



NSEA 2017 Legislative Priorities

Table of Contents

Legislative and Political Action Background	i
Introduction to NSEA	ii
Legislative Priorities	1
• Protecting Public Education	
• Better Schools Through Improved Funding	3
• High Quality Teaching and Education	5
• Every Student Succeeds	5
• Member Protection	7
NSEA-i Legislative Mobile App	8



BACKGROUND

The *NSEA Policy and Procedures Regarding Legislative and Political Action* outlines responsibilities for the development of the organization’s legislative priorities. “The Government Relations Committee, in concert with the President and the Executive Director, shall develop the NSEA Legislative Program for each legislative session by assessing the membership, evaluating external legislative proposals and reviewing the current political climate. The NSEA Delegate Assembly may propose legislative items for consideration. The NSEA-TIP Board of Directors shall make final approval of the NSEA Legislative Program.”

Per this direction, staff in conjunction with the GR Committee and Lobby Team created a membership survey to identify legislative priorities heading into the 2017 legislative session. The results of this survey were presented to a joint meeting of the GR Committee and Lobby Team in addition to the NSEA Board. These results, along with input from various local affiliates were used by the GR Committee and Lobby Team to develop a legislative candidate questionnaire. An internal version of this questionnaire was sent to the NSEA Board, GR Committee, Lobby Team, and staff. Meanwhile, the input of CCEA, ESEA, NSEA-R, UCN, WEA, and WESP was solicited regarding their major legislative priorities.

A draft of this document was amended by the GR Committee and Lobby Team and forwarded to the 2016 NSEA Delegate Assembly.

INTRODUCTION TO NSEA

The Nevada State Education Association has enjoyed a long and rich tradition as a respected voice for education in the Silver State. The Association serves as representative to more than 24,000 members.

The primary mission of NSEA is to advocate for and empower members by providing a united, political and professional voice in order to ensure the right to quality public education. The Nevada State Education Association represents the state's teachers and education support professionals. Educating children is what we know, what we do, and what matters most to us.

The organization is extremely active in promoting opportunities for professional awareness, growth, and empowerment. The NSEA is a leader not only in the political arena but in the professional development area as well. The NSEA takes pride in serving as a well-balanced, democratic organization which attempts to serve the best interests of its members while meeting the needs of the students they teach and the communities they serve.

NSEA'S CORE VALUES

Member Driven

We believe in a member driven organization, created and democratically governed by members. As stewards of the organization, members determine the legislative agenda, provide financial oversight, and craft the guiding principles of the organization.

Justice

We believe in the protection of member rights. We believe that the collective bargaining process is essential for the fair and just treatment of members.

Equality

We believe public education is the basis for a strong and healthy society which results from quality schools, quality educators, quality students, and quality communities.

Strong Vocal Advocate

We believe a quality public education includes partnerships with students, employees, families, communities, and all stakeholders who support NSEA's mission and vision.

NSEA'S VISION

The vision of NSEA is to be the trusted education expert, united to ensure an exceptional public education for every Nevada student.

NSEA LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

NSEA believes that the future of public education in Nevada is at a crossroads. While the issue of education clearly headlined the last legislative session, the outcome for its future is mixed. A quality education for all, ensured by a strong and well-resourced system of public education, should continue to be the Legislature's top priority. For nearly a decade Nevada has ranked near the bottom at basic per-pupil expenditures. While the passage of additional revenue last session was welcome relief, it hasn't yet approached the level of funding necessary so educators can do their job of providing all students with a pathway to success.

NSEA's legislative priorities seek to improve the quality of education in Nevada through supporting the educator's ability to provide quality instruction and to improve student achievement. NSEA advocates that education bills passed by the Legislature should be based on sound education policies and the belief that all educators should be supported in their development to be highly effective. In order for all students to master standards and attain the essential skills to graduate high school, their educators must be supported by all levels of the education community.

PROTECTING PUBLIC EDUCATION, THE GREAT EQUALIZER

Quality education is more than a savings account

In a potential blow to the institution of public education as the great equalizer, Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) passed last legislative session. While proponents hailed that the vouchers would actually help save Nevada's public

education system and benefit the students who are most in need, the exact opposite is actually true. Every voucher recipient, who qualifies by enrolling their child in a public school for a lifetime total of 100 days, would receive \$5,100 - \$5,700 to apply towards private school tuition or other educational uses. Vouchers would be funded by deducting 90% of the voucher amount directly from the public education budget.

