

ADDENDUM

Connecting the Dots October 24, 2006 Summit Day Meeting Report

The Summit Steering Committee convened a follow-up Summit Meeting as recommended by the March 2006 Summit attendees. The Steering Committee invited key stakeholders to a one day follow-up meeting to further define the March 2006 *Connecting the Dots* Parent Involvement Summit's recommendations.

Based on the findings from *Connecting the Dots*, Nevada's First Parent Involvement Summit, two principles emerged as defined by the summit steering committee:

- **State and Regional Collaboration.** Embedding Parent Involvement throughout Nevada's Educational system will require regional and state collaboration that is sensitive to individual community needs and requirements. To the extent possible, state and regional initiatives should include a broad range of parent involvement stakeholder interests. Coordination and alignment among these activities will require dedicated resources, including an oversight or advisory body to monitor overall progress and propose future steps. This advisory body would articulate a shared vision and goals for parent involvement implementation, and develop explicit value statements for all participants and practical strategies to ensure ongoing coordination and collaboration.
- **Role of the State.** Summit participants strongly agreed that the State of Nevada must play a visible leadership role in advancing parent involvement. The State's role was discussed in terms of four major categories: serve as the conduit for parent involvement implementation; establish mechanisms to finance parent involvement; remove barriers to parent involvement and develop legislation designed to promote and support parent involvement; and provide a foundation for state and regional collaboration to guide parent involvement implementation.

Key Areas of Focus

Building on these broad areas of interest and agreement, the second summit meeting, which took place on October 24, 2006 in Reno, Nevada, focused on three key areas: recommendations for organizational and strategic planning, (including the state's role in advancing parent involvement); strategies for parent involvement, including practical tools and resources; and implementation priorities (next steps).

The format of the second Summit meeting was designed to allow the maximum amount of guided group discussion around these key areas. In the morning, mixed groups of

participants representing education, business and other key stakeholders were assisted by a facilitator in order to discuss and prioritize the issues they thought the individual partner groups (i.e. parents, teachers, administrators, business) should focus on to maximize learning opportunities for all children. During the afternoon discussion period, homogeneous groups of participants, representing individuals of each of the stakeholder groups, focused on the priorities identified for their group earlier in the day. They discussed “what was needed to accomplish the priorities.”

At the conclusion of the second Summit day, the comments recorded in the morning and afternoon sessions were compiled and reviewed. Listed are the following highlights relative to the key focus areas:

Recommendations for Organizational and Strategic Planning

Emerging from the second Summit meeting was general agreement that some type of oversight structure was needed in order to provide ongoing leadership for planning, communication, policy development, advocacy and sharing of information on parent-family-community engagement. There was also general agreement that this group should reflect a broad range of stakeholder interests—and should be part of state government’s role. A statewide parent involvement stakeholder organization could help to define and assess progress toward achieving the vision, priorities, and goals for parent involvement in Nevada. There were also agreements on key points among the summit participants in terms of the structure and functions of this organization.

Strategies for Parent Involvement

There was also widespread agreement that information sharing within the state would help to break down existing parent-family-community engagement “silos”, while speeding implementation of promising parent involvement models. The first Summit meeting provided a good foundation for sharing of existing promising practices, but this information exchange needs to be ongoing, continuously updated and organized. The Summit participants overwhelmingly supported the development of a system where regional collaboratives can share information and promote the lessons learned and best practices within Nevada.

Implementation Priorities

Discussion throughout the day by the stakeholders revealed that there are many components necessary for the effective implementation of parent involvement. Attendees agreed that all the stakeholders in education which include business, community and government must play a role in implementing proven effective parent involvement programs and that the implementation of such strategies is key to student academic achievement. *(A list containing many of the critical parent involvement components and generated by the stakeholder group is attached at the end of this report.)*

However, it was concluded by the participants that priorities needed to be established. In an effort to view the issues from a statewide perspective, it was determined that there

were three clear areas that needed to be addressed; a mechanism for statewide oversight, a dedicated statewide position to assist in the implementation of proven strategies and the collection and distribution of resources.

Ongoing Progress within the State

Recognition by attendees at the March Summit and the Follow-Up Day was the need to collaborate, share information and to support other stakeholders in their implementation of parent involvement across the state. Time was also provided to celebrate the accomplishments of regional and state parent involvement efforts in follow up from the first Summit.

Several developments that were presented to the group since the March 2006 Summit included the following:

- **Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) Grant**

The Education Collaborative of Washoe County has been selected to receive funding under the Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRC) in the amount of \$615,848 for the period of 10/1/2006 through 9/30/07. According to the Washoe County School District (WCSD) grants office, this is the largest competitive grant WCSD has ever received.

