

NEVADA LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
(Nevada Revised Statutes 218.5352)

SUMMARY MINUTES AND ACTION REPORT

The seventh meeting of the Nevada Legislature's Legislative Committee on Education was held on Thursday, May 22, 2008, at 9:30 a.m. in Room 3137 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4401, of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, 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 www.leg.state.nv.us/74th/Interim. 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).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:

Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Chairwoman
Senator William J. Raggio, Vice Chairman
Senator Bernice Mathews
Senator Maurice E. Washington

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:

Senator Barbara K. Cegavske
Assemblyman Moises Denis
Assemblyman Harvey J. Munford
Assemblyman Lynn D. Stewart

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Carol M. Stonefield, Supervising Principal Research Analyst, Research Division
Melinda Martini, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division
Kristin C. Roberts, Senior Principal Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Sara L. Partida, Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Maryann Elorreaga, Senior Research Secretary, Research Division

OPENING REMARKS

Chairwoman Parnell called the meeting to order and welcomed the Committee members, invited guests, and the public.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MARCH 27, 2008, MEETING

The Committee **APPROVED THE FOLLOWING ACTION:**

SENATOR CEGAVSKE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MARCH 27, 2008, IN CARSON CITY, NEVADA. ASSEMBLYMAN DENIS SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 21, 2008, MEETING

The Committee **APPROVED THE FOLLOWING ACTION:**

SENATOR CEGAVSKE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 21, 2008, IN LAS VEGAS, NEVADA. ASSEMBLYMAN DENIS SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

STATUS REPORTS ON PROVISIONS OF ASSEMBLY BILL 212 (CHAPTER 439, STATUTES OF NEVADA 2007)

- Keith W. Rheault, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education (DOE), referred to a packet of information regarding the uniform grading scale for public high schools ([Exhibit B](#)) and reviewed his memorandum to the school districts and charter schools which explained the need for compliance with *Nevada Revised Statute* (NRS) 389.0195. He said the State Board of Education had adopted a uniform grading scale which outlined standards for course point range, grade, and value and a value-added grading scale for successful completion of honors courses, Advanced Placement (AP) courses and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses.

Senator Raggio asked about the differences between the honors and AP courses and the IB program. He asked if a student could participate in an IB program without participating in any other AP or honors courses.

Susan Denning, Director of Curriculum, Washoe County School District said IB was a separate entity which had specific prescribed courses. Sometimes students in a particular class may also take an AP examination but it was not a requirement.

Senator Washington asked about funding for teachers to be trained to teach AP classes.

Bill Hanlon, Director, Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program, said the Silver State AP Institute did not charge tuition for Nevada teachers. The only costs incurred by the teachers were for transportation and housing.

- Gloria Dopf, Deputy Superintendent, Office of Instructional, Research and Evaluative Services, DOE, referred to a document titled “AB 212 Update” ([Exhibit C](#)) and noted that, with the exception of Elko County School District, all Nevada school districts had adopted policies that set forth the duties, roles, and responsibilities of school counselors, as required by Assembly Bill 212 (Chapter 439, *Statutes of Nevada 2007*).
- Ms. Dopf next presented the results of a quick response survey ([Exhibit D](#)) which addressed implementation by the school districts of the requirements of AB 212, regarding academic plans for incoming ninth graders.

STATUS REPORTS ON PROVISIONS OF SENATE BILL 184 (CHAPTER 420, STATUTES OF NEVADA 2007)

- Dr. Keith Rheault, previously identified, referred to a document titled “Adopted Regulation of the State Board of Education Legislative Counsel Bureau File No. R154-07 ([Exhibit E](#)). He said *Nevada Administrative Code* 389.445 had been amended to read:

Except as otherwise provided in subsection 6, a pupil who enrolls in the seventh grade for the 2008-2009 school year or after must earn at least the following units of credit during the seventh and eighth grades for promotion to high school:

- a) One and one-half units of credit in English with a passing grade;
- b) One and one-half units of credit in mathematics with a passing grade;
- c) One unit of credit in science with a passing grade; and
- d) One unit of credit in social studies with a passing grade.

Chairwoman Parnell said she thought there should be a Committee bill draft request that would require one and one-half units of credit with a passing grade in both science and social studies.

- Melinda Martini, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau, presented a document titled “Quick Poll – Results Promotion to High School for Students on Academic Probation” ([Exhibit F](#)). She said NRS 392.033 required the board of trustees of each school district to adopt a policy that allowed pupils who have not completed the courses of study or credits required for promotion to high school to be placed on academic probation and to enroll in high school. Alternately, a parent or guardian may elect not to place his child on academic probation but to remain in grade 8. Ms. Martini then gave an overview of the school districts’ responses to the Quick Poll.

Senator Raggio said it appeared most of the school districts were implementing academic probation programs in which students would be taking 9th grade courses and remediation courses at the same time. He said such programs did not meet the legislative intent regarding academic probation as set forth in Senate Bill 184 (Chapter 420, *Statutes of Nevada 2007*). He suggested a bill draft that would either require a non achieving student be retained in the 8th grade or be

promoted to the 9th grade but be required to attend appropriate summer school courses to complete remediation in the subject areas he failed to pass.