In addition to being unconstitutional, there are numerous, fatal policy problems with the program. While individual children might benefit by having their private school tuition and other educational expenditures subsidized by taxpayers, public education as a whole would suffer. Also, in a review of those who attempted to utilize the voucher, it is clear that the program was not going to serve students who are most in need.

As with all voucher programs, ESA's raise concerns regarding cost, equity, and accountability (both fiscal and academic). Implementation of vouchers in Nevada would lead to devastating funding losses at the local level. Because fixed costs are not reduced simply because a few students leave, the loss of those students represent funding losses with no concomitant reduction in expenses. The results are inevitable – loss of programs and increased class size, which make leaving the system more appealing to those families that are able to do so, or an increase in local taxes to make up the difference. The Nye County School District predicted that, "Any loss in [state funding] due to lower student numbers will result in the loss of teachers and staff in addition to an increased staff to student ratio."

AB 421 was passed during the 2015 legislative session, creating the Spending and Government Efficiency (SAGE) Commission for the system of K-12 public education and the Nevada System of Higher Education. The Commission is required to make periodic recommendations to the Governor identifying: (1) areas in which the public costs of public education and the Nevada System of Higher Education may be reduced; (2) areas in which increased



efficiencies in public education and the Nevada System of Higher Education may be found; and (3) any means by which public education and the Nevada System of Higher Education may be improved.

Meanwhile, millions of dollars in public funds for education are being allocated to the private and non-governmental sector without this same level of oversight. In order to protect the public trust, we believe that legislation should be passed that forms a commission to study and make recommendations for efficiencies and potential reductions in this spending. This should apply specifically to: charters, Charter Management Organizations (CMOs) for the Achieve School District, vouchers, opportunity scholarships, and any organizations that are recruiting charters or private sector parties to perform preK-12 education services. Inclusive of this is the role the Department of Education, Board of Education has played in awarded contracts to private sector entities to perform preK-12 education services. This commission would be charged with also holding public hearings for the purpose of reporting out their work as well as allowing for public input.



To address these concerns, **NSEA Supports:**

- Immediate repeal of Education Savings Accounts.
- Formation of a commission charged with assessing the efficiency and efficacy of public dollars allocated to private sector and non-governmental entities to perform the function of preK-12 education.

BETTER SCHOOLS THROUGH IMPROVED FUNDING

NSEA is dedicated to the success of every student. We know students learn better in classes that are not overcrowded and school facilities that are not antiquated. Students need up-to-date technology and text books to be prepared for

the challenges of careers and college. Students deserve a well prepared, licensed teacher in every classroom and quality support from Education Support Professionals (ESPs).

That is why NSEA applauded the passage of the commerce tax, SB 483, so that funding for public education in Nevada could finally get back to pre-Recession levels. While the passage of this tax was laudable, it really should only be a beginning. Even with this new revenue, Nevada continues to rank near the bottom in states in per pupil funding for public education.

Unfortunately, increased education spending from last session hasn't necessarily translated into competitive salaries and benefits for teachers and ESPs. Nevada continues to face a vexing teacher and staff shortage. For example, in the middle of this school year, the Clark County School District still had more than 700 open teaching positions. That means a parade of substitute teachers, uneven teaching and learning, and instability and uncertainty for thousands of our children. Creation of a dedicate source of funding for licensed educators and support professionals will enable Nevada to be competitive in recruiting in the best personnel to educate our students.

The State of Nevada has a vast interest in a well prepared, well educated work force, and a failure to adequately fund public education will ultimately reduce the standard of living for all Nevadans. To meet the needs of Nevada's students, the legislature must provide the necessary resources.

To address these concerns, **NSEA Supports:**

- Building on the progress from last legislative session to increase funding for the support of Nevada's public schools.
- Creating a dedicated funding mechanism for the salary and benefits of licensed educators and education support professionals.
- Development of a teacher loan forgiveness program (modeled after the Minnesota Teacher Shortage Student Loan Repayment Program) to help attract and retain teachers.