The PIRC grant will fund an all-encompassing plan for the entire state of Nevada, which has two of the nations' top 100 largest school districts totaling 385,401 students at 558 schools. The Education Collaborative will pilot programs in WCSD and then implement a "train the trainer" model to serve Clark and Nevada rural school districts.

The Education Collaborative will work in partnership with the Nevada Department of Education, Family Resource Centers, WCSD Early Childhood Education and Title I departments, all Nevada school districts and other parent organizations. Program goals include 1) To provide all families, regardless of socioeconomic level, minority status, home language or culture, the resources, services and support they need to become active participants in their children's education; 2) To systemically strengthen partnerships among parents, teachers, principals, administrators and, other school personnel; 3) Support parents in furthering the development process of Pre-Kindergarten students in preparedness for elementary school; and 4) to coordinate federal, state, and local parent involvement services and programs.

With the anticipation that the grant will be renewed annually for a total of 5 years, the PIRC program will help to implement successful and effective parental involvement policies, programs, and activities that lead to improvements in student academic achievement. PIRC will also help strengthen partnerships among parents, teachers, principals, administrators, and other school personnel in meeting the educational needs of children throughout Nevada.

- **Clark County Summit**

In October 2006, Las Vegas stakeholders utilized resources from the first summit meeting to reconvene at a regional level to develop specific strategies to produce further progress on parent involvement in their region. Nevada's first regional parent involvement forum focused on increasing participation in parent involvement activities by engaging Clark County parent-family-community stakeholders. Highlights from the regional initiative include:

- **Collaboration**- the Nevada PTA and Clark County School District worked to engage families and community members in developing trusting and respectful relationships.
- **Building partnerships** - representatives from all stakeholder groups attended, including private schools.
- **Removing barriers** – National PTA provided a translator for the entire event.

Clark County School District successfully followed through with the Summit *Next Steps*. Additionally, their efforts met the challenge presented by the *Connecting the Dots* keynote speaker, Anne T. Henderson, who challenged Nevadans to “take a hard look at their schools and parent organizations and consider strategies suggested by the research such as bridging class and cultural differences, linking parent activities closely to student learning, giving families a voice in major decisions, and building families’ social and political connections.”

- **Report to the Legislative Interim Committee on Education**

The *Connecting the Dots* Summit Steering Committee raised public awareness in support of the summit findings by presenting a brief verbal report to the interim Legislative Committee on Education in June 2006.

- **Legislative Bill Draft**

The interim Legislative Committee on Education has addressed a statewide parent involvement council in its August 29, 2006 Work Session Document, which included the following:

“Provide for a transitory section that requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to convene a statewide parental involvement advisory council, which would study the issues and make recommendations to the Legislature for policies to increase parental involvement. The council shall also be charged with determining if there is a need for a state parent involvement coordinator and for local parent involvement coordinators in each school district. The Superintendent shall appoint two parents or legal guardians of pupils enrolled in public schools, two public school teachers, one public school administrator, one representative of business or one community leader, and one member of a school district board of trustees. The Superintendent shall ensure that members reflect the ethnic, economic, and geographic diversity of Nevada. The Majority Leader of the Senate and the Speaker of the Assembly would each appoint a member. Members of the

council would receive per diem and travel expenses. For a similar proposal (Assembly Bill 336 in 2005) the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) estimated an expense of less than \$20,000 for the biennium for non-legislative members. *(Based on recommendations from Barbara Clark, Legislative Vice President, Nevada Parent Teacher Association, June 2006 meeting.)*”

- **Follow-up Report to the Legislative Interim Committee on Education**
Assemblywoman Debbie Smith of the Steering Committee is scheduled to provide brief remarks, the March 2006 *Connecting the Dots* Summit Report and this report of the October 2006 follow-up Summit day to the interim Legislative Committee on Education on November 29, 2006.

Recommendations of the October 24, 2006 *Connecting the Dots* Summit Day

Discussion throughout the day identified many needs and issues suggested by the stakeholders to bring about effective parent involvement. The stakeholder's common goal was student academic achievement and as over 30 years of research has shown, parent involvement is the number one key to attaining academic achievement. In order to do this, the following three recommendations were considered as the top priorities by the participants:

1. Statewide Parent Involvement Council – A permanent, ongoing statewide parent involvement stakeholder council.

The council under the auspices of the Superintendent of Public Instruction would be proactive and innovative on policy issues that relate to the enhancement of educational achievement through parent involvement. The council may (but not limited to): assess statewide trends and needs; seek public and professional input; analyze information regarding parent and community education and involvement; advise and make recommendations regarding legislation, regulations, and program guidelines; and provide other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals for parent involvement.

