

OFFICIAL BARGAINING PARTNER TO CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT, REPRESENTING MORE THAN 18,000 LICENSED PROFESSIONALS.

May 5, 2021

Nevada Senate Committee on Education
C/O Chair Senator Denis
401 S Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Re: Public Comment for May 5, 2021: AB266: Revises provisions governing class size. (BDR 34-704)

Good afternoon Committee Chairman Denis and Committee members. My name is Marie Neisess, President of the Clark County Education Association.

CCEA is in support of AB266 and would like to thank Assemblywoman Miller and Anderson for bringing this bill forward. There has long been a nationwide conversation about the impact of class size on student achievement and educator practice, but Nevada has not been able to accurately quantify the current ratios in our classrooms. Past practices of including other licensed professionals and non-classroom-based educators into the overall ratio have inaccurately skewed the reported ratios to give a false impression of our classroom environment.

For years Clark County teachers have had the largest class sizes in the nation, with 87 percent of all Nevada students have a larger class size than recommended. As a former first and third-grade teacher, my class sizes were consistently larger than the recommended ratios and many of my third-grade students were two to three grade levels behind. The size of a classroom is challenging because it limits the ability to move around, but it also impacts instructional learning. Larger class sizes impacted how often I could meet with my students for small group instruction or individual instruction. Ensuring all students' cognitive abilities and skills are met is often challenging, so we must take steps to ensure we provide the best education possible for all students.

This starts with our data collection and ensuring that class size is standardized in how it is applied to the NEPF, and that information is collected to be able to work towards our goal of recommended class size ratios. Incorporating a weight to be included in three instructional standard indicators for class sizes above the recommended ratio will account for the impact of class size on instruction. Additionally, the addition of a class size weight removes the requirement of an administrator to subjectively weigh class size on an educator's evaluation. This additional weight will be consistently applied to all evaluations and will allow districts and the state to quantify the number of classrooms above recommended ratios. Additionally, this weight will help school districts and NDE to understand what schools the highest class have sizes and will help to alleviate the stress associated with the NEPF to ensure that our educators are not just complying with the indicators, but ensuring that student achievement is put first.

AB266 is a proactive step in reducing class sizes to the recommended ratios I urge you to vote yes on AB266.

Respectfully,

Marie Neisess

Marie Neisess, President
Clark County Education Association