

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

A meeting of the Legislative Committee on Education (created as a result of Senate Bill 482), was held at 9:45 a.m. on February 23, 1998, at the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, 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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblyman Wendell
Williams (Excused)

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE:

Debbie Cahill, Nevada State Employees Association

Holly Walton-Buchanan, Nevada Department of Education

Terry Owens, Nevada Department of Education

Mary Nebgen, Washoe County School District

Colleen Stockton, Carson City Republican Women's Club

J. Ashe, R&R Advertising

Keith Rheault, Nevada Department of Education

Kevin Crowe, Nevada Department of Education

David Smith, Nevada Department of Education

Pat Boyd, Lyon County School District

Kara Kelley, Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce

Rich Naccaroto, Washoe County School District

Don Hataway, Budget Office

Gloria Dopf, Nevada Department of Education

Frank Follmer, Commission on Professional Standards

Robert McCord, Clark County School District

Neena Laxalt, Rose-Glen Advertising and Public Relations

Mary Peterson, Nevada Department of Education

Steve Rock, College of Education, University of Nevada Reno

Doug Byington, Nevada Association of School Administrators

Sheila Ward, Carson-Douglas Christian Coalition

Jane Nichols, University and Community College Systems of Nevada

Bob Dickens, University of Nevada Reno

Carole Gribble, Washoe County School District

Cy Ryan, Las Vegas Sun

Geoff Dornan, Nevada Appeal

Sean Whaley, Nevada Appeal

Dan Fox, Pershing County School District

Anne Loring, Washoe County School District

John Soderman, Douglas County School District

Doug Thunder, Nevada Department of Education

Larry Spitler, Clark County School District

Debbie Smith, Council to Establish Academic Standards in Public Schools

Bill Hanlon, Nevada State Board of Education

Yvonne Shaw, Nevada State Board of Education

Exhibits:

Exhibit A - Agenda

Exhibit B - Attendance Record

Exhibit C - Meeting Packet - Volume I & II

Exhibit D - Copy of transparencies used by Dr. Jon Snyder, University of California at Santa Barbara

Exhibit E - Information on SCR 46 Advisory Group to Study Teacher Education in Nevada, provided by Dr. Jane Nichols, University and Community College System of Nevada

Exhibit F - Nevada Commission on Professional Standards in Education, provided by Dr. Keith Rheault, Nevada Department of Education

1. Roll Call.

Chairman Raggio noted a quorum was present and that Assemblyman Wendell Williams was excused. He introduced the new staff members of the Legislative Bureau of Educational Accountability and Program Evaluation, which was created under S.B. 482, Melinda (Mindy) Braun, Education Program Analyst; Lu Chen, Education Research Statistician; and Joi Davis, Management Assistant and Committee Secretary. The bureau is supervised by Jeanne L. Botts, Senior Program Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau, and is assisted by H. Pepper Sturm, Chief Principal Research Analyst, and Kelan Kelly, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau.

2. Approval of Minutes.

The Chairman noted the minutes contained at Tab 2, Volume I, of the Meeting Packet (Exhibit C), were in draft form. He asked the committee to review the minutes and note any corrections and deferred approval until the next meeting.

Chairman Raggio's Remarks.

Chairman Raggio indicated he would provide background information as to the topic for the meeting--teaching to higher academic standards. He related that during the 1997 Legislative Session, that topic was discussed throughout hearings on S.B. 482. He said the money committees were surprised to hear testimony from teachers that they did not know how to teach children to read until they received intensive instruction through the Reading Recovery Program. In addition, the Legislature received confirmation from school officials that many new teachers are not prepared to teach phonics or math computation.

Chairman Raggio pointed out that Tab 7, Volume II of the Meeting Packet (Exhibit C), contained the September, 1996, summary report by National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, which concluded that evidence from hundreds of studies showed the importance of having a qualified and trained teacher in every classroom. The National Commission found that many classrooms lack teachers with both subject matter knowledge and knowledge of effective teaching strategies. The National Commission reported:

- Nationally, nearly a quarter of all newly hired teachers have failed to meet licensing standards in their field; and
- One in five high school teachers (21 percent) has less than a minor in his or her main assignment field.

Senator Raggio reiterated that **students learn more when teachers know more**. He turned to Tab 10, Volume II of the Meeting Packet (Exhibit C) entitled "Different Drummers" a report by the Public Agenda. The Executive Director of the Public Agenda concluded:

". . . the disconnect between what the professors want and what most parents, teachers, business leaders and students say they need is often staggering. Their prescriptions for the public schools may appear to many Americans to be a type of rarified blindness, given the public's concerns about school safety and discipline, and whether high school graduates have even basic skills."

Continuing with some of the findings that led to that conclusion by The Public Agenda, Senator Raggio stated:

- **Teachers of teachers want to discard what they see as crude and outdated tools of teaching and managing classrooms--techniques that the public often sees as part-and-parcel of good schooling. They resist approaches that rely on competition, reward and punishment, memorization, or multiple-choice questions.**
- **Professors of education hold a vision of public education that seems fundamentally at odds with that of public school teachers, students and the public. The public's priorities are discipline, basic skills and good behavior in the classroom. Teachers of teachers severely downplay such goals.**
- **Even as they advocate an ambitious teaching agenda, education professors harbor serious doubts about whether they are adequately preparing teachers to succeed in the real world.** Most education professors have been out of the classroom for many years and they themselves suspect they are too detached from today's schools and they have concerns about the teachers in the program.
- **Education professors support a core curriculum and higher academic standards but often balk at requiring students to pass tests that demonstrate relatively simple academic skills and knowledge.** Most would not, for example, require students to demonstrate they know proper spelling, grammar and punctuation before receiving a high school diploma. They question the reliability of standardized tests.

Chairman Raggio reminded the Committee that the above remarks were excerpted from The Public Agenda's "Different Drummer" report.

Chairman Raggio announced that Nevada was one of the last states to begin the effort of establishing statewide standards. The Legislative Committee on Education ("Committee") has been following the work of the Council to Establish Academic Standards for Public Schools ("Council") and **he believes the Council will ensure that the standards for Nevada will be as rigorous as any in the nation. The next step, however, involves the implementation of those standards. He said the key to education reform in the state involves rigorous academic standards but the key to successful implementation of those standards involves trained, qualified teachers.**

Chairman Raggio clarified he was **not criticizing teachers or bashing the system. Teachers cannot be blamed for lacking the skills they need if they have not received the appropriate education and training.** The message is simple--**we all need to work together** to ensure that new teachers and existing teaching forces have the skills they need to teach to the higher standards.

Senator Raggio queried what the **role of the Committee would be to make sure that schools are ready to teach to higher academic standards. He stated the Committee was in a unique position to provide direction to various constituencies to ensure that Nevada has a comprehensive plan for teaching to higher standards. He noted there were many groups interested in teacher education. With so many groups involved and interested in teacher education, there might be a tendency for each party to be pulling in a different direction and for certain groups to want to preserve the status quo, for others to**

point a finger blaming others, and for the familiar turf battles of the past. The Committee can provide **leadership** and, hopefully, **mediate some of those differences** in the development of a statewide plan for teaching to the higher standards.

Senator Raggio pointed out a few essential ideas for any plan for teaching to higher academic standards:

- Comprehensive, including both teacher-preparation (pre-service) and professional (in-service) components;
- Collaborative, not competitive, among various parties concerned with teacher education;
- Coordinated, not unorganized, discordant programs or "missing links" or duplication of training efforts;
- Cooperative, not fractious, in its efforts;
- Cost-effective, making the best use of teacher training funds from all sources;
- Research-based, focusing on what works; and
- Rigorous, with teaching skills based upon higher academic standards.

Senator Raggio stated the Committee needed to get answers to the following questions:

1. What do teachers need to know to teach to higher academic standards?

2. Do teachers have the skills and knowledge required to teach to higher academic standards? How might their skills and knowledge be assessed to identify deficiencies? He commented that although that was a difficult area, it needed to be done, even if it included a self-evaluation to be able to determine deficiencies. How might this be accomplished to ensure that teachers are not criticized for needing training? He clarified this measure was an attempt to assist, not punish.

3. How might **schools or school districts** assess whether their teachers or prospective teachers have the skills and knowledge required to teach to higher academic standards? If not, how do they obtain necessary training. He asserted that although these questions appeared simple, determining deficiencies in a school and then reporting those deficiencies in a compassionate manner was important so as not to appear to be indicting teachers.

4. What can the **State Board of Education** do to ensure that prospective teachers have the skills and knowledge required to teach to higher academic standards? The State Board approves teacher preparation programs and may disapprove proposed regulations of the Commission on Professional Standards in Education. So, if there is some reluctance (and there should not be) on the part of the Commission, then that procedure will have to be changed, or the State Board could instigate its authority to disapprove those regulations.

5. What can the **Commission on Professional Standards in Education** do to ensure that licensed teachers have the skills and knowledge required to teach to higher academic standards?

6. What can **colleges and universities** do to ensure that prospective teachers have the skills and knowledge required to teach to higher academic standards? He stated

higher education needed to become more connected under the K-16 concept. Senator Raggio stated the Legislature will be anxious to see what has developed in the Colleges of Education--noting there was a question with UNR's program being reduced from five years to four years.

