



NEVADA LEGISLATURE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

(Nevada Revised Statutes [NRS] 218.53791)

SUMMARY MINUTES AND ACTION REPORT

The third meeting of the Nevada Legislature's Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities was held on March 8, 2006, 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 3138 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 Web site at www.leg.state.nv.us/73rd/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 LAS VEGAS:

Senator Barbara K. Cegavske, Chairwoman
Assemblywoman Ellen M. Koivisto, Vice Chairwoman
Senator Bernice Mathews
Senator Maurice E. Washington
Assemblywoman Susan I. Gerhardt
Assemblywoman Valerie E. Weber

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Michelle L. Van Geel, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB)
Leslie K. Hamner, Principal Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division, LCB
Yvonne M. Goodson, Senior Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division, LCB
Bob Guernsey, Principal Deputy Fiscal Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division, LCB
Andrea Dishman, Senior Research Secretary, Research Division, LCB

OPENING REMARKS

- Chairwoman Cegavske welcomed members, presenters, and the public to the third meeting of the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 18, 2006, MEETING IN LAS VEGAS

- The Committee **APPROVED THE FOLLOWING ACTION:**

ASSEMBLYWOMAN WEBER MOVED FOR APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 18, 2006, MEETING OF THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, HELD IN LAS VEGAS. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY SENATOR MATHEWS AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

PRESENTATION CONCERNING STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN NEVADA WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING (DHH)

- Frankie McCabe, Director for Special Education, Office of Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education and School Improvement, Nevada Department of Education, responded to questions raised during the last Committee meeting. Specifically Ms. McCabe provided:
 1. Statistics regarding the number of DHH students in elementary, middle, and high schools levels in each school district;
 2. Identification of the schools within each district that provide services to DHH students;
 3. Comparison of the number of DHH students to the total number of students in Nevada;
 4. The number of students with hearing impairments that graduate from high school with a standard diploma or an adjusted diploma; and
 5. How the availability of interpreter programs is conveyed to parents and students.

A copy of Ms. McCabe's testimony and the responses referenced in her presentation are available as [Exhibit B](#).

There was discussion on the availability of degree or certificate programs at the community colleges or universities. Caroline Bass, lead faculty at the Community College of Southern Nevada (CCSN) in the interpreter preparation program, stated that an Associate of Science (AS) degree program in deaf studies is available at the CCSN. The program offers certificate of achievement and a degree in sign language. Additionally, there is an AS degree program in interpreter preparation.

- Cindy Frank, Deaf Studies Program Coordinator/ASL Teacher, Western Nevada Community College (WNCC), also spoke of a deaf studies program at WNCC. See her presentation later in the meeting.
- Cynthia McCray, Director of the Low Incidence Disabilities Department, Clark County School District (CCSD), discussed the availability of proficient, qualified interpreters and certified teachers with a four-year degree in teaching DHH students. She stated that the CCSD offers the oral approach and the Total Communication (TC) approach when parents enroll their children. In addition, she informed the Committee of the current and anticipated number of DHH teachers needed for next year.
- Kim Medina, Interpreter Specialist for the CCSD, made note that lowering or raising the standard of interpreting services probably will not increase the number of available interpreters. The major problem is that there are not enough interpreters. She commented further that the focus should be on: (1) minimum certification level standards; (2) training availability; (3) recruiting; and (4) retention.
- Jacque Matteoni, Special Education Administrator, Washoe County School District (WCSD) commented that the WCSD also offers the oral approach and the TC approach.

DISCUSSION OF INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REHABILITATION DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND REHABILITATION (DETR) AND THE NEVADA SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION (NSHE) REGARDING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF NSHE TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE CLIENTS OF THE REHABILITATION DIVISION OF DETR AND ENROLLED AT AN NSHE INSTITUTION

- Dr. Jane Nichols, Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs, NSHE, and Dr. Michael T. Coleman, Administrator, Rehabilitation Division, DETR, presented the Interlocal Contract Between Public Agencies to the Committee ([Exhibit C](#)).
- Chairwoman Cegavske asked Dr. Jane Nichols; Dr. Coleman; Craig A. Kadlub, Director, Community and Government Relations, CCSD; Kris Christiansen, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education and Related Services, WCSD; and a representative from higher education to meet prior to the next meeting of the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities to finalize the Interlocal Agreement. She also requested that they work with the Interagency Transition Advisory Board to establish a transition plan.

