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## **EDUCATORS CAUTIOUS HEADING INTO THE 81st LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

“While there is some good news reflected in Governor Sisolak’s proposed budget, Nevada is still in desperate need of new revenue. Unfortunately, we did not hear about a plan to get us there in tonight’s State of the State address,” said Brian Rippet, President of the Nevada State Education Association. “Like the 31st Special Session, public education is bracing for another painful hit in the 81st Regular Session.”

As we approach the 2021 Legislative Session, NSEA is calling on all Nevada officials to **listen to educators** because words and promises are no longer sufficient. Whether the Pupil Centered Funding Plan (PCFP), returning to in-person instruction, or the need for revenue, in each instance, educator voices have been left out of the most important discussions.

Since its introduction, NSEA has expressed concern about the Pupil Centered Funding Plan (PCFP) created under Senate Bill 543 in the 2019 Session. With no active educator voice on the Commission on School Funding, teachers and education support professionals have had limited opportunity to get concerns adequately addressed during the interim. After more than a year of meetings, the Funding Commission has yet to recommend the required path to achieve optimal funding. In the most recent analysis, a majority of Nevada school districts will be harmed by the new funding plan. Equity remains a concern, and while we are pleased to see targeted restorations in the budget for English Language Learners and at-risk students, the new funding plan waters down successful Zoom and Victory schools. Lastly, the plan still contains an anti-union fund balance provision which will mean no educator raises can be won through bargaining.

NSEA has been requesting a delay in implementation of SB543 since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic crisis. A delay is the only responsible course of action, as it will provide additional time after the pandemic for education stakeholders to develop a revenue plan to get us out of the current economic crisis and on our way to optimal funding. We are pleased to see Governor Sisolak listen and recommend a phased implementation of the new plan; however, much more needs to be done.

Faced with cuts to education, as well as a corresponding educator morale and retention problem, new revenue is even more desperately needed. Emergency assistance from the Federal government is certainly helpful, and we applaud the National Education Association (NEA) for their work to help secure the \$450 million in CARES Plus K12 aid Nevada is projected to receive to assist with learning loss and infrastructure/technology needs. At the same time, Nevada needs ongoing new state revenue and our leaders need to do their part as well. Nevada students and educators can no longer afford empty promises and funding proposals that are little more than blank slates. As such, NSEA is calling on Governor Sisolak and the Legislature to show their full support for AJR1, passed in the 32nd Special Session. AJR1 would generate \$485 million in new revenue for Nevada annually and would offset the \$50 million in proposed education cuts. While only a part of what is needed for our educators and students, we see it as a critical first step towards building a funding plan to achieve optimal funding.

As NSEA continues to call on Nevada officials to **listen to educators** in the coming months, we look forward to being at the table to ensure educators have the tools and resources necessary to provide a high quality public education to every student.

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