



NEVADA LEGISLATURE NEVADA VISION STAKEHOLDER GROUP

(Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 37, File No. 102, *Statutes of Nevada 2009*)

SUMMARY MINUTES AND ACTION REPORT

The tenth meeting of the Nevada Legislature's Nevada Vision Stakeholder Group (NVSG) was held on August 6, 2010, at 9 a.m. in Room 4412 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 2134 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. A copy of this set of "Summary Minutes and Action Report," including the "Meeting Notice and Agenda" ([Exhibit A](#)) and other substantive exhibits, is available on the Nevada Legislature's website at <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/interim/75th2009/committee/>. In addition, copies of the audio record may be purchased through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (e-mail: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775/684-6835).

GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:

Robert E. Lang, Ph.D., Brookings Mountain West and Department of Sociology,
University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), Chair
Peter C. Bernhard, Cleveland Clinic Nevada
René Cantu, Jr., Ph.D., Latin Chamber of Commerce Community Foundation
Marsha Irvin, Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy
Thomas A. Perrigo, AICP, City of Las Vegas
Susan Rhodes, Licensed Advanced Social Worker (LASW), National Association of
Social Workers, Nevada Chapter
Brian Rippet, Nevada State Education Association, Middle School Teacher,
Zephyr Cove
Keith Smith, Boyd Gaming Corporation
Denise Tanata Ashby, Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy, UNLV
Cedric D. Williams, North Las Vegas Fire Department

GROUP MEMBERS PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:

Doug Busselman, Nevada Farm Bureau Federation
Robert Lee Potter, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
Terry J. Reynolds, The Reynolds Company

GROUP MEMBERS ABSENT:

Douglas D. Dirks, Employers Holdings, Inc.
Paul Dugan, Washoe County School District, Retired
Alan Feldman, MGM Resorts International
Janelle Kraft Pearce, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, Retired
Boyd Martin, Boyd Martin Construction and Associated General Contractors,
Las Vegas Chapter
John Packham, Ph.D., University of Nevada School of Medicine
Devin Reiss, Realty 500 Reiss Corporation, Nevada Association of Realtors
Katy Simon, Washoe County
Jacob L. Snow, Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada
Donald D. Snyder, The Smith Center for the Performing Arts
Sylvia Young, FACHE, Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:

David Ziegler, Principal Research Analyst, Research Division

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:

Donald O. Williams, Research Director, Research Division
C. J. Smith, Secretary, Research Division

INTRODUCTION AND OPENING REMARKS

- Robert E. Lang, Ph.D., Brookings Mountain West and Department of Sociology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), NVSG Chair, welcomed the members of the Nevada Vision Stakeholder Group (NVSG). He explained that the fiscal part of the project will not be completed, but that will not affect the NVSG's portion of the project. Chair Lang said that the NVSG's charge is to have an expert discussion and vet the challenges the State faces over the next 20 years and draw a group consensus on what the State should preserve, even when facing potential government cuts.

Chair Lang stated that since Nevada ranks 50th in education, the purpose of today's meeting is to hear formal testimony and discuss how the State can improve its national educational status. He suggested that the lack of human capital and its relation to economic development is holding Nevada back. Chair Lang noted there are a number of high-tier, Carnegie-ranked research institutes in the West, but none of them is located in Nevada. He said these institutes are spitting out patents, a connection to economic development and diversity, making these institutions partly self-sustaining because their endowments attract federal investment. Chair Lang commented that since Nevada has not made this investment, the State faces a legacy of under-investment in higher education.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF FEBRUARY 25, 2010; MARCH 12, 2010; MARCH 22, 2010; AND APRIL 6, 2010

The Group **APPROVED THE FOLLOWING ACTION:**

DOUG BUSSELMAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF FEBRUARY 25, 2010; MARCH 12, 2010; MARCH 22, 2010; AND APRIL 6, 2010, IN LAS VEGAS, NEVADA. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY ROBERT LEE POTTER AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

PRESENTATIONS ON AND DISCUSSION OF STRATEGIC ISSUES AND INITIATIVES RELATED TO EDUCATION IN NEVADA

Representative of Nevada System of Higher Education

- Jane A. Nichols, Ed.D., Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), said Nevada's higher education staff and faculty have been planning for Nevada's future for many years. She stated the importance of viewing all data as a reminder of the opportunity that NSHE has to move the State's education system forward in order to pull Nevada out of its dire economic situation.

Dr. Nichols presented a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation ([Exhibit B](#)) which identified the problems and challenges faced by Nevada's educational system. She explained that Nevada is facing a growing population of high school graduates and a growing demand

for an educated workforce. In spite of this, Dr. Nichols noted that Nevada continues to lose students. She stated the challenge is fixing the “leaky education pipeline” and establishing a “college-going” culture, a culture where all families expect their young people to take the steps necessary to go to college.

Dr. Nichols discussed the transition and completion rates from ninth grade to college in 2006. She said that according to the national methodology, only one in ten ninth graders in Nevada would achieve a college education within 150 percent of the time. Dr. Nichols pointed out the demographics that show Nevada has a growing population but with some loss in the rural counties. She stated that the number of high school graduates continues to grow, and the State would track those children through the K-12 system. Dr. Nichols stressed that those numbers, regardless of the 2010 census, would drive an increasing number of high school graduates—who right now—are not going on to college.

Dr. Nichols said the State’s percentage of high school graduates enrolled as first-time, degree-seeking college students in the fall semester immediately following high school graduation is not keeping up with the national average. She noted the rate increased from 1998 to 2000 with the advent of the Millennium Scholarship, but the percentage declined from 2004 through 2008 due to the Millennium Scholarship decreasing in value and becoming more difficult to obtain. Dr. Nichols pointed out that even though the State’s enrollment is growing rapidly, the number of citizens enrolled in higher education it is not keeping up with Nevada’s population growth.

According to the 2009 statistics provided by the Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation, Dr. Nichols stated that Nevada’s economy is too heavily dependent on industries that often do not require a college degree, such as leisure and hospitality. She noted that the projected changes in the State’s workforce and population for 19- to 64-year olds for 2006 through 2016 will be 38 percent, and job growth will be in fields that require a college degree or workforce certificate. Dr. Nichols stressed that if more businesses that require higher education move into the State, these numbers will be even more dramatic.

