

Dear Superintendent Canavero

RE: Comments to Agenda Item #6, Draft Regulations NAC 388G

We have now had a chance to review draft regulations. We recommend that you consider adding the following areas for regulation:

1. Leadership capacity. In voluminous testimony in 2016 re AB 394 heard by the Advisory Committee to Develop a Plan to reorganize Clark County, experts repeatedly stated that the reorganization would not work unless leaders were well trained and competent. The reorganization regulations approved by this Board last year, and which were the basis for AB469, required that the Board consider whether principals and SAS should be required additional training and licensure by July 1, 2017.

We believe that the draft regulations should require principal certification because reorganization greatly expands the responsibilities of principals. The State's evaluation framework is focused primarily on instruction, teacher development, and gains in student achievement. Now, principals will pivot and have to do much more, budget, comply with laws in how they structure school operations, become collaborative managers, and learn how to co-govern democratically with community input.

We note that "leadership" training for the reorganization has been non-transparent.

The evidence, thus far, raises serious questions about SAS and principal leadership capacity. For example, LV Review Journal, October 5, 2017, "Weighted funding law helps some schools avoid staff cuts," reported that CCSD principals appear not to understand that AB469 is to be interpreted in conjunction with other legal obligations, such as SB 178. In public comment before the Advisory Committee for Reorganization last month, the city attorney for Mesquite reported that the SAS had told him that "ELL is not in my wheel-house" when he raised concerns that ELL kids were not receiving services.

We recommend SAS and principal training and certification be required in the areas of: cultural competency, budget management, collaborative leadership, legal compliance, ELL and special education, and parental engagement.

2. Evaluation. SBOE should consider permitting CCSD developing its own performance evaluation rubric for principals and SAS. The rubric should be public and information about SAS/principal performance should be available to SOTs and community boards.

School performance data, by ESSA subcategories should be reported by SAS areas of responsibilities, in a manner that is easily accessible to parents. Parents and SOTs should be able to know how well their principal is performing compared to other principals with similar demographics. These data should be published and easily accessible to parents, since the intent of the law is transparency and accountability

3. Protecting ELL and Special Ed Civil Rights. ENN is on the record that we are concerned that decentralization has weakened the ability of CCSD to ensure compliance with special education and ELL federal law. We continue to have that concern, particularly since the current group of SAS is markedly non-diverse regarding knowledge of ELL and special education instruction. Recommended budget cuts by CCSD appear to be driven in part by concerns of complying with 80-20 budget split, mandated by AB469. Decentralization is weakening the ability of schools to comply with federal civil rights because both SAS and principals are so lacking in knowledge of ELL and special ed instruction. More to the point, SAS don't seem to understand CCSD's stellar ELL master plan. Knowledge and expertise is at central office, so the regulations should recognize that this should be a protected locus of activity (and budget expenditures)

For example, CCSD has eliminated special ed facilitators for high school and middle schools kids. As

Fernando Romero, parent of special ed kid, testified before the CCSD Trustees last month, the facilitators are the “quarterback” of the IEP team. Parents will now have to negotiate solo what services their middle school and high school kids will receive. These special ed facilitators are to be reassigned to schools as special ed teachers. That accomplishes the requirements of the 80-20 that SAS have been trying to conform to. But special ed facilitators, arguably served many more kids (6-10 schools) and their knowledge in shaping IEPs benefitted thousands of kids. Moreover, facilitators AVOID litigation. This budget cut and “decentralization” of special ed services runs contrary to accepted best practices for special ed kids, yet it is incentivized because it gets CCSD closer to the 80-20 split.

We suggest that regulations exempt from 80-20 requirement special education, ELL and other civil rights “central services” to ensure that of civil rights laws is at the locus where CCSD has expert personnel in these areas — that’s the central office. This would recognize that Central Services are knowledgeable, well-trained regarding these special laws, and that it will take some time for SAS and principals to achieve special ed and ELL instructional competence and knowledge of legal safeguards.

4. Inequitable Distribution of Teacher Talent. As of fall 2017, 80% of CCSD approximate 500 vacancies continue to be concentrated in title I schools. Per recent data as of fall 2017, Title I schools also disproportionately employ novice teachers (under three years experience). In sum, CCSD continues to have an inequitable distribution of teacher talent, with vulnerable kids, who need talented teachers the most, being the least likely to enjoy a licensed well-performing teacher. To continue to budget with “average” teacher salaries will reinforce this inequitable distribution of teacher talent.

Regulations should require disclosure of impacts of average versus actual salary budget so that the public and Legislative leaders can understand the impacts of not addressing this maldistribution. SBOE should monitor how this budgeting process impacts its goal of ensuring equitable distribution of teacher talent.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on these important Regulations.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvia Lazos
Policy Director, Educate Nevada Now
(c) [702 767 8017](tel:7027678017)