

PUBLIC COMMENT TO INTERIM FINANCE COMMITTEE

June 24, 2020

The Nevada State Education Association has been the voice of Nevada educators for over 100 years. NSEA is opposed to Item N on today's calendar allowing the Nevada Department of Education to revise \$299,000 of a previous authorization to hire staff to help implement SB543. While NSEA supported the previous authorization in October, given the COVID-19 crisis, we believe the only appropriate path forward is an indefinite delay of the implementation of 543.

While NSEA believes the school funding plan should be updated to reflect the changing needs of Nevada, it would be completely irresponsible to implement this radical shift during these already turbulent times. In addition to NSEA'S previous concerns with 543, the new economic realities not only undermine school funding generally but also the work of the Funding Commission specifically. The main charge of the Funding Commission is to model the new funding plan, running it alongside the Nevada Plan in this fiscal year and to make recommendations based on these numbers. However, data from this fiscal year likely will need to be discarded, as Nevada's economy hit a wall toward the end of the third quarter.

Even with all these considerations, the Funding Commission and the Department have continued as if literally nothing has changed. Meeting after meeting, the numbers in the formula vary and fluctuate. For example, between the May and June meetings, budget projections under the new funding plan provided by Applied Analysis for Nevada charter schools varied wildly. Their May numbers indicated charters would take \$68M from neighborhood public schools. By the June meeting, those numbers shifted dramatically by \$50M.

We fail to see how adjusting \$299K from a previous authorization will address any of these issues. While the new funding plan was unworkable before with no new revenue, it's even more unworkable facing decreased revenue and draconian budget cuts. In addition, our schools will have new added costs to implement guidelines outlined by the state to safely reopen. NSEA believes any available monies should be invested to keep students and educators safe and healthy. Thank you.