Dr. Nichols stated that in 2007 Nevada ranked 49th in the country according to the percent of population enrolled in college for 18- to 24-year olds, which illustrates that not enough of Nevada’s young people are going to college. She said the State cannot solve its problem by recruiting people with degrees from other states because Nevada’s net migration is primarily an uneducated workforce. Dr. Nichols said national projections show that Nevada will need more college graduates going forward than any other state. She noted that the National Center for Higher Education Management System predicts that Nevada will lose ground in the percentage of its college-educated workforce. The most substantial growth, she said, will be in the “less than high school” and “high school only” populations of the state, exacerbated by the State’s dropout rates at both the high school and college level.

Dr. Nichols said that Governor Jim Gibbons; Daniel Klaich, Chancellor, NSHE; and Nevada's Education Reform Blue Ribbon Task Force signed off on a national project called Complete College America (CCA). She stated the goal of the CCA is for 60 percent of young adults to have a college degree or credential of value by 2020, with a focus on the traditionally underrepresented populations—those people not attending college or not being successful in college. Because Nevada has so many adult students who need a college degree, Dr. Nichols said the State would focus on the 25 to 64 age group. She said the CCA has asked for Nevada's commitment to increase the number of annual completers of certificates, associate, or bachelor degrees by 1,064 each year.

Dr. Nichols stated that NSHE is Nevada's primary higher education portal because the State does not have as many large, established private institutions as other states. She said that NSHE is calling on private institutions to join as partners to increase the number of graduates. Based on current degree production, Dr. Nichols said that NSHE would assume 84 percent of the goal, or 890 additional completions per year, and private institutions would assume 16 percent, or 174 completions. By 2020, she stated NSHE would produce 23,215 students; of those, 19,408 would be from public institutions and 3,807 students would be from private institutions. To meet the goal for completion by minorities, Dr. Nichols stated that about two-thirds of the students completing certificates or degrees in 2020 would need to be minority students. She stressed that the State needs to recruit, retain, and graduate more qualified students by creating a "college-going" culture, which means a high school diploma must produce a student who is ready for college or the work place.

Dr. Nichols said it is important today to graduate more students in key fields, such as engineering, health care, teacher education, and technology. She suggested that Nevada needs a strong research base to attract and sustain partnerships with businesses, such as the developments made in the area of renewable energy and the new companies accompanying that effort. Dr. Nichols stated these partnerships are the highway to high tech jobs that would support a new Nevada. She stressed that the role of Nevada's colleges—which cannot be underestimated—is to produce work-ready graduates in response to ever-changing State needs.

Concluding her testimony, Dr. Nichols said that Nevada is part of a global economy, and its universities are committed to assisting the State with research and a supportive workforce, but the State has not clearly identified the key sectors for economic development and diversification. She stated the Chancellor would be presenting some new ideas and challenges to the Board of Regents at its early September meeting that will address the key issues of efficiency and effectiveness in entrepreneurial efforts, State finances and financial aid for students, partnerships, and public accountability.

- Dr. René Cantu Jr., Ph.D., Latin Chamber of Commerce Community Foundation, NVSG member, stated that the CCA goals of increasing the number of degrees that NSHE has committed to are admirable. He reiterated the need to reach out to

underserved and underrepresented populations, but expressed his concern as to how NSHE would accomplish these goals in light of budget cuts.

- Dr. Nichols said that NSHE would call on each institution to help accomplish the goals. She stated that NSHE would have to try new things and find different ways to use the money it already has. Dr. Nichols added that NSHE has joined a project associated with the University of Southern California that allows NSHE to look at its institutions in order to discover where students are lost, such as in remedial education or mathematics, during the freshman or sophomore year.
- Dr. Cantu stated that institutions should change fundamentally and adapt to the new demographic reality rather than institute more programs or projects. Based on his background with NSHE, he noticed a small percentage of faculty and staff from underrepresented populations and a tremendous failure rate among those who attend and then leave college. Dr. Cantu questioned NSHE's commitment to make the necessary fundamental changes to achieve these goals.
- Dr. Nichols said NSHE is very serious about making the needed changes.
- Marsha Irvin, Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy, NVSG member, suggested that Nevada create a "college-going" culture beginning in preschool and early education rather than waiting until a student's senior year. She requested an overview and status report of the P-16 Advisory Council (*Nevada Revised Statutes* [NRS] 400.030).
- Dr. Nichols explained that the Nevada Legislature created the P-16 Advisory Council, and the Governor and the legislators name the representatives. She said the Council has been in existence for three years and had oversight of the first College Access Challenge Grant, which was federal money directed toward elementary students. Dr. Nichols pointed out that the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force has addressed many of the same issues as the P-16 Advisory Council. She added that the Blue Ribbon Task Force has done a remarkable job in a short period identifying the needs of grades K-12.
- Ms. Irvin expressed her admiration that the councils are meeting, but stated the future of education is a joint venture between public and higher education. She was hopeful that the NVSG could obtain some of the action steps, because the proof is in the actual implementation. Ms. Irvin stated this structure is already in place, one that Nevada could build upon for the future.
- Susan Rhodes, LASW, National Association of Social Workers, Nevada Chapter, NVSG member, asked if any states have met the national goal of six out of ten young adults receiving a college degree and if there is any completed analysis regarding their success in meeting that goal.
- Dr. Nichols said that none of the western states has met that goal, but a number of older, well-established states are close to meeting or have met the standard. She cited

Massachusetts as having a remarkable record of educated citizens. Dr. Nichols said the more successful states have a large number of both public and private colleges and universities, whereas Nevada is a very young state that has experienced rapid growth. She added that even though the Nevada Legislature and the governors have worked hard to support higher education, the State has not been able to keep up with the growing needs of higher education and the students attending college.

- Doug Busselman, Nevada Farm Bureau Federation, NVSG member, asked if there has been any assessment on whether the needs of meeting these goals and objectives has to do with structure within the system or a lack of funding. He questioned what higher education has done with the money it has received over the years.
- Dr. Nichols replied that NSHE has been running a race, trying to provide enough classrooms and instructors to keep up with the fastest growth in the country and has worked hard to spend its money well. She is of the opinion that the State has not done a good job culturally in stressing the importance of college completion. Dr. Nichols added that NSHE feels a great sense of responsibility in countering the idea that if people come to Nevada they do not need a college education. She stated this attitude can and must change by faculty, parents, and students by insisting that every student who enters college graduates with a degree or certificate.
- Chair Lang is of the opinion that no state has ever regretted substantial investment in higher education research. He stated there was a time when Nevada was one of the most affluent states in the country—at a time when higher education was not the route to affluence. Chair Lang expressed his concern that Nevada is at substantial risk because it is behind other states that are making changes. He noted the engines of economic growth that have gotten Nevada to this point have worked well, but this is a new imperative. Chair Lang stated his hope that this report provides a context for decision makers to consider the necessary steps for this type of investment in higher education or at least recognize that additional contraction of investment carries real risk. He said he worries that Nevada will risk the necessary investment to capture the complementarities to the existing economic strengths and competitive advantages in the State.

