



January 2, 2016

Sindie Read, Nevada SkillsUSA State Director  
SkillsUSA Board of Directors  
441-1/2 St. Lawrence Ave.  
Reno, Nevada 89509

Dear Ms. Read and SkillsUSA Board Members:

It has come to our attention that you have received a grievance alleging that northern Nevada schools have not provided promised transportation and travel support for southern Nevada schools, in violation of an agreement made with the Nevada SkillsUSA organization as part of the determination to hold the Nevada SkillsUSA State Conference in Reno through 2020.

We would like to clarify the transportation/travel support arrangements that were made between the northern Nevada District CTE representatives (Washoe, Elko, Lyon counties) and the southern Nevada District CTE representatives (Clark County), in collaboration with the Nevada SkillsUSA Director, Board President, and Nevada CTE Director, in support of moving the Nevada SkillsUSA State Conference to Reno.

In July, 2013, the SkillsUSA Board of Directors was evaluating the possibility of moving the state conference to Reno for an extended period of time, citing cost saving and quality improvement measures, as well as logistics, contract and scheduling challenges prevalent in Las Vegas. We were invited to a meeting, along with representatives from Elko and Lyon counties, to discuss how we could work collaboratively to address worst case scenarios. Mike Raponi and Alex Kyser, representing the Nevada CTE Department, were also in attendance for the meeting.

During this meeting, everyone agreed that holding the conference in Reno for five years presented a financial burden for Las Vegas schools, Clark County School District in particular. However, it was noted by all school district representatives that attending the conference should serve as an incentive for high quality school and regional performance for all students. It was also noted that participating in the conference (particularly for those that are travelling) should be considered a reward, recognizing student effort and preparedness.

To address the financial burden for all school districts, there was a request to the NDE to consider withholding a portion of the state allocation funds to provide for equitable transportation across the state. Mr. Raponi indicated that the state did not have the authority to do this. As a result, Washoe County School District offered to provide support for CCSD transportation costs, if needed, by paying a portion of the charter bus rental fee. Similarly, Elko and Lyon Counties - whose students must travel every year - offered to support transportation needs in the future in order to ensure that Clark County did not experience an inequitable increase in the transportation burden. Washoe County also made this offer.


In response to this conversation, WCSD and CCSD worked closely during the 2015 SkillsUSA State Conference to coordinate and best utilize existing bussing to determine future needs. CCSD determined that no funds from WCSD were needed to offset transportation costs for 2015. Additionally, CCSD CTE representatives continue to advocate that CCSD advisors reduce the number of students traveling to Reno by increasing the school-based and regional competitions. This would reduce the overall cost to CCSD by reducing the number of busses needed.

CCSD and WCSD have agreed that in future years, WCSD will supplement conference transportation by providing additional busses for the State Conference to address the logistics of moving students between venues. This will reduce the strain on the daily time limits for the CCSD charter bus drivers and preserve the CCSD relationship with the charter bus company.

It is important to note that during the initial meeting held in July, 2013, there was no conversation among District CTE representatives, the Nevada Department of Education, and the SkillsUSA Board members about subsidizing transportation costs for individual schools, charter schools or southern Nevada rural districts that might experience an increased travel burden based on the location of the State Conference in Reno.

It is our hope that this statement serves to clarify the understandings and agreements between the northern and southern school districts with regard to supporting transportation/travel costs to the Nevada SkillsUSA State Conferences to be held in Reno through 2020.

Sincerely,

  
David McElwain, CTE Coordinator  
Clark County School District

  
Dr. Dana Ryan, CTE Director  
Washoe County School District

Dear Mr. Lawrence,

It is with great regret that Beacon Academy of Nevada will no longer be able to participate with SkillsUSA Nevada. Since our school is a state sponsored charter school, we do not have the flexibility or funding to travel within the state every year.

We believe that if the separation of the North and the South continues school will have to find other associations within Nevada. For these reasons we do not feel that we can continue to participate with honor.

The values that the mission statement provides is what we continue to instilled in our students today. Unfortunately the senses of events that have led to this point discouraged the overall concept of SkillsUSA.

In 2013, we were told by board that the events will be held in various locations, rotating between cities in order to consider the expenses of all the parties involved. The following year we were told the board decided to hold everything in Reno(North) for the next five(5) years because it was too expensive to hold anything in Las Vegas(South). To compensate for the change of location and to help with costs, Northern schools would be helping to pay for buses and travel for the Southern schools. **(As of today, no help has been given).**

Aside from the budgeting issues we have some concerns that arose during our participation last year that we feel hindered the overall experience. If the problems listed below are not fixed, the state of Nevada SkillsUSA program will not succeed.

