

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 9:30 a.m. on November 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 Maurice Washington

Assemblywoman Marcia deBraga

Assemblyman Pat Hickey

Assemblyman Wendell Williams

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Senator Jack Regan (Excused)

STAFF PRESENT:

Jeanne L. Botts, Senior Program Analyst

H. Pepper Sturm, Principal Research Analyst

Kelan Kelly, Senior Research Analyst

Kristin Roberts, Senior Deputy, Legislative Counsel

Mindy Braun, Education Program Analyst

Joi Davis, Committee Secretary

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE:

Eugene Paslov, EMC, Inc.

Debbie Cahill, Nevada State Education Association

Fred Dugger, Commission on Educational Technology

Neena Laxalt, Rose/Glenn Group

Shirley Barber, Clark County School Board Trustee

Robert S. McCord, Clark County School District

Ruth Johnson, Clark County School Board Trustee

Bob Dickens, University of Nevada, Reno

Sherry Blunt, University of Nevada, Reno

Keith Rheault, Nevada Department of Education

Bill Hanlon, Nevada State Board of Education

Holly Walton-Buchanan, Nevada Department of Education

Gloria Dopf, Nevada Department of Education

Roy Casey, Douglas County School District

Anne Loring, Washoe County School District

Kendyl Depaoli, Washoe County School District

Debbie Smith, Council to Establish Academic Standards

Dave Cook, State Board of Education

Cy Ryan, Las Vegas Sun

Dan Piel, Storey County School District

Richard Naccarato, Washoe County School District

Barbara Clark, Nevada Parent-Teacher Association

Carol Harris, Carson City School District

Frank Follmer, Commission on Professional Standards

Jane Nichols, University and Community College System of Nevada

Thalia Dondero, University and Community College System of Nevada

Gail Hansen-Starich, University and Community College System of Nevada

Judith Simpson, Washoe County Partners-in-Education

Joyce Woodhouse, Clark County Partners-in-Education

The following educators from Bosnia appeared as guests to the meeting:

Marina H. Avdic, Alija Lapo, Dusanka Dobrijevic, Milena Stojicic,

Ivo Jelusic, Zdravko Sunkic, Malik Kulenovic, Visnja Trkulja, Tomo Vidovic

List of Exhibits

Exhibit A - Meeting Notice and Agenda

Exhibit B - Attendance Roster

Exhibit C - Meeting Packet

Exhibit D - Excerpt from an article, Making Standards Matter; and Bill Draft Request, provided by Debbie Smith, Chairperson of Council to Establish Academic Standards in Public Schools.

Exhibit E - Regents Initiative on Teachers for Clark County; Community

College of Southern Nevada 2+2+2 Partners, provided by Dr. Jane

Nichols, University and Community College System of Nevada.

Exhibit F - Follow-up Report on AB 610 dated April 17, 1997, provided by

Holly Walton-Buchanan, Nevada Department of Education

Exhibit G - Information regarding Rapid Achievement Gains in Texas

and North Carolina, provided by Jeanne Botts and Pepper Sturm.

Exhibit H - Written Testimony of Joyce Woodhouse, Partners-in-Education,

Clark County School District, and folder of information on program.

Exhibit I - Partners-in-Education program information provided by Judith

Simpson, Washoe County School District.

Exhibit J - Written testimony regarding Parental Involvement from

Dr. Robert McCord, Shirley Barber, and Ruth Johnson.

Exhibit K - Clark County School District's Parental Involvement brochure

and copy of website information.

Exhibit L - National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs,

provided by Mindy Braun, Fiscal Analysis Division.

Exhibit M - Memorandum regarding Attendance Policies (AB 376), provided

by Mindy Braun, Fiscal Analysis Division.

Exhibit N - Letter from Ray Bacon, Nevada Manufacturers Association.

NOTE: All Exhibits are on file at the Research Library and Fiscal Analysis Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

Roll Call

The meeting commenced at 9:45 a.m. with a quorum present. Chairman Raggio noted that Senator Regan was excused. In addition, he noted that Assemblyman Hickey and Senator Regan, although not re-elected to the Nevada Legislature, would remain members to the Committee until the 1999 session convenes.

Approval of Minutes from September 24, 1998, Meeting

Chairman Raggio asked the members if they had any additions, modifications, or corrections to the minutes in the Meeting Packet (Exhibit C, Tab 2). Hearing none, he indicated he would accept a motion for approval.

ASSEMBLYMAN WILLIAMS MOVED TO APPROVE THE

MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 24, 1998, MEETING.

SENATOR RAWSON SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY THOSE PRESENT.

Status Report from the Commission on Educational Technology

Fred Dugger, member, Commission on Educational Technology (CET), directed the Committee to the status report (Exhibit C, Tab 3). Mr. Dugger reported that the CET has a draft statewide technology plan that should be finalized after the next meeting on December 9, 1998. In addition, all of the school districts now have approved technology plans. Mr. Dugger said it was a real incentive for the school districts to complete their technology plans because funding would not be allocated without an approved plan. The school districts are in the process of implementing their technology plans and are using the plans as working documents during that process.

Mr. Dugger said the CET was charged with writing technical standards and a draft document in that regard has been completed. This document was prepared voluntarily by Greg Halapoff, a teacher in Clark County. Eight different revisions have been drafted on the technical standards document and it is almost ready for finalization. This document defines three tiers of technology which districts and schools should try to achieve.

Mr. Dugger explained that the first goal of the CET in distributing funding was to get all schools to Level One—a computer in every classroom, a network in each school, a connection to the Internet, and fundamental wiring (electrical and computer). The CET believes that the funding provided to date has substantially provided Level One for all schools.

Turning to his report (Exhibit C, Tab 3), Mr. Dugger noted that Senate Bill 482, which provided two types of funding (one for equipment and one for implementation and planning), has been beneficial to the districts. At the last meeting of the CET, the possibility of establishing a statewide network for K-12 was discussed. The CET feels that a statewide network is already in place through the University and Community College System of Nevada (UCCSN) and they would like to see cooperation between the UCCSN and the local school districts in order to best utilize that as a backbone for providing networking. To that end, a subcommittee was formed to meet with district and UCCSN representatives to establish proper roles for a cooperative relationship.

Senator Raggio said it appeared from the information provided in the status report, that Churchill, Esmeralda, and Nye counties received funding under Senate Bill 482, Sections 61.1 and 61.2, but have not implemented the projects for which the allocations were made. Mr. Dugger said some districts were more advanced in their technology plans or already had plans drafted and other districts had nothing. The CET refused to release any funding to districts until they had a technology plan completed and approved. Some of the districts did not begin their planning until they received Section 61.2 funding because they had no internal funding for planning. It took longer for some of the smaller districts to get up to the same speed.

