

March 25, 2021

Nevada Assembly Committee on Education
C/O Chair Assemblywoman Bilbray-Axelrod
401 S Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Re: Public Comment for March 23, 2021: AB225: Revises provisions governing examinations for the licensure of teachers and other educational personnel. (BDR 34-139)

Good afternoon, Committee Chair Bilbray-Axelrod, and committee members. My name is Marie Neisess, and I am the president of the Clark County Education Association.

The Clark County Education Association (CCEA) is the official bargaining partner for the Clark County School District and represents more than 18,000 licensed professionals. We engage in bipartisan advocacy for advancing public education in Nevada and Clark County.

CCEA supports AB225 and the amendment offered by Assemblywoman Tolles. As an elementary school teacher, I know firsthand the importance of making accommodations for not only my students with an Individualized Education Plan but students who may suffer from test anxiety. Assessing students on their knowledge of content standards does not mean it has to be done in a traditional formative or summative assessment format. This type of accommodation should be applicable to potential educators.

We need to make accommodations for people with a disability that have proven academic success in the past but may not be able to successfully demonstrate competency in the traditional assessment format. We need to diversify the education profession and do whatever we can to attract individuals with a high academic aptitude who want to be in the profession. Providing an alternative means of demonstrating competency does not make the individual any less successful or knowledgeable about the profession. Instead allowing potential educators the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge in a content area through performance-based methods or other alternative methods will enable all types of learners an opportunity to demonstrate competency without lowering the standards to enter the profession. Diversifying the teaching profession must be a priority, especially as we face issues with teacher retention. Allowing testing alternatives will be a step in supporting diversity, will help address the teacher shortage crisis, and will help to destigmatize learning accommodations for students once they have teachers who represent their same needs.

Respectfully,

Marie Neisess, President
Clark County Education Association