



MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON SCHOOL SAFETY AND JUVENILE VIOLENCE
(Assembly Bill 686, Chapter 607, *Statutes of Nevada 1999*)
October 7, 1999
Carson City, Nevada

The first meeting of the Nevada Legislature's Commission on School Safety and Juvenile Violence (Assembly Bill 686, Chapter 607, *Statutes of Nevada 1999*) during the 1999-2000 interim was held on Thursday, October 7, 1999, commencing at 9:35 a.m. The meeting was held in Room 3138 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada, and was video conferenced to Room 4401, Grant Sawyer State Office Building, Las Vegas, Nevada. Pages 2 and 3 contain the "Meeting Notice and Agenda" for this meeting.

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:

Senator Valerie Wiener, Chairman

Michael E. Johnson, Parent, Vice Chairman

Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell

Barbara Baxter, Teacher, Sparks High School

Annie Rees, Parent, Owner of Annie's Bail Bonds

Keith Savage, Principal, Yerington High School

Vince Swinney, Retired, Law Enforcement Representative

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:

Tom Burns, Chief of Police, Henderson

Pamela Hawkins, Principal, Western High School

M. Kim Radich, Teacher, O'Callaghan Middle School

COMMISSION MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Marcia Bandera, Superintendent, Elko County School District

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Juliann K. Jenson, Senior Research Analyst

R. Rene Yeckley, Senior Deputy Legislative Counsel

Linda Chandler Law, Senior Research Secretary

All place names mentioned in these minutes are in Nevada, unless otherwise noted.

MEETING NOTICE AND AGENDA

Name of Organization: Commission on School Safety and Juvenile Violence

(Assembly Bill 686, Chapter 607, *Statutes of Nevada 1999*)

Date and Time of Meeting: Thursday, October 7, 1999

9:30 a.m.

Place of Meeting: Legislative Building

Room 3138

401 South Carson Street

Carson City, Nevada

Note: Some members of the commission may be attending the meeting, and other persons may observe the meeting and provide testimony, through a simultaneous video conference conducted at the following location:

Grant Sawyer State Office Building

Room 4401

555 East Washington Avenue

Las Vegas, Nevada

A G E N D A

I. Opening Remarks and Introduction of Committee Members and Staff

Juliann K. Jenson, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau

***II. Election of Chair of Commission**

***III. Overview Regarding the Interim Study of the System of Juvenile Justice in the State of Nevada**

Larry L. Peri, Senior Program Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau

***IV. Discussion of School Safety and Juvenile Violence Issues in Response to Survey Sent to Committee Members**

Juliann K. Jenson, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau, and Committee Members

***V. Issues Related to Youth Gangs and Juvenile Violence**

Senator Valerie Wiener

***VI. Review of Emergency Response Plans to Incidents of School Violence**

Michael Fitzgerald, Coordinator of Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities, State Department of Education

VII. Selection of Future Meeting Dates

VIII. Public Comment

IX. Adjournment

***Denotes items on which the committee may take action.**

Note: We are pleased to make reasonable accommodations for members of the public who are disabled and wish to attend the meeting. If special arrangements for the meeting are necessary, please notify the Research Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, in writing, at the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada 89701-4747, or call Linda Chandler Law, at (775) 687-6825, as soon as possible.

Notice of this meeting was posted in the following Carson City, Nevada, locations: Blasdel Building, 209 East Musser Street; Capitol Press Corps, Basement, Capitol Building; City Hall, 201 North Carson Street; Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street; and Nevada State Library, 100 Stewart Street. Notice of this meeting was faxed for posting to the following Las Vegas, Nevada, locations: Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue; and Clark County Office, 500 South Grand Central Parkway.

