

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Held at the Legislative Building

Las Vegas, Nevada

A meeting of the Legislative Committee on Education (created as a result of Senate Bill 482), was held at 10:00 a.m. on October 21, 1997 at the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 E. Washington Avenue, Room 4401, Las Vegas, Nevada.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator William J. Raggio, Chairman

Senator Raymond D. Rawson

Senator Jack Regan

Senator Maurice Washington

Assemblywoman Marcia deBraga

Assemblyman Patrick Hickey

Assemblyman Richard Perkins

Assemblyman Wendell Williams

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE:

Robert S. McCord, Clark County School District

Carolyn Chapman, University of Nevada-Reno

Mark Alden, Regent, University and Community College System of Nevada

Gloria Dopf, Nevada Department of Education

Roy Casey, Nevada Department of Education

Sue Smuskiewicz, Nevada PTA

Kami Dempsey, Las Vegas Community College

Larry Spitler, Clark County School District

Eugene Paslov, EMC, Inc.

David Smith, Nevada Department of Education

Cheryl Purvis, Nevada Department of Education

Jane Nichols, University and Community College System of Nevada

Jerry Holloway, Washoe County School District

Jan Biggerstaff, State Board of Education

Mary Peterson, Nevada Department of Education

Rick Bennett, University of Nevada-Las Vegas

Carole Vilardo, Nevada Taxpayers Association

Bobbie Gang, Nevada Women's Lobby

Gerald Kops, University of Nevada-Las Vegas

Liliam Hickey, State Board of Education

Chairman Raggio opened the meeting and indicated he would accept a motion to approve or modify the minutes of the September 25, 1997, meeting of the Legislative Committee on Education.

ASSEMBLYMAN WILLIAMS MOVED FOR APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

OF SEPTEMBER 25, 1997.

SENATOR RAWSON SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Raggio appointed Assemblyman Wendell Williams as Vice-Chairman of the Legislative Committee on Education (S.B. 482). The committee was directed to Item C on the agenda.

Senator Raggio indicated Dr. Eugene Paslov had been invited to speak to the committee. Dr. Paslov was currently the president of Education Management Consultants, Inc., (EMC) and had been the former Superintendent of Public Instruction for the state. Senator Raggio provided additional background information on Dr. Paslov's educational and professional background. Senator Raggio informed the committee that Dr. Paslov, during his position as Superintendent of Public Instruction, was instrumental in creating innovative programs, including those dealing with at-risk children. Dr. Paslov demonstrated the desire to improve the quality of the school system and the academic performance of children.

Senator Raggio announced that the committee was charged with recommending to the Department of Education effective remedial education programs for each subject tested on examinations administered pursuant to the statewide proficiency examination statute. Therefore, it was important for the committee to receive an overview from someone knowledgeable in effective remedial education programs.

Dr. Eugene Paslov, 13-year resident of the state of Nevada, former Superintendent of Public Instruction, stated he was now a private businessman with International Education Management, Inc., a consulting firm located in Carson City. Dr. Paslov stated Jeanne Botts was seeking an expert to present information on remedial programs in English, language arts, and mathematics. He stated it was difficult to find such experts because they were usually advocating a particular program or research rather than addressing the issues. Dr. Paslov explained he had been involved with education research for the past 30 years, mostly as a manager rather than a researcher. He informed the committee that during the 1970's he managed the State of Michigan's \$120 million Title I program for several years and was involved with the federal government in performing research and evaluation on Title I programs. Dr. Paslov went on to describe some of the other research and professional achievements in the past years.

Dr. Paslov indicated his presentation would define "remedial" and identify successful programs in reading and mathematics. He pointed out that the state had not been silent on the issue of remediation, and he highlighted Title I programs and other activities that had been underway in the state that were

helpful in improving childrens' basic skills. He stated it was useful to know what programs were effective in the state.

Dr. Paslov stated researchers defined reading as a process that included demonstrating comprehension and showed evidence of a warranted and responsible interpretation of text. That definition was composed by the International Reading Association. He stated that the teaching of reading had been met with much controversy in the past. However, research was clear that both phonics for the skill development and "whole" language had to work together in order for reading to be effective. Phonics could not be ignored, especially at the younger ages, as the sound system of our language must be understood.

Dr. Paslov informed the committee that author, Bill Honig, having recently published a book about teaching our children the role of skills in a comprehensive reading program, reviewed research on the topic for the past 100 years and concluded that if children did not learn phonics at an early age, they will have difficulty reading. Responding to Senator Raggio's question, Dr. Paslov confirmed that Mr. Honick was the state Superintendent for California years ago, and now had his own private management consulting firm. Dr. Paslov stated teaching reading and writing also involved speaking correctly, listening and viewing critically. Dr. Paslov provided handouts regarding remedial programs and effectiveness and a Glossary of Terms ([Exhibit C](#)).

Dr. Paslov stated that "basic" mathematics was comprised of eight content areas:

- Number and operation;
- Geometry and measurement;
- Function and Algebra;
- Statistics and Probability;
- Problem Solving;
- Mathematical reasoning;
- Mathematical skills and tools;
- Communications in putting mathematics to work.

He said the controversy over the above content areas involved when basic functions were taught since math learning was sequential and, generally, the basic skills of computing and functions had to be learned first. He anticipated there would be debate over the use of calculators in math. Most researchers agree that youngsters should be able to use all eight content areas by the end of the fourth grade, at least conceptually. After the fourth grade, youngsters became more adept and deal with more complex subject matter.

Dr. Paslov also stated that by the end of the fourth grade, the youngster should be a fluent reader. He explained "fluency" was defined as being able to read aloud without stuttering over every other word, and there were tests that determined fluency. Comprehension, he stated, involved being able to answer questions about the subject matter or the text that had been read.

Dr. Paslov asserted there were several reasons to remediate:

- There were no clear academic standards about what children should know and be able to do in the area of reading and mathematics. He stated that [S.B. 482](#), hopefully, would solve the problem of not having clear standards.
- Elementary teachers and language arts teachers, in general, did not have thorough training in phonics, literature-based or whole language approaches. As a result, instruction was inconsistent.

Many teachers did not have a good understanding of how to teach phonics. He stated there were advocates in the University system for various approaches in this regard, and the use of phonics had been highly politicized. Dr. Paslov concluded that teachers must be able to work with children using both techniques and that was not currently being done. Nationwide, elementary teachers did not understand the concepts of mathematics or how to teach those concepts.

- He said there was a fairly good grasp on the basic functions of adding, subtracting, dividing and multiplication, and Nevada students generally did well on those functions. However, students were not performing well on the higher levels of mathematics, geometry, probability and statistics, or algebra.
- Dr. Paslov, in addressing home-grown reading and mathematics programs, stated teachers across the country had discovered that the "home grown" programs were ineffective in that there was little evaluation data available. Programs developed by experts generally were more effective.
- The major influx of students with no English or limited English speaking ability. He indicated that was a problem in teaching children and young adults as it required special programs to help them to learn English.

Dr. Paslov reiterated those were the five reasons why remediation was necessary in the state. He stated S.B. 482 was shaping the academic standards issue, and within a short period of time the issue of explicit performance and content standards would become well known. Also, there would be measurements developed to assess the progress of students in meeting the academic standards. He stated there needed to be an accountability system and there needed to be a way of measuring student programs--all of which should be accomplished under S.B. 482. He stated growth in student enrollment added to the problem of limited or non-English speaking students and literacy programs required for them.

Senator Regan commented a major problem with the home-grown programs not working was the "one-size fits all" mentality of the programs, even at the federal level. He asked how the unsuccessful home-grown programs versus the totally unsuccessful federal programs could deviate from the "one-size fits all" theory. Dr. Paslov stated programs were effective when the technology and training was designed to help teachers teach a particular skill level and variation and flexibility was necessary for the programs to be effective.

Senator Regan acknowledged Dr. Paslov's five reasons for remediation and added another reason--lack of parental involvement at all academic levels. Dr. Paslov concurred and stated that the programs he would discussing included strong parental involvement and tutoring.

Assemblyman Hickey commented that Dr. Paslov made reference to problems within the training of teachers and asked what suggestions he had for the committee in looking at standards for the state which related ultimately to curriculum and content. Further, he asked if colleges of education would be required to work more closely with the legislature to better prepare teachers to teach within the defined standards. Dr. Paslov replied that teachers were not trained in teaching phonics or advanced mathematics. He agreed that the state and the legislature had to work closely within the schools of education to accomplish that task. He pointed out that in Clark County there was an understanding that elementary teachers needed assistance in teaching mathematics. That issue was addressed by establishing audit teams that would allow mathematics instructors at the secondary level to work with elementary school teachers. He concluded that was a positive and useful approach. In addition, if the universities get involved in the process and find out exactly what teachers need to be able to teach youngsters advanced math concepts, that would be very helpful as well. As an aside, Dr. Paslov commented that teaching institutions sometimes became "disengaged" as to what was needed in classrooms.

Dr. Paslov stated that Nevada held a leadership role in the area of writing. He recalled the major debate in the area of statewide testing for writing was whether the test should be a "fill in the bubble" test or whether the teachers should grade written examples of students work based on a holistic scoring grid.

He stated the English teachers throughout the state absolutely insisted that the exams be written exams. There was one superintendent who was surprised to see such low scores stemming from one of the highest middle schools in the state. Those results precipitated the Nevada Writing Assessment Program to demonstrably improve the writing of all students. He encouraged the committee to view the level of improvement in the state in the area of writing. The end result of the program was that teachers learned how to teach writing better and students learned how to write better.

Dr. Paslov went on to list what needed to be done to improve remedial programs:

- Better trained teachers were needed in the area of mathematics. He pointed toward the Clark County model as a good example to review.
- Elementary and secondary English language arts instructors needed to be able to fully understand and teach phonics and literature-based reading.

