Welcome to the 80th Legislative Session!

(Carson City, NV) - The 80th legislative session began Monday, February 4th and will run 120 days into June. NSEA has been on the ground in Carson City for the past 2 weeks, engaging legislators, working on bill drafts, and reviewing budget proposals. NSEA's Lobby Team will be active for the entire Session to ensure a quality public education for every Nevada Student.

In this first issue of Powerline for 2019, we will introduce you to the members of the NSEA Lobby Team, and provide you with information to help educators and public education win by directly participating in the legislative process.

Opportunities in 2019

NSEA is proud of the work we did during the 2018 election cycle, electing pro-public education majorities in the legislature, and helping to elect Steve Sisolak Governor. The results of the election give us our best opportunity to strengthen and protect public education and take steps to provide our students and communities with strong public schools. You don’t have to follow newspaper headlines to know that education funding is front and center for 2019. This includes efforts to modernize the nation’s oldest school funding formula.

It is important to remember these opportunities are the result of hard work done by our association and our member leaders during the 2018 election. Educator voices made a difference in key races, and together with our political allies, we turned out a record number of education voters in a midterm election. While elections are important, our work ahead is equally so. We need to hold legislators accountable to their pro-public education positions, especially when important actions like creating new revenue for education will require great political courage. NSEA is, and has been the voice of Nevada educators for over 100 years. Our collective voices will, again, be important during this Session.

Are you connected?

The NSEA Lobby Team is your voice on the ground during the 120-day session. There will be numerous opportunities for educators to participate directly in the process; we will need your help! Are you connected to NSEA? During the session, we will be tweeting and texting updates. You can find NSEA on Twitter with the handle @nseaonline. If you do not receive the NSEA e-newsletter, please subscribe by sending an email to contact.nsea@nsea-nv.org with the subject line Newsletters. This newsletter, Powerline, will be updated on the NSEA website www.nsea-nv.org as well. On Facebook, facebook.com/nseanv members will get updates on proposed legislation and there will be an easy-to-follow meme alerting members to legislation needing support or opposition and how to take action. Throughout the session, we will be posting which bills NSEA supports and/or opposes so that you are kept up to date as to all bills we are tracking.
School Funding, a Statewide Crisis

As Nevada’s economy and overall job market improves, careers in the education field become less financially appealing. Without competitive salaries and benefits for licensed educators and ESPs, Nevada will continue to face a vexing teacher and staff shortage. That means a parade of substitute teachers, uneven teaching and learning, and instability and uncertainty for thousands of our children. Meanwhile, the cost of healthcare tends to be a burden on both educators and school districts who redirect monies that would otherwise go to salaries into covering increased employer healthcare costs. Increased premiums and copays without corresponding increases in pay mean less overall money for educators.

Governor Sisolak’s budget proposal finally addresses this critical issue with a proposed 3% salary increase for K-12 education personnel next fiscal year. While this increase doesn’t make up for over a decade of cuts and freezes, it is an important first step. We know that more needs to be done.

NSEA was one of the loudest voices in Carson City for increased funding during the last Session, and we recognize there is still much work to be done on education funding. NSEA will continue to call attention to the IP1 room tax money that was intended to supplement, not supplant, education spending. NSEA is concerned the proposed base per-pupil spending for the next biennium is projected to be outpaced by inflation. The lack of base funding for education could mean school districts across the state will again be forced to make difficult budget cuts by 2020.

NSEA is committed to working with Governor Sisolak and legislators to ensure students benefit from reasonable class sizes and teachers and ESP’s have competitive salaries and benefits, which will require a renewed investment in our students and schools. Otherwise, Nevada will continue to face an alarming teacher and staff shortage and overcrowded classrooms, leaving the needs of diverse student populations left unmet.

The Nevada Constitution requires all public schools receive adequate funding to fulfill their duty to educate every Nevada student. NSEA will continue our work to make sure Nevada moves the needle to provide adequate funding for the basic operation of public schools, so that every Nevada student has access to a high-quality public education.

Creation of a dedicated source of funding for licensed educators and support professionals will enable Nevada to be competitive in recruiting the best personnel to educate our students. The State of Nevada has a vast interest in a well-prepared, well-educated workforce, 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.

NSEA remains committed to creating a dedicated funding mechanism for the salary and benefits of both licensed educators and education support professionals.

FIGHTING FOR ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR OUR SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS!

From West Virginia to Oklahoma, Kentucky to Arizona, and most recently, California and Colorado, our brothers and sisters have taken to the streets and their statehouses to demand more for their students along with better school funding and pay for educators. Meanwhile, here in Nevada, most school districts have struggled to close budget deficits and have left Nevada Educators with little or nothing extra for salaries or benefits. At 47th in the nation, the issue of school funding in Nevada tops nearly everyone’s list of priorities.

That is why educators from across our state will be converging on Carson City on Monday, February 18th, for Red for Ed Day in Nevada. Making significant strides in education funding requires our leaders to have the courage to stand up to the powerful interests to demand new revenue. This just won’t happen until those most effected by the severity of underfunding education mobilize and make sure our voices are heard.
The Nevada State Education Association (NSEA), your state association, has a Lobby Team in Carson City, NV working for you each and every day. Our elected lawmakers at the Legislature determine everything from what teachers teach to how schools are funded. That's why the Nevada State Education Association has lobbyists who are there when you can't be, monitoring the issues, and the bills, and making sure your voice is heard loud and clear. Our Lobby Team is comprised of leaders from all around the state that members like you have elected to represent them:

- 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
- 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

Our team has been meeting with lawmakers for months to ensure our schools, our students, our teachers, and our support professionals are their top priority. Please join NSEA's lobbying efforts by becoming engaged throughout the session. We have numerous ways in which you can stay informed, involved, and make a huge impact. It is crucial that the legislators hear from you, first hand, how their proposals would impact the work you do each day in our schools and community.

Here's How To Get Involved and Stay Engaged Throughout the Session

**Social Media**
With the various platforms available, search “Nevada State Education Association” to stay current with late-breaking developments on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Through our social media, you’ll see which bills we are tracking, as well as which bills we support and oppose.

**Newsletters**
Watch out for various newsletters delivered directly to your email. Inside this easy to read e-newsletter, you will find all the latest developments from the ground in Carson City, NV, and article submissions from members across the State.

**Text Messages**
Know when to take action when we send you a text message. When important topics are heard, we will reach out to members so you can testify on bills we are tracking.

**The Legislative Action Center**
Visit our website where you can get all the updates you need. You can also contact your legislators directly from our website, or by going to leg.state.nv.us. You can track bills, read public testimony, and offer opinions on various bills.

**Share Your Opinions**
The Nevada Legislative website includes an opinion poll portion for constituents. Throughout a legislative session, legislators review these opinions to gain perspective on how constituents in their districts feel about legislation.

**Testify in Person**
Hearings are held in Carson City and remotely at the Grant Sawyer building in Las Vegas. This is a great way to share your opinions on the real world implications of the bills being proposed.