

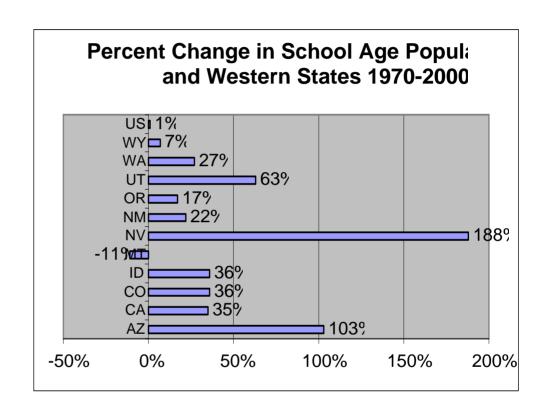


The Education Context in Nevada

- Two realities dominate:
 - 1. Explosive enrollment growth in urban areas
 - 2. The overwhelming presence of Clark County
- But local contrasts are marked: Some rural districts are losing enrollment, while Clark County builds a school roughly every 38 days.

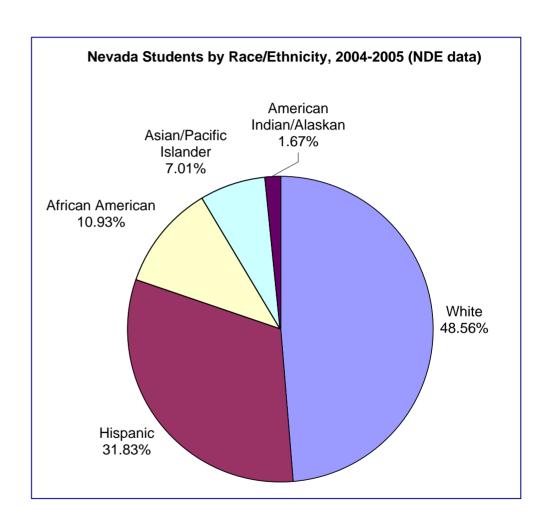


- NV leads the nation in enrollment growth, a trend expected to continue for the next decade.
- Burgeoning urban enrollment encompasses multiple student needs, particularly related to poverty and limited English proficiency.





- The number of English learners has skyrocketed from 14,296 in 1994 to an estimated 75,000 in 2005.
- More students are living in poverty. Nearly 60% of NV's jobs pay less than a living wage for a three-person family.





- Rapidly increasing enrollment requires massive efforts to find and keep high-quality teachers, especially in mathematics, science, and special education.
- Overall, the number of NV licensed education personnel grew from 19,600 in 1999 to 23,600 in 2004.
- Many hires are new to their profession.



- State education investment is low, and particularly low relative to need. Analysts report that the existing tax structure is unable to support the growing need for schools and other social services.
- Per-student investment in school operations is anywhere from \$1,000 to \$1,500 below the national average, depending on the data source and formula used. *Quality Counts 2005* ranked NV 47th among states in per-pupil operational funding.



Nevada Reforms

- Since 1997, NV (NERA) has developed standards and launched continuing state and local efforts to build an accountability infrastructure.
- Key policy changes have included:
 - 1. A shift to standards-based rather than norm-referenced assessments
 - 2. An overhaul of school district reporting processes, of how the state designates which schools are (or are not) meeting achievement requirements, and of what consequences will apply
 - 3. A requirement that the NDE, each school district, and each school (regardless of performance level) develop and annually revise improvement plans



Data-Driven Instruction & Decisions

- Development of System of Accountability Information laid foundation for data-driven improvement plans. SAIN provides statewide hub of relevant & consistent education data.
- NV is investing \$3 to \$4 million to provide all districts with access to Grow Network, which develops data management resources for school leaders. Six districts (including Washoe and Clark) have contracted with a second commercial provider for a data management system.
- NV focusing resources on analyzing fiscal data; now able to generate various displays of expenditures within and across districts.





- 1999: Legislature appropriated \$3.5 million in annual funds to launch 4 Regional PD Programs (RPDPs), designed to help teachers in all 17 districts implement state standards and assess student progress.
- NV has established incentives to recruit and retain teachers
 - □ Online posting of positions and electronic applications
 - □ 5% annual salary increase for National Board certification



Teacher Quality Initiatives (cont.)

- Local school districts have their own initiatives
 - □ Clark County offers incentives for teaching in hard-tostaff schools or subject areas
 - Washoe County has structured a 3-year induction program featuring novice seminars and a mentor program
 - □ In rural counties, mentoring and induction occurs at the district and/or regional (RPDP) level





- NV Early Childhood Education Comprehensive Plan (ECE) funds new pre-K programs and expands existing programs. Districts and community groups use about \$3 million yearly.
- NV Early Literacy Intervention Program (NELIP) provides \$4.5 million annually to ensure that all pupils are reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.



Early Childhood & Early Literacy (cont.)

- Federal grant programs supplement early literacy efforts
 - □ 2001-04: NV Reading Excellence Act (NREA) utilized \$26M in federal funds to improve early reading instruction and family literacy
 - □ 2003: NV began receiving federal funds under a 6-year, \$26M Reading First grant.
- Washoe and Clark Counties have begun offering full-day kindergarten for children in their lowest-income elementary schools.