OPENING REMARKS

AND INTRODUCTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND STAFF

Juliann K. Jenson

Juliann K. Jenson, Senior Research Analyst, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB), lead staff for the commission, called the meeting to order and provided background information on the establishment of the commission, which was authorized subsequent to incidents of school violence at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, and elsewhere in the nation. Ms. Jenson stated that neither rural nor urban schools in Nevada are exempt from violence, nor are communities in general. She explained the tentative schedule, budget, duties, and obligations of the commission, including:

- The development, by early 2000, of a statewide emergency response plan with which district plans must be consistent, and
- The establishment of a set of uniform recommendations regarding policies for violent behavior in school environments.

She explained that articles and other information related to the commission's study topics would be sent to members for inclusion in their reference binder.

Prior to nominations for a commission chair, she asked the members to introduce themselves and describe their background.

ELECTION OF CHAIR OF COMMISSION

Ms. Jenson opened the hearing to nominations for chairman.

MS. REES NOMINATED MR. JOHNSON, AND ASSEMBLYWOMAN PARNELL NOMINATED SENATOR WIENER FOR CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION ON SCHOOL SAFETY AND JUVENILE VIOLENCE. MS. RADICH SECONDED THE NOMINATION OF SENATOR WIENER. MS. BAXTER SECONDED THE NOMINATION OF MR. JOHNSON. THERE BEING NO FURTHER NAMES PUT FORWARD, NOMINATIONS WERE CLOSED.

Then, Ms. Jenson, on counsel of Ms. Yeckley, called for a roll call vote for chair.

MR. BURNS, MS. HAWKINS, ASSEMBLYWOMAN PARNELL, MR. SAVAGE, MR. SWINNEY, AND SENATOR WIENER VOTED IN FAVOR OF SENATOR WIENER FOR CHAIR.

MS. BAXTER, MR. JOHNSON, MS. RADICH, AND MS. REES VOTED IN FAVOR OF MR. JOHNSON FOR CHAIR.

HAVING RECEIVED THE MAJORITY VOTE, SENATOR WIENER WAS RECOGNIZED AS CHAIR AND SHE NOTED THAT MR. JOHNSON, HAVING RECEIVED THE REMAINDER OF THE VOTES CAST, WOULD SERVE AS VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION.

Senator Valerie Wiener

Chairman Wiener said she anticipates many topics will be discussed this interim, and she expects the commission to address a wide range of issues.

OVERVIEW REGARDING THE INTERIM STUDY OF
THE SYSTEM OF JUVENILE JUSTICE
IN THE STATE OF NEVADA

Larry L. Peri, Senior Program Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division, LCB, read and commented upon the fifteen final recommendations set forth in LCB Bulletin No. 99-11, titled *System of Juvenile Justice in Nevada*, dated January 1999 (see Exhibit A, pages 30 through 44).

Mr. Peri explained that James C. "Buddy" Howell, Ph.D., assisted the 1997-1998 interim Study of The System of Juvenile Justice in the State of Nevada with the development of a "blueprint" for a comprehensive juvenile justice system, which included a stratified time frame, i.e., immediate, two-year, and two- to ten-year plans. The recommendations covered 15 topics, specifically the need:

1. For consistent (detention and) placement instruments, to be developed through a joint effort with the Juvenile Justice Commission, the Juvenile Justice Commission's Work Study Group, and the Nevada Association of Juvenile Justice Administrators, with technical assistance from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges;
2. To create intermediate sanctions and interventions;
3. To assess existing substance abuse programs;
4. To assess existing drug court models in Clark and Washoe Counties, with leadership provided by Judges Deborah Schumacher, Charles McGee, and Gerald Hardcastle, also with technical assistance from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges;
5. To complete new serious and chronic juvenile offender facility;
6. For restructuring the state-county relationship;
7. To conduct a statewide gang survey;
8. To conduct a school violence assessment;

9. For alternative programs offered by local school districts;
10. To amend the *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) per recommendations from county district attorneys;
11. To consider developing standards of operation for juvenile facilities;
12. To evaluate mental health needs for the juvenile offender population;
13. To evaluate the need to establish truancy centers;
14. To determine whether professional social workers should be employed by local school districts; and
15. To determine whether the committee should recommend a resolution to create (continue) an interim study committee on juvenile justice after the adjournment of the 1999 Legislature.