Senator Raggio reminded that when Senate Bill 482 was developed, one of the threshold issues was that if a school wanted to have a computer lab the money would be available for that purpose. He asked whether that was what actually was taking place now that funding has been allocated. Mr. Dugger said that the CET

determined that a school district would have the equivalent of a computer in every classroom; however, the school districts and schools had the discretion of determining whether it was best to have a computer in every classroom or the equivalent in a computer lab. Senator Raggio stressed that he did not want to hear any school district report to the Committee that they did not have enough money for a computer lab in their school. Mr. Dugger assured the Chairman that would not occur.

Senator Rawson asked if any of the counties diverted the computer technology money to personnel or non-related technology issues. School districts are not permitted to use the funds to hire employees; recurring costs are not to be funded by one time appropriations. Mr. Dugger said the CET "hammered" that point to the school districts repeatedly. He said the CET had received plans from school districts showing that a person would be hired to support the plan, but the CET continually reminded the districts that could not occur and that the funding under Senate Bill 482 must be used for the purposes outlined in the law. He said the CET was aided tremendously by Jeanne Botts and Pepper Sturm, of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, and by Doug Thunder and Christine Huss, of the Department of Education, to make that point absolutely clear with the school districts. Mr. Dugger said there has been no indication that any funding has been diverted, and if there has been any such activity, it is without the knowledge of the CET.

Senator Raggio asked Mr. Dugger to elaborate on his comment about the UCCSN networking system. Mr. Dugger explained that the UCCSN already has approximately 20 different sites and they have extended that service to certain schools. The school districts have the option of hooking up to that networking system. The school districts that have been successful in that regard are located in the Northeastern Consortium, centered around Elko. They have used the university network but are calling it the Nevada School Network. Senator Raggio said that sort of joint cooperation should be encouraged and utilized whenever possible, if cost effective. However, he reminded that the CET is the governing authority for the statewide K-12 network.

Mr. Dugger said that Chancellor Richard Jarvis, University of Nevada, Reno, addressed the CET at the last meeting and he relayed that they have no interest in adding another governing authority. Further, the CET subcommittee on networking is addressing the notion of making CET the governing body.

Senator Washington asked whether the youth training centers (Elko and Caliente) were funded from the appropriation contained in Section 61.1 for computer technology individually, or as part of the state library allocation. Mr. Dugger replied that the youth training centers were part of the Elko and Lincoln County school districts. Even though the youth training centers were not included under Section 61.2 funding, the CET worked with Elko and Lincoln counties to provide funding for those two institutions. The investment per student for the youth training centers is higher than any institution in the state due to the high level of student need. The amount of money allocated to the two youth centers is more than four times the rate per pupil than in the Clark County School District.

Jeanne L. Botts, Legislative Counsel Bureau, Fiscal Analysis Division, stated that an explanation of the "one-shot" funding, taken directly from the context of the bill, under Section 61.2, will help in understanding the two sources of funding: The \$27.5 million under Section 61.1 and the \$8.6 million under Section 61.2. On page 30 of Exhibit C, the youth training centers are listed.

Chairman Raggio thanked Mr. Dugger for the status report and asked that he forward a "thank you" to the members of the Commission on Educational Technology for their dedicated efforts.

Status Report From Council To Establish Academic Standards For Public Schools

Debbie Smith, Chairperson, Council to Establish Academic Standards, provided the Committee with the Content Standards that were adopted by the Council and State Board of Education on August 20, 1998, and provide comments if any. She acknowledged that the Council is aware that the Standards will need to be reviewed from time-to-time.

Mrs. Smith informed the Committee that the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) recently released a report; a copy of the pertinent section is attached as Exhibit D. She stated that the AFT prepares an annual report entitled *Making Standards Better*, and last year Nevada's standards did not receive a good review. However, this year's review in the AFT pre-publication document is very favorable to the new standards that have been adopted.

Mrs. Smith said the Council is now working on adopting performance standards, which tell how well a student must know the information. She stated that writing teams were convened to work on the performance standards. Those performance standards will come before the Council at the meeting in January 1999, for recommendation to the State Board of Education. The performance standards help by making sense of the content standards and what that means to the student and the teacher in the classroom. After the performance standards are adopted, the Council will obtain pieces of student work that coincide with the performance standards to enable teachers to recognize student work that meets the standard or falls below the standard. By the spring of 1999, the Council will have a full picture of the content and performance standards, along with examples of student work.

Mrs. Smith reported that the Council continues to work on public engagement, stating much information needs to be disseminated to citizens of the state. The Council is working on a brochure which should be produced in final form in the next couple weeks. The brochure provides a recap of how the standards were developed, what the standards look like, and what the standards mean to Nevada students and teachers. Hopefully, the brochure can be a useful tool to explain that the standards are here and will be implemented for the next school year.

Senator Raggio asked how the brochure would be disseminated. Mrs. Smith said the Council has not determined that as yet, but they would be discussing that issue at their January 1999 meeting. Next, a series of public meetings will take place in January 1999. She anticipated that a town hall meeting would take place where the performance standards will be previewed as they are adopted, the Council will receive input on the performance standards, and the public will then be able to see how the two (content and performance standards) tie together. They will also have the brochure available, along with some student presentations of what it looks like to integrate curriculum and what the standards mean to students.

Mrs. Smith related that the Council is beginning to work on Phase II of the standards movement. They have been receiving applications from persons wishing to serve on the writing teams for computer education & technology, health/physical education, arts, and social studies. A subcommittee will be meeting on November 22, 1998, to select the writing team members who will meet in January 1999 to begin writing Phase II standards. She explained that in an effort to cut back on costs, the Council will use local persons as facilitators, except in the area of social studies. Training will take place in December 1998 for local facilitators. Senator Raggio acknowledged the dedication of the writing teams. Mrs. Smith stated that in addition attending meetings, many of them have spent countless hours on editing, reviewing documents and making recommendations. They have contributed a significant amount of their personal time.

Mrs. Smith presented a BDR to extend the time line on the performance standards (Exhibit D). The nine months remaining was not enough time to complete the content standards and finalize the performance standards as well. They would request the timeline be extended to allow the Council to adopt the Phase II standards in January 2000, and then make the assessment recommendation the following month. Next, the Council would like to establish a periodic review of the standards. In Senate Bill 482, the role of the Council is not explicit as to what occurs after the Phase II standards are completed. They believe that the standards will need to be periodically revisited and reviewed by the writing teams and the Council to ensure the standards are on track. Therefore, they would like to include language in the law defining the role of the Council in the last two years of their appointment.

Next, Mrs. Smith said the Council feels strongly about the need for assessment. One of the critical and vital issues of establishing higher standards is the ability to provide remediation. Remediation cannot be provided, however, if assessment of students does not take place.

