



perspectives

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Message from the President



As we make the transition from summertime rest and renewal to the hectic fall school days, I want to thank every one of you for the work you do to support all of Nevada's students. This is going to be an incredible year of learning, growth, and activism as we continue to create great learning and working environments in our public schools.

This summer, I transitioned from my role as a classroom science teacher of 25 years to serving as President of the Nevada State Education Association. I bring an analytic approach and great enthusiasm to the position. As your Union, we will work together to ensure every public school student in the state of Nevada has an opportunity to learn, grow, thrive, and succeed regardless of zip code. This is our work; this is our duty as educators in Nevada.

This summer, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. During this anniversary summer, I have been continually reminded via "remembrance media" of what a focused and determined group of people can accomplish. Nearly 60 years ago, President Kennedy laid out his audacious goal to land on the moon when he spoke these words to a Texas crowd on September 12, 1962:

"We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things not because they are easy, but because they are hard; because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills..."

Ensuring a great public school for every student in Nevada is our moonshot! To paraphrase JFK, we choose to take on the challenges of doing what is best (and right) for our students *not because it is easy*. We choose to take on these challenges *because they are hard* and they will serve to organize the best of our energies and skills.

Educators of Nevada, our children need us, our communities need us, and I need all of you as we endeavor to meet the challenges of today to achieve our goals. Union brothers and sisters, it is a tremendous honor to be your NSEA President. We can do this; we must do this!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Rippet". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" and last name "Rippet" clearly legible.

Brian Rippet, NSEA President

80th Legislative Session Report Card

The 80th Legislative Session ended, Sine Die, just before midnight on Monday June 3, 2019. NSEA had a strong, regular presence at the Legislature from the Governor's State of the State address in mid-January all the way through Sine Die. Members of NSEA's ground team tracked nearly 200 bills, with 58 of 77 supported bills passing and 12 of the 13 opposed failing. NSEA ground and member leaders testified at the table over 100 distinct times, submitting exhibits on about 50 unique bills. For a complete list of NSEA positions, testimony, and exhibits, please visit the [Legislative Updates](#) page on NSEA's website. Before Session, NSEA sent out a [Legislative Priorities Handbook](#) containing various priorities; this Report Card will serve as a supplement to that booklet. Unless noted, all bills passed both the Senate and Assembly and were signed by the Governor.

While many important steps were taken to improve public education during the 80th Legislative Session, NSEA feels strongly that Nevada missed a golden opportunity to raise desperately needed, new revenue for Nevada's schools. We also maintain strong opposition to the new education funding formula passed in SB543, which pits Nevada students against each other for scarce resources without addressing the structural problem of underfunding of public education.

SCHOOL FUNDING, A STATEWIDE CRISIS

SB545 (NSEA Priority): This bill redirects the marijuana tax proceeds from the Rainy Day Fund to the Distributive Schools Account (DSA). Under SB545, \$120M will be moved to education over the next biennium. NSEA has advocated for this proposal for the last 2 Sessions.

SB551: SB551 extends the modified business tax, worth just under \$100M for the next biennium. It allocates \$72M for general support to help offset the cost of educator raises; nearly \$17M in additional funds for school safety recommendations; and about \$9.5M for Opportunity Scholarships. While NSEA opposes Opportunity scholarships as a back-door voucher scheme, the language in this bill will phase out the dollar for dollar tax break over time. (Also see AB458)

SB555: The dollars in the K-12 Education Budget represent significant movement over last year's expenditures. The average total per pupil next year will be \$10,277, with a base funding of \$6,218. That is an increase of \$166 per-pupil (or 4.2%) and a total funding increase of nearly \$900 per-pupil (or 9.5%). The budget also includes \$327.2M for class size reduction and \$45.5M for school safety.

SB324: Monies for the School Supply reimbursement Fund were doubled this Session. This bill streamlines the process for accessing these funds, so more teachers will be able to take advantage of the program.

AB196: This bill provides \$5M in incentives for teachers who are currently employed to teach at a Title I school or a school designated as underperforming. NSEA has worked with the Speaker since 2017 on this program to expand to existing Title I teachers.

AB309: This bill from the Speaker, AB309 serves as a vehicle to funnel money appropriated by the Legislature into educator salaries - requiring school districts to set aside any monies necessary to cover negotiated raises and allowing counties to raises funds for schools and other services by passing a .25% sales tax. It also combines certain categories of education funding into a block grant.