Senator Wiener, who also serves as Chair of the 1999-2000 Study of The System of Juvenile Justice in the State of Nevada (authorized by Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 13, File No. 139, *Statutes of Nevada 1999*, see Recommendation 15), noted this commission and that study committee have bifurcated jurisdiction over Recommendations 7, 9, and 13. In addition, the responsibility for Recommendation 8 has been shifted entirely to the Commission on School Safety and Juvenile Violence. She added that educational opportunities for many students are missed because they fear school violence.

Responding to questions from commission members, Mr. Peri explained that:

- Although some of the information requested in the 1997-1998 study had not been provided as requested last interim, the first meeting of the Juvenile Justice study committee for this interim is scheduled for November 4,

1999; and

- The collection of some information may have been delayed due to district fiscal constraints.

Chairman Wiener said that a report on the status of the study recommendations that will be presented at the November 4 hearing will be forthcoming at this commission's next meeting.

DISCUSSION OF SCHOOL SAFETY AND JUVENILE VIOLENCE ISSUES

IN RESPONSE TO SURVEY SENT TO COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ms. Jenson provided a synopsis of the responses to a questionnaire sent to commission members to ascertain their individual opinions of school violence, risk factors, and the steps necessary to make students feel safe at school (see Exhibit B, titled "Commission on School Safety and Juvenile Violence, Homework Assignment Responses"). She discussed:

- The definition of school violence. Generally, the commission members defined it as any act, either mental or physical, that causes fear, intimidation, or bodily harm.
- Risk factors, i.e., family and adult influences; low self-esteem, alienation, and estrangement; attention and recognition; accountability and responsibility; harassment and intimidation; accessibility of weapons; substance abuse; gang involvement, mental illness, and the effect of media coverage.
- Safety in schools includes the need to impose swift and sure sanctions on students who behave inappropriately while promoting a safe, nurturing, and learning environment.

Ms. Jenson said the survey was undertaken to set a reference point from which the commission could work and that most of the members' responses were similar. She also noted that, though incidents of school violence do occur in some schools, most schools provide a safe environment for students.

ISSUES RELATED TO YOUTH GANGS AND JUVENILE VIOLENCE

Senator Valerie Wiener provided a brief overview of youth gangs (see Exhibit C for her complete written remarks). Based on her research for *Winning the War on Youth Gangs, A Guide for Teens, Families, and Communities*, she noted that:

- Discussion of the subject of youth gangs in this country often prompts emotional responses, e.g., denial - "Not my community . . . neighborhood . . . or child";
- The number of youth gangs in America is growing at an uncomfortable rate, and the impact is felt everywhere; and
- There is a need to address this issue from several perspectives, including the commonalities and differences in children.

She explained that children get their identity by watching and "shadowing" others - following and mimicking behaviors, either good or bad. Asserting independence from parental authority may lead to group identification as a means of forming a personal identity to satisfy internal needs. The choices that children make during this process are complex and range from healthy influences, such as scouting, to negative models, such as criminal youth gangs.

The appeal of criminal youth gang activities may stem from:

- •
- The inclusion of, and frequent interaction among, young adults and adolescent members who share a common identity and who encourage participation by age 11 and recruitment as early as age 5;
- The use of a common language, the protection of turf, and an identifiable leadership structure; and
- The excitement of, and the risks associated with, inclusion in gang activities, which are often of a criminal nature.

It is the illegality and violence of criminal youth gang activities that set these groups apart from other, healthier youth groups.

A youth gang member:

- •Is commonly involved in violent activities, perhaps initiated by a false promise that joining the gang will protect that child from the violent acts of others;
- •Is often attracted to the group by the possibility of adventure, danger, and excitement involved in high-risk activities; and
- •Often seeks thrills that other, more traditional groups do not provide.

