

**BOARD FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

**Thursday, December 12, 2013**

Department of Education  
Board Conference Room  
700 East Fifth Street  
Carson City, Nevada

And

Department of Education  
9890 South Maryland  
Board Conference Room  
Las Vegas, Nevada

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING**  
**(Video Conferenced)**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**In Las Vegas:**

Allison Serafin, Vice President  
Alexis Gonzales-Black  
Kamryn Mock  
Mark Newburn

**In Carson City:**

Dave Cook  
Freeman Holbrook  
Richard Stokes

**In Elko:**

Thad Ballard  
Kevin Melcher

**DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT:**

**In Las Vegas**

Dale Erquiaga, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Kim Thompson, Administrative Assistant

**In Carson City:**

Mike Raponi, Director, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education  
Cindy Sharp, Director, Assessments, Program Accountability and Curriculum  
Julia Teska, Deputy Superintendent for Business and Support Services  
Christine Hull, Education Programs Professional

EXHIBIT Z - EDUCATION Document consists of 20 pages. Entire exhibit provided. Meeting Date: 02-25-14
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Gerry Peterson, Assessments, Program Accountability and Curriculum  
Donna Wix, Private Schools  
Sue Poland, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education  
Karen Johansen, Assistant to the State Board of Education  
**LEGAL STAFF PRESENT:**

**In Carson City:**

Carrie Parker, Deputy Attorney General

**AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:**

**In Las Vegas:**

Kim Metcalf, University of Las Vegas  
C.T. Wang  
Kim Mauk  
Janice Carkeek  
Kerry Pope, Clark County School District  
Ryan Cordia, Clark County School District  
Lynn Thornhill  
Bill Thornhill  
Mary Pike, Clark County School District  
Ryan Yanagi, Clark County School District  
Jonathan Synold, Explore Knowledge Academy  
Caroline McIntosh, Nevada Virtual Academy  
Eric Johnson, Clark County School District  
Neva Herrold  
Mary Rooney  
Marty Rooney  
David Blodgett  
Emily Lin, University of Las Vegas  
Jodi Starkey  
Wendy Weathermax, Clark County School District  
Denise Thistlewaite, Clark County School District  
Lindsay Anderson, Washoe County School District  
Seth Rau, Nevada Succeeds  
Rebecca Franks  
Victoria Carreon, Latino Leadership Council  
Christy Grossnickle, Pearson  
Ida Rosen  
Cindy Coletti  
Wilma Ehrens  
Julia Chavez, Clark County School District  
Heidi Arbuckle, Clark County School District  
Nicole Rourke, Clark County School District  
Kyle Konold, Delta Academy  
Deb Roberson, Quest Academy  
Linda Sanders  
Bonnie McDaniel

Diane Reitz, Clark County School district  
Leslie Frehner, Clark County School District  
Karen Taycher, Nevada PEP  
Marilyn Dondero Loop, Nevada Assemblywoman  
Nicole Klimow, Clark County School District  
Leslie Arnold, Clark County School District  
Charles Greer  
Joyce Halderman, Clark County School District  
Lucy Flores, Nevada Assemblywoman  
Abbe Mattson, Explore Knowledge Academy  
Pat Skorkowsky, Superintendent, Clark County School District

**In Carson City:**

Wayne Workman, Lyon County School District  
Rev. Michael Patterson, Lutheran Advocacy Mission in Nevada  
Tony Nitz, Assistant Principal, I Can Do Anything Charter School  
Brianna Braun, I Can Do Anything Charter School  
Kevin Vasquez, I Can Do Anything Charter School  
Keith Savage, Superintendent, Lyon County School District  
Steve Canavero, State Public Charter Authority  
Lindsay Knox, McDonald Carano Wilson  
Gary Schmidt  
Scott Kampmeier, ACT  
Romelle Cronin, Douglas County School District  
Susan Keema, Carson City School District  
Lisa Noonan, Superintendent, Douglas County School District  
Ray Bacon, Nevada Manufacturers Association  
Randy Kirner, Nevada Assemblyman  
Bob Clifford, Fallon Tea Party  
Trudy Stanford  
Craig Stevens, Nevada State Education Association  
Allison Combs, Nevada System of Higher Education  
Dr. Sandra Sheldon, Superintendent, Churchill County School District  
Ben Zunino, Superintendent, Eureka County School District  
David Jensen, Superintendent, Humboldt County School District  
Lynette Conrad, Carson City School District  
Adam Nicely, ACE High School  
Carol B. Wright  
Bryn Lapenta, Washoe County School District  
Andrea McCalla, Fiscal Division, Legislative Council Bureau  
Wayne Thorley, Fiscal Division, Legislative Council Bureau  
Bob Ballou, Good Governance Group of Douglas County  
Pedro Martinez, Superintendent, Washoe County School District

**CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The meeting was called to order at 9:08 a.m. with attendance as reflected above. Vice President Serafin announced President Wynn was unable to attend the meeting, and she would be acting as chairwoman. Member Stavan Corbett was congratulated on his recent appointment to the Clark

County School District Board of Trustees, representing District D. He has resigned from the State Board of Education but will continue to represent the children in Clark County.

Chair Serafin requested moving the public comment normally heard at the end of the meeting to the beginning of the meeting.

### **Public Comment**

Janice Carkeek questioned the outcome if the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) is not defeated. She stated the government is already intruding on lives and once the CCSS becomes the law of the land, freedoms will be gone. Indoctrination for socialism and communism begins in kindergarten. They teach not to rely on family rather that the government knows best. She said teachers will have no impact and implored the Board to reject the CCSS; local decisions for Nevada schools are the right way to go.

Diane Burnett stated she belongs to a group of parents and teachers that has concerns about the CCSS. Twenty two states have legislation pending to get rid of parts of the CCSS. Kansas recently opted out of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) testing, which is what Nevada uses. Smarter Balance stated they would not share information with the federal government, however, that is what SBAC is going to do. Information was provided about a statewide website; Stop Common Core Nevada. Ms. Burnett asked that the Board fully understand the CCSS.