7. Finally, we will need to find out what the **Legislature** can do to ensure that teachers possess the skills and knowledge to teach to higher academic standards. What bill draft requests might the Committee recommend to get schools ready for higher standards?

8. In the end, an evaluation will be necessary to determine whether teachers have gained the skills and knowledge necessary to teach to higher academic standards. Will that be done by pupil's performance on examination of achievement and proficiency?

Senator Raggio reiterated that the Committee will **set in motion a process for developing a comprehensive plan for teaching to academic standards.**

3. Teaching to Higher Standards.

A. Dr. Jon Snyder

Chairman Raggio introduced Dr. Jon Snyder, Director of Teacher Education and a faculty member in the Educational Leadership and Organizations specialization at the University of California at Santa Barbara. He is also a Senior Researcher and Policy Analyst for the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. He began his career in education as an elementary school teacher. He has served as an elementary school principal and as a staff and curriculum director. Upon receipt of a doctorate at the Teacher College Columbia University, Dr. Snyder worked in the Teacher Education Program. Prior to moving to Santa Barbara, Dr. Snyder was the Associate Director of Research for the National Center for the Restructuring of Education Schools and Teaching.

Dr. Snyder is a recognized leader-teacher researcher in teacher education. He is or has served as a member of the Commission of Teacher Credentialing (California's professional licensure board), the National Teacher Education Study Group, the State Task Force on Expectations for Beginning Teachers, the National Professional Development School Network, the Advisory Board for the Center for Collaborative Education, Chair of the Lilly Endowment's Advisory Committee on Educational Guidance, and as consultant to several states engaged in developing standards and assessments. A copy of Dr. Snyder's overhead transparencies is attached as Exhibit D.

Dr. Snyder began his presentation by stating that the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future has a very basic purpose:

The Commission's mission is to develop and implement a blueprint for recruiting, preparing, and supporting caring, competent, and qualified teachers in all of America's schools. Its recommendations focus on ensuring that all teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to teach so that all children can learn to high standards, and all school systems are organized to support teachers in this work.

Dr. Snyder stated what mattered most was teachers. Poor students and students of color are far-more likely to have less qualified teachers; however, when poor students and students of color have qualified teachers, then the achievement gap closes dramatically. Efforts should be made to support teachers throughout the nation's educational systems in order to teach **all children** to higher standards.

Senator Raggio emphasized that Dr. Snyder's message was identical to Kati Haycock's message during the Committee's last meeting in January, 1998--that higher standards were necessary for **all students** and no excuses for anything less should be accepted.

Dr. Snyder said parents most often worry about what teachers their children will have rather than what textbooks they will be using. Gallup polls have revealed that parents feel that what mattered most in teaching was the teachers, and researchers are just now beginning to catch on. Dr. Snyder presented a chart outlining what made the difference in students' achievement test scores. The chart displayed that 49 percent of student achievement was based upon outside of school variables--home and family factors. He stated that schools cannot control the amount of education a parent has, what language is spoken in the home, or other such factors. However, schools can influence achievement. Forty-three percent of achievement score variance is based upon teacher quality--defined as licensing examination scores, performance assessments, and teacher experience. Further, in terms of class-size reduction initiatives, eight percent can be attributed as a variance, particularly in the primary grades.

Dr. Snyder stated the effects of good teaching are cumulative. For example, a group of third graders who begin at the same place of achievement and receive three consecutive years of poor teaching (unqualified, no teacher preparation, teaching out of field area), will end up at the 44th to 29th percentile. If those same children were given exemplary teachers for three consecutive years, their test scores would be 96th to 83rd percentile. Dr. Snyder stated that he hears much about supporting teachers in that it takes two to three years for an unqualified teacher to become qualified. He said that although the teacher will gain, the children do not get three years of their education back.

Dr. Snyder noted that teacher-pupil ratio can make a difference; however, he stated that it is less expensive to educate more teachers in undergraduate preparation than it is to hire seven new teachers in every school of the state.

Senator Raggio emphasized Dr. Snyder's comments that each of the components (lowering class size, teachers' salaries, teacher experience) were effective in improving student achievement; however, when measuring the cost-effectiveness against student achievement, five times the benefit was seen if money was used to increase teacher education than if the same dollar was spent for reducing class size. Dr. Snyder commented that was true--adding the cost effectiveness dealt with both teacher in-service and pre-service.

Senator Regan opined that for the dollar invested in teacher training the return on the investment resulted in a one-to-one ratio. The point is, the state needed to be convinced that the greater the investment at the academic level, teacher training, and support staff training, a greater understanding could be had and ultimately the children of the state would benefit.

Senator Rawson asked what the factor was when teacher salaries were increased. He noted the chart indicated that the benefits of teacher salary increases resulted in four times the effect and asked what was it about teacher salaries that made the results of student achievement increase. Dr. Snyder replied that increasing teacher salaries often resulted in better recruitment in the field and teacher satisfaction. He stated Nevada ranked fourth in the country for teacher satisfaction. In other words, when Nevada teachers are asked if they would become teachers again, they rank fourth in the country in the percentage that would become a teacher again. He said the state's teacher satisfaction level was due in some part because Nevada's teachers are well paid (in the top ten), according to the national average.

Quoting from an economist, Dr. Snyder stated that " . . . the evidence suggests most strongly that teacher quality matters and should be a major focus on efforts to upgrade the quality of schooling. School teachers are the most critical of all schooling inputs."

Dr. Snyder asserted that Nevada has the opportunity to develop a comprehensive program even though

there are challenges for such implementation.

- Demographics - More children are coming into the state but the teachers are getting older. In 1994, 25 percent of Nevada's teachers were 50 years of age or older. For instance, Clark County School District is one of the fastest growing school districts in the country.
- There are increased needs for teachers to have more, better and different knowledge, skills and dispositions. Children are learning more now than they ever have in the history of American public education. For example, what a child in fourth grade used to learn, was now being taught in second grade. Yet, at the same time, public schools are failing.
- Inequitable distribution of teacher quality. A school with 50 percent low-income children is four times more likely to have an unqualified teacher. If teaching is what matters most for student achievement and if you can control poor, income, ethnicity, raises, class sizes and language, then some of the challenges can be decreased.

Senator Raggio asked what other jurisdictions have done to improve the inequitable distribution of teachers. He asked if teacher incentives could be developed to encourage teachers to remain in at-risk schools. Dr. Snyder agreed that teacher incentives are an important factor. Quite frankly, he continued, Nevada school districts are not strong in the area of teacher incentives for retraining or the acquisition of the second license in particular areas to work with particular populations. For instance, he could not recall any school district in Nevada in 1993 that offered incentives for a teacher to return to school to obtain a license in science if they were already a math teacher. He said only one school district in the state had incentives to teach English as a second language (ESL) but there were incentives to teach special education. He recommended the state put energy into providing incentives to teachers. He continued by stating a common practice was to hire a teacher to teach math and then that teacher is eventually required to teach one period of science. It would be helpful to provide incentives to support teachers to learn the knowledge, skills and dispositions that are different than their subject area.

Dr. Snyder stated there were five elements of a comprehensive teacher quality system:

- Get serious about standards, for both students and teachers.

If what matters most is teachers, then work together to find out what it is that matters the most about teaching.

- Reinvent teacher preparation and professional development.

Once it is known what matters most about teaching, then provide teachers, teacher educators, administrators and school districts, the opportunities for learning, practicing and assessing their development to teach to the standards.

- Fix teacher recruitment and put qualified teachers in every classroom.

Ensure that persons entering into teacher education are capable of learning from the opportunities provided. Teacher education should not be a right to just anybody. It is expensive to educate a teacher so be selective and use resources well. In addition, school districts need to do a good job in hiring.

Senator Regan said it had been his experience that failing students would enroll in the Colleges of Education because they knew they could get a degree at that College as it was the "school of last resort." He asked how that issue could be alleviated and Colleges of Education could be seen as the college of "prestigious"

instead. Dr. Snyder replied that the trend data he has seen indicates improvement in terms of the caliber of people entering into teaching. Secondly, most often the Colleges of Education, specifically teacher education, is the "cash cow" of the university in that education students get less support than any other student in the university and that needed to change. Further, he said "Don't buy the rhetoric" as most college presidents will say "Our fundamental mission is the education of teachers for our state." He suggested that research into where the money was going in higher education was needed. Then, take a look at where the money is going in the Colleges of Education--it is not going to future educators.

- Encourage and reward knowledge and skill.

Everyone should take the responsibility to help teachers having difficulties and have the integrity and courage to side with the needs of children over the employment needs of educators--whether that be teacher educators, school educators, or principals.

- Create schools that are genuine learning organizations, organized for student and teacher success.

Dr. Snyder asserted that teacher educators are the victims of higher education not the villain. Schools need to be organized in such a way that teachers can capably perform what is necessary. For example, a teacher may be very skilled in teaching chemistry and performing a detailed chemistry experiment but if the school has no chemistry lab, that knowledge will never be shared.

