I am hearing from teachers is that some teachers still feel as though as a whole, the other extreme, of course, is you just cannot suspend students. So that kind of—what feedback are you getting? You said you got some information in particular as it pertains to the disproportionality picture.

***Superintendent Wakefield:***

Thank you. That helps me clarify how I will answer and then also follow up on that we will do here after. First, on data, blame me for the high-level slide on that one. My team had actually given me about five more slides with graphs, and I was trying to honor the time limits that the Committee had asked for. You can see we are very data driven. Yes, I am ten minutes into the job, but I know that we have so much work to do. That every day is a real blessing to get to roll up my sleeves with a great team and with great partners.

I think what I will do, because I have been learning a lot from Director LaNesha Battle and Deputy Christy McGill around this area. I will ask Deputy McGill to share just any broad brushstrokes. We will follow up with more detail, and we can maybe point you as well to some of the—we had a really deep dive into the disproportionality question related to suspension, expulsion, and disciplinary at our recent State Board meeting as well, so we have rich data. I will ask one of our experts to give you some of those broad brushstrokes, and I will make sure that as we share back with this Committee, in particular, that we add another slide with those rates. If we have the chance to present something similar so that way it is not just talking points as well. Deputy McGill, would you share?

***Ms. McGill:***

Thank you. I will start with the first part of your question, and that is clarifying what constitutes as a suspension, expulsion, those kinds of things. We are still on track. We have clarified and moved into data definitions in Infinite Campus itself. We are in that pilot. One of the things we really wanted to do was make sure that when we were comparing district to district, we had some apples to apples. You can imagine, with adults, with humans, really getting good data definitions around things like respect and those kinds of things, that it was a lengthy process, but it is all entered into Infinite Campus now.

What we are hoping with the clarification of this, is that we will be able to then create real time data platforms for schools to use. What does that look like? We really want to make sure that our schools are empowered to look at their data around discipline to see if there is disparities, not just once a year, but throughout the year, to really what we call progress monitor.

We also want to see if maybe there are some discipline things going on in the school cafeteria, and the school really wants to ramp up their interventions at the cafeteria or make sure we have adults in the cafeteria really trying to get in front of some of the discipline. That is the discipline piece. We put out support materials of really making sure that we are all on the same page. We talk about things like if a child is removed from the classroom in the school, it counts as a suspension, that you cannot count it as something else. We are kind of in the throes of that data definition work.

On the other side, when we go to implementation and interventions, one of the things that we found, and I think that you will probably know this already, is that when a school implements a systems approach, they have interventions at the ready, they are looking at if a young person is not successful, looking at different ways to help that young person feel supported, whether it is through, perhaps, a trauma or something of that sort. Because what we know is sometimes discipline is a manifestation of things that are not supported, and so really trying to reduce that piece. We have some great data. I have, I can send this to you all. I have a nice handout that really shows schools that are implementing MTSS with fidelity are, have significant reductions in discipline.

One of the key factors is that when you do implement MTSS you are very intentional about the rules you set. Many times, because it is a line, people say, we want to maintain safety, but we also want to make sure we have good interventions and so that everyone is safe. What you will see is that by strengthening the intentions and consequences, we also have a reduction in the incidences themselves.

Then, also really ensuring that our teachers have teams that can lean in with a teacher that maybe have a student that is struggling and utilizing discipline as an externalizing factor, and think people like social workers or school counselors or paraprofessionals, to really lean in so that there are teams there to help with the mental health side.

On our climate data that you will see, that many teachers exiting the profession, note that after retirement, behavior is one of the key factors why many of our teachers leave the profession. So really trying to lean into those interventions, not only to improve school safety, but also make sure that our teachers feel safe and supported as well.

***Superintendent Wakefield:***

Last thing I will share, because you have access to our annual report and I believe that transparency builds trust and action. Just to put it on the record, data that I think we should all take a hard look at is that the data from 2023–2024 to 2024–2025 revealed persistent disparities that did not drop significantly. Black students face disproportionately high rates of both suspensions and expulsions. Hispanic students, which is our largest enrollment group, were not overrepresented in terms of suspensions and expulsions in that data.

There is more detail in our annual report and in what is available. I just want to make sure that we are clear eyed and looking at the data and taking a hard look in the mirror as we think about policies and practices that we have to do moving forward.

***Ms. McGill:***

I apologize. I left that out of the answer. We are also monitoring, with the school districts, that persistently have disproportionate data, like the law says, and they are in support of action right now. Those schools have been identified. We are looking at the interventions, and we will be mapping whether or not we are seeing those go down and really leaning in with our districts to help with those interventions to reduce that disciplinary data.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you to the both of you. I appreciate the work that has been done and just want to make sure that the work continues. I know it is an elephant, and you have to eat it one bite at a time. I get that, and nothing changes overnight. But I am really committed to finding that place, that sweet spot between the two, as you said, Deputy McGill. I think, certainly,

our students need it, our staff needs it, and it gives us an opportunity to create a better opportunity and keep more kids in school, which is ultimately where we want them to be. I appreciate your work, and these conversations will certainly continue.

Vice Chair, I think you wanted to follow up with a question as well?

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Yes, I did want a quick follow up because I know that Ms. McGill talked a lot about MTSS and what that looks like, but I know it was really technical. Could you explain in more of an everyday scenario, what MTSS looks like in this setting? My understanding is that it is used to support some of the programming that we have done to address the disproportionate discipline data that we have seen in our state. I just want to understand what the value is that MTSS has in our schools?

***Superintendent Wakefield:***

Deputy McGill, please.

***Ms. McGill:***

Thank you for the question. You are totally correct. MTSS is a systems approach, and it is hard to make it approachable. But the bottom line is, what MTSS does is it creates a system for the adults in each team to work together as a team to do four key things.

One is to review the data. What is really going on in that school? To really have a good visualization of really that school and then also the stories and those kinds of things. The data.

The next is to really take a look at the current initiatives. Are the initiatives and intervention that school are doing actually having the results? Our UNR team works with each one of our district leadership teams to take a look at an inventory of initiatives and see if they can find out what is working and what is not working. Sometimes schools and districts will not know if that particular initiative is working or not. And so we work, the UNR really works with that team to put progress monitoring in place. Then with that progress monitoring, if they do a new intervention, let us say it is restorative practices, that we can actually or the schools can see whether or not if that is having any effect.

Last but not least, it is putting in that tiered system of supports so that if a child starts to struggle we are screening. Many times if a child is suspended for the first time, instead of just saying, "Okay, you are suspended and come back to school," that acts as a warning light, like a check your engine, and to really screen to see what else is going on, and again trying to get those interventions earlier. Screening becomes a really important component to putting in interventions, not just for behavior, but it could be for math or for literacy as well.

One system, multiple practices. What MTSS does well, it empower the people at the school level to see what is working and what is not working. That is our big goal and push.

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Thank you. Is it accurate to say that the MTSS model supports some of the restorative justice language and policies that we have implemented in the last couple legislative sessions?

***Ms. McGill:***

You are correct. What MTSS will do, it is an implementation framework to check and make sure that restorative practices have been trained, that they have been coached, and they are supportive. Then making sure progress monitoring is occurring. Is it working? Is it not working? And not just to automatically jumping to, oh, it does not work. But if, let us say there was a gap in training or let us say there was a gap in coaching, the MTSS implementation framework will kind of show where that gap occurred, if there was a gap. Really the ideal is to get to implementing with fidelity.

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Thank you. That is helpful.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Vice Chair. Thank you, Deputy McGill. I am a fan of the MTSS framework, and I hope we can continue to move that forward. Because I think it helps us get to where we want to get with students, with staff, in a way that is supportive but also has some parameters around it.

Thank you for the work in that. I know you have had some good results, and we tried to get that extended a little bit. We did not get the bill across the finish line, but it is going to be on my radar because I think that is the best way to try to get to where it is that we are trying to get.

Thank you so much. Any other questions? I know you have been up for a while. Thank you so much. Welcome to your first meeting, Dr. Wakefield. We appreciate all that you have done. Seeing no more questions, you are off of the hot seat. I really thank you for the information. I do want to say thank you in advance for the information and material you are going to send us in terms of follow up. Even information on some of those slides on expulsions and suspensions that you did not use. I appreciate that. Thank you. If you can get that to staff so they can get that to us, we can use that, along with reading the report to answer other questions and fill in some blanks that may still be there.

***Superintendent Wakefield:***

We sure will. Thank you very much for the time.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you.

## AGENDA ITEM VI—PRESENTATION ON THE STATE OF NEVADA'S SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AND UPDATES ON THE ADOPTION OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICE USE POLICIES BY SCHOOL DISTRICTS (SENATE BILL 444 [2025])

***Chair Taylor:***

I think we can get in one more agenda item before lunch for those of you who are there in Las Vegas, and staff who are in Carson City. Let us go on to Agenda Item VI, this is the presentation from our school districts. We have representation here from the NASS—the President of NASS, President Else, as well as Superintendents Anderson from Elko, Alvarado

from Douglas, Ebert from Clark, and Ernst from Washoe. We will go in that order unless you have organized some other way to present.

***Tate Else, President, NASS:***

No. Can you see and hear me okay?

***Chair Taylor:***

I can. We can now.

***President Else:***

This is interesting. All along I have been practicing eye contact, and now all I can see is my computer screen.

Madam Chair, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today. My name is Tate Else, and I am the Superintendent of Eureka County School District and President of the Nevada Association of School Superintendents, also known as NASS. NASS consists of all 17 school districts and the State Public Charter School Authority. We deeply value your partnership and ongoing support for Nevada students. Our district leaders are eager to collaborate, learn together, and drive progress for our communities. Today's presentation celebrates a shared journey, building on successes and strengthening our commitment to working side by side (Agenda Item VI A).

Several members of NASS recently attended the National Conference on Education, where the theme was The Future Is Ready. Many states across the nation are facing similar challenges to Nevada and are working to improve educational systems. As we all know, this is no easy task. There are no simple answers. But what we do know is that the only path to meaningful progress is through collective effort—working together to identify and implement solutions that most positively impact our learning environments. At the same time the nation is working to improve education, Nevada superintendents are doing the same. This year we have been intentionally reflective about our purpose and have created dedicated time each month for professional learning and collaboration during our meetings.

Nevada is a unique and diverse state, from small rural districts to our large urban systems, needs vary significantly. These vast differences make it difficult to create one overreaching narrative. Yet, through meaningful discussion, we developed a statement that reflects our shared values. NASS is committed to equipping leaders to build learning systems grounded in trust, collaboration, and high expectations. We align resources, foster professional growth, influence policy, and strengthen networks so caring adults can engage students in rigorous, relevant learning connected to real world challenges.

We recently updated our motto to better reflect the evolving needs of our state. With substantial turnover among educational leaders and the urgent need for a systematic improvement, we are committed to adapting our practices to ensure all students benefit from high quality learning experiences. We are proud of the strong partnerships among Nevada school districts, the Nevada's Department of Education, the State Board of Education, and numerous supporting organizations such as the Regional Professional Development Organizations, as well as the Commission on Innovation and Excellence. We have already made significant progress and look forward to continued improvements.

Collaboration among all stakeholders is essential to creating better learning environments. Our joint meetings and initiatives reflect a true spirit of unity, enabling practical solutions and sustainable progress. Successful implementation is key to meaningful change. Every June, NASS hosts its annual Superintendents Academy. Over the years, this conference has grown in attendance and impact. It has become an important space to collaborate with educational partners across Nevada. This year's conference will take place on June 8 and 9 at South Lake Tahoe, and we would be honored for each of you to attend as our guests. As I was just watching Superintendent Wakefield's presentation and some of the questions and conversations that came up, I thought this would be a perfect opportunity to collaborate in a space like that; so we welcome all of you to join us.

Our priorities reflect shared goals and opportunities for meaningful action. These are not the only issues districts are focused on, but they represent areas where statewide collaboration is most crucial. Financial stability remains one of the most pressing challenges. Declining enrollment does not reduce fixed costs. Transportation, special education services, staffing, and facilities remain essential, yet our funding systems were built for growth, not contraction.

At the same time, districts must modernize accountability systems, expand access to early learning, and meet the diverse needs of students. NASS priorities reflect these realities: sustainable and flexible funding, modernize meaningful accountability, strategic investments such as pre-K that prevent future costs instead of reacting to them later. These priorities are not about lowering expectations but about creating the conditions necessary to meet them.

Let me be very clear. Districts are not afraid of accountability. In fact, superintendents welcome it when it is focused on student learning and system effectiveness. But we must ask ourselves: are we holding the right things accountable? Districts have the responsibility to examine their systems, eliminate practices that are ineffective, and focus energy on strategies proven to improve learning. Are we measuring compliance, or are we measuring impact? Are we adding initiatives faster than districts can implement them with fidelity? Are we allowing enough time and support for innovation to succeed? NASS encourages a more focused approach, doing fewer things better. When we limit the scope of initiatives, districts can implement with quality, evaluate results with honesty, and adjust based on evidence rather than urgency.

Nevada school districts remain committed to collaboration and innovation and accountability. What we are asking for is a shared commitment to clarity, focus, and system level responsibility. If we shift from layering initiatives to building strong systems, and from compliance driven accountability to impact driven accountability, we can better serve our students, especially during times of fiscal constraint and demographic change. NASS looks forward to continuing its partnerships with the Legislature to ensure that policies are not only well intended but well implemented and successful.

We invite you to join us at our annual conference, where we can continue to work together to help every district reach its full potential. Thank you for your time and commitment to Nevada students, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Thank you. I think the Chair stepped away for just a moment, so I will go ahead and see if anybody, any members, have any questions. I do not see anyone with any questions.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

I have a question.

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Assemblymember La Rue Hatch, go ahead.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Thank you so much, Vice Chair, and thank you so much for being with us today. I think you might have heard, I mentioned it earlier, we just saw 29 pages of reports that are due to us and to the state, and we have talked about how this interim there is work being done to look at what reports are needed and what are not needed.

I would just love your thoughts on how we can streamline. I am a classroom teacher. I am filling out reports. You are filling out reports. Principals are filling out reports. I would just love some thoughts on how we can reduce those reports and actually get to the work of educating.

***President Else:***

Well, I absolutely love your question Senator [sic] La Rue Hatch, so thank you for that. This is something that we continually talk about, and it is an issue that I think everybody can agree upon that is a challenge. At our most recent NASS meeting that we held in Las Vegas, Dr. Wakefield actually shared his report page with us that we have for the Department of Education has recently created. It is three very full Word page documents. But I had to point out to him at that point in time that we are back onto a fourth of a page because he had just introduced another report within that page.

All of the school districts are working collaboratively on this. We are all meeting, actually, with an organization next week that is assessing and analyzing that. They are an organization working with Opportunity 180 to go through and really assess what all the reports are, what is mandated, what could be reduced, and what is duplicative. I think it is really crucial that we do that because I can speak from my small rural district. It is only a few of us who do those reports in my district. In a Clark County or Washoe County School District, there are entire teams or departments that may be dedicated to working on some of those. They might be a little bit more individualized. In my district, there are four of us who essentially do all of that, and the amount of time that those reporting requirements take from us is immense. It certainly takes away from the things that we really should be doing, which is focusing on improving teaching and learning.

I will be very happy to come back and share the results of what happens with that. I believe you will be hearing from other organizations as well on this. I think this is an initiative that is going to be championed heavily by several people this upcoming session.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Thank you so much, and thank you, Vice Chair.

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Thank you. There you go. I thought you were back.

***Chair Taylor:***

Just sat down. Thank you. I wanted to take that moment to refresh my coffee as well. But I had you in my ear, so I heard the whole thing.

I do just want to add into that. I think reducing the reports is on everybody's radar, which is why it came up in some legislation this past session. Hopefully, we can make some good progress and relieve the superintendents and the classroom teachers and school administrators and all of that, because the most important work happens in that classroom. I do not mean the work of filling out the report in the classroom. We are talking about with the students—so we appreciate that.

Senator Rogich, I see your hand. Please jump in.

***Senator Rogich:***

Thank you, Senator Chair.

A quick question with regard to, under policy solutions, modernized fed funding to reflect actual costs. Could you elaborate further on what that means?

***President Else:***

Yes, absolutely. The amount of dollars that we receive for our special education funding is heavily supp—it is not enough to incur our cost of what each district is spending. At the end of every year, each district is making a very substantial transfer from the general fund to the special education fund to essentially make that fund whole. I think it is a little bit dependent upon the district. In my district it is about 50 percent of our annual special education funding that is actually covered out of our general fund dollars.

***Senator Rogich:***

Thank you.

***President Else:***

Absolutely.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you. Any other questions from the members before we let the president of NASS go?

Well, you did all that practice Superintendent Else, for eye contact and an in-person presentation. You will get another opportunity at some point during your presidency. I am sure we will see you.

***President Else:***

I know that we will be having another request to come back and share our invest document with you when it is complete. We are in the process of working on that as we speak. We are hoping that we have it completed by April or May. I will be requesting another visit back with your Committee for sure.

***Chair Taylor:***

Well, we can. I cannot promise no snow in April or May because it is northern Nevada. But it is less likely. Anyway, it will not be this much.

***President Else:***

I would like to thank Churchill County School District for allowing me. I left Carson City this morning at 6 a.m. before I got snowed in so that I could drive back to Churchill County, so that I was not stuck away from home another night. Thank you to Churchill County for letting me use our boardroom today.

***Chair Taylor:***

Well, I am glad you were able to get home. That was actually a big reason why we went ahead and went virtually here. We could have gotten there this morning, but we would not have gotten home. It would have but it would have been treacherous, and we did not want to do that.

***President Else:***

I can assure you the roads were pretty suspect as I was leaving this morning. I am very happy I got out of there. The sun is shining in Fernley, or in Fallon, so very fortunate.

***Chair Taylor:***

Well, that is good. Glad to hear it. Thank you again for the presentation, and we look forward to the invest document as well.

Let us go on to, Elko County Superintendent Anderson.

***Clayton Anderson, Superintendent, Elko County School District:***

Hello. Can you both see and hear me?