Bill Thornhill said 100 years ago kids were taught the same thing at the same time. It was the only way education would work at that time. With today's technology a question is typed into a computer and the answer is right there. Kids need to know how to think so they can reach their full potential. The CCSS is a step back from education 100 years ago. Mr. Thornhill said he started a private school in Calgary because the public system was not teaching kids how to think; tuition was \$10,000. Parents were willing to pay because it was important for their kids. He asked the Board to review the CCSS and consider moving in the other direction to educate our kids.

Jody Starkey explained one of her objections is that the CCSS was adopted before the standards were developed. She urged the Board to look at what is in the lessons before a decision is made, she asked that the standards are raised and not made common.

C.T. Wong stated that in 1979 President Carter signed the law that established the Department of Education at a cabinet level organization. During those years, America led the world in reading, writing and arithmetic. Since then, the Department of Education has done nothing effectively. America no longer leads the world in reading, writing and arithmetic. Statistics indicate we are close to the bottom of the pile. The Department of Education does not work. Mr. Wong asked why the system is being bought into when there is ample evidence that it does not work. He stated the graduation rate in Clark County is appalling because a system was bought into instead of dealing with the problem and educating our kids by teaching them reading, writing and arithmetic.

Reverend Michael Patterson stated he is speaking on behalf of the Episcopal Church of Nevada and the Lutherans Advocacy in Ministry in Nevada regarding the HSPE. He said there are considerations to be made during discussions today including the technical, the legal and the moral issue. Information has been provided stating the current tests given to students are invalid. They do not test what is being taught in the classroom, and they do not test what state standards say are to be taught in the classroom.

He said he read through testimony from the 2013 legislative hearings, and provided highlights. Mr. Martinez, Superintendent of Washoe County Schools, stated one of his missions has been to understand and fix the HSPE. Washoe County is leading the state in children graduating with advanced diplomas. However, there are students who take and pass advancement courses and college credit courses, but cannot pass the HSPE on their first try. This confirms that the HSPE is well intentioned but the exam is not aligned to what is being taught in the classroom. Educational leaders stated that over and over again during the last legislative session.

The Legislature decided to discontinue the HSPE, and the Board was given the opportunity to decide how to do that. He suggested that an end-of-course assessment is needed, and understands juniors should have an assessment to determine what they need. He recommended using the current Accuplacer to provide good information. He said he believes the Board was concerned about a cause of action when the vote was first taken, and the state is being left open to massive liability. Data indicates the difference between obtaining a high school diploma and not obtaining a high school diploma is \$9,000 starting salary. Rev. Patterson said the Board has the decision about the future of Nevada's children, they can be built up or crushed.

Brianna Brann, a Reno Nevada student, said the HSPE in Nevada is destroying their education and future. The Department of Education says education is the key to the future, if that is true, then why is their education being jeopardized with an invalid test? If a student earns the required credits that should indicate they have learned what is required in high school. Ms. Brann explained that in her sophomore year she was in all honors and AP classes. Instead of taking earth science, she took honors chemistry. That class did not prepare her for the HSPE, when she took the science part of the proficiency exam she did not know the questions that were mostly about earth science. She said she failed the test, and asked why she should be penalized as an advanced student. She stated she had never failed a class in high school and worked very hard to be in an honors program and take an AP class. Her GPA is high and she has enough credits to graduate early. There is no reason why she should not get a diploma and a test should not determine her future. Ms. Brann said the proficiencies are keeping students behind; they are keeping students from diplomas and pursuing their dreams. Instead of proficiencies, she recommended they use star testing throughout the year, and instead take finals to prove what they have learned.

Tony Nitz, Assistant Principal, I Can Do Anything (ICDA) charter high school, said he hopes there is light at the end of the tunnel for not only their students but also many more across the state. He stated ICDA is the first charter school in Nevada, they are in their 15<sup>th</sup> year of operation, and have saved thousands of at risk students over the years. Many students enroll at ICDA because they have not been successful at their zone schools. The majority of their students come to them from traditional schools, significantly behind in their academics and many of them are credit deficient. The school has done a tremendous job over the years helping students get caught up with their peers academically. Many have been able to turn things around, graduate and move on to the next chapter of their lives. With the removal of the certificate of attendance and no new exam in place, there is still the requirement all seniors must pass all of the HSPE in order to walk at graduation.

Mr. Nitz explained that many of their students are facing a disturbing situation, no diploma and no opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments and efforts for the past 13 years and more. They currently have 69 out of 101 students in 12<sup>th</sup> grade who still need to pass one or more parts of the HSPE. Many of these students are close to or have already earned the required credits to graduate.

The only thing preventing them from reaching the milestone of walking the stage and graduating with their peers is the HSPE. This is creating undue stress; many students indicated they will drop out if they do not pass the HSPE. There is no reason to continue taking tests that have been deemed invalid and are not tied to standards or curriculum being covered in class. These students have been working diligently over the years to reach this milestone, for some of them, no one else in their family has achieved. To deny them the right to graduate and walk across the stage for graduation seems to be unjust and unfair. He said he hoped the Board will find a solution to the mandate to pass all of the HSPE so these students have the opportunity to celebrate their other academic accomplishments.

Kevin Vasquez, Student, ICDA, stated the HSPE is keeping kids from graduating. Even if a student has 22.5 credits, they will not graduate unless they pass the HSPE. Foreign exchange students must also pass the HSPE and some are still learning English, which makes it more difficult. Kids from other states must also take the test and some cannot pass because they have not taken the courses included in the HSPE. He said the test should be eliminated.

Gary Schmidt stated he is a candidate for State Senate District 16, which encompasses all of southern Washoe County including Incline Village and all of Carson City in the Republican primary to be held in June 2014. He stated that taking the public comment items out of order fell short of complying with the Open Meeting Law (OML) and informed that he had copies of the OML complaint form, NRS 241. His web site, Reform Nevada Politics.com, offers quick links to the OML and more. He said he opposes the CCSS and is a strong supporter of bringing primary education back to the local jurisdictions and parents. Mr. Schmidt said the OML demands that public comments are at the beginning or end of meeting, and both must be view and content neutral being allowed to talk about anything that is broadly within the jurisdiction of the Board, including CCSS. He stated it is his opinion that people have been denied the opportunity to speak about the CCSS at the beginning of the meeting and that is a violation. He asked for that to be corrected.