Senator Raggio returned to the issue of at-risk schools with poor and minority students. He asked if Dr. Snyder could expand on that subject since he so often heard that the reason high standards cannot be implemented is because it is unfair to the poor or minority students. Dr. Snyder said there are many things educators can do nothing about in that approximately 50 percent of student achievement or lack thereof is based on outside factors. However, there are things that can be done to improve student achievement and balance teacher inequities, such as providing opportunities for learning in pre-service. That can be done. In fact, Dr. Snyder stated there would be a report out shortly identifying seven exemplary teacher education programs that specifically list ways to help pre-service teachers learn how to work with students that traditionally are not learning in schools. Secondly, professional development needs to be evaluated. He said even if higher education was perfect right now, it would take 15 years to replace 50 percent of the teachers in the current workforce. He stressed that professional development needed to be provided immediately for teachers working in the schools presently. He said he has seen the unions pushing this issue in a productive way as they begin to understand the importance of teacher training nationwide. Further, Dr. Snyder stated, incentives for teachers must be provided to get teachers what they need.

Senator Raggio assured that the Legislature was committed to whatever intervention or remediation programs were necessary and that was a high priority for funding. He mentioned that the foster grandparent program was being used in Washoe County and that program appeared to be cost effective. He stated although that was not a scientific program, it was getting positive results. Senator Raggio commended Mary Nebgen, Superintendent of the Washoe County School District, for her work in the foster grandparent program.

Dr. Snyder concurred and directed the committees' attention to an overhead display which showed how resources were used in schools. He said too few educational dollars are spent on educational staff to work with children as regular classroom teachers. He reiterated that if everyone agrees that teaching is what matters most, then what needed to be done is maximize the number of teachers who are working with children. Dr. Snyder clarified that although there are more and more adults working in schools, there are

fewer and fewer of those adults actually working in classrooms. He said the amount of teachers working in classrooms has decreased by 18 percent. Senator Raggio asked that all the superintendents in the audience take that message back to their districts.

Dr. Snyder continued, only 52 percent of persons working in schools are working in the classroom and the rest are telling those persons what to do. He opined that such a process did not translate to an effective organizational system. Continuing, Dr. Snyder indicated that for every 2.5 teachers there is 1 person telling those 2.5 teachers what to do. He emphasized that a better method would be to educate teachers and support them. He concluded the current system was simply not a good use of educational resources. He said the nation is spending more money now on education than ever, yet there are fewer classroom teachers.

Senator Raggio noted from Dr. Snyder's handout (Exhibit D) there was a statement "Get Serious About Teachers" and there were some points he wanted to stress:

- Insist on accreditation for all Schools of Education.

He asked how meaningful that was. Dr. Snyder replied that the issue of accreditation was a touchy subject and there are two ways of looking at it. One way is through the assessment process. However, if the teachers do not have the opportunity to learn during the assessment process then it is just a waste of time. He said the issue on accreditation was trying to assure that teachers had the opportunity to learn from assessments. Two, once the students' standards are put into place, there will have to be standards for teachers that are aligned with the student standards. Then, the Professional Standards Commission, the State Board of Education, and the State Department of Education will have to redesign the standards for teacher education programs so that teachers are guaranteed to learn what they need to learn to teach to higher standards.

Dr. Snyder said performance assessments of teachers along with the higher education institutions were important in order to adhere to higher standards.

- Licensed Teachers based on Demonstrated Performance.

Dr. Snyder commented that licensing teachers was a state function but perhaps with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and the assessments aligned with such programs, a group could get together to make sure that the assessments are working effectively. He said ultimately what gets taught is what gets tested. He encouraged the state to look at the PRAXIS series from the Educational Testing Service and the WestEd program of assessments for teachers that support teachers both in pre-service and in-service. Using a blend of the above programs, the state can determine what is best for Nevada.

Senator Regan asked what teachers could do to police themselves and aid in the changes occurring in implementing higher academic standards. Dr. Snyder answered that one portion of his job is to visit school districts throughout the country and review promising practices based on places where students are learning more. He noted that what these districts had in common was that the unions have signed on for the responsibility in excellence as well as working conditions. He said the districts varied tremendously but the bottom line was that the contract included language defining the responsibilities of the union, of the district, the administration, the public. He stated that Cincinnati has been doing that for a decade. He pointed out that once the language in the contracts was changed to include "joint, peer review, plus administrative" issues, twice as many teachers received support. Also, the towns of Rochester and Toledo have benefitted from these types of contracts.

Dr. Snyder recommended contacting networks such as the Teachers Union Reform Network (TURN), which is a joint NEA/AFT organization. He said he would send information on two other programs that these organizations combine the efforts of union representatives and persons at the local level with great success.

Senator Regan announced that he has served on accreditation committees at the post-secondary level and much emphasis was placed on square footage and books. He acknowledged Dr. Snyder's comments as to assessments, and commented that there did not appear to be any assessments of the end results. He asked how that could be changed, because at present it appeared that the major concern was buildings, bricks and mortar, rather than the success level of students being produced from the Colleges of Education.

Dr. Snyder replied that changes must occur and the system should be output driven. He acknowledged that it was not feasible for someone to assess every single candidate but the institution should be held accountable for teacher standards and the opportunities for students to learn those standards, and then be able to assure the public that students are being assessed on the standards.

Senator Raggio thanked Dr. Snyder for his testimony and presentation. Dr. Snyder concluded his comments that the five topic areas he brought forth have historically been the problems of different institutions and to make it work, everyone's role and responsibilities have to change. Colleges of Education have to be engaged in schools rather than just telling them what to do. Professional Standards boards, state boards, legislatures, Departments of Education, and the Governor's office have to work with each other rather than against each other. Unions and teachers have to accept responsibility for excellence as well as employment and work conditions. He said everyone needs to be prepared to change what they are currently doing and be honest with themselves--acknowledging individual strengths and weaknesses.

Senator Washington noted that Dr. Snyder mentioned the importance of incentives to improve teacher success in reaching the higher standards that will be implemented. He asked if he knew of any jurisdictions that took action in dealing with inadequate teachers or teachers who have decided not to comply or not adhere to the new standards. Was there any mechanism in place to relieve that teacher from their teaching status or make them comply? Dr. Snyder responded that it was important that teachers take responsibility for the excellence issue and that could be done with peer review. He said teachers easily recognize incompetent teachers but just need to step up and demand excellence in that process. Secondly, administrators need to take notice. He informed the committee of a school district in New Haven, California, that had a superintendent that spent the first two years of his tenure in the courts because he took on incompetent teachers. He did that even though they were clear-cut cases, and it cost a lot of time and money. However, after two years, the union, the teachers, and the community got the message to do what was right for the children. Then, the superintendent would not allow an inadequate teacher to be placed in another school and that became the responsibility of the school.

Dr. Snyder said there are just a small number of teachers that need improvement, but those teachers should not be shuffled around. Everyone should be taking responsibility to say "no" to a teacher.

Senator Washington asked what Nevada could do to make sure the qualifications and the process for teachers to adhere to the standards was enforced and that dismissal of a teacher would occur if they did not adhere. Dr. Snyder answered that there was no simple answer. He said it would take time and brainstorming to come up with appropriate sanctions and incentives to ensure that teacher education was working.

Senator Raggio mentioned that in Nevada that responsibility would be with each school district and he did not believe the teacher's union would want to retain teachers that were incompetent that could not be made competent and that could be a matter contained within contract negotiations.

Dr. Snyder commented that his review of S.B. 482 revealed that school "report cards" are issued by the district and he suggested that "teacher quality" be included on that report card.

Assemblyman Hickey acknowledged that the states of Georgia and North Carolina are tinkering with education reform, especially in the area of improving the Colleges of Education and teacher improvement in the area of teaching to the standards. He asked if Dr. Snyder could point to any specific states that have

embarked on that aspect of the reform that perhaps the Nevada State Legislature could look to as examples. Dr. Snyder replied that there were 12 states that have been working on the five factors he mentioned, and there is a consortium of those states that have been working together. He said some of those states were progressing faster than others. However, Idaho has been very active in the area of teacher training. In addition, he suggested contacting Mr. Barnett Berry for more information in that area.

Senator Raggio asked if there was one state that stood above the rest. Dr. Snyder replied that in regards to student standards, the state of Kentucky received high scores. For teacher standards he suggested the state of Maine. For recruiting and rewarding teachers, he suggested North Carolina. As for reinventing teacher education, Dr. Snyder commented that the country was deficient, and for reorganizing schools, North Carolina has done a remarkable job. He said most of the 12 states were moving ahead, with the exception of political problems. He said Ohio had the best union issues.

B. Dr. Jane Nichols

Senator Raggio introduced Dr. Jane Nichols, Vice-President for Academic and Student Affairs at the University and Community College System of Nevada (UCCSN). He noted that the committee had not yet heard anything about the effect of Senate Concurrent Resolution 46 (SCR 46) of the 1997 Legislative Session, which urged the Board of Regents to conduct a study regarding teacher training programs.