***Chair Taylor:***

All right. Yes, we can. Thank you so much for being here, sir.

***Superintendent Anderson:***

Wonderful. Thank you all so much as well. Good morning, Chair Taylor and members of the Committee. I am very pleased to be here virtually with you today to share our successes, also talk about some of our persistent challenges, and our progress on recent mandates like the one identified with SB 444 (Agenda Item VI B-1).

Before I get too deep into our Elko County School District stuff, I just want to point out that, we are in Elko County School District, we are a proud member of the Nevada Association of School Superintendents. Strongly support everything that President Else shared with you, and we believe in the power of all working together despite the differences that some of our communities have, whether geographically or otherwise. We do stand behind a shared commitment to build learning systems that are grounded in trust, collaboration, and high expectations.

I have got just a few points here on this slide to highlight some of what makes Elko pretty unique compared with other parts of our state. While we do cover over 17,000 square miles, we are unified with our colleagues in Clark, Washoe, Douglas—who you will hear from today, as well as the other counties, to ensure every Nevada student has access to rigorous and relevant learning. While we are different, definitely not divided.

Here in Elko, this is our mission, which is to empower students to go anywhere and be anything through teaching and learning excellence, productive relationships, and responding to each learner's unique needs (Agenda Item VI B-2). We have a strong belief and a track record of supporting and fostering innovative practices. We also believe in the power of creative collaborations and partnerships within our community, among Nevada entities, and as well as national opportunities that come across. Strongly believe in advocacy and solutions-oriented approaches to optimal funding to align our resources and make sure we are having a positive influence on student-centered policy. We appreciate your role in helping those very important efforts move forward in Nevada.

I want to begin here with a little bit of gratitude. Actually, sorry, I got ahead of myself. I also want to show here, through these slides, that there were some references in the previous slide about our Portrait of a Learner and some of our core beliefs. On the left-hand side of this, you will see what our current Elko County School District Portrait of a Learner looks like with what our competencies are. There are a lot of similarities, with an Elko flavor, with the state Portrait of a Nevada Learner. Definitely, as we went through that process developing it over the last year and a half here in Elko County, were drawing from our work at the state level. We did have multiple schools and teams that participated in that, and that is reflected in our own version of that and, as I said, our own Elko County flavor.

I just want to highlight this quote, which is that education is an investment in economic development and an investment in opportunity and investment in our shared future. There are dollars that are limited, and we understand that those are constantly in competition with one another across entities and so many needs that there is never enough to meet across the state. The same could be said even just within one industry. But we know that education is that industry that impacts all other industries. I want to start with some thank yous here. Really grateful for the one-time infusion of funds into the PCFP. There has been lots of positive impact on students and staff. Also want to say thank you for AB 519 and AB 355, which directly affected our Owyhee combined school project, which is moving forward. I have a few updates here soon on that.

AB 519, apart from Owyhee, has also enabled us to gain access to some more capital improvement funds that have been very needed for mechanical upgrades and roof repairs and replacements and essential infrastructure needs for our district. As well as the creative pathways that the state and the Legislature came up with to fill hard to staff positions and positions at hard to staff locations, which we have multiple of here in Elko County. Those have been very meaningful to us, and we know that we would have additional problems that would not have had solutions without that support, so thank you.

I referenced the Owyhee project. I just want to give a quick update on that. It seems like wherever I go from a state standpoint, people want to know about Owyhee. There are some pictures here to show, and some of these were as recent as about two or three weeks ago. That is definitely a school coming together. I was out at the site myself a couple of months ago, and seeing these new pictures makes me want to go out again.

***Chair Taylor:***

Superintendent, I am so sorry to interrupt you, but I do not know if you think you are sharing your slides, but you are not. When you refer to them, we cannot see them. I have mine open because I am at home, and I have three screens, but we want others who may be wanting to see. If you could that, that would be fantastic. Thank you so much.

Here we are. Now we are talking.

***Superintendent Anderson:***

I poorly assume that someone was doing that on your end already. I apologize.

There are a couple of pictures. Now it looks like a school, now that you can see it. It looks like a school building coming together. If we had more time, I would detail what you are looking at there, but there are a couple of quick pictures and a couple more. Lots of work going on there. Thankfully, I know that having a mild winter presents its own problems in Nevada but having a mild winter has facilitated more rapid progress on this Owyhee construction. That is moving forward. We are currently securing additional funding we need to get into phase two, which would be other buildings beyond the main structure that you saw in those pictures. All signs and implications point to that going in the right direction, thanks to those bills and to the mechanisms that are put in place.

The next topic I want to talk about is the cell phone updates (Agenda Item VI B-3). SB 444, you asked for an update on that. We had a policy in place already, but it was pretty old. You can tell it was put in place when cell phones were probably a pretty brand new thing, or just starting to become a little more common. Our new updated personal electronics device policy, JDBA, I did share a copy of that with all of you. We were actually well in the process, we have been going through that process about a year, actually, by the point that the Legislature passed that bill. That is why that was turned around so quickly at the end of the session, because we were already doing it anyway. That bill and our version, thankfully, checked all the boxes, plus some other things important to us.

It requires the absence of use and visibility during instructional time. It allows for instructor discretion for instructional purposes. It also, there are elements in there to allow for utilization in emergencies, health management, or as required by student's IEP [individualized education plan] or 504 plan. We also, consistent with our state's restorative justice model of discipline, the cellphone or personal electronic policy violations are within that same matrix of discipline, which is progressive in nature. We have also been engaging in a cell phone policy marketing campaign across the district.

The next slide shows this logo. There is a lot more to it than just this one logo, but this was a logo chosen by the students. The saying, "Be here. Be you. Be present." was chosen by our students. We have been utilizing these marketing campaigns to make sure the importance of being present at school is clear throughout.

Here are some quick data points from what we have seen because we did just implement this year, so it is still pretty fresh as far as data goes. We were not surprised to see personal device violations go up given that we are now taking them away a little more often, and classroom disruptions, because of those, go up a little bit. We do think that as people become more accustomed to that we will see that improve. The big takeaway from the administrators at the schools was that we have not seen this shocking or drastic change in student behavior or community happen right away. But again, this is after one semester

of data. We are committed to it. It is districtwide now at every school, and with a consistent manner. I just wanted to make sure you saw some of that, as it pertains to SB 444. We are fully implemented at this time.

Next up, want to talk about our primary challenge, that is this perfect storm with funding for us. I have got three categories up here. This has already been talked about to a certain extent nationally and at the state. There is, obviously, declining enrollment happening due to various reasons. We also have our state's funding model of the PCFP, which provides equality in some areas but provides challenges in others. Some of those challenges for us are listed there. Those allocations are directly tied to enrollment rates, which for us are unpredictable at this time. Timelines sometimes make it difficult to have those enrollment rates match up with when budgets are due and things like that. Right now, where we are in a pretty steady decline in enrollment of 10 to 11 percent over the last four years. The hold harmless trigger has not been something we are able to use. We have not been able to be held harmless. It has been nothing but harm with those declines in enrollments.

That budget gap just keeps increasing for us. It has been widely publicized in the news lately about our challenges. In fact, tonight, we have a board meeting about possible solutions to what we are going to do to try to catch up from this. It does feel like over the last few years, any time you finally adjust to the damage caused from the decline in enrollment from that year, you are starting over again and unable to stay ahead of it. That has been a significant challenge for us as district leaders, as educators, and as a board. Some of those numbers and graphs are here. I am cognizant that I have gone over ten minutes, so I am trying not to dwell on anything too much more. But you can just see that steady decline in enrollment, the impact of the PCFP true-ups. Right now, we are looking at not only, roughly $7 million deficit from the loss of students from one year to the next, but on top of the catch up from the year before, we actually see ourselves having to figure out an $11 million problem in Elko County, which is pretty challenging. That is our biggest struggle at the moment.

Some of our solutions mirror those of what President Else shared before, so I am not going to belabor those again. I will leave those on there without mentioning them. I would say that in addition to those, we also feel like ongoing, having ongoing funding streams for school safety, behavioral, and mental health would be very important for us. Those are things that our general fund often goes to compensate for, much like our general fund goes to SPED [special education] to make up for shortfalls from state and federal funding.

The Commission on School Funding does really great work. Our CFO [Chief Financial Officer] is represented on that Commission, and highly recommend that this Committee, as well as all state Legislators, take very seriously the recommendations from that commission. Fully funding pre-K would be incredible. It was good to hear from State Superintendent Wakefield about the great progress that is happening across the state with pre-K. We do not see that as much here in Elko. It is pretty limited. I would also encourage any removal of barriers to innovation.

As I mentioned, we do love innovation here and we try to do different things, but sometimes we find ourselves hampered with trying to be innovative within the parameters of currently existing criteria and structures. That can be tough for us to truly find innovation when that happens.

Sorry, I went over by about three or four minutes. At that point, I am happy to answer any questions about these topics or anything else.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Superintendent Anderson. We will be docking you three or four minutes, just for the record, just so you know. Thank you for the presentation. Thank you for taking the time. Do we have any questions for the Superintendent from Committee members? I do not see any, but please give me a hand raise if you have anything for him. I am seeing no questions.

Thank you for the pictures. I am glad we got to your slide again. It is in our packets, but for those who may not have that in front of them, it was helpful. We appreciate the slides and the pictures and so on, and certainly the solutions and recommendations.

Seeing no questions, then we will let you jump out of there. Superintendent Anderson, again, we appreciate you taking the time and for sharing with us on this morning.

***Superintendent Anderson:***

Thank you, Chair.

***Chair Taylor:***

We are going to continue on, Superintendent of Douglas County. Superintendent Alvarado, welcome. Thank you for joining us. You were down the street and you are probably still in Douglas, so you can just jump on Zoom. Great.

***Frankie Alvarado, Superintendent, Douglas County School District:***

Good morning, Chair Taylor. I would like to introduce my Assistant Director of Ed Services, Leslie Peters. Leslie, can you please turn on your camera and microphone?

***Leslie Peters, Assistant Director of Educational Services, Douglas County School District:***

Good morning.

***Chair Taylor:***

Good morning.

***Superintendent Alvarado:***

Let me share my screen so I can get started here.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you so much and then get started whenever you are ready. Okay, we see it.

***Superintendent Alvarado:***

Great. Like I said, good morning. Thank you for welcoming Douglas County School District to provide an update to you on our educational services as well as a district business (Agenda Item VI C). I am Superintendent Frankie Alvarado and joining me today is our Assistant Director of Education Services, Leslie Peters. In Douglas County, our theme this year is inspiring hope. Hope means creating school environments where students believe in themselves, where families feel connected and informed, and where educators are

empowered to make a difference. You will see the difference that we are making here in Douglas County as we go through the slides. So that I am not reading to you, I will share the important information, because I know that you can review the slides on your own.

Our vision in Douglas County is we will inspire, empower, and prepare each learner to achieve his or her life aspirations. Going into our theme of inspiring hope, we know that hope is a combination of action and belief. The point of inspiration happens with hope is when your mind and your heart both align, so that way you purposefully make a decision to achieve and develop a goal and achieve that goal.

We understand in Douglas County School District that every student learns to the beat of a different drum. With that understanding, we have some keystones of our instructional program, and which Ms. Peters will dive into as we get to the Portrait of a Learner slide next. Some of those keystones are personalized learning and then ensuring rigor and relevance in our daily teaching for students. Ms. Peters, please take us away for the Portrait of a Learner.

***Ms. Peters:***

Good morning. We did some rebranding, post COVID [Coronavirus Disease of 2019], of our Portrait of a Learner. It previously was a portrait of a graduate, and we realized everyone in our school district is a learner, from the youngest learner all the way up to the superintendent, so we wanted our Portrait to reflect that. In Douglas County, we are EPIC—we are empowered, prepared, inspired, and connected. You see that on the slide there.

We have done work with the Nevada Future of Learning Network—not only on the state Portrait, from that very first convening in Las Vegas helping to create the state Portrait, but that also gave us a vehicle to continue to refine our individual district Portrait. It was a very collaborative effort with students, community members, and educators coming together to talk about what it means to be an empowered learner or a connected learner. With our community, we wanted to find out what kinds of mindsets and skill sets are important as we have students graduating from our schools and then going out potentially into the workforce or post-secondary education.

Probably some of the most important work we did was talk with our educators and ask them to consider signature practices that happen in their classrooms, or in their buildings that help provide opportunities for our students to have experiences where they do feel empowered or inspired. As we all know, and as has been talked about here today, sometimes we get initiative fatigue and we hear there is a new thing in education, and sometimes we jump on that. We did not want the Portrait to be that thing. We did not want it, number one, to just be a poster sitting on the walls of classrooms, but we also wanted our teachers to see what kinds of things are happening in real time for students that are part of this Portrait. From that, we have created a list of signature practices, and that work was just recently highlighted in Las Vegas as a bright spot in our state with the Nevada Future of Learning Network convening. We are very proud of that work that we have done with our team.

Next steps with our Portrait work are to really build up competencies and learning progressions. Following on the footsteps of the state's work in that realm, that will give us some metrics to be looking at our Portrait work.

It has been exciting work to be a part of, not only at the district level, but also at the state level. I think we are seeing some good returns on that with our students, as far as their engagement in their learning and opportunities that teachers are providing for students to have voice and choice and some personalization within their classrooms.

***Superintendent Alvarado:***

Thank you, Ms. Peters. Just like every other educational institution in Nevada, data is key, and it is important for us to consistently look at data. I have embedded some data regarding attendance and our chronic absenteeism rates. This is midyear review and comparison to other districts in the state. We are right up there in the top three when it comes to chronic absenteeism. Right now, the bottom right corner of this slide, you will see our total attendance percentage is 93.91 percent, looking at the first semester of the school year, and chronic absenteeism is sitting at 19.76 percent. We are under that 20 percent threshold that most districts are at across the state.

Looking forward, we also have a multi-tiered systems of supports, which is a key priority for the District. Ms. Peters, go ahead and take it away.

***Ms. Peters:***

We are working with UNR Technical Assistance Center on our MTSS implementation here in Douglas County. This is something that had been in the District and then coaching went away due to funding. We were able to get a little bit creative last year and find a coach so that we could work with UNR. They have supported our District leadership team. With some training that we had with Sean Covey and the four disciplines of execution, we talked about a wildly important goal. We felt, as District cabinet, that our work around MTSS should be that goal. It is a large part of our District strategic plan, and really our goal is to increase the percentage of school sites that are showing fidelity with Tier 1 implementation. As Deputy Superintendent McGill alluded to, MTSS is a tiered system of support, but, really, the most important work is in Tier 1, where we are giving the majority of our students intervention that is evidence based and from there, monitoring progress to determine if students need to move on to Tier 2 or Tier 3.

Through our work with UNR, we have been able to provide two different cohorts of training. Last year, we had an elementary, a middle, and a high school that went through our initial training. We have now since added all of our school sites this year. We are tracking data on the number of school sites who are attending all of our monthly trainings with UNR, as well as the percentage of their team attending those trainings. Then our hope is that we have 100 percent of our schools at 100 percent fidelity with the tiered fidelity inventory (TFI) data that will be collected in the spring. We have seen some good movement in that direction. All of our schools, from the fall to the winter TFI, have shown improvement in their implementation of MTSS interventions and just monitoring of student data. We are excited to see the results in the spring as well.

***Superintendent Alvarado:***

Thank you, Ms. Peters. Another priority for Douglas County School District is CTE. With our CTE program, we applied for and received a work-based learning grant, in which we now have a work-based learning teacher. Proud to report that our 2024 to 2025 state assessments, we are top ranked in Nevada. You will see our participation rate is well over 90 percent for the End of Program Performance, as well as the Workplace Readiness Skills Performance. Our passage rate for End of Program was 71.89 percent, and then our

passage rate for Workplace Readiness was 79.5 percent. In total, we had close to 400 total passed exams by our students between these two assessments.

Moving on next is an update on policy implementation. Our Board has successfully adopted a policy for open enrollment, BP [Board Policy] 552, as well as a policy for school bus stop arm cameras, BP 816. Those are well onto their way of implementation. We are in the middle of our open enrollment application period currently, which closes this Friday. Then, we plan to implement the school bus stop arm cameras next school year. We are also in the middle of our awareness campaign with our community.

In regards to SB 444 for cell phones, we currently have Board Policy number 546. We will look at making revisions to that policy but we wanted to make our way through the school year and see what would be the most important aspects to change. So far this year, we have seen a 30 percent decrease in total incidents for cell phones, and we have seen a 16 percent decrease in the total number of students from Fiscal Year 2025 to Fiscal Year 2026 when we compare that data midyear.

In Douglas County School District, we have Tiger Pride, and that is shown at our middle school level as well as our high school level. Last year, we prioritized our strategic plan, and we learned from our kids. Some student voices in the strategic plan is our students want more hands-on learning. They want to know how to get a good grade on everything that they do. They want higher level learning options and courses. They want more opportunities for classes, clubs, and sports. They want a broader range of CTE courses—fire science, woodshop, construction can all be potential add ons. We do have a fire science program at George Whittell High School, and we are looking at bridging those options down into the Valley as well. Students also want more CTE and dual enrollment options in their course calendar and more options to learn about possible careers.

The last piece of information that I was asked to prepare for today is information for our committee to consider for policy discussions. As Superintendent Anderson mentioned previously, right now funding decisions are made after statutory deadlines for staffing decisions. I will just give a recent example of SB 500, which was passed on May 29. I can tell you at the school district level, our obligation through NRS was to provide notice to our employees by May 15 if we were not going to retain their position. The passage of this funding bill beyond that statutory deadline made it very difficult for us to align our staffing to our enrollment and also to align our staffing to the funding that we receive as a school district.