SB543: This is the new Nevada Funding Formula. This bill has numerous issues due to a flawed process in which stakeholders other than large school districts and gaming were shut out. NSEA opposed SB543 due to serious policy concerns, including: no new revenue for schools, a rural "freeze and squeeze", watering down of Zoom/Victory Schools, a multi-million-dollar charter school giveaway, anti-union end fund balance provisions, possible exclusion of educator voice on the Commission on School Funding, and a fundamentally flawed legislative process. NSEA, as well as other public educational advocates, offered numerous amendments. Unfortunately, all suggestions from the community were ignored and not adopted, further highlighting the flawed process.

PUBLIC EDUCATION, THE GREAT EQUALIZER

SB551 (NSEA Priority): In addition to funding highlighted above, this bill removed the Education Savings Account voucher program from the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS). NSEA has aggressively campaigned against private school vouchers and worked diligently to remove this language from law.

AB458: While another \$9.5M funded Opportunity Scholarships in SB551, AB458 eliminates the automatic 10% annual increase to the total amount of tax credits allowed. Taken together, both AB458 and SB551 will phase out Opportunity Scholarships over time.

SB467 (NSEA Priority): This bill extends the Zoom and Victory School programs in Nevada, of which NSEA remains extremely supportive.

AB84: Due to cuts at the national level, PreK seats across Nevada were threatened with elimination. This bill creates the Pre-Kindergarten Account to fund the existing seats.

MORE LEARNING, LESS TESTING

SB475: NSEA has led the fight to reduce the use of student data in teacher evaluations. SB475 decreases the percentage of (SLO/SLG) in teacher evaluations from 40% to 15% starting this school year. NSEA will continue to advocate for 0% but is proud of our efforts to get us where we are now.

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND EDUCATION

AB304: While significantly weakened from its first version, AB304 will require the state to count and accurately report actual student to educator ratios in Nevada's classrooms. With this data, NSEA will continue our effort to lower these ratios to more reasonable levels.

SB41: This bill makes several changes to Nevada's educator licensure rules. NSEA was able to remove problematic sections of this bill, including a licensure requirement for paraprofessionals.

SB204: This bill requires a policy for suicide prevention and training to address the issue.

MEMBER PROTECTION

SB111: This bill mainly pertains to end fund balance provisions for local governments that are not school districts; however, along with the Clark County Association of School Administrators, NSEA was able to get an amendment to ensure that any money appropriated to school districts for salary increases or roll ups be protected from being diverted to end fund balance.

SB135: Collective bargaining rights are granted to state employees under this bill. It has been a priority for our sisters and brothers in AFSME.

SB153 (NSEA Priority): This bill strengthens the collective bargaining process for public employees. It addresses the issues created in the 2015 Session, making timelines more reasonable and restoring the evergreen provisions to expired contracts. This bill will set a more level playing field for bargaining units.

SB224: The personal information of NV PERS members is further protected under this bill.

SB231/AB136: Expands prevailing wages provisions, including requiring full payment of prevailing wages on construction projects by school districts and NSHE.

CHARTER ACCOUNTABILITY

AB78: Additional transparency and oversight of the State Public Charter School Authority (SPCSA)

AB462: Requires the SPCSA to develop a 5-Year Growth Plan. Originally introduced as a 2-year moratorium of Charter Schools, NSEA battled over the bill with charter school advocates. Amendments suggested by NSEA to cap charter expansion were not added to the bill, but the fight now moves over to the Charter School Authority.

AB441: Regulates online virtual charter schools. These are the worst of the worst when it comes to charter schools; NSEA will continue advocating for stricter accountability measures.

SCHOOL SAFETY

SB57: This bill makes school blueprints confidential, and only available to law enforcement in certain circumstances.

SB80: The Handle With Care Program will receive reports from law enforcement when a student is exposed to a traumatic event. Handle with Care will allow our educators to better serve our diverse student population by providing critical information about the current mental state of a student who has suffered trauma

SB89: The School Safety Omnibus bill. It contains numerous recommendations from Governor Sandoval's Statewide School Safety Task Force. One aspect of the bill NSEA strongly supports is addressing the ratio of pupils to specialized instructional support personnel, as the caseloads of counselors, nurses, speech language pathologists, library media specialists, social workers, and numerous other licensed personal are overwhelming. NSEA is committed to creating a safe learning and working environment for every child in our

state. We believe SB 89 is a strong beginning to address the issues impacting our schools.

SB185: This bill eases the background check requirements adopted in 2017 for certain school volunteers. This includes addressing concerns of University practicum students and also may reduce costs of fingerprinting for parent volunteers.

