

NSEA SUPPORTS AB194 AND AB285

The Nevada State Education Association has been the voice of Nevada educators for over 120 years.

NSEA supports both AB194 and AB285 as commonsense proposals to help ensure educator safety.

AB194 includes language to authorize the suspension, expulsion, or permanent expulsion of a pupil of any age who commits a battery or assault against an employee of a school. AB285 reverts Nevada's system to a program of progressive discipline for students, allowing districts to include restorative justice practices within their plan. AB285 also removes the requirement to implement restorative justice before removing a pupil from a classroom or the premises of the school or suspending or expelling the pupil. This language reflects NSEA's initial position on AB168 in 2019, especially in cases when a student is a threat to a teacher.

In the wake of the horrific event at El Dorado High School in 2022, Vickie Kreidel, a teacher and President of the NEA of Southern Nevada said, "The young woman who was attacked, her life will never be the same. You can't cross your fingers and hope for the best."

High-profile school violence events are not new and not limited to Clark County or the 2013 shooting at Sparks Middle School, which took the life of teacher Michael Landsberry. NSEA has consistently heard alarming concerns about personal safety from our members across the state. That's why we have a long history of engagement on the issue of educator safety and student disciplinary practice. NSEA spearheaded the creation of the progressive student discipline system decades ago and during the 2019 session, we were the only stakeholder group raising public concerns about the implementation of restorative justice in AB168. We believe a strong restorative discipline system could reduce incidents where educators sustain injuries. However, this system would need to be proactive, implemented district-wide across all districts, and would require significantly more training, attention, and resources.

In 2020, NSEA proposed an Educator Bill of Rights to improve educator safety and to respect educator voice, but our proposal was largely disregarded. Since the pandemic the situation in schools has deteriorated further. The pandemic exacerbated mental health issues. And a historic educator shortage, with thousands of vacant positions across the state in addition to the structural shortage with the largest class sizes in the country, makes it nearly impossible to implement even the best plans for school safety and student discipline. Unfortunately, AB168 had a delayed and poor statewide implementation leaving many schools and school districts unsure about the student discipline system, opting for little to no student discipline at all. Educators coined the phrase "restore at the door" to describe the approach many administrators have taken, opting to send disruptive students back into classes after a brief conversation in the hall. This has only made classrooms and schools less safe. Meaningful resources for student mental health and significant investment in the implementation of restorative justice are absolutely necessary for the system to have a chance to work. And this needs to go hand in hand with commonsense changes like the ones proposed in AB194 and AB285.

NSEA talks about the Respect Educators Act to elevate the safety, well-being, and autonomy of educators in their work. This includes real accountability for any violence committed against educators and giving educators the tools necessary to deal with disruptive behavior. The Respect Educators Act also calls for the creation of a monitoring committee including educators from across the state, legislators, and NDE to gain a clear understanding of the impact of the laws, ensure consistent implementation, and secure protection for all students and educators.