Other issues in PCFP, which Superintendent Wakefield did discuss this in his presentation, include looking at the declining enrollment provision. Currently, it is set at 5 percent. Douglas County was one of the school districts who missed out on that hold harmless provision. We were at 4.75 percent, narrowly missing out on additional revenue that could make a difference for our kids here in Douglas County. Additionally is the quarterly funding adjustment, the "True-up" process that happens within PCFP. This process is harmful to the instructional process because having to reduce support staff is the only mechanism we have during the course of a calendar school year. NRS protects all certified contracts, and our certified employees must receive their full compensation for the year once the year starts and they have a contract. Looking at declining enrollment over three school years, Douglas County School District has lost out on over $5 million in revenue, which somewhat matches our deficit, similar to Elko County.

Another plea we have for you from Douglas County is looking at rising special education costs. Our special education rate has surpassed 15 percent of our student population. We

have a tremendous amount of costs associated with transportation of our students from home to school and back home after their school day.

Moving on to the next slide, some other important considerations for you as a Committee is to consider a funding stream for universal pre-K. Within NRS, there is a technology trust, but I have learned over the last three months that there is no funding set aside for this technology trust that districts have the ability to access for technology purchases.

The last item here is consider funding state mandates in perpetuity. If it is going to be a mandate at the state level, consider identifying a revenue stream to make sure districts can afford it for year after year.

I do appreciate and want to thank you all for recognizing the administrative burden with reporting requirements. The Nevada's Department of Education does have access to a lot of our data systems. One thing I would recommend is that if the state has access, maybe they or the departments housed within NDE can do those reports for districts, and then send the information for reconciling to districts. That way we can all be on the same page and allocate more funding directly to teaching and learning. I firmly believe that we need to do the best possible job in clearing the runway for superintendents, directors, assistant sups [superintendents], principals, and vice principals. We have to clear the runway for them to be instructional leaders in their buildings and in their districts if we want to make a change in our achievement levels.

That sums up our presentation today. Thank you for this opportunity to give you an update on the Douglas County School District.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you so much, Superintendent Alvarado. We do have a couple of questions, and we will start with Assemblymember La Rue Hatch.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Thank you so much, Chair, and thank you, Superintendent, for being here. My question comes from a place of support. I am a teacher. I ran originally because I know our schools are not well funded. As I have been speaking to the issue of needing to increase education funding, I often point to Douglas County and others who have been in the news about the financial strains. I ask this question in the hopes that you can help support those efforts.

When I bring up specifically Douglas, I often hear from cynical people that, "Well, Douglas wasted their money, Douglas paid for a law firm that scammed them out of a bunch of money, and that it is their fault that they are in trouble." I wondered if you could maybe clarify that and speak to that rumor that I hear at times that I do not know is necessarily accurate.

***Superintendent Alvarado:***

Committee member Hatch, thank you for that question. It is a politically charged question, and I do appreciate it no matter what. I can tell you that Douglas County School District is always allocated as much funding as possible to teaching and learning and to kids. We have a lot of in-house-built programs that have made a huge difference in every student's life here in Douglas County School District.

In regards to that question, hiring a law firm who has taken a lot of money, every firm in Nevada that represents a school district earns their dollars. The District was in a lot of legally complicated situations in which we had no options but to defend ourselves. I cannot speak to the past, all I can speak to the 19 months that I have been superintendent here. I can tell you that we have done a thorough review of the finances associated with legal costs, as well as a 10-year general fund analysis. We have utilized the one-time dollars, and those one-time dollars kind of masked our structural deficit going back to 2021.

I kind of danced around your question, and I can say it is not solely blamed on the law firm. I think it is blamed on turnover of leadership—a board that was looking at implementing certain initiatives that were not aligned with teaching and learning. They were aligned with different political stances in the nation. I think losing your focus, losing your way on the path, I think is really the story that happened here. We are all on the yellow brick road and then obviously took a stop to smell the flowers there and forgot to get back on track. I can tell you that we are back on track, and we are going to work tirelessly to put us in a better financial position, and also allocate funding to kids where it belongs—to teaching and learning.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Thank you so much, and I know it was a delicate question, so I appreciate your answer. Thank you so much for the indulgence Chair.

***Chair Taylor:***

You are very welcome, Assemblymember. Certainly, some difficult questions, and I appreciate your candor and your willingness to take the question and answer it Superintendent, thank you so much.

I do have just a couple of questions. You mentioned, just to go back, it did not have a slide number, but the one where you talked about chronic absenteeism. Most of these are just clarifying questions, and you may have the answer, or Ms. Peters may. If we go back to that slide, we were looking at attendance. Attendance was 93.91 percent, but chronic absenteeism was 19.76 percent. Should that not equal 100 percent, or am I misreading the intention?

***Superintendent Alvarado:***

Chronic absenteeism is missing 10 percent of the school year or more. Attendance percentage is the number of days you missed, in the percentage of the school year. Can you restate the question?

***Chair Taylor:***

Yes. Attendance percentage is the percentage of students that are coming to school, I assume, on a regular basis—that is 93.9 percent. Good number. But then the percentage of students who are chronically absent is 19.76 percent. Together, should that not equal 100 percent? Am I reading this chart incorrectly? It certainly could be. Just clarifying. I am not looking for anything. I am just asking a clarifying question.

***Superintendent Alvarado:***

It does not equal 100 percent when those are combined. They are two different metrics. Chronic absenteeism is based upon the number of students missing 10 percent or more—

***Chair Taylor:***

Yes, 10 percent or more.

***Superintendent Alvarado:***

And the regular attendance percentage is every student's percentage average—

***Chair Taylor:***

Just generally, as a whole. Got you. Just generally. So some of those can be on this side, depending on— Okay. Got you, because it is an average. Certainly.

Then just one other thing. Thank you for that. On the slide when you talked about your cell phone policy. I know you are looking at it, and I think it is really wise to put something in place, take a look, see how it goes, and then make adjustments if you need to. Let us see. You said there is a 16 percent decrease in total number of students. Total number of students doing?

***Superintendent Alvarado:***

Total number of students who committed a technology violation per BP 546.

***Chair Taylor:***

Okay, I thought that is what you meant. Just like total number doing what, but that is what— Again, just clarifying questions. I am not looking for anything, I just want to make sure I am following you. Thank you so much for the clarification.

Any other questions from members?

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Chair?

***Chair Taylor:***

Yes.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Can I—

***Chair Taylor:***

Is that Senator Rogich?

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

It is not. It is Senator Dondero Loop. [Inaudible]

***Chair Taylor:***

First time I have heard your voice today. [Inaudible] see you are quiet, which is not like you. Please go ahead.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Thank you, Superintendent. I feel your pain and a lot of it as I watched Douglas County. I would like a little more. As Chair of Finance and Chair of Interim Finance, can you talk a little bit more about when you talked about considering your quarterly funding adjustment?

Then, the next point is that you stated that you have experienced the loss of revenue over $5 million over the three-year period. Is that $5 million due to home school students? Is that $5 million due to the financing of the per-pupil-centered funding formula? Can you talk a little bit more about that particular slide?

***Superintendent Alvarado:***

Yes, I can talk more about that. The PCFP is funded on an individual per student basis. Over the course of three school years, beginning in 2023–2024, then going for 2024–2025, and then looking at the current year 2025—2026, with the amount of declining students, and since it is funded per student for every district in Nevada, we have lost out on over $5 million in revenue because of the loss of enrollment. It is not solely to homeschool students. There are provisions within NRS 388, that do not allow Douglas County School District or any other district in Nevada to ask parents why they are choosing to homeschool? That can be something for the Committee to look at as well for NRS 388. We did hold a homeschool town hall earlier this school year, and we did send out a survey that was isolated, separate from the application form. What we learned from that survey, and we had just over 30 families attend this homeschool town hall, is they want flexibility and options to educate their children, and they also wanted the option to provide faith-based education.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Thank you very much. On the very next page, where you have the "Consider for Policy Discussions," can you talk to me a little bit about the technology trust?

***Superintendent Alvarado:***

Yes. Being new to the State of Nevada, it is very important for me to understand and know the laws that govern the schools as well as the funding model. As I was digging through NRS, I found NRS 388.800. I reached out to the NASS President, Superintendent Else, who also reached out to the Nevada's Department of Education, and we learned that this technology trust is currently unfunded. There is no money in this trust, but this is a trust that was designed by Legislature for school districts to access for technology purchases. Currently, there is no money in it.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Thank you very much. I cannot get out my checkbook today, but I appreciate your feedback. Thank you very much, and that is it, Chair. Thank you.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you so much, Senator. Any other questions from other members for Superintendent Alvarado or Ms. Peters? Seeing none. Thanks to both of you so much for being here with us, taking time out of your day. We appreciate the information.

We are going to go ahead and push forward on these next two presentations, and then we will take our break. Superintendent Ebert from Clark County, you are up next.

***Jhone Ebert, Superintendent, CCSD:***

Good morning, Chair Taylor. Thank you for having me here this morning to all the members of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education. I am honored to serve as the Superintendent of the Clark County School District. Proud to be here with my colleagues from NASS, Elko, Douglas, and Washoe this morning.

We are thrilled to report that CCSD is on the move and that academic achievement is improving at every grade level and every subjects. I want to start by thanking you because of these investments, the investments that were made during the 2023 Legislative Session, we are seeing those improvements. We are seeing more teacher retention. We have the ability to provide all of our schools with the resources that they need and enrich the professional development for all of our educators.

We know that today's presentation will also have challenges at the end of the presentation for you (Agenda Item VI D-1). But I want to make sure that we lean in on the positive aspects as well, making those improvements—

Are we okay? Chair, can you hear me?

***Chair Taylor:***

Yes, we can hear you, and we could see the slides. Now the slide just went away, but yes, we can hear you and see you again.

***Superintendent Ebert:***

The screens in this room shifted, so I will keep going.

Continuing with the good news, out of the, we had over 16,000 of our classrooms have licensed highly effective educators in them. That is the most that we have had in a decade, with a 98 percent classroom fill rate. Along with that, we still are, and we are working very closely—which I will get to in the presentation deeper—but we still have a very high need. Special education has come up in all of the presentations, so we are working to fill our special education vacancies.

Specifically, the teacher retention rate has increased from a 90 percent in the 2022–2023 School Year to 92.45 percent in the 2024–2025 School Year. I am also proud to let you know that we had the most CCSD employees return to the Clark County School District, with 780. That is more than has returned in the last five years. I am also proud to share that because of the investments that you have made in education, our average teacher salary is now $84,768. If you add the benefits, which are $44,582, that is an average total compensation package of $129,350. We are very proud of that progress that has made, and we attribute that to our teachers staying with us and leading in their classrooms.

How was all of this accomplished? No one person, no one entity can do this work alone. As I mentioned before, we especially need a special education teacher. Working with the UNLV Special Education Certification Program, we currently have 60 candidates enrolled who are on track and ready to become special education teachers. They will finish that cohort and start another cohort this summer, which we expect another 60. That will be 120 additional special education teachers coming just out of UNLV.

You have also invested, and it was mentioned by State Superintendent Wakefield, about UNLV Nevada Forward, the teacher apprenticeship program. This Program has supported over 300 district employees in Clark County, including our paraprofessionals who become our educators in our classroom. As the nation's largest, so number one, nation's largest registered apprenticeship program, UNLV has established a 95 percent graduation rate, with the diversity of their students being over 60 percent. It is a no out-of-pocket cost for those educators, future educators which become our educators.

UNLV also partners with community organizations such as the Public Education Foundation and Workforce Connections to support our teacher apprentice. Additionally, we partner with iteach, Teach for America, and Teachers for Tomorrow on alternative route to licensure programs to prepare more than 200 teachers a year for CCSD classrooms.

This year, I am also proud to announce that we are fully staffed with all of our nurses in the Clark County School District, as well as our police officers. Our transportation, for our bus drivers, less than a or single digits—which over two years ago, we were in the hundreds. This year we are in single digits. This progress, I just give a huge shout out to our human resources team, who has worked diligently to make sure that people can see a path to becoming an educator, a bus driver, support staff professional—whatever it is that they choose within the Clark County School District.

The first day of school is my first day as Superintendent and running over 1,300 bus routes, moving over 120,000 children. We move over 120,000 children a day. That is large. That is not even the size of school districts across this nation. I am so very proud of this team. Amber Rideout is amazing, and her whole entire team. We had 98 percent bus routes running on time that first week, which is just phenomenal for that work. We shoot for 100 percent every single day, but very proud that they were at 90 percent, excuse me, 98 percent.

Also, our square footage. As the fifth largest school district in the nation, we have over, almost 40 million square feet in maintenance across all of our facilities and grounds. We have over 5,646 acres.

Also proud of our food service team. They feed not only our children each and every day, but they feed their souls. It is a wonderful team that works across the entire school district and serving over 42 million meals every single year.

Our Nevada Performance Framework, diving into the data—so those bus drivers, our food service, all of the people that make sure that the system runs well, helps dive into performance. Really proud that over 34 percent of our schools this last year improved their star ratings. We now have 48 five-star schools, and approximately 70 percent of our schools improved their overall NSPF [Nevada School Performance Framework] index score.

Every grade level, every single grade level had an increase in year over year change in English language arts, mathematics, science, and that is shown in the data. Really proud, our largest gain was 4.9 percentage points improvement in middle school English language arts proficiency.

Chronic absenteeism, as you can see here, we are in a downward trend. We specifically, so far this year, at 24.11 percent, continue to drive that down to zero. I am proud to share with you, not only the data from the prior school year, but where we are currently in this school year. This is our winter MAP [Measures of Academic Progress] data, and I am happy to report that you can see continued growth in mathematics and reading from just one year

ago. Every grade level is seeing steady increases and that is attributed to the great work of our educators in our classrooms. Making sure that we continue to have our children in our classrooms driving that chronic absenteeism data down, we have had over 43,000 home visits to our students, and we have had over 800 businesses participate with us.

I am really proud of our Bright Futures walk that we instituted this last school year. Two times a year we are going to visit homes. We have had our mayors join us, council members, elected officials, our own board members, myself, and Dr. Keating walking out into our neighborhoods asking what our families need to make sure that our children are attending school. I will tell you, at least for myself, it is not about the parents not wanting their children in school, it is about resources and other pieces that they need support with. You can see our Bright Futures partners here.

I will move on to our graduation rate, which I am really proud of the graduation rate, and the improvements that have been made. I am excited to see this year's data as well. Graduation rate, we are at 86.6 percentage points, that is a 5.1 percentage point increase in graduation, which is a record 23,443 students for the Class of 2025. When you break that data down and you look at the groups of students and the increases, you can see here that these groups of students made greater gains than the overall average of 5.1 percentage points. Again, it is resources. It is making sure that our students that have the steepest climb receive the resources that they deserve so they can achieve. I am just very, very proud of all of this data and our students, families, and our teammates.

Along with that graduation rate, more specifically, you can see here that two thirds of our high schools achieved a graduation rate of 90 percent or higher, five at 100 percent graduation. This links to a lot of the questions, or some of the questions that you were asking earlier. We had a record number, 7,011 graduates, who earned the college and career ready diploma. That is the most rigorous diploma that we have in the State of Nevada. Again, always driving, looking for that 100 percent rate, but this is phenomenal because of the requirements that they must have to earn that diploma.

Our Core Four, this year coming in, pre-kindergarten—you heard a lot about that already this morning, early literacy. Middle school mathematics, our mathematics achievement is not as high as our literacy achievement. We spent a lot of time talking about literacy, but we are not, we are actually farther behind in mathematics, so focusing there. Then, our workforce and college readiness. We need to really be proud as a state. Our dual credit enrollment has increased. We are actually the second highest increase across the entire United States for the State of Nevada—not just Clark County School District, but the entire State of Nevada. That is something to be proud of, as well as the increase in our AP [advanced placement] courses and our CTE courses. All of the workforce and college readiness pieces we focused on.

We know that so far that the progress that we made—again, great celebration—but we still need to make more improvements. We started with our 100-day plan this year, talked about our climate and culture, making sure that we are gathering community feedback as we develop our five-year strategic plan (Agenda Item VI D-2). If you would like to join us, those of you that are in Las Vegas, we do have a dream session this evening at Dr. Charles I. West Prep Academy. So building brighter futures as well, and we continue to move forward with our, and thankful to the Legislature as well there with our bonding, that we are able to make improvements to our physical locations and implement all of those pieces.

You can see here this last year—the team, all the, every single person. I receive emails quite often from folks that do not have children in our community right now, but they care

deeply about what is transpiring in the Clark County School District because they know that the success of our children right now—they are going to drive the economy forward. So making sure that I am engaged and out in our community with our nonprofit partners, our municipalities, meeting with all of our mayors across southern Nevada, they have been wonderful to work with, all of you, our school board of trustees, and our union leadership as well. I was proud to announce at the State of the District that we are also kicking off a specific parent group for special education parent alliance. So that we are listening directly to our parents and to help them shape and build out the future.

One of the questions that was asked of us also was the cell phone policy. I am proud to say that we also have a policy. It is our Revised Policy 5136, and it aligns with the requirements for our students placing, in the Clark County School District, in a nonlocking signal blocking pouch. We do provide those to our students. They either have them in the classroom on their desk or they are in their backpack. I have been in our classrooms, and the cell phones have been put away. This is actually the second year for the Clark County School District, and it has been working really well.

Moving into the challenges that you asked us to address, we are seeing increased gaps in our kindergarten readiness for our students, making sure that we have pre-K access. We also want to make sure that with that pre-K access that we are partnering with other entities. I just learned that United Way does have some pre-K seats available as we sit here today. So we want to expand our pre-K seats, but we also want to make sure our partners are expanding their seats as well.

As mentioned by my colleagues, the declining birth rates, increasing costs across all of the school districts, working out how the pupil-centered funding formula can level out those pieces of support. Being deeply involved prior to 2019, as well as post 2019 when the funding formula came into play. As mentioned by our colleague from Douglas, the 5 percent enrollment shift. Then, also leveling out the funding that comes in when we see these declines, I will just double down on what my colleagues have said there.