Jim Falk, Churchill County, said he does not see progress with the CCSS and does not like the way the program was created behind closed doors by unelected, unaccountable associates of non-governmental organizations. There was no input from parents or teachers, and then it was forced on the states by bribery and extortion. Sixteen states of the 45 that originally accepted the CCSS are having second thoughts and are taking actions ranging from legislative bills to repealing the program to halting until thorough studies can be conducted. Some people say the CCSS is the dumbing down of children. He said when you look behind the bells and whistles, such as smart boards and computer models you see the lack of real education.

Bob Clifford, Fallon, NV, said he has been researching how the CCSS was approved in Nevada. The Committee on Academic Standards originally approved a draft of the standards. He stated that a different draft was approved by the State Board and the original documents approved are not available; it was approved as written. What is being implemented is no longer a draft. He stated the memorandum of understanding with the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium gives up authority of both the state and local school boards to make any changes to the tests once they are received back from the Consortium. He asked who had the authority to give up the rights of the local school boards to accept or reject specific testing.

Roger Haynes said he recently moved to Nevada because he thought it was a state that had less intrusive government. However, he has found a number of the same issues from the state he left; the CCSS is one of those. The federal government has approved the CCSS without the content being in

place. He said there are many things wrong with this legislation and testing items and asked that it be reversed.

Rebecca Franks stated she is a mother of five and three of her children have graduated from high school. She said when she is not smart enough to figure out her fourth grader's math, something is wrong. She asked why we have adopted the CCSS when it has not been tested and to look into it to determine if it is what is best for Nevada's kids.

Neva Herrold said she was disappointed that of the four people being considered for the superintendent of public instruction, only one did not approve of the CCSS and he was not chosen as a finalist. She said the one issue that bothers her is who is behind the CCSS. Her research indicated it is private companies such as Microsoft and Pearson Publishing. Their mission statement on the web is to enrich their members and they want to make money for themselves. She said she thinks it is their attempt to make a global workforce and our children should be seen as individuals. Not everyone can learn in a everyone fits all program.

Kerry Pope, High School Principal, Clark County, and a mom of a sixth and eighth grader. She stated her concern is regarding the timeline and the end-of-course exams, and how to get next year's group of freshmen ready. Course catalogs are going out and eighth graders will begin to register for classes in the next few months. Students will be enrolling and it is not clear if they are going to take an end-of-course exam for high school graduation. She said she is aware the Board has a timeline, but there is urgency for those that deal with this daily; she needs the process to hurry up. With an eighth grade daughter going into ninth grade, it is important to her as a mom. And for the 460 freshmen she is bringing into her school next year, it is important as a principal to provide accurate information. The credit bearing issue is another major concern. If a student does not pass the exam but passes the class, she will need to re-do her schedule and hire new teachers and go back over material if the kids did not get it. It is a big deal. She said they are two months away from needing this information or they will have a freshman class not knowing what is coming or what their expectations are going to be.

Ms. Pope said as a mom she is a fan of the CCSS because she has watched her sixth grade son, who has had common core since third grade, understand and perform better in math than her daughter who is in eighth grade and who started the common core in fifth grade. She stated there is a huge difference, her daughter struggles with fractions, decimals and percents but those are not her son's struggles, and it is not because he is more brilliant than she is. It is because he has had a solid foundation in those skills. Ms. Pope commented that her nieces and nephews in Maryland cannot talk to her daughter about math because they are two years ahead, but her son is able to have a conversation with his sixth grade cousin because they are on the same level. She said she sees struggles at her school with the CCSS and the lack of materials, but overall she endorses them.

Ben Gerhardt, Testing Coordinator, Nevada Virtual Academy, said based on the NSPF in 2012, tenth graders were 57.12 percent proficient in math with a cut score of 242. In 2013, tenth graders were proficient at 33.58 percent. That is a 23.54 percent decrease in proficiency. Currently with 11th grade cut scores moving up to 300, Nevada Virtual Academy, which last year had a 58.7 percent proficiency in math, now has a 25.4 proficiency in math. He asked will we get up to that 58.8 percent, we are trying our best, but probably not. The worry is that next year across the state when these 11th graders who now have a cut score of 300 in math, become 12<sup>th</sup> graders, will the cut score be 300? And what will the state graduation rate be? Graduation moved from 61.65 percent in 2012 to 63 percent in 2013. He said it is improving again this year, but what about next year's seniors if the math

score remains at 300. Mr. Gerhardt stated he would like the Board to look at just Math and ELA for the end-of-course proposals because those standards are in place. The science standards are still in transition and should be brought in later.

Victoria Carreon, Latino Leadership Council, stated the Council supports maintaining an exam in science, and they support exams in the four core areas: reading, math, science, and social studies. If there are four core areas, there should be end-of-course exams for each core area. Flexibility is important to help ensure students succeed. The Council likes the Maryland model that helps students compensate for strengths in one area and weaknesses in another area and has an overall score that meets the graduation requirement. The model in Louisiana offers three sets of exams: two in English, two in math and one in biology or American history. Students must pass one test within each category, which might be the flexibility Nevada needs. This would allow students the choice and flexibility of passing within each of those categories, which may meet the intent of the law and help students be successful and boost the graduation rate.

Pat Skorkowsky, Superintendent, Clark County School District, said the state superintendents have been discussing the end-of-course exams and their fear is that a system will be put in place that may keep students from graduating because they will be dealing with the transitional time in the curriculum. The HSPE is a smart move in that category, but challenges must be addressed; to provide a state accountability system to ensure students are meeting a minimum standard and to comply with the federal waiver in place for No Child Left Behind.

