

# NEVADA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION COUNCIL TO ESTABLISH ACADEMIC STANDARDS

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**Monday, March 7, 2016**

Department of Education  
700 East Fifth Street  
Board Conference Room  
Carson City, Nevada

And

Department of Education  
9890 South Maryland  
Board Conference Room  
Las Vegas, Nevada

## **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING** *(Video Conferenced)*

### **Council Members Present**

***Las Vegas:***

Sharon Beatty

***Carson City:***

Steve Laden

Nikki Haag

Steve Laden

***Dial In:***

Senator Aaron D. Ford

Members Not Present:

Dr. Gary Shen

Evelyn Allred

Senator Becky Harris

Assembly David Gardner

### **Department Staff Present**

***Las Vegas:***

None

***Carson City:***

Tracy Gruber, Assistant Director, Assessment, Data, and Accountability Management

Dave Brancamp, Director of Standards and Instructional Support

Peter Zutz, Director, Assessment, Data, and Accountability Management

Mary Holsclaw, Education Program-Social Studies

Mayita Sanchez, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent's Office

***Dial In:***

Rick Mercado, Sr. Director Research, Data Recognition Corporation

**Legal Staff Present**

***Carson City:***

Greg Ott, Deputy Attorney General

**No Audience in Attendance**

The meeting was called to order at 1:10 PM with attendance as reflected above.

**Public Comment**

No public comment

**Approval of a Flexible Agenda**

Member Steve Laden moved to approve a flexible agenda. Member Aaron Ford seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Superintendent's Annual Report**

Review of the 2016 Annual Report of the State of Public Education, Generations to Come provided by Dave Brancamp, Director of Standards and Instructional Support on behalf of Steve Canavero. The report can be found [here](#).

Brancamp also briefly touched upon the upcoming ESSA planning and regulations coming forth from the Federal Government.

Member Laden asked about educator licensure regulations and there was brief discussion. There was some clarification on qualification and the vetting of teachers under the recent emergency regulation.

Brancamp expressed sending further information to council members.

Chair Beatty had a question regarding performance of Zoom schools versus non-Zoom schools and asked for the variables involved with the higher student achievement in the Zoom schools.

Brancamp stated that many different groups get to assist in the Zoom Schools. Other than funding they had the support of numerous offices of the department and under both Marva Cleven and Janie Lowe's direction from the previous year it helped to have the collaboration of sending a common message. Brancamp noted that the common message is the powerful piece of the Zoom schools and has been transferred on to the Victory and other schools that have been listed.

Chair Beatty clarified that it was a combination of funding, collaboration, and oversight.

Chair Beatty asked if the demographics of the student population had been considered because sometimes the most at risk students do have characteristics of a non-supportive home. Had this been looked at or something we can look at?

Brancamp stated that he would have to look into the matter. He did mention there are islands of excellence that have students who are in extreme poverty with lack of support that have done very well. Zoom schools demonstrate very strong leadership and connection to staff and the relationship built between the two entities to help support those students. Demographic information is collected on the

Assessment side but unclear how it was specifically used. Brancamp expressed that further information would be provided to the Chair to address her question.

Chair Beatty asked if there is anything missing from the report.

Brancamp noted that there are many items that the report had addressed but could be expanded on in regards to Family Engagement. There was further discussion.

No further questions or comments.

**Information, discussion and possible action on the ELA I and ELA II Cut Scores**

Tracey Gruber, Assistant Director for the Assessment, Data and Accountability Management office (ADAM) was joined by Rick Mercado, Senior Director of Research with Data Recognition Corporation (DRC)

Gruber provided a brief background on the standard setting. The purpose of the standard setting was to provide information to the council to determine whether or not to approve the recommended English Language Arts Cut Scores or ELA I and ELA II. The state had moved from the High School Proficiency Exam to the End of Course Exams. Because the assessment was changed we needed to determine what the cuts would be so that students could be put into each of the four achievement levels based on knowledge skills and abilities that were shown or proven through the assessment. The standard setting occurred in February and several people were invited to participate.

There was further information given on the standard setting process. Only the 2015 assessment was discussed.

The Standards Setting Process and results were also discussed.

It was stated that collaboration with NPD and the Districts determined the recommended standards. In conjunction with WestEd, NDE created the blueprints, item specs and items that were aligned to the new standards. The items that are on the assessments have gone through several reviews to make sure they were aligned to standards, depth of knowledge and the claims to which NDE will be reporting.

Rick Mercado from DRC discussed the exact process that was used during the standard setting as well as the results and the impact of what they meant. The goal is to describe students' performance that could give more information to teachers to the field about the types of knowledge skills and abilities that students have.

Discussion and question brought forth by Member Shen. He asked for clarification on the process questioning if students taking the new exams already had a designation as to which level they were at.

Mercado responded that this was not the case. Students took the test based on the items that were part of the field test forms that were provided to them last May. Students were scored and assigned a three or two digit score based on ELA II, based entirely on their performance. Student scores had been waiting and they had not received a designation of achievement level until standard setting was conducted where educators could come together and make recommendations on which scale ranges which scores were associated with which achievement level. Students do not have preassigned achievement levels but earn achievement levels by doing well on the test.