In closing, thank you for having us here this morning. I know there is other data that is made available for you from the Department of Education. If there is anything else that I can help you with. I am very thankful to work with 44,000 employees in the Clark County School District and partner with all of you and the entire community to lift up our students. I stand ready to answer any questions that you may have.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you so much, Superintendent Ebert. We applaud the great progress happening there in Clark, and it is a monster of a district. You are impacting a lot of students in a positive way. We do have a couple of questions. I am going to start with Assemblymember La Rue Hatch.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Thank you so much, Chair. Thank you, Superintendent, for being here. You touched on a lot of things that I wanted to ask about, and I appreciate the thoughtful and thorough presentation. I just wanted to touch on class size. I know we have the largest class sizes in the nation. I wondered what challenges you are seeing in Clark County and what can be done to address that issue?

***Superintendent Ebert:***

Thank you Assemblywoman La Rue Hatch. Those class sizes are linked directly to the funding that we have available to us. This is year 36 for me, so in year two, I actually myself had a pre-algebra class of 45. I can tell you that is not the case anymore anywhere in the Clark County School District. When you look back even a decade ago, we had much higher class sizes across the State of Nevada. They are lower, but they are still not where they need to be. I think trending, making sure that we watch all components of the funds that we receive and work together to drive those class sizes down are top of mind.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Just to clarify, though, the main thing we can do is to increase the per-pupil funding is what you are saying.

***Superintendent Ebert:***

Yes, that is in any other state that you look at, they receive much more funding, which then they can drive their class sizes down.

***Assemblymember Las Rue Hatch:***

Thank you so much, Chair.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Assemblymember. Assemblymember Mosca.

***Assemblymember Erica Mosca:***

Thank you so much, Chair. Thank you, Superintendent. I really commend you. I know you have been in the community. You have been talking to lots of folks. I also know that you are making sure you are transparent. I think you and your team have done a good job of talking about there are no budget cuts right now. That is not where we are, but there will most likely be some in the future.

I just wanted to ask about the approach, not potential solutions right now, but it is what we hear from constituents, and I know that you are being very thoughtful about how you are approaching it. I would love to hear how you may be approaching what may be coming for the budget in the future.

***Superintendent Ebert:***

Thank you, Assemblywoman Mosca, for that piece. First and foremost, being new to this position, I should not say first and foremost, but one lane that we are following, I did hire, the school board hired, a team to look at where we can gain efficiencies. They are currently going through, and across the entire system—which has not been done since 2011—an efficiency and operational study to look to see where, and they have already reported, which, you all know, is a place where we can do better too, is for Medicaid reimbursements. That is an area that if we expand that, if we even get $3 million more a year in reimbursements, then that can offset general fund. We can have more social workers, counselors, all of those pieces. One of the pieces is making sure that we are using the dollars that we have right now effectively, efficiently. That report should be done this summer.

The other piece is working with all of you and our entire community, making sure they are aware of the declining enrollment, but it is also declining birth rates. My graduating classes last year was 24,000 children, with a kindergarten class of 17,000 children. That is what is projected already for this fall as well—5,000 in one year, another 5,000 in another year, that is 10,000 students over two years. Seeing that trend, planning out ahead, working with all of you, and for the funding formula moving forward, there is no perfect funding formula, but if we can see the data and understand what is transpiring and listen to the great work that the Commission on School Funding has done, I think that will help the entire state, not just the Clark County School District.

***Assemblymember Erica Mosca:***

Thank you, Chair.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Assemblymember, and thank you, Superintendent. I see a question, Senator Rogich.

***Senator Rogich:***

Yes. Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Superintendent. I just have a quick question. Douglas and Elko mentioned a solution of modernizing the SPED funding to match delivery costs or actual costs. Is that something that CCSD is thinking about doing, or are you doing that already?

***Superintendent Ebert:***

The funding that we receive from the federal government and the state as well does not cover all of, as mentioned by my colleagues, does not cover all of their expenses. We do take from general fund to support our students with special needs. I think really working together, not only with the Legislature to make sure that the funds are made available for special education students, but also at the national level. At the national level, they fund only 12 to 13 percent, and it should be at 40 percent. I would even, I know they are not going to go to 40 percent right away, but the federal government needs to also shift the percentage of funding that they provide for our special education students.

***Senator Rogich:***

I see, thank you so much.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Senator. I know you are hanging in there. You are not feeling well. So we appreciate it. Thank you.

Other questions for Superintendent Ebert? I see our Vice Chair has a question.

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Thank you, Chair, and thank you for the presentation, Superintendent. It is great to see you and Dr. Keating. I had a list of ten questions for Dr. Keating, but fortunately you have answered most of them. I was just hoping that you could hit a little bit on the

implementation of AB 533, and what is left—where we are at right now, and then what is left to come ahead. Thank you.

***Superintendent Ebert:***

Thank you, Vice Chair Torres-Fossett. Specifically, in which component of 533 would you like me to address?

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

If you could just talk a little bit about the process and the applications, how it will look like moving forward. My understanding is that we have extended the ability for students to apply now, and they can participate even though I know the initial window ended sometime in early mid-January. So just talking about an update on where we are at with AB 533, and what open enrollment looks like for the future in CCSD.

***Superintendent Ebert:***

Great. Thank you. We have open enrollment within the Clark County School District, and that first round was made available to all of our families where there are seats available. So that first round actually closed in January, as you noted. Thank you. We will have another round that will open up for families on March 23 for the seats that are available after we, our magnet schools as well. After all of those seats have been identified, we will make them available. We are, that is for us going ahead and moving forward and trying to amplify. I will use this moment as well—that we do have open enrollment within the Clark County School District, elementary, middle, and high school availability with seats. Now, that being said, we are working with the Nevada's Department of Education on their regulations for the implementation of the transportation funding and other pieces. So we will be in alignment with the regulations once they are there, but we are not waiting for all of them to be codified to move forward with family choice within the Clark County School District.

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Thank you. Just as a quick note, because I have looked at the website too, and I am just hopeful that CCSD can maybe update that or provide a little clarity. I know it talks a little about the late application, but I have received quite a few different constituent questions about it, or families reaching out to me, just knowing I work in education, that are a little confused. Maybe the team can take a look at that and see how to better address that. I think that would be helpful. It talks a little bit about the lottery system, but because the January 13 day for the initial application, which had a really weird cutoff time, by the way, 3 p.m. cutoff time for application, it is very odd. But then it is kind of confusing, even for myself, so if you could add a little more in the future, that would be helpful.

***Superintendent Ebert:***

Yeah, we will take a look at that. Thank you for flagging that for us.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Vice Chair, and thank you, Superintendent Ebert and Dr. Keating—next time, do not speak so much. Seeing no further questions from the team at the Clark County School District, then we just thank you. Thank you for spending your time. Thank you for the update. Again, kudos on the great work, and I am sure we will see you at some point again, but we appreciate it. Thanks to you both.

***Superintendent Ebert:***

Thank you, Madam Chair.

***Chair Taylor:***

You bet. We will push forward to our last presentation. We know they have been hanging around and do not want to make them wait any longer. We will welcome Superintendent Ernst from the Washoe County School District to come forward, and then afterwards we will have our lunch break.

***Joseph M. Ernst, M.Ed., Superintendent, Washoe County School District:***

Good afternoon, Madam Chair. Thank you for having us here today. Joined, also today, by our Chief Financial Officer Mark Mathers. Our first couple of slides really are just an overview of our school district, the number of schools we have, the number of students, the number of languages spoken in our school district (Agenda Item VI E). As we also look forward, we are the 58th largest school district in the country, and you can see the number of square miles, the number of staff, and the number of meals we serve each day.

Going into the heart of our presentation is really centered on our strategic plan, which is really the north star of all the work that we are doing in the school district. Looking at our P5 foundational learning, really increasing extra and co-curricular opportunities for students, improving physical safety and belonging, strengthening our recruitment and retention throughout the organization, and expanding advanced coursework opportunities. Some of the work we are proud to share is around the investment we have made with our teachers in the science of reading. It is a comprehensive 60-hour training over two years' time. We now have close to 600 of our educators trained with the science of reading.

We continue to focus in our youngest grade, kindergarten, around chronic absenteeism. You can see that this fall, and we have tried to share up-to-date data with the Committee here, but we are just under 11 percent for chronic absenteeism with our kindergarten students. That is really some good progress that we are happy to share. We have implemented high-quality instructional materials through a new math adoption. [Inaudible] and what we are happy to see is that we [inaudible] some of that first-year implementation dip [inaudible] when we looked at our mid-year iReady scores. Finally, you can see that pre-K remains a focus of ours in the school district, serving over 1,500 pre-K students.

The data on the next two slides really speaks that we have made down in our earliest grades, kindergarten and first. What we are seeing is the percentage of students on grade level, as measured by iReady, last year that these were really good indicators in terms of Washoe County School District having historic gains in proficiency amongst all grade levels and ELA and math. You can see here, we are on target for continued growth in both ELA and math, math particularly incurred because of the adoption of a new math textbook.

Going on to Goal 2, really a focus of ours is about student engagement. There has been an historic investment from our board of trustees in making sure that we are expanding the number in our school district. We are very encouraged that last year was the first year we were able to begin making every student and every club that they belong to. That way, we have been able to see what that impact has been on their attendance and on their academic outcomes. We are very engaged in high school, that we see that students across all populations that are engaging in the clubs or the extracurricular activities, are showing improvements with chronic absenteeism and with their academic outcomes.

The next slide simply is a visual representation of that. Already this year, we have over 400 clubs, and that is a big increase compared to fall of last year. As we are all working to ensure safety is something that we are attending to, and so what we have done is now to secure perimeter fencing and single points of entries. We are also looking for other signs in our system that help us gain on people's sense of safety. In our most recent staff climates, 91 percent of our staff are feeling safe at school, and it the highest ever perception in Washoe County School District.

We are pleased that a few of the school districts have talked about school choice. We are in our third year of school choice. We continue to [inaudible] and we continue to see families, over 90 families, are getting their first, second, or sometimes [inaudible].

As we look at academic growth, as mentioned, we are very pleased as a school district. Our highest ever third-grade reading proficiency rate. We know that is a steppingstone to outcomes in the future. We reduced our number of one-star schools in elementary. We cut that number in half last year. We believe a lot of it had to do with our collateral model, which is a turnaround model for our lowest schools, making sure that we are providing adequate and additional supports for those schools to [inaudible] 50 percent of our collaborative [inaudible] in star rating. In fact, our collaborative schools actually outperformed the rest of the schools in the district.

As we continue to go forward, you can see again the students that increased in proficiency. These were the highest one-year gains that we have had as a school district. This has been the result of years of hard work and really a nice time to see that we are turning the pre-pandemic academic performance, turning the corner and actually performing above those levels now for the first time. We think a lot of this has to do with our certified staffing. As we go to Goal 4, you will see that our vacancy rates continue to decline. We have for [inaudible] innovative ideas around recruiting staff, and we have been really successful in eliminating the overall vacancy rate or reducing it. [Inaudible] of budget deficit. We were still able to compensate all of our employee group with a 2 percent COLA [cost-of-living adjustment. It really demonstrates our commitment to staff [inaudible] role that they play in moving student achievement and student outcomes forward.

Finally, as we look at and bring all learners, again, there has been exceptional work from Washoe County School District throughout the years. We can see last year 10,000 college credits were earned by over 36 [inaudible] students, really equating to about $3 million in estimated college tuition. We think that is a significant value for our students and for our families.

We continue to see the number of students participating in CTE expand, and our internships have now expanded to over 100 internships that we are participating and partnering local businesses to create learning away from the classroom and the job.

Some of you have had the opportunity to visit Debbie Smith CTE Academy. This is really the work of many, many years in our school, and a real celebration to the expansion of CTE is that we continue to have a greater and greater desire for CTE programming.

[Inaudible] data, 71 percent of our schools last year improved their star ratings. 35 percent of our schools are now five-star schools [inaudible] and what we proved chronic absenteeism. We have really focused on a commitment to making sure our students are attending, that behavior is improving, and we are seeing that is leading to improvements in academic outcomes.

Finally, as we look at our 2025 graduates, 67 percent have completed advanced courses, 47 percent earning AP [advanced placement], and 39 percent with dual credit. So we are really pleased to just have the opportunity to briefly share some of the progress that has been made in Washoe County School District relative to our strategic plan. With that, I will turnover the last few slides of the presentation to Chief Officer Mathers.

Mark, I think your microphone, you may want to just turn that on and I think we will be all set.

***Mark Mathers, Chief Financial Officer, Washoe County School District:***

Thank you, Joe. Just to quickly cover our funding challenges. Washoe County School District is no different than most of the districts in the state. We have seen enrollment decline, and so that has been a major issue we have had to confront in the last several budget cycles. There are two main drivers of some of the financial challenges we have had this biennium. First is the flat increases to our per-pupil funding. You can see for Fiscal Year 2026 we have an additional $3 per student, and for 2027 that is about a 0.75 percent increase in funding. Then, as we have talked about, our enrollment is declining based on lower birth rates in Washoe. Just to give you context, of those two issues, the greatest by far is the flat per-pupil funding. Even if we had not seen enrollment decline, our projected deficit for 2027 would have been greater than $10 million.

Of the two issues, that is our biggest and most immediate issue. At the right of this slide, we just wanted to, again, quantify the challenges we face, just to pin down definitional terms here. These were our projected deficits we saw during the budget process. During both Fiscal Year 2026 and 2027, we closed these deficits by doing some of the things here you can see, in terms of cost shifts, or certainly reductions. In the Fiscal Year 2027 budget, we reduced 48 central office positions. We will have a balanced budget in 2027, just like we have the last several years, but it is a large hill to overcome when we look at the lack of funding.

When we look at reductions in Washoe, what guides us here is this hierarchy of needs. We want to avoid at all costs impacting our school sites, if at all possible. For example, in Fiscal Year 2027 we looked at centrally budgeted positions only when making reductions. The business office, human resources, and our IT [information technology] departments were reduced by 10 percent each to get to where we needed to go. We are proud that we did not end any of the supports and investments we made in the prior biennium that led to the academic results that Superintendent Ernst went over. I do not know how much longer we can do that, though, if we see continued flat funding from the state.

In terms of potential solutions, I think you have heard earlier this morning a lot of discussion about pre-K, special education, and weighted funding, so I will not belabor those. The one largest factor, again, that drives our general fund budget is our base per-pupil amount. Unless per-pupil amount increases, consistent with inflation, we will continue to have projected deficits, and we will need to make the level of reductions again in the next several years.

Last bullet points here just talk about, again, maybe a possible bridge funding solution for school districts that have declining enrollment. I know a lot of agencies and a lot of commissions are looking at the issue of declining enrollment and how to help school districts. Maybe one potential idea would be to create a revolving loan program, or something of that nature, with some strings attached for districts to make sure they are

properly projecting enrollment and taking the necessary actions to maintain financial soundness.

With that, I think that concludes my comments. Chair, if Superintendent Ernst wants to make any concluding statements.

***Superintendent Ernst:***

Thank you, Mark, very much. Appreciate, again, the opportunity to share this information with the Committee. I am certainly open to answering any questions that there may be.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Mr. Mathers and Superintendent Ernst. We do have a couple of questions, and so I will go to Assemblymember La Rue Hatch to get us started.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Thank you so much, Chair, and thank you for being here on our snow day today. My question might be more appropriate for Mr. Mathers. I have seen in all these presentations this issue of declining enrollment, and I know in our per-pupil funding formula that per-pupil amount is supposed to follow the students, so if they leave Washoe County and they go to Clark County, it goes with them. If they leave Washoe County School District, they go to a charter, it goes with them. But when these students are not enrolling in the first place because our demographics are changing, what happens to the money then? Let us say we set our budget and we plan for there to be a million students this year in Nevada, and then only 800,000 enroll. Does that extra 200,000 just sit in an account? Does it increase the amount of money you get per pupil? What happens in that situation?

***Mr. Mathers:***

That is a really great question. I think if we saw something like that happen, as long as revenues continue to track to the budgeted amounts in the state budget, that would indicate there is more funding available to redistribute to school districts based on actual enrollment. Again, the key area or assumption there is that revenues are performing and tracking according to budget.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

If, though, let us say we allocate a billion dollars to schools for this year and then the enrollment is less than we expect, are we then recalculating and giving you more money per pupil, or because it is in between legislative sessions, are we just holding it in an account and then maybe allocating it next biennium?

***Mr. Mathers:***

My understanding is it is the latter. This is a state budgeting question, probably, that the state would be in a better position to answer. My understanding is there is no way to, midway through the biennium, reallocate that funding.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Now that we are seeing these declining enrollments, that we are seeing a real time impact of that is what you are seeing. That part of why we are seeing all these budget deficits in all these school districts.

***Mr. Mathers:***

I think enrollment is one aspect. Again, though, if our per-pupil amount is not tracking with inflation, we have to pay our employees a livable wage and offer cost-of-living adjustments, as well as funding step increases in health insurance. If the per-pupil amount is tracking at less than 1 percent, there is no way we can make our budget work without reductions.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

You never have to convince me that we have to increase our per-pupil amount. I am there with you, and I appreciate you so much.

***Mr. Mathers:***

Thank you.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Mr. Mathers and Assemblymember. Are there any other questions for the team from Washoe? Seeing none. Superintendent Ernst, thank you so much for being here Mr. Mathers. I know it is a snow day in Washoe, but I know that means more students and teachers than it does administrative staff. But thank you nonetheless for being here. We appreciate it. We appreciate the information, and I know we will see you soon.

***Superintendent Ernst:***

Thank you.

***Chair Taylor:***

All right, everyone, we will take a— I know there is a little bit of a walk to get something to eat there in Las Vegas, so we will, let us take a, we will call it 12:45. Let us come back at 1:20, a little bit over 30 minutes. Then we will get started. We still have three presentations before us, and we will get started with Mr. McNair from NSHE. Thank you, everyone. We will see you back in 30 minutes.