PRESENTATION ON THE RESULTS OF THE 2007 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY

- Donnell Barton, Director, Office of Child Nutrition and School Health, DOE, conducted a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation titled “2007 Nevada Youth Risk Behavior Survey” ([Exhibit G](#)). She said the survey was comprised of 99 questions 57 of which were core questions that came from the Center for Disease Control. The survey examined:
 - behaviors that resulted in unintentional injury or violence;
 - tobacco use;
 - alcohol and other drug use;
 - sexual behavior;
 - dietary behavior; and
 - physical activity.

Ms. Barton then reviewed the survey results for Nevada high schools and middle schools.

- Katherine Loudon, Coordinator, Safe and Drug Free Schools, Washoe County School District (WCSD), referred to a document titled “Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2007 Highlights” ([Exhibit H](#)) and explained how the survey participants were selected by the CDC. She said the results of the survey were shared with youth-serving agencies in the community as well as with administrators, teachers, and counselors.
- Karlene McCormick-Lee, Ed.D., Associate Superintendent of Schools, Clark County School District (CCSD), reviewed a document titled “2003-2007 Nevada Youth Risk Behavior Survey Clark County School District Comparative Data” ([Exhibit I](#)) and gave an overview of the results of the 2007 survey and how those results compared to those of surveys conducted in 2003 and 2005.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF ISSUES RELATING TO MIDDLE SCHOOL REFORMS BY A PANEL CONSISTING OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, COUNSELORS, TEACHERS, AND STUDENTS FROM SCHOOLS IN CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT, WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND CARSON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

- Campbell Valle, English Teacher, Yvonne Shaw Middle School, WCSD, said the standards-based teaching model implemented at Shaw was unique to the middle schools in Washoe County. She said standards-based teaching really began with a whole school commitment and filtered down to a departmental and then classroom level and ultimately resided in the students themselves. The departments were divided by discipline. Each department identified focus standards and then determined the criteria for mastery of the standards. Then they worked together to design common assessments that every teacher in that discipline would give to the students so that every student would demonstrate mastery in the same way. Ms. Valle said instead of letter grades, report cards listed standards and the level of mastery achieved by the students.

- Krista Kruger, Mathematics Teacher, Yvonne Shaw Middle School, WCSD, said the report cards provided a lot of information for parents regarding their children's mastery of standards. She said the academic grades were based on assessments only, not on homework or class participation.
- Lauren Ford, Principal, Fred W. Traner Middle School, WCSD, said she has monthly vertical alignment meetings with the principals of Bernice Mathews Elementary School, Lois Allen Elementary School, and Rita Cannan Elementary School to align K-6 curriculum with the 7th and 8th grade curriculum. She said that she and a group of teachers and students spend a day at each of the elementary schools and then the 6th grade students visit Traner, tour the school and are mentored by members of the Traner Student Council. Ms. Ford said the number of students who need to attend summer school for remediation classes had been reduced because support classes were offered to students who were not achieving in language arts, mathematics, and reading.
- Misti Taton, Principal, James Cashman Middle School, CCSD, said she was a Breaking Ranks in the Middle (BRIM) trainer and had implemented BRIM's three core values of collaborative leadership, personalization, and high expectations for all students at Cashman. She established academic teams for each grade level; reinstituted accelerated classes; and started the Saturday Cougar Camp—an academic camp to focus on the skills the students needed in math and in reading. She said Cashman was one of only eight middle schools that made adequate yearly progress the first year the changes had been put in place.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF ISSUES RELATING TO HIGH SCHOOL REFORMS BY A PANEL CONSISTING OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, COUNSELORS, TEACHERS, AND STUDENTS FROM SCHOOLS WITHIN CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT, WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND CARSON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

(At the direction of the Chairwoman this item was heard out of order)

- Misty J. Harris, Link Crew Coordinator, Carson High School (CHS), referred to a document titled "Carson High School's Freshmen Transition Program" ([Exhibit J](#)) and said the purpose of Link Crew was to make students comfortable by giving them support and information so they could transition into high school and to help them make better academic and behavior choices. She said after freshman orientation, Link Crew continued to make connections with the students, both academically and socially, through the Link Leaders. She said the goal of the Link Crew was to improve all aspects of the CHS community.
- Lynette I. Brown, Link Crew Coordinator, CHS, said the coordinators worked with the Link Leaders addressing such things as different life skills, including leadership, interpersonal, communication, and organizational skills. She said that four times a year, Link Leaders go into freshman classrooms and teach life skill lessons on a variety of

subjects such as: dealing with peer pressure; time management; and seeking available resources.

