

## STUDENT ASSESSMENT AUDIT (SB303)

Date: February 21, 2019

To: Senate Committee on Education

Re: Hearing on Evaluation of Nevada's Statewide Assessment System

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

### **BACKGROUND**

During the 2017 Legislation Session, Senator Joyce Woodhouse sponsored Senate Bill 303 at NSEA's request. The bill, which had bipartisan support in the Assembly and Senate, required the Department of Education to create and carry out a plan for auditing the assessment tools and examinations used to monitor the performance of pupils and schools for kindergarten through grade 12 in the public school system in Nevada. The report was to include a plan to improve **and streamline** the assessment tools and examinations used to monitor the performance of pupils and schools in the public school system in Nevada.

### **RESULTS**

Unfortunately, the audit, which was due no later than December 1, 2017, was not submitted by the Department of Education until January 20, 2019. The final report did **not** follow the requirements contained within SB303.

The Department's report is written with a certain result in mind that simply does not conform to the realities in our classrooms. The audit does contain some important information about the amount of time teachers spend administering assessments. For the SBAC Annual Assessment, 69% of District Test Directors stated that "way too much time" or "slightly too much time" was spent on assessments. For the SBAC Interim Assessment, 84% of District Directors stated "way too much time" or "slightly too much time" was spent on Assessments. These percentages only highlight the necessity for a plan to improve and streamline assessment tools and examinations. This audit fails to address those very important elements of SB303.

After a 13-month delay, the report failed to make recommendations for streamlining student assessments. While tests like the SBAC and End of Course exams are widely disliked, the Department recommends more funding to communicate to stakeholders about the "benefits" of these assessments. Educators know about the benefits and shortcomings of these tests and appreciate the need to spend less time testing and more time teaching. It is that simple.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Department's recommendation that a communications strategy about the "benefits" of certain assessments disregards the purpose of SB303 in the first place. The Department's audit misses the mark. It's time for the legislature to ensure our educators and students have more time teaching learning and less time testing!