## AGENDA ITEM VII—PRESENTATION ON THE STATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NEVADA

***Chair Taylor:***

All right, looks like down south is ready, and I am hoping everyone is back behind the names on Zoom. Why do we not go ahead and get started. We have presenters who have been waiting, and we want to get staff out of the room and back home, especially here up north. Let us go ahead and jump in. Mr. McNair, Chancellor McNair, I hope that you are there and ready to come forward. We are ready for your presentation from NSHE. I see the Chancellor coming forward and some team members hustling to get into positions. Mr. Chancellor, please go ahead whenever you are ready, sir.

***Matt McNair, J.D., Chancellor, NSHE:***

Thank you, Chair, nice to see you. Good afternoon, everybody. Great to see you. I am going to see here if I can start the presentation. Can you all see that? There it is. Thank you.

***Chair Taylor:***

We can see it, but it is not in the screen share mode.

***Chancellor McNair:***

Let us see. Any ideas?

***Chair Taylor:***

It was there, then it was gone again. No, it just looks like one of the—

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Hang on, Chair. We are going to see if we can pull in a phone, a friend.

***Chancellor McNair:***

I am working really hard to make it look good. I am just sitting here.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Screens look great, Dr. McNair.

***Chancellor McNair:***

Thank you so much. I worked hard on these. Actually, a lot of people did work hard on them.

***Chair Taylor:***

Certainly. Well, we are waiting for the phone a friend down there. Just so you know, I looked at the weather. It says it feels like 14 up here, just thought I would share that.

***Chancellor McNair:***

It has got to be close to 60 here and I did see people walking around the parking lot in winter coats and scarves.

***Chair Taylor:***

That is so Vegas.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Will it make you feel better if I tell you it is going to be 38 tomorrow night?

***Chair Taylor:***

I have got to be there Thursday. No, I do not want that.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Thursday it is 34 is a low.

***Chair Taylor:***

That is legitimately chilly—34 is legitimately chilly.

***AVH:***

Excuse me, Chair. Can you currently see the presentation slides?

***Chair Taylor:***

I can see the slide in a box, but I cannot see it from a screen share.

***AVH:***

All right, please stand by as we troubleshoot. Just one moment.

***Chair Taylor:***

Others on Zoom, can you see it like a screen share? I still see the whole gallery.

***Senator Donero Loop:***

We can see two screens, the whole screen share, and the middle screen has some interesting decoration thing on it. A picture.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

I think, Chair, if you click "View" up at the top, you can select "Speaker," and then I think it might make it larger rather than gallery.

***Chair Taylor:***

No, I have— yeah, I know how to work that. Thank you. I have that. It does not— it could just be on my end. I have a speaker. It is in one of the boxes as though Zoom is one of the people, but it is not, you know, when you do a screen share, it takes over your whole screen here.

***AVH:***

The presentation is being run from the room, so that is different than how you would view it if it is being run from Zoom. But you can change your view to speaker, and then it should show bigger for you once the speaker is speaking.

***Chair Taylor:***

It is on my end. It is on speaker, but it is not showing, it is not switching over. But that is okay. I have it open in front of me anyway. I just wanted to make sure that everybody could see that, so that is fine. It is probably on my end. It is on speaker, but it still is not showing that way. I see Zoom as my speaker, so clearly it is on my end, but I have a slide so let us go forward. Thank you, everybody. Whenever you are ready, Chancellor.

***Chancellor McNair:***

Do you want me to just talk? I guess people have physical copies of the slides, right? Then we will get started. It is there?

***Chair Taylor:***

It is there. It is showing from the room. It is showing a little differently, and eventually it could just be my system. Sometimes it is slow, so eventually switch over to. But I have the slide, so we are good. Thank you.

***Chancellor McNair:***

I will go ahead and get started then. But again, great to see you all. We do have representatives here from each institution in case there are campus specific questions.

Who are we? We are eight institutions lining for students across the State of Nevada (Agenda Item VII). We are 13 elected regents, 8 presidents, serving 115,000 students, promoting access, affordable education, and social mobility. Our goal is to make sure that every student in Nevada has access to information that they can access higher education. We want them to access that higher education, and we want to help them get a good job.

Our strategic plan—and if you cannot see it on slide 6—our strategic plan focuses on access, student success, closing performance gaps, alignment with the needs of Nevada's workforce, research impact, and accountability.

Who are we serving? Students, of course. Now, on slide 8, you can see that enrollment dipped after COVID, or during COVID, but we are now back to pre-pandemic levels. This does not mean that we are immune, of course, from the enrollment cliff that the rest of the country is facing. It is probably going to come to us a little bit later over the course of the next decade than it is just hitting the rest of the country. But we will be seeing the impact of that, presumably.

Here you can see the headcount distribution for each of our institutions on slide 9. In slide 10 here, this is by credit load. You can see that our four-year institutions are primarily full-time students, while the other institutions are lots of part-time students who are either working or are caregivers. Eighteen- to 24-year-olds, that is still the age range that we serve primarily. But you can see that there are a number of other people who we serve, and it has been trending younger more recently because of the focus on dual and concurrent enrollment.

You can see here that the demographics of our institutions basically mirror what is happening across the state. We are also seeing national trends, or seeing our state follow national trends, that most of the students on each of our campuses are female. That was slide 13.

Dual and concurrent enrollment—I am sure you are all familiar with this. Concurrent enrollment is when the high school students take classes at their high school with teachers who are certified to teach classes at the college level. Then dual enrollment is when high school students come to the college campuses to take those classes. You can see here that College of Southern Nevada has historically been the biggest provider, but that UNR and NSU [Nevada State University] are catching up and increasing their partnerships a lot in the last few years.

Slide 16, here you can see that the dual and concurrent enrollment also tends to mirror the demographics of the state. This shows the results for people that do participate in dual and concurrent enrollment, it is one of the most effective tools that we have for improving college participation. Students that have dual and concurrent enrollment classes are more than twice as likely to continue their higher education, and it significantly reduces costs for the students.

Pell Grants, as you know, serve our low-income students—oh, it came up there on the main screen—40 percent, nearly 40 percent, of all students within the NSHE system receive Pell funds. What this means is that nearly 80 percent of the costs at UNR and UNLV are covered, and more than 100 percent of the cost at Nevada State and the community colleges are covered. Now, the challenge with that—I went too fast— the challenge with that is that even if students, and actually a lot of our students, have all of their fees and tuition covered, the challenge is that the cost of living has gone up a lot for everything else. Whether they are in school for two years or for four years, even if they have no fees and tuition expenses, they still have other living expenses, which make it challenging for our students to make it through.

Now, you all are familiar, I am sure, with the state-supported financial aid programs. You, the Legislature, and the Regents have all done great work over the last decade or more to make education affordable in Nevada. These really highlight the students that benefit from the work that you all have done and the Regents have done.

The fee waiver program, we serve active-duty service members, foster youth, Native American students, National Guard, and Purple Heart recipients. We have received approximately $457,000 since 2023 to partially defray the cost of these. I know this is not a money committee, but I would be remiss if I did not say that this is putting a strain on the system, particularly in the self-supporting programs, which are at risk from people over-enrollment now in these programs.

How are we doing? These three-year graphs do not tell the whole story. If you could see the ten-year graphs, you can see that our graduation rates are rising consistently. These are first-time, full-time, degree-seeking students that graduate within six years. The community college rates are different, of course, because they serve a different population. The most note noteworthy thing here, and again, you cannot see it based on CSN [College of Southern Nevada] because it is only three years, but CSN 20 years ago had approximately barely over a 1 percent graduation rate, and they are now consistently, even with their peers, closer to 20 percent graduation.

Graduation plus transfer-out is actually a more useful metric for us, because if students attend a community college, but leave and transfer out before they get a degree, we still consider that a success. This is actually the metric that we look at more often than not.

We began implementing programs for math and English corequisite programs in 2021. They have been a significant success. In math alone, the corequisite completion rates have gone from 16 percent to 58 percent. We also joined the national Launch Years Initiative to refine math pathways, with a goal of better alignment with our K–12 partners.

Credit for Prior Learning—this is a program that our Regents approved last summer. You can see that we are aligning here with 88 standard exams across the country to give people credit for education and training that they have received outside of the educational setting. There are 321,000 adults in Nevada who have some college experience, but do not have a degree. Our adult degree attainment rate is 11 percent below the national average so we

are prioritizing credit for prior learning to give people credit for things like military training. Because if they do get credit for that prior learning, they are 17 percent more likely to receive a credential.

We are working to modernize concurrent and dual enrollment here. We joined the Align and Shine Nevada, which is a collaboration between NSHE and our K–12 leaders across the state to align those programs with national best practices to make sure that the students have the same learning outcomes and assignments, the same assessments, grading, and academic calendars.

We are trying to make it easier for students to transfer within NSHE institutions as well. Right now, a lack of clarity and alignment within the system around general education makes it harder for students to transfer. It means that they end up getting excess credits and have to pay more. We are really trying hard to make it easier for students to transfer within NSHE system or within NSHE institutions.

I am sure you are all familiar with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), our biggest challenge here is awareness. We rank 47$^{th}$ nationally in FAFSA completion, and only 43 percent of students in Nevada complete the FAFSA forms. We know that FAFSA is proven to boost enrollment and help people receive financial aid. Students that complete the FAFSA form are 84 percent more likely to access higher education, and lower-income students are 127 percent more likely to receive financial aid if they fill out the form. The Nevada FAFSA Challenge is driving improvement through school-level engagement. Last year, the Mineral County High School was the inaugural winner of the program, and they increased FAFSA completion by 53.1 percent compared to the prior year

I just want to give a quick update on some of the bills that you all passed in the last session. AB 345 was for the data dashboard and the financial and food insecurity study. The work is underway. The final meeting of that committee is actually happening on April 8, after which we will deliver a final report and presentation to the Committee.

AB 567 was the emergency response plan for the opioid emergency response plan. Every campus is either actively executing or adopting a plan for opioid emergencies, including emergency planning, training, Narcan availability, and safety kits.

SB 165 was the $6.4 million investment in behavioral health to create a new professional certification, which is going to focus on early identification and prevention, not just crisis response. This will align licensure, education, and supervision into a coordinated pipeline.

SB 322 is ongoing professional development for the Regents through education and training. This is something that we have been focused on even before this bill was passed. Just last year, our Regents attended completion, or completed education, covering open meeting laws and ethics; roles and responsibility of Regents and the Chancellor; NSHE funding formula and the biennial budget process; enrollment trends; financial aid; federal policy changes; data dashboards; and NIL [Name, Image, and Likeness] developments. Carol Del Carlo is currently the national Chair of the Association of Community College Trustees, and many of our Regents participate in national organizations around higher education. They are also part of the regional accreditation site visits as part of institutional evaluations.

SB 498 was the nursing expansion. That was $10 million for each year of the biennium and has led to hiring new faculty and staff, equipment, and partnerships.

Final thought—our biggest challenge, we believe, is the is the 43 percent FAFSA completion rate. Because 70 percent of the students who do not complete that form think that they cannot afford college, and that is just not true. Higher education in Nevada is affordable and accessible for almost everybody. We are going to be working very hard to increase awareness about financial aid because, like I said, you all have done, and the Governor has done, and the Regents have done, a lot of work to make college and higher education in all forms very accessible and affordable.

The Lumina Foundation recently released a report that said that Nevada is dead last among the United States, in the United States, when it comes to the percentage of the population who have earned a credential of value after high school. This is a challenge that we must overcome. We have to increase those rates. We look forward to working with all of you and the state agencies and our K–12 partners to do that. Happy to answer any questions if you have any.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you so much, Chancellor McNair. I appreciate the presentation, and I appreciate the highlight of needing to get more students into college. Our college-going rate has been low for quite a while, and so the connection to FAFSA makes a lot of sense. Hopefully that can be part of a solution to encourage more, especially those low-income students who do not think it is possible. The FAFSA did help me.

We do have some questions from Committee members. We are going to start with Assemblymember La Rue Hatch.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Thank you, Chair and thank you so much for the presentation. My question is on the transfer credit—I think slide 29 of your presentation. One of the questions I consistently have about our dual credit programs is whether or not students can transfer those elsewhere. Because whether folks like the AP exams or not—and I think there are a lot of problems with them—we could at least predict where they could take those credits and how they would apply and what classes they would apply to. One of the biggest questions I have is if a student is not staying in the NSHE system, can they take those dual credits with them? Or if someone completes at a community college here and then moves to another state, what work is being done to ensure that all of our credits are transferable outside of Nevada?

***Chancellor McNair:***

My understanding is that those credits are transferable. You might be able to see on the screen, and I am going to look behind me to see if anybody on my team disagrees with me.

Renée Davis is on Zoom if she wants to jump in, if I got any of that wrong.

***Renée Davis, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, NSHE:***

Thank you, Chancellor. Yes, you are correct. The credits, college credits, are on a college-level transcript and are, by and large, transferable outside the state, throughout the nation. I would be remiss, however, if I did not mention that there are some Ivys that do not accept any high school credit, or any college credit earned while the student is still enrolled in high school. I think those are few and far between, but I have seen certain institutions, such as Penn [Pennsylvania State University]—so there are a couple out there.

But, by and large, it appears on a college transcript. It is transferable pretty widely through public institutions throughout the nation.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Just to follow up, then, do those schools that are not taking those dual enrollment credits, are they accepting AP credits, or are they not accepting anything that a student got through a high school course?

***Ms. Davis:***

The research that I have done has not been extensive, but I have seen that those institutions will accept a AP.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Perfect. Thank you. Then, Chair, I have a second question, if I might.

***Chair Taylor:***

Yes, but before you jump on, I do have another member with a related question to dual credit. We are going to go to Senator Dondero Loop, and then we will jump right back to you, Assemblymember, if that is okay?

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Beautiful.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Thank you very much, Chair. Everybody that knows me knows that I am always beating a dead horse on the dual credit, and unfortunately, I am going to beat it again. Because I know several children, several young students, I should say, that have done dual credit and they are not getting credit. The other thing is they get the dual credit and they think when they go to college, it is only a two-year stint, and it is not. Can you talk about that a little bit, because that has, I literally could name five kids right off the top of my head right now that are in that position. They all have a high school degree. They all have an AA [Associate of Arts] degree. They have all gone to college. They have got there, and they are being told it will take them three and a half years to finish, or they have been put in a third-year biology class, which they are not ready for. Some of them went out of state, and those dual credits were not accepted. That has been my experience. I have not had anybody say to me, this is the best thing that ever happened, yet.

***Chancellor McNair:***

I will probably let Renée jump in as well. After you and I had coffee, that was something we started looking into, and I am trying to determine if that is something, there was a specialized degree, and maybe the Gen Ed [General Education] requirements did not apply because they took some different classes.

Renée, do you have an idea? I mean, I know we are looking into it.

***Ms. Davis:***

Honestly, I think that those situations may be very individualized, and I would love to dig into those further because we definitely want to get to the bottom of that.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

All I can say is okay. I will just tell you that has been, like I said, my experience. I can tell you, like I said, that I know all of these kids personally or through a personal relationship, and that is not what I am hearing. That does not mean there are some that do not get to do that. But I was talking with somebody recently about it, and this person has a lot of educational background, and they said, "Yeah, that happened to my son too. He went out of state, and they were not accepted."

***Chris Heavey, Ph.D., Interim President, UNLV:***

Senator Dondero Loop, If I could—

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Yes, please.

***Interim President Heavey:***

I have two children who went out of state, and were in one of those situations. Some universities are extremely particular, so each one is a complex story. There are definitely universities, as Vice Chancellor Davis said, who accept no credits from anything, including AP. Our kids were in that situation when they went to college, would have had two years of credit had they gone instate. There is also the sequencing of courses required for degrees, so you might have the credits in order to reach the 120. If you are going for something like an engineering degree, there is a specific sequences of courses that need to be completed because of the prerequisite chain. Some of those prerequisite chains might not be completable in two years. It is very complicated.

What I will say is the Nevada System of Higher Education is highly coordinated amongst ourselves, and that it does not happen within the state. Our credits count at our institutions. They are interchangeable among the institutions. I think we have built a very good system in Nevada, but we cannot control what happens in other states, and some private universities do not take any of it, as you noted.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Thank you.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Senator, and thank you, Mr. President, for coming forward. We do have a few more questions on dual credit, so we will stay in that vein before we move forward. Thank you, Ms. Davis, for jumping in. We will go to Assemblymember Torres-Fossett. Vice Chair?

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Chancellor, for being here with us today. It is great to see you again. I wanted to ask about the difference in the types of programming, just because I

know that we have seen them increase in dual enrollment programs, and I really think that a lot of that would not be possible without other institutions stepping up to the plate and starting to provide some of these dual enrollment opportunities or concurrent enrollment opportunities. I was wondering if you could talk about how the programs differ, why a school might choose to go with a different program than what a different high school in the community might use.

***Chancellor McNair:***

Sure. I could give you an answer, but there is almost certainly a better answer from somebody behind me so I am going to look to see if one of the institutions that is actually working on those partnerships wants to take a stab at that. Here comes President Heavey again.

***Interim President Heavey:***

Thank you for that question. As you probably are aware, the Nevada System of Higher Education has been on a journey, maybe over the last five years, to create more standardization in the dual enrollment space. During that time, there was some substantial differences in the nature of the particular programs that were offered by different colleges and universities that sometimes led to some high schools wanting to pick a particular college or university to provide their offerings, and we have moved toward greater standardization. One of the most common reasons that schools chose different institutions is because of the programs that they had to qualify high school teachers. Some schools were leaning on high school teachers who required a master's degree in a particular discipline in order to be qualified as someone to teach the dual enrollment course in the high school, whereas other institutions were creating greater supports and accepting people who did not have their master's degrees. There were also different levels of stipends being provided. But the system has moved over the last year or so to create much greater standardization to make sure that all high schools are getting what they need from the institutions who are serving them.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, President Heavey. I do see—

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

I was going to just comment that I—

***Chair Taylor:***

If you want to follow up, Assemblymember, but I do see the Provost from the University of Nevada, Reno, who wants to chime in on the response. Perhaps let us hear from him first because he may answer your question. Dr. Thompson.