Representative of State of Nevada Education Reform Blue Ribbon Task Force

(As directed by Chair Lang, this agenda item was taken out of order.)

- Elaine Wynn, Co-chair, Nevada Education Reform Blue Ribbon Task Force, explained that the Task Force convened at the request of Governor Gibbons in spring 2010. She stated the Task Force focused on education reform with the initial assignment of creating the grant application for the federal government Race to the Top funding. Ms. Wynn said the Task Force came together as a cohesive organization with a common purpose, and the meetings were open to the public. She stated the Task Force understood that Nevada was at a critical moment in history in linking education to

survival, an idea that has not resonated strongly in either America or Nevada. Ms. Wynn noted that Nevada's economic focus on gaming and tourism has blunted the State's directive to grow and diversify its economy.

Ms. Wynn expressed concern that not enough people are traveling to Nevada because of the recession and competition in the gaming industry. She said that the State's economic potential is heavily dependent on having an educated workforce. Ms. Wynn stated that a child born in Nevada has the least chance of success compared to a child born in any other state. She said that Nevada has the lowest high school graduation rate in the country and the lowest percentage of high school graduates attending post-secondary education. Ms. Wynn stated this poses a dire problem for Nevada since most careers of the future will require some post-secondary education. She stated there is clearly a need for Nevada to address its educational system now that it has the highest unemployment rate in the country.

Ms. Wynn said that the Race to the Top application is online and the application process revealed many positives for Nevada, including broad stakeholder support. She stated that 100 percent of the education agencies in the State signed on to the Task Force's effective blueprint for education reform, regardless of whether or not the State received federal funding.

Ms. Wynn explained that the Race to the Top plan contains a commitment to professional development in addition to a plan for teaching the Core Standards, a point required of the application. She added that a plan is now in place to intervene in persistently low performing schools, and there is an agreement to foster charter school development. Ms. Wynn said the State's school structure is manageable having 17 counties with 17 districts, which easily lends itself to implementing and sustaining reform. She pointed out the tremendous diversity in the school districts by comparing the Clark County School District (CCSD), the fifth largest school district in the country, to Esmeralda County which has only 68 students.

Ms. Wynn identified three goals established by the Task Force that are guidelines for Nevada's future in education:

1. Every class must have an effective teacher;
2. Every school must have an effective principal; and
3. Every student will graduate.

Ms. Wynn also identified the following specific goals of the plan:

1. Increase the graduation rate to 85 percent using a longitudinal cohort model;
2. Reduce the achievement gap by 50 percent;
3. Increase the number of high school graduates enrolled in post-secondary education by 50 percent;
4. Increase fourth grade math achievement to proficient or advanced from 32 percent to 50 percent;
5. Increase eighth grade math achievement to proficient or advanced from 25 percent to 50 percent;
6. Increase fourth grade reading achievement to proficient or advanced from 24 percent to 50 percent; and
7. Increase eighth grade reading achievement to proficient or advanced from 22 percent to 50 percent.

Ms. Wynn said that Nevada was not a finalist in the Race to the Top competition, but she added that Nevada was a long shot because this was the State's first time to apply. Ms. Wynn said the State missed the opening round because of legislation not present, which has since been fixed, qualifying Nevada to apply for the second round. She explained that of the 41 applicants in round one, there were 16 finalists with scores of more than 400. Ms. Wynn noted that in phase two, there were 19 states with over 400 points and the average score rose by 23 points. She added that an advantage of being in the first round is that states not initially chosen receive feedback and learn where they were deficient in the first round, allowing for improvement of their plans for eligibility in the second round. Ms. Wynn commented that another \$3.4 billion in funding remains to be distributed under Race to the Top funding.

Continuing, Ms. Wynn stressed that implementation of the plan is critical for Nevada to show both the State and the federal government its commitment to education. She suggested that the application process did not favorably perceive the recent cuts to State education funding. Ms. Wynn expressed her pleasure knowing that the plan was a statewide collaboration despite her disappointment that it was not chosen for the second round. She noted that committees are continuing promotion of the plan, and the Task Force appreciates that it must create public will and become involved in legislative changes. Ms. Wynn stated that Race to the Top has been a catalyst for reform, but Nevada must get the message across that the State's economic health is directly dependent on the quality of its educational system. She stressed that Nevada's promise makes a clear and decisive link between the education system and the economic distress that the State faces and this plan will help solve the problem. Ms. Wynn said that in

order for America to remain economically vibrant, the country must assume responsibility for what its children learn and the effectiveness of its teachers. She is of the opinion that Nevada has abandoned its responsibility when half the State's children fail to graduate from high school; when the smallest percentage go on to college; and when there is such a wide achievement gap of African-American, Hispanic, and poor children. Ms. Wynn said the Race to the Top plan clearly states what Nevada needs to address in order to improve its education system.

Concluding her testimony, Ms. Wynn stated the Blue Ribbon Task Force shared the plan with both gubernatorial candidates, and she is hopeful that when the election occurs and leadership has been determined, there will be a serious review and approval of the plan. She expressed her hope that the State Legislature will also adopt the plan. Ms. Wynn stated that even though the plan will undergo a review and an evaluation with likely adjustments, the Task Force is not prepared to compromise on the core principals and the goals established.

- Ms. Irvin asked if any schools in the State are prepared to implement any of the action steps this school year that would not have a financial impact on the districts.
- Ms. Wynn said that regional professional development groups and methods for turning around low-achieving schools are currently in place, in addition to the approval of the common core standards. She stated that Nevada is currently in limbo without a superintendent for CCSD and not knowing who the next governor is going to be. Therefore, Ms. Wynn suggested it would not be prudent to tell an organization what its charge must be when the chief executive officers, who will ultimately be accountable for the plan, are not in place.
- Ms. Irvin asked Ms. Wynn if the Task Force discussed Communities in Schools (CIS) as a core component of addressing the dropout rate in Nevada.
- Ms. Wynn replied that the Task Force did not discuss CIS because its approach is part of a larger concept of "community schools." She stated this concept acknowledges that traditional mechanisms are not the only way to have a positive impact on children, and that there must be a concentrated effort to take advantage of all the various agencies that exist in communities to bring their resources to bear in a highly leveraged and focused way. Ms. Wynn said that CIS makes an impact by adding a management component to actual school sites with coordinators positioned at schools to help leverage services and deliver them to students and schools. She stated that the current organization of Nevada's schools would not easily accept CIS.

