

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 May 6, 2021 SB249: Revises provisions relating to education. (BDR 34-81)

Good Afternoon Committee Chair Bilbray-Axelrod and Committee members,

My name is Dr. Brenda Pearson, and I am here representing the Clark County Education Association. We engage in bipartisan advocacy for advancing public education in Nevada.

CCEA is in support of Senate Bill 249. Currently, two similar bills are being heard before this Legislature this session, Senate Bill 249 and Assembly Bill 167. Although comparable, CCEA believes that specifically detailing the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, or its successor organization, as being included on student identification cards would ensure the most responsive and accessible number is given to our students in their time of need.

Nevadans must stand together and give our students the resources they need should they require crisis support. CCEA knows that sharing mental health resources with our students is important, but it is only one tool and **must be in addition to** a strong foundation of mental and behavioral health care in schools. Nevada needs to be proactive to support the mental and behavioral health of our students, and we can only do that with increasing the number of school psychologists, social workers, school counselors, and nurses in our schools. As you know, Nevada cannot make progress on this front **until** we fully fund SB543 and find a designated revenue stream to do so. CCEA understands that it takes both the Democrats and Republicans, under the Governor's leadership, to be able to introduce and pass new revenue needed. We must fully fund SB543 during this legislative session. Our students deserve this- their mental and behavioral health depends upon it.

Thank you again to the committee for hearing this bill, and we look forward to continuing the mental health discussion as it pertains to education and finding a way to combine this bill with AB167 to ensure that our student IDs are the clear and concise resource our students need. We also look forward to developing more robust outreach to ensure our educators and students have the resources and knowledge needed to manage mental health.

Respectfully,
Brenda Pearson, Ph.D.
Director of Strategic Policy Initiatives
Clark County Education Association