#### **Events that occurred during out membership**

##### *Travel*

1<sup>st</sup> year was a trial Reno Leadership and State in Reno

2<sup>nd</sup> year Elko Leadership and State was in Las Vegas

3<sup>rd</sup> year Las Vegas Leadership and State was in Reno

4<sup>th</sup> year Elko Leadership and State in Reno

5<sup>th</sup> year Reno Leadership and State in Reno ( Future)

6<sup>th</sup> year Reno Leadership and State in Reno (Future)

7<sup>th</sup> year Reno Leadership and State in Reno (Future)



## Problems

- Rules of competition are not followed according to National SkillsUSA guidelines
- When complaints are reported, they are not handled in accordance to National SkillsUSA guidelines
- State Director of Nevada would make the decision on her own if she felt she could ignore the complaint without being caught
- During the State Conference in Reno 2014, it was observed by many advisors, students, and parents that inappropriate conduct that was taking place in the ballot room while ballots were being handed in to be counted. (An ex- State officer Hagen Sandoval and a current SkillsUSA Alumni officer, Coleen Read (daughter of State Director) were lying on each other's laps while the State Director was in the same room counting ballots. Nothing was said or done. This made everybody feel very uncomfortable
- Since 2013, the Nevada SkillsUSA Board has stressed the importance of appropriate dress attire for the entire conference. Before students were allowed to accept awards on the award stage, they were checked by a SkillsUSA board member. If the student was not dressed appropriately, they didn't get to go on stage
- During the 2014 Reno State awards ceremony the State Director of Nevada Sindie Read was wearing a mini skirt. According to the dress code for SkillsUSA, skirts should be at least knee length. (How can we tell our students to dress appropriately when the State Director wears a mini skirt and stilettos?)
- The alumni Region 5 Representative (Coleen Read) who was allowed on stage to speak to the students about SkillsUSA after graduation, was in jeans, flip-flops, and sees through top
- There was never any communication between Sindie Read and the Southern Schools
- 2015, We had heard that the State Advisor, Ann Feliz, was released from her job after holding the position for more than 10 years. Her position was never posted publicly to anyone. Then, it was told to students that the State Director named her daughter, Collen Read, and friend, Hagen Sandoval, as the state advisors/lead trainers
- We have, as advisors, been involved in SkillsUSA since 2002
- We started SkillsUSA chapter at Beacon Academy of Nevada in 2012. Our students and staff were very excited about competing in Skills
- We were the first charter school in Nevada to open its own chapter
- Within the first two(2) years our, students had in won 12 medals
- Students who graduated wanted to become alumni because they enjoyed SkillsUSA

The value that the mission statement makes is what is being instilled in our students. Unfortunately, the senses of events have led to this point of discouragement in the overall vision of SkillsUSA for Beacon Academy of Nevada.

We taught our students to believe and practice become outstanding citizens and yet they have viewed a totally different understanding of what SkillsUSA symbolizes. Because they felt the divide of North and South, the moral changed within our organization. We must continue to remember this is for our students and it's not about whom we are, but who we want them to become.

We feel that if the above problems are not fixed, the state of Nevada SkillsUSA program will not succeed. If the separation between North and South continue, schools will have to find other associations to become a part of and for these reasons we do not feel that we can continue to participate with honor in this program.

Sincerely,

Shannon Romero

Diane Miner-James

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the SkillsUSA Nevada State Officers, we would first like to express how appreciative we are for the experiences we've been given during our term this year. For most of us, this was the first time we have been given the opportunity to take on a position of leadership that allowed us to impact the organization that has done so much for us in the past years while we were members. Going into this term, we had expectations as to what this year would look like. Some of those expectations were met and exceeded. For example, the National Conference was the best part of the term for us as a team. We learned so much in the leadership workshops and enjoyed having the opportunity to bond as a state officer team. At the conclusion of the National Conference, we lost our first State Officer. As our term progressed, our State Officer Team lost a second State Officer and the State Officer Trainer.

During our first State Officer meeting, we were introduced our new State Officer Trainer, Ms. Coleen Read, the daughter of our State Director Mrs. Sindie Read. Upon first meeting her, we gave her our full respect and accepted her as our new State Officer Trainer who held a great deal of authority. That respect and authority quickly diminished through multiple actions during our meetings and future interactions that caused our team to feel extremely uncomfortable. When frustrated, Ms. Read used strong forms of profanity in our State Officer meetings at the State Leadership Conference in Elko. Many times, she disrespected Mrs. Read in front of our officer team which resulted in a very hostile environment. Ms. Read disrespected and talked down to Mr. Hagen Sandoval in front of a majority of the conference attendees during one of the sessions. Many members felt it was inappropriate and unprofessional of Ms. Read and it reflected negatively upon our team. At one point, she became upset and threatened to "get on a plane and fly to Chicago" and that we could "handle the conference on our own."

There were several occasions in which she left during our State Officer meetings for long periods of time to take personal phone calls with her significant other. This left the State Officers wasting valuable time since no further instructions from our trainer were given prior to leaving the room rendering us to feel inadequately trained and unprepared to deliver workshops and presentations for the following day. When asking for direction on things that we didn't fully understand, she would ignore our questions and continue looking at her phone. Ms. Read let her emotions get the best of her on multiple occasions during times that were valuable to the preparation needed to provide for the conference. Ms. Read, after one of her emotional tantrums, met with the officers individually in tears to excuse her unfit actions, making us feel uncomfortable. We understand that personal issues arise but Ms. Read's emotions were inexcusable and irrelevant to the current situation. We feel as though she cannot compose herself under pressure or in difficult situations.