Member Shen then asked what criteria are applied to students considered a level II or III. Did not understand what came first, the scores or the levels?

Mercado confirmed that the scores came first. The tests were built according to the standards of the content standards. The items went through the process previously discussed where the tests themselves are aligned to the content standards. Students' scores come first, then set scores are created that divide students into different achievement levels. This provides context to teachers on how their students perform.

Chair Beatty asked for further questions.

Member Laden asked for clarification. Grade three through the ELA I test is this entirely or primarily a computer based question and answer exam where they can do multiple choice or true false, purely objective examinations that are computer based?

Tracey Gruber responded that Smarter Balanced three through eight, students would write in their answers which include a rubric. She stated that it is not a traditional true/false format and there are a lot of selective responses, multiple correct answers and drag drop. It is not the traditional paper pencil. There will be a new standard setting as well as examinations will now be computer based.

There was further discussion and clarification on the ELA II between Member Laden and Director Tracy Gruber.

There was then discussion between Rick Mercado and Member Laden where Mercado reiterated the three analytical traits in the rubric, referencing the Power Point provided to members and posted on the board website.

Chair Beatty asked about the possibility of changing the emphasis of the testing as a result of student's lack of clarity and sentence structure in writing. Tracey Gruber noted that they could take this into consideration and take the information into account for future scoring situations.

Member Gardner asked how cut scores were developed and asked if there were copies of the test that the member would be allowed to receive a copy. Tracey Gruber informed that the Member, if he signed a confidentiality statement, would be allowed to review the tests in office, on any occasion.

Member Shen questioned the drop off from 8<sup>th</sup> grade to ELA I. Rick Mercado responded referencing the line graph in the presentation provided to members. There was discussion on the drop-off and discussion as to what bias towards the content based process meant and if there was evidence that the cut scores were telling a story that were not reflecting reality.

Chair Beatty then asked about motivation in regards to testing and how the variable is identified. Chair Beatty then asked about multiple correct answers and the complex passages. Beatty provided a suggestion that the goal in testing and assessing students is not to trip them up or challenge them in ways they have never been challenged before but instead to assess what they know. She asked what could be done to ensure that the difficulty of the test is not so challenging that the students are not demonstrating what they know. Rick Mercado responded that the goal is to allow students to demonstrate what they know and not reveal what it is they do not know. Then there was further discussion on content measured by the items and if types of questions being asked were in alignment with expectations. There was further reiteration by Tracy Gruber that there is representation of the aligned system in Nevada.

There was further discussion between Chair Beatty regarding test design. Tracy Gruber invited Chair Beatty to review tests, after signing the confidentiality agreement, at her leisure.

No further questions.

Motion made by Member Ford to take action and approve the cut scores for the 2015 English Language Arts I and II EOC assessments 2015 administration only.

Motion seconded by Member Haag.

No further discussion.

Carried unanimously.

**Information, discussion and possible action on the End of Course Prioritized Standards for Science**

Dave Brancamp provided information on the End of Course Prioritized Standards for Science. In May of 2014 the department had brought together a team of teachers, parents, administrators and community members to take a look at the Science standards that had been adopted and sent forth to the State Board for adoption. The committee met in May of 2014 and came up with a series of recommendation of what they felt were the standards to set forth and what areas of science should be used.

Dale Erquiaga, Superintendent at the time emphasized the importance to not to create another version of the HSPE so it was very well documented and pushed to the committee that it needed to be narrowed down to one of the courses. After discussion and feedback from multiple stakeholders recommendation were made for End of Course Science I.

Standards were unique because they are structured. See bolded areas see ([support material](#)). Further discussion and information was provided on the structure of the science assessment.

The standards and the process were provided to the council members. It was asked that the council would make a motion to post standards on the website that would go into effect in the spring of 2017 and have the possibility of seeing field test items with approval prior to the spring 2017 assessment.

Mr. Brancamp discussed design and how the model would be on a computer display. The use of technology would help bring the displays to life for students. The models would be a reflection of what is being taught in the classroom.

Chair Beatty asked for clarification on the bullet points or standards. She asked if there was a way to make this clear so that students and parents could understand what they were going to be tested on in regards to science standards.

Mr. Brancamp stated that when the standards would be posted online they would include support documents. He discussed assessment limits that would describe how they would structure a question. The necessary information would be provided to support the teachers so they clearly understood what the standard looked like.

There was further discussion between the Chair and Mr. Brancamp. The Chair asked for further clarity in the phrasing of standards.

*Note Member Ford signed off at 2:40 PM.*

Motion made by Member Laden to recommend that the Council adopt the standards set before them with the addition of the End of Course Exam Science I, written with the clarity in phrasing for teachers and students, to adopt standards.

Motion seconded by Member Haag.

Motion carried unanimously.

**Set Quarterly Calendar and Future Agenda Items**

Tentative quarterly agenda set to meet in June and September of 2016 and then again in January of 2017.

Motion to set quarterly calendar was made by Member Gardner and seconded by Member Laden.

Motion passed, none opposed.

**Public Comment**

No public comment

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn by Member Laden

Seconded by Member Gardner

Meeting adjourned at 3:09 PM