Lastly, Mrs. Smith said the Council would like the Committee to consider phasing-in the assessments. She noted that was an area the Council needed to discuss at more length in order to formalize their position, but they are concerned that if accountability is only tied to the norm-referenced test, that would place students and teachers in an unfair position. Accountability should be tied to criterion-referenced tests.

Senator Raggio asked if the Council was intending to replace norm-referenced tests altogether. Mrs. Smith replied the Council did not indicate that norm-referenced tests should be replaced, just that it is important to have accountability tied to the criterion-referenced tests. Perhaps a combination of those two types of tests could be used.

Mrs. Smith stated a copy of the Council's funding request was included in the BDR and would enable the Council to complete their work in Phase II (Exhibit D).

Senator Raggio asked whether CBE would be involved in the Phase II standard development process. Mrs. Smith clarified that CBE would be involved in the training of the facilitators, and in the review and editing, but they will not be on-site to assist the writing teams, except for the social studies writing team.

Senator Raggio noted that no questions of Mrs. Smith were forthcoming so he thanked her for her status report and all her efforts toward the Council.

Status Report on the Regents' Initiative for Teacher Education

Jane Nichols, Vice-Chancellor of Academic and Student Affairs, University and Community College System of Nevada (UCCSN), introduced Regent Thalia Dondero, Board of Regents, and Chair to the Initiative for Teacher Education Task Force.

Mrs. Dondero stated that Nevada has been the fastest growing state in the past twelve years. In 1997 the state's population was 1.8 million and it is projected the population in the state will increase by 32 percent. The Western State's Interstate Commission on Higher Education indicates that the rate of Nevada high school graduates will increase by 50 percent. She announced that the college continuation rate for Nevada's graduates is one of the lowest in the nation—32 percent. Mrs. Dondero said the Regents have made undergraduate access and growth their first priorities. In addition, they have received a "wake-up" call from Superintendent Brian Cram, Clark County School District, as to his needs. That precipitated a \$3 million addition to the state budget request to address the area of growth and access needs to provide K-12 teachers for the fastest-growing school district in the nation. The school district indicated that they need about 1,700 new teachers annually. The Regents have found a way supply 1,200 teachers each year, keeping in mind that the school district needs qualified teachers. Mrs. Dondero informed the Committee that the task force has combined efforts with the community college system and the local school districts, especially the Clark County School District. This has resulted in the "2+2+2" program for training teachers which starts with juniors and seniors in high school who attend two years of community college and finish with two years at a university.

Dr. Nichols indicated she would be detailing the initiative for Clark County, which was just approved by the Board of Regents last week. She provided a copy of the Regents' Initiative on Teachers for Clark County (Exhibit E). Dr. Nichols said she would also be updating the Committee on the statewide study on professional development and the steps the UCCSN is taking in order to provide the final report to the 1999

Legislature on teacher education required by Senate Concurrent Resolution 46 of the 1997 session.

Senator Raggio announced that he recently met with representatives of the UCCSN regarding the issues described by Dr. Nichols and Mrs. Dondero. It was during that meeting that he received an outline of the "2+2+2" program. However, it was his understanding that 1,600 teachers would be produced as a result of the proposal; but weeks later the press reported that figure would be 1,200 instead. He asked Dr. Nichols to address the change in that projection.

Dr. Nichols said there was much publicity surrounding the issue of teacher supply. The 1,600 figure for teachers was only the initial figure. Senator Raggio commented that the growth in K-12 enrollment and corresponding need for teachers was obvious; however, if class-size reduction requirements remained and growth estimates were correct, what is the estimated number of teachers needed during the next biennium? Dr. Nichols replied that the first initiative only addresses Clark County. Superintendent Brian Cram had supplied the figure of 1,700 new teachers per year to meet the needs of the Clark County School District. They have met with Dr. Cram and have agreed that UNLV needs to produce 1,200 teachers each year, but that is not a statewide figure. To get the statewide figure, the task force is following the same process—meeting with all of the district superintendents in Nevada to receive their projections of teachers needed. Based on that input, they will set goals for UNR and for Great Basin College in Elko, which is seeking approval to become a 4-year teacher education college, to meet the needs of the rural districts. Out of those projections, they will be able to set a statewide figure with a goal of having 75 percent of teachers in the state hired from Nevada's higher education institutions. Dr. Nichols explained that the districts support that concept because diversity teachers is desired.

Senator Raggio said there has been a problem with out-of-state teachers not being able to meet certification requirements. Dr. Nichols concurred and stated that issue is being addressed as well. Senator Raggio reminded that he hoped that concept would not include waivers in the area of teacher certification. Dr. Nichols assured the Chairman that was not the case; however, they have suggestions in the area of changing teacher certification that will help out-of-state teachers become certified, which does not mean the quality of teaching will be lowered. Senator Raggio commented that it is a nationwide problem. As a result of rapid growth, Nevada cannot always put into place teachers that are certified. The Legislature is not looking for shortcuts in addressing teacher shortages. Dr. Nichols reassured Senator Raggio they would not be taking shortcuts that would result in unqualified teachers.

Dr. Nichols stated the Clark County School District is the largest growing school district in the country, with 11,000 to 14,000 new students each year. She reiterated that the UCCSN task force is also fully aware of the impact upon teacher supply that will occur as a result of class-size reduction and the retirement of existing teachers. At the same time, they are cognizant that while there is a need to produce more new teachers, there are internal issues regarding the quality of graduates. The Regents initiated the task force to build a partnership and to take a specific look first at Clark County—hoping to build a model to use in the remainder of the state. She explained that the initiative task force members consisted of persons from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV); the Community College of Southern Nevada (CCSN); and the Clark County School District. She stated that the Legislature is a part of the initiative as well since funding in the amounts of \$2 million for UNLV and \$1 million for the CCSN has been requested. In addition, the initiative realizes that the Commission on Professional Standards in Education will become an integral part of the project because the task force has suggested changes to teacher certification requirements.

Dr. Nichols informed the Committee that the Clark County Initiative includes all higher education institutions within the state. The University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) is beginning the process of systematically producing teachers who will come to Clark County for their internship and, hopefully, stay in Clark County to teach. In addition, they have contacted all of the approved private colleges that are approved in the State of Nevada, and UCCSN will be working with them to make sure there are sufficient teachers for the school districts.

Senator Raggio asked Dr. Nichols to identify the private colleges. Dr. Nichols said they met with Sierra Nevada College, University of Phoenix, NOVA, and Western Governor's University (WGU). She noted that WGU delivers courses by distance education and has been functioning for some time. There are a small number of students enrolled at WGU and, although they do not currently have an approved teacher education program, they have indicated they have an interest in meeting special needs where they may be able to lend their assistance.