Dr. Nichols provided a handout regarding the Advisory Committee to Study Teacher Education (Exhibit E) and a copy of a report by UCCSN which she would be discussing jointly with Mary Peterson, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada Department of Education. Dr. Nichols explained that SCR 46 asked for two things: 1) A study of teacher education; and 2) A study into the construction needs which might be a part of teacher education needs for higher education. She said the advisory committee has elected to focus on the first portion of that study unless the Legislative Committee on Education wanted to see more attention placed on construction needs.

Dr. Nichols informed the Committee that the advisory group was comprised of representatives from teacher education, school superintendents, and universities and community colleges. She added that Great Basin College was rapidly moving into the area of teacher education. Others on the advisory group include representatives from the Nevada Department of Education, members of the Washoe and Clark County School Districts responsible for recruitment of teachers and placement of teachers, and a representative from Sierra Nevada College, because there are a number of teachers in the state that receive their education from that college.

Dr. Nichols informed the committee that the advisory group has met on one occasion and has proposed meetings scheduled throughout the year. In addition, the advisory group is working with WestEd to help design the study and collect data to assist in interpreting those results and forming recommendations to the Legislature.

Dr. Nichols stated that some of the questions the SCR 46 study is designed to answer are:

- Are we producing enough teachers in our public and private institutions of higher education in Nevada to meet the needs of K-12, given the projected rate of growth? What is the right mix of in-state and out-of-state graduates? (Approximately one-third of newly hired teachers are Nevada graduates). Is retention of teachers an equal problem to having a sufficient supply of new teachers, and if so, can school districts do more to support retention?

Dr. Nichols said the "turn-over" rate was something the advisory group would look at in regard to obtaining and maintaining good teachers. Also, they will look at the characteristics of the new teachers moving into Nevada.

- Are there currently shortages of qualified teachers in Nevada, either geographically or by subject area and specialization? What does the data reveal in relation to qualified teachers?
- Will Nevada's current classroom teachers be prepared to teach curriculum based on the new standards established by the Council to Establish Academic Standards? If not, what will it take to prepare them? Are initiatives needed for professional development for current teachers? If so, are resources available to support this?

She indicated the advisory group will start with the draft standards that have been developed and then look at the existing pre-service education programs to review the amount of content that is taught, the amount of methods courses that are taught, the basic curriculum, and the tests that are taken for entry into the teaching profession. In addition, this involves taking a look at where classroom teachers receive their education, when they received it, and what were their areas of preparation in. Then, a look at the current patterns of professional development will be undertaken.

- Are the curricula in the pre-service teacher education programs supportive of the new standards? Are our current licensing and re-certification requirements sufficient, given the new standards?

Dr. Nichols said the advisory group will need to know if professional development dollars are being spent efficiently and effectively to support teachers teaching to the standards. Are these dollars organized properly to bring our teachers up to the level needed?

- Do current induction programs for new teachers support transition into the classroom as demonstrated by retention rates of first-time teachers? Are there sufficient professional resources available to new, first-time teachers? Is there a mentor available to work with new teachers in the first few years?

Dr. Nichols said new teachers have difficulty in the classroom with what may not be enough support, particularly if that teacher has come from another state and is adjusting to a new community. She said that teaching was one of the few professions that graduates someone and then "turns them loose," often without any support. Across the country, patterns of mentoring are being developed for new teachers to provide extra support and additional classes or seminars as areas of weakness or particular needs are identified.

Dr. Nichols related that a good example for a seminar was the area of classroom management. She continued, the University of Nevada, Reno, performed a survey of employers of new graduates and the number one item principals most often complained about was that new teachers had inadequate classroom management skills. She noted her experience has been that you can teach classroom management but until a teacher gets into the classroom for nine months with a group of students, the complexity of classroom management cannot be grasped. Often, a continuing relationship with another teacher or a mentor in the first couple years of teaching can make a tremendous difference in the quality of teaching.

Dr. Nichols asserted that one of the things she would like to see come out of the SCR 46 study was a better understanding into the expectations of beginning teachers and a better understanding of the career paths of teachers in terms of continuing education.

- Are there alternative models of licensure that would help meet teachers' needs in the years ahead? Are we using these models or alternatives appropriately in the state?

Noting the rapid growth in the state, particularly in Clark County, Dr. Nichols queried if the state would be able to produce enough graduates from the Colleges of Education and would there be enough recruitment to sufficiently fill the classrooms.

- Are administrators in K-12 adequately prepared to assess and assist teachers' classroom practice? Do

administrators need new professional development and other types of support in light of the new standards-based education?

Dr. Nichols stated this was a key issue as the state went through the process of improving the quality of teachers and the quality of K-12. The individual who is held responsible for the quality of teaching in the system is the principal or assistant principal. She stated many states are investing resources in creating training and schools for principals to become better assessors and evaluators and to be trained to know what to do if the teacher's performance is below standards. She indicated there are direct ways to help an inadequate teacher, and perhaps administrators need new professional development and other types of support in light of the new standards-based education.

As the study of teacher education becomes more in depth, the advisory group believes it is important to look at the role of the administrative staff in supporting standards.

Dr. Nichols said the above questions were compiled by the advisory group and represent what they believe to be important to this topic and the interpretation of the legislative mandate. She mentioned that, of course, the committee could add to that list. She indicated future meeting topics include: Discussion of design proposals, data collection, completion of needed surveys, continuation of collection of data, use of experts and consultants as needed, updating the school district superintendents, and to shape the final recommendations to be presented to the Board of Regents before presentation to the Legislature.

Senator Raggio asked how the advisory group members were selected. Dr. Nichols replied that she selected the group after talking to a number of persons regarding key players that could provide information and be able to use the recommendations of the study to effectuate change. Senator Raggio announced he was unable to attend the first advisory committee meeting due to family illness, and he designated Jeanne Botts to act in his place and stead should he be unable to attend future meetings.

Further, Senator Raggio noted the advisory committee did not include a member from the State Board of Education. Dr. Nichols concurred that she did not have a representative from the State Board of Education or from the Board of Regents; however, they were welcome to attend and she will notify them of future meetings.

Senator Raggio asked whether the Colleges of Education were represented on the advisory committee. Dr. Nichols said John Readence and Steve Rock, the deans from the Colleges of the Education in the state serve as ex-officio members to the committee. Also, the advisory committee has invited Ginny Wiswell from the Legislative Counsel Bureau to attend the meetings.

Senator Rawson commented that the charts shown by Dr. Snyder in earlier testimony showed the relative support and administration in schools of the various countries and although Nevada was not the most "administrative-heavy" state, it was high. He asked if the advisory committee was accepting that by maintaining the current administrative staff ratio while attempting to improve the current system. Dr. Nichols replied that it was her impression that the data shown by Dr. Snyder referred to the United States in comparison to other developing countries. She said the advisory committee would need to review data in that area specific to Nevada; however, she recalled that the state had a lower ratio of administrators than the national data showed for the country. She assured the committee that would be a topic of discussion for the advisory group.

Senator Rawson asserted that if teachers were required to earn a Master's Degree prior to entering the classroom, then they may need less support because they would have more experience, capability and self-assurance. Dr. Nichols said the advisory group is being asked to evaluate whether current programs produce teachers ready to enter the classroom. Also, they will be looking at whether a 4-year program is adequate or a 5-year program should be reimplemented. The study will compare the content and readiness for the

classroom of student teachers. However, most of the data she has reviewed indicates that support for teachers is experience-based and is necessary even if they have completed the California model which has a fifth-year internship in the classroom rather than graduate experience.

Senator Rawson asked whether teacher "support" included curriculum specialists, audio-visual or technology specialists, or was it someone that performed such tasks as copying and test grading. Dr. Nichols replied that in her opinion "support" was not defined in that way. Rather, successful models involve pairing a new teacher with an experienced, competent teacher in the same subject matter area. The experienced teacher is given some recognition for taking responsibility for working with the new teacher for the first year or two. It also may include a seminar for new teachers to meet together once per month or every other week to discuss their experiences and point out areas where help is needed. The seminar could be with an experienced teacher from the school or an instructor from one of the teacher education programs.

Dr. Nichols stated the success of teachers in the classroom is strongly related to their feeling a part of a profession and feeling responsibility for their own performance and their own learning. One of the best ways to build that is to create a support group of teachers who are willing to risk discussing their inadequacies, their successes and what they need to do to get better.

Senator Rawson asked if a more experienced teacher would have a certain percentage of their workload (maybe 20 percent) delegated to this assignment of helping a new teacher. Dr. Nichols said that was a model that had been used in some school districts but it was a resource allocation issue. Also, creating schools that are learning communities helped and allowing teachers the time to mentor, work together in professional development, and learn what they need to learn. She said there were other models that were less resource intensive.

Senator Regan noted that the list of members for the advisory group did not contain any teachers. In fact the only person on the list that has been in a classroom in the last ten years is Debbie Cahill. He opined that the advisory group should include teachers. Dr. Nichols said the advisory group was not the critical component. She viewed that group as a policy group to ensure that the study answered the public policy questions that were raised. As far as the results, findings, and data, that will be determined by talking to teachers, school districts, and the people working in the classrooms. She assured the committee the study would include talking to teachers and obtaining input from teachers; however, she would be happy to include more teachers on the advisory group.