AB168: Restorative Justice implementation throughout the state. NSEA believes in the principles of restorative justice, which proactively build healthy relationships and a sense of community to prevent and address conflict and wrongdoing. While AB168 touches on restorative justice, requiring a plan of action before a student is suspended or expelled, NSEA would like to see a more robust and resourced restorative discipline process for our school sites and classrooms.

AB490: This bill requires public schools to collect and report on data on the discipline of pupils.

MISCELLANEOUS

AB205 (NSEA Priority): Requires school districts to implement an integrated pest management policy; this bill will limit the use of pesticides in our schools and provide professional development for education support professionals.

AB289: Removes the mandatory retention mandate from the Read by Three Program.

AB275: Prohibits a regulatory body from denying licensure of an applicant based on his or her immigration or citizenship status.

AB331: Creates the Outdoor Education and Recreation Grant Program.

AB456: Increases the minimum wage paid to private employees in Nevada to \$12.00 over time.

SB319: Defines "school counselor," "school psychologist" and "school social worker" and establishes the duties of a school counselor, psychologist and social worker.

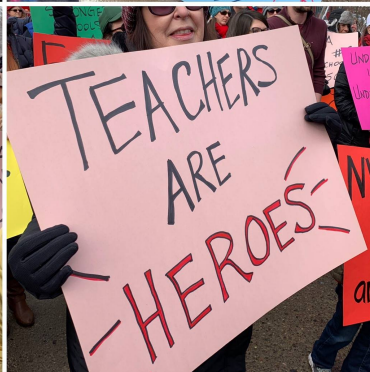
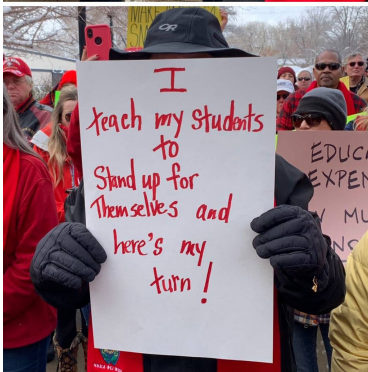
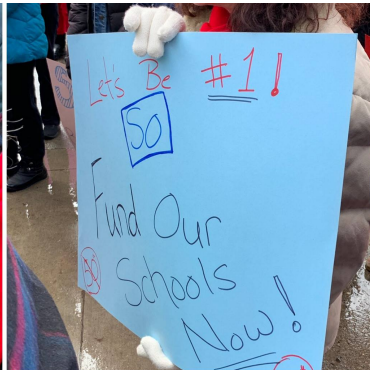
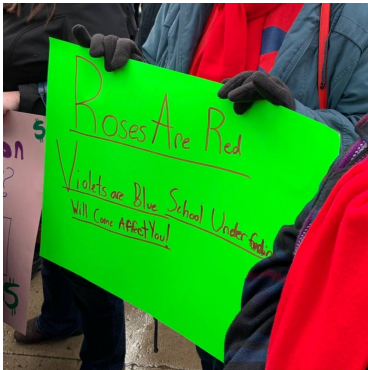
SB321 (NSEA Priority): Abolishes the Achievement School District (ASD), the failed partisan program that handed public schools over to private charter management organizations.

SB403: Requires each public and private school to provide certain information to a pupil or the parent or legal guardian of a pupil before providing technology to a pupil or allowing a pupil to use a school service.



RED FOR ED NEVADA: A GOOD SIGN

In February and May of 2019, hundreds of educators rallied under the banner of #RedForEd to bring awareness to the chronic underfunding of public education in Nevada as well as numerous other issues we deal with in public education. We are #RedForEd, so we are able to get the policies mentioned above passed into law. We are #RedForEd, so we can work towards full adequacy of our schools. In the 80th Session, the base funding did increase by \$166 in the first year (or 4.2%); however, Nevada is still a long way from full adequacy. Without raising taxes, the K12 Budget contains more movement than most thought possible this Session, but we still need to do better for our kids, our educators, and our classrooms. **#RedForEd will keep up that momentum.** Thank you to everyone who attended; your voices matter. Here are some of the great photos of the signs made by members as we marched on the steps of the Legislature in Carson City and Las Vegas.