The task force has set a number of goals regarding teacher education:

1. That UNLV will graduate 1,000 teachers in 2001 and 1,200 teachers in 2003. To make that possible, the CCSN will need to transfer at the end of two years, 200 teachers by 2001 who are ready to begin upper division coursework at UNLV.

2. Create "fast-track" pathways to teaching for adults (2+2 package); whereby the first two years of education are concluded at the community college level and the second two years are met at the university level. The community colleges in the state provide a "doorway" into higher education for those students who might not consider going to the university, so that partnership is critical, in addition to being cost-effective. In addition, the 2+2+2 program is underway. This program allows the community college to offer college courses to students at the high school level. Also, they are creating high schools on the community college campuses, and in some instances on university campuses. This enables high school students, at a reasonable cost, to complete part of their college work.

3. The task force will be looking for financial incentives from the school districts to assist students who are prospective employees of the school district, such as loans or stipends and a work commitment. She noted that the Clark County School District has made a commitment to the Initiative by providing space in schools to offer classes to teachers and potential teachers during the evenings and weekends. They have also offered teachers as master teachers who will act as partners in recruitment. Dr. Nichols stated there is a master's program at UNLV which places students in the classroom after the first year, and allows them to finish the master's program while teaching.

4. Look at alternative licensure programs to address areas such as special education teachers, certifying more teachers over 45 years of age more swiftly into other content areas, working with existing substitute teachers to become fully certified, and expanding the entry points to the community college level. The CCSN has hired education faculty and content area faculty that are prepared to provide the first two years of teacher education. The CCSN is successful in seeing that more minority students are placed in Baccalaureate programs and providing transitions for students. In addition, CCSN has begun a partnership with Clark County School District employees who may be interested in teaching. The Paul Laxalt Center in Clark County will be a visible way to give a high priority to teaching. The Clark County Initiative plans on emphasizing the importance of completing the first two years of the teacher education program at the community college and then transferring to UNLV. Many students are lost by going back and forth between the two colleges. More tracking in this area has been suggested in an attempt to maintain students in the program.

The Clark County School District has been working with the UCCSN task force to provide financial incentives for students to enter the teaching field. Dr. Cram is going to provide more internships and field sites that will be needed as more teachers come on board. He will also work with the Initiative on providing supervisors for student teachers and expanding the use of schools in the district. Dr. Nichols advised that the UCCSN and the Clark County School District also plan on partnering on research and assessment to make the program a success. The K-12 partnerships will be looking at college courses in high schools and will work with the school district in supporting teacher cadet programs, a teacher magnet high school in Clark School, future educators, organizations, and America Reads and other tutoring programs to try to get more students interesting in teaching.

Dr. Nichols said one of the needs that has been identified by UNLV and the Clark County School District to produce quality teachers is a list of changes suggested to the Commission on Professional Education in Public Schools regarding teacher certification requirements (Exhibit E, page 10):

- Allow paid internships supervised by UNLV and school district mentors and supervisors to be accepted as meeting licensing requirements for student teaching. Currently, those internships are not accepted by the state, but they could be essential for persons to get into teaching more quickly through alternative licensing or other "fast-track" programs.

Senator Raggio asked if that method would circumvent the certification requirement, and asked Dr. Nichols to explain the proposition. Dr. Nichols replied that it was her understanding that the internships planned under the proposal are exactly the same as those being offered presently at UNLV. There is no difference in the quality or the requirement of those internships for students to demonstrate competency. However, because the internship may be "paid" for the "fast-track" program, they do not meet current licensure requirements. She explained that these internships would be a logical equivalent to the current internship program that is accepted by the state.

- Allow individuals who hold a degree with a major in mathematics or science to use the successful completion of the PRAXIS subject/content examination to certify course content requirements for licensure in mathematics or science. Currently, when an individual requests licensure in a certain field and they have a degree in math or science, the certification clerk looks for individual courses that match the titles if required courses. In many instances, those individuals must go back and take additional courses in that subject area simply because the courses they took at the time they received their master's degree do not match the courses specified for that subject area. The task force is suggesting that if an applicant has a major in that subject area and they can pass the subject-matter exam, then that should suffice to meet the course content requirements for licensure.

Senator Rawson said he understands the task force is progressive in addressing teacher certification issues; however, he acknowledged that the Commission on Professional Standards in Education has not, in the past, been sympathetic. He asked whether the Commission would be more cooperative at this juncture. Dr. Nichols replied that Superintendent Mary Peterson has been informed that they are "opening the door" to look at some of these issues and she has encouraged the task force to bring forth their ideas.

- If a teacher holds an early-childhood or middle-school license from another state, a three-year provisional license to teach in the teacher's licensed area may be issued while the teacher completes course work that leads to K-8 licensure. Currently, the state does not have an equivalent early-childhood or middle-school license equivalent for persons holding that type of license from another state which results in those teachers not being allowed to teach in our state until they complete additional course work. Therefore, it would be appropriate to accept those teachers on a provisional license while they complete additional course work.
- The task force recommends that individuals holding a secondary license be eligible to obtain a limited elementary education endorsement that allows them to teach at the elementary school level, while pursuing additional course work for K-8 licensure. That teaching experience could then be used to meet the student-teaching requirement for K-8 licensure. Dr. Nichols explained that teachers that hold a secondary license are desperately needed in the elementary school level.
- The task force has recommended that teachers licensed in another state where less than eight

credits are required for student teaching, may be granted reciprocity to obtain the license without completing additional credits in student teaching. Those teachers are already fully qualified and certified and it would be appropriate to allow them to teach in Nevada.

- The task force would like to amend NRS 391.060 regarding citizenship requirements for teachers. That provision precludes qualified teachers from coming to the state to teach. Unlike other states, Nevada cannot recruit teachers from Canada or international students.

Dr. Nichols said the UCCSN will provide a report on Teacher Education to the Legislature for the next legislative session. She informed the Committee that aside from the Regent's Initiative, conversations have taken place to align college curriculum with state standards. She stated that a partnership has been established between the UCCSN and The Education Trust to look at the English, mathematics and science standards that have been adopted by the state. They have pulled all six of the higher education institutions together in a process to review all of the curriculum and content being offered, in conjunction with the newly-adopted standards for K-12. Dr. Nichols said the purpose of this project is to make sure that the college faculty is knowledgeable about the content standards and have the curriculum so aligned. Most elementary school teachers actually take their content course work at the community college level, so that course work needs to be raised to meet the standards.

Dr. Nichols opined that there is a need for universities and community colleges to understand that producing teachers is not just the responsibility of the colleges of education but is the responsibility of the entire institution. She said it is exciting to see a professor of biology excited about the standards, or excited about changing the science courses to better prepare teachers, and that is what is transpiring.