Senator Washington said Dr. Snyder's presentation indicated that cooperation was needed among several entities, and there were two entities missing on the advisory group committee--parents and the business community. He noted that input should be derived from those two groups as well, or the School-to-Careers group. Dr. Nichols said she would be happy to include anyone to the advisory group.

Senator Raggio interjected that Dr. Nichols should not be chided for selecting the list of names to the advisory group. He recognized everyone's concerns and clarified that the advisory group should not be going beyond the language contained in SCR 46 which was to project the number of teachers, current enrollment, etc. Otherwise, additional concerns will surface and then the necessary input and data from those most affected will not be obtained. Dr. Nichols acknowledged Senator Raggio's comments and concluded that the advisory group is very involved in the K-16 initiative which is built upon the business community, teachers and professors.

Assemblyman Hickey commented on the study that was done by The Public Agenda discussing the "disconnect" between content and process and the debate that goes on in the higher education institutions. He said Kati Haycock, who spoke at the K-16 initiative and to this committee, talked about changing the "mindset" of persons involved in higher education. He asked if these messages were being heard in the Colleges of Education. He said the Legislature is looking for solutions and it appeared that teacher

preparation is a part of that solution. He noted it was not fair to hold schools accountable for assessments without knowing what was being done to help teachers teach to the standards. Dr. Nichols answered that the message in higher education was being heard and solutions were being considered.

Dr. Nichols continued that Colleges of Education, historically, have been set apart from the rest of the campus, and they have been considered the "stepchild" whereby students went to the College of Education because they could not succeed anywhere else. She said that attitude, if present on the campus, is destructive to future teachers and for faculty in the Colleges. She indicated that the universities are attempting to communicate that educating teachers is the job of the university--not the Colleges of Education. It is equally, or more so, the responsibility of all of the faculty to role model good teaching, to provide good discipline-based knowledge, and to produce graduating students with basic skills. She said perhaps the philosophy should be: "Nobody should have to worry about the quality of the teachers graduating from the Colleges of Education if you don't have to worry about the quality of all of the graduates from the university." She said it made no sense to isolate teachers, rather it made sense to talk about the quality of all graduates. Graduates should have enough basic knowledge to place them in the classrooms of this country. That is where the SCR 46 study will place a great deal of emphasis.

Senator Raggio asked if the College of Education in Reno still had an internship program for teachers first entering the classroom. Dr. Nichols replied there were approximately seven programs for students studying to be teachers. In fact, there is something every year. Senator Raggio asked if those programs were after graduation when the teacher was in the classroom. Dr. Nichols recalled there was an effective mentoring program for new teachers, but that program was funded through a federal grant awarded to the university which is no longer being funded. She commented that Mary Nebgen, Washoe County School District, had more information on that topic.

C. Mary Peterson and Dr. Keith Rheault

Mary Peterson, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada Department of Education, stated that in Volume 1, Tab 5, Page 66 (Exhibit C), contained the "Nevada Collaborative for Academic Success: A Blueprint for Nevada K-16 Initiatives for the years 1997-2002." Providing background information, Mrs. Peterson said that the K-16 initiative has set strategies containing specific goals for time lines for when those activities should be initiated.

Directing the committee to page 63 of Volume 1 (Exhibit C), Mrs. Peterson said the emphasis is on academic standards for all children. She said the state is already aware that upon disaggregating the data, Hispanic, American-Indian, and Black students do more poorly than Caucasian and Asian students. Also the state has an unacceptably high dropout rate, while at the same time Nevada has one of the lowest "college-going" rates in the country. The most recent statistic is that 38 percent of high school graduates in Nevada continue on to post-secondary training. Further, when Nevada's students reach the university, there is a low persistence rate in graduating. Given all those facts and concerns, she and Chancellor Jarvis initiated a K-16 approach to address these problems.

Commencing in 1996, the Department of Education hosted a K-16 forum at the Southern Nevada Community College campus. At that time, many issues were discussed, including standards. During the summer of 1997, the K-16 meeting was held by the university and included were representatives from Washoe and Clark County School Districts, the Department of Education, the business community and the University and Community College System of Nevada. The forum spent three days looking at K-16 initiatives across the country. In fact, some of the states that Dr. Snyder mentioned had good partnerships were represented at the meeting which allowed for discussion of effective strategies for aligning the standards to make sure that teachers are prepared for teaching to those standards, not only in K-12, but also in teacher preparation programs.

During the fall of 1997, another K-16 meeting was held with the topic of that meeting being focused on standards. Mrs. Peterson said that the K-16 collaborative has begun working on strategies. Directing the committee to page 64 of Volume I ([Exhibit C](#)):

STRATEGY I: In order to develop and implement standards and assessment methods that will raise the level of academic achievement of all students in K-16, we will:

- Include university and community college faculty, both in disciplines and colleges of education, in the process of developing standards and assessments, to include K-12 teachers and administrators in the development of standards and assessments.

Mrs. Peterson added this included writing teams, specifically the writing teams that most recently met in Las Vegas in January, 1998, to establish standards in English, Math and Science.

- Align district standards and curricula with state standards, involving appropriate higher education faculty in that process.

Mrs. Peterson stated the Department of Education has initiated a summer institute to collaborate with colleagues in the university system to focus on standards and preparing teachers to teach to the standards. This will be a professional development in-service opportunity for teachers and educators in Nevada's school districts.

- As assessments are developed, explore using results for university and college admission decisions and for placement in remedial courses.
- Develop pilot projects to explore the relationship between K-12 standards and higher education standards.
- Communicate expectations for student performance on entry to colleges and universities to K-12.

Mrs. Peterson explained the above three items are future items as the collaborative has been mostly working on the first two items of Strategy I.

STRATEGY II: In order to align pre-service and in-service teacher education with the State-established standards and assessments.

Mrs. Peterson said there will be more forum dates dedicated to the topic of aligning the standards across the system. Also, once the academic standards for students are in place, they will have to look carefully at what the standards of teachers should be and make sure that the program approval standards align with them.

STRATEGY III: Reduce impediments and provide incentives for students to complete high school and to enter post-secondary programs that support their successful transition to careers and life.

- This strategy involved the communication of criteria and methods used for placement and remedial course work. She noted that persons at UCCSN have had conversations with persons in the K-12 community on defining remediation.
- Streamline the review process to identify courses used for admission to the two Nevada universities and explore tying this process to new standards and assessment methods as they are

developed, to consider a testing mechanism for high school students who take college courses.

Mrs. Peterson stated that streamlining the process would include the university looking at student scores on the high school proficiency exam as a consideration for admissions criteria and making sure that what is set out as standards for students to achieve by the time they graduate from high school, are the same standards the universities are looking at for freshmen entering the university system.

STRATEGY IV: The development of a K-16 Collaborative related to academic success and standards-based reform is desirable and could include proposals for funding for:

- Mentor teachers;
- Programs to support new teachers;
- Leadership programs that focus on standards;
- Assessment of effectiveness of standards for K-16;
- Business mentors for school, teachers, and students;
- Other initiatives beginning in 1999

Mrs. Peterson said a big issue was mentor teachers. How do you support teachers new to the classroom? How do you match teachers with mentor teachers?

In response to Senator Raggio's question, Mrs. Peterson confirmed that there was someone at the Department of Education to put cost factors into place once the strategies were fully developed.

Senator Raggio announced he had recently received a copy of the draft standards for English Language Arts, Science and Math but had not had an opportunity to review them as yet. He said even though there were only drafts available, it should not be a mystery to what they will eventually look like. He asked if the Colleges of Education were preparing for the implementation of standards. He said the course of instruction at the college would have to be shifted quickly once these standards are implemented. When can the state expect that teachers graduating from the Colleges of Education are ready to teach without having to have new, outside instruction or summer courses. He clarified that he was not being cynical but that might mean professors might need to change their notes that have been used for many years. He asked what the College of Education and the university were doing to prepare.

In response to Senator Raggio's questions, Dr. Jane Nichols, UCCSN, replied that the deans at the two universities have been extremely involved in the standards from the beginning. In addition, both of the Colleges of Education faculties and the faculties from the Math, Chemistry and History Departments have been involved in setting the standards and are fully aware of them. They have also been involved in subgroups of the professional standards and are looking at aligning of the requirements to enter teaching.

Senator Raggio stressed he did not want the Colleges of Education to wait until the standards were implemented in final form to act. Dr. Nichols said the UCCSN will likely take the first step by looking at the content of the standards in comparison to what teachers currently learn in the existing program. She reminded that both UNR and UNLV have implemented new programs in the past one and one-half years. Further, most of the teachers in the Colleges of Education started there in the past three years. In addition, the Colleges of Education are taking responsibility for looking at the standards to make sure that they are graduating students who can teach to those standards.

Senator Raggio expressed that he did not want to hear from the Colleges of Education during the 1999 Legislative Session that the standards were not adopted because they had not had time to look at them. He hoped the message was loud and clear when the measure passed in the 1997 Legislative Session.

Dr. Nichols noted there was a dean from UNR in the audience and she was certain he was hearing the message.