Superintendent Skorkowsky said he spoke with legislators when the bill was being drafted and legislative intent was that it would be ELA and mathematics for the first years until the science standards could be brought on board. The fear is that moving forward with science at this point in time will bring us back here with the same concerns with students who are caught in transition. He said the superintendents support testing in science and believe it is important, but agree it should wait until the Next Generation Standards are adopted so the transition happens all at once instead of a fear of repeating the current conversations two years down the line. They want to assure that as a state they are moving forward.

Bob Ballou said the way our graduation records and state education standards are compared with other countries is wrong. The comparisons are not accurate. Our kids are not as stupid as the numbers make them look.

Lucy Flores, Nevada State Assemblywoman, stated as one of the main co-sponsors and drafters of AB 288, she appreciates the partnership with the State Board in moving from the HSPE to end-of-course examinations. She said she supports Superintendent Erquiaga and that this change is one of the biggest that has been made to the education system; it is important to get it right.

#### **Approval of Flexible Agenda**

**Member Gonzales-Black moved to approve a flexible agenda. Member Newburn seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

#### **Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Erquiaga announced that Member Corbett was recently appointed to the Clark County Board of Trustees. Governor Sandoval will appoint his replacement from names submitted by the

Senate Majority Leader, Mo Denis. An update was provided on the College and Career Readiness Assessment, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver that expires at the end of this school year. The English Mastery Council will begin in January. Superintendent Erquiaga announced that Dr. Steve Canavero has been appointed as the Deputy Superintendent of Student Achievement and will begin in January; Dena Durish will join the Department on January 2, 2014 as the Director of Educator Effectiveness.

### **Approval of Consent Agenda**

**Member Cook moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Member Gonzales-Black seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

### **Possible Approval of Variance Requests – Class Size Reduction for First Quarter 2013-2014 School Year.**

Julie Teska, Deputy Superintendent, Business and Support Services, stated significant changes in class size reduction came out of the 77<sup>th</sup> regular session of the Legislature and the 27<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the Legislature. Past reports were small, the new version of the class size reduction reports and variance requests are larger. It has been a significant undertaking for the Department and the school districts and will hopefully be automated in the future.

The education funding bill, SB 522 of the 77<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, created a 21 to 1 ratio for kindergarten classes with a variance available for up to 25 to 1 average class sizes at the school site level. That is a big change; it is now at the school site level, not the district level. In the past the variance for the kindergarten classes was approved by this Board, now they are approved at the district level by the district superintendent. Another change is that 25 to 1 is a hard cap, there is no variance available beyond 25 to 1.

Due to funding and facility need limitations, Clark County School District was required to meet the 21 to 1 ratio in one-third of its schools in 2014 and the remainder in 2015. Clark County has exceeded the requirement and should be acknowledged for that. They are meeting the 21 to 1 ratio in about 60 percent of their schools, and the 25 to 1 ratio in almost two-thirds of their schools.

During the special session, AB 2 had an impact by changing the class-size reduction reporting and variance size requests for all of the class-size reduction programs from district level ratios to school level ratios and from annually to quarterly. Reports are now due November 1, February 1, May 1, and August 1. Those reports are for the preceding school quarter. NRS 387.700 prescribes that pupil-teacher ratios in grades 1 and 2 are 16 to 1 and in grade 3, 18 to 1. NRS 387.720 allows districts and counties with a population of less than 100,000 to adopt an alternative class-size reduction plan with ratios of 22 to 1. In grades 1, 2, 3 and 25 to 1 in grades 4, 5, 6. Senate Bill 522 allows all districts to exceed the above ratios for grades either 1 through 3 or grades 1 through 6 by two students without requesting a variance from the State Board.

The request today is for approval of the variances for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of this school year. The primary reasons provided for the variance request is insufficient funds at the district level. This can come in two different forms, either facilities without enough classrooms to meet the required ratios, or staffing not having sufficient funds to hire enough teachers to meet the ratio or in some cases teacher availability in certain geographic areas. The reports have been reviewed for compliance with the statutory requirements however a thorough analysis of the reports submitted is still underway.

Approval of the variance requests submitted for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter is recommended, as there are significant financial implications for the districts if the variance requests are not approved.

**Member Gonzales-Black moved to approve the variance requests. Member Newburn seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

**Pursuant to NRS 385.040 (2), information and discussion focusing on the goals and benchmarks of the State for improving student achievement; the effects of those goals, status in achieving them, and the status of any corrective action the Department has imposed**

Superintendent Erquiaga explained that NRS 385.040 (2) requires at one meeting per year the State Board allow a period of discussion focusing on the goals and benchmarks of the state for improving student achievement. Invitations were sent to those entities delineated in the law to invite them to the meeting.

Caroline McIntosh, Head of School, Nevada Virtual Academy, the largest charter school in Nevada statewide, stated it has been her pleasure to serve on different committees for the State Performance Plan which was the STIP. She said their current goal is for all Nevada students, whether in a charter school or a brick and mortar school, graduate high school college and career ready. To deliver their promise they are implementing the CCSS and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) will be coming on board. They are not a pilot school and have a lot of work to assure their teachers understand the framework and the importance of the rigor. She said we need to deliver students ready, but also need to understand they have been with us for years where there was no rigor. There needs to be a transition to assure students are successful.

Dr. Lisa Noonan, Superintendent, Douglas County School District, said they get so caught up in content of what they are going to do, they sometimes forget about the process. There needs to be a transition to assure students are successful. A mantra used in K-12 to help guide a document is to start with students in mind and ask what we want the students to know and be able to do. She said when she began her career, the focus was on teaching with experts coming into the classroom to observe teaching practices. A huge shift along the way began to focus on how students learn, which can be a more difficult success to achieve.

Pam Salazar, Chair, Teachers and Leaders Council, stated on behalf of the Council, how important the focus on educator effectiveness is. Nevada has an opportunity to move forward with the development of the Nevada Educator Performance Framework. She said as Nevada moves in that direction over the next few years to help educators, principals, teachers and administrators, it is important to keep in mind that they need to support the students to be college and career ready to be successful. A big component of that is the Nevada Educator Performance Framework. It will take professional development and ongoing support so that educators can master that set of skills and knowledge to move students forward.