- Brian Rippet, Nevada State Education Association, Middle School Teacher, Zephyr Cove, NVSG member, asked Ms. Wynn if she could compare each gubernatorial candidate's education plan to the Race to the Top plan. He questioned if there is significant overlap or if their plans are as comprehensive as the Race to the Top plan.
- Ms. Wynn said she could not answer that question with great detail because the candidates' plans are broad statements of policy and direction. She added that neither candidate has agreed to accept the Race to the Top plan as his methodology. Ms. Wynn noted there are specific differences in the candidates' plans. She said that Brian Sandoval's plan mentioned vouchers and was more vocal on school choice, which the Task Force plan does not address. Ms. Wynn reiterated that once the State elects a new governor and assigns a staff person to the education piece of the budget and platform, the Task Force would then be able to see how its plan will work with the governor's plan. She stated that even though neither candidate is ready to take the Race to the Top plan as described and make it their own yet, the Task Force is inclined to be helpful, available, and ready to argue its case.
- Mr. Busselman asked if the NVSG could receive a copy or access a link to review the Race to the Top application. He also asked how the Group might incorporate the concepts embodied in the Race to the Top proposal with its vision statement.
- Ms. Wynn said she could send the online link as well as copies of the DVD to all NVSG members. She stated the Task Force would be pleased to have the application reviewed and embraced by the NVSG and would provide testimony to support the direction of the application.
- Robert Lee Potter, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, NVSG member, said he is a member of the Group because he envisions Nevada being an employer of choice for educators. He stressed that educators cannot be transient. Mr. Potter stated that in order for Nevada to compete in this new economy and grow a qualified workforce, it must be able to recruit and retain quality educators. He suggested the State have employee benefits and incentives that allow for the recruitment of top employees in order to be the best and compete with the other states.
- Ms. Wynn said a large part of the Race to the Top application centers on preparing, recruiting, and retaining the best teachers. She mentioned Teach for America, a 20-year-old program similar to a domestic peace corps. Ms. Wynn explained that the gifted, young college graduates in the program have majored in specific areas other than education, but they receive extensive training prior to placement in schools. She said that Nevada has a class of 55 teachers from the program this year. Ms. Wynn added that a member of the Task Force had been involved with Teach for America and was extremely instructive and helpful with the Race to the Top plan. She said that benefit packages must be part of the overall incentive to teach, but the passion and commitment of young people to be the best possible teacher are also very important.

Ms. Wynn stated there are both good and bad teachers in Nevada, and there is no silver bullet in education reform.

Representative of Nevada's Department of Education

- Keith W. Rheault, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education, stated the State Board of Education is a ten-member elected board charged with the oversight of setting policies and regulations. He said the Board appoints the State superintendent who carries out policies and regulations, along with legislative direction through statutes and governor directives. Dr. Rheault discussed the vision, mission, philosophy and values, and goals of the State Board ([Exhibit C](#)). He also provided the Group with a copy of the *2009 Education Data Book* ([Exhibit D](#)).

Dr. Rheault said the Legislative Commission's Committee to Study the Governance and Oversight of the System of K-12 Public Education (Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 2, File No. 89, *Statutes of Nevada 2009*) concluded its meetings with recommendations relevant to the structure of K-12 education. He stated the Committee recommended the Board review its vision and mission objectives and create clearer, more definitive goals and measurable objectives that tie in to the strategic plan.

Dr. Rheault discussed the 2009 State Improvement Plan ([Exhibit C](#)), which has been in place since 2004 and is required under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. He said it is a three-year plan containing the following ten strategies that will ensure progress in meeting the measurable objectives and accomplishing the key indicators of success:

1. Value of education;
2. Student learning;
3. Challenging and relevant standards-based curriculum;
4. Quality educators;
5. Relationships in a safe environment;
6. Educational leadership;
7. Continuous improvement;
8. Effective use of data;
9. Adequate and equitable funding; and
10. Parent and community involvement.

Dr. Rheault explained that each Nevada school district is required to have its own district improvement plan, and from that plan, each school then creates its own improvement plan. He stated that if adequately addressed, the targeted actions should provide a first-rate education system in Nevada.

Dr. Rheault is of the opinion that the State needs a philosophical change in how it values education. He stated that Nevada has demonstrated its value of higher education through the Millennium Scholarship program. Dr. Rheault expressed concern that if the program ceases to exist, it would send a message that Nevada does not value higher education and that the State cannot assist its high school graduates.

Dr. Rheault explained that the Race to the Top plan requires states to join a consortium or adopt the Common Core Standards. He said that before Race to the Top existed, Nevada joined a group of 48 states to develop the Common Core Standards in English and mathematics. Dr. Rheault stated these core standards were developed with three principles in mind: (1) They would be clearer, with fewer and higher standards than most states were currently requiring; (2) They would be considered college and workforce ready; and (3) They were measured and internationally benchmarked against ten other higher scoring countries' standards. Dr. Rheault said that Nevada has adopted these standards, and the next step is to develop a common core assessment in tandem with the standards, which should be in place within five years. He added that once adopted, it would take several years to integrate the standards into the elementary and high school curriculums, and the first testing under the Common Core Standards would be in 2015.

Continuing, Dr. Rheault stated that the key to student achievement success is quality educators. He noted that over the last 20 years, Nevada has not produced enough educators through its colleges of education. Dr. Rheault said the State has been importing between 65 and 75 percent of its new teachers from other states, which means they lack training in Nevada's standards and other requirements unique to Nevada. Dr. Rheault explained that even though Nevada has been able to recruit teachers who could not find employment in other states during its time of rapid growth, the State still has a retention problem. He said that Nevada provides license reciprocity with 41 states, which means if a teacher holding a license in another state moves to Nevada, the State may provide the teacher a license, with some restrictions.

Dr. Rheault discussed the alternative licensure program. He mentioned that Nevada did not accept alternative licenses in the past because of the disparity among the states' programs. He noted that over the last 10 to 15 years, the alternative programs have become more standardized, more reliable, and are now mentioned in federal regulations. Dr. Rheault stated that Nevada has had an alternative route for licensure for many years where a person with a bachelor's degree in a particular subject can be given a license but must take additional teacher education coursework within three years. He said that upon completion of the coursework and an evaluation that demonstrates success in the classroom, the teacher could obtain a renewable license.