Dr. Stephen Rock, Acting Dean, College of Education, University of Nevada, Reno, assured the committee that they have faculty that have been working diligently at revising the programs. Further, even before the state standards-setting movement began, they seriously reviewed national standards when developing their programs. He informed the committee that faculty have been involved in standards at national and state levels and, therefore, they are very much aware of standards.

Senator Raggio asked whether current graduates from the Colleges of Education will be adequately prepared to teach phonics and math computation or was there still reluctance within the university thinking that such issues are "passe." Dr. Rock confirmed that teachers would be prepared. He elaborated that there has been some sense, especially at the University of Nevada, Reno, but also at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, that the only thing being taught is whole language and that was inaccurate. In fact, graduates have been taught a variety of approaches when reading is taught, and whole language is a part of that.

Senator Raggio said the issue of whole language versus phonics has been discussed at the Legislature previously, and there was an understanding that it was "set aside" by the Colleges of Education. He asked what has been changed in the program during the last one and one-half years to teach to higher standards. In response, Dr. Rock related that they have been attempting to change their selection process, particularly in the past year. In this way, the College of Education is trying to admit students earlier into the program, requiring that they need the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) much earlier in their program. In addition, they are trying to make sure the prerequisites are enforced so that basic math skills are completed before moving into upper-division math courses. He clarified they are trying to make sure they select higher quality students into the program.

Senator Raggio commented that the Legislature has placed a high priority on the training and education of teachers in that large sums of money have been committed to those programs and towards capital needs. He stressed that message should be understood by the university. Dr. Rock responded that they enjoyed the new building and it has created much opportunity for them and opportunities for students to see how to use technology and to improve teaching.

Dr. Keith Rheault, Assistant Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada Department of Education, said he was present to provide information on the Nevada Commission on Professional Standards. He said this is the entity that sets the standards for licensing personnel in the state. He provided a handout (Exhibit F) which explained the tasks of the Commission. Dr. Rheault informed the committee that he was secretary to the Commission and has been working with them for the past three years.

In response to Senator Raggio's inquiry, Dr. Rheault stated there was no misunderstanding on the role the Commission played in the standards-setting process. He noted that Barnett Berry, from the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, is scheduled to appear at the March, 1998, meeting of the Commission on Professional Standards in addition to representatives from Indiana, a state that is in touch with aligning student academic standards with teaching standards. Also, there is a half-day workshop designed for the May 1, 1998, Commission on Professional Standards meeting in Carson City. Senator Raggio asked if that meeting would include a discussion on upgrading the qualifications of teachers. Dr. Rheault clarified the May 1, 1998, meeting would specifically look at aligning teacher licensing standards to what has been approved for student achievement standards.

Senator Raggio asked if there was any reluctance by the Commission to perform its role of changing the level of qualifications to respond to the higher standards. Dr. Rheault replied that he provided charts depicting where the baseline standards are currently. He directed the committee to page 3 of his handout (Exhibit F), Table 10. He noted that 32 states currently require assessments of their teachers and Nevada is one of those states. He said Nevada does more than some states as far as teacher assessment. On Table 11, Exhibit F, the professional development requirements for re-certification are listed. He pointed out that the highest standards in Nevada are for initial licensure. The Commission has taken that stand because approximately 35 percent of new teachers are from Nevada and 65 percent from elsewhere. Specifically, last year three out of every four teachers were from out of state. Turning to Table 11, Dr. Rheault noted that 43 states have renewal requirements. He acknowledged that there have been comments that those requirements needed to be strengthened.

Dr. Rheault explained that in some states if a teacher has taught in the last five years, they can renew their license. However, Nevada requires six renewal credits every five years. A teacher with a master's degree or professional license gets six years, and a teacher with a doctorate is allowed ten years. He said he was not certain that two courses every five years would keep teachers up-to-date with all the changes in standards.

In response to Senator Raggio's inquiry, Dr. Rheault replied the state required three tests for teacher certification: The Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) which tests the basics in reading, writing and math. The Professional Knowledge Test (PKT) which is pedagogical or teaching skills and then for some areas, a speciality area test is required.

Senator Raggio asked how the passing scores for Nevada compared to other states. Dr. Rheault said he believed that approximately 65 to 70 percent were passing. Senator Raggio asked staff to check with the Department of Education to find out how the state's passing scores on the skills tests compared with other states. Dr. Rheault said those numbers were available and, surprisingly, the basic skills test was where they saw most persons not passing, or passing scores were at a lower percentage than the subject area speciality tests.

Senator Raggio asked if the university used the same passing score on the skills test as the state does and asked staff to review the level of passing scores. Dr. Rheault commented that Table 3-B "Ancillary and Special Requirements for Teaching Certificates" dealt with initial licensing requirements in Nevada. He said he believed Nevada had more stringent requirements than many other states. For example, Nevada requires United States citizenship, the oath of allegiance, TB test, the United States and Nevada constitution, a test in basic skills and two other tests, fingerprinting and background checks--he noted that only two or three other states required that. Therefore, on initial licensure, the department and the Commission take into consideration and balance stringent requirements with being able to fill teacher vacancies in the state.

Dr. Rheault informed the Committee that the 1995 Legislature required the Department to allow reciprocity of licensure among states because of the difficulty in filling special education teaching positions. Thereafter, the Commission on Professional Standards proposed that Nevada would accept licensed special education teachers from all 50 states with three years of teaching experience. Also, the number one provision placed on elementary licenses for teachers coming into the state from another state is reading course work provisions. Nevada requires six credits to obtain an elementary license. However, most teachers coming from out-of-state only have two credits so the state places a provision on their license that they must complete another four credits on reading within one year.

In response to Senator Raggio's questions, Dr. Rheault indicated that assessment of teaching performance was not a function of the Department of Education, but he assumed there was some sort of "hands-on" component to measure how well the teacher is performing.

Senator Raggio directed a question to Mary Nebgen, Superintendent of Washoe County School District,

present in the audience. He asked how the Washoe County School District measured teacher performance. Dr. Nebgen answered that the Washoe County School District used a specific set of standards to assess teachers' performance. She stated they follow the "Madeleine Hunter Improvement of Instruction" model and a clinical supervision model--what the principals and assistant principals use when they enter the classroom to observe. At that time, they are observing to see if the teacher is teaching to an objective and whether the objective is at the correct level of difficulty for those students. Dr. Nebgen explained that observations of student responses and teacher responses to students is made. Other observations include: Is the teacher able to monitor and adjust? Is the teacher making use of the principles of learning? She said Dr. Nichols' testimony earlier explained that "principles of learning" included classroom management. In other words, were students taking too much time to sharpen pencils, disrupting the class, do they get started right on time, and is there positive reinforcement.

Senator Raggio asked who observed the conduct described by Dr. Nebgen, and she answered that it was done by the principal or assistant principal.

Senator Raggio asked how school districts dealt with "bad teachers," considering the protection afforded under contracts. How did teachers get help or how are teachers terminated when they continue to be inadequate? He acknowledged that it was not fair to punish a teacher who has devoted many years to teaching. On the other hand, children suffer and that time is never made up to them.

Dr. Nebgen said their attitude is to first help incompetent teachers to be successful. When a principal observes evidence of incompetence, he makes suggestions for improvement and provides those suggestions to the teacher. Some suggestions may include visiting other teachers, receiving assistance from curriculum coordinators, in-service conferences, and other methods.

In response to Senator Raggio's further inquiry, Dr. Nebgen responded that the law required a teacher be allowed 90 days to improve. She noted that was the minimum amount of time, and when a teacher has given the district 15 years, it was harsh to only allow that teacher 90 days to improve so they extend that time period. Also, there comes a point when the teacher is not cooperating, not improving, is not taking advantage of the opportunities provided; then it is time to terminate the contract.

Dr. Nebgen commented that there are procedures at the state and district level that can be followed for a teacher needing improvement and the district can easily show the arbitrator, if necessary, that a teacher is incompetent. Replying to Senator Raggio's direct question, Dr. Nebgen stated the district is able to get rid of a teacher who fails to improve.

Noting that the Governor had declared a "snow day," Senator Raggio indicated the committee would continue the meeting and asked the presenters to be as precise as possible.

Dr. Rheault introduced Frank Follmer, member, Commission on Professional Standards in Education, from the audience.

D. Bill Hanlon

Bill Hanlon, member, State Board of Education, spoke to the committee about the role of the State Board in teacher training programs. He said the state's responsibility in teacher training programs is to provide program approval for the state's universities. Mr. Hanlon expressed concern in that regard and concurred with Dr. Snyder's earlier comments that teacher knowledge was extremely important. It is also important that the teachers not only have the knowledge but can also demonstrate relationships within that knowledge. For instance, a teacher teaching division in the fourth grade should be able to connect that information to polynomials and introductory algebra. Further, it is important when teaching concepts that the teacher relate that concept to other concepts within the same subject area.

Mr. Hanlon continued by stating that one of the weaknesses in the programs statewide and nationwide is the lack of application to mathematical concepts. The problems have much to do with a lack of content and lack of application of the content within the fields that are being taught. For instance, applying mathematical concepts to construction, and architectural design. However, what concerned him most in terms of assessing teachers is the behavioral expectations within schools, and that was what was most cited for lack of teacher preparation.