Dr. Paslov outlined a few reading and math programs that were effective, stressing that these programs had strong parental involvement and strong professional development and teacher training components:

- **Success for All** - developed by the Office of Evaluation, Research, and Information (OERI) at the United States Department of Education, currently operated out of John Hopkins University and developed by Robert Slavin. The program was skill-oriented, had strong parental involvement and strong staff development.
- **Accelerated Learning** - This was developed by Henry Lavin based at Stanford University. He stated this was a basic reading and math program with strong parental involvement, strong skills development and strong staff development. Dr. Paslov indicated there were some schools in Clark County and Washoe County using the accelerated learning program.
- **Reading Recovery** - This was primarily an elementary program for children who had fallen behind. He said this was most often evident by the first or second grade. If a youngster was not back on track by third or fourth grade, it became more difficult to recover them.

Senator Raggio asked if the *Success for All* program was a whole school program as distinguished from the *Reading Recovery* program which was a targeted reading program. Dr. Paslov replied that most of the programs he was discussing were whole school programs that focused on the basic skills of either reading or math.

Senator Raggio indicated the *Reading Recovery* program was detailed extensively during the 1997 legislative session and many of the school districts had much success with that program. Dr. Paslov concurred and stated that the *Reading Recovery* program was a very intensive staff development program in that staff needed to be trained in the techniques but the program has been very effective.

- **Flint Follow-Through** - This program utilized reading and mastery through a DISTAR program. Dr. Paslov explained that DISTAR was a reading program established 10-15 years ago which was very skills oriented and prescriptive and had produced positive results.
- **Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE)** - This program was developed in the State of California. Dr. Paslov strongly suggested that staff talk to Mr. Bill Honig to determine the success of this program. The CORE program had a strong emphasis in phonics in the early ages. In addition, the program had a balanced approach with both phonics and whole language, with a strong emphasis in teaching children the necessary skills. The program also included strong staff development and parental involvement.
- **Lifespan Partnership, Inc.** - This was a technologically, sophisticated program dealing with reading and math skills in K-6 and involved parent teaching in the home. The method of improving reading and mathematics was done primarily by working with parents and having parents working with

youngsters in the home. This was a very interesting program located in San Diego, California.

- **Renaissance Mathematics** - This is a standards-based middle school math program for the regular teaching of mathematics and remedial teaching of mathematics--also a California based program.
- **Illinois Mathematics Consortium** - This program, developed through the University of Chicago, deals with teaching elementary school teachers on how to teach complex math in elementary schools. Several colleges in the Chicago area formed a group and developed a program using textbook and hard-copy materials.

Dr. Paslov emphasized the above were only a few remedial programs for consideration by the committee and the Nevada Department of Education would have more programs to discuss. He encouraged the committee to link the programs recommended to the school districts to the academic standards. He reiterated that the bottom line was to have all youngsters meeting high standards, including programs of remediation.

Dr. Paslov stated that many of the programs he described were used for teaching the initial subject; however, the programs could be used for older children needing remediation or children needing bilingual adaptation.

Dr. Paslov concluded his testimony. His remarks were provided for the record and are attached as Exhibit D.

Senator Regan asked if the programs suggested by Dr. Paslov were adaptable to the original problems in education, such as the lack of correct teaching. He commented if the job was being done correctly the first time then there would be no need for remedial programs. He commented on the argument presented during the 1997 legislative session whereby it was suggested that high schools be charged with the cost of remedial education provided in the post-secondary forum. The Superintendent of Public Instruction retorted with the suggestion that colleges could be charged for the rotten teachers they were producing.

Dr. Paslov responded that he tried to point out in his testimony that each of the suggested remedial programs was sound, based on the data produced, as a regular or initial program for teaching English and mathematics. However, there was inappropriate training of teachers, a lack of parent involvement, and a lack of knowledge among both new and experienced teachers about how to teach phonics, literature-based language and complex mathematic. Each of the suggested programs dealt with those areas of concern. He presumed that once the standards were in place and good programs were used by the school districts, the need for remediation would eventually be reduced. However, there was the present problem where massive numbers of youngsters were entering and progressing through the system, and the best programs should be made available. Dr. Paslov commented that eventually the need for remediation should be eliminated or the need should dissipate somewhat.

Turning to teacher training institutions, Dr. Paslov indicated this was a problem area. He stated that his view was the local boards and local superintendents should be telling teacher training institutions exactly what was needed and following up to ensure that the kinds of teachers that were needed were being produced from those institutions.

Senator Rawson asked whether a teacher college was needed rather than a higher education center to produce academic educational personnel. Dr. Paslov opined that elementary and secondary teachers should be well-trained and well-educated in the subject matter IN which they teach. In other words, math teachers, English teachers, and science teachers should have very strong academic training. The "how-to" portion of that could be done in a number of ways. He stated he was uncertain whether a teacher training institute was necessary. However, teachers did need help in teaching skills. A teacher well-trained in English language arts with a solid background in phonics and literature-based techniques for teaching reading and writing and listening, would have fewer difficulties. He added some of the problems could be the result of allowing teacher colleges. Dr. Paslov confessed he attended a teacher college. However, in the state of California, which is where he attended, in order to be a secondary

school teacher he was required to attend the teacher college for five years and obtain a masters degree in a subject-matter area.

Senator Regan asked if Dr. Paslov was advocating the old method of using teaching colleges. Dr. Paslov replied he was not advocating the old method as he was more inclined to require academic rigor, and that should be a prerequisite for teaching at any level. Then, the technology and technique of teaching could be promoted but not necessarily through the use of a special college.

Chairman Raggio stated he understood the comments made regarding home-grown remedial programs and acknowledged the list of effective remedial programs provided by Dr. Paslov, but stressed that those programs probably started somewhere as a home-grown program. However, if a home-grown program was to be considered by the committee, they should look at one that was effectively evaluated and had opportunity for future evaluation.

Chairman Raggio stated that Nevada was one of the last states to engage in setting standards. Teachers, for whatever reason, had been teaching at an unacceptable level and that put Nevada "behind the curve." He said he received comments about why Nevada cannot do what has been put into statute. He served notice on behalf of the committee that the argument was no longer why concepts in statute were not accomplished. Rather, the committee would be achieving what was set out in law. Although there was resistance to change, that would not be tolerated. Students going through the academic process were losing out and they did not have any time to waste. The legislature needed to implement action swiftly, and the committee would not accept alibis as to why statutory provisions could not be met nor would the committee accept proposals for low standards.

Returning to Senator Regan's comments, Chairman Raggio stated he did not know how teachers were being trained, but there were universities in both the northern and southern portions of the state that each had a school of education and whatever the end result was, there should be a guarantee that teachers within the higher education system were equipped to conform with higher standards. If teachers could not meet those standards, then they should not be hired.

Senator Raggio stated that the committee was going to proceed with intent set up under S.B. 482, and people would have to "lead, follow, or get out of the way." Senator Raggio expressed concern for an article he read from a rural newspaper by someone serving on the standards council, who also served for a number of years on the State Board of Education. This person criticized the entire piece of legislation as a political game. Senator Raggio reiterated that he was serving notice that S.B. 482 was not a political game, and if anyone still had that idea, they should watch the committee over the next five months because the committee intended to meet the deadlines since the state was far behind 49 other states.

Dr. Paslov stated he was pleased to watch the development of S.B. 482 and the direction the committee was heading. He added that Senator Raggio had been very consistent since his first encounters with him, especially in the area of accountability and high standards in education.

Chairman Raggio asked Roy Casey from the Department of Education to present the department's list of remedial programs for the committee.

Roy Casey, Nevada Department of Education, stated he was born and raised in Fallon, Nevada and was graduated from Churchill County High School. He attended the University of Nevada, Reno and began his teaching career in 1975 in rural Nevada. He then became the administrator of two elementary schools and one middle school. Finally, he became the superintendent of a small rural district. He stated he brought to the committee his expertise in working in the field at the ground level and working with schools and communities while at the same time administrating effective programs. Mr. Casey stated his current position at the Nevada Department of Education involved working in the area of Title I programs and the Nevada 2000 program. Both of these areas, he explained, represented change and school improvement.

Mr. Casey stated when he was asked to present information on successful programs, he first

referenced a book called the *National Diffusion Network*, a federal program which funded effective, proven research-based programs. Some of the programs began as home-grown programs based through years of research, while other programs came out of university systems, as well as from comprehensive centers and speciality centers. He stated there was one thing that all programs within the *National Diffusion Network* had in common--they each had to pass a high test. That test was a requirement that the program demonstrate to a committee, through actual, hard data and research, that the program was effective, not only for all student populations, but in certain programs, for a population of disadvantaged students.

Mr. Casey stated he sought advice from consultants, Dr. James Brant, a math specialist consultant, and Ms. Kathleen St. Clair, an English Language Arts consultant, both with the Nevada Department of Education. Together they reviewed effective programs to present to the committee. Mr. Casey provided a handout containing those programs (Exhibit E) and noted that most of the programs related to grades K-4 or K-6. He explained that was due to the urgency in actually disseminating dollars under the class-size reduction act (CSR) for effective, proven programs in grades K-3. He stated he hoped to present additional programs in the future.

Mr. Casey clarified there were two types of programs:

ALL-SCHOOL PROGRAMS: Programs that dealt specifically with reading, math or general literacy programs.

- **Success for All**

The most important part of this program, Mr. Casey said, was the program, *Roots and Wings*, a reading series. There was one school in the state that just adopted the program. The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) made awareness presentations to many schools throughout the state; however, they found some reluctance in getting schools to adopt the *Success for All* program because it was a comprehensive program and focused specifically on reading. He stated McDermitt Combined Schools, a K-12 school, adopted the *Success for All* program this year. Mr. Casey related he spoke with the principal at McDermitt School, a recent Milken award winner, who indicated his school improvement process had resulted in a professional development component, and his staff was coming together to focus on student learning and achievement in the area of reading.

Senator Raggio asked if the *Success for All* program had bilingual capability. Mr. Casey replied that it did and added that was very important for the English language learners as that population throughout the state continued to increase. Senator Raggio asked if Mr. Casey would point out any programs that did not have bilingual capability.

Senator Washington indicated his perusal of the *Success for All* program mentioned parental involvement and asked how that occurred with parents of students who were lacking in English-speaking skills. Mr. Casey stated the school used translators to engage the parents in dialogue. They translated information into Spanish (the majority of the English-language learners), and they had bilingual specialists within the school and at the state level who worked with the parents.