Senator Wiener explained that 270 youths from ten states participated in the research for her book. Some of the reasons cited as causes for them to join gangs were:

- •Protection and safety; role models who "take care" of them; fun, thrills, and excitement; a viable group alternative; economic opportunities; status and prestige; power over others.
- •Recruitment incentives, e.g., receiving a pair of brand name shoes in return for alerting members when police may be approaching a drug deal.

Violence is often a common thread throughout the life of a youth gang member. Once a child decides to join, violence is an integral part of the initiation process. Initiation generally involves the initiate to be beat up by each existing member as a right of passage and to prove that he or she can endure the rigors of violence. Often, potential female members are required to commit a crime or perpetrate some violent act upon a nonmember to become part of the group. This process increases the group's solidarity. Hard-core gang members sometimes proclaim proudly their willingness to die for their brothers and sisters, the ultimate commitment.

Leaving the gang can be difficult, however:

- •Some mature out. They get too old and outgrow it; and
- •Some fade out. They find reasons to leave gradually.

If they decide to leave prematurely, violence continues to affect that person. If the gang decides to let that person depart, the exit ritual can be even more dangerous than the initiation process. It can be life threatening. The gang wants to create a disincentive for departures. If a person is not willing to put the gang first, then that gang questions

whether he or she can be counted on during tough times.

A few of the reasons why a youth may decide to leave a gang are:

- •The need to get away from violence;
- •A desire for less exploitive group relationships;
- •A personal or physical crisis related to the gang;
- •Religious conversion;
- •Pursuit of legitimate career or educational opportunities;
- •The realization that the gang leader is no better than an abusive parent;
- •Healing within the biological family that makes the return to that family feasible;
- •The ability to resolve personal crises;
- •Departure from the gang of relatives who inspired the membership; and
- •Incarceration.

For females, who comprise up to 30 percent of today's gangs, reasons may include being institutionalized, going to school, becoming pregnant or married, or a desire for straight living. Occasionally, the gang itself may break up.

Violence can continue after the exit. The possibility of rival gang violence still exists, since those outside are unaware of the exit and, therefore, he or she is still considered "the enemy."

To combat violent youth gangs, it is necessary to:

- •Recognize that no community is immune to the influence or presence of gangs;
- •Assess situations realistically;
- •Recognize that youth gangs have grown 200 percent throughout the country since 1990;
- •Understand there are more than 200 identifiable youth gangs, with more than 7,700 members, in Clark County alone;
- •Involve community leaders in an active role in disseminating this information to protect the residents and towns of Nevada; and
- •Understand that children are composites of their total environment, and families cannot combat this problem alone.

According to the children she surveyed, most of them are willing to take responsibility for their own lives. According to another nationwide survey, 98 percent of gang members state that they do not want their own children involved in these types of gangs. She concluded that it is time for everyone to listen, learn, and work together to create the necessary changes to save our children and communities.

REVIEW OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS **TO INCIDENTS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE**

Michael Fitzgerald

Michael Fitzgerald, Coordinator of Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities, State Department of Education, presented a draft copy of the "Comprehensive Safe School Plan." See Exhibit D.

Mr. Fitzgerald described his official duties and then apologized to the commission for certain reports not being available. Information on many related topics is or can be compiled and provided to the commission for reference. He requested members to contact him in the event data is desired or required.

He referred to the draft of the Comprehensive Safe School Plan and further explained:

- •The report contains the essential strategies to ensure safe schools in the state.
- •No one strategy will work in all locations or situations.
- •Responses need to be categorized to be useful, i.e., short-term crisis management through long-term restructuring changes.
- •All approaches must be investigated concurrently or the plan will be weakened.
- •There must be a clear student code of conduct at every school in the state, which clearly delineates what is expected to occur and not occur relative to actions and behaviors, and what the consequences are for breaking that code.
- •Once program strategies are developed, it will be necessary to provide educational resources to teachers and staff to train them to recognize and respond appropriately to various situations.
- •A cooperative agreement with local law enforcement should be in place so that everyone understands what is expected of them in an emergency.
- •Incident response should be consistent among schools but keyed to individual situations and communities. Flexibility should be an important component to program strategies and emergency responses because of the wide range of school environments and resources available throughout Nevada.