Mr. Hanlon mentioned the State Board of Education had the following concerns about student standards that relate to teacher education standards:

In the State of Nevada, a teacher can be licensed as a K-8 teacher and within that framework, the teacher could be teaching sixth, seventh and eighth grade classes, subject specific. In other words, one teacher is teaching math, science or English all day long. He said this led to difficulty when that teacher had the same education as a second grade teacher.

Mr. Hanlon stressed that he would like to see the state mandate middle school licensure as opposed to having a secondary or elementary licensure.

Also, Mr. Hanlon said issues concerning teacher licensure have been before the state for the past five years addressing teachers being competent and current, reciprocity, and the alternative route to teacher licensure. While the issue of reciprocity has passed and the alternative route has passed into law, he was still experiencing reluctance from the Colleges of Education to allow people who have gained expertise in some subject matter area to take the course work that would allow them to become teachers. He provided a specific example of such an occurrence:

A young lady at UNLV has a master's degree in Math and is teaching Math part-time for the College of Science and Math at UNLV, currently teaching the "methods" courses in the College of Education. She wants to be a math teacher in the public schools, yet UNLV's College of Education refuses to allow her to take the appropriate course work as prescribed by the Commission on Professional Standards so she can become a public school teacher.

Responding to Senator Raggio, Mr. Hanlon related the reason UNLV will not allow her to take these courses was because "she is not qualified." He queried how a teacher was not qualified to be a secondary math teacher, but was qualified to be teaching methods courses to students who want to become math teachers.

Mr. Hanlon said the above example was more than a conflict, it was a philosophical difference. He said as a math major, he was required to take math courses and education courses and application of math, and it was his opinion that the "weak link" was the application of the course work that is required for licensure.

Senator Raggio commented that Mr. Hanlon's point was well taken and asked what recommendations he had for changes to occur and if such changes were required by legislation or by a change in policy for the Colleges of Education. Would changes in policy for the College impair their accreditation? Mr. Hanlon said he would like to think that the Colleges of Education would agree just based on that it was needed. However, part of his function for the Clark County School District involved him performing math audits at K-12 schools where he continually sees teachers that were taught bad practices in school. Personally, he explains to a teacher the possibility that a subject should have been introduced by linking it to something previously learned. He stressed the importance of having teachers teach things that can be connected to something already learned and explain how it is applied.

Mr. Hanlon asserted there is a "disconnect" between public schools and the universities in that they are concerned with being "life-long learners," and he is concerned with the teacher in the classroom having the knowledge, ability and skill to be able to teach the curriculum so that students perform well on tests.

Mr. Hanlon reiterated that the State Board of Education was responsible for program approval on state programs. He said he did not agree with comments made earlier in testimony that UNR and UNLV were providing the basics of phonics instruction even though that conversation had been discussed in Las Vegas. He stated that needed to be made clear in the program. The State Board needed to ensure that new standards being developed by the state are addressed by the teacher preparation programs. Also, to carry out regulations passed by the Professional Standards Commission on the alternative route to licensure that teacher candidates in shortage areas (math and science) must be allowed access to course work that would allow them to be classroom teachers. He said he would like to see that happen simply by cooperation. In addition, he suggested the Commission on Professional Standards: 1) raise the standards in math; 2) address middle school licensure; and 3) when teachers seek license renewal, they are taking classes that would make them current and competent in the fields they teach.

Mr. Hanlon informed the committee that he has a license to teach math, science and driver's education. However, he does not feel adequately prepared to teach science at any level. Hopefully, those types of things can be addressed. He reiterated his three suggestions:

- Allow students access to course work in areas in which they wish to teach.
- Ensure that teachers who are renewing their license take courses that are more appropriate to the field they teach.
- Make sure the curriculum at the universities match what the public schools need as opposed to a more elitist type of attitude.

Mr. Hanlon concluded his remarks by commenting on Dr. Snyder's testimony regarding the ratio between teachers in the classroom and administrators. Mr. Hanlon opined that there is a 50/50 split of teachers and other people within the school district but those "other people" in the school included teacher aides, special education aides, bus drivers, speech therapists, cafeteria workers and nurses; they are not all administrators. He stressed there is more going into education these days and while what Dr. Snyder was accurate, there is a one to one relationship present in schools and so the comparison made was not completely fair. Senator Raggio acknowledged Mr. Hanlon's concerns--adding that it was an issue that needed to be clarified, particularly in Washoe County because one of the criticisms and reasons for the bond failure is the argument that there are too many administrators. So, it would be helpful to obtain accurate information because even though school staff may not all be teachers, they are essential to the teaching aspect of the entire program.

E. Pat Boyd

Pat Boyd, Associate Superintendent, Lyon County School District, discussed how school districts could provide teacher training to teach to higher standards. Ms. Boyd confirmed that a professional development program had been developed at the Lyon County School District, and she had discussed with some of the members of the committee the success they are having with the "Reading Recovery" program. They have found that not only the children in the program were benefitting from Reading Recovery, but also the children in the classrooms of teachers who spend half their time in Reading Recovery and half of their time in the regular classroom were improving their reading at a higher level than other classrooms.

Ms. Boyd said the district was trying to build on the information the teachers are learning in Reading Recovery and to get that information to all teachers working in elementary schools. They used two in-service days at the beginning of the school year to work on sharing those strategies and instructional techniques. She informed the committee that during the most recent semester, the district was able to access Assembly Bill 659 training funds provided by the legislature and offered a one-credit course to all K-4 teachers. Since they have many trained Reading Recovery teachers in the district, they are able to offer it in each of the attendance areas. Five different communities served. She stated they were pleased to learn that 90 percent

of the teachers in the district elected to take the course. Senator Raggio asked if there was a stipend attached to the course. Ms. Boyd replied there was no stipend but there was an incentive--upon completion of the 15-hour class, the teacher obtained a re-licensing credit and received \$150 worth of books for the classroom to help them implement the kind of reading instruction learned. She said this showed that teachers do want training that is useful and pertinent to their jobs and are interested in succeeding. The district is pleased with their willingness to work in the program. Ms. Boyd related that developing a professional development program is a big effort, and they are constantly trying to supply materials needed to be successful in implementing the new strategies. She advised the committee that the Lyon County School District has invested approximately \$40,000 this year in materials for teachers to use in changing how they teach reading.

Senator Raggio asked if any other school districts had consulted with the Lyon County School District about their program. Ms. Boyd replied that this was the first year experimenting with the program so hopefully they will be able to share the information they have learned with other school districts and continue training over the new few years. She said the Reading Recovery program is working for them because they have a lot of teachers trained already and they can train other teachers; however, Reading Recovery is just one area of the curriculum in which they are working. They will need assistance from the universities and other school districts as to what is effective. She commented on the time limit restrictions in mandating teachers to take training, and the district is working on different incentives so they will be able to attend training beyond their contract hours.

Ms. Boyd stressed the main point was that teacher training/professional development efforts involved a lot of money and time. Senator Raggio acknowledged that it would take a lot of money but it also required teachers willing to personally involve themselves, improve themselves, and update themselves. Also, self-motivation is involved. Ms. Boyd concurred--adding that teachers will come to classes if the programs are successful. However, there is a limited amount of time for teacher in-service during the regular school year and that was a problem.

Senator Raggio noted that in the audience was John Soderman, Associate Superintendent, Douglas County School District. He reminded the committee that they had heard a presentation from the Douglas County School District describing the link the district had between its exemplary professional development program and their strategic plan and high school competency standards. Mr. Soderman thanked Senator Raggio for the recognition and related that the district had three full-time staff devoted to the professional development program.

4. Update on Test Security Procedures for Nevada Proficiency Examinations.

Senator Raggio asked for a report on why breaches of test security occurred and what the status of those breaches were. In addition, he pointed out that at Tab 4, Volume I of the packet (Exhibit C), there was a status report of the test security breaches. David Smith, Nevada Department of Education, stated that Kevin Crowe of the Department of Education would address the letter regarding the status of the cases involving test security breaches. However, a manual outlining procedures to be followed in the instance of a test security breach was set forth at Tab 3, Volume I (Exhibit C), and he could discuss that if the committee desired.

Kevin Crowe, Team Leader, Standards, Curriculum and Assessments, Nevada Department of Education, referred to the letter dated February 18, 1998, at Tab 4, Volume I of the Meeting Packet (Exhibit C) and stated the letter outlined three incidences of test security breaches occurring in 1996 and 1997--noting there was another incident underway in 1998. He said "test security" was a new activity for the department. It had just recently become an issue due to improvement in assessment programs and since the legislature placed more emphasis on test results as a measure of school performance.

Dr. Crowe said test security is common in "high stakes" testing. Therefore, as the state raises the "ante" on state tests, it becomes important to have procedures in place that are clear on what activities the department undertakes when cheating occurs. He informed the committee that his first experience with test security problems occurred in FY 1995, before the incidences outlined in the February 18, 1998, letter. After that, the department began to implement more stringent procedures. Prior to that time, the department had no procedures to investigate test security violations, and no violations had been reported.