Senator Washington asked if there were any incentives, enticements, or encouragement for the parents to become involved in the reading programs with their children. Mr. Casey replied the incentive was that the parents' involvement was not only in the child's literacy but also resulted in family literacy. He stated most of the parents were seeking the skills to learn English themselves, and some schools were engaging in an Even-Start model, an early childhood education program, where the school not only educated the child, but at the same time educated the parent. The department also promoted parents' to obtain a GED or high school diploma. Responding to Senator Washington, Mr. Casey further stated that Title I funds could be used for this purpose.

- **Books and Beyond**

Books and Beyond is a national program implemented in this state for a number of years and included

materials translated into Spanish. *Books and Beyond* provided professional development training throughout Clark county, Washoe county, Churchill county, and many of the rural counties. Mr. Casey indicated the *Books and Beyond* program had been around for many years and had been successfully validated over time. He pointed out that the program promoted family literacy activities that engaged parents in the child's learning.

- **Image-making within the Writing Process**

Mr. Casey informed the committee this program was sometimes referred to as the "Right to Read" program and used computer instruction in the writing process and promoted literacy skills. He stated there was a very successful program such as *Image-making* in the Clark County School District, and just recently a rural school in Nye County adopted the *Image-making* program. Even though the community was small, they began the program with computers from the Clark County School District placed in classrooms in the town of Amagosa.

Mr. Casey informed the committee that all the programs he was discussing had one main theme--professional development. Also, on-going mentoring was a necessary and major component, as well as parental involvement.

Senator Raggio asked if the *Image-making* program involved phonics since the description of the program set forth in Exhibit E did not indicate as such. Mr. Casey replied that the program did involve phonics, and the teacher needed to integrate phonics and whole language into the program itself. He stated that the NDE advocated the use of both phonics and the whole language process.

Senator Washington asked for a definition of "kinesthetic mode of thinking conceptual processes." Mr. Casey replied that was the putting together of the thought process of the individual child and that Dr. Paslov or Mary Peterson would better be able to define that theory. Mr. Casey stated "kinesthetic" was the "hands-on" approach, whereby a visual approach was to conceptualize the process and bring the process together in a visual imagery. Mrs. Peterson added that children learn in a variety of ways. Some children learn better visually while other children learn better aurally, by hearing things. Some children learn better by a "hands-on" approach. She stated the *Image-making* program was re-enforcing learning through a variety of modes, recognizing that children do learn in various ways.

Senator Washington asked when a child learned with their hands, or kinesthetically, how was that translated into writing skills? Mrs. Peterson stated she was not sure how that was done specifically in relation to the *Image-making* program, but many other programs took the experiences the child had and asked them to reflect upon those experiences in writing.

Mr. Casey added that a child in grades one and two described a feeling or task to the teacher who then wrote for the student so the student saw the connection between the words spoken and the written words.

Senator Regan observed that none of the programs seemed to equate poverty and disadvantaged students with stupidity. He stated he was unsure if being poor or disadvantaged in modern society necessarily meant a child was dumb. He asked if there were programs that look at the child regardless of whether the child is disadvantaged. Mr. Casey replied that the programs he was describing looked at the entire child regardless of poverty level. The emphasis of most of the programs, nationwide, was that schools and school systems are not prevented from being effective because they have disadvantaged populations. In reviewing the programs, there was no specific focus on the impoverished population so that only those populations benefitted from the programs.

- **Junior Great Books Curriculum (JGBC)**

This curriculum, which was successful in both public and private schools in the southern part of the state, included a set of books from which students read. The materials were available for grades 2-6, with some related materials applicable for kindergarten. Mr. Casey indicated the program involved a great deal of professional development, but there was a course within the program that was a "trainer

of trainers" model. He said the *Junior Great Books Curriculum* could be translated into other languages to share with students that were currently learning the English language but were still learning under their native language.

- **Reading Recovery**

Mr. Casey related this program was very effective. He stated that the research from the *Reading Recovery* program showed that a first grade student progressing through the program maintained grade level reading status until about the fourth grade. That was why it was so important to have a comprehensive research-based reading program throughout the school. Without that, *Reading Recovery* began to diminish its effect after the fourth grade. The comprehensive program was necessary so that one program supported the other. *Reading Recovery* was also referred to as "Project Life" in the Clark County School District where they have adopted the *Reading Recovery* model and altered it to fit their needs. He stated that had been very successful for the past three years. He reiterated that there were specific training requirements for the *Reading Recovery* program.

Senator Washington noted one of the requirements under the *Reading Recovery* program was that the teachers had to be trained at a designated university. He asked if the University and Community College System of Nevada (UCCSN) was a designated university. Mr. Casey replied UCCSN was not but it might be in the future. Presently, teachers could be trained in *Reading Recovery* through the University of San Bernadino. He informed the committee there were trained teachers in the program in Lyon and Washoe counties. The NDE used Nevada 2000 funds to train two teachers out of the Nye county school district who will teach numerous teachers throughout five additional school districts starting in 1998.

Senator Regan asked if there were proprietary restrictions in the programs mentioned and if the programs were adaptable in terms of software updates. Mr. Casey answered that all the programs had to be flexible to be able to fit within a school environment and the curriculum of the established school. At the same time, if the integrity of the program was violated, the research would not hold. He concluded it was important for a program to remain flexible but have certain conditions must be placed on it so that the results reflected the original research might be achieved.

- **Flint Follow-Through:**

Mr. Casey explained this program was designed for educationally and economically disadvantaged students but that did not preclude all students from benefitting from the program.

- **Help One Student to Succeed (HOST):**

This program, Mr. Casey explained, which had been around for many years, was a mentoring program in Language Arts. He stated the HOST program was a K-12 program which could be used in the K-3 setting, as was proposed. The program included one-on-one instruction, and this type of instruction was very important in class-size reduction. As teachers were reducing their class sizes, they were experiencing difficulties in teaching one-on-one. They had a smaller class size but still were teaching to the average of the class. Mr. Casey stated that under S.B. 482, schools could no longer teach to the average of the class but, instead, were required to teach with differentiated instructional methods which meant they had to teach the gifted students as well as the low-performing students in the same classroom. He said the HOST program helped teachers accomplish that by providing a one-on-one application to support the teacher's efforts.

Mr. Casey indicated all the programs integrated parental involvement, and the programs could not succeed without the parents knowing and understanding the program. Most programs began with making parents and the school community aware of the program with follow-up activities geared for the parents.

Returning to the *Reading Recovery* program, Senator Washington asked, with regard to the "service" listed in the handout, Exhibit E, whether the \$3,000 listed represent training for one teacher, along

with \$2,000 for books and materials. Mr. Casey stated that was correct--adding that the startup costs were more expensive than after the program was in full effect. After the teacher was trained and the district built a cadre of teachers, then that teacher was on board at their regular salary.

- **On the Road to Success:**

Mr. Casey indicated this would be the last program to present to the committee. The program, also referred to as "Early Prevention of School Failure" (EPSF) by the NDE, was used in Title I kindergarten schools and was also used in a preschool in Clark County School District. He stated the EPSF had also successfully been introduced in the Douglas County School District. He stated both districts had been using the program for extended-day kindergarten activities for at least seven years. Each district, when entering into the research-based program, under Title I, was asked to keep sound, hard data on the students in the program. Mr. Casey indicated the districts found it to be normal and customary for the students using the EPSF program to remain on grade level, either through grades given by teachers or through test scores. When the EPSF was reevaluated, the name was changed to *On the Way to Success in Reading and Writing*. The program included extensive parental involvement and professional development, and there were trainers within the state that could be utilized to disseminate the program.

Senator Raggio noted that some of the programs, as described in Exhibit E, appeared to be designed for particular groups, such as kindergarten only, K-3, K-6, or K-12. He said the committee was concerned about reading remediation and language arts throughout all the grades; however, the priority should be that no child gets beyond 4th grade without knowing how to read with fluency. He asked Mr. Casey, Dr. Paslov, or Mrs. Peterson to rank the programs described above as to the effectiveness to achieve that priority.

Mr. Casey replied that if that priority was to be achieved, then the schools needed to start with a kindergarten or preschool model with literacy-based education. If the student was not reading at their grade level by the time they reached the first grade, then the most successful programs, outside of the EPSF program for kindergarten, would be the *Reading Recovery* program. As the grade levels progressed, the most successful model is the *Success for All* model with the Roots and Wings components for reading. Mrs. Peterson agreed with that ranking.

Turning to the remedial math programs, Mr. Casey stated there were not as many effective, proven math programs at the K-6 and K-3 level. He said Dr. James Brant, consultant at NDE, who worked and trained teachers in the field, and suggested the following four programs. In addition, Mr. Casey informed the committee that although the handout (Exhibit E) did not contain the research data on the programs, he could provide that information to the committee at a later date. Mr. Casey added that the math programs were supported by WestEd, a research consulting company out of California. Mr. Casey informed the committee that the four math programs he would be addressing implemented professional development in the schools. Under the newly-enacted legislation, S.B. 482, the school improvement models would be more than a choice, but rather a mandate if the school wanted to increase the level of mathematic achievement in students.

- **Comprehensive School Math Program**

Mr. Casey stated the Comprehensive School Math Program (CSMP), which covered grades K-6, had the unique feature of involving problem-solving connections and experiences in game-like situations for the very young students and it was comprehensive, with story-telling and writing for older children. He pointed out that the use of nonverbal languages was used so students could understand the hands-on manipulatives. Mr. Casey explained this was done by using blocks to add and differentiate between numbers and sizes. He stated that technology was very important, not only with computer-assisted instruction, but also in reading, writing and math. Students will start to explore the use of how problems can be solved in math not only with a computer, but also by using other tools such as a hand-held computer.

Senator Raggio asked if all of the remedial programs in math were designed to equip the student to

function in math processes without the use of a calculator. In other words, could the student work the problem with and without the use of a calculator? Mr. Casey stated the student learned math without the use of a calculator and that concept was a part of each of the math programs. He pointed out that the math concepts and comprehensive math and application of math required the student to calculate math without a computer or calculator, or any assistance whatsoever. He confirmed that each one of the math programs instilled the concepts of student learning of how to calculate within their mind and also with paper and pencil.

