

## OPPOSE– SB 372

Date: March 27, 2019

To: Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor

Re: NSEA Opposes SB 372

The Nevada State Education Association represents teachers, other licensed education professionals, and education support professionals across the state. We believe every Nevada student deserves a high-quality public education.

**NSEA agrees with the Nevada School Counselor Association in opposition to SB 372. While we appreciate efforts to recoup costs for Medicaid billing, there are numerous concerns regarding the process and increased responsibilities of documenting these services. We are also concerned with moving licensure of our school counselors away from the Department of Education.**

The responsibilities of a school counselor are numerous. With a state average ratio of 485:1 (from 2015-2016 American School Counselors Association) as opposed to the recommended 250:1, counselors are overworked and too many students go without needed services. Documentation and billing practices for Medicaid could create a bigger emphasis on paperwork than providing direct services to our students.

Movement of licensure away from the Nevada Department of Education is an additional concern. Licensure at NDE provides a better connection with numerous education programs counselors engage, such as Safe to Tell. Many of our counselors are expected to teach at different levels as well as provide small group discussion and one-on-one counseling services. We are also concerned that there could be an increase in cost for our school counselors if licensed through a different State department.

Our school counselors are an important part of our school communities. Incoming NSCA President Kelli Killian stated, “With our unique qualifications, school counselors support safe learning environments. They work to safeguard the human rights of all members of a school community, and they address the needs of students through culturally relevant prevention and intervention programs that are part of a comprehensive school counseling program. When we are able to spend time on building comprehensive school counseling programs, we have increased rates of attendance, increased school safety, increased mental wellness for our students, and increased access to services related to mental illness.” We want to make sure that we promote legislation that give school counselors providing direct services.