Class Size Reduction

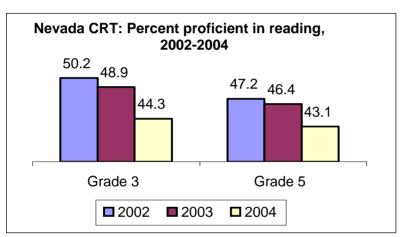
 NV has funded primary-grade class size reduction since 1989, with a total investment since then of approximately \$1 billion

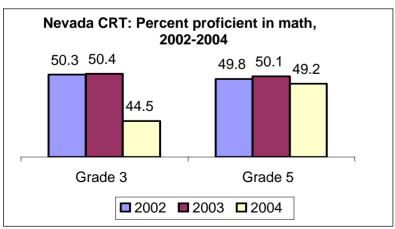
College Scholarships

■ 1999: Legislature funded Gov. Guinn's Millennium Scholarship initiative, awarding merit-based scholarships of up to \$10,000 to eligible students attending NV colleges



Status of Student Achievement

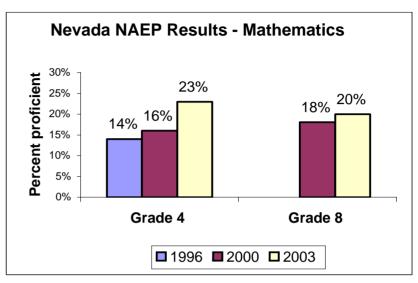


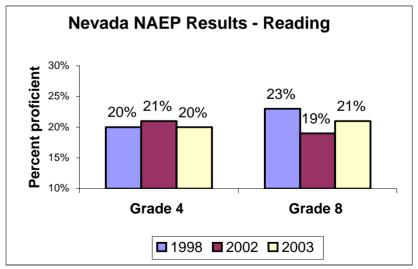


Student achievement at the elementary and middle school levels remains low and shows few signs of progress.



NV continues to rank at or near the bottom among the states in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)







- At the high school level, the average performance of NV students in both math and reading has steadily improved.
- However, in all grade levels, significant achievement gaps persist among different groups of students
 - □ Racial/ethnic gaps
 - ☐ English learner and special needs gaps
 - Poverty gap



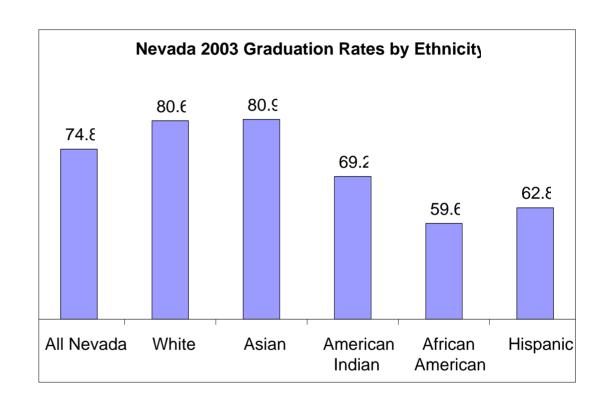
Status of Graduation Rate

Grad Rate (%)	Class	Methodology
70	2001	NCES formula (dropout data)
61	2001	Greene Method (enrollment data)
55	2001	Urban Institute CPI (enrollment data)

- Recent state calculations suggest that approximately 70% of high school students graduate, but the actual rate may be lower.
- This is not just an urban problem; several of the state's smaller districts were below the statewide average in 2003.



- A racial/ethnic gap is evident across methodologies.
- White and Asian American students tend to graduate at higher rates than their Hispanic and African American peers.





Recommendations

Make education a state priority

- The state's policy approach tends to be piecemeal rather than comprehensive, resulting in episodic rather than systemic progress; efforts tend to be underfunded or inconsistently funded over time.
- One remedy, now lacking, would be the driving force of a statewide activist group that engages the public around education urgencies and advocates for an unrelenting focus on improvement.



Develop a comprehensive system for developing teachers, emphasizing strategies for teaching English learners

- In light of its teacher-hiring pace, growing student diversity, low achievement, and academic performance disparities among different student groups, NV needs to ensure that more of its teachers are well qualified.
- This requires building on pieces already in place to create a career-long system of teacher development aligned with state improvement goals.



Use data to drive improvement and evaluate progress

- Consistent and relevant data need to be methodically collected and made transparent to all, even when what they reveal is painful or politically difficult.
- Nevada has made great strides at the state and local levels in developing data systems. Cohesive, statewide planning and development of such systems should continue.



Identify and incorporate research-based strategies to improve performance and reduce achievement gaps

- Key strategies
 - □ Setting specific, data-driven goals
 - □ Central emphasis on teaching programs and practices that stress rigor, reduction of dropouts, and parental involvement
 - □ Continual monitoring and measuring of results
 - □ Ongoing process of intervention and adjustment



Implement a statewide high school initiative

- Nevada's low graduation rate, racial/ethnic and socioeconomic gaps in achievement and graduation rates, and low college-going rates warrant a particular focus on high school.
- A high school initiative should include attention to effective dropout-prevention programs and should explore partnerships with higher education, and community and business leaders.



Focus comprehensively on early childhood

- Given NV's growing numbers of poor, minority, and LEP children, efforts to improve early literacy would profit from being embedded in a comprehensive approach to early care and education from birth to age 8.
- NV should continue to develop a system of research-based programs in infant-toddler care, preschool, full-day kindergarten, and early literacy.



Provide the resources and support needed to do the job

- Low-level operational investment is a major problem for a system trying to manage explosive enrollment growth and surging numbers of English learners.
- Fully implementing and sustaining these initiatives requires a commitment not just of energy but of dollars.
- The public needs to be engaged to resolve the question: What resources, spent in what ways, will enable the state to reach its education achievement goals?