Senator Regan pointed out that in Nevada, as well as on the national level, the student attitude was being scrutinized. He asked if the mathematics programs were defining mathematics as opposed to the "touchy, feely" attitude. He asked if the programs were teaching concrete math. Mr. Casey replied that all four programs taught concrete math and that was an essential component to each program.

- **Everyday Mathematics:**

Mr. Casey informed the committee the Everyday Mathematics program (UCSM) originated from the University of Chicago school mathematics project and was one of the successful programs in mathematics. He stated what made the program successful was that the concrete concepts learned through math were applied to everyday situations. Mr. Casey indicated that was relevant not only to the state legislation, but also the federal legislation which called for school-to-careers, and the association of these types of academic skills as they related to business and industry--an everyday skill. He stated the program brought those skills to the individual learner and also provided the teacher with extensive training.

Mr. Casey related that he once taught fourth grade math. In order to make math more interesting for his students, he found it important that they be able to transfer what they had learned in class to what they were expected to know and be able to do in real life. He stated he used the UCSM curriculum with applications such as subtraction and addition in conjunction with meter reading. In that regard, the students would be asked to take the amounts of watts used each month in their household and then through multiplication, identify the cost of the electricity in their homes. He stated the UCSM program involved parent participation and he believed it was an outstanding math program at the elementary level for the application of math concepts.

Senator Raggio asked if there were more costs applicable to the UCSM program than the other math programs. He noted the explanation in the handout (Exhibit E) indicated there were consumables in the program. Mr. Casey answered that most of the programs in the K-3 area used consumable items, yet those were fairly inexpensive in comparison to hardbound items. He explained that some teachers will run copies from the generic workbook for their use in the classroom.

Senator Washington stated his review of the math programs showed the programs were for grades K-6 and, outside of class-size reduction, most students were in one classroom and the teacher had to identify those students that were not proficient in math to get those students "up to speed" in the remedial program. He asked what happened if the teacher was not proficient? Mr. Casey responded that most teachers had evaluation and professional development plans, and the administrator of the school needed to know the background of the teachers and understand their skills and abilities. The administration needed to be able to provide some guided instruction for the teachers that needed help. He said some teachers acknowledged discrepancies in a particular area and sought the specific area of professional development needed. Mr. Casey stated he had rarely seen a teacher who could not make the necessary changes in professional development.

Mr. Casey went on to state that he had been working with the Winnemucca Grammar School and looking at professional development, the strength and weaknesses of the staff at that K-4 school. He said in working with the planning team, it was discussed that if a teacher had a strength in the area of math, then perhaps that teacher could teach math for more than one grade. On the other hand, if the teacher had a weakness in a certain area, the school and staff could be reorganized and retrained so the focus on student learning improved.

Senator Regan asked how a sense of urgency was instilled in 17 school districts that staff development dollars were important. He indicated there was a misunderstanding of staff development, and he expressed his concern that the dollars for staff development be properly used to train teachers. Mr. Casey replied that each of the schools needed to focus on professional development under the proven programs. He said he consulted with districts on professional development and the importance of implementation of programs to strengthen student learning.

Senator Regan stated in viewing the matter from a budgetary standpoint, staff improvement dollars should be spent on professional development and training. Mr. Casey retorted that under federal programs, Title I Goals 2000, Title II, Eisenhower science and math programs, and the drug-free schools programs were now all mandating that all professional development had to be connected to proven, research-based program. He informed the committee that was a new mandate by the federal government. In the past, the directive included successful programs or successful practice.

- **Investigations in Number, Data, and Space**

Mr. Casey stated this program was from the National Science Foundation and worked to establish meaningful mathematic problems and emphasized higher order of thinking skills. He said when students were in remediation, that did not mean that low-level education was needed, but rather a higher order of thinking skills was necessary for the students. It had been proven that students regardless of their poverty rate could benefit from higher order of thinking skills or problem solving. Therefore, remediation did not mean only "drill and skill" but that concept was enhanced by the use of computers and technology and a higher order of thinking. Mr. Casey indicated the program allowed students time to explore problems in depth. He said the intent was for the program not to be concrete and not to take the place of concrete programs. Mr. Casey stated the *Investigations in Number, Data, and Space* was a program to be investigated. He indicated there had been professional development in this area but he was unsure if there was any school that had implemented the program as of this date.

- **Math Trailblazers: A Mathematical Journey using Science and Language Arts**

Mr. Casey said this program was for grades K-5 and not only used math, but also science and language arts. He informed the committee this program was where students began to understand how mathematics was used in other content areas. It integrated the idea of literacy with mathematics. *Math Trailblazers* was a program with multiple problem-solving strategies yet at the same time the program used hands-on manipulatives at the younger grades and then used calculators as the youngster proceeded into the 2nd and 3rd grades.

Mr. Casey said this new program was well-founded and was different than the other math programs in that it was from a textbook publisher, Kendall/Hunt. He explained that most of the textbook publishers sold the program desired, but unfortunately, teachers took the textbook off the shelf and used it as their sole resource for teaching. A problem arose when that textbook was not in alignment with Nevada standards and the curriculum. He cautioned the committee on adopting programs by textbook publishers and asked that consideration be given to the effectiveness of a program, but *Math Trailblazers* was an effective program.

Mr. Casey acknowledged that the math programs submitted to the committee were applicable to the lower grades; however, the department would be submitting programs applicable to the middle school and high school as well.

Senator Raggio asked if the department had any suggestions for science components or programs. Mr. Casey responded he was not prepared to discuss science programs at this time. Mrs. Peterson indicated she had nothing further to add. Chairman Raggio noted that the committee, under S.B. 482, was required to recommend to the Nevada Department of Education a list of remedial studies for each

of the subject areas by April 1, 1998, but the department can proceed with the funding appropriated, \$400,000 in A.B. 659 for teacher training. He hoped the committee could provide some guidance to the department for the teacher training portion of the remedial education programs. He indicated the final list should be provided to the department before the April 1, 1998, date. He suggested the committee adopt as the preliminary list the programs referenced by Mr. Casey and Dr. Paslov, unless there were some of those programs mentioned that the committee wished to delete or the committee knew of other programs they wished to add to the list.

Chairman Raggio suggested the committee adopt all the programs as a preliminary list and then asked the department and staff to provide additional information on those programs, including:

- The origin of the program;
- How the effectiveness had been evaluated;
- The costs of the program; and
- The purposes and major components of the program.

ASSEMBLYMAN WILLIAMS MOVED THAT THE COMMITTEE ADOPT
AS A PRELIMINARY LIST THE PROGRAMS OUTLINED BY MR. CASEY
OF THE NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, AND DR. PASLOV
OF EMC, INC.

SENATOR REGAN SECONDED THE MOTION.

Senator Regan asked that the motion be amended to require staff to look into the costs versus effectiveness and where those programs had been successful. Senator Raggio clarified his request for staff to prepare for each of the programs:

- A description of the program
- The origin and purpose of the program
- The major components and philosophy of the program
- Summary of the evidence of effectiveness in improving students'

academic achievement from research

- Notes from other sites where the programs have been implemented

and utilized

- Information on costs and additional costs of the program requirements
- Outline of contact persons for each program so obtaining information

on the program could be achieved

Senator Washington asked if the other programs that may be competitive with those listed be included for comparison with a brief explanation or description. Senator Raggio asked the department and staff if such a list could be prepared. Mrs. Peterson affirmed that was possible. Senator Raggio indicated that the motion included those items listed as requested and brought the motion back to the floor for a vote.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Senator Raggio noted that the final list of programs that were found by the Committee to be effective in approving academic achievement of pupils must be taken into consideration by the Nevada Department of Education when it adopted the programs of remedial study. Also, that school districts designated as having inadequate achievement should establish the programs so adopted. He announced there was approximately \$3 million available for remedial programs, and the committee felt the remediation component of the entire reform act was essential to success.

Senator Regan asked if NDE could also look at the ancillary programs and other programs within Clark County and the rural counties that were successful in complimenting the academic programs to be included in the list the committee was requesting.

Mr. Casey invited the committee to attend a "Showcase of Proven Programs" to be held at the legislative building in Carson City. He informed the committee that the meeting would provide an overview of S.B. 482 and the assistance provided by the Department with the remediation programs. The request for proposal (RFP) or application for schools to apply for the \$400,000 in professional development dollars will be made available at that meeting, and the Department wants to be assured that those dollars would align with the effective, proven programs.

Chairman Raggio turned to Item E on the Agenda and asked Carolyn Chapman to come forward. He announced this portion of the agenda involved a review of the criteria for the school accountability reports. He asked the committee not to interrupt the presentation in order to accommodate the presenters' time limits.

David Smith, Nevada Department of Education, Proficiency Testing and Assessments, stated he was asked by Jeanne Botts, Legislative Counsel Bureau, to provide introductory comments and background information for the use of the committee to review school accountability reports. Mr. Smith explained that until the 1995-96 school year, he was in charge of the accountability program in the Nevada Department of Education. The Panel of Scholars Report was used to evaluate school improvement plans and the schools' analysis of the impact of school accountability. With passage of the original school accountability law, the department was required to do certain things. One item was to develop a method for providing school accountability information to the public in some organized fashion. He stated the school districts did a good job in providing the information. Part I reports were individual schools' accountability reports that were provided to parents and anyone else who wanted them.

Mr. Smith stated Part II reports were district reports that summarized the information for each school within a district. The second thing the department had to look at was evaluating the impact of school accountability on school-level planning which was called the Part III reports.

Mr. Smith provided the committee with a folder (Exhibit F) and directed the committee to an illustration of what was required by school districts to report on the effectiveness of the accountability programs: areas of exemplary achievement; areas with needs for improvement; and efforts and plans to impact those areas for improvement. Mr. Smith indicated that resulted in district-wide reports. He stated Douglas County was used as an illustration (report contained in Exhibit F) which focused on individual school sites. When the department began engaging in the activity, many school districts were reporting district-wide programs and plans for improvement. However, Douglas County provided a good illustration of a district that looked at individual school sites. He stated that was happening more frequently with all districts presently.