The Teacher Education Study group will be implementing performance evaluations and benchmarks, along with conducting a review of the testing that is currently used (PRAXIS) to certify teachers, but they are considering preparing a state-designed test for Nevada's teachers. New professional development initiatives have been studied in order to support the standards. The technology centers that are already in place, and the centers that will be created, will be used for professional development for teachers in the late afternoon when technology centers are not being used by K-12 or the community colleges. Also, they have implemented a statewide process to review distance education. These efforts are all designed to support the K-12 standards by better alignment of college curriculum and to bring K-12 standards and professional development together with the Regional Professional Development Centers that have been proposed for the next legislative session.

Senator Raggio asked Dr. Nichols to address the \$3 million funding request. Dr. Nichols directed the Committee to page six of her handout (Exhibit E), and stated the request is part of the UCCSN's enhancement request. The funding would enable UNLV and CCSN to increase their faculty to accommodate the new, non-traditional, teacher education programs. The funding source would be matched by the continuing enrollment growth that is already budgeted in the base budget. However, when they looked at doubling the numbers of graduates in education over a four-year period, it will take a larger staff. Most of the \$3 million request is directed to the essentials of implementing the programs. They agonized over putting the funding request into faculty and staff; however, they do not believe the need to produce teachers, especially in Clark County, will diminish. So, the \$3 million would enable them to build the programs at each institution to a level beyond the regular growth expected and anticipated in the base budget.

Dr. Nichols added that they do not know what the estimated funding request will be for the school district. Senator Raggio asked for clarification on the community college funding. Dr. Nichols replied that the \$1 million for the community college would include eight new faculty by the year 2001, two new staff, and the operating expenses and equipment to support those positions. The Great Basin Community College is

building a major teacher education program.

Senator Raggio asked for clarification on the number of teachers targeted to meet the demand. Dr. Nichols answered that 1,200 teachers are targeted for the year 2003. Looking at page four of her handout (Exhibit E), the estimated teacher productivity section sets forth the actual numbers of persons finishing the program. In 1997-98, there were 565 students who completed the teacher education program at UNLV, and all those students were in regular baccalaureate or graduate programs already in place. If all the programs the Teacher Education Study has proposed are implemented, it will take approximately four years to reach 1,200 graduates per year from the teacher education programs.

In response to Senator Raggio's questions, Dr. Nichols said approximately 600 students will graduate from the teacher education program at UNLV and approximately 300 students will graduate from the teacher education program at UNR. She stated that they are waiting for UNR to complete their estimates on the proposed number of graduates over the next four years.

Senator Raggio asked what was currently in place at UNLV and UNR to deal with the new standards. Dr. Nichols said the UCCSN has in place a task force in each content area from each of the colleges. These task forces are holding workshops to review curriculum and bring needed changes to the attention of the faculty. Senator Raggio said he expects the faculty at UNLV and CCSN have duly-noted the new standards and the students coming out of those two institutions should have an enhanced capability when they graduate in May or June 1999. Dr. Nichols agreed. Also, there are structures in place to encourage the faculty at these institutions to ensure the standards are integrated into their teaching.

Senator Raggio asked how they planned to address the specialized instruction that is necessary. Dr. Nichols replied that a Teacher Education Study has been created and Dr. Gale Starich, School of Medicine, University of Nevada, Reno, is working with faculty from all the disciplines from every campus to review all of the math, science and English courses that teachers need to take and to systematically match those courses with the standards. This is getting the faculty's attention. In addition, the Regents implemented a policy to commence in the spring 1999, whereby systematic teaching evaluations must be performed in every class within every institution within the UCCSN. Every student in each class will have the ability to evaluate teaching, and those evaluations will be used in the performance evaluation for each person who is part-time, full-time, or a graduate assistant teaching classes within the UCCSN. Dr. Nichols opined that the Regents have sent a message to the faculty that teaching is important.

Senator Raggio asked if any of the funding that is provided for new teachers under newly-enacted federal legislation is available. Dr. Nichols said they would like to take advantage of that funding. In fact, some of the new funding is coming directly to the state to support teacher education and professional development, particularly in partnerships between universities and school districts. They hope to take advantage of that funding, along with the competitive funding at the federal level for which UNLV and CCSN are planning to apply. Federal funding has included the support of new mentoring programs for new teachers.

Dr. Nichols said there is another portion of the federal funding proposal that is of interest—The Report Card. She said they had planned on voluntarily preparing a report card on their graduates' success rate on the required exams, but now they are more motivated to prepare that report. She indicated the Report Card will be included in their report to the Legislature in January 1999.

Assemblyman Hickey asked whether any thought had been given to raising the academic standards for universities—which would be the most logical step after raising standards in the K-12 environment. He acknowledged that there has been some discussion about raising admission standards and other similar proposals. Dr. Nichols answered that the UCCSN is taking a serious look at the students entering the university who are placed in remedial courses. That has resulted in conversations with high school administrators in an attempt to see why students are being placed in remedial courses and to get a better

sense of what the UCCSN might do to match admission standards to the new standards in high school. She anticipates they will be able to clearly articulate appropriate placement at the community colleges and universities. Just that step will enable the universities to raise their standards and change their admission requirements. However, that matter has not been discussed with the Regents as yet.

Senator Rawson asked if teachers in training had a one-semester requirement for student teaching. Dr. Nichols replied the universities and the community colleges in the state are getting student teachers into the classroom very early so that they have a series of classroom experience throughout all four years of college. She explained that there is also the capstone requirement which is one semester whereby the student teacher is required to prepare their own lessons, control the classroom, and perform the job under supervision in an internship fashion, but that experience is not their first experience in the classroom.

Senator Rawson asked whether a certified teacher is present at all times while the student teacher is fulfilling their capstone requirement. Dr. Nichols answered that there is a provision within the Nevada Revised Statutes which requires student teachers to be supervised by a regular teacher in the classroom at all times. Mrs. Dondero mentioned that, in addition, another supervisor from the school district supervises the entire operation.

Senator Rawson commented that if the number of teachers is doubled or tripled over the next couple years, the local school districts will be required to absorb some of those costs. Dr. Nichols agreed there would be a cost to the local school districts in terms of practicums, tutoring, and internships. This is a terrific load on K-12 teachers in the classroom and they should receive additional help. Senator Rawson said at first glance it would appear there is a salary savings; however, in reality the endeavor is actually a cost.

Senator Rawson asked if the 2+2+2 program meant that students would graduate from UNLV or UNR with master's degrees. Dr. Nichols answered the students would be obtaining a baccalaureate degree. She explained:

The first "2" - 2 years of high school (junior/senior)

The second "2" - 2 years of community college

The third "2" - 2 years at a university

It is hoped that students, by combining their coursework, can complete the program in less than six years through the various institutions. However, since very few students these days finish their education in four years that may be too optimistic.

Senator Raggio said the 2+2+2 program should promote interest and motivation at the high school level.