***Jeff Thompson, Ph.D., Executive Vice President and Provost, UNR:***

Thank you, Chair, and thank you for the question. Certainly, I would start with, in our state, there has been a lot of unmet need, and I think a lot of institutions have come in by invitation to schools. As President Heavey, has said, we are much more coordinated and working through the Nevada System of Higher Education and through the Chancellor's office to make sure we are meeting the need of the students in our state. We are also working very hard, and this comes out of the working group that was from the State Board of

Education and NSHE, to have standards across our system. The standards are informed by the guidelines from a national crediting body, NACEP—the National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships—which I think is a great opportunity for all of us to work together to make sure that we have a national leader in concurrent enrollment across the state.

We continue to work with our partners at NSHE, but also work with our school districts to try and meet need, depending on what types of courses the school districts need and what NSHE institution has them available. Again, I think we are still learning from each other and making a lot of progress, and I think this is something that we can all be proud of, but we still have work to do.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Provost Thompson. I want to go back to Assemblymember Torres-Fossett. You wanted to follow up? You are good.

***Vice Chair Torres-Fossett:***

I am good. I was just going to note that the Provost was on. Thank you.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you so much. I appreciate that. Senator Rogich, I know you have a question.

***Senator Rogich:***

Thank you, Chair. I would like to go back to one of the slides. It is on page 26, and it is with regard to gateway math. It is a two-part question. The first one is, are there any high school students enrolled in the dual enrollment courses that are being placed into or receiving instruction in gateway or remedial math or English courses?

***Chancellor McNair:***

I do not believe that would happen. If Renée wants to jump on, she probably has a more informed answer.

***Ms. Davis:***

I believe you are asking if students take a dual enrollment course and then they continue to college and have to take a concurrent enrollment. Is that the question, Senator?

***Senator Rogich:***

I am wondering if you are able to notice if they need some form of remediation. The child enrolls in a dual enrollment course, and you are noticing that they are struggling in math. Are you providing any type of remediation to help them come up to speed so that they can continue with the dual enrollment?

***Ms. Davis:***

Thank you. I actually would have to defer to the institutions on this. We do not have data at that level currently. I do not know if Prevost Thompson is able to respond to that. Perhaps, I know they teach a lot of the gateway English and math courses at the high schools.

***Senator Rogich:***

It just leads to my next question, actually, and maybe that could be easier to answer. Is if you do have any data on the amount of high school students that require remediation courses. So they graduate high school, they apply to UNLV or UNR or one of the other colleges in the state, and you are noticing that they need remediation courses in order to take a college-level English or math course. I am just trying to see where the gap is, and if it can be identified early. If you have kids that do qualify for dual enrollment, but they may struggle a little bit with an algebra concept, is that something that you can assist with?

***James Mccoy, Ph.D., Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs, CSN:***

Senator Rogich. In a prior life, I served as the Associate Vice Chancellor for NSHE in the context of implementation around corequisite gateway math and gateway English sustainability across the state. What I can tell you is—in terms of the Nevada System of Higher Education Board of Regents policy around gateway math and English—it does allow, in fact encourages in that policy language for NSHE institutions, to provide the right type of mathematics and the right type of English in high school. In fact, the policy generally says that any kind of remediation, so that below 100-level English or below 100-level math, ought to be happening in high school. Students are put into a placement paradigm where we are matching student aptitude in mathematics and aptitude in English and reading, and appropriately aligning the remedial or gateway math or English class that is applicable for that student's aptitude. By design, then, if the student is falling short in preparation for mathematics college-level or English college-level, then we are wrapping around them in a dual credit scenario, in a remediation circumstance, to make sure that when they do graduate from high school, they are ready for college gateway math and college gateway English following the conclusion of high school. I hope that is helpful.

***Chair Taylor:***

Senator Rogich, did that— Please go ahead.

***Senator Rogich:***

Thank you. I appreciate the answers.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Chair, can I jump in real quick and ask a follow-up on that?

***Chair Taylor:***

Absolutely. Senator, go ahead.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Dr. McCoy, do not go anywhere. With that being said, how do we ascertain that if they need remediation, or they come in and they are in a class— Talk us through that a little bit. Because especially in a, well I should not say especially, I think in all higher ed, you could go into CSN or TMCC [Truckee Meadows Community College], whatever it is, Great Basin, and you could think you can do English, whatever, and find out you cannot. The same with math. It does not matter whether it is a four-year college or a four-year university or a community college atmosphere. Can you talk us through a little bit how we ascertain those kids and how we get them the help they need?

***Dr. Mccoy:***

Senator Dondero Loop, great question. Two parallel pathways on this that I want to respond to your question on. One is in the context of dual enrollment, so a high school student that is participating in college-level coursework, particularly in math or English. Then, I also want to speak broadly to your question in terms of they are out of high school now, in some cases have been out of high school for many years, and then coming back into particularly that math pathway is daunting for a lot of adults.

In the first pathway, around the high school student, particularly as it relates to dual enrollment. A student, despite their desire to get into, say college algebra, if they are not ready for college algebra, we are not going to put them into a college algebra course for dual enrollment. They are going to take a placement assessment to ensure that where they are at in that moment of understanding of mathematics, in this example. They are going to get into a class that matches their aptitude. But it gets a little trickier, Senator Dondero Loop, when we are talking about general population of students after high school, particularly for the community colleges. As the Chancellor's report just noted, the age demographic of our students coming into the community colleges is a lot further along after high school. The math leakage, if you will, from high school to the point by which they are entering into college has happened. Time has happened.

The Board of Regents, it was also a slide in the Chancellor's report, put together a corequisite math and English policy, contemplated in 2019, firmly implemented in 2021. What the corequisite English and mathematics policy requires the NSHE colleges and universities to do, is to provide just-in-time "remedial support" in a college credit-bearing class. But it is far more seat time. It is far more intrusive in the context of what an individual student needs in that moment. Instead of a three-credit college algebra course, that is traditional gateway math, it is a five or six-credit corequisite course, where they are going to get the three credits of college algebra, but they are also going to get two to three more credits of just in time support that is nuanced that each and every one of those individual students. Those are open entry, and that is why I said it gets really complicated really quick. Sure, we celebrate a significant success rate in the corequisite model that the Chancellor talked about, going from single-digit success to 55-plus percent success. But 45 percent are still not getting through. It is a significant uptick, but we are still not quite there yet. But that is the design around that coreq [corequisite] space, is getting the right student in the right math at the right moment with the right support to make sure that we can get them across the finish line.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

I appreciate that, and that is kind of where I was going. Because in the higher education space, the age and maturity level even can be so diverse. You can have somebody going back to high school, or going back to your second degrees, you can have people going, deciding to change, shift jobs and going to CSN to become whatever. So they may not have the same level of experience as we have in a K–12 system, where everybody is a certain age when they are at a certain spot. I appreciate that.

Thank you for being here, Dr. McCoy, and thank you for what you do. I know that probably putting students on the right path is not an easy job when you are in a secondary, like I said, situation where we have all different kinds of experiences and levels of understanding. I may think I am a great math student, but I may get there and find out I am not. I appreciate that. Thank you very much, and thank you, Madam Chair, for letting me jump in.

***Chancellor McNair:***

Senator and Chair, if I could add one more thing, I just want to make sure everybody knows this is not just a Nevada phenomenon. This is a nationwide issue, and I think there will be a lot of factors.

***Chair Taylor:***

I am sorry, I am going to jump in and just remind you, give us your name when you speak. I know it is awkward, but yes. Thank you so much. Please, go ahead, Mr. Chancellor. That is okay. Thank you.

***Chancellor McNair:***

Like I said, this is a nationwide issue. It is not a Nevada issue. There have been a few articles that I have seen recently about UCSD [University of California, San Diego] in San Diego. It is a very good institution. They are having a big issue, just like we are, with a significant number of students—not just adults who have taken ten years off and might have forgotten—but directly from high school who are going into these coreq classes. I just want to make sure we know this is not a Nevada thing. I have already talked to the superintendents about how we can work with them to address this, but it is a nationwide issue.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

That is really important that we do, not only for the success of students but for the success of our institutions. I remember way back, because I can go back a few years in the history of Nevada, when somebody I know was a regent, Ms. Turner in the audience. I remember when you could not transfer from UNR to UNLV and take credits. They did not transfer across lines. I heard that same thing this morning in the presentation. I was kind of surprised to hear that we still could not transfer credits, because I remember that specifically being worked on, I would say, in the nineties, late nineties of some sort. I am glad that we are still working on that. I was just surprised to hear that as well.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Senator, and thank you, Mr. Mccoy, and thank you, Mr. Chancellor. I would agree that the matriculation amongst our schools in our state, we certainly want to make sure we get that worked out because we know we are one of those states where our students do that often. We certainly want to encourage them on their path so that they will keep going. Thank you for working on the corequisites. Even though it is a longer class, that has been a conversation of the remediation from students one way or another. The more we can do with that, the better.

I do know Assemblymember Mosca has several questions. Assemblymember, thank you for your patience. Please go ahead.

***Assemblymember Erica Mosca:***

Thank you so much, Chair. First, I want to welcome the Chancellor. This is his first ever meeting in the Legislature, so thank you. I really appreciate my colleagues talking about questions around the P20 system and how we are making sure it is efficient for students. I have some questions for the system itself. First, we all know what has been in the news. We really appreciate all the institutions working very hard to try to shield our students as much

as we can. I know that in the Committee that we had from last session, we have really been talking about funding formulas. You can see in K–12 that was here before, everybody has the same language when they talk about we have the Commission on School Funding. We know where we are trying to get with funding, and we know where people are trying to advocate for. Would love just to know what is the update on what we are trying to do to revamp the funding, to know what we want potentially for the state impact to be, and to just hear more about that on the record today.

***Chancellor McNair:***

Sure. Thank you. Yes, we started working on the budget last fall and thought we were getting a nice head start on it. Then we had some issues come up that derail us, but we are catching up now and getting back on track. We are working with some outside consultants, who you probably know, Applied Analysis, to help us put together a formula. Right now, we are looking largely at keeping the existing corpus of funding the same and then adding a new formula for any additional funds that would come in. Because we want each institution to be held harmless, essentially, for what has happened in the past, and that fixed amount that we have gotten so far. We will be working over the next several months with LCB, the Governor's office, and the presidents, of course, to talk about what that formula would look like and make sure that every one of our institutions can live with it and benefits from it.

The colleges, I know, were particularly hard hit the last couple of years so we want to make sure that the colleges get what they need because the workforce development and CTE work that they are doing is really important to diversifying the economy. We are, in the next, I would say, four months, going to be spending a lot of time working on that formula. I have seen a preview of it. I could not really explain it in detail. Applied Analysis is going to help us do that. Then, like I said, talk to the presidents about that and then eventually make a presentation to all of you.

***Assemblymember Erica Mosca:***

Thank you. Yes, I think that is very helpful. I think the more shared language that we can all use around what is adequate, what is optimal, just like they have in the K–12 sense, all my colleagues that worked on that way before I was here, I mean, I think it has really helped move, and I know that could help with higher education.

Would love to also, I know you talked about enrollment numbers and how it may hit us later, would love to just know, because when I am talking to students, it is the issues that they are talking about really have to do with what is happening at the federal level, with federal cuts, what are happening with the diversity programs that we have had for a long time that now the federal issues are impacting, and then what we really think the impacts of the increase in tuition may be.

***Chancellor McNair:***

There is a lot there, so if I missed part of it, you can remind me. I guess starting with the federal piece, that is something that we are keeping a very close eye on. Going back, I guess, close to a year now, it looked like there was a lot of our funding that was going to be at risk. Thankfully, we did not lose as much federal funding as we thought we might. The challenge has been not the loss of funding. It has been the disruption and the distraction from the fear around whether those programs would go away, because many of the programs that we thought would go away ended up remaining. That has been one of the challenges, is just the ongoing distraction and trying to conduct ourselves in a way

where we are following state law and federal law and the *Constitution* so that we are assured that we are not going to be a target for any funding cuts. We just want to play by the rules, keep our heads down, keep teaching students, keep doing research, and stay off the radar essentially because we are doing our jobs.

The enrollment, I guess the first part of the question was, I think we have benefited from a lot of in-state migration. We are still in the top ten states for people moving here, thankfully, and that has helped us. But in the next ten years, we expect that the enrollment cliff actually might start to affect us. We are going to be talking with the president about how to deal with that. Obviously, we want to continue to target more students and look for nontraditional students and adult learners in ways that we might be able to bolster our enrollment numbers, but also be prepared if the enrollment cliff does hit us. How we are going to be responding to that for staffing levels and all sorts of different things, but be prepared if and when that comes.

***Assemblymember Erica Mosca:***

Thank you, Chancellor. Just my last question is, I know that it is a different, for it is a different government entity. I know that the Regents approved the increase. But if you could just talk about what you think the increase in tuition will impact enrollment, at least for the upcoming school year.

***Chancellor McNair:***

Thank you. Yes, I do not know that the increase, we do not expect to see a decrease in enrollment because of the fee increase. Our data over the last decade shows that when there have been fluctuations, generally increases in tuition and fees, we have not seen any decreases in enrollment. That is the first part.

The second part is even with the increase, and it will be over the next couple of years, between [inaudible] and the increase that the Regents voted for, it is going to be more than 20 percent for some of the students, which is a significant percentage. But we are still the third most, after those increases, we will be the third most affordable system in the country. We are currently the second most affordable system in the country, and I suspect there might be movement in other states. We are going to stay at or near the top of being the most affordable in the country. The challenge is, like I mentioned before, not so much the financial burden that students face, because our students in Nevada face very little burden for their tuition and fees as compared to other states because of what you have done, what the Regents have done, in terms of access fees and Silver State Grants, Millennium Scholarships. We have among the lowest tuitions in the country, the very lowest.

The challenge is the other cost of living that has gone up so much. More than one-third of students at UNR and nearly one-third of students at UNLV pay no tuition, no fees, nothing for their education expenses. It is really the other living expenses that have been the biggest challenge it seems to us. Not minimizing, I know that there are some families who will be burdened by this. I do not mean to seem insensitive to that. I know that is the case. But we are still among the most, the very most affordable states in the country for higher education. Really what those increased fees will do is we will make sure that we do not have to cut any programs. We do not have to cut any staff who are facing students and helping them get access to and staying in school. When we have cut programs, it is basically just helps us keep our heads above water. Thank you.

***Assemblymember Erica Mosca:***

Thank you, Chair, for the indulgence, and thank you, Chancellor.

***Chancellor McNair:***

Thank you.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Committee, for all the great questions. Mr. Chancellor, I know that this is your first meeting, and there were plenty of questions. You had plenty of friends around to do a phone a friend. We thank Provost Thompson, we thank Dr. Heavey, we thank Dr. Mccoy, I am trying to catch everyone, we thank Ms. Davis. We thank all of you for jumping in. As we know, again, the Chancellor has been on the job probably five minutes, and it was good to have some help to answer those questions. We know there is other business that is going to come forward.

We do have, in fact, another question that Vice Chair has. You want to jump on that Assemblymember? Thank you. Selena, not Selena. Assemblymember La Rue Hatch. Yes.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Thank you so much, Chair. I did have that second question, so thank you for coming back to me. I just wanted to ask about the status of collective bargaining with the graduate assistants. We heard a lot about it last session, we talked about it when we have met. I just wondered where you are at in the process of recognizing that bargaining unit and whether or not you think you have the authority, or you think that we, as a Legislature, need to give you that explicit authority to do so?

***Chancellor McNair:***

Thanks for that question. We are still in the process of evaluating the rationale and to understand the problems that we are trying to solve through that. We understand that the request has been made. We continue to meet with the graduate students. I meet monthly with the student government leaders. We are, like I said, still trying to assess the need and whether we, not to say that we would not eventually do it anyway, really trying to figure out if there are ways that we can address those issues separate and apart from recognition of the bargaining unit because that is a different matter.

We are more focusing on the challenges that they have brought up that they want addressed and the reason for that. That our first order of business is really trying to figure out how can we address. I know that pay, obviously, and cost of living is one of their big issues and something that we are trying to address. Part of the challenge is that a lot of the funding for graduate students comes from the federal government through grants, and it is limited to that. We do not have other pots of money lying around, unfortunately, to supplement their income, even though we know that those grants do not give them enough, based on housing expenses in Las Vegas and Reno, to really live well. We are in the process of trying to address those issues with them.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Just to follow up on my second part, it sounds like you think you do believe you have the authority to recognize the unit, you just have not gotten there yet. Or do you not believe you have the authority and we need to make a legislative change?

***Chancellor McNair:***

That is a question I do not have the answer to yet. I apologize. We have been talking about it a lot. We have not actually talked specifically about whether we have the authority. We have been focused more on whether it would be a good idea and what the problems are. I will have to get back to you on that. I am sure our general counsel is watching right now saying I told you that, and I just cannot remember. We have not, as far as I can recall, we have not covered that yet.

***Assemblymember La Rue Hatch:***

Thank you so much. When you get that answer, if you could send it to the Committee, I am sure we are all very interested. Thank you so much, Chair.

***Chancellor McNair:***

Will do.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Assemblymember. I do want to say that we know there is other business coming forward. There is the reduction in the size of the board that will need to come back our way as well. We look forward to doing more work together during this interim session before we even get into the next session of the Legislature.

Thank you so much for being here. Again, welcome to your very first meeting. You see, you have a lot of people who are really concerned about education, and that is why I think it is a great Committee. Looking forward to our work together.

***Chancellor McNair:***

Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you, everybody.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you.

## AGENDA ITEM VIII—OVERVIEW OF THE STATE OF NEVADA'S CHARTER SCHOOLS, THE CHARTER SCHOOL SYSTEM GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE, AND RECOMMENDATIONS THAT WOULD ASSIST CHARTER SCHOOLS IN ACHIEVING ACADEMIC, FISCAL, AND ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS (*NEVADA REVISED STATUTES* 388A.171)

***Chair Taylor:***

Next item on the agenda, Agenda Item VIII, overview of the State of Nevada's charter schools, the charter school system governance structure, and then recommendations going forward. We know we speak a lot about charters, one way or another, and so we thought it

would be just good to have an overview, a quick preview of. I do not want to emphasize quick, you know the time you have on this, but just to make sure that there is a clear understanding on the interim committee as we move forward.

