General ECAC | Special Session
Public Meeting
Wednesday, February 18, 2026
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

This is a VIRTUAL MEETING held via Zoom.com **Join us: HERE**
Meeting ID: 815 9023 7818 **Passcode**: 308879 Click **HERE** for Zoom Directions

MINUTES

1. Welcome, Call to Order, Roll Call
Tiffany Alston opened the meeting at 1:05 pm
Brandi Hearst conducted roll call

Members' Present
1. SEAT A Edith Farmer, MA Supervisor, Child Care Licensing Department of Supportive Services
2. SEAT C Brooke Yarborough, Social Services Chief 2, Division of Social Services, Nevada Department of Human Services
3. SEAT E Betsy Newman, Part C Coordinator, Clinical Program Planner II, Nevada Department of Human Services, IDEA Part C, Aging and Disability Services Division
4. SEAT F Dr. Diane Nicolet, Trustee, Washoe County School District."
5. SEAT G Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward Associate Professor, Early Childhood Multilingual and Special Education, UNLV
6. SEAT H Deetra Stewart, Family Home Care Provider,
7. SEAT I Dr. Stephanie Vega, Ph.D., Teacher, Washoe County School District
8. SEAT J Tiffany Alston, Director of Programs, Sunrise Children's Foundation
9. SEAT K, Patrice Gardner, M.Ed, ECAC Vice Chair, Education Programs Supervisor, NV Head Start State Collaboration Director Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
10. SEAT N Tiffany Olivas, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Manager, The Children's Cabinet
11. SEAT O, Abbey Bernhardt, National Alliance on Mental Illness, Nevada Chapter
12. SEAT R, Laura Brown, Monitoring and Compliance Coordinator, Acelero Head Start
13. SEAT R, Tina Springmeyer, Director, Department of Child and Family Services
14. SEAT R Brianna Cambra Provider Support Director, The Children's Cabinet
15. SEAT R, Amanda Haboush-Deloye, Associate Professor, The Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy, UNLV

Members Absent
1. SEAT B Tami Conn Deputy Bureau Chief Division of Public and Behavioral Health
2. SEAT D Jennese Black Education Programs Professional, Nevada Department of Education
3. SEAT L, Dazzrael Lyke, Developmental Specialist 4, Aging And Disability Services Division.
4. SEAT M Kathy Yoder Bass, Non-Profit Provider
5. SEAT R, Dr. Linda Young, Founder, The Village Foundation, Former CCSD School Board Trustee

Public In Attendance
1. Nayesdi Badillo, Family Engagement Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
2. Brandi Hearst, ECAC Administrative Coordinator, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
3. Sabrina Jones, ECAC Systems Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
4. Janice Lee, Pyramid Model
5. Octavia McLaurin, Home Care Provider
6. Jamie Mendez, Early Childhood Workforce Specialist, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
7. Turia Penkalski, Community Member
8. Dana Preece, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
9. Sarah Smith, University of Reno, Nevada
10. Rachel Stepina, PDG B-5 Grant Manager, Office of Early Learning and Development, Nevada Department of Education
11. Denise Tanata, Executive Leadership, Strategic Planning Committee Co-Chair

2. Public Comment #1 | 6 min

Public Comments were made during this agenda item .

- Turia Penklski [from chat for public comment 1] UNLV currently recruiting families of infants and toddlers with disabilities in Nevada who may be eligible for a study on expanding access to high-quality child care.
  - Request Members to share flyer: https://childcareaccess.my.canva.site/
  - Contact: Turia.Penkalski@unlv.edu
- Octavia McLaurin shared that the funding cuts have a lot of providers concerned for center-based and home-based providers in Las Vegas, Nevada.
- Amanda Haboush-Deloye announced on April 25, 2026, that the Children's Symposium registration is open

3. Approval of Flexible Agenda *(Discussion for Possible Action)* **3 min**

The Council approved a flexible agenda.

Tiffany Alston, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Chair

Patrice Gardner, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council Vice Chair

- Patrice Gardner motioned for a Flexible Agenda
- Deetra Stewart seconded the motion
- Members voted unanimously, motion passed, Flexible Agenda approved

4. Strategic Plan (SP) Final Recommendations *(Discussion for Possible Action)* **75 minutes**

The Council heard, voted and approved recommendations for the 2026-2030 Strategic Plan.

Tiffany Alston, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Chair

Patrice Gardner, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council, Vice Chair

Denise Tanata, Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee Co-Chair

- Denise Tanata opened the agenda item with a brief introduction that the Ad Hoc accomplished the requested tasks, thanked the members and co-Chair Abbey Bernhardt, then explained that the Ad Hoc will present the motion, we will need a second then the conversation can start.
- Denise Tanata, on behalf of the Ad Hoc Committee, made a motion to the ECAC to adopt the goals and objectives for the Nevada ECAC 2026-2030 Strategic Plan
- Brianna Cambra Seconds the motion to review then vote on Motion 1
- Denise Tanata reviewed the Goals and Objectives of Motion 1
  - Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward asked if we are still allowing the subcommittees to create their own activities
  - Denise Tanata responded that yes, we are using the same formatting and asking to remove the "Key implementation strategies: to allow for flexibility
  - Dr. Jenna Weglarz-Ward asks if we can make sure there is a way to measure success with the activities being accomplished
- Denise Tanata recommends the following for Goal 2 and its objectives:
  - Define "qualified and well-prepared"
  - Define "respectfully compensated"
  - Define "representative" of the early childhood workforce
  - There are multiple sectors within the early childhood system so objectives may be addressed broadly or narrowly, depending on the focus of the subcommittee.

