

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COUNCIL TO ESTABLISH ACADEMIC STANDARDS
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2018 (1:00 PM)

Meeting Locations:

Office	Address	City	Meeting Room
Department of Education	9890 S. Maryland Pkwy	Las Vegas	Board Room (2 nd Floor)
Department of Education	700 E. Fifth St	Carson City	Board Room

SUMMARY MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING

(Video Conferenced)

Agenda Item I - Welcome, Pledge of Allegiance, and Roll Call

- Chair Beatty called the meeting to order at 1:25 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council Members in Attendance:

In Las Vegas

- Sharon Beatty, Chair

In Carson City

- Nikki Haag
- David Sirna

Dial In:

- Dina Neal
- Yvette Williams

Department Staff Present:

In Carson City:

- Gabriel Hill, Assistant to the Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement
- Dave Brancamp, Director, Office of Standards and Instructional Support
- Will Jensen, Director, Office of Special Education
- Mike Pacheco, Assistant Director of Assessment
- CJ Fields, Office of Special Education
- Andrew Snyder, Office of Standards and Instructional Support

Legal Staff Present:

In Carson City:

- Greg Ott, Senior Deputy Attorney General

Audience:

In Las Vegas:

- None

In Carson City:

- Ricardo Mercado Director, Research Data Recognition Corporation

Agenda Item II - Public Comment #1

Las Vegas:

- No Public Comment

Carson City:

- No Public Comment

Agenda Item III - Approval of April 11, 2018 Meeting Minutes

- Chairwoman Beatty asked for comments or corrections.
- Member Neal moved to approve the minutes.
 - Member Haag seconded.
 - The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item IV – Approval of Flexible Agenda

- Member Haag moved for a flexible agenda.
- Member Sirna seconded.
 - The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item V – Council Members’ Comments

- Chair Beatty asked for comments from members. Members Williams, Haag, and Neal made no comments. Member Sirna expressed his excitement at being a part of the council, and Chair Beatty welcomed him.
- Chair Beatty shared that she had attended an Equity and Evidence Conference hosted by NDE. The Chair noted that evidence-based practices and information are of great value for assessing students, teachers, and schools. Presenters discussed Zoom schools and other high-performing schools, and they discussed the intense focus on standards-based instruction at grade level. The Chair expressed her belief that the need to guarantee equity through both equal opportunity and equal results is something that Nevada is still grappling with. The role of the Council is to see that student learning is occurring; the primary focus is establishing standards, and those standards are strong and can stand with those of other states. The Council needs to know how the standards are doing and functioning so that members can know if they need to be revamped or redone in some way. All statewide tests must correlate to the standards. Chair Beatty concluded by wondering how well the ACT actually reflects state standards, and she noted that continually lowering cut scores does not inform the Council about the standards themselves.
- Member Neal asked if the Council dealt with the strategies used to implement standards by teachers. Chair Beatty responded that teaching strategies were situational and not something with which the Council deals.

Agenda Item VI: Department Update

- Dave Brancamp, Director of the Office of Standards and Instructional Support, thanked the group for being present. Director Brancamp noted that Deputy Superintendent Barley had moved on and that Superintendent Canavero was looking for a new Deputy Superintendent. Director Brancamp stated that he was willing to answer potential questions from Members, but he hoped that a new Deputy Superintendent would be hired before the January meeting. He mentioned to Member Neal and Member Sirna that he would be willing to arrange a brief primer on the Council if they would be interested.
- Member Williams commented on how much Deputy Superintendent Barley would be missed due to his reform efforts around equity, and she asked that her feelings be conveyed to Superintendent Canavero.

Agenda Item VII: Presentation, discussion, and possible approval of the Nevada Alternate Assessment Cut Scores