I am sure, Ms. Mackedon, you are in Las Vegas. I do not see that right now, but I see your slides are up, or you are on Zoom. Either way it goes, the floor is yours whenever you are ready. You are on Zoom because this is your screen. Whenever you are ready, please go right ahead, and thank you for being here.

***Melissa Mackedon, Executive Director, State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA):***

Thank you. I am in northern Nevada [inaudible], and I see a lot of familiar faces. Some of these first slides, I will move through very quickly because, again, a lot of familiar faces (Agenda Item VIII). As a reminder, NRS 388 established three primary purposes for the SPCSA: (1) authorize charter schools of high quality; (2) provide oversight; and (3) serve as a model of best practice.

As you know, we have a ten member board, which includes nine voting members and one student member. The agency has 42 full-time employees this year, while 43 in the second year of the biennium. Additionally, we have six independent contractors working on various projects. We have four directors who oversee our teams, which include: (1) finance and operations; (2) school support; (3) monitoring and evaluation; and (4) charters school authorizing. We have three offices, and we oversee an estimated, right around $50 million in grant funding that will pass through to our schools this fiscal year.

The SPCSA has 70,534 students enrolled as of October 1. With that number of students, the SPCSA is the second largest LEA, or local education agency, in Nevada, trailing only Clark County. This is mainly due to the transfer of six existing charter schools from Clark County School District to the SPCSA sponsorship on July 1, 2025. When you remove those six Clark County schools, have 5,400 students, so when you pull that out it does change our growth significantly. This slide better shows that. Again, if you pull out the 5,400 students that transferred from Clark County, our percent increase from 2024 to 2025 was 2.3 percent, which demonstrates controlled growth over recent years.

This slide includes all new charter campuses that opened, meaning new charter schools and charter school new campus amendments. Additionally, of the 20 schools that have opened in the last five years, four have closed—Teach, Eagle, Battle Born and pilotED. This slide outlined school closures over the last two years, as well as the upcoming closure of Nevada Prep. Notably, pilotED was restarted, and Academy of Math and Science was approved earlier, about a month ago, to restart Nevada Prep next year.

This is just a reminder of the vision and mission of the SPCSA. I am going to move quickly through that for the sake of time. These are the values of the SPCSA. They include student focused, excellence through improvement, transparency, accountable autonomy, equity and diversity, and leadership.

The SPCSA has a new five-year strategic plan. For the purposes of today's presentation, I am going to focus on the two goals that have historically been of the most interest to this body—student success and student representation. We will now dig into each of these goals more closely and look into our outcomes.

Our first goal was to provide communities with access to excellent schools that students and families want to attend. The SPCSA means for all sponsored schools to meet academic, organizational, and financial performance standards.

Our strategic plan measurable objective is that 78 percent of our schools are three star or better and that 60 percent are four star or better on the Nevada School Performance Framework. As you can see, our schools exceeded this school and can have improved over last year's performance, with 73 percent were three star or better and 52 percent were four star or better.

Although our strategic plan does not specifically have a graduation rate goal, we believe it is important to highlight those outcomes. In particular, we are very proud of the fact that 53.5 percent of students who graduated from a charter school did so with an advanced or CCR diploma. The SPCSA is very proud to have Beacon Academy in our portfolio. This is an alternative high school that is doing exceptional work with fifth and sixth year seniors. When you pull those alternative performance high schools out of this rating, our grad rate is 95.2 percent, so definitely something that we are proud of.

This slide provides national context for SPCSA performance in English language arts and math Smarter Balance Assessments (SBAC) given in third to eighth grade. We located a sample state that also administered the SBAC, including California, Connecticut, Delaware, Oregon, and Washington, and found that in both ELA and math, SPCSA outperformed those states shown for the 2024–2025 School Year.

About 82 percent of non-Title I schools across the state had an NSPF rating of three stars or higher, whereas about 95 percent of SPCSA non-Title I schools earned at least three stars or higher. Moving on to Title I schools, for the state overall only one in three Title I schools had a three-star rating, while the SPCSA had about 74 percent of our Title I schools having a three-star rate.

The left panel of this slide discusses the SPCSA’s Academic Performance Framework, which is very similar to the NSPF in that schools are rated based on their performance in various measures, including NSPF index score, performance comparisons—where we compare them to other schools in their zip code, chronic absenteeism reduction—which is slightly different than what the NSPF does, and student group performance comparisons—where we are looking specifically at how students are doing who are English language learners (ELLs), and students on IEP’s as compared to the overall student body in each school.

As you also may remember, the SPCSA is required to conduct site evaluations at a minimum in the first, third, and fifth year of a charter contract. Site evaluations are labor intensive. This year, staff have will have conducted 62 site evaluations, and they have completed about half of those to date.

This slide looks at the organizational and financial framework. Charter school authorizers must evaluate their schools in both areas. This year marks the first year that schools were rated on a new OPF [Organizational Performance Framework] approved by the SPCSA board in 2024. This Framework is attempting to answer the question of whether an organization is effective and well run. It looks specifically at things like compliance with the charter contract, statutes, and regulations. It also looks at school governance. We have three schools that were issued notices under this framework.

The financial framework was also updated in 2024, it is on the right-hand side of your screen. The financial framework, essentially, is seeking to answer the question, is the school

financially viable? Over 72 percent of schools meet standards on the Financial Performance Framework. At the SPCSA, we are really trying to emphasize the progress being made by our schools. With that in mind, our second measurable objective under this strategic goal is that 85 percent of schools in the Organizational and Financial Performance Framework will be returned to good standing or not escalated. We are slowly monitoring that and making progress in that regard.

The second goal that we want to talk about is equitable access to charter schools. The SPCSA aims for sponsored schools to serve a student population that is representative of the state in terms of race, ethnicity, and other student groups. The first measurable objective under this goal was that the percent of Title I schools in the SPCSA portfolio is at or above the percentage of statewide Title I schools. This objective was met for the 2025–2026 School Year. About 61 percent, or 55 out of 90, SPCSA schools operating in the 2025–2026 School Year are Title I, as compared to 55 percent of schools across the state.

The second measurable objective was that new charter schools opening under this strategic plan will have an ELL enrollment rate at or above their district averages. This school was not met for the 2025–2026 School Year, as only one new SPCSA school had an English language learner enrollment rate at or above its district enrollment rates. Combined schools under this respective district also did not result in the SPCSA meeting this school, as SPCSA schools located within Clark County had a combined ELL enrollment rate of 9.2 percent, whereas Clark County is at about 15.7 percent.

The third measurable objective was that new charter schools opening under this strategic plan will have an average enrollment rate of students with IEPs at or above the state average. This goal was not met for the 2025–2026 School Year. None of our new schools that opened this year had an IEP enrollment rate at or above the state average. Although, Do & Be Arts Academy and WYLEES [Western Youth Leadership, Engagement, and Empowerment Middle School] are doing really well at 10.8 percent, the state average being at 14.7. We still have a little room to grow there and this remains an important role in our five-year strategic plan.

Recent initiatives and state legislation, starting back in 2019, many of you were around for that, have resulted in more strategic authorizing centered around the demographic and academic needs assessment. There are some positive trends towards the SPCSA serving a population more representative of the state. You can see, for example, that in schools open since 2020, they actually have a higher ELL rate than the state. I would also point out that the state rate for free or reduced lunch is significantly inflated as a result of community eligibility rules. These rules allow any district whose direct certification rate is 25 percent or more to claim the entire student count of the district as qualifying for free reduce lunch. This chart shows enrollment rates for the state, SPCSA and SPCSA schools that have been approved post implementation of the aforementioned needs assessment. Overall, these new charter schools are serving a population more representative of the state.

This slide, going back to what I was just talking about, the inflated free and reduced lunch rate, we have really started looking at direct certification rates at the SPCSA to see, to get a truer picture of where we are at in educating a representative population. You can see the SPCSA, we are sitting about 30.4 percent qualifying for a direct cert [certification]. You can see the state is at 36.4 percent. While there is still room for improvement, the disparity is not as great as the previous slide indicated.

I know you asked for updates on recent legislation. AB 398 allocated approximately $90 million per year during the biennium for charter school teacher and education support professional salary increases. The bill also required that the Interim Finance Committee (IFC) approve those plans. The SPCSA allocated the funds for all charter schools in the state, regardless of sponsor. The Interim Finance Committee approved those plans, and the money has been distributed to all but one charter school. We will begin the process again for the 2026–2027 School Year this spring, with the goal of having IFC approval prior to the school year starting.

Then, we are going to jump to SB 460 as it relates specifically to charter schools. Section 19 added an appeals process for school districts when a charter school is approved in their jurisdiction. To date, no school district has utilized this process. Section 20 updated membership requirements and appointments to the SPCSA board. This section of the bill goes into effect on July 1, 2026. As such, the SPCSA will work with the appointing authorities to ensure compliance with the law for the two remaining board members who do not meet the new criteria by that date. Section 23 added a requirement that we hold meetings in counties of 100,000 or more for new charter applications. This provision was immediately implemented, with the SPCSA having physical locations in both Clark and Washoe County when approving new charter school applications. We have done that. We will continue to do so. Section 25 added language regarding public hearing for amendments. The amendments that fall under this provision of the law include expanding grade levels, increasing enrollment, reducing enrollment, adding facilities, and consolidating. The SPCSA was already doing this, so nothing about our practices changed. Section 33.1 allows the SPCSA to designate innovation schools beginning in July 2026. We look forward to getting the regulations from NDE and exploring this opportunity.

Lastly, I know that you have asked for challenges and solutions, and so I bring forth a few of those today. The root cause of most struggling charter schools is their facilities. Facilities, especially affordable facilities, are difficult to find, which leads to too many pupil-centered funding dollars intended for classroom use being spent on leases. Until charter schools have access to equitable facilities funds, this will continue to be a problem. One viable solution is expanding bond financing availability for charter schools by investing more in the Nevada facility fund.

Moving on to multiple authorizers. As this body is aware, cities and municipalities are now permitted to authorize charter schools. After completing our first charter school application cycle with multiple authorizers last year, we identified several issues that need to be addressed. For example, the cities and municipalities were given about half the amount of time to review their applications as the SPCSA has. And that, obviously, is not necessarily reasonable. If it takes us 120 days to do it, they should have 120 days as well. Our law also did not contemplate a single committee to form applying to multi authorizer, so we are anticipating some cleanup language in the upcoming session.

As far as school closures, we are definitely starting to do some things this year. For the first time, the SPCSA used a provision of the law that has been there for a long time to solicit proven charter school providers. Through this process, we were able to find a charter school operator to restart a charter school following the nonrenewal of its contract. This is really important because this allows students in that school to remain there, should they choose to do so. As we have gone through a few school closures in the last few years, and the restart process, we have identified some weaknesses in statute that we are hoping to address to ensure timely, legally compliant, and transparent process. Those are sort of the big challenges that we see and some of the solutions that we see coming up in the next session.

Do not worry, I am not going to go through all of these appendixes, but I included them because these are the questions that we get asked a lot by you all. How are the schools in your district doing? What these do is, this lists out all the new schools. That is another big question we get asked from Legislatures, what are the schools that have opened recently? So we include those. We have also included the star ratings, a lot more detailed information for you, and then slides that specifically get into, so you can look up schools specifically in your districts.

Then again, these are really cool slides. I know a lot of you have asked me in the past about specific subgroups at charter schools. These graphs look at three-year trends for every single subgroup for both SPCSA and the state on the SBAC. Then you keep going further and you will see them for ACT [American College Test] data as well by subgroup. We just included these more because, then we have graduation rates, because these are the questions that we commonly get asked about. We were hoping to provide you with a one-stop presentation that you could reference back and get the information that you are looking for. With that, I will pause and answer any questions that you may have.

***Chair Taylor:***

Ms. Mackedon, thank you so much for the appendix, and you have probably saved 15 minutes today from people asking those questions that, as you said, you typically get. Plus, it is great information to have. Thank you so much for just being preemptive I should say, not even proactive, but preemptive. This is good information, especially as our districts and subgroups, and so on. Really good information so thank you so much.

I am looking to see if we have any questions from Committee members at all for Ms. Mackedon. See, you may have just preempted yourself out of some questions, I think. Look at that smile. I think you have, because you have absolutely answered every question I ever remember hearing asked. I can certainly tell you that. You saw this. It tells me you have done this once or twice before, and can anticipate what is to come. But it is really good information and allows me to answer questions as I am asked out in my district and otherwise.

Seeing no questions, then I am going to let you slip away from here while you can before somebody comes up with something.

***Executive Director Mackedon:***

Thank you so much. Have a great day.

***Chair Taylor:***

No, thank you so much. I appreciate it. I am sure we will see you again. She is gone, swoop. Okay. All right.

## AGENDA ITEM IX—OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE NEVADA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS, INCLUDING TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR MEMBERS

***Chair Taylor:***

We will go on to Agenda Item IX. That is from our Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB), roles and activities of NASB including training, professional development for

members. We have an alum of our own body, who serves as president of NASB now, President Bustamante. Welcome. I think you have a couple of board members that are on as well, Dr. Nicolet and Mr. Harris, your executive director, and your government affairs person, Mr. Clark. Please, go right— I do not see President Bustamante yet. Is she here?

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

She is here. She is here in front of us.

***Chair Taylor:***

She is in person, okay. Well, that makes sense because that is where she lives. We will turn it over to you, Madam President, whenever you are ready.

***Irene Bustamante Adams, President, NASB:***

Good afternoon, Madam Chair, members of the Committee. I have the privilege, as the Chair said, to serve as the President this year for the Nevada Association of School Boards. It is an honor. I found you guys. I did not realize that there was a whole other section of hearing rooms. I am used to going to one. I am grateful and thank you for staying for our presentation. As you mentioned, Madam Chair, we have people in northern Nevada with us. They wanted to be there in person in front of you, but I know that there was a weather issue. You introduced our President-Elect from Washoe County, Dr. Diane Nicolette. You also introduced, thank you for waving. You also introduced our Executive Director for NASB, Mr. Rick Harris. You also introduced the person who leads our government affairs team, Mr. Tom Clark. I do not see him, but I am going to trust that he is there. Then, it is my role to advance the slides. Do I have to do this? Nope. Did it advance? No, it does not. I might be doing it wrong.

In the interim, while she comes and shows me, I wanted to let you know that the Nevada Association of School Boards, also called NASB for short, one of the beautiful things is that we represent all 17 school districts. I cannot tell you what a privilege that is because every voice is heard. I am grateful to be able to serve in the role that I am today.

Our focus is on strong public education, training leaders, and ensuring the success of every student through effective government governance (Agenda Item IX). Thank you. There we go. In addition, I just want to thank you personally for making us feel heard as trustees. We do have a role within the education ecosystem. In addition, I am thankful for your partnership this last legislative session. I really truly felt like we were rowing in the same direction. I am going to turn it over to Mr. Harris, our Executive Director, for this portion.

***Rick Harris, Executive Director, NASB:***

I am looking out my window here at a foot of snow so that is why I have my Hawaiian background, wishing I was there instead. I have the privilege of talking about our core mission at NASB. We keep it simple but strong with professional development, mentoring, advocacy. We work in collaboration with NASS and the state department. That is our philosophy, to listen and learn together.

The next couple of slides, I am going to dive into our training program. You can advance, there we go. What we do on this slide, highlights our guiding principles. We really do not look to check the box off or look at a requirement. Our intent is much deeper. We are intentional, and we use these guiding principles to design our professional development. What we want is trustees to walk away saying that was worth my time, or here is

something I can apply immediately, or here is something I can share with other board members. We really focus on stretching thinking. We know because strong governance requires reflection, perspective, and a willingness to examine how we lead. Our sessions are grounded in the reality of board services, decision making, team dynamics. We work really hard on our superintendent relationships. I really am proud of this, is that we talk a lot about we do not prescribe *the* way, we explore *a* way. We want to recognize that our work in districts may look different because of our size and our cultures, but the environment we have encourages dialogue, and diverse perspectives, and problem solving. So ultimately, trustees leave more confident, sharper, hopefully, and more effective in their leadership.

I wanted to highlight a slide, if you can advance it, Irene. Just last, I thought it will be good to show you our last workshop, which was just last month, that we focused on conflict. Show you some of the content in that one. We think conflict, we know conflict is there, so we do not hide from it. But we really want to work with our leaders, and whenever you have leaders to handle conflict and to lead through it. When you have people that care deeply about students, budgets, policies and expectations, you are going to have different viewpoints. It is going to happen. It is healthy to have those conversations, but it is really important that you lead through it. That slide kind of shows you how we did that last month.

This next slide that we have is a little bit of content for a workshop we are really excited about this Saturday, where we host a workshop with all of the board presidents in the state. We will be down in Las Vegas and talking about a lot of different things. But one of them that is very important to us is that president-superintendent relationship, something that we believe in strongly. We need to have that relationship grounded in trust and clarity. We really spend a lot of time with that and have great conversations.

We will also be talking about, as a board member, and particularly as a board member president, the authority is the whole board, it is not just that one individual. A lot of times, this Saturday is a good example, we will have a lot of new, first-time presidents so we try to help them say, when you are with the board, you are leading it. Your responsibility is to build consensus and to work together and make the board stronger as a team. That stability, as you know, will lead to a stronger governance and stronger districts and better outcomes for kids. hat is just the flavor of our professional development. Irene will talk about our first 90 days.

***President Bustamante Adams:***

Our first 90 days is on the screen. We are extremely active throughout the state, and this is an example of what we have going on. I want to highlight the professional development workshops because that is one of our priorities. Like Mr. Harris said, we have the upcoming board president workshop this weekend here in Las Vegas. The next one, which we will talk about a little later, is also the development workshop that we are doing with Legislators, being very intentional to build the relationship with the legislative body. We will have one in March up in northern Nevada, and the one in southern Nevada will be in April. It is not included in this slide.