Generally, Dr. Crowe continued, the state becomes involved in test security problems in the most blatant cases because it is difficult to monitor every incident where an accident or inadvertent incident occurs. Senator Raggio recalled the incident involving three counselors at a high school who decided to provide certain students who did not speak English very well with the answers. He asked what the department would do in such an instance. Dr. Crowe replied that particular incident was so blatant that they found the breach during the scoring procedure. Students written responses were identical, even in terms of misspellings and grammatical errors, so that led to an investigation of the time and place those tests were administered.

Senator Raggio said if meaningful assessments cannot be assured, then the state is depriving students of a higher level of education and the ability to compete in the world. He stated he could not stress enough the importance of protecting student testing and meaningful assessments.

Dr. Smith said Melanie Crossley from the Attorney General's office was present to speak to that matter as the case involved a settlement. Senator Raggio asked how such a case was "settled" and noted that people should be fired in such an instance as such acts constituted cheating and absolute dishonesty. Ms. Crossley responded that there were degrees of culpability present in the case in addition to defenses. She added that defense attorneys counseled the offenders that settlement was the best course of action. Senator Raggio asked what the settlement included--was it a monetary settlement? Ms. Crossley replied the settlement involved suspension and the Attorney General's Office included the school district's attorney in the process. Senator Raggio stated he would like a continuing report on the matter.

5. Status report on Class-size Reduction Program.

Senator Raggio asked that in the interest of time and the inclement weather, the report provided by Jeanne L. Botts, Senior Program Analyst, Fiscal Analysis Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau, regarding the Class-size Reduction Program be reviewed by the members of the committee and then it can be discussed at the next meeting of the Legislative Committee on Education.

6. Status report on activities of the Council to Establish Academic Standards.

Debbie Smith, Chairperson of the Council to Establish Academic Standards, informed the committee that the writing teams met at the end of January, 1998, for three days to begin work on developing the standards in the three subject areas of English, Math and Science. The drafts that precipitated from those meetings are rough and preliminary because the writing teams will be meeting again in March, 1998, to finalize their efforts. She will provide the committee with those drafts that will eventually go to public hearing. She noted that the three draft standards came in different formats, and the Council has decided the format used by the Science writing team would be used by all. That format was designed as a chart that would allow parents and business lay persons to look from one grade level to the next to see how things tie together.

Senator Raggio commended the Council for working diligently and acknowledged the dedication of the Council members and the writing teams in developing the draft standards.

Mrs. Smith stated the Council has asked for comment from all of the writing teams on all three subject areas

and will be taking those comments into consideration. Further, the Council has asked for comments from their consultants at the Council for Basic Education. She stated one issue that was brought forth was having the standards written in language that was easy for everyone to understand.

Senator Raggio recalled that one of the requirements was that the standards must be rigorous and asked if Mrs. Smith was satisfied that the standards being developed were rigorous. Mrs. Smith replied that English still needed the most work and that was a observation made by the consultant in relation to the draft standards devised by the writing teams, together with the material that had been worked on by the state previously.

In addition, Mrs. Smith stated the Council recently approved an ambitious schedule of meetings to the end of the year, including public meetings and hearings. The Council has begun work on the public engagement process and has set up focus groups for the Las Vegas, Elko and Reno areas next week to gather information to develop a public engagement strategy. That process has two missions: 1) To gather information from the public and gain input on the standards; and then after those standards are drafted and approved by the Council, 2) To make certain the public is aware that the standards are implemented.

Senator Raggio stated the Council appeared to have a slow start but they have risen to the occasion and Mrs. Smith's chairmanship was appreciated.

Mrs. Smith, speaking as a parent and not the Chairperson to the Council to Establish Academic Standards, said with regard to the teacher education issue, while parents do not necessarily need to be involved in the advisory committee capacity, parent input and participation is critical. She informed the committee that she had been an involved parent for many years and she continually heard that teachers do not have enough training or professional development in the area of parental involvement. Parents were asking for improvement in that area at the district, but perhaps teachers have not been provided with all the information or skills they need to improve. Senator Raggio said that issue was an area everyone was having difficulty addressing--"How do you better prepare parents?" Mrs. Smith asserted that it was common knowledge that children do better if their parents are involved in their education.

7. Status report on activities of the Commission on Educational Technology.

Doug Thunder, Deputy Superintendent, Nevada Department of Education, and liaison between the Commission on Educational Technology and the Department of Education, stated that there have been two prior reports from the Commission to the Committee presented by Fred Dugger. He indicated the Commission would continue to provide status reports to the Committee in the future. He provided the Committee with a status report ([Exhibit G](#)) which highlighted activities of the Commission since the Legislative Committee on Education last met. He noted that the last few pages of that handout included statements adopted by the Commission at their last meeting.

Mr. Thunder pointed out that the contract with WestEd to assist the Commission with the preparation of a statewide Comprehensive Educational Technology Plan for the state was negotiated and completed on February 2, 1998, and is fully in effect under the leadership of Kathleen Barfield at WestEd.

Senator Raggio asked if the statement regarding the priorities for the use of funding was adopted by the Commission. Mr. Thunder said the document was adopted by the Commission. Senator Raggio said what caught his attention was the "five computers in every classroom" statement from the Peoria study and, therefore, he would discard that study.

Senator Raggio said it was the understanding of the Legislative Committee on Education that there was some confusion during the last meeting of the Commission on Educational Technology among some members regarding the distribution of the technology funding that was appropriated at \$27.5 million. He

wanted to make sure that it was clear what the purpose and goal of that appropriation was.

Senator Raggio stressed that those funds are **not** to be distributed based upon some sort of "per pupil" formula and if that was where the Commission was headed, then that was completely opposite to what the Legislature intended when the funds were appropriated. He asked that message be delivered to the Commission on Educational Technology and stressed that funds were not to be distributed on a per pupil basis. If that had been the Legislature's intent, the Educational Technology Commission would never have been created and a statewide technology plan would never have been required. Senator Raggio clarified the \$27.5 million were to be distributed to school districts based upon priorities established by the Commission and based upon the needs of the district as reflected in their own district technology plan and the application.

Senator Raggio said it was the Committee's expectation that the Commission on Educational Technology follow a rigorous procedure in evaluating the applications for the funding, and he thought that was what had been adopted at the last meeting of the Commission. He said if there was any member of the Commission that had that misunderstanding, then the message is that is not the way the funding was created and set up and if it is misused, it would not sit well in the future. He noted there were some school districts that obviously have more needs and if the money was allocated on some sort of per capita funding basis, then the Commission will create a disaster.

Mr. Thunder responded that the Commission had the understanding so described by Senator Raggio. He added that early on the Department used the Distributive School Account as a measure of financial need as one indicator and a formula was run from that. However, it is not the intent of the Commission to use that formula. Senator Raggio interjected that may be an easier method but the bill and funding for technology was not designed to be handled that way, and there have been too many times that the Legislature has made these special appropriations with high expectations and then funds end up being distributed because somebody does not want to take the time and effort to determine the perimeters and the need. "Let that not happen here."

8. Public Testimony.

There was no public testimony.

9. Directions to Staff.

The committee was provided with a draft Request for Proposal for a contractor to assist the Legislative Bureau of Educational Accountability and Program Evaluation on the school accountability program that was required by S.B. 482. Senator Raggio stated the RFP would have to be sent out by March 1, 1998. Ms. Botts requested the committee and staff review the RFP carefully and respond to her by the end of the week on any changes or questions they have so it can be mailed by March 1, 1998. She explained that the review of the accountability programs in Nevada school districts was required under S.B. 482 and she would like input from the committee before the RFP was sent to prospective bidders.

Senator Raggio announced he would like a final list of remedial programs found to be effective for the March, 1998, meeting since S.B. 482 requires the Committee to recommend to the Department of Education programs of remedial study by April 1, 1998. He reminded the Committee they had adopted a preliminary list in October, 1997, so if there were any additions or changes, the Committee would need to know about it.

Senator Raggio announced that the interim committee to study juvenile justice recently set up some regional workshops which proved successful and with the committee's approval, he would like to move forward in setting up several regional workshops to answer questions posed to ensure that Nevada has a plan to raise

teachers' ability to deal with higher standards. He suggested that two or three workshops be held throughout the state and acknowledged that it was an important component in implementing the standards and could involve teachers, school administrators, business people and parents. He hoped that it could be put together in the next month and asked staff if that could be accomplished.

Assemblywoman deBraga asserted she was on the juvenile justice committee and assisted in conducting the workshop in Churchill County. She stated the workshop was by invitation although it was a public forum so that specific people could be identified to participate. She explained the workshops were very successful and included presenters on each area identified and then break-out groups were formulated to work on specific areas and come up with specific areas for improvement and suggest legislative involvement when needed. She reiterated that the workshops were extremely successful.

Senator Regan said he did not object to the concept but wanted to make sure that staff checked with other committee schedules and interim studies. Senator Raggio commented that staff could ensure that no calendar conflicts occurred while scheduling the workshops. In addition, it was not necessary for all of the committee members to be at each and every workshop. He said it would be mainly designed to allow for input from various interest groups on a critical issue.

Chairman Raggio tentatively scheduled the next committee meeting for March 26, 1998.

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at

1:08 p.m.

Joi Davis, Secretary

Senator William Raggio, Chairman

Date: _____