Mr. Smith stated NDE needed some way to evaluate the plans. The department established a Panel of Scholars to serve as an outside review source. The evaluators were from the College of Education at University of Nevada-Reno and University of Nevada-Las Vegas. Mr. Smith went on to explain that the Panel of Scholars received the Part III reports from school districts that reflected the areas that needed improvement, along with the plans for improvement, and the exemplary programs. In addition, the Department provided Panel of Scholars with data including the Part III reports, school district data in terms of school characteristics, classroom characteristics, student participation and student

achievement. For each district the Panel would be reviewing, they received elementary school data and secondary school data.

Mr. Smith indicated his handout (Exhibit F) provided information from the Washoe County School District and explained the procedures followed for each district. First, the Panel of Scholars obtained the plans, then they needed some form of data to see how the school districts were doing. For example, were the school districts appropriately identifying areas where there were deficiencies and areas where there were exemplary programs.

Pursuant to Senator Raggio's inquiry, Mr. Smith responded the information contained in Exhibit F was prepared by the Nevada Department of Education based on information provided to them from the districts. In addition, the Panel of Scholars sent questionnaires to the school districts.

Mr. Smith pointed out that many of the districts were attempting to complete evaluations in order to provide information to the public but also to look at the information provided in the evaluation to try to come up with plans to address concerns at the school-site level. He stated last year Washoe County decided not to provide district-level plans for improvement reports, but the principals from each school provided a report. Turning to the accountability indicators shown in Exhibit F, Mr. Smith stated those were an example of the accountability indicators used in Washoe County by principals. In addition, a subcommittee of the local superintendents met and tried to develop what they felt were critical indicators such as truancy and dropout rates.

Mr. Smith stated his handouts also included some up-to-date information that had not been utilized in the evaluation by the Panel of Scholars. In addition the information contained in the folder (Exhibit F) included an evaluation form that was done prior to the enactment of S.B. 482 which could be updated if necessary. He noted that when schools reviewed the Panel of Scholars reports, they did not believe they were graded on the same criteria as other school districts. In order to have consistency in the criteria and to focus on the elements the committee urged were important, he believed it would be a good idea for school districts to use these forms for each school. Lastly, Mr. Smith pointed out the folder (Exhibit F) also contained some examples of site-based, Part III reporting forms. He said it was a good sign that the school districts were looking at what programs were working in schools while at the same time looking at what types of improvement plans each particular school was devising and implementing.

He stated Dr. Cheryl Purvis, from the Nevada Department of Education, had a report on the effectiveness of the accountability program. However, he would now turn the presentation over to Dr. Chapman.

Dr. Carolyn Chapman, Professor, Department of Educational Leadership, University of Nevada, Reno, stated that for the last several years she was a member of the Panel of Scholars which was comprised of professors from UNLV and UNR. She informed the committee that the Panel of Scholars was charged with the task of examining the information received from the school districts with an eye for defining whether the school districts had met the requirements of the statute and what could be done to improve the degree to which the districts were meeting those requirements.

Dr. Chapman directed the committee to the report from the Panel of Scholars and stated that at first the panel looked at the most minimal meeting of the standards and then went through a process of looking more closely at the Part III reports. These reports raised the most resistance on the part of school districts. Part I and Part II data provided to the public seemed to be going smoothly; however, the Part III reports asked districts to make decisions and plans based on the data and a number of districts had been resistant to that requirement. Dr. Chapman indicated it was not an unreasonable task that the legislature required in completing these Part III reports, although some districts took this as an opportunity to plan things to be improved in the district.

Dr. Chapman stated in order to improve the learning curve, the Panel of Scholars, when they reviewed each Part III report, acknowledged what each district had identified as being exemplary or outstanding, and then outlined areas that needed improvement or might be considered as needing improvement.

Thereafter, the Panel of Scholars would look at the plans that the district provided and made suggestions on how those plans could be improved. Dr. Chapman indicated that last year there was a lot of resistance from the school districts with districts not submitting Part III reports at all or submitting inadequate Part III reports. Therefore, the Panel of Scholars, consisting of nine members, scrutinized the reports provided and divided the 17 school districts in the state among the nine members of the panel, and each member reviewed the reports and that analysis was presented and provided to the legislature.

Mr. Hickey commented that he had reviewed the curriculum at the College of Education through the website, and there was a wide range of courses offered. He asked if there were ways in which the Colleges of Education could tie into the process of improving standards for the bigger picture. Dr. Chapman answered that at the under-graduate and graduate level that could be done, and her responsibilities at the Department of Educational Leadership were intensively related with helping administrators to be better supervisors of instruction and do a better job. She stated sometimes busy administrators met the "letter of the law" in terms of evaluating teaching but had not engaged in the process of supervision.

Mr. Hickey asked Dr. Chapman to respond to Dr. Paslov's criticism that the state's academic training was not rigorous or specific enough in terms of helping students in the best methods of math and literacy. Dr. Chapman replied that because her assignment was in the training of administrators, she did not have first-hand data to support or oppose that philosophy. From a personal standpoint, she opined she was disappointed when the University went from a five-year to a four-year teacher education program. Some elements were lost by reducing the number of hours and requirements a student had to meet when trained as a teacher.

Senator Raggio asked why the five-year teacher program was reduced to a four-year program. Dr. Chapman replied she did not know the answer, but she believed one of the reasons was that the program was reduced by one year in order to accommodate the need for more teachers. She explained the decision was made primarily in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and she was not privy to the reasoning behind the decision.

Senator Raggio asked if Dr. Purvis had anything to add to the discussion. Dr. Cheryl Purvis, an evaluation consultant, Nevada Department of Education (NDE), stated she had been so employed since December 2, 1996. She explained she would be discussing site-based reporting efforts on Part III. Turning to the information on the left side of the handouts contained in Exhibit E, Dr. Purvis stated the first document was Part III, current requirements, the next document was the current copy of the Part III section of the accountability handbook. She explained that was what the districts would be using to do their Part III reporting commencing March, 1998. The next document was entitled "A standardized reporting format for Part III reporting" which were a few pages that might be a possible form that could be used at the school level to evaluate certain standards and criteria of academic performances and other school characteristics.

Following that document were examples of site-based Part III reporting. Dr. Purvis stated the examples were from the most recent accountability cycle--reports submitted in March and April, 1997 (Exhibit F).

Senator Raggio asked if the forms pointed out by Dr. Purvis were being utilized. Dr. Purvis replied the forms were simply provided as a draft, but one district, Eureka County, did use them. The other districts used their own, textual format. The differences in the old forms and the most recent forms were minimal. Mostly, the new Part III section consisted of a reorganization of the earlier version. For example, currently the accountability reports must be submitted to five separate entities; whereas, they were previously submitted directly to the Department of Education. Secondly, S.B. 482 created specific requirements regarding the need for schools to provide school improvement plans. That language was not in the reports previously and has now been added at section (b). Also, there was a change made in that the State Board of Education was interested in looking at the relationship of transiency to school achievement. There were some additional reporting requirements having to do with that type of tracking. The school accountability technical advisory committee adopted that particular reporting element and requirement in their last meeting which was held in August, 1996.

Moving to the standardized reporting form (Exhibit E), Dr. Purvis explained that form had been developed subsequent to the superintendents' meeting where there had been some discussions on the need for standardization. The form now included an area where someone could report information pertaining to the state-mandated assessment items and other accountability related items which would be correlated with achievement or were of general interest to the public. She pointed out the new items placed in the form included items over which school districts may have some control. Whereas, transiency was an area over which schools had no control. Attendance rates, school achievement, truancy and violence were areas that schools and districts could improve on and that was why the subset was of value.

Dr. Purvis went on to explain that by using the forms, principals could enter values for the last three years as to how the student population was improving or declining. In addition, there were sections in the new form that allowed for discussion of the results and plans for improvement.

Dr. Chapman pointed out the new form did not include a category listing the number of students tested. She pointed out that everyone knew the best way to increase scores quickly was to only have your best students tested. So if only average scores were measured, what guidance was being provided to ensure a larger percentage of students were being tested? Mr. Smith interjected by stating the department would be reporting to LCB and the department a break-out of who was taking the test and who was not taking the test, including a variety of categories such as, ESL students taking the test under special circumstances, ESL students that did not qualify for the test, special education students that took the test under special circumstances, regular circumstances, and those exempted from the test. He stated there was a wide range of information provided beginning this year on the categories of students tested with the Terra Nova exams. He explained he would be providing a report on such issues to LCB, and he could provide it to the Panel of Scholars if requested.

Senator Raggio emphasized the committees' concern about the number of students taking the test. He recognized the need for some exceptions, but they should be uniform across the state and there should not be the degree of flexibility that allowed an administrator to leave a certain group of students out of taking the test. He concluded that was a high priority and the exceptions should be granted sparingly. He stressed it was a disservice to just test in a fashion to "look good." He asked Dr. Chapman to opine what data elements were the most important for an outside evaluator.

Dr. Chapman replied she would look at: 1) attendance; 2) standardized test scores; 3) the percent passing the writing test and 4) The percent passing the high school proficiency test, once it was improved.

Mr. Smith agreed with Dr. Chapman as to the listed categories but asked the committee to also look at the local superintendents' approach. He stated the superintendents did a good job and directed the committee to the document "Illustration of site-based approach to Part III reporting" (Exhibit F). Senator Raggio asked, out of the examples provided to the committee, what were the most important for outside evaluators in striving toward consistency in evaluations.

Dr. Purvis went through the standardized evaluation form. She stated since she was particularly interested in statistics, she reviewed the statistics from the previous year and looked at the mean, standard deviations, top and bottom percentiles, and came up with some rough estimates in determining what constituted achievement and what constituted decline. She stated if a standardized reporting format was going to be used, it was important to determine precisely what was improvement and decline. In addition, she noted that the new form was created prior to S.B. 482 and there would likely be more elements if the form was to be used, such as 10th grade Terra Nova scores. Further, a couple of blank lines should be added since every school was different so they could report on the specific areas on which they were working. She stressed the importance of the form was to help people to evaluate their own data. She pointed out the form did not specifically include all categories as they tried to make the form logical and easy to move through.