Continuing, Dr. Rheault said that Nevada requires all teachers, including substitutes, to take tests proving their basic skills in English, mathematics, reading, and writing. He added that all regular teachers must pass a pedagogy test regarding teacher skills in

addition to a subject matter test. In the last few years, Dr. Rheault said the State has offered reciprocity in testing, which has assisted in recruiting the best teachers.

Dr. Rheault is of the opinion that the State has been lax in the area of relationships in a safe environment. He added normally this is the first area cut when there are budget shortfalls, even at the federal level. Dr. Rheault said that school climate is a key indicator that keeps and retains teachers and makes students successful.

Dr. Rheault suggested that Nevada has greatly improved its effective use of data due to its unique student accountability system that provides updates every night from every school district and charter school on any item that has changed in a database that has over 90 different categories. He said the availability of data is not the problem but rather using the data effectively to improve instruction. Dr. Rheault said the State has been able to use longitudinal studies over the last few years. He also mentioned that since 2006, the State has provided unique ID's for every student in the State and it hopes to better share this information with NSHE.

- Due to time constraints, Chair Lang requested Dr. Rheault discuss the long-range goals to 2030.
- Referring to table two on page four ([Exhibit C](#)), Dr. Rheault noted the action steps that address the ten indicators of success. He reiterated the facts mentioned by Ms. Wynn that Nevada ranked last in providing pre-K instruction to students, and that the State ranks last in the percentage of parents who speak English as their first language in their home. He suggested that starting early in pre-K and offering full-day kindergarten to all students is the way to improve the system by 2030.

Dr. Rheault stated the success of students in grades 4, 8, and 12 will be the benchmark to measure academic achievement among the top quartile of all states. He said that statistics from the Data Book ([Exhibit D](#)) show that Nevada ranks 47th in the country in student achievement in grades 4 and 8. Dr. Rheault also suggested that the adoption and implementation of the Common Core Standards, currently measured in English, math, and science, would help Nevada reach the top quarter of states in those areas by 2030.

According to Dr. Rheault, another goal is to increase the high school completion graduation rate. Depending on which measure is used, he stated that Nevada ranks last or near to the last in the country. Even though the State has a current agreement with the federal government to improve its graduation rate to 85 percent, he said his goal is to reach 90 percent within 20 years. Dr. Rheault said it would take a lot of work to increase 2 percent a year for 20 years in a row.

Dr. Rheault said that having a well-defined system in place, in addition to identifying and rewarding effective teachers and school administrators would attract high-quality educators. He stated that a positive school climate supported by administrators and

smaller class sizes could achieve this goal. Dr. Rheault noted that Nevada also ranks 47th in the country in average class size. He added that Nevada must compensate its teachers appropriately to attract quality staff.

- Expressing his concern that Nevada ranks 50th in parents who speak a language other than English primarily in the home, Dr. Cantu questioned why no one has mentioned the issue of English Language Learners (ELL) in the long-range goals or talking points. He suggested that ELL might be a solution to help the State meet some of its goals.
- Dr. Rheault said he had planned to address the topic of English as a Second Language (ESL) under the “Adequate and Equitable Funding” topic ([Exhibit C](#)). He stated that in the 1980s, Nevada’s student population was 88 percent Caucasian with a very small number of students who did not speak English. Dr. Rheault said that the Caucasian student numbers have dropped 41 percent this year, and the Hispanic population now exceeds the Caucasian population in Clark County. He added that over a 10-year period, normal student growth was 55 to 60 percent, but the growth of ESL students grew by 680 percent. Dr. Rheault said the funding formula is the same today as it was in 1986, with the same amount paid per student, whether or not the student can speak English. He stated it costs more to educate a student who does not have a good grasp of English. Dr. Rheault added that there has been discussion in Clark County to include specified funding for ESL students in possible bill drafts, urging the State needs to address the needs of these students.
- Dr. Cantu agreed that funding for ELL students is important. He stated that as of a year or two ago, Nevada was one of only 17 states that did not have funding in place for ELL students, 80 percent of whom are American citizens and play an important role in our State’s future economy. Dr. Cantu suggested there is insufficient political will to address the problem. He added that the economic downturn greatly affected Latino families and their children, and the school system has failed them more than any other student population. Dr. Cantu asked that the NSVG incorporate the topic of ESL into its final report.
- Ms. Irvin commended Dr. Rheault and his staff for the work they have done, and she thanked him for his response on reciprocity. She noted that the State’s typical classroom is not like it was years ago as teachers today are responsible for teaching ESL students and special education students. Therefore, Ms. Irvin stated, the professional development component must remain strong, consistent, and be well implemented. She complimented the Teach for America program and its phenomenal job in providing quality, consistent training. Ms. Irvin expressed her hope that all the superintendents will agree on what kind of training is best for their districts. She asked if Dr. Rheault’s long-range goals for 2030 are current and if he circulated them to the schools. Ms. Irvin also asked about the relationship of the Department of Education with higher education.

- Dr. Rheault replied that over the last ten years, the relationship between K-12 and higher education is the best it has ever been. He said he has worked with Dr. Nichols on several initiatives, one of which was a joint task force to develop college readiness standards in Nevada. Dr. Rheault added that graduation data is shared with the university system in order to see how well high school students may perform in higher education; however, the two data systems are not yet linked. He said it is critical that university input be included in the standards development and teacher training. Dr. Rheault noted that these are positive steps, but there is always room for improvement.

Dr. Rheault said he plans to share his goals with the State Board when it meets next week, at which time the Board is to develop its own five-year plan that will hopefully coincide with the 20-year plan. He stated that he intends to circulate the goals to all districts, charter schools, and other educational agencies for comments.

- Chair Lang expressed his concern that the goals are lofty and difficult to achieve. He suggested a more realistic goal might be to move incrementally from 47th to 40th or 35th. Chair Lang stated this reform is about reversing a course, not drifting down to the 50th rank so that any movement upward is positive. He added that the uniqueness of some of the eastern states makes them difficult to compare to the Southwest. He asked Dr. Rheault to name one state that within the last ten years moved up the chain and how it accomplished that feat.
- Dr. Rheault said Florida has made significant gains in the last ten years due in part to their good data system. He stated that both Florida and Nevada have a high number of non-English speaking students, and initiatives conducted in Florida show their non-English speaking students have progressed faster than Nevada's students did. In addition to their specialized programs, Dr. Rheault added that Florida also has higher levels of funding. He compared Florida's population to that of Nevada, both having a large number of immigrants, a high senior population, and an economy reliant on tourism.

