

## NDE - ASSESSMENTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY (BUDGET 2697)

Date: March 5, 2019

To: Senate Finance and Assembly Ways and Means Subcommittee on K-12/Higher Ed/CIP

Re: Assessments and Accountability Budget (2697)

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.

**The Nevada State Education Association takes a particular interest in Budget 2697, the Nevada Department of Education budget on Assessments and Accountability. We believe that the legislature has an opportunity to streamline student assessments and possibly achieve a savings in this budget.**

During the 2017 Legislation Session, Senator Joyce Woodhouse sponsored Senate Bill 303 at NSEA's request. The bill required the Department of Education to audit student assessments in Nevada and include a plan to improve *and streamline* these assessments. 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; most notably by not including a recommendation to streamline these assessments.

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 too much time was spent on this assessment. For the SBAC Interim Assessment, 84% of District Directors stated too much time was spent on this assessment.

While tests like the SBAC and End of Course exams are widely disliked, the Department recommended 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.

Budget 2697 proposes increases to the line item for State Assessments Contracts. We believe that these contracts should be reduced over time, as Nevada moves toward a more streamlined system of state assessments. Certainly, no monies should be appropriated to communicate the "benefits" of these assessments to educators. Like the Department's audit, this budget item misses the mark. It's time for the legislature to ensure our educators and students have more time teaching learning and less time testing!