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Meeting Date 6-6-06

Findings

SUBCOMMITTEE TO STUDY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOLS (Assembly Bill 388, Chapter 309, *Statutes of Nevada 2005*)

1. Career and technical education courses are effective in educating students.

Nearly 50 percent of high school students enroll in one or more career and technical education (CTE) courses. Among students enrolled in CTE courses, the dropout rate was less than 2 percent in 2003-2004, while the overall dropout rate that year was slightly less than 6 percent. In the Class of 2004, 89 percent of students enrolled in terminal CTE courses earned a high school diploma; that year, 83 percent of all 12th graders attained a high school diploma. Within 6 months of graduation, 97 percent of CTE completers obtained employment, continued in postsecondary education, or joined the military. (Source: Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation titled *Career and Technical Education Indicators*, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, Nevada Department of Education, January 18, 2006)

At Southern Nevada Vocational Technical Center (SNVTC), in the 2003-2004 academic year, African-American and Hispanic students comprised 56.5 percent of the student body. The Accountability Report Card indicates the following proficiency rates on each section of the Nevada High School Proficiency Examination for these two demographic groups as well as the overall proficiency rate.

Percent Proficient on Sections of the High School Proficiency Examination, 2003-2004

	Overall		Hispanic		African-American	
	State	SNVTC	State	SNVTC	State	SNVTC
Reading	77.2	91.0	62.0	91.1	65.9	90.6
Writing	83.4	92.9	72.1	96.8	75.4	86.9
Mathematics	57.7	68.3	38.9	67.2	35.5	57.8

(Source: *Education Accountability Brief #6*, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, Nevada Department of Education, March 2005)

2. Career and technical education requires stable funding sources and increased revenues.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2006, total federal funding was \$9,029,668; of that, \$8,054,441 was provided under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act. The proposed federal budget for FY 2007 would eliminate CTE funding.

In FY 2006, total state funding for CTE, including funding for apprenticeships and career and technical student organizations, was \$2,109,589. Assembly Bill 580 (Chapter 482, *Statutes of Nevada 2005*) appropriated \$1 million in each year of the biennium to provide grants to form and support technical skills advisory committees in school districts with secondary schools. All eligible districts applied for and received grants in the first fiscal year. Advisory committee members testified that additional funds are needed for facilities upgrade and expansion, equipment compatible with industry standards, professional development for CTE teachers, and recruitment of students (Source: Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation titled *Overview of State & Federal Funding for Career and Technical Education in Nevada*, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, Nevada Department of Education, January 18, 2006).

3. Additional career and technical education high schools are necessary to meet the needs of employers and the interests of students.

Clark County School District and Washoe County School District are the only Nevada districts to provide career and technical high schools. In Clark County, SNVTC is a career and technical magnet school. Additional academies are proposed to open in northwest Las Vegas in 2007 and in eastern Clark County in 2008. Three more regional academies are proposed for 2009. (Source: Testimony, March 1, 2006 meeting of the Subcommittee, Southern Nevada Vocational Technical Center Las Vegas, Nevada)

Washoe County School District's Vision 2015 plan envisions a degree-granting career and technical high school with a projected opening in 2009, organized around nine career clusters. The vision calls for the existing Regional Technical Institute to be incorporated into the new Career and Technical Academy. (Source: *Preliminary Evaluation of Space Requirements for a Career and Technical Academy*, Final Report, Washoe County School District, October 2005)

According to a survey of school districts conducted by the Fiscal Analysis Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, three districts (Carson City, Clark, and Lyon) reported waiting lists for enrollment in career and technical education courses. Other districts reported that, when more students apply than there is capacity, upper class students receive priority. (Source: Quick Poll, December 8, 2005, Fiscal Analysis Division)

Technical skills advisory committee members testified that opportunities for collaboration with industry should be provided. They also testified that assistance with financing for facilities, equipment upgrades, professional development for career and technical education instructors, and recruitment of students is needed. (Source: Testimony, April 13, 2006 meeting of the Subcommittee, Regional Technical Institute, Reno, Nevada)

4. Articulated courses provide a means for high school students to start a college career and technical education major while still in high school.