Dr. Purvis also provided three examples of site-based reporting from the last school year, including the Spring of 1997. One of the examples provided, she explained, was from the Eureka County School

District, one that was using a fairly terse format and one with a two-to-three page format. The other examples were from the Carson City and the Lyon County School Districts. She explained what was important on these reports was that they showed those two districts were doing their reports very differently. Although they were following the same instructions, the format varied. She stressed the value of having a standardized format so the person filling out the form had an idea of how to complete the form.

Senator Raggio concurred with Dr. Purvis' suggestion for uniformity of the basic criteria, while allowing flexibility for individual school districts to expound and present unique information.

Senator Raggio commented that the role of the committee needed to be fully understood. In that regard, prior to the passage of the Nevada Education Reform Act, the Superintendent of Public Instruction was charged with analyzing the effectiveness of the school accountability information submitted by schools and districts and providing an annual report to the legislature. As Dr. Chapman indicated, several school districts in 1996 failed to comply with the requirement, particularly with reference to the Part III reports. Therefore, the department did not provide an in-depth analysis of the characteristics of the school, or school student achievement. Pursuant to S.B. 482, that duty has been assumed by the legislative branch. The Legislative Committee on Education will prescribe standards for the review and evaluation of the reports of school districts and the Legislative Bureau of Educational Accountability and Program Evaluation will contract for the review and analysis of school accountability data and consultation with each school district regarding ways in which the district might improve accuracy of the data and use of the data for school improvement. Senator Raggio stated that was the law, and asked the committee to be mindful that was now the responsibility of the committee. Furthermore, the requirements of the districts' analysis of accountability data, the Part III reports, were set forth in statute in section 18 of the S.B. 482. Previously, it was in a handbook written by the Nevada Department of Education. He stressed there could no longer be the argument from districts that they were not going to complete the form or they did not have to complete the reporting requirements, because the law now mandated it.

Senator Raggio commented there had been indications that school districts were concerned that the criteria be set to assure a more uniform, less subjective review of the accountability data. The committee would be looking for guidance in that area, along with assurances that the school districts would be using data from the accountability reports in order to guide their improvement efforts. As a result, an independent review of the schools' use of accountability data would be conducted by the committee and perhaps provide assistance to school districts in planning for improvement.

He went on to state the committee had discussed the suggested criteria and he did not believe there was an argument as to the basic criteria, adding that did not preclude additional criteria. He stated the suggestions provided thus far were very helpful. Under S.B. 482, the department must, by regulation, determine what constituted significant improvement, and that provided a potential for a waiver. However, he stressed the waiver should not be seen or used as a "loophole." Senator Raggio stated the committee would like to see the department work on defining "significant improvement" as a regulation.

In addition, Senator Raggio stated that staff reminded him that the law now required the Part III report be attached to the school district's budget so when the local school board reviewed and approved the budget, that would be part of the document. He stressed that the association of the accountability report and the budget was not a coincidence.

Mrs. deBraga commented that when the United States was compared with other countries where standards might be higher, the rationale was that those countries did not test everybody and the United States did. She asked if the state tested every student and whether class size was a factor in the evaluation. Ms. Purvis replied that Gloria Dopf, the Special Education Director, Nevada Department of Education, could address that issue better. However, she replied that the state tested students with special education plans and students with disabilities whenever possible. Also, included in the overall aggregation of accountability scores were those students able to take the test under an accommodation approved by the testing contractors. Therefore, those students who were able, under

certain conditions, took the exams and were reported in the standard group while the others were reported separately. However, Ms. Purvis stated she did not believe that was being done in the accountability report. Jeanne Botts interjected that disaggregated scores for special education pupils would be reported in the statewide report on results of the proficiency testing program, not in the accountability reports.

Responding to Mrs. deBraga's question further, Ms. Purvis, stated that Mary Snow, an evaluation consultant at the Nevada Department of Education, conducted a class-size reduction study for all the years, and she would be the best person to discuss the impact of class-size reduction on testing.

Senator Washington commented that he did not notice any accountability reports for class-size reduction in the packet provided by the department. He asked if that would be requested from the district or from the state department. Mr. Smith replied he was not aware that class-size reduction was a data element in the accountability reports. Generally, class size reduction was the subject of independent studies that looked at the standardized testing results of every student. A review of those studies showed the difference between team-taught classes, and self-contained classes, that is, one teacher for 15-16 students versus two teachers for 30-32 students. He explained that study had been done twice--once by the department and once by Interwest. Senator Raggio pointed out that a future meeting of the committee would cover the subject of class-size reduction and perhaps that question would be better answered then.

Senator Raggio turned to Item F from the Agenda and asked Mr. Casey, Nevada Department of Education, to come forward to help the committee focus on programs that reviewed the school improvement process and how school districts could consolidate their planning processes and better utilize their funds for school improvement. He stated he was particularly interested in the school improvement plans for the larger districts.

Mr. Casey directed the committee to tab 4 of the packet (Exhibit G) which set forth school improvement programs and school improvement planning. Ms. Botts suggested Mr. Casey go through the binder information provided to the committee along with the packet information. Mr. Casey indicated the binder contained information on school improvement planning and the description of the remedial programs already discussed. He stated there was a summary of effective school improvement programs and the information provided to the committee listed 10 of those programs. In addition, the material provided went over the process of planning, school-wide planning under Title I, and the Nevada effective schools model. He suggested the committee review that information at their leisure and stated he would be discussing the Title I school improvement programs.

Mr. Casey explained to the committee there were many similarities between an overall comprehensive planning process and the other processes presented in the binder. Mr. Casey stated the video included in the binder was entitled "Building the Bridges" and described the 4-step process of planning for school improvement. The example depicted in the video was the Title I process utilized in the state. He pointed out that other processes could be used as well. He explained that when he begins a planning process, he uses that video as a starting point for discussions. Senator Raggio stated if there was time at the end of the committee meeting, the video would be shown.

Mr. Casey said the first step in school planning was gathering hard data and developing needs assessments in order to gain a profile of the school. He drew the committee's attention to the last tab in the packet which included information regarding Title I schools by district and notes whether they were implementing a school improvement plan, planning for a plan, or whether or not they were receiving targeted-assistance. He explained this information was requested at the last meeting of the committee. Reviewing the list, Mr. Casey pointed out that schools that were eligible for Title I services were listed, and that meant those schools had above-average poverty rates for the district under Title I. He explained that not all the eligible schools were being served. This was because there was not enough federal Title I dollars to serve all schools that were eligible.

Mr. Casey noted that in the school-wide planning process, there were some schools that had already implemented a school improvement plan, and as part of that plan they used the information from the

accountability report. Mr. Casey stated some of the schools that were in the planning process were currently called "targeted assisted" schools. That meant the school did not have a high rate of poverty, yet those students were still accommodated by either one-on-one, inclusionary programs, or pull-out programs within the target-assisted programs.

Mr. Casey stated that the packet also included a research document dealing with successful schools. There were 26 schools and 7 different components to measure the success of those schools. Mr. Casey stated many of the school improvement programs were similar in nature so he would be walking the committee through the planning process. Last week, Mr. Casey related, he worked with four different schools on school improvement planning. Those schools were: Jackpot (K-12 school) with a high percentage of English language learners and a high rate of poverty; Montello (1-8 school) with two teachers and approximately 26 students and one teacher's aide. Another school he worked with was West Wendover (K-6 school) with a newly built addition to house the high school. He stated this school was in strong competition with student learning between Nevada and Utah. West Wendover school also has a high poverty rate and wished to enter into a school improvement plan. The last school he worked with was Winnemucca Grammar School which did not qualify for under 50 percent poverty rate for a school-wide program. However, the principal and superintendent of Winnemucca Grammar and asked for his assistance in improving student learning. Mr. Casey stated he would be using Winnemucca Grammar as an example in taking the committee through the 4-step planning process.

Mr. Casey stated that the four schools initially were not focused on student learning. He stated when he began working with the planning teams he asked them to create a vision. The groups believed something had already been written in that regard. Mr. Casey explained that in the past, the department did not empower building principals to assume instructional leadership to make changes in their buildings. The district, rather, was the one that was responsible for the accountability report. Later, as schools began to identify strengths and weaknesses through the Part III reports, the principals discovered they did not have the background to begin a planning process based on that hard data and student achievement needs.

Mr. Casey stated he talked with the principals at the four schools about the legislation under S.B. 482 and the need for them to return to their accountability reports. He insisted that each principal bring copies of their prior accountability reports to the table with their planning team before he began working with them. He stated it was important that they build upon the information they already had.

Mr. Casey related that the principal at Winnemucca Grammar confided in him that he had never really known how to use the data from the accountability reports. Mr. Casey stated that was not a minority position in that most principals really needed to learn about the legislation and become proactive with the data provided in reports. Mr. Casey stated that one of the concerns for Winnemucca Grammar was that they had a successful remediation program for grades K-2, but that as the students got to the 4th grade they were no longer at grade level and had not sustained their learning. The principal wanted to know how they could find out what happened to these children through a planning process.

Mr. Casey pointed out that the four schools working on the planning process were meeting in Wells, Nevada between now and the end of May, 1998 to develop plans. The schools were meeting together in order to see what they had in common with student learning, student achievement, student attendance, and the English learner language populations. At the same time, Mr. Casey explained he would be meeting with the schools individually because if there was not a mentor to review the building principal and the building team, they would not succeed in their planning process.

Mr. Casey asked the planning process teams of each school to identify speciality areas that needed to be addressed and to bring those persons to the meetings. At Winnemucca Grammar all the key players were at the meetings and he empowered them to make decisions for the entire school, and inform the parents and the community of those changes. Mr. Casey asserted that Winnemucca Grammar was fortunate to have federal dollars, under Title I, to support planning and implementation.

Step 2 of the process, Mr. Casey explained, required the schools to plan under Accountability Part III as it was clear in the law that they will be required to enter into school improvement planning regardless

of whether the school was identified as adequate or high-achieving.

Mr. Casey stated he discussed with the four schools the possibility of being termed an "inadequate" school. He stated that there were concerns expressed by the planning group that the community would not be able to handle a school being termed "inadequate." Mr. Casey said that was discussed in detail and he stressed that no matter what was done in planning, it had to involve student learning and student achievement was the highest priority. Mr. Casey stated that as discussions continued with the planning groups, they began to see this as a window of opportunity and the community or parents of students in a school might have a feeling of dismay upon learning a certain school had an "inadequate" standing.

