

President Wynn and Board Members,

We are members of the parent advocacy group HOPE, Honoring Our Public Education. Thank you for letting us address you today. We support so many of the new Legislative changes in Nevada's K-12 education system, and we have attended every Advisory Committee, TAC and Townhall meeting with cautious optimism that the changes being proposed will give all of our children a better chance of graduating high school and succeeding in college and careers.

Our 800 and counting, active HOPE members represent over 41 zip codes across the valley and are from all spectrums of education. We all share similar enthusiasm at the prospect of real decision making being made at individual school sites, based on student need. We would relish greater efficiency, true family and community involvement, and changing unsuccessful practices in a meaningful way.

Because our advocacy focuses on championing a wide variety of challenges in public ed, we have become increasingly concerned as the impending timeline approaches, at the amount of missing information, and the lack of real-time & historical data to vet. While we can appreciate the value of not being overly prescriptive in law and regulation, we must provide enough of a framework to ensure true, equitable support to our children, teachers and administrators.

We have seen the pinball activity of the reorg meetings over the last seven months and have reserved judgment because of the constant change in trajectory from meeting to meeting. Now past the discovery phase, we feel the following concerns should be addressed before we can propel our students in the Reorg ether, in good conscience.

In Sect. 14, the list of services still provided through central administration is so extensive, no one has been able to illuminate what services will actually transfer to the school site. In that vein, the undocumented but well-touted "savings" that will come from eliminating said services, remain less than conjecture. For example, currently we receive about one quarter of our promised federal SPED funds and the district is left to cover millions of dollars in need. How can we expect individual schools to bear the burden of that deficit, with their current per pupil dollars? Will we actually be robbing Peter to pay federally mandated Paul, upsetting the already questionable equity our students currently face? Will unprotected GATE money be subject to filling the holes, as well?

I'd like to share a 2016 actual flex budget for a four star school that receives no title funds. With approximately 700 students, their allocated budget for the year is roughly \$3,200,000. The cost of their personnel alone (salaries & benefits) is over

\$3 million for 34 licensed teachers, 2 Administrators & contracted hours for support staff. They require additional support staff hours for their special education needs and pay out of pocket. Combined with approximately \$140,000 for an additional teacher for growth, and teaching supplies, this leaves the school team about \$50,000 to pay for all copy paper, office supplies, Custodial supplies, Health office supplies, Books & materials, technology replacement, Subscriptions, Forms, publications and Subscription fees for online programs. This is an experienced administrator working for years with a flexible budget. Seeing the list of how far that money must stretch, exactly what do they truly have autonomy over, not to mention any "cost savings"? We already see CCSD schools on flexible budgets attempting to save money by cutting programs, hiring long term subs, and expanding class size to eliminate teachers. Is this the autonomy the Legislature felt the school communities were craving? There are approximately 180 of our 356 schools currently operating with a flex budget, but as evidenced by the latest ROI study only a handful are utilizing it well enough to register "success". Rapid change will need to occur to guarantee more success with those administrators, as well as the remaining 176 admins that have no flexible budget experience. In addition to budget training for all, we cannot impress strongly enough the importance for Climate and Culture training for the entire team. Superintendent Skorkowsky stated that CCSD has Reorg funds until January, right when the real work is to start. The previous empowerment model's success came with appropriated state and grant money. How do we ensure that all training via the School Associate Superintendent is adequate; the survey at the end of the year? And with the cost of the transition unknown, and no estimates on future available funds, you can see that the administrators we have surveyed are understandably concerned.

Over the years, HOPE has also attended the Task Force meetings charged with recommending weights for the modernization of our funding formula. Section 17 is very concerning because the Implementation of weights at the state level is stalled due to lack of money, but yet AB394 requires the school district to do it. Additionally, if the Department of Education recommends using actual teacher salaries versus averages in 2018, this could be apocalyptic.

In Section 17, WHY is there only a hold harmless for magnet and rural schools? Not having ALL of our schools given this same entitlement will leave the bulk of them vulnerable to having their budgets cut below existing pp \$, especially with implemented weighted funding. And if student achievement is the primary goal for AB394, how will this lack of protection negatively affect student outcomes?

While we are trying to transition central services from "free" to "school-to-pay," where do utilities come into play? Who pays to keep the lights on, and the water running? Are these dollars part of the money that comes from central to the local school precinct and then back to central? Are those actuals, which is especially important for track schools, and our new schedule next year when school starts two weeks earlier in August?

In addressing the makeup of the school team in Section 25, the information regarding the Parental component of the school team is largely absent from draft regs. We support Educate Nevada Now added language recommendations for this section. Further, in our survey completed earlier this year, hundreds of parents commented on their inability to participate in a parent group (75 percent said occasionally or never). Additionally, if there isn't a parent group at their school, as is the case with close to half of the schools in CCSD, there was a high percentage (almost 70 percent) of parents that stated they were NOT willing to start one. The majority of parents we spoke to (other than the handful of schools that makeup the community of Moapa), worried that time was a luxury they didn't have and they questioned their ability to be effective without feeling pressure to defer to administrators and teachers, for fear their child will suffer the consequences. While the plan says "there is no hierarchy," we must be realistic. Given these responses, we suggest parent participation and training should be made mandatory to level the field. Hopefully the liability component for parents will be remedied in the upcoming session but we are aware that is also a deterrent for parents to serve.

We are grateful to CCEA for working to provide the training teachers will need. We wish the Administrators' union saw the need to provide the same obvious supports for their members. Parents and teachers have expressed that the selection of teachers based on payment of membership fees is discriminatory and the school team may lack important historical insight as veteran teachers are less likely to be members. What happens when the highest vote getters are not union members? Must they join or considered unable to serve? The plan states that efficient operation requires constant planning and communicating. In Section 26, how will teachers participate with their current CBA restricting their "after hours" events to three per year, but the regulation requires no less than one meeting per month? Will meetings then be held during teachers contract hours, limiting parent and community availability? How does the "NO additional compensation allowed" affect the teachers' ability to serve? (Sect. 26, 5 & 7) If more money must be found for compensation of staff, does that come from the school's operating budget?

We suggest that the union requirement for teachers and support staff be removed, parent participation be made mandatory, term limits be instituted, terms be staggered, and moving forward from year one, an election is responsible for the election of all members.

In Section 30, with respect to accountability, parents, teachers and administrators are concerned by the use of surveys as being our measure for success. Historically, we suffer from abysmal participation in surveys for several reasons: they aren't mandatory, the results are subjective, and the lack of employee anonymity hinders participation for fear of retribution. Not only do we recommend that a minimum threshold be added, but also that this cannot be our only barometer.

We need to make it clear that we are absolutely not against the Reorganization. However, we have spent time navigating through many upheavals in Nevada education, from the rollout of the NACS, the SBAC chaos and the continued confusion of the EOC exams. We

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

JENNIFER BLACKHURST | **PRESIDENT**
CARYNE SHEA | **VICE PRESIDENT**
ERICA REYNOLDS | **SECRETARY**
ANNA ANTOLICK | **MEMBER**
JULIE VIGIL | **MEMBER**

don't want to see similar implementation struggles and rushed timelines with autonomous schools. Parents, teachers and administrators all agree that the ultimate goal is increased student achievement for every student in every school. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and consideration for our children's success as the determining factor for when and how this reorganization is adequately vetted and approved.