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Statement of Emergency Allowing School Safety Teams to Provide Assistance to Students Who Self-Report Safety Concerns

Public school systems across the United States and in Nevada are currently facing historic safety challenges. Nevada has been deeply affected by many forms of violence in schools, from student suicides related to bullying or other stressors facing our children, to gun violence. Nevada annually honors its teacher of the year, with an award named for Michael Landsberry, a teacher who gave his life protecting students from gun violence in Sparks in 2013.

The Nevada legislature has taken significant efforts to allow students to come forward to report dangerous activities passing Senate Bills 504 and 338 of the 2015 legislative session requiring students be provided a 24-hour tipline to report bullying and establishing an anonymous reporting outlet for dangerous activities.

The Nevada Department of Education's Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment has worked diligently with the Department of Public Safety and other stakeholders to establish Nevada's SafeVoice program to provide students a single telephone number, mobile phone application, and online portal to report safety concerns.

Section 1323 of Chapter 388 of the Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) requires the Director of the Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment to ensure the office maintains a 24-hour toll-free hotline and website where reports of bullying can be received. Section 1351 further requires the principal of a school to take immediate action to ensure the safety and well-being of the student or students. Section 1455 of Chapter 388 of NRS requires the Director of the Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment to establish a program allowing anonymous reporting of dangerous, violent and unlawful activity. The identity of individuals reporting information must not be disclosed because as the legislature declared in NRS 388.1454, "It is in the best interest of this State to ensure the anonymity of a person who reports such an activity, or the threat of such an activity, and who wishes to remain anonymous."

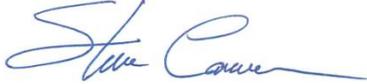
Current law allows for the use of a single center to receive information pursuant to both avenues of reporting. However, the anonymity provisions of the two programs are different and the application of the strong anonymity provisions of NRS 388.1455 to an individual reporting bullying of themselves would prevent the principal of the school from knowing the self-reporter's identity and taking their statutorily required actions to ensure safety and well-being.

The proposed emergency regulation clarifies that any self-reported tip received by the Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment's SafeVoice program is a report provided to the NRS 388.1323 tipline and that the self-reporting individual has opted not to remain anonymous

from school officials who are required to assist them. All information received pursuant to a self-report would continue to be a confidential education record protected from other disclosures as a confidential product of a law enforcement investigation. Due to the urgency of the safety concerns facing Nevada students and the need to allow principals and school safety team members to provide assistance to self-reporting individuals as quickly as possible, an emergency exists to promulgate emergency regulations to allow for this clarification. This will then allow the Director of the Office for a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment to begin immediately sharing critical information with school officials who can provide assistance to students in crisis. The Superintendent of Public Instruction will also commence the process of enacting permanent regulations to continue this information sharing after the expiration of this emergency regulation. Therefore, for the above reasons, I respectfully request the Governor of the State of Nevada endorse this Statement of Emergency allowing Nevada's SafeVoice program to clearly identify individuals who have opted not to remain anonymous and more effectively investigate those reports.

Requested: Endorsed:

Requested:



Steve Canavero
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Endorsed:



Brian Sandoval
Governor