

Commission on School Funding

Work Group Structure

Commission Structure and Work Group Overview

In order to manage the workload and meet critical timelines, Work Groups are an essential part of the Commission's structure. A streamlined Work Group structure is a way to leverage each Commission member's skills, knowledge, and expertise. Two Work Groups have been identified based on the key responsibilities and deliverables outlined in SB 543.

1. **Formula and Distribution** - including reviewing base funding, the weights for categories of pupils, cost adjustment factors, and the distribution processes (§11.1(a)(c)(e))
2. **Reporting and Monitoring** - including identifying the evidence required to monitor the implementation of the Pupil-Centered Funding Plan (PCFP) and determining the recommendations, within the limits of appropriated funding, to improve or correct any deficiencies of the Department or any school district or public school in carrying out the PCFP (§11.1(b))

After certain deadlines and deliverables are addressed, the Commission may restructure to address other aspects of its responsibilities, including but not limited to recommending revisions to funding amounts and weights that would create an optimal level of funding and, if the recommendation would require more money to be implemented than was appropriated, identifying a method to fully fund the recommendation within 10 years after the date of the recommendation (§11.1(c)).

The Work Groups are not decision-making bodies, but rather will make recommendations to the full Commission for deliberation. The Commission will make decisions, recommend actions, or adopt processes/plans as a whole. While recommendations from a Work Group may be approved by the full Commission, the Commission is not obligated to act on or in alignment with Work Group recommendations. A majority of the members of the Commission constitutes a quorum and a majority of those present must concur in any decision (§10.7).

Work Group Composition

After reviewing with the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) and legal counsel, I propose the following structure and composition. Each work group will consist of:

- No more than five (5) members from the Commission, one of whom will serve as the Work Group Lead;
- One Chief Financial Officer of a district with more than 40,000 pupils enrolled in its public schools; and
- One Chief Financial Officer of a district with 40,000 or fewer pupils enrolled in its public schools.

Participation in Work Group meetings will be limited to Work Group members, staff from NDE and the Governor's Finance Office (GFO), and selected subject-matter experts.

- Work Group Leads will work with the Commission Chair and NDE and GFO to collect requested information and invite subject-matter experts as needed in advance of Work Group meetings.
- Work Group meetings will comply with Nevada’s Open Meeting Law allowing public comment and attendance.
- Subject-matter experts will not participate in discussion unless responding to specific questions posed by Work Group members.

Work Group Responsibilities

The Work Groups will:

- Explore and analyze issues for discussion by the full Commission
- Review research and data about effective funding and monitoring solutions
- Examine a variety of options with appropriate pluses and minuses for each option
- Consider public comment and input
- Formulate and refine potential solutions based on selected strategies
- Determine risks, ramifications, and consequences of each strategy
- Present recommendations, progress, and updates to the full Commission
- Respond to and address the full Commission’s feedback

The Work Group Lead will work with the Commission Chair, Vice Chair, NDE, and GFO to:

- Convene, direct, and preside over Work Group meetings
- Oversee fulfillment of the group’s work, progress, and goals
- Coordinate tasks among Work Group members
- Ensure active participation of members and troubleshoot when necessary
- Confirm documentation of meetings and maintenance of group records

Work Group members will:

- Actively participate in and make every effort to attend all Work Group meetings; meetings are expected to consist of two half-day work sessions each month; and
- Make suggestions based on their expertise and experience, while working collaboratively to form consensus around recommendations that will benefit the state as a whole.

Work Group #1 – Formula and Distribution

Dr. David Jensen – Lead

Building on the work of the 2019 legislative session, the Commission on School Funding is in a unique position to bring the vision of a new funding formula to life. In support of this effort, the Formula and Distribution Work Group will conduct careful evaluation and provide recommendations to support a long-standing and equitable funding model based on the parameters and intent defined in Senate Bill 543. The Formula and Distribution Work Group will ensure the PCFP is functional, operational, defensible, and transparent. Understanding the challenges of developing and modernizing a new PCFP, the perspectives of this Work Group will assist the Commission as a whole in making the recommendations necessary to ensure a funding formula that provides meaningful benefit to all of Nevada's students.

Key Tasks

- Review statewide base per pupil funding streams and formulae
- Examine the adjusted base per pupil funding for each district
- Recommend the creation or elimination of categories of pupils
- Study the multipliers for weighted funding
- Evaluate the county cost adjustment factors
- Assess the method for calculating small district equity adjustment
- Review the method for calculating the adjustment for each necessarily small school
- Examine the hold-harmless approach and implications

Work Group #2 - Report and Monitor Implementation

Jim McIntosh – Lead

To monitor the implementation of the PCFP and recommend improvements, the Commission will require a clear set of the business rules, processes, and assumptions underlying and governing the PCFP. This will require detailed documentation of these constructs to memorialize them for future reference. This foundation will provide the platform for the Commission to monitor and gauge whether the new plan is working as designed.

Monitoring should include a comparison of the current biennium’s Equity Allocation Model under the Nevada Plan to the proposed PCFP model, using the same data, in order to provide an appropriate “crosswalk” of the Nevada Plan to the PCFP (§76.1). This reconciliation should allow the Commission to fully review its assumptions in order to identify any potential areas within the PCFP that may not be working as designed. A gap analysis should be performed surrounding the implementation and any identified gaps in the implementation should be noted.

The Work Group should create a detailed report and checklist of key data points, timelines, and processes for prospective reviews. As potential improvements or deficiencies are highlighted in these reviews, the Work Group should move to bring corrective action recommendations forward to the Commission for the Legislative Committee on Education.

Key Tasks:

- Review of current reporting required by NRS 387
- Identify critical elements to report at state, district, and school levels under the PCFP
- Ensure the reporting and monitoring requirements are not unduly burdensome to NDE, districts, and/or schools
- Create a detailed report and review checklist for prospective monitoring of the PCFP
- Recommend modification for NDE regulations to accommodate reporting changes
- Document business rules, processes, and assumptions that govern the PCFP
- Ensure that the business rules, processes, and assumptions align with Senate Bill 543
- Use data from the current biennium Nevada Plan to compare outcomes under the new business rules for the PCFP

- Create reconciliations that identify the differences in funding outcomes for school districts that outline how individual business rules or process changes affect each district
- Recommend how to refine business rules/processes where they are not working as designed
- Prepare an analysis of NDE's capacity to implement the PCFP and generate a plan to resolve issues
- Implement a prospective periodic review process of all levels involved in the PCFP
- Recommend to the Commission improvements or corrections to the implementation of the PCFP based on these reviews