He noted that, in interviewing and talking with students from various schools, young people and their views regarding what to do about school violence often reflect a wide range of opinion and degrees of possible punishments.

Responding to questions from the panel, Mr. Fitzgerald discussed:

- •The need to address community and societal problems that spawn juvenile violence, especially on school property;
- •Staff development and training requirements and the lack of preparedness on the part of new and veteran teachers to proactively deal with potentially disruptive and violent incidents and students;

- Dress codes;
- Life skills and adult mentoring programs;
- The need to regain a feeling of neighborhood in communities; and
- Classroom management, particularly the need for colleges of education to acknowledge the societal demand for the institution of long-term curricula changes to address today's school safety and juvenile violence issues, to train teachers how to recognize and respond to emergency situations at school.

Ms. Baxter noted that beginning teachers often take on the look of "deer caught in headlights," and unruly students see those teachers as targets. Disciplinarians are needed in the classrooms.

Ms. Hawkins noted that training in classroom management is generally left to individual schools. Most schools should develop techniques to strengthen crisis response on campus. Resource reallocation and program restructuring is critical.

Assemblywoman Parnell added that such in-service training should not be exclusively given to new teachers. Most teachers are ill prepared in this area of classroom management. She noted that a meeting will be held at Douglas County High School on October 20, with representatives of Columbine High School (Littleton, Colorado), to discuss related issues.

Acknowledging comments from Mr. Johnson, Mr. Fitzgerald:

- Noted that implementation of the state's school safety plan will be up to individual schools, and will vary from site to site, depending on local conditions and perceptions. The overall policy related to school safety and violence, however, should be consistently applied.
- Encouraged the adoption of a common-sense approach that takes into account different community needs.

Mr. Swinney interjected that the more serious the school violence incident, the more political the situation becomes, and the reality of that should be addressed in any final plan. Ms. Radich underscored the need for equity in applying punishment for those who violate behavior guidelines. Influential parents should not be able to negate the

consequences of their child's inappropriate actions any more than any other parent could.

Also received, from the Office of the Attorney General, were three pamphlets (titled "School Safety, A Message to the Community"; "School Violence, a Guide to Search and Seizure in the Public School Setting"; and "Protecting Students from Harassment and Hate Crimes"), which were prepared by the State Department of Education. See Exhibit E.

SELECTION OF FUTURE MEETING DATES

Senator Wiener noted the time constraints outlined in A.B. 686 for the development of the state emergency plan and the consequent need to schedule meetings before the end of 1999. She suggested November 8, 9, 15, or 16 for the next meeting, to coincide with the availability of an expert witness. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that the second meeting of the commission would be held on Tuesday, November 9, 1999, in Washoe County. Members should plan to set aside the full day.

Ms. Jenson explained that members' per diem and travel reimbursements will be available for all commission meetings.

Senator Wiener said school safety and juvenile violence are growing, emotional, and personal issues, and she encouraged member outreach to broaden participation opportunities. Ms. Baxter and Assemblywoman Parnell offered to assist staff with planning student involvement in the November 9, 1999, meeting. Ms. Rees suggested that home-schooled students and their parents be included in the meeting to be held in a rural area.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Pete Bachstadt

Pete Bachstadt, a Carson City resident, stated he would share information he has that is related to the commission's work with Assemblywoman Parnell and Ms. Rees. He offered to act as a reference source for the commission.

Senator Wiener stated that all the members could be contacted by parties interested in sharing information or opinions, which should then be transmitted to staff for dissemination to the commission when appropriate.

Willie Smith and Dan Coppa

Willie Smith, Deputy Administrator of Youth Correctional Services, Division of Child and Family Services, Department of Human Resources; and Dan Coppa, chairman of the Juvenile Justice Commission, also offered to assist the members.