- Will Jensen, Director, Office of Special Education, Mike Pacheco, Assistant Director of Assessment, and Ricardo Mercado, Director, Research Data Recognition Corporation, presented on the Nevada Alternate Assessment (NAA) Cut Scores. Director Jensen began by noting that he had been working with these scores for some time. Examining these cut scores is quite important since Nevada has attempted to innovate in regards to helping students with significant cognitive disabilities. AB64 provided a new diploma option for students taking NAA. As a people, we are doing better to help this population. Prior to 2014, Special Education was really about compliance; in 2014, we started to talk about all students. Director Jensen argued that these changes were welcomed since low expectations thwarted students' desire to succeed and gain meaningful employment. Historically, people have focused on the limitations of this population and have had low expectations of them. However, Director Jensen argued for refocusing on the high expectations that they can actually attain. He suggested that our expectations are too influenced by adult concerns and expectations rather than on what high expectations will actually do for students. In the end, high expectations lead to high achievement.
- Member Neal asked about students who had alternate diplomas with retroactivity. Director Jensen expressed some confusion about the question but commented that standard diplomas were available to students who had not passed one or more of the HSPEs in the past. Some 5,000 standard diplomas have been issued to students. Member Neal clarified that she was referring to issuing Ws instead of grades but that Director Jensen had answered the question.
- Chair Beatty asked about the specific population served by the NAA. Director Jensen responded that the NAA was geared towards those with the most significant disabilities. Chair Beatty noted that, when she was a principal, tests were tailored to IEPs. She wondered how fair it was to give the same test to everyone. Director Jensen responded that he viewed this through the lens of equity. There must be a set of benchmarks to guide instruction. Knowing when students have reached their potential is something to be valued. He argued that without something for these kids to shoot for, it is unlikely that they would progress. Chair Beatty stated that equitable might not be truly equitable if a student is unable to address certain principles. She asked how exactly the test was administered. Assistant Director Pacheco responded that the NAA was very accessible and that administration varied from student to student. Mr. Mercado reiterated those comments and noted that the test is designed to show what students know and can do rather than what they don't know or cannot do. Chair Beatty asked if the test resulted in students showing some sort of mastery of science content. Assistant Director Pacheco responded that students were rated proficient or not. Chair Beatty asked if students would be assessed based on current science standards, and Assistant Director Pacheco responded that the test was written for the content connectors (a more assessable version of the standards).

- Assistant Director Pacheco went through a [presentation that can be found at the Council's website](#). In this presentation, he discussed the history of the NAA test, the evolution of the science standards, the Alternate Achievement Level Descriptors (AALDs), and the process of setting the standards in the spring of 2018. Mr. Mercado took over to discuss the standard setting process and their work in a content and policy-based process. Twelve individuals made up the cut score setting committee; the majority of those twelve had students who would take, or had taken, the NAA. Some 300 students in each grade take the NAA. The committee used the Yes/No Angoff Procedure to consider performance level for each item. By looking at the number of items that a student in each level should be able to answer, they can calculate cut scores. They started in the middle (the Grade 8 test) and then examined the Grade 11 and Grade 5 tests. Mr. Mercado then presented the NAA Science Cut Scores Impact Data and noted that, while the majority of students would currently be in Level 1 or Level 2, with help more students would be able to enter Levels 3 and 4. He then presented the cut score recommendations for the Council.
 - Member Williams asked about students with ELA or math difficulties and if that was taken into consideration. Mr. Mercado responded that it was and that very little math/computation was involved in the NAA. Teachers can read the test aloud to students, and students can respond in the way they normally do.
 - Member Haag asked if IEP accommodations were allowable for use on the NAA. Mr. Mercado responded in the affirmative. Member Haag asked about time extensions, and Mr. Mercado responded that the NAA was not a timed test; it could last a week or more.
 - Chair Beatty asked about the seven classroom teachers included on the committee; what sort of students did they work with? Mr. Mercado responded that they were special education teachers who worked with students in a variety of contexts. The teachers worked with a wide array of special-needs students. Chair Beatty asked if all the teachers worked with dramatically disabled or challenged students. Mr. Mercado replied that it was a mix and it included some teachers who were resource experts. Chair Beatty observed that the school where she served as principal had a variety of special education programs. Lumping all those students together seemed fundamentally erroneous. The Chair asked if the NAA was fully videotaped in the same way as it was done in the past. Assistant Director Pacheco replied in the affirmative. Chair Beatty commented on the rigorous nature of the process and of administering the test. The Chair inquired if the results of the test affected the achievement designation of the school. Assistant Director Pacheco noted that the results were a part of the NSPF. Chair Beatty asked if a school with a high population of special needs students would be held to the same levels as other schools. Assistant Director Pacheco replied that there was an alternate NSPF, and the Chair asked about schools with special needs programs along with non-special needs populations. Assistant Director Pacheco responded that those schools would have the results of the NAA factored into the NSPF.
 - Member Neal asked how it was fair to include these scores into the entire score for the school. Director Jensen replied that, while the expectations might be different, there still must be high expectations for students with disabilities with some sort of accountability to the system. We have a diploma option with high rigor, but we need to separate out adult issues with student needs. Director Jensen argued that we should not rate a school highly if they are failing special needs students, and we should not give students a meaningless piece of paper. If the ratings are to mean anything, they have to reflect what is good for students. What we are doing now is leading to a very low employment rate, but that can be improved with high expectations and programs of support. Director Jensen noted that Nevada is also embarking on a massive attempt to improve professional development opportunities so that teachers can deliver content and meet the cut scores. Member Neal asked about a school where 1% of the population might be disabled. They might have three or four separate populations, and they are trying to move from two to three stars. While Member Neal agreed with the need for

accountability, she pointed out that it was very difficult to move enough of the needles to achieve change. Member Neal inquired if this was a bill or amendment of some sort. Director Jensen stated that the legislative actions had already been done; this was the final leg of the regulation process. The scores should be passed to ensure that there is a tight package for all students with disabilities to ensure that they are not left behind.

