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Dear Fellow Nevadan:

The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) is required by law to collect and store student and educator data, and collecting data and information about our students and educators is a critical step in our state's plan to prepare students to succeed in college and careers. Better data allow us to make informed education decisions and promote accountability at all levels. With Nevada's transition to a new mathematics and English language arts statewide assessment, increased dialogue regarding privacy and security of student data is taking place. This dialogue is important so that we can reflect on the current practices in place to ensure all possible measures are taken to protect student identity.

Protecting the privacy, security, and confidentiality of student data is a responsibility my staff at the Department and I take very seriously. The Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) establishes baseline parameters for what is permissible when sharing student information. The Department uses additional guidelines and strict processes to protect the privacy of every student and ensure the security of all data collected and managed. Specifically, NRS 386.650 spells out several responsibilities and restrictions.

In response to the concerns I have been hearing about privacy and security of student data, I have asked my staff to review NDE's student privacy and data security practices and develop a data privacy policy, as well as communication tools on the topic. I encourage you to visit the Department's web page that contains links to resources about student data privacy: http://www.doe.nv.gov/DataCenter/Student_Data_Privacy. In addition, please visit www.dataqualitycampaign.org to learn more about education data in general.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dale A.R. Erquiaga". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

DALE A.R. ERQUIAGA
Superintendent of Public Instruction