Deetra Stewart inquired if Goal 2 would include grant writing for providers, such as a skill that could be used with this particular goal?

- Denise Tanata responded that it would be up to the subcommittee,
  - Big Picture- We are looking at professional growth across early childhood roles.
- Dr. Jenna Weglarz Ward stated it is essential to have grant writing skills in early childhood and requests it be noted (officially) for the subcommittee that takes objectives 3.2 or 3.3 so they can turn it into actions
- Deetra Stewart shared that when (providers) are planning and coordinating, they need communication such as:
  - Licensing

  - needing funding so that we can get information in a timely manner from them
  - information needs to be clear so the different child care programs can work together and make an educated decision on what's best for them.
- Dr. Nicolet shared how hard the Ad Hoc worked and reviewed the role of ECAC
  - "Remember that is not our role, but in the future we can figure out whose role that might be."
  - Shared that it's good to reflect on what the intent, the purpose, and the guardrails are for ECAC to stay on track

- Tiffany Alston called for last comments, then asked for a vote
- Members voted unanimously, **Motion 1 approved**.
- Denise Tanata discusses terms of the number of meetings, because we may not have administrative support, we are establishing subcommittees that have the ability to focus. Subcommittee membership needs the expertise and resources to focus on the work necessary to achieve the objectives within the five-year strategic plan timeframe.
- Denise Tanata on behalf of the Ad Hoc presents **Motion 2**,
- Patrice Gardner Seconds the Motion to open for discussion
- Motion 2 Discussion and Recommendations as follows:
  - Bi-Monthly Meetings for all subcommittees except Executive Leadership.
  - 2-month transition period requiring the Executive Leadership Subcommittee to:
  - establish parameters for subcommittees
    - related to decision-making
    - approvals for the development and implementation of key activities aligned with goals and objectives.
  - Set policy and procedures regarding subcommittee membership
    - including the number of appointed members per subcommittee
    - process for subcommittee applications
    - process for application approval to serve on a subcommittee.
  - Determine a timeline for implementation of the two new subcommittees:
    - Family Leadership and Engagement
    - Workforce Development
  - Discuss recommendations for co-chairs for each subcommittee for consideration of the Chair for relevant appointments.
  - Allow flexibility if subcommittees request to meet more frequently
- Tiffany Alston calls for a vote after offering for any more comments on Motion 2
  - Members voted unanimously, Motion 2 approved.
- Denise Tanata reviews the Strategic Plan outline, recommending the following:
  - Remove “Implementation Strategies” from document (strategies to go into work plans, developed by Subcommittees)
  - Update the “North Star” using language and priorities identified in the Strategic Planning Retreat
  - Retain formatting/images in draft document, replace logo, align color scheme with new colors

  <u>Outline reads:</u>
  - Executive Summary
    - Brief Intro to ECAC
    - Purpose and Scope of SP
    - Why This Plan is Needed Now
    - What We Heard From Nevadans Summary
    - Goal Summaries & Moving Forward Statement
  - The Nevada ECAC
  - Strategic Framework: Role, Vision, Purpose and Values/Commitments
  - Building from our 22-24 Strategic Plan: Brief Overview of 2022-2024 SP Focus/Work
    - The Strategic Planning Process
    - Community Engagement
    - What We Learned

- Our North Star
  - Statements drafted during SP Retreat
- Goals and Objectives
  - Comprehensive and Integrated EC System
  - Workforce Development
  - Fiscal Policy and Sustainability
  - Advocacy and Influence
- **Appendix**
  - Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Challenge Summary
  - Remove or update Infographic (pending)

- Dr Jenna Weglarz-Ward shared that this document has great information
  - suggests creating a public facing one pager that is easy to digest
- Tiffany Alston asked If Denise Tanata has anything for the plan to move forward
- Denise Tanata shared that the Executive Leadership Subcommittee is being recommended to plan the move forward

5. Public Comment #2 (Discussion for Possible Action) **6 min**

Public comments taken during this agenda item.

- Amanda Haboush-Deloye thanked the Ad Hoc and Denise Tanata for all of the hard work put in
- Dr. Nicolet shared that the Ad Hoc worked very hard on all of the planning and conversations to get this accomplished and thanked Denise Tanata who put in 100 times more into this behind the scenes
- Dr. Stephanie Vega shared that the ECAC has always supported the smooth transitions and discussed the district stated that most of the assessments now done in a group / small group setting using the teaching strategies "gold"
  - The one-on-one nature that the Brigance fostered for families and teachers
  - There's value in the aspect of the communication; that's something that I wanted to bring to light.
  - School district, The Nevada Department of Education has spoken to it being an option for NV school districts make their own decisions in regard to assessments level
  - WCSD thinks it could prevent parents from needing child care during assessment week
  - WCSD class size issues have been smoothed out at a 23 max class size for kindergarten
    - Max class sizes for first and second grade have gone up from 20 to 23
    - State-mandated class sizes are:
    - K through 2nd - 16.
  - WCSD argues that it's not always funded at the level through the state, districts are increasing this number which has:
    - Created not just one grade level but now 3 grade levels having a higher class size
    - Schools not adhering to 1:16 ratio
  - Pre-K is 1:10 ratio
    - Incoming Kindergarteners are going from 1:10 to 1:23 Teacher: student ratio
  - **Link**: https://www.rgj.com/story/news/education/2026/02/11/wcsd-teachers-blindsided-by-kindergarten-schedule-change/88616130007/
- Kate Pflueghoft shared that the Nevada Compass website is available for families experiencing homelessness
  - **Link:** https://nevadacompass.nv.gov/

6. Adjournment

Tiffany Alston adjourned meeting at 2:02 pm