- Augustine (Gus) deBacco, Link Crew Leader, CHS, said the Link Crew conducted a variety of social events which helped build relationships between the freshman and their Link Leaders. He said all Link Crew events were designed to strengthen the Link Crew connection with the freshmen, increase comfort and involvement at the school and to establish safe peer support.
- Rebecca Rodina, English Teacher, CHS, gave an overview of the Mandatory Academic Study Hall (MASH) program at CHS ([Exhibit K](#)) and explained that the program was initiated to help CHS reach its goal of reducing freshman failures by 10 percent each year. She said the program identified freshmen who were failing two or more classes at each of the grade-reporting dates. Once identified, the student and his parents would be contacted by the MASH coordinator and informed about the program as well as other tutoring programs which were available. If the student was still failing at the next grade-reporting date, it then became mandatory for him to enter into the MASH program.
- Andrew E. Kelly, Principal, Proctor R. Hug High School, Washoe County School District, said that, over the last three years, there had been a redesign of Hug High School which shifted it from a comprehensive high school model into a series of four small schools on the same campus. The goal was to make sure that personalized relationships were created with all of the students that would last for four years. He said all freshmen were required to take algebra and biology courses and all sophomores were required to take chemistry and geometry courses. He said the students had been given fewer curriculum choices to ensure all students took courses that would prepare them for college.
- Felicia Nemcek, Assistant Principal, El Dorado High School, CCSD, said the school district gave El Dorado the opportunity to put the Freshman Academy on the old Bishop Gorman High School campus. She said there were 850 ninth graders enrolled in the school and 80 percent of the teaching positions were filled by 50 El Dorado teachers who volunteered to move to the Freshman Academy. The remaining vacancies were filled by new teachers. Over the summer, the teachers were all trained in the “Capturing Kids Hearts” program which helped the teachers connect with the students at the very beginning of the year. The teachers meet every Tuesday and Thursday and work together to ensure alignment in all of the classes. Ms. Nemcek said the freshmen had improved in the three core areas; 80 percent of the students passed mathematics, 89 percent passed English, and 91 percent passed science.

COMMENTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SCHOOLS OF CLARK COUNTY ASSEMBLY DISTRICT NO.

(At the direction of the Chairwoman, this item was heard out of order)

- Ronan K. Matthew, Principal, Canyon Springs High School (CSHS), CCSD, said he had brought two students with him who had overcome great obstacles to be successful. Both

of the young men had passed all of their proficiencies in all areas, and both of them had scholarships to different colleges and universities.

- DeMario Lay, Student, CSHS, said he had a lot of difficulties in his first two years of high school. In his 10th grade year, he was suspended from school for a month but the principal gave him a second chance. When he returned to school, he went out for football, started attending classes regularly and improved his grades.
- Mario Hawkins, Student, CSHS, said he had expelled from Desert Palms High School after half a semester and found it very difficult to make up for that during his junior and senior years at CSHS. He took his proficiency examinations; got on the basketball team; worked with tutors; and took after school classes so he could graduate.
- Jill Hersha, Lead Counselor, CSHS, said CSHS had implemented a block schedule which enabled struggling students to make up credits. In addition, students had access to teachers, counselors, and administrators for support

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Maryann Elorreaga
Senior Research Secretary

Carol M. Stonefield,
Supervising Principal Research Analyst

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Chairwoman

Date: _____

LIST OF EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Meeting Notice and Agenda provided by Carol M. Stonefield, Supervising Principal Research Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB).

[Exhibit B](#) is a packet of information regarding the uniform grading scale for public high schools provided by Keith W. Rheault, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education (DOE).

[Exhibit C](#) is a document titled “AB 212 Update,” provided by Gloria Dopf, Deputy Superintendent, Office of Instructional, Research and Evaluative Services, DOE.

[Exhibit D](#) is the results of a quick response survey, provided by Gloria Dopf, Deputy Superintendent, Office of Instructional, Research and Evaluative Services, DOE.

[Exhibit E](#) is a document titled “Adopted Regulation of the State Board of Education Legislative Counsel Bureau File No. R154-07,” provided by Keith W. Rheault, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, DOE.

[Exhibit F](#) is a document titled “Quick Poll – Results Promotion to High School for Students on Academic Probation,” provided by Melinda Martini, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division, LCB.

[Exhibit G](#) is a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation titled “2007 Nevada Youth Risk Behavior Survey,” provided by Donnell Barton, Director, Office of Child Nutrition and School Health, DOE.

[Exhibit H](#) is a document titled “Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2007 Highlights,” provided by Katherine Loudon, Coordinator, Safe and Drug Free Schools, Washoe County School District.

[Exhibit I](#) is a document titled “2003-2007 Nevada Youth risk Behavior Survey Clark County School District Comparative Data,” provided by Karlene McCormick-Lee, Ed.D., Associate Superintendent of Schools, Clark County School District.

[Exhibit J](#) is a document titled “Carson High School’s Freshmen Transition Program,” provided by Misty J. Harris, Link Crew Coordinator, Carson High School.

[Exhibit K](#) is an explanatory document regarding the Mandatory Academic Study Hall program at Carson High School (CHS), provided by Rebecca Rodina, English Teacher, CHS.