Mr. Casey stated he next urged the planning groups of the four schools to review the results of Terra Nova as that was hard data, and it was important to know what was happening between boys and girls, between minority races, and between students with different socio-economic status. He explained that as the hard data was disaggregated, there might be a realization that some of the students might not be reaching the high standards that had been set. Mr. Casey said the group went through the Fall of 1996 Terra Nova results, and in going through the 4th grade tests, subject-by-subject, the group found their school would not be determined "inadequate" even though more than 40 percent of the students scored in the bottom quarter of the reading section. Mr. Casey opined that reading would likely be the area needing most focus. Identifying the need for more attention in the area of reading was the beginning of the planning process.

Mr. Casey said that he brought information from the state of Texas for the planning group so they could focus on certain things in the process. Number One: The planning group had to believe in the school and had to convince everyone in the school community that all students could learn regardless of their abilities. Number Two: There should be no excuses for the school not to accept a planning program and to leave old programs behind and enter into research-based, proven, and professional programs. Number Three: Everyone is a part of the solution. Mr. Casey stated there was discussion about the high transiency rate and that concept was brought out in the video in greater detail. Number Four: The last thing he pointed out was that parents, administrators, teachers, and others seemed to lose their passion for learning and growing. The planning panel discussed the importance of instilling that passion and setting themselves out as models for learning and growing. Teachers can no longer use lesson plans they wrote five years ago since standards had changed and were changing. Curriculum had to be aligned to the standards adopted by the committee and council and those effective changes would need to be made.

Mr. Casey also discussed with the planning groups that they could use other programs, such as Dr. Carl Glickman's program on site-based management, or the National League of Professional Schools, a league where professionals set forth that 90 percent of the people had to agree to site-based decision making and had to write a charter to be aligned with student achievement and accountability.

Mr. Casey stated he talked to the planning groups about creating vision for the school and not to rely on what the district had set out sometime ago. He offered a vision such as "Every student, by the end of the third grade will be reading fluently and with comprehension." Although a short vision statement, it was a vision that everyone could truly embrace and remember. He commented that many vision and mission statements became too lengthy and thereby were difficult to remember.

The next topic the group discussed was that the changes were being driven "from the top down." He addressed that by providing a handout on change and about the importance of the "top down" and "bottom up" changes and how those two areas needed to meet. Mr. Casey stated he said to the group that nothing had been driven from the top down and that Nevada had the opportunity, under current legislation, to build from the bottom up and that should be the planning group's focus and task. He reminded them of the major focus being student achievement and to try not to deviate from that focus as it was most important.

Mr. Casey stated the first step in the school planning process was "Conducting a Comprehensive Needs Assessment." He said many of the questions he heard included "How did this happen to us?"

"Why aren't these kids passing these tests?" "Why can't these kids do better?" "Is our staff professionally trained?" "Do we have ongoing parent/community involvement in our school?" "Are parents reading to students?" "Do we have a tutorial program after school to help unsuccessful students?" Those were the questions the planning group attempted to answer in the second step of the planning process. Step Three was the actual design of the program. Step Four was the evaluation of the program. Mr. Casey added that Step Four, evaluation, was often not addressed in education, and by May, 1998, these schools should have indicators in place to show the success rate in their planning attempts. Mr. Casey informed the committee that other schools that had gone through the school improvement planning process experienced differences within the student body--and that was just by being involved in the planning, not implementing the planning program. The planning group Mr. Casey was working with began gathering data, or utilizing the data already gathered but not analyzed. He said in so doing, the group looked at five factors:

- Student Learning
- Parent/Community involvement
- School organization
- Curriculum
- Instruction

Mr. Casey stated there was a need to research, gather data, complete a needs assessment, identify the school, and have a profile. Mr. Casey concluded that the planning groups from the four schools were required to complete, for the meeting in Wells, Nevada on December 5, 1997, a comprehensive assessment with all the above data components. He said the schools were very enthusiastic about obtaining their goals and getting the blessings from the staff and community. He said the teachers were overwhelmed with the task ahead of them and, even though skeptical of the outcome, were enthusiastic in obtaining their goals. He encouraged all four schools to stay in touch with their local school boards and district offices to effectively communicate with those persons because in May, 1998, the school district must approve the plan. Mr. Casey informed the committee that Nye County School District had mandated school improvement planning for every school, and currently the department was working with five schools. Clark and Washoe County had always mandated school improvement planning. He reiterated that in all these plans the single focus was student achievement/student learning.

Senator Raggio complimented Mr. Casey for his comments and expressed his interest in hearing what he had to say. He asserted that Mr. Casey's testimony proved that there was no mystery in achieving student learning, progress and achievement. He asserted it was important that the message was delivered through the Department of Education as it was not an unattainable goal and progress could be achieved. Further, he appreciated Mr. Casey's enthusiasm in designing a way to obtain the goals. He was interested in following the progress of the four schools Mr. Casey had been working with.

Senator Washington commented that his review of the Title I chart provided in the packet ([Exhibit G](#)) indicated that almost all the schools mentioned could be entitled to Title I funds. He asked if Title I funds were allocated based on the plans submitted by the schools, or what determinations were made to allocate the funds. Mr. Casey stated the department did not make that determination in that it was made through the local districts; however, the department attempted to influence the schools with the highest poverty rate and lowest academic performance that those should be the schools identified by the district. Senator Washington asked whether the department assisted the schools in deciding how to implement and use the funds once the improvement plan was completed. Mr. Casey replied that with the reauthorization of Title I, each school was responsible for its own budget and that included professional development for remedial programs, parent and community involvement, as well as supplies or salaries and benefits that had to be paid. Mr. Casey confirmed that was "site-based" management.

Senator Raggio acknowledged there were various reasons or purposes for the development of school improvement plans in that some were mandated for schools with inadequate achievement, Title I, Goals 2000, etc. Particularly in the larger school districts, there would be different people developing the plans, and what bothered him was the probable lack of communication within the larger districts in order to consolidate the plans. He asked if the implementation of a single plan should be mandatory or voluntary. Mr. Casey answered that with the reauthorization of the programs under Improving Americas Schools Act (IASA), each state was given the option to apply for funds under a consolidated plan or individual application. The NDE submitted a consolidated plan. Also, the state was given the option of mandating or asking the districts to submit a consolidated plan for federal dollars with a focus on student achievement. He stated the state has not mandated a consolidated plan so far, but that issue could be revisited at a later date. He informed that it was the job of Mary Peterson, Superintendent of Public Instruction, to ask the individual districts to consolidate or not. His review showed successful districts that have consolidated plans, such as Douglas County and Churchill County, and districts that have partially consolidated plans such as Washoe County. However, larger districts such as Clark County, have entered into a "plan-to-plan" for consolidation. Because of the district's size it was difficult to get everyone together and some fragmentation was occurring. Mr. Casey stated the state department of education needed to continue to offer guidance in the consolidation of planning for federal dollars, and now that there was the state initiative under S.B. 482 so the department could ask for the consolidation to focus on those activities.

Senator Raggio acknowledged persons in attendance in the audience included Assemblywoman Barbara Cegvaske; former Assemblyman Larry Spitler, now a representative with the Clark County School District; Jan Biggerstaff and Liliam Hickey, both of the State Board of Education; and Jerry Holloway from the Washoe County School District.

Chairman Raggio turned to Item G on the agenda and recognized Leonard Paul, Assistant Superintendent, Clark County School District. Mr. Paul stated his supervision included the secondary schools, and his presentation today was based on his role as the Nevada State Chairman of the Northwest Accreditation Association, State of Nevada group. He explained that Northwest Accreditation covered the six-member states in the northwest portion of the United States and was one of six accrediting agencies throughout the country that accredited schools. He stated he was nominated to serve in the capacity representing the largest school district, and Clark County had been urging their schools to get involved with accreditation.

Mr. Paul assured the committee that Clark County School District was very serious about implementing S.B. 482, and he had been meeting with all the administrators of the secondary division to explain and outline the content of S.B. 482 so those schools understood their responsibilities.

Mr. Paul provided the committee with literature to coincide with his overhead display presentation regarding accreditation (Exhibit H). He explained, in Nevada, there were two responsibility components in accreditation. The first was that every year by October 15th schools had to turn in yearly reports. That report reviewed the schools' progress in meeting the 10 standards outlined in the yearly reporting process and updated the efforts of the school improvement process. The second part of accreditation was the school improvement process which was conducted every 4-6 years. This was a 2-3 year completion process and updating was required throughout that process before the school had to reenter the process. He informed the committee that the state recently adopted the school improvement process as a requirement for Nevada schools. Until that was done, schools had been able to use a different model, known as the "Sixth Edition."

Mr. Paul went through the ten standards that schools were required to meet each year in order to acquire accreditation:

- **Educational Program** - This outlined the type of school, how it governed, and the types of programs in place.

Mr. Paul stated that all high schools in Nevada were accredited, and in Clark County, half of the middle schools were accredited. By next year, all of the middle schools were expected to be accredited. In addition, there were a number of elementary schools accredited in the state. He stated that accreditation was not a requirement.

- **Student Personnel Services** - These were the support services available for students such as psychologists, counseling, and other program efforts to help maintain student focus in the school environment.
- **School Plant and Equipment** - This included technology in the facility and items such as fire safety appropriateness and requirements.
- **Library Media Program** - This included books and periodicals, and technology through the use of the Internet and other such programs.
- **School Records** - This included the transcript efforts and other content items closely aligned with the states' Statewide Management of Automated Records Transfer (SMART).
- **School Improvement** - On an annual basis each school has to report their status on implementing school improvement projects.
- **Preparation of Personnel** - This included a review to ensure teachers were licensed, that they were teaching in their licensed field, how often they were teaching outside of their licensed field and under what circumstances.
- **Administration** - This included school organization, who administered the school, were there staff development activities, and were management accountability systems in place to work with supervision of teachers.
- **Teacher Load** - This mandated that no teacher should have over 160 students per day.
- **Student Activities** - What type of student activities programs were in place to offer students opportunities other than in academic areas.