A program of articulated courses, commonly known as Tech Prep, allow 11th and 12th graders to earn college credit for career and technical education courses completed in high school. In Tech Prep programs, students begin their study in high school with a particular sequence of courses and can continue the same program in college. To be eligible, students must earn a grade of A or B in an articulated class with a community college. According to testimony, the typical fee is \$10 per credit hour and the maximum number of credits that may be earned is 15 college credits.

Further testimony informed the Subcommittee that a shortage of teachers in career and technical education fields exists. The Subcommittee was told there is a need to increase the number of pre-service teachers as well as to recruit individuals who change careers or retirees. A statewide Tech Prep coordinator is critical if the program is to expand, according to testimony. (Source: Testimony, March 1, 2006 meeting of the Subcommittee, Southern Nevada Vocational Technical Center Las Vegas, Nevada, and April 13, 2006 meeting of the Subcommittee, Regional Technical Institute, Reno, Nevada)

5. Guidance counselors, who provide crucial service in academic and career advising, are increasingly assigned non-guidance duties.

Representatives from the Nevada Department of Education, Clark County School District, and Washoe County School District presented information on the results of a survey of guidance counselors. The American School Counselor Association recommends a ratio of students to counselors at 250 to 1. The survey found that in the elementary schools ratios could reach as high as 877 to 1. Six districts reported ratios between 400 and 600 students per counselor, while 5 districts report ratios of more than 600 to 1. In middle schools, 6 districts reported ratios of more than 300 to 1, but 8 districts reported ratios of more than 400 students per counselor. Thirteen of the 16 districts with high schools reported ratios of more than 300 students per counselor. Further, one district reported that one counselor serves all schools and several districts reported the sharing of counselors among schools.

In addition, the Subcommittee received information that at the high school level the average counselor spends 355 total hours acting as the testing coordinator per year. Testing duties for counselors at all school levels include attending district training sessions, organizing proctor meetings, setting up testing logistics, picking up and delivering test booklets, securing the tests in locked cabinets, organizing and administering make-up testing, and submitting all returned materials correctly.

Counselors suggested testing facilitators or proctors to relieve the counselors of some testing administration duties so that they would have more time to work with students on test results interpretation. (Source: Testimony, May 9, 2006 meeting of the Subcommittee, Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada.)

6. Schools and employers should make students and parents aware of skills needed to succeed in the 21st Century and increase opportunities available to students.

Reno area employers testified to the Subcommittee that the area is experiencing a shortage of qualified workers. An advisory technical skills committee member suggested that career and technical education must recruit students in middle school and raise public awareness. A guidance counselor testified that advisement at the transition to high school is crucial and students need help to understand the consequences of their choices. Students need meaningful exposure to various careers. Representatives of the Department of Education testified that some federal funds will be used to develop advising materials for students. Financial assistance is needed to help teachers sponsor career and technical student organizations. (Source: Testimony, April 13, 2006 meeting of the Subcommittee, Regional Training Institute, Reno, Nevada.)

The Subcommittee received testimony from one community college president that a lack of communication exists between secondary and postsecondary education. A lack of communications also exists among educators, policy makers, and business and industry. This results in a fragmentation of career and technical education. Employers have needs for highly skilled technicians. New technologies and economic growth will require training and retraining of currently employed workers. Academic instruction must be integrated with career and technical education. A career pathway is a sequence of academic and career courses, beginning in 9th grade and leading to an associate degree, an industry-recognized certificate or license, or a baccalaureate degree and beyond. (Source: Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation titled *Career Technical Education Presentation*, Philip M. Ringle, Ph.D., President, Truckee Meadows Community College, April 13, 2006 meeting of the Subcommittee, Regional Training Institute, Reno, Nevada.)

The Subcommittee was told that additional dual credit opportunities should be provided in academic courses as well as in CTE courses. This would encourage more students to pursue postsecondary education because they would have earned college credits while in high school. (Source: Testimony, March 1, 2006 meeting of the Subcommittee, Southern Nevada Vocational Technical Center Las Vegas, Nevada)