DISCUSSION OF AUTISM BEHAVIORAL SERVICES PURSUANT TO MEDICAID'S MENTAL RETARDATION/RELATED CONDITIONS WAIVER

- Chairwoman Cegavske commended Dr. Dave Luke, Associate Administrator for Developmental Services, Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), on his 31 years of service with the DHHS and noted his retiring next month. She gave a brief synopsis of his accomplishments.
- Jan Crandy, Vice Chair, Strategic Plan Accountability Committee (SPAC), urged the Committee to support the mental retardation/related waiver proposed for the 2007 Legislative Session that would ensure children with autism receive behavioral services. A complete copy of Ms. Crandy's written testimony and statistics are available as [Exhibit D](#).
- Chairwoman Cegavske noted that the autism funding legislation failed to pass during the 2005 Session, and commented that the Committee would make it a priority to present legislation for funding in the 2007 Legislative Session.
- Dr. Dave Luke, previously identified in these minutes, provided a packet of information ([Exhibit E](#)) giving details of the autism program offered by the Bureau of Early Intervention Services in northern, southern, and rural Nevada. Highlights from his discussion included:
 1. A description of a screening tool called the "Checklist for Autism in Toddlers" (CHAT) that examines communication, social interaction, physical behaviors, and sensory interests of a child 18-months of age or older and can be used to determine if an autism evaluation is warranted;
 2. A synopsis of the composition and functions of multi-disciplinary autism teams; and
 3. A review of the types of services provided and available to children with autism, including examples of intervention approaches and strategies utilized by professionals.

Continuing his presentation, Dr. Luke indicated that using additional state and waiver funding for the Bureau of Early Intervention Services would provide for continuation of noneducational family and intensive behavior treatment, as well as speech, physical and occupational therapies.

- Toni Richard, citizen of Sparks, and the parent of a boy who was diagnosed with autism at 18 months of age, gave an update on her son's progress and spoke on the development of appropriate programs to meet the needs of children who are diagnosed with autism. Refer to [Exhibit F](#) for Ms. Richard's written comments.

PRESENTATION CONCERNING PROVIDING COST-EFFECTIVE CARE TO PERSONS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)

- Constance E. Anderson, Chief of Continuum of Care, Division of Health Care Financing and Policy, DHHS, presented a case history of a young man with TBI and the costs associated with his treatment. Concluding her testimony, Ms. Anderson noted that as a result of a comprehensive interagency team effort, the man now resides in a community-based facility that specializes in the care and treatment of individuals with TBI.
- Jane Imboden, member, SPAC, provided information about the necessity of care for people with TBI. She said additional adult day centers and behavioral community-based housing centers are needed as well as facilities for long-term care. Ms. Imboden commented on a variety of individuals with TBI and read a case history from the sister of a person who suffers from TBI. She stated that long-term, community-based residential programs would provide a home to behaviorally challenged adults who would otherwise be institutionalized.
- Jean Grasko, parent of an adult daughter with TBI, stated that her daughter has regained about 90 percent of her physical abilities primarily due to the Nevada Community Enrichment Program. She discussed the hardships placed on other family members since her daughter is living at home due to the lack of facilities to provide care for her daughter's specific types of needs.

There was a discussion regarding the number of individuals waiting for TBI facilities. Chairwoman Cegavske asked for input from staff in providing that figure.

PRESENTATION CONCERNING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES RELATED TO FEDERAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION FUNDING

- Jack Mayes, Chairman, SPAC, spoke about the monitoring of State budgets and the need to ensure that federal funding is being appropriately utilized and is being drawn down. He voiced concern that approximately \$2 million of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) funding has not been drawn down and encouraged legislative oversight of the VR funds. Additionally, Mr. Mayes encouraged the members of the Disability Committee to fully fund the VR matching funds.
- Dr. Michael T. Coleman, previously identified, introduced Martin A. Ramirez, Deputy Director, DETR. Dr. Coleman discussed the challenges the Division has faced over the past two years as well as the available funding for vocational rehabilitation.
- Martin A. Ramirez, previously identified, discussed budgets, current funding, and performance indicators for vocational rehabilitation.

DISCUSSION OF MOBILITY EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- Claudia L. Obertreis, Vice President, Ability Center, introduced Scott Santos, Las Vegas General Manager, Ability Center, who presented a packet of information ([Exhibit G](#)), demonstrating how the Ability Center has addressed numerous mobility problems and the various options, products, and services now available in southern Nevada for persons with disabilities. Concluding his presentation, Mr. Santos talked about the various different programs available to disabled persons in obtaining a mobility vehicle.

There was discussion regarding the contractual process for the purchase of assistive or mobility-related technology. Ms. Gayle Sherman, Deputy Administrator, Program Rehabilitation Division, DETR, indicated that purchasing by DETR of such devices is done through an informal bid process; however, DETR is in the process of issuing vendor requests for proposal.

- Jack Mayes, previously identified in these minutes, explained the process for an individual to obtain mobility equipment.
- Assemblywoman Weber requested that the Disability Advisory Committee make every effort to ensure that Nevada's 2-1-1 System is able to refer an individual with a question on mobility equipment to the appropriate agency.