- Member Williams argued for the need to hold schools accountable for the students they teach. Without accountability, we will never change the opportunity gaps, and we will create a false picture of school achievement. Students with the greatest needs need more resources; accountability will enable us to channel resources to those students rather than leaving them behind.
- Member Haag noted that her son has an IEP and that this system works. It is necessary for parents and schools to have high expectations of students. Her son will be going for his Advanced Diploma because of the available programs and the high expectations of his parents and teachers.
- Member Beatty commented that she expected high standards for students; however, children with serious disabilities have differences on an individual basis. That is why they have IEPs. Taking students with IEPs and plugging them into a generic test seemed problematic. The Chair inquired if it would be better to use IEPs to create testing as was done previously. Mr. Mercado noted that the variation of the population was a serious concern that the committee addressed, and it was one of the main topics of conversation.
- Member Neal apologized if she seemed insensitive in the phrasing or tone of her questions.
- Chair Beatty asked if someone would be willing to make a motion.
- Member Haag moved to approve the 2018 Nevada Alternate Assessment Cut Scores as presented by NDE.
 - Member Williams seconded.
 - The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item VIII: Standards Revision Update

- Director Brancamp reminded members that 2018 was a very busy year for the Academic Standards Council. Once standards leave the Council, they go to the State Board in teacher friendly language. NDE then works with the regional professional development organizations to develop professional development programs, and they then go through the process of becoming state law. This can be a long process. In the 2017-18 school year, the Computer Science Standards were added to the Ed Tech Standards, and they were approved by the Legislative Commission in October. The Health Standards for Personal Safety were also approved. Fine Arts will have a public hearing on 10-12. The Social Studies Standards, except for the financial literacy elements, have made their way into law as well. The financial literacy elements are going through the legal side. It will need to be done twice (now and again after the legislature wraps up in June).
- Member Williams asked about the cultural competency requirements for professional development that were passed by the legislature. Member Williams commented that she had heard they were being watered down. Director Brancamp responded that regional professional development centers and districts dealt with those issues. Interpretations and presentation can vary depending on the office. It might be possible to bring people in to discuss professional development at the January meeting.
- Director Brancamp reported that Ed Tech standards are in the process of being revised and the meetings to begin that process would occur on October 18th and 19th in NDE's Las Vegas office. Any interested Council members were welcome to observe. The current plan was to leave the Computer Science Standards as is and simply update the rest of the standards. These might be

available at the January meeting. The Health Standards will also be revised. The recently hired Andrew Snyder, who was at the meeting, will be in charge of those revisions.

- Member Williams asked about the time of the Ed Tech meetings. Director Brancamp responded.

Agenda Item IX: Next meeting and Future Agenda Items

- Chair Beatty asked about January 14th, 21st, and 24th. Member Neal commented that the 24th would be too late for her given the start of the Legislative session. Member Williams commented that the 14th would be best.
 - Member Haag made a motion for the next meeting to be on January 14th.
 - Member Williams seconded.
 - The motion passed unanimously
- Chair Beatty asked about June 25th or 27th and July 8th or 9th. Member Neal stated that the June dates would be problematic for her, Member Williams pointed out that she would be gone the month of July, and Chair Beatty suggested the 27th as a tentative date.
 - Member Haag made a motion to have a tentative date for June 27th.
 - Member Sirna seconded
 - The motion was approved (with Member Williams abstaining)
- Chair Beatty asked for potential agenda items.
 - Director Brancamp noted that representatives of Elko, Washoe, and Clark county school districts had expressed interest in presenting on the impact that adopting new standards had on the districts when adopting new materials. Chair Beatty thought a presentation on that topic seemed like a good idea and that the council needed to be aware of how it influences the state.
 - Chair Beatty noted a possible agenda item as being professional development and cultural competency. Director Brancamp noted that he could talk with Member Williams about that. Member Williams also asked for an update on the Multicultural Standards and an update on their implementation plans. Director Brancamp stated that he could have that for the members in January.
 - Chair Beatty asked for a report on how the ACT correlated with Nevada's standards. Director Brancamp noted that would be an issue for Director Peter Zutz. Director Brancamp asked if this was a report from NDE or WestEd, and Chair Beatty responded that she simply wanted the information.

Agenda Item X: Public Comment #2

- Member Beatty asked if there was any public comment.

Las Vegas

- None

Carson City

- None

Agenda Item XI: Adjournment

- Chair Beatty adjourned the meeting at 3:18 PM