The participants recommended that statewide parent involvement summits continue during non-legislative years and that the Parent Involvement Council play a role in furtherance of this.

2. Statewide Parent Involvement Coordinator

Both the Summit and the follow-up Summit Day participants stated that it was a priority to have a statewide parent involvement coordinator to help facilitate effective parent involvement strategies throughout the state.

The two largest school districts each have a parent involvement coordinator, however, the other 15 school districts currently do not have the resources to fund such a position. A statewide Parent Involvement Coordinator is vital to the cohesiveness of research based effective parent involvement program implementation throughout the state and thereby, academic achievement for all students, hence the need for this position to be funded by the state.

3. Resources

Resource needs include staffing, funding, the gathering of/or development of materials, and the distribution of such resources throughout the state. Through the follow-up Summit day as well as the original Summit, it was determined that statewide collaboration and information sharing needed to be addressed. There are many effective and proven parent involvement programs already in existence, however, currently many school sites and school districts operate in a vacuum where best practices are not shared.

Other recommendations were made relative to the use of technology in order to explore ways to connect with the virtual learning communities as well as other networks of communication, such as websites and list-serves.

Commitment of the *Connecting the Dots* Parent Involvement Summit Steering Committee

The *Connecting the Dots* Summit Steering Committee will continue to provide support for this work as it unfolds. It will provide the interim organizational leadership needed to advocate for comprehensive and systemic parent involvement strategies and programs by working with state and local leaders to promote effective practices and needed policy changes while raising public awareness.

Currently, a January 2007 video-conference, in follow-up to the October 24th meeting, is being organized by the *Connecting the Dots* Summit Steering Committee. The video-conference will include those participants from the October 24th meeting as well as other identified stakeholders. The purpose of this stakeholder meeting will be to address how to achieve the above priorities at the 2007 Legislative Session.

The *Connecting the Dots* Steering Committee consists of Barbara Clark, Chair; Assemblywoman Debbie Smith; Janie Lowe, Early Childhood Education Consultant, Office of Special Education, ESEA, and School Improvement Programs, Nevada Department of Education; Joanne Everts, WCSD Director, Early Childhood Education; and the Steering Committee has added the parent involvement coordinators from the Washoe County School District and the Clark County School District, D'Lisa Crain and Eva Melendrez to assist in its planning and future projects.

Stakeholder Members

Karen Flanagan, NV PTA
Bettie Carter, Title I, Clark County School District (CCSD)
Joan Westover, NV School Board Association
Fatima Rivas, Hispanic Liaison, Washoe County School District (WCSD)
Mary Pierczynski, Superintendent Association
Denise Hedrick, Executive Director, Education Collaborative
Alison Turner, Parent, CCSD
D’Lisa Crain, Parent Involvement Coordinator, WCSD
Margaret Ferrara, College of Education, UNR
Tina Springmeyer, Parent, WCSD
Carmen Castillo, Business Representative
Robin Kincaid, NV PEP
Darlene Hart, GROW
Jackie Juarez, Parent Involvement Facilitator, WCSD
Blake Orr, Parent, Rural
Dawn Miller, Teacher, NEA
Terry Hickman, President, NEA
Jane Moon, Parent, Rural
Fawn Lewis, Title I/Even Start, NDE
Elaine Lancaster, WEA
Dell Ray Rhodes, NAACP
Lora Minter, Parent, Rural
Donna Anspach, Nevadans for Quality Education
Eva Melendrez, Parent Involvement Coordinator, CCSD
Regina Shoykhet, GROW

Steering Committee Members

Barbara Clark, Chair
Assemblywoman Debbie Smith
Janie Lowe, Department of Education
Dr. Joanne Everts, Washoe County School District

Facilitator

Lisa Ruggerio Rogers, LR2 Consulting Group



Parent Involvement ●—● Student Achievement

Statewide Summit Committee Agenda

Best Western Airport Plaza
1981 Terminal Way, Reno, Nevada (775-348-6370)

8:30	Registration / Continental Breakfast
9:00	Welcoming Remarks/Introductions/Purpose/Overview Set the Ground Rules Review the Parent Involvement Policy Identify the Most Significant Challenges & Opportunities Review by Entire Group
10:15	Break
10:30	Identify & Discuss Issues Prioritize & Confirm Issues
Noon	Lunch
12:45	Identify & Discuss how to Accomplish Priorities Brief Verbal Reports to the Large Group Confirm How the Priorities will be Accomplished
2:15	Break and Refreshments
3:00	Consensus Building Review Bill Draft Next Steps and Wrap Up
4:00	Day Ends