Abbe Mattson, Superintendent, Explore Knowledge Academy, a project-based charter school in Las Vegas, stated sometimes there is so much focus on testing our children that we forget they are kids. One test, one time a year, does not provide sufficient information on whether that child is achieving. Other measures may be needed to determine whether they are successful and learning and the same for the educators; a snapshot in time does not always give us the full compliment. A project-based school uses a lot of time and effort to develop public speaking and students do deeper learning projects. Ms. Mattson explained that the last couple of years has been difficult trying to get their kids

to go from the idea that they can explore anything and do deep research, reporting what they have learned, to now fill in some bubbles and tell us what you have learned. That does not always work. Keep an open mind that sometimes a test is not everything and giving our kids a harder test does not always make them smarter.

Pedro Martinez, Superintendent, Washoe County School District, stated Nevada's education system is going to be taken to a different level with the new law changing the HSPE and requirements for children graduating from high school. The new law allows the Board an opportunity to look at a change of course for end-of-course assessments in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades, as well as the current HSPE. In previous meetings the Board took action to leave the exam for the current grade levels before the new assessments are developed. The current system is a student must pass with a 300 cut score for the three subjects, English, Math and science, or they fail. A student could receive 299, as several children did last year, and they will not graduate because they are one point off. With passage of the new law there is an opportunity to consider a composite score for children who will still need to take the HSPE as Nevada transitions through the new changes.

Superintendent Martinez stated he does not want to lower rigor or standards, but to change the system to be more reasonable and flexible. He suggested to still keep the average composite of 300; there are 3 sections and a score of 300 could be received in each section for a total of 900. The student would still need an average of 300, but could receive 320 in one section, 300 in another and 280 in another to meet the average of 300 which would be acceptable for high school graduation. Other parts of the country have been using this system for several years and it would be a more flexible system. Nevada law prohibited this in the past; however, the current law would allow it. He asked the Board to consider a composite score as they make the changes for next year's classes so it would be in effect for next year's sophomores, juniors and seniors who will still need to take the HSPE as the brand new assessments are being introduced.

Keith Savage, Superintendent, Lyon County School District, said he would like to add context to the numbers being thrown around. For example, 242 on a math cut score of HSPE, 300 on the science, 300 on the reading and now we are talking about 900 as a composite score. Using Lyon County as an example, there are five high schools and they range in size from 20 seniors in Smith Valley to 220 seniors in Fernley High School. These five high schools are average, two of the five schools are three star schools, and three of them are four star schools. They are solid schools and using them as an example statewide is not going to be very different from one county to the next. Last year's senior class of 2013 had a 242 math cut score and 85 percent of the students passed all the proficiency exams. Using the same score, and same kids but apply a 300 cut score, which is not what our freshmen, sophomores and juniors are required to obtain, that 85 percent drops down to 71 percent. As we move forward, take that 900 composite score, apply it to the same graduating class of 2013, it moves back up to 82 percent. Giving kids a fighting chance in this transition as Pat Skorkowsky was talking about earlier, is what we are after, but still keeps the rigor and high expectations on the student and school in this age of accountability. Last year they had a student who scored a 333 on the science, 247 on math and 500 on reading. That student was able to graduate because the cut score was 242. If that student had been in the graduating class of 2015, the student would not have been eligible to graduate from a Lyon County School. It is an extreme example, but there are many examples right above and below the 900. Look at opportunities for students to improve upon a passing score by using a composite score. Think outside the box. If they score a 301 on the science, still below that and have another opportunity to take that assessment, maybe they can get a 330 to total a 900 composite score.

Dr. Noonan said this topic is of high concern and has been discussed at the NASS meetings. Everything they do from kindergarten on is about getting kids across the stage and receiving that diploma. She said when people attend college they seek subjects where they excel, have passion and are driven. Today's idea honors the student while still in high school. With STEM being such a heavy focus they want students to be aware of engineering opportunities, the high tech manufacturing and the possibilities for future careers. She suggested flexibility for students that tests high in one area, struggle in another and not deny them a diploma because they do not equally excel in all areas at the same time.

Superintendent Martinez said if this were approved, instead of spending resources on remediation for students in the 242-300 range in math, they could spend resources on professional development for instructors on how to teach to a more rigorous curriculum. The pedagogy is changing for teachers and how they will be able to teach a standard, rather than teach it one class setting, one class one time, now the standard may need to be taught over a two week period. This is where spending professional development, money and resources should be.

Member Cook said the cut score for mathematics was 242, but has since bounced up to 300 and that only exacerbates the situation. Superintendent Savage responded the assessments have changed over the last few years in reading and math. When the math assessment was changed three years ago, the State Board decided to lower the passing scoring, or cut score, from 300 to 242 with the understanding that it would revert back to the 300 level within a specific time period. That year has become this year. Last year it affected the middle school grades, sophomores and CRTs and this year's juniors. With the new law there is the possible flexibility around the composite scores. He stated he is fine keeping the average at 300, but if there is a student who has 299 in one section, and 310 in another this is a time to be more flexible so they are not penalized and do not graduate.

Member Serafin said students are given five opportunities to take the HSPE, and she asked if the cohort from students who have taken the test five times has been looked at to determine how many students the composite score would impact in each of the school districts.

Superintendent Martinez responded that some districts have done the analysis, it would be easy for Washoe or Clark County as well as smaller districts, and he would be happy to provide the analysis. In Eureka it is a 50 percent difference and it will not be insignificant in any district. It will reduce costs; there are students who are taking the exam as many as seven times, all the way through the summer of their senior year. Many of them have passed multiple sections, and they are trying to pass one or two sections. With the composite score it will reduce their testing and reduce the cost. These assessments are independent of ACT/SAT and AP assessments which students need to focus for college. From an economic perspective, it is reasonable and the right thing to do for our children.

Member Newburn said he has been following the Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) as they worked on building the school and teacher framework and the evaluation system. They brought in experts and used two key principals. One is that a high stakes test should never drive a single decision and the composite, the multiple summing of indicators, is a more reliable metric to make these decisions. He said he is a big fan of the Maryland model that uses an option of a composite score for graduation.