Responding to Chair Lang's request to identify successful key policies implemented by Florida, Dr. Rheault replied that Florida increased its funding and accountability. He said the state well publicized those schools not making the grade on a list. Dr. Rheault added that Florida established a statewide program that funded distance education courses for some of the smaller districts that could not provide advanced placement courses. He said Florida addressed the non-English speaking students with specialized programs paid for by the state. Dr. Rheault stressed that it was a concerted effort led from the governor's office down to the school district level.

- Mr. Busselman asked Dr. Rheault if any tracking information exists that identifies the outcomes and any successes in reaching the objectives of the State Improvement Plan.
- Dr. Rheault replied that the State Improvement Plan tracks the information, which shows indications of modest gains. He said that for the last five years, the State has

shown gains of 2 to 3 percent in all areas in grades 4 and 8. He reiterated a previous comment made by Ms. Wynn that Nevada was only one of four states that had consistent gains for both grades 4 and 8 based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, but modest gains in the graduation rates.

- Mr. Potter referred to the statistic that Nevada recruits 65 percent of its teachers to the State and suggested that the State hold a career day to highlight the benefits of becoming an educator to help increase the graduation rate and promote future teachers from Nevada.
- Dr. Rheault said there are such programs in the State, but they are spotty.
- Chair Lang introduced Michael Harter, Ph.D., Senior Provost and Chief Executive Officer, Touro University Nevada (Touro), Western Division, and invited Dr. Harter to provide testimony. Dr. Harter said he is responsible for the day-to-day oversight of the Touro campuses in Nevada and California.

Dr. Harter said Touro is a Jewish-sponsored, private, nonprofit organization with a focus on health sciences ([Exhibit E](#)). He stated that planning for Touro began in 2003 due to the shortages in the health industry and problems in K-12 education. Dr. Harter said that Touro has over 500 medical students and its academic programs include the College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Dr. Harter said that in 2006 Touro became partners with Valley Hospital Medical Center, Las Vegas, to create a residency program, which began with a traditional one-year internship for students required to have a general internship before they moved into a specialty area. He stated the university also has a family medicine residency program and a general internal medicine program. Since then, Dr. Harter said Touro has added the first dermatology, neurology, and ophthalmology residency programs in the State.

Dr. Harter said that Touro became involved in graduate medical education for two major reasons. The first reason, he cited, is that national statistics show that 70 percent of doctors practice within a 50-mile radius of where they completed their residency. Dr. Harter stated the second reason is that residency programs are excellent teaching opportunities for undergraduate medical students. He noted that Valley Hospital has the capacity to see about 30 Touro students every month and there are plans to expand the program even further.

Continuing, Dr. Harter said an entry-level master's program in physician-assistant studies, the only one in the State, began in 2004. He added that the program has about 55 students each year, and many of them stayed in Nevada to practice. In addition, Dr. Harter stated that Touro built a College of Health and Human Services in 2005, beginning with a School of Nursing, which has grown from a baccalaureate entry-level program to a doctoral entry-level program. He explained that since it is difficult to find

faculty to teach in nursing programs, Touro has grown several of its own programs, and now has a fully trained faculty.

Dr. Harter said that in 2005, Touro began a School of Occupational Therapy, also the only one of its kind in the State. He stated that approximately 53 percent of the students in that program now come from Nevada. Dr. Harter explained that Touro also started a program in education, most of which is now online; several master degree programs and several certificate of advanced study programs have partnerships with the CCSD and the teachers' union. He noted the program has about 450 students and most of them are employees of the CCSD. Dr. Harter stated there is now a doctoral entry-level program in physical therapy with an enrollment of approximately 40 students.

As part of its mission, Dr. Harter stated that Touro wants to service those areas that Nevada does not adequately address. For example, he said Touro created a center for autism and developmental disabilities. Dr. Harter explained the university has a one-stop shop that provides behavioral therapy, neuropsychology, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and eventually physical therapy. He said that since children needing these services have inundated the program, the university works closely with the schools in order to enhance their visits with one-on-one care. Dr. Harter said the center also provides training for occupational therapy, physical therapy, and physician assistant students.

Dr. Harter said that Touro has also created a faculty practice clinic, which sees large numbers of the general population. Because of Nevada's high number of older adults, he stated the clinic has three rheumatologists and two geriatricians on staff in addition to offering the usual general internal medicine, family medicine, and osteopathic manipulative medicine. Dr. Harter stated that Touro hopes to add a gerontology center to address the medical and social needs of the growing adult population. He said the university has outgrown its space for its faculty practice, which will probably quadruple in size, and is looking into the possibility of opening a new college of optometry and veterinary medicine.

Dr. Harter stated that tuition largely funds the programs with no subsidization from the State, although the Legislature has passed laws that enable a private institution to function within Nevada.

- Chair Lang applauded the university's efforts because there is a large demand for health and medical education in this region. He asked whether Touro is comparable to the University of Nevada's School of Medicine.

- Dr. Harter replied that Touro is considerably larger, with 135 students in each class compared to approximately 50 students in the University of Nevada's School of Medicine. He said the issue is to retain these students after they complete medical school, and commented that Touro has a few more students who stay in Nevada for their residency than the School of Medicine.

Responding to Chair Lang's question regarding research, Dr. Harter said Touro completed its first research laboratory in 2007 assuming it would serve faculty needs for the next ten years, but it is currently overflowing. He stated that the university has 12 faculty members with ongoing research, and the students in the master's program in medical health sciences have a large research responsibility. Dr. Harter mentioned that Touro has received some small grants and hopes to access funding from the National Institutes of Health in the near future.

- Chair Lang asked how the State and NVSG could help move Touro's success forward.
- Dr. Harter replied that private education did not exist in Nevada a few years ago. He said it is important for the NVSG to recognize that the State system cannot begin to address all of the health care and health personnel needs of the State. Dr. Harter said it would be helpful if the Group could make it clear that Nevada has some good private institutions and urge the State to develop regulations and laws that encourage the continued development of private education. In addition, he stated Nevada does not deliver the specialty medical care to the extent that it needs. Dr. Harter said it would be beneficial if the NVSG could encourage the development of additional residency and fellowship programs so that our own doctors stay and practice in Nevada.
- Dr. Cantu acknowledged that Touro focuses on baccalaureate, masters, and doctorate programs. He asked about the needs and support of lower level certificate programs that could retrain Nevadans to reenter the workforce.
- Dr. Harter explained that Touro is not in the business of certificate programs, but occasionally he will receive a request to do something for a certified nursing assistant. He stated several organizations have requested a partnership with Touro in paramedic training. Dr. Harter mentioned that other associate degree programs, such as sonography and ultrasound, have a shortage of personnel. He said the College of Southern Nevada has a small program but does not produce enough graduates to reduce the shortage.

