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May 6, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

As you are likely aware, last week, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) [released](#) our [Path Forward Plan – Response to COVID-19](#). The *Path Forward Plan* outlines work that has been done to date to shift policies and practices in response to COVID-19, as well as next steps to navigate the remainder of this school year and to prepare for the 2020-21 school year.

NDE's *Path Forward Plan* includes the establishment of a Re-Opening of Schools Committee (Committee). This Committee will support NDE in developing a framework for districts and charter schools to create and implement safe and efficient guidelines for returning to school buildings. The Committee is comprised of State health officials, district superintendents and staff, charter school leaders, school safety experts, and others. The Committee held its first meeting on Friday, May 1, 2020 and, as its work proceeds, will create opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback.

I have received inquiries from educators, parents, and other stakeholders expressing interest in joining this Committee. In response to those inquiries, as well as to questions that were discussed during last week's State Board of Education meeting, I have assured our community that the purpose of NDE's Committee is to leverage the expertise and experience of experts to create a framework for a return to school buildings. The Committee's work is *not* a substitute for local planning, but rather is intended to provide a foundation from which district and school leaders can create local plans for the 2020-21 school year.

As noted in the *Path Forward Plan*, this one committee will:

- Be able to be embedded into current district and charter school emergency plans and contribute to the ongoing continuum of decision making
- Provide guidance and guardrails for consideration by districts and charter schools
- Help strengthen future crisis response
- Be a companion to traditional school opening procedures

In addition to providing feedback in response to future outreach conducted by the Committee, the best way for educators, staff, and parents to meaningfully contribute to the returning to school process is to engage in planning with your district leaders at the local level. **As you begin planning for the composition of local school re-opening committees, if you have not already done so, please ensure that local committees include, as appropriate:**

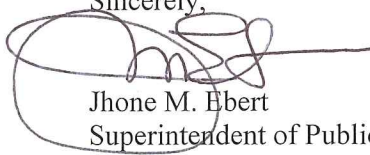
- Classroom teachers
- Building administrators
- Other licensed educational personnel
- Support staff
- Parents
- Union representatives

- District/school personnel with expertise in social-emotional health
- District/school personnel with expertise in emergency planning
- School nurses
- As relevant, local public health officials and emergency managers

The school building closures as a result of COVID-19 have surfaced a number of challenges. This has also created an unprecedented opportunity to engage with educators, parents, staff, and stakeholders about the significance of education for our students and the role of schools in our communities. It is my hope we can seize this moment to forge a more accessible and equitable future of education in the Silver State.

Thank you for the care, ingenuity, and leadership you continue to demonstrate; I am proud to work alongside you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Ebert', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jhone M. Ebert
Superintendent of Public Instruction