Ben Gerhardt, Testing Coordinator, Nevada Virtual Academy, stated they just received the scores last week of the 218 11<sup>th</sup> graders who took the math this past fall. Fifty-five of them scored between 251 and 299. Last year they would have passed math, this year 21 had a 300 or better and passed math.

Member Gonzales-Black asked what the difference is between a cut score of 242 and 300, what does it actually mean for students. If the answer is zero, and there is no value added to the increased cut score, is there any research or thoughts about how it benefits kids, and what does the difference mean in terms of student learning.

Superintendent Martinez said he does not want to debate the validity of the proficiency exams, but the reality is that their rigor was increased. As a way to balance the extra rigor, the passing score was reduced. He said he respects the law, but the HSPE is not aligned to the course work being taught. The schools have become savvy in teaching to the assessment because it is a requirement. Washoe County has one of the highest rates of college going students taking AP classes but there is no correlation between their HSPE scores in any of the sections and their scores on the ACT/SAT or AP exams. Graduation rates are on the way up across the state. We do not want to be in a position to sacrifice rigor and lower standards, but we do see an opportunity to make the system more reasonable, more flexible, allowing more children to graduate.

Superintendent Savage reported that Lyon County just received the results from their juniors on the HSPE they took in November with a 300 cut score. Out of 448 students that took the assessment, 59 passed with a 300, 13 percent coupled with 25 percent that passed as sophomores last year. That creates an interesting dilemma, how do they remediate those students and use resources. Most of those 448 juniors are in an Algebra II class. That is the natural progression where they take algebra as a freshman, geometry as a sophomore, and Algebra II as a junior. Students are being prepared in Algebra II with the CCSS so that they are ready to take the ACT and score high and not need remediation when they enter college. They cannot remediate for the proficiency in Algebra II. A separate proficiency math class is needed for those 448 students who are going to take the assessment again in March. For example, in Lyon County they are going to try and buy prep periods from math teachers to allow for those students in a second math class. It is a burden on their resources.

Member Gonzales-Black asked if the decision around cut scores relates to the new testing system and the end-of-course tests. Is there any thought about how lowering or raising composite scores will impact the transition, or better prepare kids for the test systems they are going to see in the next couple of years?

Superintendent Martinez explained the new law allows the Board flexibility to make significant graduation requirement changes for all grade levels from 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>. With the new law, the superintendents advocate having new end-of-course finals which are tied to instruction and the content that is taught, and is tied to the CCSS in the early grades of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> and then have a college readiness assessment in 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Currently, today the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders and 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders next year are going to get caught in the middle. The new law cannot be used to help them because they are caught in the middle. In an earlier decision, the Board kept the HSPE for those students. The new law provides flexibility to make changes such as using a composite score.

Member Cook said that at the end-of-course subcommittee meeting, Member Newburn spoke about Maryland and how favorably they were inclined towards composite testing. Their discussion centered

on composite testing for end-of-course. He stated he supports composite testing and reestablishing a lower math cut score as well.

Chair Serafin stated this topic will be moved to the January meeting when there will be opportunity for further discussion and action.

Kyle Konald, Executive Director, Delta Academy Charter School, explained that their school is for grades 7-12. The majority of students that enroll in Delta Academy have experienced difficulties in a traditional school due to academic skill level and social/emotional issues. Historically they have not done well on high stakes testing, and began to look at internal measures of assessments. They give students three assessments, math, reading and a measure of social/emotional well being when they first come to Delta Academy. This year at intake, September testing indicated their students were about 3-4 grade levels below in both reading and math, and that extends across grades 7-12. They have 12<sup>th</sup> grade students at a 1<sup>st</sup> grade level; there is a huge range of ability levels.

The social/emotional indicators show students face a high level of social stress with low levels of social support; yet students have a good attitude and motivation to succeed in school. It is a recipe for failure with no social support. It appears Nevada is moving towards a high school diploma just for students going to a four year college, which is maybe 50 percent at most of the students graduating from high school. The other fifty percent will go to a career technical program, or go to work, join the military, but they all require a high school diploma. Please consider these students.

They want to succeed, but they are so far behind when they come to Delta Academy that it is very difficult for them to be motivated to come to school when they see what the requirements are. They see how credit deficient they are and that they need to take Algebra II. They do not know how to do two digit by one digit multiplication problems, they are not going to get Algebra II, but that is the current requirement of the HSPE.

Other states have multiple diplomas; standard, honors, advanced diplomas, but even the standard diploma is a four year college track diploma. He said he would like to see a high school diploma for students that want to go to the military, be a chef or an auto mechanic, but right now they cannot go to those schools because they do not have a traditional high school diploma. He said he would like to see the certificate of graduation reinstated.

Mr. Konald stated that it is amazing to watch the graduation ceremony, even students who did not meet all the requirements but were at school for four years, received 22.5 credits but could not pass the HSPE, or did not take all the required four years of English and 3 years of math, but got 22.5 credits. They still received a certificate of attendance and crossed the stage. Family members cried; that was the first of their family to even get on the stage and go four years in high school. It is a great accomplishment and now that has been taken away.

Superintendent Erquiaga said this is an example of when the statute works the way it is supposed to. You are required to hold a discussion about benchmarks, a benchmark that is problematic has been brought to the Board's attention and they can take action on it. This item will be moved to January for further discussion and possible action on the scoring of the HSPE.

**Information and Discussion regarding the State Improvement Plan (STIP)**

Superintendent Erquiaga stated that NRS requires the State Board to prepare an annual plan for the improvement of student achievement in the state. The first step of the process is a review and analysis of the data that is required to be compiled. The next step is the identification of factors and problems common to public schools in the state, and then the Department will outline strategies to address those problems and factors. The work of the review of the analysis is underway and the Board will need to approve the document in January. He invited Board members to participate in the conversations around strategies if they would like.