DISCUSSION OF PRIORITIES FOR POTENTIAL GOALS AND STRATEGIES FOR QUALITY-OF-LIFE INDICATORS

- Chair Lang said Moody's Analytics, Inc. would discuss the mechanics of choosing priorities regarding the NVSG's goals for the State. He suggested to Moody's that the Group work on a precise set of goals, match them with strategies and tangible suggestions for implementation, and decide which of these rise to the top in rank order.
- Steven G. Cochrane, Managing Director, Moody's Analytics, Inc., said that Moody's has a deadline of August 30, 2010, to compile its draft report. He stated that based on the comments from the meeting of May 14, 2010, the draft report provided seemed to lack sufficient structure to embrace the summary of the Group's discussions. Mr. Cochrane said that Moody's has been working on a more structured approach in compiling the information ([Exhibit F](#) and [Exhibit G](#)). He said these documents are preliminary, but they are an example of how Moody's is trying to add structure to the draft report.

Mr. Cochrane stated that for each section of the report, Moody's identified two to four broad, thematic goals that were well discussed in the Group's meetings. He said Moody's then put together a few metrics since the charge is to measure achievement towards goals over the next 5, 20, and 30 years. Mr. Cochrane pointed out the suggested strategies that have resulted from the discussions of trying to achieve the goals and objectives outlined.

Referring to the contractual "structured inquiries," Mr. Cochrane said that Moody's tried contacting each NVSG member individually as well as relying on the many records from meetings to date, which have been remarkably helpful in understanding the appropriate strategies to follow in order to reach these goals and identify priorities. Mr. Cochrane said Moody's has listed, where it could, some of the strategies in priority order, partly as a function of what has been learned from the meetings, what has been learned from the one-on-one discussions with committee members, and from Moody's own experience in economic analysis and development.

In completing this project, Mr. Cochrane stated that Moody's found there is a fair amount of overlap across various sections of the report. He said it is important to note that this creates some repetition, but it also means that certain themes emerged from the Group's discussions, such as Nevada's unique relationship with the federal government and the State's need to diversify its economy in terms of education, health care, and jobs. Mr. Cochrane noted the clear need for public-private partnerships and community participation across all the themes of diversification, education, governance, health care, and innovation. He identified what is most appropriate for today's meeting: education, employee retention, retention of skills, and workforce training.

- Chair Lang said he would like to have a predictable set of items to vote on at the final meeting, and he asked the Group to provide useful instruction to Moody's to help them achieve that goal.
- Dr. Cantu, previously identified, said he would like to see more specificity and promotion of charter schools as strategies for raising educational attainment, in addition to expanding and strengthening ELL programs, with secure funding set for the programs.
- Ms. Irvin, previously identified, suggested building upon the work of committees already in place that are targeting the areas that the NVSG is addressing. She wondered if the Group could review some of the data from those committees that needed more support or strategies in order to get the State to its projected goals of 2030.
- Mr. Cochrane said those structures were brought up in the conversation and were included, for instance, in the "Transportation" chapter.
- Ms. Irvin noted an emphasis on early childhood education as a target area but asked if the report reflected professional development for teachers. She also asked if the Group would be able to provide written support for any areas the NVSG is reviewing and have time to look at past notes and respond.
- Chair Lang replied that Moody's is available to receive input from the Group. He urged the Group to ask any general or specific questions today, because Moody's is moving quickly so that the Group can vote on the draft report in September.
- Regarding increasing early childhood education options ([Exhibit E](#)), Dr. Cantu requested something more visionary that implies all Nevada children would enter school ready to learn. He asked whether this would be a goal or an objective.
- Mr. Cochrane replied that it could be placed under the objectives of improving early childhood education.
- Ms. Irvin asked if a revised copy of the document ([Exhibit F](#)) could clarify the acronyms.
- Mr. Cochrane replied in the affirmative.
- Ms. Rhodes, previously identified, directed Mr. Cochrane to the first column of metrics that addressed "Medicaid and food stamp enrollment/total in poverty" in the "Health and Wellbeing" section ([Exhibit F](#)). She stated that the responsibility for medical health care of indigents in Nevada is a statutory responsibility of the counties. Ms. Rhodes said that county participation and those individuals who receive medical assistance through the individual county should be a factor in the metrics. She said that

since each county has its own program, a complete picture cannot be obtained by looking only at Medicaid since most individuals are not Medicaid eligible.

- Mr. Cochrane stated that was a good point.
- Mr. Potter, previously identified, said he liked the common threads that appear in the focused areas and asked whether Moody's could identify those threads and provide a final page of that information.
- Mr. Cochrane agreed to do so.
- Mr. Busselman, previously identified, asked how a member who has already gone through the structured interview could contact Moody's to provide feedback.
- David Ziegler, Principal Research Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB), said there are two options: (1) contact Moody's directly, as there is no prohibition on a member engaging one-one-one; or (2) members are welcome to contact him and he will set up an exchange of information.
- Mr. Busselman requested that the members receive the appropriate e-mail information for Moody's so that they all send their input to the same location.
- Mr. Ziegler agreed to provide the e-mail contact information.
- Keith Smith, Boyd Gaming Corporation, NVSG member, said that one task of the NVSG was to create 5-, 10-, and 20-year strategic plans in specific areas. He suggested that the document presented is not broken into as granular a document as the Group has been tasked with developing, and he stated that some thought needs to be given as to how that will be achieved. Mr. Smith also suggested the NVSG identify goals or strategies that necessitate asking why the goals are important to the State and what the NVSG hopes to achieve. He cautioned the group about including tactics—otherwise—the document would become voluminous. Mr. Smith advised the Group to not get “tied up in the weeds” at the final meeting, but rather think about what the NVSG is trying to achieve.
- Chair Lang said the NVSG would abide by its assigned structure. He said the final report would consist of a narrative that will provide rationale and case analysis, with an executive summary attached. Chair Lang said that Moody's would look at the major themes that have occurred over the entire course of this exchange.
- Mr. Cochrane verified that Moody's would relate everything back to how and why it relates to the vision statement of the NVSG. He said if something does not link back to the vision statement, it probably does not belong in the report.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF FUTURE MEETING AGENDAS AND DATES

- David Ziegler, previously identified, said there is a revised contract with Moody's that sets the schedule going forward. He said the draft written report should be submitted to the LCB on or before the end of August; the final meeting must take place on or before September 10, 2010; and the final written report from Moody's is due to the LCB by September 15, 2010.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Ray Bacon, Executive Director, Nevada Manufacturers Association, said he has been involved in education issues in Nevada for 20 years and sits on the Governor's Education Reform Blue Ribbon Task Force and the P-16 Advisory Council. He mentioned Imagine Learning, a company that started in Utah, is a language lab operation that can work on 16 languages at one time. Mr. Bacon said the program is in place in 60 schools in CCSD with a high success rate. He suggested the Group visit Whitney Elementary School in Las Vegas to see what the schools are doing today.