I just want to touch on our goals. We have an executive board. As I shared, we have representation from Washoe County for the President-Elect, we have representation from White Pine County—which will be the first Vice President, and then Elko County from the second Vice President. I really appreciate that this group makes sure that we have representation whether you are urban or rural. Our goals focus on making sure that we have high-quality learning opportunities for the trustees, make sure that we are advocating and building relationships with you as a legislative body, but also with other state and

federal levels. Mentoring, I get assigned a mentor in my first year, which I still use heavily, especially since I was the school board President of Clark County last year. I use that a lot to make phone calls, 9-1-1 sometimes for the things that were happening. Then building the leadership capacity, making sure that we focus on effective governance.

Next, we are going to have Mr. Clark. I cannot see him, but this is our 2025 reflection of our legislative priorities.

***Tom Clark, on Behalf of NASB:***

Hello, Madam Chair, members of the Committee. It has been a long, fun day up here in northern Nevada. We did want to just go through some of the priorities that we had from the last legislative session. I know a lot of you all were part of these bill hearings and stuff with us. We just wanted to touch bases briefly on what those legislative priorities were. We had a really good legislative session last session. NASBs performance, as far as being advocates for all of the school boards, went along really, really well. We had a lot of really good meetings with both Chairs and all members of the Committees as we were going through these different policies. We are pretty pleased with the way that things came out in 2025. Who is advancing slides for us?

***President Bustamante Adams:***

I am Mr. Clark, now it is on 2025 Legislative Session.

***Mr. Clark:***

The major themes for the 2025 Legislative Session that we had was really the accountability and education. We had early childhood. That is going to be another big matter, I believe, coming into the 2027 Legislative Session. A lot of the issues that you have listened to and heard today are going to be priority policies that we also translated into the 2027 Legislative Session and came from the 2025 Legislative Session.

The notable bills that we had last session, of course, Senate Bill 460, which we really enjoyed working with the legislative body on getting that bill passed. The 224, the rural funding bill for White Pine County, that was a big deal. The cell phone policy bill, of course, that you heard a little bit about earlier today as well. Then, we also know that there were a lot of bills that did not make it through the last legislative session that we expect we are going to see again going into 2027.

***President Bustamante Adams:***

Now I am going to turn it over to our trustee, Diane Nicolet from Washoe County. I do want to mention, though, I appreciate AB 224 from the last legislative session, this was carried by Assemblymember Mosca. This shows the collaboration between urban and rural. It was for a purpose that benefited White County, but without that support, it would not have happened because we have tried several times. Thank you, our gratitude to this body for that. Miss Diane.

***Diane Nicolet, Ph.D., President-Elect, NASB:***

Thank you, President Irene. I have a dubious distinction of sharing with you my trip to Washington, D.C., on February 3, where I spent the day on Capitol Hill. I am smiling because our conversations during this meeting were so reflective of the conversations that happened with the staffers, the legislative policymakers, the staffers that I had and my

colleagues had. Irene was there. Then we had Brenda Zamora from Clark County School District, and then we had Catherine Whitaker from Churchill. Our conversations today have mirrored what we have been discussing. For example, the IDEA [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act] and special education, the 40 percent by 50. A little tidbit is, in 1975, that—under a different name, was first earmarked to have 40 percent of federal funding go to our schools throughout the United States for special education. I can tell you right now that we are lucky if we hit 17 percent, and the typical is about 15 percent.

Next, we talked about Title I, which is really an approach to bridging gaps, and Perkins and Career Technical Education, which is about building futures. The discussions were really very positive in Washington, D.C., relating to the importance of maintaining Title I funding and recognizing that we are behind the eight ball and needing to build our current technical education pathways. Many aspects of that.

Then, of course, the biggie was dismantling the U.S. Department of Education and the oversight and services, which has really caused some great angst throughout our funding mechanisms. I will tell you one legislative staffer said something that I thought was really kind of cute, and I will share it without sharing a name. They mentioned that dismantling the Department of Education is like moving cars from one government parking lot to another government parking lot without a roadmap. I just thought that was a little poignant.

Then, number four, the Secure Rural Schools Funding Act really was reauthorized, which is really fabulous news because, as we know, with 17 school districts, some of our states have 300, 400, and 500 school districts, that our rural education, and our rural roads, and our rural emergency services really do need a different kind of support. They are different communities, different and special, and we need to support their work. Next slide, please.

Next, we will talk about federal impacts in school services. As we know, there was the universal school breakfast and lunch that was at no charge to any student. It not did matter, and you did not even have to fill out the free and reduced lunch application. As we know, with COVID, that funding ended. We have really turned to what we call community eligibility provision, and many of our schools in Nevada take advantage of that. Basically, what it means is that high poverty schools can provide meals to students, and it is regardless of your income level so there is an equalization there.

The next is the relocation of the U.S. Department of Ed that keeps coming up because it is really a big deal. We have interagency agreements now, the U.S. Department of Education and the Department of Labor. Our Perkins and Career Technical Ed now is under the U.S. Department of Labor. I will tell you, speaking with colleagues that have direct impact, that the Department of Labor, nothing against their work, it is just that they were not ready to accept grant applications and distribute funds so school district funding formulas and planning have really had to take a backseat so that they can wait and see what kind of funding they have for their career and technical education programs.

Then, of course, the uncertainty in Medicaid reimbursements, which we know directly that these services impact positively attendance, safety, and academic performance. If we have to reorganize how we are going to fund certain programs that support attendance, safety, and academic performance, we know that we are looking at, I would use the word, some catastrophic impacts that will impact our students, our families, our employees, and our communities. There you go. Thank you. Now, I will pass it back to Irene and Tom.

***President Bustamante Adams:***

Thank you, Madam Chair. I am going to ask Mr. Clark also to chime in. I will not spend a whole lot of time on this. You asked us for our current financial challenges that we see in the school districts, but you have had a whole day of individuals sharing that. What I would add is that, in examining ways of how could we in collaboration, I know that some districts are working to include the community because if the enrollment is declining, then how could we reimagine serving the students and maintain the high quality? Those are happening, and I feel really good about those efforts. Mr. Clark, would you like to add anything?

***Mr. Clark:***

Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the Committee. This is a, how things have changed so much in just the last decade when it comes to funding for schools and the ways that your body has stepped up to the plate and really funded schools in a significant manner. Now we are seeing the decreases in enrollment, like Irene said. All of the other issues now that each of the districts are facing, we are looking, we are up to this challenge. We want to have these conversations. We have been working with districts like Douglas County. We facilitated a meeting with the governor's office that I think went really well so that we could bring all the players to the table and really truly understand what is facing these districts. The parents and the students are confused. Suddenly, in some of these districts, we are combining schools. We have facilities that are not being used, whereas ten years ago, these schools were busting at the seams. we got to kind of figure this out, and we are looking forward to working with the superintendents and all the other stakeholders, and of course this Committee, going into the 2027 Session to see what solutions we can find to help address some of these major issues.

***President Bustamante Adams:***

Thank you. In preparation for our closing, one of the things you also asked us is potential areas of policy interest for us. Mr. Clark, I am going to ask you to chime in here. What I would say is, did I skip a slide? I might have skipped a slide. The Pupil-Centered Funding is also obviously of great interest to us. I do want to be able to mention the fact that some funding issues, even though the phenomenal effort that it took, and thank you for those that served on that, we know that everything is not perfect when you pass legislation. Some of the issues that still may be of interest are quarterly enrollment revenue adjustments, created issues with annual employment contracts when revenues decline, and also increased whole harmless percentages take away needed safety nets for school districts.

Mr. Clark, I am going to ask you to chime in here on the potential areas of policy interest since you will be leading us in our strategic planning efforts both in northern and southern Nevada.

***Mr. Clark:***

Thank you again. We have the list of some of the issues. Again, you have heard a lot of these throughout the day. The falling enrollment, we want to capitalize on some of the successes that we have had in previous sessions too, including that rural school funding bill for White Pine County. We know, based on the surveys of each individual district, that there are more rural districts that are going to be running into capital issues down the road. We need to really truly look at ways that we can find opportunities for permanent funding for those rural school districts to be able to either rehab the schools that they have got, if they need them, or to build new schools.

Now, I just mentioned that some of these districts are going the opposite direction. How does that align with our 17 counties going forward? We do want to do a survey of parents to find out where their issues are at. We really need to communicate with our parents in every district and have them communicate back to us. We will be doing that as part of the strategic plan, doing those types of surveys, working with each individual district to understand what those issues are.

Then you can see some of the other, mental health is always going to be a big issue, and it is one that we are seeing more and more areas, rural and urban, that we can help students and give teachers the tools that they need, and administrators the tools that they need to address the mental health issues that the kids are facing.

AI [artificial intelligence] is going to continue to be something that we are going to see, whether kids are using it for all the wrong reasons or districts are using them for all the right reasons. There is starting to be more and more evidence-based AI relationships between the education environment and the students, and the teachers and the parents. We will be pursuing those things as well.

***President Bustamante Adams:***

Thank you. Then Dr. Nicolet, if you could close this out.

***President-Elect Nicolet:***

Absolutely. This is an invitation to breakfast, conversation, and friendship. Saturday, going to get these dates right, in Reno, this is northern Nevada portion in Reno. March 21 is breakfast with Legislators and school board trustees. We have done this before, and I have to tell you it was illuminating and it was fun. We had some, I would say, we had some conversation that was rather deep dive, heartfelt, and we did not always agree, but that is sometimes the fun part of it. Then, we will have a second one in the South, in Las Vegas, Saturday, April 25. Again, breakfast with NASB, Nevada Association of School Board trustees and our Legislators. Please join us for breakfast, conversation, and friendship. The more, the merrier.

***President Bustamante Adams:***

Thank you. That ends our presentation, Madam Chair. Once again, I just want to express my gratitude to the members of this Committee and yourself for the collaborative effort. Thank you for inviting us to the table. Thank you for helping us to feel heard and to pass legislation that is important to trustees and the school districts. I think, in my personal opinion, we have the right leadership. There is new leaders in this space, and that we are headed in the right direction. We have a lot of uphill battles, but our focus in NASB is to train trustees to be great in their effectiveness and in their governance for the responsibilities that they have. We are available to take any questions.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you so much, Madam President and team who is here. We will open it up and see if any Committee members have questions for the school board association. I think you might be benefiting from being at the end of the agenda. Take it while you—

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Madam Chair?

***Chair Taylor:***

Yes, please. Senator, go right ahead.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Thank you. I just sneezed, so I apologize.

***Chair Taylor:***

Well, God bless.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Trustee Bustamante Adams, thank you so much for being here. Can you talk just a little bit, I know we are not a funding committee, but when you talked about the rural school funding and a permanent pathway in Nevada, how will that be different than the Pupil-Centered Funding formula?

***President Bustamante Adams:***

Thank you.  I am going to ask Mr. Clark to chime in here for that question. Did you hear the question, Mr. Clark, a permanent funding solution for the rural?

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Can you hear me, Mr. Clark?

***Mr. Clark:***

If you could repeat the question for me, Senator, that would be great.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Yes. I just want to make sure you can hear me. When you talk about a rural school funding, a permanent pathway in Nevada, how is that different than the Pupil-Centered Funding formula that we currently have? What can you give me a little more, embellish that a little bit, so I understand?

***Mr. Clark:***

Really, what it comes down to is more on the facilities side of the balance sheet for the school districts. As you know, they rely heavily on the property tax to be able to do the improvements and to build new schools and to do things in White Pine County with 224 that came with this last legislative session. It was using the state's bonding capacity to be able to fund the construction of the schools and how those bonds were repaid. Some of those other rural districts are going to be running into those types of concerns 5, 10, 15 years down the road. That comment was intended to be, how can we find the resources for these rural districts to be able to build schools or rehab existing schools long term down the road? Because those resources come from a different bank account than what goes into the pockets of the teachers and the administrators in the districts themselves. It is really those capital improvement projects that we are talking about.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

Thank you very much. That helps.

***Chair Taylor:***

Are you good, Senator? I guess I will take that as a yes.

***Senator Dondero Loop:***

I am sorry, I did not know you were waiting. Apologies. I was processing what Mr. Clark said. Yes, that sort of answered my question. I just was trying to figure out whether we were talking about per pupil or what kind of funding we were talking about. I appreciate that. Thank you.

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you, Senator, and thank you, Mr. Clark. Any other questions for the state school board association while we have them here? Seeing none. Mr. Harris, thank you. President-Elect Dr. Nicolet, thank you. Mr. Clark, thank you. President Bustamante, thank you so much for being here and for taking the time. We appreciate you all. Thank you.

***Mr. Clark:***

Thank you so much for having us.

***Chair Taylor:***

You are welcome. Thank you.

## AGENDA ITEM X—PUBLIC COMMENT

***Chair Taylor:***

Now we are on Agenda Item X, which is public comment. If there is any public comment, I do not know if there is anyone there in Las Vegas who may want to make public comment to the Joint Standing Interim Committee. If so, please come forward at this time. You will have two minutes, and please state your name for the record. Seeing no one come forward. Broadcast, we will go to the phone lines. Any public comment?

***AVH:***

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

[The following public comment was received for inclusion in the record:

- Anna Marie Binder, Member of the Public (Agenda Item X A);
- Abraham S. Camejo, Member of the Public (Agenda Item X B); and
- Andrea Gregg, Chief Executive Officer, High Sierra Area Health Education Center (Agenda Item X C).]

***Chair Taylor:***

Thank you so much. Thank you, everyone, and staff, thank you so much for the quick pivot and turnaround. I really tried to have this meeting in person, and I waited until this morning, but it just was not going to be safe. Thank you so much for your hard work. You made a turn and got us ready yesterday. We really appreciate it to those who made it to Carson City and then presented from your hotel rooms. We apologize, but we certainly thank you for your efforts. Of course, those in Las Vegas.

Our next meeting is a month from today, March 17, and hopefully we will not have a repeat performance in terms of snow. Thank you, everyone. Thank you for being here. Our meeting is adjourned. Have a great day and be safe out there in the North.

## AGENDA ITEM XI—ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Stef Sandoval
Research Policy Assistant

_____

Alberto Quintero
Senior Policy Analyst

APPROVED BY:

_____

Senator Angela D. Taylor, Chair

Date: _____

# MEETING MATERIALS

| AGENDA ITEM | PRESENTER/ENTITY | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| Agenda Item II | Chris Daly, Deputy Executive Director of Government Relations, Nevada State Education Association | Written Remarks |
| Agenda Item III A | Alberto Quintero, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB)<br><br>Angelina Garcia, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division, LCB | Committee Brief |
| Agenda Item III B | Alberto Quintero, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division, LCB<br><br>Angelina Garcia, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division, LCB | Handout |
| Agenda Item IV | Adrienne Fischer, Principal, Education Commission of the States (ECS) | PowerPoint Presentation |
| Agenda Item V | Victor Wakefield, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada's Department of Education (NDE) | PowerPoint Presentation<br><br>The presentation may be viewed at https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Video/ and the original will be on file in the Research Library, Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or email Library@lcb.state.nv.us |
| Agenda Item VI A | Tate Else, President, Nevada Association of School Superintendents | PowerPoint Presentation |

| AGENDA ITEM | PRESENTER/ENTITY | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| Agenda Item VI B-1 | Clayton Anderson, Superintendent, Elko County School District (ECSD) | PowerPoint Presentation<br><br>The presentation may be viewed at https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Video/ and the original will be on file in the Research Library, Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or email Library@lcb.state.nv.us |
| Agenda Item VI B-2 | Clayton Anderson, Superintendent, ECSD | Handout |
| Agenda Item VI B-3 | Clayton Anderson, Superintendent, ECSD | Handout |
| Agenda Item VI C | Frankie Alvarado, Superintendent, Douglas County School District (DCSD)<br><br>Leslie Peters, Assistant Director of Educational Services, DCSD | PowerPoint Presentation<br><br>The presentation may be viewed at https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Video/ and the original will be on file in the Research Library, Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or email Library@lcb.state.nv.us |
| Agenda Item VI D-1 | Jhone Ebert, Superintendent, Clark County School District (CCSD) | PowerPoint Presentation<br><br>The presentation may be viewed at https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Video/ and the original will be on file in the Research Library, Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or email Library@lcb.state.nv.us |
| Agenda Item VI D-2 | Jhone Ebert, Superintendent, CCSD | Handout<br><br>The handout may be viewed at https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Video/ and the original will be on file in the Research Library, Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or email Library@lcb.state.nv.us |

| AGENDA ITEM | PRESENTER/ENTITY | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| Agenda Item VI E | Joseph M. Ernst, M.Ed., Superintendent, Washoe County School District (WCSD)<br><br>Mark Mathers, Chief Financial Officer, WCSD | PowerPoint Presentation<br><br>The presentation may be viewed at https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Video/ and the original will be on file in the Research Library, Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or email Library@lcb.state.nv.us |
| Agenda Item VII | Matt McNair, J.D., Chancellor, Nevada System of Higher Education | PowerPoint Presentation<br><br>The presentation may be viewed at https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Video/ and the original will be on file in the Research Library, Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or email Library@lcb.state.nv.us |
| Agenda Item VIII | Melissa Mackedon, Executive Director, State Public Charter School Authority | PowerPoint Presentation |
| Agenda Item IX | Irene Bustamante Adams, President, Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB)<br><br>Rick Harris, Executive Director, NASB<br><br>Tom Clark, on Behalf of NASB<br><br>Diane Nicolet, Ph.D., President-Elect, NASB | PowerPoint Presentation |
| Agenda Item X A | Anne Marie Binder, Member of the Public | Written Remarks |
| Agenda Item X B | Abraham S. Camejo, Member of the Public | Written Remarks |
| Agenda Item X C | Andrea Gregg, Chief Executive Officer, High | Written Remarks<br><br>The presentation may be viewed at https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Video/ |

| AGENDA ITEM | PRESENTER/ENTITY | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|
| | Sierra Area Health Education Center | and the original will be on file in the Research Library, Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or email Library@lcb.state.nv.us |

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