**Information, discussion and Possible Action regarding Administration of the High School Proficiency Exam pursuant to AB 288 of the 77<sup>th</sup> Regular Session.**

Superintendent Erquiaga explained that AB 288 of the 77<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session delineated the years the Board could authorize the continuance of the HSPE for purposes of receiving federal money under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). There must be a test based on academic and content standards in order to comply with the ESEA. The Board was given authority to prescribe requirements for graduation for students in certain grades to include the continuance of the HSPE, they extended it to four grades, and the law does not allow for that. Today, the Board is being asked to re-consider the issue, and entertain a motion to prescribe the requirement for graduation that a pupil enrolled in grade 12 in 2013-14, 2014-15 or 2015-16 must satisfy to receive a standard diploma, which may include passage of the HSPE. The graduating class of 2017 was included and the law does not give the Board authority to do that.

Chair Serafin reiterated that Superintendent Erquiaga recommended that the previous agreement be amended, that the HSPE applies to seniors in the classes of 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 with 2016 being the last year required for HSPE exams.

**Member Gonzales-Black moved to approve that the HSPE applies to seniors in the classes of 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 with 2016 being the last year required for HSPE exams. Member Cook seconded the motion.**

Member Newburn asked about the requirements for the class that was just dropped from the HSPE. Superintendent Erquiaga responded the law requires the end-of-course examinations begin to commence in class 2014-15. They will be using the end-of-course assessments.

Member Holbrook asked if they move forward with the changes on the HSPE, what is the plan for students that were denied a diploma, there may be a backlash from individuals asking questions about the rule change right after they were denied a diploma.

Deputy Attorney General Parker replied that AB 288 gave the Board authority to decide what to do with the students in grade 12 in the schools years 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16. The bill does not allow the Board to go retroactive to the previous school year.

**The motion carried.**

**Progress report from the Subcommittee on End-of-Course Examinations and Discussion regarding the Subcommittee studying the Board's requirement to select courses of study for end-of-course examinations.**

Member Melcher, Chair, End-of-Course Subcommittee, informed the Board a meeting was held on November 13, 2013. Discussions were held with consultants as well as stakeholders and the public to help decide the content the exams will assess, when the end of course exams will occur and how many re-takes students will have to pass the exam. The statewide end-of-course meetings were held on November 15-16. The committee will provide their report at the next subcommittee meeting, December 19.

Superintendent Erquiaga explained there was a request to provide the Board with budget information at the last subcommittee meeting. The legislature provided \$1.5 million this biennium for the development of the End-of-Course examinations. Not all of the tests will be brought online this biennium, so the Department can go back to the legislature and make this a part of the ongoing budget. He said there are enough funds to develop the End-of-Course exams in this period of the biennium.

Superintendent Erquiaga suggested it would be useful if individual members of the full Board advise the subcommittee now if they have thoughts about the examinations in terms of what their purpose is, is it a minimum competency test, is it just a high school graduation test, should it begin at grade 9 and 10. It will help the subcommittee next week and in January. He said he appreciates the principal who expressed a sense of urgency. Department staff would also like the Board to make this decision quickly, but it must also be made correctly; the issue is difficult for everyone.

Member Gonzales-Black shared a personal experience; she used end-of-course exams when she was a biology teacher in North Carolina and drew heavily from them. She said the end-of-course exams are useful in getting timely information about kids, improve the feed-back loop and inform teaching. She gave her kids a test at the end of class and got the results in a rapid time frame that allowed for time to remediate throughout the remainder of the year. It is imperative that teachers use these tests and the results of the tests to reflect on their students' progress for improvement. It brings up questions about implementation and what testing service to use and how quickly test scores will come back.

Member Gonzales-Black asked if it would make sense having a test in 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades to test the 11<sup>th</sup> grade CCSS? She said she wanted to advocate for the minimum viable product and not over test students; to have the least amount of testing to adequately provide information about their progress. She commented it is a tricky situation given that the standards are the same in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade and the same in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

Chair Serafin suggested the subcommittee address member Gonzales-Black's questions at the upcoming meeting. The purpose of the subcommittee is to provide guidance and to take these questions back.

Member Melcher agreed to take today's questions to the subcommittee for discussion at the next meeting.

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Chair Serafin noted there are questions regarding course alignment, such as algebra, geometry, and algebra II in CCSS. She asked if students take an algebra I course prior to high school, what will be the impact on the data rollup. Other states have end-of-course exams and students have the opportunity to take those tests prior to high school. She suggested that the subcommittee determine if that would impact federal reporting at the January meeting.

Member Melcher asked if Chair Serafin is referring to banking scores. Chair Serafin clarified her questions is whether it is it banked, or is it rolled up and reported out separately? She asked how other states meet the requirements of federal reporting while also having flexibility to afford students outside of those grades the opportunity to take those courses.

Member Gonzales-Black asked if there will be alternative end-of-course exams for Special Education students or students with Individual Education Plans (IEP).

Member Melcher said that Special Education students and the reciprocity of testing from other states including students who move into Nevada and have completed similar tests to meet our requirements will need to be discussed.

**11:30 a.m. Public Hearing and possible Board adoption on proposed amendments to R062-13; NAC 389.2425 Second Grade: Physical Education; NAC 389.2946 Fifth Grade: Physical Education; NAC 389.386 Eighth Grade: Physical Education; NAC 389.485 Physical Education; Complete Deletion of NAC 389.283 Physical Education.**

The public hearing opened at 11:30 a.m. There were 47 individuals present in Las Vegas and 11 individuals present in Carson City.

There was no public comment. There was no Board member comment.

**Member Gonzales-Black moved to adopt the proposed amendments to R062-13. Member Holbrook seconded the motion.** A vote was taken however it was determined two members were not present and the vote was re-taken. **The motion carried.**

The public hearing closed at 11:48 a.m.

**11:35 a.m. Workshop to solicit comments on proposed changes to Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) related to high school equivalency assessments: NAC 385.402-Purpose; NAC 385.404-Eligibility to take tests; duties of school district; NAC 385.406-Identification required; NAC 385.408-Minimum passing scores; NAC 385.410-Initial testing and retesting; NAC 385.420-Certificate of educational equivalence; NAC 389.694-Waiver of credits for adult standard diploma; and NAC 389.695-Attendance at adult high school program for test preparation.**

The workshop opened at 11:48 a.m. There were 47 individuals present in Las Vegas and 8 individuals present in Carson City.