Senator Washington acknowledged Dr. Nichols' comments regarding the Clark County Initiative, noting that those efforts will be implemented statewide, and asked if there was a method to identify teachers wishing to teach in rural school districts or at-risk schools. Dr. Nichols replied that several of the rural districts have indicated an interest in providing incentives to support teachers. She said that UNR and UNLV have not been successful in producing teachers who want to teach in the rural school districts. In talking to the students, it appears that teaching in a rural district is sometimes a difficult transition for them. Teachers hired in rural school districts are not graduates of UNR or UNLV; rather, they are hired from Utah and Idaho, from small colleges in rural areas.

Dr. Nichols said targeting the needs of rural students is one of the reasons the Regents approved the request from Great Basin College in Elko to produce teachers for rural areas. Their program, if accepted, would identify students early, provide incentives for them to stay in rural Nevada, and give them a different kind of education based on not having all the support that urban teachers have. Regarding at-risk schools, Dr.

Nichols stated that the national data shows that those most likely to be successful in at-risk schools are those who have come out of those areas or come out of hardship. Minority students are much more likely to go back into schools with minority enrollment. Again, UNR and UNLV have not been successful in recruiting those students into higher education or into teaching. Their strategy is to work with community colleges in a new fashion to recruit students who do not believe they can be teachers and working with them to attain a high performance level.

Senator Washington asked if some of the incentives could include low-cost loans or low-interest loans for interested students. In addition, he inquired into the type of recruitment programs that have been used forth. Dr. Nichols replied that many of the students in at-risk schools or in rural school districts are eligible for financial aid. However, they try to discourage loans to students who have great financial difficulties because that makes it more difficult for them to remain in the program and pay off the loan. There are many existing programs that students simply do not know about so the UCCSN will be working with the school districts and counselors to target individuals and get the word out. Further, financial aid information for all the higher education institutions and transfer information can be located on the Internet for better access by students and school counselors. Dr. Nichols also advised that CCSN has implemented a placement test for remedial courses in high schools, so students can be prepared and take the necessary classes before entering college.

Bill Hanlon, State Board of Education member, said he had a couple comments regarding the testimony so far. Regarding Senator Raggio's inquiry, he informed the Committee that the universities are working to imbed the new state standards within the curriculum. Secondly, Senator Rawson inquired as to whether the Commission on Professional Standards in Education would work cooperatively with involved parties to address necessary changes. He informed the Committee that the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education have met with all of the teacher education programs recently to discuss performance-based programs.

Mr. Hanlon expressed a concern regarding PRAXIS. He said it has been inferred that PRAXIS is the "gatekeeper" and ETS who developed the PRAXIS exam made a statement last month indicating the PRAXIS exam is not an accurate reflection of what teachers need to know. He noted that the Committee has a BDR to raise the level of performance on the PRAXIS exam and he cautioned them in doing that.

Mr. Hanlon addressed the problem of recruiting new teachers. He said the Legislature has a means to help with that problem. He asked that the Legislature consider an "exemption" for retired educators to return to the classroom while receiving their pension. This would help keep faculty at the universities. He said he has acquaintances and friends who are leaving Nevada to work in Arizona, Utah or California because they can teach or be an administrator in those states, while still receiving their retirement benefits. He said that is a "brain-drain" that greatly affects the university. For example, if a teacher retires from teaching at the Clark County School District, and wishes to teach at UNLV, they cannot do that. He asked that the Legislature review the personnel exemption for retirement to see if retired teachers can be returned to the system while also receiving their pension.

Senator Raggio said that was a good suggestion but how the retirement system would be affected by that proposal, especially in areas other than education, would need to be considered.

Status Report from the Testing Advisory Committee

Jeanne L. Botts, Senior Program Analyst, Legislative Counsel Bureau, stated the Testing Advisory Committee (TAC) was established to help the Legislative Bureau of Educational Accountability and Program Evaluation (LeBeape) and the Committee with testing issues. The TAC is comprised of test directors from local school districts, Department of Education staff members, University testing and statistics experts, and other persons are welcome to attend. Testing vendors and representatives from the Education Commission

of the States (ECS) have attended as well. Ms. Botts said the scope of the TAC is to identify concerns and priorities in testing and develop plans and recommendations to solve problems. The Legislature mandates and pays for statewide testing of pupils.

Ms. Botts announced that at the last meeting of the TAC, the members finalized the survey that was conducted on the amount of classroom time spent on testing. Much interest has been expressed on the results of that survey and the TAC helped develop the survey instrument. The survey results should be completed by December 1, 1998, and Committee members will be provided with a copy of those results at that time.

The TAC has looked at the criteria for the standards-based exams for the CRTs recommended by the Council to Establish Academic Standards (Council). On October 8, 1998, the Council made recommendations regarding the testing of standards. Senate Bill 482 contained \$271,500 to pay for test development at two grade levels. The Council is recommending that testing be implemented in grades 3 and 5, and that local testing be required at the "off-grades" to make sure that students are attaining the standards.

Ms. Botts mentioned that The Education Trust prepared a study comparing the Nevada standards with several tests administered to Nevada students and teachers. Ms. Botts stated that the report prepared by The Education Trust posed concerns among the TAC because in some instances sample questions or brochures were used rather than actual tests and that might not be an adequate basis for comparing the content or the rigor of the tests. She has asked the TAC to review the report so that recommendations might be made. The TAC agreed that the concept was good, but the way the study measured tests against the standards was not adequately performed so the data in the report may not be meaningful.

Ms. Botts said the TAC continues to pursue the process of receiving directly from the test vendor data tables reporting test score information and demographic information from the norm-referenced tests' score sheets. A meeting with the vendor, CTB/McGraw-Hill, took place on October 9, 1998, and the vendor agreed to produce the statewide accountability data tables for \$10,000; the Department of Education and the Legislative Counsel Bureau will each pay \$5,000 to fulfill that contract.

The TAC has also discussed the priorities of the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) for the testing program in view of the budget problems. The Department of Education has been notified by the Budget Division that the \$271,500 appropriated for the tests tied to standards has been "frozen." One of the highest priorities identified by the TAC is continued administration and development of alternative forms of the high school proficiency exam, and incorporating the new standards into that exam. Also, adequately funding the 10th grade TerraNova exam is a high priority. Senator Raggio asked if that was impacted by the budget cuts. Ms. Botts said she believed there was funding available for the remainder of the year, but the recommended budget cut is for the development of the new standards-based exams which the Council to Establish Academic Standards has recommended be given in grades 3 and 5.

Ms. Botts informed the Committee that the Budget Division has asked the NDE to revert approximately \$1 million of general fund money. She pointed out that the Council to Establish Academic Standards has made some general recommendations regarding the standards-based tests, but the State Board of Education will not take action on their recommendations until the December 1998 State Board meeting. Ms. Botts stated Keith Rheault of the NDE could comment further on the budget impact.