Debbie Cahill

Debbie Cahill, Nevada State Education Association (NSEA), stated that:

- The NSEA is charged with finding ways to reduce the incidence of violence in schools. Reports of violence are used to track that activity. Over the past two or three years, there has been an increased concern on the part of teachers about safety.
- Accountability reports, filed by each school across the state, include those statistics; however, the NSEA believes violent incidents have been significantly underreported. Therefore, the NSEA has considered printing its own multi-copy report form for its members so that teachers can retain a copy.
- Although most of the information received from teachers has been anecdotal, there should be consistency in criteria that determine which teacher reports do and do not end up in the official accountability statistics and which are referred to law enforcement.

Ms. Rees agreed that many incidents may be underreported. In addition, in her view, there appears to be some level of animosity between law enforcement and school administrators in some instances when problems occur on campus.

Ms. Baxter noted that, although some schools do not want to establish themselves as a "problem school," in her experience at Sparks High School the police have been "great" and have provided a strong support system for the school.

Mr. Savage pointed out that the criteria for including various data in the accountability reports have changed over time.

Ms. Hawkins noted that recently passed legislation, which requires parent conferences for habitual discipline or truancy students, has helped schools to do a better job of tracking and reporting problems.

Mr. Burns added that reporting can be a problem, but a standardized form with copies might help. Inaccurate reports, whether or not law enforcement is involved, make the assessment process more complex. In his view, reporting has improved due to increased cooperation between the Clark County School District (CCSD) and the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department; however, there is a perception that incidents are underreported.

Mr. Johnson stated that, based on his six and one-half years as a SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) officer, it is easy to "Monday morning quarterback" an incident such as the one that occurred at Columbine - to speculate on what should have been done by whom to prevent or respond to such a horrible tragedy. However, discussing the Columbine and similar incidents during the process of developing a statewide emergency response plan does lead to a higher level of awareness and consciousness.

Mr. Swinney added that Columbine demonstrated the need for communities to plan, practice, review, and revise response plans, and then do it over again. Instant and unified command structures are always important.

Phil Gervasi

Phil Gervasi, President of the Police Officers' Association (POA) of the CCSD, which represents 125 sworn and trained officers, testified from Las Vegas. He noted that it is the position of the POA that in Clark County schools:

- Two police officers are stationed at each high school, one at most middle schools, and other officers patrol during swing and graveyard shifts.

- •There is a problem with underreporting incidents.
- •When a violent crime is not reported, that too is a crime.
- •Officers often find out about criminal incidents several days or weeks after they occur, e.g., the school police became aware of a shooting on a bus recently only when the bus was brought in to repair a bullet hole, even though the transportation administrators were already aware of the situation.
- •Some schools seem to be more interested in "imaging" than in protecting students.
- •The first priority must be for the safety of the children and staff.
- •Some teachers and support staff have intimated that they have been told not to make police reports when incidents occur, and, if true, making such a request is against the provisions of the NRS.
- •Adults should do all they can to ensure a safe environment for school children.
- •Police cannot do the job they are charged without accurate and timely information, and the present situation leads to frustration since they cannot provide the desired level of safety.
- •Most administrators are part of the "team" and the safety of students first.
- •Some administrators require campus police to adhere closely to a predetermined schedule and route, rather than a random patrol pattern, and that jeopardizes school safety.
- •Officers must be trusted to be a professional team that knows how to do its job.
- •The gang awareness team has identified more than 6,000 gang members on a data base that is shared with local jurisdictions.
- •Zero tolerance policies cannot be effective unless all incidents are reported appropriately and promptly.
- •Recently, emergency response guidelines were introduced at a training exercise that included most law enforcement agencies as a combined unit; however, school district police were left out of the training and told not to attend.
- •Many officers feel like "window dressing."