Mr. Bacon said the Nevada Policy Research Institute (NPRI) has prepared a study that is worth reading and is available on its website (<http://www.npri.org/>). He noted that ten years ago, Florida's numbers were very similar to Nevada's, but now Florida's scores have surpassed Nevada's scores in a relatively short period. Mr. Bacon suggested that Nevada look at a 10-year goal rather than a 20-year goal to fix the State's education issues. He stated that K-3 is about learning to read and the rest of life is about reading to learn. Mr. Bacon explained that Florida made the decision that any students in the third grade who could not read would not pass. He said Florida held back 23,000 students in the first year, half that amount the second year, and half that amount in the third year. Mr. Bacon stated that as a result, Florida has dramatically decreased its high school dropout rate. He said Florida was a state that fundamentally did not value education, like Nevada, but now the value of education has dramatically increased in Florida. Mr. Bacon stated the business community and the general population see and recognize the difference, and Florida's workplace productivity numbers have increased as well.

- Patrick R. Gibbons, Education Policy Analyst, NPRI, said it is not clear that additional investments in higher education will have positive impacts on Nevada's economy because of the fast-growing cost of higher education. He stated that in the last 20 years, higher education costs have grown by 139 percent. Due to the hyperinflation in higher education, Mr. Gibbons said the value added from higher education would be less and less relative to the growing cost. He said our country has reached a point where additional money in higher education does not necessarily mean additional output. Mr. Gibbons said an economist at the University of Ohio found a negative correlation between additional money invested in higher education and economic

growth because the value added from higher education is now lower than the additional money invested.

Mr. Gibbons said for-profit universities are graduating fewer students at a high cost; many students are leaving with debt and disappointment. Putting this into perspective for Nevada, he stated the average for-profit university graduates 27 percent of its students in a four-year period, while UNLV graduates 11 percent, and UNR graduates 15 percent. Mr. Gibbons noted that the average for-profit university has a cost of \$10,270 per pupil, while the cost average between UNLV and UNR is \$11,030 per pupil, which increases when grants are included. He is of the opinion that Nevada is not getting its money's worth from its investments. Mr. Gibbons suggested raising admission standards for UNLV and UNR, and allow other students to attend any community college they want, with an incentive to gain admission to UNLV or UNR. This way, he added, students have the opportunity to learn at a lower cost to see if they are ready for college.

Moving on to K-12, his specialty, Mr. Gibbons said that most pre-K studies do not suggest any long-term benefits. He explained that most studies show no long-lasting benefits for affluent white students, and benefits typically disappear by third grade for low-income African-American students. Mr. Gibbons does not recommend any preschool programs, but if Nevada is going to offer preschool, he suggested the schools be dedicated to and targeted for low-income students only. He also recommended offering scholarships of up to \$2,000 and allowing those children to go to any public or private preschool of their choice.

Continuing, Mr. Gibbons stated that 15 percent of the studies on class-size reduction indicate a positive correlation between smaller classes and higher student achievement, 13 percent show a negative effect, and 72 percent show there is either no effect or the effects are statistically insignificant. He stated that class-size reduction is expensive and ineffective at improving student achievement. Mr. Gibbons noted that Nevada would spend \$290 million this biennium on class-size reduction.

Mr. Gibbons stated that charter schools are wonderful at reducing the achievement gap. He mentioned that gubernatorial candidate, Rory Reid, recommended a massive expansion of the empowerment school concept in his education proposal. Mr. Gibbons explained that this concept allows parents to pick any school they want, regardless of the school's location, and the money follows the students to the school, giving the school autonomy over usage of the money. Mr. Gibbons stated that empowerment schools create a market in public education where schools compete for students and use the money as they see fit to improve the quality of learning for their students.

- Craig M. Stevens, Director of Education Policy and Research, Nevada State Education Association, stated that while Teach for America is a good program, the task of NVSG is to look at long-term goals. He questioned how hiring 55 educators, who are planning to only stay in the classroom for three years, achieves the Group's long-term

goal of improving Nevada's education system. Mr. Stevens stated that only half of Nevada's educators stay in the classroom beyond three years, which illustrates that Nevada has a teacher retention problem. He suggested that a community school with little turnover is a better way to improve student achievement and growth within Nevada's schools. Mr. Stevens urged the Group to think beyond three years and look toward a 20-year goal of how Nevada can bring teachers into the State and pay them well so they will stay.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Group, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

C. J. Smith
Research Secretary

David Ziegler
Principal Research Analyst

APPROVED BY:

Robert E. Lang, Ph.D., Chair

Date: _____

LIST OF EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the “Meeting Notice and Agenda” provided by David Ziegler, Principal Research Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB).

[Exhibit B](#) is a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation titled “Nevada: The Crisis We Face,” provided by Jane A. Nichols, Ed.D., Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, Nevada System of Higher Education, dated August 4, 2010.

[Exhibit C](#) is the talking points of Keith W. Rheault, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education, dated August 6, 2010.

[Exhibit D](#) is the cover page and “Introduction” of the publication titled *2009 Nevada Education Data Book*, prepared by the Research and Fiscal Analysis Divisions, LCB, dated March 2009.

[Exhibit E](#) is the cover page of a brochure from Touro University Nevada and an advertisement titled “Touro University Nevada, Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities,” offered by Michael Harter, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer and Senior Provost, Touro University Nevada.

[Exhibit F](#) is a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation provided by Steven G. Cochrane, Managing Director, Moody’s Analytics, Inc.

[Exhibit G](#) is a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation titled “Selected Education Metrics” submitted by Steven G. Cochrane, Managing Director, Moody’s Analytics, Inc.

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