“Connecting the Dots” Planning Committee:

Barbara Clark; Joanne Everts, Washoe Even Start;
Janie Lowe, Department of Education; Assemblywoman Debbie Smith

**List of Issues/Needs for Effective Parent Involvement
as Generated by Stakeholder Group**

(Items are not listed in any order of priority and may be repetitive as an issue may have been raised by more than one group)

Parents

- Attendance, readiness (clean, rested, fed); responsibility; parent self-responsibility to keep abreast of happenings
- Know what parent involvement opportunities exist & possibilities
- Importance/priority in the home for education
- Become advocates for their child
- Develop connection between :”Home” and “School”
- Mandatory parent meetings before school, ongoing
- Ongoing communication with teachers
- Plan & participate in trainings about PI
- Parents encourage other parents to be part of the everyday of school
- Need to communicate to call the schools when there is a question, a problem, find ways to be involved
- Need to support child’s learning at home

Teachers

- Ongoing training in best PI practices
- Provide opportunities for PI in classroom
- Sharing student academic achievement data
- Provide clear, understandable instruction on how to help – relevant to weakness in academic achievement
- Training/Integrating PI
- Alternative methods of communication with parents (grades/assignments online)
- Support parent meetings, participate in PI training
- Seek student input, be accessible prior to problems, continue education to be qualified
- Clear expectations; initiate the school to home communication; don’t worry about the things you cannot control – focus on the student
- Communicate directly to parents before problem
- Get rapport started early and build on positive

Higher Ed

- Disconnect in level of preparation
- Low high school graduation rate
- Bridge programs
- Millennium scholarship – review guidelines
- Needs to partner with schools to help parents prepare their students for higher education and/or careers
- Develop structures for homework that help parents help with homework

Professional development during pre-service training
Courses on parent involvement
Opportunities for parents to link to university
Share research on PI w/parents & other stakeholders
Strengthen K-12 link
Mandatory teacher training in PI, coordinate with district pre & inservice, mandatory parenting classes
Teacher prep should include BSP & PI
Parent rights

Administrators

Provide opportunities/resources for teachers
Administrators is responsible for “Family Friendly schools”
See what is under teachers
Be real with expectations for students and their parents
Make parent involvement a high priority AND communicate this to the staff
Actively participate in parent activities. If not, send an appropriate representative
Qualified teachers delivering quality curriculum
Is staff communicating with home? On-site P.R. – welcoming attitude
Educate parents on NCLB
Alternate methods of communication (email, connect ed)
Accessibility/visibility; commitment to PI
Address language & cultural barriers
Base decision on PI data (collect it)
Survey of parents – collect info re: parent community
Survey to parents – Is the school family friendly
English classes for immigrant parents
Open doors to school
Pre-school & other parent meetings opportunities
Sincere buy in of PI & participate

Policy Makers

Provide proper Funding, resources, staffing
Reports, explain results
Parent coordinator (state, district, school)
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Identify PI as a priority
Make decisions based on stakeholders input/priorities and based on best practices & SBR
Base decisions on PI data (collect it)
Responsible for resources
Real commitment to PI
Parent accords – employer/business compliance

Funding – Training in PI all levels
Introduce bills & fund for education
Be accessible to all - fund technology (tele/conf. Hearings across the state)
Seek input at all levels
Address language & cultural barriers
\$ for parent coordinator (state, district, schools)
Make sure parents from diverse and socio-economic backgrounds are on essential committees
Since NCLB, be real and flexible with expectations
Ensure that all parents are highly informed about graduation requirements and learning opportunities

Community/Business

Parent accord = community business compliance
Work leave policy to accommodate PI
Meaningful partnerships
Resources & \$\$
Eliminate turf issues
True partnerships
Allow employee's time
 Support thru workshops on site
 Fund training/support school/employer partnerships
Edline at the workplace/access
Flexible scheduling for parent involvement
Accurate and effective communication on all levels about the needs and expectations of parents (i.e. Edline) – access at work place
Address language & cultural barriers
Increase internships
Release employees for school functions (lessens stress)
Partner/Adopt a School

Students

Seek out ways to have a voice
Voice ideas on PI, etc.

**For more information on the *Connecting the Dots* Parent Involvement Summits contact:
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