

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

May 6, 2021

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

Re: Public Comment for SB151: Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR 34-77)

Hello and thank you Committee Chairwoman Bilbray-Axelrod, and committee members. My name is Hawah Ahmad, and I am here representing the Clark County Education Association.

CCEA supports Senate Bill 151 and thanks Senator Dondero Loop for working with us on this bill. This bill ensures that every school district reflects upon progress made to get to the long-term goal of State Board recommended ratios for mental and behavioral professionals. This bill also includes accountability measures to ensure that districts develop and follow a plan that contains strategies to recruit and retain mental and behavioral health professionals. Currently, our school psychologists, counselors, and social workers have already dealt with high professional to student ratios. With the anticipated rise of mental and behavioral health issues due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, it is incredibly important to have accountability measures in place to make sure that our long-term goals can be met and that we can be agile in our approach to creating pipelines for mental health professionals in education.

It is clear that a reduction in caseloads for our mental health professionals will lead to increased student success in academics and will help to develop the social and emotional growth factor linked to academic success. Though the ultimate goal of this bill projects us fifteen years into the future, the reporting mechanism in this bill will ensure that we keep our eye on the target and achieve our goals.

When looking at the cost of mental and behavioral health in K-12 education, known as wrap around services, we must understand that this is a specified area that Federal COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Funds can be utilized. In addition to the full implementation and funding of the pupil-centered funding plan, it is imperative that we as stakeholders, impacted communities, and legislators commit to the fact that our students need us, today. We cannot wait for another legislative session to create, implement, strengthen and fund these types of services. Mental health, just like education, is not a talking point. Located in the exhibits on NELIS are ten comments in support from mental and behavioral health professionals in CCSD who cannot be here today because they are on the clock, on the front line at the cross section of education and mental health, ensuring our students have the resources they need to succeed. Now it is our turn to make sure we do our part to ensure that every student can have the recommended ratio of mental and behavioral health professional to student to ensure that their achievement and outcomes are top priority.

CCEA thanks every stakeholder for their effort and looks forward to supporting the development of mental health support in K-12.

Respectfully,

Hawah Ahmad, JD, CIPP/E
Lobbyist
Clark County Education Association