Senator Raggio asked what was lacking in the above standards for the schools throughout the state that were not accredited. Mr. Paul answered there was very little lacking in the above process, but getting through the second process--the school improvement plan, presented more of a challenge. At some times, the only schools that had a problem with obtaining the above ten standards were the private schools, small rural schools, and parochial schools.

Turning to the school improvement process, Mr. Paul stated in the past, the state had a 10-year cycle rather than a 6-year cycle as was now implemented. That was a major concern because schools should review their status more frequently than just every ten years. In the self-evaluation phase, the school would go through a process of looking at the programs in the school and evaluating them based on the following criteria: excellent, good, satisfactory, poor, missing but needing, or not applicable. Mr. Paul stated that teams of teachers would group together to review the various programs in place then a visiting team would walk through the school and visit with the departments and "rubber stamp" what was happening. After that, the school would have a break until the follow-up phase. Mr. Paul stated the follow-up phase was not done very well as there was not a system in place to bring people back in and work through what had happened.

Therefore, the state decided to adopt a new model for the school improvement process, as outlined on pages 8-9 of [Exhibit H](#) and known as the Self-Improvement Plan (SIP). SIP was adopted through a national model. The first step was for the schools to meet with their staff and community to develop a school profile of the school.

Mr. Paul went through the process and time line outlined in [Exhibit H](#):

Orientation/Organization

The principal works in cooperation with the regional commission or chairperson and the school to devise materials needed and to formulate a steering committee at the school that guides and plans the process.

Senator Raggio asked what the typical make-up of a steering committee would be. Mr. Paul replied most of the schools throughout the state had a learning improvement team in place made up of parents, students, and faculty. In addition, an administrator and member of the accreditation association would be present. He indicated that the orientation/organization process took approximately 18 months, but an outstanding school could go through this portion in less time.

Phase I: Development of a School/Community Profile

The profile is used for the basis of determining students' current and future needs. In order to have a complete picture of the school, Mr. Paul stated that all the data compiled regarding the school was reviewed such as academic data, achievement scores, attendance rates, dropout rates, number of students, transiency rate, staff turnover, materials on hand, budget and ordering data, uses of technology. In addition, the community surrounding the school location is also reviewed as that could have a major impact on what was occurring in that school environment.

Phase II: Development of School Mission Statement and Beliefs

This phase required the group to determine where the school was going and what the school should be doing to fulfill the requirements of the community.

Phase III: Development of Desired Results for Student Learning

This phase outlined what the students should be learning and gaining while attending the school and clearly defined the purpose of the school. Mr. Paul noted that in Clark County, the school district had a system for quality where certain standards had to be met, including curriculum content standards that had to be met. Other schools may have their own set of management systems in place in order to outline what it was their students were to learn.

Senator Raggio asked if the statewide standards, when adopted, would tie into this phase. Mr. Paul indicated that it would, and accreditation activities as a whole were very closely aligned with S.B. 482.

Phase IV: Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness

This phase was an analysis of student performance whereby the data compiled during Phases I-III was reviewed and evaluated to determine the performance level of the students, along with an analysis of the instruction and school organization. Some factors that were considered include: the use by the school of support services from the state department, the district office, input from parents and the community and partnership programs. This phase identified weaknesses in particular programs.

Phase V: School Improvement Plan

This was the development and implementation of the learning improvement plan based on the above criteria. The schools are responsible for submitting accreditation requests every six years, and submitting annual reports on the progress of that improvement process. The following year, the visiting team is required to see if the schools were implementing the plans, and if they were not, the schools would be at risk of losing accreditation.

Mr. Paul provided the committee with pamphlets entitled "Assuring Quality Through School Improvement" and "Improve Education in your School" which show the process of losing accreditation (Exhibit I).

Senator Regan asked if the monitoring program of the school improvement program allowed

opportunity for change within the program in the event the plan needed to be changed during the six-year accreditation. Mr. Paul replied that had not been done as yet since the six-year model had not progressed far enough through any schools; however, he anticipated that would occur. He noted that in southern Nevada there were only four schools that had gone through the new six-year model. Those schools found that with the significant changes every year, that may be necessary. He stated the system would allow for such modification to occur.

Mr. Paul discussed the process used in instructing school staff on what processes were necessary in order to accomplish accreditation. First, in analyzing student achievement, they talked to the schools about a variety of assessments in comparison to what they already had in place. In addition, they needed to review completion rates, retention rates, dropout rates, multi-year trends, classes, how the school related to other schools within the community and district, and other such factors. He stated there was another aspect for staff to review and that was, finding out what happened to students after leaving school.

Mr. Paul continued by stating once a school developed a plan, they were asked to review the summaries of areas needing improvement and make recommendations on improvement needs. He stated research had revealed that schools and staff involved so many different people that there were different ideas on how programs were to be implemented, so they needed to cluster and get better focused on their school improvement plans. In addition, he asked that the schools reach consensus on the recommendations to accomplish the mission statement of the school. They asked the schools to write goal statements that were challenging, measurable, and obtainable within a three to five year period. Further, they required schools to design interventions, determine resources needed, establish a time frame, and assign staff to be responsible for the implementation. The schools were also asked to determine a process of monitoring and reporting on an annual basis and disseminate their completed school improvement plans to the community. Mr. Paul outlined in greater detail the chart on page 10 of Exhibit H.

Senator Raggio asked if the steering committee and school staff worked on the plan together throughout the improvement process. Mr. Paul answered that was correct. Senator Raggio stated there were many facets to the process and asked how long the overall process took. Mr. Paul replied accreditation was approximately a two to three year project, but it depended on the school, the district, and the support they had. Senator Raggio asked if the makeup of the steering committee remained the same during the two to three year process--noting that was a large commitment. Mr. Paul announced the state was attempting to do two things. One, there was a committee chaired by Hal Butler, a retired principal from Douglas County High School, who was putting together a handbook for schools to use while going through the school improvement process. The book would be provided during orientation and would assist the school in the accreditation process. Secondly, the state was developing a cadre of people trained to go into schools throughout the state in order to conduct the visiting efforts and substitute for those committee members who may drop out.

Senator Raggio inquired in Clark County, where there were a number of school improvement plans in process, if any duplication of efforts was occurring and how that could be prevented. Mr. Paul replied they were trying to align their efforts with the accountability efforts at the legislative level, and in conjunction with what occurred at the state department, the Northwest Accreditation Association, and at the district level. He explained that was necessary in order to help the schools focus on particular areas and integrate their efforts throughout the continuum of efforts. He explained further that the secondary division in Clark County established three to four priority objectives for each school year. This year, those were established based on what were seen as state efforts: Attendance, Dropout, Reading Improvement, Achievement, and Technology. Thereafter, schools were required to develop priority objectives each year that would be supportive of those efforts.

Mr. Paul commented as the school improvement process proceeded, the relationship with the identified priority areas would be required to prevent a duplication of efforts. Further, the districts were provided with guidelines so they were in conjunction with the state-level efforts.

Senator Regan asked what incentives existed for parental involvement in the accreditation program. Mr.

Paul responded community involvement was required if accreditation was to be successful.

Mr. Paul discussed how the school improvement efforts were closely aligned to the Part III reporting requirements. In Clark County, the schools took one staff development day each semester whereby the staff worked on school improvement efforts. He added that the state accreditation group consisted of Vicki Butler, commissioner for the northern area, and principal of Incline Middle School; Frank South, commissioner for the central area, from the state department; Robert Chesto, commissioner for the eastern area, former principal for a small school and current principal for a larger school in Clark County; and then himself, commissioner for the southern region. The Northwest Association allowed four commissioners from each state but allowed as many program directors as needed to help schools work through the process. He stated there would be 58 schools going through the accreditation program over the next few years and that was quite an undertaking.

Mr. Paul thanked the committee for allowing him to attend the meeting and stated he was honored to address the issue of accreditation. He reiterated that the district took accreditation efforts seriously, and they were concerned about the alignment to S.B. 482 as it was inconceivable to have a school fully accredited but not meet the efforts of S.B. 482.

Senator Raggio thanked Mr. Paul and commended him for the ambitious efforts of the improvement process entailed in undergoing accreditation. He hoped that consolidation of planning efforts could continue to be attained.

Chairman Raggio asked if there was any public testimony. Jan Biggerstaff, a mother, wife, small business owner, court-appointed special advocate (CASA), and member of the State Board of Education, stated she was not representing any entity other than children, and she was not testifying on behalf of the State Board of Education or the CASA program. She asked the committee to consider, as they evaluated schools, the ability level of the schools. She stated there were some very dedicated and hard-working teachers in schools throughout the state that may be the subject of a school takeover. However, those schools likely could use summer school, extra time, or anything other than a takeover, and she urged the committee consider the ability level of such schools.

Senator Raggio commented that S.B. 482 did not intend the school evaluation process to be a punitive process, but rather just the opposite. The legislation could be a very helpful tool; by in designating a school as "inadequate," that school would receive the assistance and efforts necessary to improve and rectify that situation. He stated it was not a question of evaluating the school, the teacher, or the principal at the school; accountability should address whether the student who should be learning more and progressing better was being cheated. He stressed that the state was not the first to implement this type of legislation as there had been much discussion across the country about academic bankruptcy in schools, and the state did not wish that to occur.

Mrs. Biggerstaff stated she supported all the efforts made by the committee and the legislation. She reiterated that she understood the process, and she was enthusiastic about it. However, she noted that the impression the schools had was that their reputation was on the line and they were going to be moved out. Therefore, she was concerned with how teachers were treated in the process. Senator Raggio replied he did not disagree; however, teachers should be concerned with things before they happened, not after they happened. Under the law, there was ability for the school to show improvement if they became designated as inadequate. Mrs. Biggerstaff reiterated that she fully supported the efforts under S.B. 482.

There being no further public testimony, Chairman Raggio tentatively scheduled the next meeting for Tuesday, November 25, 1997, in Carson City. In addition, he asked that staff inform him of meetings of the Council to Establish Academic Standards and the Commission on Educational Technology. He invited members of the committee to participate and/or monitor those meetings as well.

There being nothing further to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joi Davis, Secretary

Fiscal Analysis Division

APPROVED:

Senator William J. Raggio, Chairman

DATE: _____