

## **A student's essay on how COVID-19 has affected education in Nevada.**

As we all know, COVID-19 has hit everyone hard. There are so many areas to be discussed regarding the effects of this pandemic, but this essay is going to focus on the effect it has on education for students in Nevada. The reality of it all is that many children are without the proper technology to connect with their teachers, and to keep up with ongoing assignments and new material. This means that many students will fall behind, forget material that they previously learned, and lose track of their progress. Everyone is trying to do their best, but there are long term consequences due to these circumstances. On April 29, 2020, KNPR State of Nevada radio host Joe Schoenmann discussed a huge problem regarding the significant learning loss that could occur, or is occurring due to school closures. Over the period of about a month, thousands of kids in public schools in Nevada, including thousands of other kids in private and charter schools, have had to transition to online classes, also known as “distance learning”. Additionally, teachers have also had to make the transition to teaching them online. For most people this change is very challenging, and can have a huge affect on students.

Participant Beth Tarasawa, who is the Executive Vice-President of Research at NWEA, discussed the study which included testing 5,000 students in english and math to see any trends or changes in their knowledge and learning loss. She explained that in most cases, students will return with a lot of missing pieces as far as being able to recall certain knowledge, and it’s mainly up to teachers to figure out how to fill those gaps. Tarasawa and her team estimated that students will lose the most knowledge in math, leaving them almost a year behind. In english, they suggested that the numbers should be

more positive. She discussed that we should expect that filling these gaps is definitely going to take some time and resources. Participant Chris Minnich, CEO of NWEA, discussed recommendations for schools regarding the “summer slide”. Minnich was suggesting that the main thing that needs to change is the time in front of teachers. Students need to have more time with their teachers to get that much needed instruction. To add, these sessions with teachers need to be consistent and ongoing. He also says that teachers may even have to go back a year to help students retain old information. What Minnich and his team believe is that teachers are the solution. Minnich also added that parents can have their children read books or do online activities to at least keep up to speed with their learning. Participant Jesus Jara, Superintendent of Clark County School District, discussed that the summer slide is very concerning. Jara discussed that the research is helping with figuring out what further steps need to be taken. He also went into discussing how they’re making the efforts to focus on the health of the children and their families, provide students with devices, and the preparation for the upcoming school year. They have put into place wellness checks, and are going door to door to give out chromebooks to students. Jara and his team know that addressing this education gap will take years, but regardless of the negative effects, everyone is still being supportive of one another.

Overall, it appears that everyone is on the same page. They all see that there are so many problems that need to be taken care of, regardless of the fact that these issues can’t be solved with a quick fix. The participants who spoke were all a part of the same team, with an exception of superintendent Jesus Jara. Even though Jara wasn’t a member of NWEA,

he still had knowledge about the research that was conducted. This information helps Jara make further changes and improvements for Clark County School District. No one is against one another. They all have the same end goal which is keeping children and their families safe, whilst also providing them with the proper education they need to flatten the curve. Everyone is truly giving their all, and nobody is backing down from the virus. It's amazing how hard everyone is working to overcome this hurdle.