Dr. Keith Rheault, Deputy Superintendent, NDE, stated that Ms. Botts was correct in stating that the NDE is to reserve for reversion to the state general fund approximately \$1.1 million. The majority of that sum will come from the NRS 395 Program for out-of-state placement of children with disabilities. However, since most of the money has already been encumbered and provided to school districts, one of the few sources remaining was the \$271,500 allocated for the criterion-referenced tests so they did not have much choice

which funds to revert. Another area of funding the NDE has considered for reversion is the funding for instructional materials tied to the standards. However, those materials are necessary for implementing the standards into the classroom and in order for the materials to be supplied to the schools by the summer of 1999, the Department of Education would prefer not to have to reserve those funds.

Senator Raggio stressed that he did not want the NDE to take any money out of remediation funding. Dr. Rheault said there was about \$20,000 in remediation which had not been expended which they thought they may have to use for reversion.

Final Report on Recommended Changes to Chapter 389, Nevada Revised Statutes (AB 610 of 1995 Session.)

Holly Walton-Buchanan, Assistant Director of the Standards, Curriculum and Assessments Team, NDE, directed the Committee to Tab 4 of the packet (Exhibit C). The report represents approximately three years of work with teachers, curriculum coordinators, the Council to Establish Academic Standards, superintendents, and a number of entities involved in Assembly Bill 610. That bill required a review of the courses of study outlined in Chapter 389 of the Nevada Revised Statutes.

In response to Senator Raggio, Senator Rawson said the report was performed as a result of action taken by his Senate Committee on Human Resources and Facilities during the 1995 Legislature. Ms. Walton-Buchanan said the words "core curriculum" will now, hopefully, become a part of the Nevada Revised Statutes, which set forth what the most important subjects are for students.

Ms. Walton-Buchanan provided a supplement to her report (Exhibit E). She stated that initially a report on Assembly Bill 610 was prepared on January 15, 1997, which contained a survey of many of the groups active in the bill. The findings were presented at the hearing before Senator Rawson's Committee on January 24, 1997. At that time there was testimony concerning difficulties that might occur if certain sections in Chapter 389 were deleted. Therefore, more research was conducted to see what other states were doing. In the meantime, the 1997 Legislature passed Senate Bill 482 which required the development of content standards. Another meeting was conducted and more surveys were completed. Ultimately, a decision was made to recommend the standards as the core curriculum and then revise the old sections of Chapter 389.

Ms. Walton-Buchanan directed the Committee to page 41 of the packet (Exhibit C) which contains the language the Department recommends be added to Chapter 389 of the Nevada Revised Statutes. She stated that adding this language would designate the four major subjects as core curriculum which, under Senate Bill 482, will eventually be tested statewide. She noted that the other subjects contained in Phase II of the standards implementation process must be taught although they will not be tested.

Continuing, Ms. Walton-Buchanan pointed out some of the other changes to the course of study recommended in Chapter 389 of the NRS (pages 41-48, Exhibit C). She reminded the Committee that items in brackets contain language suggested to be removed and italics refer to new language. She noted that the sections on American government and American history, as well as driver's education, have not been altered.

Senator Rawson said there were a couple of sections that appeared to be removed that he could not locate in the new language, such as the section on violent and other crimes and occupational education. He noted that although some progress may have been made to condense the statutes, it appears that everything has just been rearranged. He observed that the groups and committees working on this report have indicated that they do not want to change the timeline because it is too controversial and he asked for comment on that. Quoting from the report, Senator Rawson expressed concern about the comment on Item No. 8 where the State Board said that **"It was decided that no changes be made to NRS 389.065 due to its difficulty in initial passage in the Legislature. It was feared that opening up the statute might result in significant**

changes that would alter the intent of the original legislation" (emphasis added). Senator Rawson continued that he understands those concerns; however, the group studying the matter under Assembly Bill 610 has essentially provided the same requirements, only under a different format.

Senator Raggio asked Ms. Walton-Buchanan to address the provisions that have been deleted entirely, not just moved. Ms. Walton-Buchanan said the American System of Free Enterprise is in the new language (page 41, Exhibit C). She said there were no provisions that were deleted entirely because the course requirement remains. What has been deleted, however, is old, dated language. The subjects are still present, but they have been abbreviated to reference only the subject, rather than all of the specific things that must be taught under that subject matter. The new version deleted the reference to one hour per week for patriotic exercises. However, school district superintendents mentioned that assemblies occur regularly, the pledge of allegiance takes place often, and many other patriotic activities occur so they recommended the following language: "set aside time to hold patriotic exercises."

Senator Rawson said the issue was brought forth because of complaints that Chapter 389 of the Nevada Revised Statutes was too cluttered and needed to be simplified. Where some of the specifics on the subject have been deleted, all of the subjects that received the complaints still remain. In addition, he would like to know if there has been any further discussion on the Legislature's involvement in reviewing the course of study.

Ms. Walton-Buchanan said the Committee reviewing the matter under Assembly Bill 610 discovered that the only subjects contained in Chapter 389 as subjects that are required to be taught were American Government, American History, and Environmental Science. The review committee decided this was the appropriate time to add to the law the subject areas that are required by the new standards. The committee felt it would be better to remove some of the old language and keep it under the four subject areas:

- English, including reading, composition and writing;
- Mathematics;
- Science; and
- Social studies, including history, civics, geography and economics.

Ms. Walton-Buchanan noted that the committee added economics to the course curriculum.

Senator Rawson asked whether everything that currently exists in regulation would remain. Ms. Walton-Buchanan stated that is detailed in the state course of study in Nevada Administration Code 389 and that code is being revamped because of the new academic standards. For instance, where social studies for third grade is outlined, it will be re-written to match the new social studies standards. Senator Rawson said he understood that concept for the four core subject areas where standards have been designed; however, the other subject areas are not addressed by standards so they would be addressed by regulation.

Ms. Walton-Buchanan acknowledged that in areas such as "careers," the committee decided that subject should be included more broadly rather than just addressing that subject in environmental science.

Senator Rawson reiterated that he has continually received complaints that the course of study is too cluttered; yet, this attempt has not deleted any regulations, but instead added more requirements, such as addressing "careers" in every subject matter. He asked if that was correct. Ms. Walton-Buchanan said the review committee felt that designating the subjects as outlined would allow the school districts to determine the amount of emphasis to be placed in each subject area.

Senator Rawson opined that although it may not be in NRS, it is still defined somewhere in regulation. There

should be an outline and reason for everything being taught and, perhaps, that process should be undertaken for each subject listed. He opined that there will likely be some "sharp discussion" on this matter as the legislative session commences. He announced that the Legislature would take a role in the issue. Ms. Walton-Buchanan said there was no appetite to change the way the courses are prescribed and who has responsibility for the courses of study.