Mike Raponi, Director, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education, explained the proposed changes to NAC 385 and NAC 389 related to high-school equivalency examinations (HSE). The proposed amendments affect the regulations as follows:

- NAC 385.402, the amendment would change the words *Tests of general educational development* to *State approved high school equivalency*.
- NAC 385.404: Eligibility and duties of the school district: changes the age requirement from 17 years of age to 18 years of age for eligibility to take an AJSE and updates test nomenclature to high school equivalency assessments. The Department will propose adding

a new section to allow students 17 years of age who are enrolled in an alternative education program and who pass an HSE to waive the units of credits required for an adult standard diploma so that those students would not have to wait until they are 18 years old to receive credits they have otherwise rightfully earned.

- NAC 385.406 Identification required: deletes the work “proctor” for “chief examiner,” because chief examiner is associated historically to the GED.
- NAC 285.408 Minimum passing scores: Strikes the reference to the minimum passing score on the GED and adds language to reference the passing scores on the three new HSEs: The GED, HiSET and the TSAC.
- NAC 385.410 Initial testing and retesting: replaces the reference to tests of general education development with state-approved high school equivalency assessments. Deletes Section 4 which prohibits retesting for anyone who earns a Nevada H.S. Equivalency Certificate. The assessments will include a “with honors” higher cut score that will indicate college and career readiness.
- NAC 385.420 Certificate of educational equivalence: Updates the language to read *state-approved high school equivalency assessment*, including the description how a certificate will be issued.
- NAC 389.694 Waiver of credits for adult standard diplomas: this regulation will be updated to include the new name of the assessment, replaces the reference to English with language arts, and ascredit waivers for Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social studies for the 2014 HSEs.
- NAC 389.695 Attendance at adult high school program for test preparation: This change is to update the new name of the assessment and add language that allows a person who is 16 years of age but less than 18 years of age to attend an adult high school program for the purpose of test preparation. This change is to comply with compulsory education age requirements.

There was no public comment.

**Member Newburn moved to submit the proposed regulations to the Legislative Council Bureau (LCB) for drafting and return to the Board at a later date for a public hearing. Member Gonzales-Black seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

The workshop closed at 11:54 a.m.

**11:40 a.m. Workshop to solicit comments on proposed changes to NAC 389.800 General Requirements for program and NAC 389.815 Requirements for endorsement on diploma indicating successful completion of program.**

The workshop opened at 11: 54 a.m. There were 47 individuals present in Las Vegas and 8 individuals present in Carson City.

Mike Raponi, Director, Office of Career, Technical and Education explained the proposed changes to NAC 389 related to career and technical education. The proposed amendments effect the regulations as follows:

- NAC 389.800, Section 1: the amendment updates language for clarification purposes only. Part (a) (3) of Section 1 would be struck to remove redundancy because it addresses employability skills which are already addressed in another section.
- Part (d) of Section 1 would be amended to specify that student proficiency in employability skills would be measured by an assessment prescribed by the Department of Education.

- Section 3 is amended for updating language, and in part (b) of Section 3 the requirement for school districts to issue competency certificates and the conclusion of the program would be removed and replaced with the requirements for students to earn the State Certificate of Skill Attainment. The criteria to earn the State Certificate is: (1) earning a 3.0 GPA in the CTE course sequence; (2) pass the state end-of-program technical assessment; and (3) pass the state employability skills assessment. School districts would be required to report the numbers of students who earn the certificate each year.
- Language would be added to Section 4 referencing the requirement for each school district to appoint an advisory technical skills committee as per NRS 388.385. One more addition includes a requirement for the Department to establish and maintain a list of state-approved industry credentials and certifications that high school students enrolled in CTE programs may be eligible to earn. This list would be updated annually.
- NRS 388.380 provides for the State Board to adopt regulations prescribing the endorsement of career and technical education for a high school diploma. The regulations are in NAC 389.815: Requirements for endorsement on the diploma indicating successful completion of program. The proposed amendments would make two distinct changes to the regulation: one, the requirements to earn the endorsement on the diploma would be the same as those to earn the Certificate of Skill Attainment (3.0 GPA and passing the state CTE assessments) and two, would require the endorsement be in a format prescribed by the Department. The reason for this change is to develop and maintain a system of state-level credentials that is somewhat portable, at least within our state.

These changes would have no bearing on a school district's ability to provide other types of recognition at local levels.

Superintendent Erquiaga stated the public hearing to follow is an important step for Nevada students; this is the career readiness section. Career and Technical Education has new aligned assessments and this will generate a new certificate in program that will show as a new endorsed diploma. On any given day there are 50,000 students enrolled in Career and Technical Education in Nevada; over ten percent. These students are as much a part of Nevada's future as when we talk about the common core.

**Member Cook moved to submit the proposed regulations to the Legislative Council Bureau (LCB) for drafting and return to the Board at a later date for a public hearing. Member Gonzales-Black seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

The workshop closed at 11: 50 a.m.

#### **Approval of 2014 Board Calendar**

**Member Cook moved to approve the 2014 Board calendar. Member Newburn seconded the motion. The motion carried.**

#### **Future Agenda Items**

Member Newburn requested a presentation from Code.org from the STEM community regarding how to incorporate computer science in curriculums.

Member Cook requested a presentation from Kate Marshall, Secretary of State, regarding a savings program she is proposing in preparation for college attendance.

**Public Comment**

Ray Bacon, Nevada Manufacturers Association, stated the end-of-course exams will have a short life span. Since it is going to have a limited lifespan, the existing test used in every county, and consolidate it into a single statewide test. It may not be perfect, but it will be efficient and will keep the testing costs down. That would provide a uniform test. He said he is not sure setting a cut score matters because it will be short lived. There will be a measurement and data and that is preserving the train of data. Mr. Bacon stated that employers are looking at the National Career Readiness certificate. That has bronze, silver, gold, platinum levels and it is something employers are looking at and does not have a cut score.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 p.m.