Another discussion ensued regarding recycling of mobility equipment. Organizations and programs identified for recycling include Easter Seals, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, CARE Chest of Sierra Nevada, and the Assistive Technology Program in the DHHS.

INTERPRETER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES IN NORTHERN NEVADA

- Cindy Frank, previously identified, indicated that WNCC offers an associate in arts degree in deaf studies and interpreting classes, and is also in the process of offering an interpreting degree. She continued her testimony by highlighting the progress WNCC has been making towards developing a stronger deaf studies and interpreting program:
 1. Establishment of an American Sign Language (ASL) and interpreter training program technical advisory committee;
 2. Four registered interpreters for the deaf certified faculties;
 3. A 5.0 certification level instructor;
 4. Availability of ASL one through six;
 5. Classes on deaf history and deaf culture;

6. Finger spelling one and two;
7. Spring workshops with accredited training; and
8. American Sign Language at the high school for dual credit.

Concluding her remarks, Ms. Frank emphasized that it is imperative to involve deaf people in the planning and goal setting of future programs.

DISCUSSION OF INTERPRETER CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS IN SENATE BILL 245 FROM THE 2001 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

- Danell L. Fanning, nationally certified sign language interpreter, spoke on regulating the requirements of sign language interpreters. A written copy of her testimony is available as [Exhibit H](#).
- Kelley DeRiemer, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advocacy Resource Center, focused her testimony on the establishment of the certification level 4.0 or higher on the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment. A written copy of her testimony is available as [Exhibit I](#).

DISCUSSION OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

- Chairwoman Cegavske stated NRS 218.53796 requires the establishment of an Advisory Committee of the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities. The following individuals were appointed as members to the Advisory Committee:

Karen Taycher, Chairwoman
Caroline Bass
Michael T. Coleman
Kelley DeRiemer
Gloria Dopf
Danell L. Fanning
Rhonda Feldman
Cindy Frank
David Gordon
Betty Hammond
Jack Mayes
Gary Olsen
Sally Ramm
Linda L. Raymond
Gayle Sherman

Chairwoman Cegavske asked that the Advisory Committee study: (1) public education issues for DHH children in grades K through 12; (2) interpreter certification issues as they relate to DHH residents in Nevada; and (3) transition issues from grades K through 12 to higher education. Two meetings will be held; one to discuss the issues and one work session to vote on recommendations to bring back to the Legislative Committee on Persons with Disabilities. The first Advisory Committee meeting will be held one week before the next Committee meeting, which is scheduled for Wednesday, April 19, 2006.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Gary Olsen, Director, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advocacy Resource Center, testified that deaf children and parents are not in support of the current certification level. He commented that there is a lack of qualified teachers of the deaf, and parents are seeking educational alternatives in other states. Mr. Olsen recommended that this issue be addressed by the Disability Advisory Committee.
- Laurie Mead, parent of a deaf student, commented regarding the inability of Nevada's school districts to provide better education for the deaf students. She indicated that deaf students should not have to graduate with an adjusted diploma due to their hearing disability.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrea Dishman
Senior Research Secretary

Michelle L. Van Geel
Senior Research Analyst

APPROVED BY:

Senator Barbara K. Cegavske, Chairwoman

Date: _____

LIST OF EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the “Meeting Notice and Agenda” provided by Michelle L. Van Geel, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau.

[Exhibit B](#) is a document titled “Response to Request for Information” prepared by Frankie McCabe, Director for Special Education, Nevada Department of Education.

[Exhibit C](#) is a legal document titled “Interlocal Contract between Public Agencies” submitted by Dr. Michael T. Coleman, Administrator, Rehabilitation Division, Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation, and Dr. Jane Nichols, Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs, NSHE.

[Exhibit D](#) is the written testimony and autism statistics prepared by Jan Crandy, Vice Chair, Strategic Plan Accountability Committee.

[Exhibit E](#) is a report titled “Autism Numbers and Autism Matrix” provided by Dr. Dave Luke, Associate Administrator for Developmental Services, Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services, Department of Health and Human Services.

[Exhibit F](#) is the written testimony of Toni Richard.

[Exhibit G](#) is a packet containing various brochures and informational flyers titled “Ability Center,” submitted by Scott Santos, Las Vegas General Manager, Ability Center.

[Exhibit H](#) is the written testimony of Danell L. Fanning.

[Exhibit I](#) is the written testimony of Kelley DeRiemer, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Advocacy Resource Center.

This set of “Summary Minutes and Action Report” is supplied as an informational service. Exhibits in electronic format may not be complete. Copies of the complete exhibits, other materials distributed at the meeting, and the audio record are on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. You may contact the Library online at www.leg.state.nv.us/lcb/research/library/feedbackmail.cfm or telephone: 775/684-6827.