

Good evening, my name is Dr. Donna Kobrin. On October 20, 2022, I, and 4 others, made public comments at the Nevada State High School Board meeting regarding the immoral, and possibly illegal business practices of the Nevada State High School leadership team, the general distrust the employees have of the NSHS Governing Board, and the employees overwhelming fear of retaliation from the leadership team. At the end of my remarks, I specifically requested that the NSHS Board:

1. Review all past employee exit interviews
2. Perform personal and confidential interviews with past and current employees
3. To Review the purpose of restructuring system made by the leadership team
4. And to formally investigate the bullying and abusive behavior of the leaders in an unbiased fashion.

It was only after our departure that we learned that Chair Fox not only disregarded these recommendations but, instead, did the opposite and requested that leadership members Jesse Welsh and John Hawk do an 'in-house' investigation and provide an analysis of the last two years' exit interviews. He also stated that he had not seen one instance in which the leadership team had failed in its duties and that he is in full support of the leadership team. After hearing five people speak on the conditions of the NSHS working environment (including 2 past employees and one current one) he determined without hesitation and without further investigation that all five were simply unfounded allegations.

As a result of Chair Fox's unwillingness to act in an unbiased manner, and apparent apathy towards NSHS employees, two things occurred. First, the day following the meeting the employees of Nevada State High School in Henderson had an exceptionally bad day as they were interrogated at work and asked with "a creepy smile, do you not like me" by John Hawk. Secondly, we were forced to do our own independent investigation including the analysis of online reviews, collection of past employee exit interviews, and creating an NSHS survey to present to the NSHS Board and the SPCSA.

First let's address the fake positive online reviews and the content of the negative reviews. We informed the governing board that a monetary performance incentive which included gift certificates to staff and contests for students were put in place by the NSHS leaders to write positive online reviews.

8 online sites were analyzed using a standard "Fake Review Indicator System". A copy of the full document (all 53 page) can be found on the [www.NSHSmonitor.com](http://www.NSHSmonitor.com) website. For time's sake, I will simply provide the consensus concerning fake positive online reviews.

The mass majority of all positive reviews were fake. In fact, Yelp removed 63 reviews for Nevada State High School for being fake/coerced. The most prevalent indicators were the following:

1. All positive reviews were 5-stars only
2. Every positive review followed a negative review
3. Multiple positive reviews followed a negative review
4. However, the most prevalent indicator were the dates in which all the positive reviews were written which was between **February and April of 2021** with most occurring on the same exact date.

We have since obtained documentation of the performance incentive that occurred between February and April 2021 with the goal of reaching 225 positive reviews by May 7, 2021. This document further supports the validity of the fake reviews.

The content of the negative reviews was disturbing with almost all reviewers mentioning bullying, high turnover, toxic, abusive, nasty, behavior by the leadership team. But most revealing was how many reviewers specifically named the founders as the main problem.

These online review statements mimic our survey results, and I can honestly testify that the results we have so far are sickening. The fact that this behavior has been going on for years, being especially prevalent under the leadership of Chair Fox is incomprehensible and the fact that SPCSA has not investigated Nevada State High School earlier is disheartening. We have supporting documents that prove that the NSHS Board had been aware of the behavior, including employees sending emails and copies of exit interviews sent directly to the board, well before the “documented complaint” in December of 2021.

I am now going to share with this board the findings. I hope you are as sickened by the knowledge I am about to share with you as we have been in the hope that you see the immediacy of action that is warranted. Every person who took the survey stated there was bullying/belittling behavior, required to work 50 + hours a week including weekends, and seen a high turnover of staff at Nevada State High School.

The following are direct quotes, each from a different individual

“Working here has affected my mental, and physical health. I went to see a doctor and the reason why I missed my menstrual period for over 2 months was because of stress I experience at work”

“The administration is nothing short of borderline abusive and toxic. Run”

“This has got to be the worst school in Nevada! The students and some staff are great but the people who run it especially the woman, tall blond is from a horror movie! She treats her staff and student workers so bad that I don't know why they would stay there! She is one of those people who would rather see that school fail than respect her staff and doesn't care who is around treats them like shit! She is a despicable person and has no right being around students!

“Zero positive experiences. I was bullied and belittled by Wendi Hawk and Janet Chaffin. John Hawk intimidated employees...and they planted certain employees during charter school interviews from the state, so any negative feedback was reported to the Hawks”

“My whole body was collapsing mentally and physically. When I requested some days off, they said we were short staffed and they will consider it the next month”

“NSHS is toxic. Especially for students of color”

“I had so much anxiety I had to see my doctor for it”

“It's a slave environment holding one hostage by offering second rate evaluations simply to keep you from finding another job”

“This is very much a ‘gotcha’ system of leadership causing anxiety, sometimes severe, in employees”

“During one of our staff meetings, Wendi Hawk was talking about reaching out to students and said something like, “act like a stalker, an abusive boyfriend who just won’t stop”

“The NSHS board is complicit and keeps protecting the abusers”

When asked why an employee resigned, they stated “I would rather not say. It’s hard for a victim to trust anyone”

“The NSHS Board, Chairman Fox especially, has maintained a blind eye for years to the Hawks and now Jesse’s mistreatment of employees”

“You wake up to emails in all caps yelling at you and telling you why you suck...”

“People have literally checked into mental hospitals because of the Hawks”

“I was in the military for 20 years and describe the culture and environment, even during times of deployment, as better than NSHS.

“I resigned due to the toxic work environment, browbeating from John and Wendy Hawk and the refusal of the board or Jesse to act in the best interests of the school”

“My stomach still turns, and anxiety increases when I think of the 12 months I worked at NSHS”

“Wendi Hawk got so upset during a meeting once, that she started to throw papers around the room and yell at the top of her lungs”

“The worst job I ever had to work in my life, they stressed me to the point of a mental breakdown”

“In my 25+ years in the workplace, I have not encountered a more toxic, demeaning environment”

“We resigned broken, saddened to leave students...many of us resigned without a job in place due to the toxicity”

In an exit interview when asked “any suggestions for improvement” the employee wrote “Treat employees like human beings”. Unfortunately, this was not the only exit interview that made that same suggestion.

I want to make this clear- every NSHS Board member and every SPCSA board member is personally responsible for every abusive act committed by the NSHS leadership team on their employees from this day forward.

I am requesting that the SPCSA recommend the immediate and permanent termination of founding members John Hawk and Wendi Hawk, CEO Jesse Welsh, and Janet Chaffin from Nevada State High School and the immediate resignation of Chair Fox from the NSHS Board. In addition, since it has come to our attention that the Charter Authority has been informed of these issues in writing for at least the last 18 months we are imploring you to do a full investigation rather than simply requesting information from the offending parties.