

Dear Colleagues at the Nevada Department of Education:

Attn: Steve Canavero, Interim Superintendent of Public Instruction

Dr. Edward Ableeser, Director, Office of Safe and Respectful Learning Environment

Dave Bruncamp, Office of Standards and Instructional Support

As members of the Grants Management Advisory Committee (GMAC), a statutory body appointed by the Director of the Department of Health and Human Services, Richard Whitley, we oversee the annual distribution of approximately \$1.5 million for programs intended to prevent child abuse and neglect. This funding comprises revenue from the Children's Trust Account [established by Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 432.131-133], leveraged funds from the federal Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention program, and an allocation from the federal Social Services Block Grant (Title XX). The GMAC was created in 2005 via NRS 232.383 with the intent of blending multiple advisory committees including the Committee for the Protection of Children, which formerly provided oversight of these funding streams.

One specific category of funding under the aforementioned grants includes Child Self-protection Training to prevent child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse is an enormous problem in our communities, affecting an estimated one in four girls and one in six boys before they turn 18. Child sexual abuse is also identified as one of the more significant Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) that can have dramatic and long-term consequences on a person's physical and mental health, including their opportunities for normal brain development and ability to learn.

Our committee was heartened to hear about the passage of Senate Bill (SB) 394, portions of which require revisions to the health education standards and the adoption of age-appropriate curriculum for teaching personal safety to children in grades K-12. This includes the prevention of child sexual abuse. As a body that has funded self-protection training for young children for more than 20 years, we want to offer our support of the expansion of this curriculum to ensure that every student in the state of Nevada is able to receive this life-changing education.

We also want to encourage the Department of Education to take a strong stand to ensure that the implementation of SB394 is completed with fidelity and using curricula that employ best-practice and research-supported information and implementation practices. The program that the GMAC currently funds, Child Assault Prevention (CAP) is an internationally recognized program that has produced excellent outcomes over the years that it has been implemented in both the Washoe County and Clark County School Districts. We would ask for the Department of Education's leadership and support to expand the currently funded and supported programs being offered in the schools now. In addition, we would ask that you assist in removing barriers to the implementation of these programs by helping school boards, principals and administrators understand that, while this curriculum may utilize instructional time, it is incredibly valuable and important that children be exposed to this information.

Children being abused and traumatized at home cannot absorb other information or perform well in testing. Arming children with the ability to understand their rights, know how to protect themselves and others, and how to report abuse to a trusted adult is critical information for their short and long-term

health and success. It is also critical that this training be understood and classified as child self-protection training and not sex education, which is a completely different curricula and subject matter.

If the GMAC can be of assistance as the Department of Education works to implement SB394, please let us know in what ways we might be helpful. Again, we applaud the fact that this information will be implemented for every student in coming years, and want to work with you to reduce the barriers to current and future child sexual abuse prevention programming reaching every Nevada student.

Sincerely,

Jeff Fontaine, Chairperson  
On behalf of the Grants Management Advisory Committee

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