STRONG PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2020

What is Strong Public Schools? NEA launched StrongPublicSchools.org to serve as an information and engagement hub. You can find events, submit your candidate questions, watch videos, learn more about the candidates running for president, AND take action to support public education. The campaign itself is a nationwide issue campaign focused on lifting up public education in the 2020 presidential campaigns and providing NEA members a voice in the election. Our goal is to have a campaign that is highly inclusive and provide NEA members opportunities to engage with the candidates in order to ensure their voice is heard early and often in 2020

What is the Strong Public Schools Message? All students deserve an excellent education, regardless of income or zip code. That means great teachers and educational support professionals, smaller class sizes, new technologies and textbooks, and more affordable college options. To achieve this, we must ensure parents and educators—not only politicians—have a voice in what’s best for our schools. Giving all children a fair opportunity creates stronger public schools and a stronger America.

YOUR VOTE, THEIR FUTURE

As the 2020 Presidential campaign ramps up, candidates are frequently visiting Nevada, an early caucus state. As candidates visit, they have been contacting NSEA to sit down with educators across the state to hear what issues concern us the most. While no formal endorsement has been made, NSEA is always willing to sit with candidates and ask them questions about public education. To date, NSEA has sat with Senator Kamala Harris, Mayor Bill De Blasio, Senator Bernie Sanders, Senator Elizabeth Warren, Rep. Tim Ryan, and Governor Jay Inslee.



GET INVOLVED

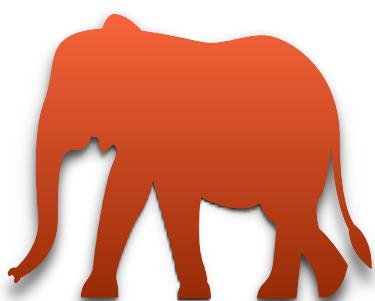
COMPARE AND CONTRAST: If you have been unable to attend our round table discussions, there are numerous ways to learn about the candidates. There are several candidates running and NSEA, through the NEA, has a compare / contrast candidates tool which you can find [here](#).

ATTEND AN EVENT: We have a great tool through Mobilize America that will connect you to various events around the state! Click [here](#) to find a presidential campaign event near you! NSEA's social media pages will also keep you up to date with campaign events that we will be hosting.

2020 NEVADA CAUCUS

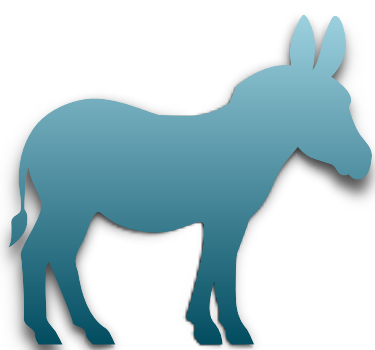
Nevada will hold the “first in the west” Presidential Caucus in the 2020 Democratic nomination for President. The Nevada Caucus is the best opportunity for Nevadas to make their voices heard, both in nominating candidates for President, as well as adding important issues to the party platform. In addition to the first in the first Western state, Nevada is the third state in the nation to participate in the presidential nominating process! NSEA is encouraging all of our members to caucus in #RedForEd, while advocating for new revenue for Nevada public schools. Educators are going to have a huge impact in selecting the next president, and NSEA will be there along the way to help you get involved!

2020 NEVADA REPUBLICAN CAUCUS



The Republican caucus is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday February 25, 2020; however that date is unofficial and is subject to change. NSEA will do its best to keep interested members up to date on the details as they become available. In the meantime, should you have any questions for the party itself, such as the delegate selection process, the best email is info@nevadagop.org.

2020 NEVADA DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS



The Democrats are doing things a bit differently than in previous years. They will still have the traditional precinct caucus, but they are also adding an early vote and virtual caucus option. There will now be three (3) options for participation in the 2020 caucus. The Nevada Democrats have provided a helpful chart so that members can participate. Additional information can be found at nvdemocrats.com/2020-caucus/



PRECINCT CAUCUS

Caucus with your neighbors in your precinct

When: Saturday, February 22, 2020

Where: Your location will be announced by January 15, 2020. Visit caucus.nvdems.com to find your precinct caucus location.



EARLY VOTE

Vote early in person at any site in your county

When: Saturday, February 15 - Tuesday, February 18 [You Pick the Day!]

Where: Early Vote locations will be announced by October 1, 2019. Visit caucus.nvdems.com to find an Early vote location in your county.



VIRTUAL CAUCUS

Vote from home or on the go using your phone

When: Sunday, February 16 or Monday, February 17 [You Pick the Day!]**

Where: The comfort of your home. All you need is a landline or cell phone to participate.

**You must be registered to vote as a Democrat by November 30, 2019 to participate in the virtual caucus.



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