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING & EDUCATION

NSEA believes attracting and retaining qualified teachers in every classroom and for every subject is critical for all Nevadans. Meanwhile, it is also critical to provide our educators with the opportunity to gain and improve the knowledge and skills important to their positions and job performance.

Nevada has made some strides in the past few years on NSEA priorities to continue to improve the teaching profession with the creation of Professional Development programs as well as Peer Assistance and Review. Last session SB474 created the Great Teaching and Leading Fund, allowing our local affiliate, the Clark County Education Association, to become of provider of site-based professional development. SB332 funded the Peer Assistance and Review pilot program in Clark County. Both of these programs should be expanded statewide, and additional professional development opportunities should be extended to education support professionals.

To address these concerns, the **NSEA Supports:**

- Additional resources for site-based Professional Development programs, including stipends for National Board Certification Training.
- Statewide Expansion of Peer Assistance and Review, to help new educators and those whose practice is in need of improvement.
- Increased and continued funding for locally bargained enhanced compensation programs to reward skills, knowledge, and responsibilities.

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS

Less testing, more learning

For 14 years, students and educators here in Nevada and across the country operated under the deeply flawed No

Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) returns decision making back where it belongs - in the hands of local educators, parents and communities - while keeping the focus on students most in need.

Simply stated, ESSA will help ensure that all students, regardless of their ZIP code, will have the support, tools, and time to learn what they need to succeed. It also ensures that educators' voices are part of the decision making process all levels.

Even after the historic passage of this bill, the work in many ways is just beginning. Because the new law does away with so many federal mandates on everything from assessment, accountability and evaluation, it will be up to the state to determine how ESSA is implemented. That means it is now up to us to develop new and better assessments and accountability systems for our students, teachers, schools, and communities.

Given these developments, **NSEA Supports:**

- Creating school site-based empowerment councils that include parents, educators, education support professionals, administrators, and students to return control of education back to the schools and community.
- Accessing federal grant dollars to audit and streamline Nevada's assessment systems, eliminating unnecessary and duplicative assessments
- Amending the Nevada Educator Performance Framework to eliminate student test scores from teacher evaluations.
- Better alignment of professional development opportunities with educator evaluations.



MEMBER PROTECTION

Union rights, healthcare, & retirement security

We believe public education is the foundation of democracy and the cornerstone of a civil and free society. And there is no more important component to public education than the people who do the work. As the representative of over 24,000 educators and ESPs, NSEA is committed to the well-being and protection of our members. This includes safety and rights in the workplace, our collective bargaining rights, as well as access to life's necessities like healthcare and security in retirement.

To that end, **NSEA Supports:**

- Strengthening the state's collective bargaining provisions to ease timelines on the selection of arbitrators, clarify leave opportunities for bargaining, and ensuring rollover of economic provisions beyond the expiration date of a contract.
- Preserving and protecting against any further attacks on NVPERS in order to preserve the system's defined benefit status.
- Realignment of PERS investment portfolio to gain greater financial stability.
- Providing resources, support, and protection to education support professionals and licensed professionals when addressing student discipline and behavior issues.
- Rolling back Achievement School Districts and turnaround schools.



The 79th Legislative Session...



Yeah, there's an app for that!

(and you won't believe what it can do!)



Look for NSEA interactive on iPhone or Droid or visit <http://ddut.ch/nsea>.



Login to the NSEA app requires a registered email. For more information contact NSEA at contact.nsea@nsea-nv.org.

The logo for the Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) features a red outline of the state of Nevada on the left. To its right, the words "Nevada State Education Association" are written in red, stacked vertically. Below this, the letters "NSEA" are written in a large, bold, blue serif font.

NSEA LOBBY TEAM

The members of the Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) Lobby Team include:

NSEA President **Ruben Murillo, Jr.**

NSEA Executive Director **Brian Lee**

NSEA Deputy Executive Director of Government Relations **Chris Daly**

NSEA Government Relations Committee Chairperson **Phil Kaiser**

Clark County Education Association (CCEA) President **Vikki Courtney**

Education Support Employees Association President (ESEA) **Virginia Mills**

NSEA-Retired (NSEA-R) President **Tom Wellman**

UniServ Council of Nevada (UCN) President **Andy Piper**

Washoe Education Association (WEA) President **Natha Anderson**

Washoe Education Support Professionals (WESP) President **Melissa Boesen**