Additional challenges were faced in Elko within the Officer team when the second State Officer left the team. Two days prior to arriving in Elko, we were notified that a previous officer, who did not run for re-election, would be replacing the currently vacant officer position at the conference. We would have liked to have been given the opportunity to discuss possible solutions for the sudden loss of our second State Officer and the effects it would have during the conference.

As for Mr. Sandoval, the team felt that he carried himself professionally and was available to us as a source of direction when Ms. Read was unavailable during our trainings and during the Leadership Conference. Mr. Sandoval managed to direct us and put in the work needed to provide us with structure and guidance. Mr. Sandoval was an extremely useful resource by helping us manage an extra officer who was brought on to help with the Leadership Conference without prior experience working with our team.

There has been a lack of communication regarding transportation and itineraries involving Southern Officers. The team was notified of the first official meeting, after Nationals, only one week prior to the scheduled date. This made it difficult to reschedule prior commitments and arrange for proper transportation. This short meeting did not leave us adequate time to prepare for the conference as an Officer team. The meeting was scheduled close to the State Leadership Conference leaving only a few weeks to prepare speeches, presentation and workshops. Shortly before the State Leadership Conference, the Southern Officers received an itinerary for the State Leadership Conference, including flight and hotel information. This information was given on such short notice that the parents of the Southern Officers were frustrated.

It is unfortunate that our State Officer team has had to encounter several major changes during our terms in office. The loss of two State Officers has created a challenge for the current team as additional duties and responsibilities have been assigned to the current officers. The removal of the State Officer Trainer was an unexpected change in the beginning of the school year. Unfortunately, many issues and lack of leadership has been evident in the new State Officer Coach. As an Officer Team, we are asking the Board of Directors to assist us in finding solutions to the problems addressed in this letter prior to the State Conference. Thank you for your support and the opportunity to represent Nevada SkillsUSA. We appreciate your dedication to this wonderful organization.

Sincerely,

Austin Chavez, President  
Zachariah Simms, Vice President  
Danniela Munoz, Secretary  
Mykaela Ryan, Treasurer  
Wyatt Daane, Parliamentarian

# SkillsUSA Structure Conference Structure

Proposed for 2016

State Director  
SINDIE READ

Responsibilities:

Venue Contracts - T-shirts/sponsor - Conference Sponsor Care & Recognition - Kid & Advisor Management - Contest Updates

## Registration

(formerly \$3,900, now \$2,500)

MARNI MAST

Responsibilities:

Registration for all events - Name Badges - Preparing Scoring System/Forms - Compiling Scores - Problem Solving

## Grievances

BOARD PRESIDENT/STATE DIRECTOR

## Conference Support

(as assigned)

BOARD of DIRECTORS

## Officer Training

(formerly \$1,500; suggested \$1,500 + travel costs for 2015-16)

Responsibilities:

Training state officers in skills to include public speaking, national expectations, managing group dynamics, conference planning, leadership skills/concepts, communications—internal & external, conflict resolution, public behavior

## Officer Management

(formerly Operations @ \$2200— scheduled for reduction in 2015-16 to \$1,500; suggested \$1,500 + travel costs)

Responsibilities:

Managing travel, scheduling & supervision of state officers to include—making travel arrangements, managing scheduling (PR events, leadership, state, nationals), communicating with parents, supervision - risk management, boundary setting, conflict management

## Conference Coordinator

(formerly \$2,200, currently \$2,500)

CHRISTINA CRAVENS

Responsibilities:

Venue Management - Permits - Social Event Planning - Student Food - Conference Program & Schedule - Chair/Judge Identification, Mgmt, Mtgs & Materials - Volunteer (Judges) Hospitality - Public Relations - Bus Schedule (w/ CCSD) - Contest Updates to State Director - Conference Follow Up (venue, thank yous, plaques)

## Leadership Contests

(formerly \$1,300, now \$1,500)

ROBERT LOVINO

Responsibilities:

Set Up - Chair/Judge Securement, Follow Up - Chair Check In - Facility & Problem Management - Scoring Oversight with Leadership Chairs - Supervise assigned Courtesy Corp - Site Tear Down as needed

## Skill Contest Site Mgmt

(formerly \$2,000, then \$1,500—single person; suggested for 2015-16 = \$1,400—multiple)

- Edison (\$250)    •Livestock (\$250)
- Ballroom (\$450)    •All Other Sites (\$450)

Responsibilities of Each Site Manager:

Support Conference Chair by — Assist in securing judges - Contest planning - Arrange/accept deliveries - Site set up (day prior) - Site Supervision (day of) - Site tear-down & clean up (day of) - Manage student lunches (if necessary) - Manage judge check in, hospitality - Problem solve

## Opening/Closing Management

(formerly Operations \$2,300, scheduled for reduction to \$1,500 in 2015-16; suggested \$400)

Responsibilities:

Plan and manage opening and closing to include: script - IT - keynote speaker - photo booth - photography & videography - prizes - schedule - practicing with State Officers (in conjunction with Officer Supervisor)

## Bussing

Clark County School District

## Courtesy Corp

Washoe County School District

## Local Events (tours)

Washoe County School District