- It must be recognized that society has changed and everything that has changed in society is changing in the schools - what happens on a community's streets at night, happens in its schools during the day.
- Societal changes are not the fault of school administrators or staff; therefore, school police must be allowed to do their job to provide a better, safer environment.
- Sometimes alternative education schools are attractive to disruptive students because classes start at 7:30 a.m. and the school day is over by 11:30; therefore, the rest of the day is available for other activities.
- Often the alternative schools are used as a "dumping ground" for rude or difficult students with behavior problems (who should be on detention or suspended), when those facilities should be reserved for children who pose a serious threat to the safety of the general population of regular schools.
- The CCSD emergency response plan is an administrative document that advises what to do and who to call - there is no plan for the school police.
- Efforts to develop a police response plan have been stymied and few resources are available, i.e., there is no defined budget within the CCSD for designing and implementing such a program.
- In some instances, female students are carrying weapons for their male gang-member counterparts because they assume they cannot be searched.

Mr. Gervasi demonstrated various weapons disguised as ordinary items, i.e., a pen and a comb that hide knives. In conclusion, he noted that the POA will assist the commission members in every way possible and will not hide anything. The only benefit the POA seeks is that schools become a safe place for everyone, staff and students alike.

Ms. Rees thanked Mr. Gervasi for his presentation and encouraged school administrators to utilize the police skills available to them. Schools today are not what they were in the past.

Ralph Cadwallader

Ralph Cadwallader, Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Administrators, spoke from Las Vegas in support of the commission, which, in his view, is much needed. He noted that:

- The organization is primarily a professional development organization.

- •No school, large or small, urban or rural, is exempt from violence; however, these events are not new, either in this state or this country.
- •It is unwise to be lured into the feeling that violent incidents in school are gang or substance abuse related.
- •Data from many of the schools, and from other public buildings, in which these incidents have occurred show that most were not gang or substance abuse related and few of the perpetrators had criminal records.
- •What was common about those events was that the perpetrators were troubled, white males.
- •It is critical that the commission move forward to establish an emergency response plan that focuses on the training of staff, teachers, and administrators.
- •There has been no training, in college or elsewhere, which prepares teachers to respond when someone is shot.

Mr. Cadwallader noted that regardless of recent incidents, schools are still among the safest places for large groups of people to gather, based on per-capita, per-hour statistics. On average, data show that 15 students die annually from a violent event in schools. In contrast, on average, 15 youths die every day of violent events outside schools. In conclusion, he asked the commission to focus its attention on training that is proactive and preventive. The key, however, is to implement an emergency plan, not just to develop it and do nothing further. It needs to be practiced, rehearsed, and amended as necessary.

Doris Femenella

Doris Femenella, member, State Board of Education, testifying from Las Vegas, reiterated that school conflict is not new. She was a high school administrator in the 1960s when deadly violence occurred at Kent State University in Michigan. She concurred with Mr. Gervasi that it takes everyone, working together as a team, to make buildings safe. Working independently is not effective. She complimented Mr. Fitzgerald on the department's draft emergency response plan.

Exhibit F is the "Attendance Record" for this meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Chandler Law

Senior Research Secretary

Juliann K. Jenson

Senior Research Analyst

APPROVED BY:

Senator Valerie Wiener, Chair

Date: _____

LIST OF EXHIBITS

Exhibit A, presented by Larry L. Peri, Senior Program Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB), is a copy of LCB Bulletin No. 99-11, titled *System of Juvenile Justice in Nevada*, dated January 1999.

Exhibit B is a document submitted by Juliann K. Jenson, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division, LCB, titled "Commission on School Safety and Juvenile Violence, Homework Assignment Responses."

Exhibit C is a copy of the written remarks of Senator Valerie Wiener.

Exhibit D includes a draft copy of the "Comprehensive Safe School Plan," which was prepared by the State Department of Education and submitted by Michael Fitzgerald, Coordinator of Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities.

Exhibit E includes three pamphlets (titled "School Safety, A Message to the Community"; "School Violence, a Guide to Search and Seizure in the Public School Setting"; and "Protecting Students from Harassment and Hate Crimes"), which were prepared by the State Department of Education and received from the Office of the Attorney General.

Exhibit F is the "Attendance Record" for this meeting.

Copies of the materials distributed in the meeting are on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. You may contact the library at (775) 684-6827.