Ms. Walton-Buchanan said a comparison of the current Chapter 389 against what is being recommended will show that large sections of text have been removed. Senator Rawson concurred; adding that those sections of text were still located in regulation, though. Ms. Walton-Buchanan said they were not contained in the regulations to that extent. Senator Rawson said the Senate Committee on Human Resources and Facilities may want to look further at the Nevada Revised Statutes on this issue.

Senator Raggio stated he supported Senator Rawson's comments that the Legislature should have a role in establishing the course of study. He asked staff to review Ms. Walton-Buchanan's report and get back to Senator Rawson on his concerns, and any other areas of the report they might feel worthy of review.

Presentation on Sustaining Educational Reform.

ACHIEVEMENT GAINS IN NORTH CAROLINA AND TEXAS

Senator Raggio pointed out that there was a very interesting report contained in the packet at Tab 5, Exhibit C. The report was produced by the National Education Goals Panel regarding the rapid achievement gains in North Carolina and Texas.

H. Pepper Sturm, Principal Research Analyst, Legislative Counsel Bureau, said the National Education Goals Panel (Goals Panel) tracks and reports 33 indicators linked to the National Education's goals on an annual basis. It came to the attention of the Goals Panel that two states, North Carolina and Texas, have shown extraordinary increases in many of the indicators, especially in the area of National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores in mathematics. The Goals Panel then asked the Rand Corporation to conduct an analysis of the education reforms undertaken in both states to identify the factors that could and could not account for their progress. The report is unique in that it represents for the first time, an attempt to evaluate what works at the state level regarding policies for education reform.

Mr. Sturm said that North Carolina and Texas posted the largest average gains in student scores on the NAEP tests administered from 1990 through 1997. The results, which are mirrored in state assessments also administered during the same period, showing evidence that scores of disadvantaged students improved rapidly and more than advantaged students.

Mr. Sturm said he would be discussing the achievement data from each state and the conclusions from the report on what factors were found to not be responsible for the significant gains in both states. Jeanne Botts will discuss the report's findings about what common factors were associated with those gains. Material discussed by Mr. Sturm and Ms. Botts is attached as Exhibit G.

The report concluded that among the states North Carolina and Texas made the greatest combined student achievement gains in math and reading. The report noted that both states also made parallel improvements on their own state assessment tests. In most cases those were CRTs that matched the state standards.

Directing the Committee to page 7 of the report (Exhibit C, tab 5) the reading scores were reported for North Carolina, with math scores increasing even more in that state. He pointed out that both Texas and North Carolina administer grade-by-grade assessments which allows an opportunity to evaluate what is occurring in different grades.

Mr. Sturm noted that the data contained in the Goals Panel report mirror the findings presented by Kati

Haycock from the Education Trust during her presentation to the Committee in January 1998--that significant gains were demonstrated by students from low socioeconomic status and minorities who traditionally score lower on achievement tests.

In summary, Mr. Sturm said Texas and North Carolina made the largest gains in the nation on the NAEP exam from 1990 to 1996. Large gains were also registered on reading and math scores on their individual state assessment tests that reflect the period of 1992 to 1997. Gains in math are larger than in reading on both the state NAEP tests and the individual state assessments. The individual state assessments show larger gains for minority students in Texas and similar gains for black and non-Hispanic white students in North Carolina, with smaller gains for the Hispanic students in North Carolina.

Mr. Sturm said the report by the Goals Panel identified and evaluated several factors commonly associated with student achievement:

- Real per pupil spending;
- Teacher/pupil ratios;
- Teachers with advanced degrees; and
- Experience level of teachers.

The Goals Panel concluded that none of the above factors explained the test score gains. The study concluded that Texas and North Carolina rank at or below national averages on the above characteristics and none of these factors changed during the period under study in ways that would explain the gains.

The Goals Panel concluded that the most plausible explanation for the test score gains is found in the policy environment established in each state through an evolving education reform process. Both states pursued similar paths and each succeeded in changing the organizational environment and incentive structure for educators in ways that led to improvement.

Jeanne Botts, Senior Program Analyst, Legislative Counsel Bureau, stated that when she talks to people from around the nation about what states have been successful in implementing education reform and what steps states have taken to sustain reform once legislation has passed, Texas is always mentioned as a leader.

In both Texas and North Carolina, education reform had taken place over the past decade. The main elements of the policies in both states are often summarized as "systemic reform" which seems to have its roots in the business community. The approach and success in North Carolina and Texas is attributed to three major reasons:

- Leadership from the Business Community.
- Political Leadership.
- Continuity and Stability of Reform Policies over time.

The approaches in both states included the following:

- Establishing clear objectives by grade.
- Establishing new statewide assessments closely linked to learning standards.

- Establishing a system of accountability with both sanctions and rewards linked to assessment results.
- Establishing a computerized system of feed-back on test score performance.
- Emphasizing that all students are expected to meet the standards.
- Providing local control and increased flexibility to teachers and administrators on determining how to meet the standards.
- Sustaining the system of assessment and accountability relatively unchanged over several years.
- Explicit shifting of resources to schools with more disadvantaged students.

Ms. Botts said that the study of the Goals Panel observed certain changes in education, namely:

- Teachers have much better and timely information.
- Teachers are allocating their time more efficiently.
- There is increased use of after-school, weekend and summer time for learning, and tutoring.
- Increased cooperation within the schools.
- Increased attention, at the principal level, to the performance of teachers in raising test scores.
- Focused attention and resources on poor-performing schools.
- More attention is given to the content and choice of professional development and parental involvement programs.

At the superintendent level, there is more awareness of comparisons of results across schools and how that might be used to identify factors that make a difference in test scores at the school level. Teachers and administrators appear to be using a wide range of methods to achieve higher achievement scores. However, the changed design of the organizational environment and competitive incentive structure was thought to be responsible for teachers and administrators finding creative ways to foster high achievement in their students.

Ms. Botts said that one of the major policy changes has been the development of clear teaching objectives through statewide standards. Learning standards covering each grade were established in several subjects, and teachers in all grades were given clear objectives for what students should know at each level. In both states, efforts were made to align professional development, textbooks and curriculum with the statewide assessments.

Continuing, Ms. Botts stated that the study indicated that statewide assessments are closely linked to the statewide standards. New statewide tests were developed in both states reflecting the standards in each grade. Assessment in both states is performed in grades 3 through 8 in both reading and math.

Turning to systems of accountability, Ms. Botts related that the schools in North Carolina and Texas are publicly rated based on their performance on the assessment tests. Both states have financial rewards for schools based on performance, and both states have the power to remove principals based on sustained

levels of poor performance. One of the key issues faced by these states in establishing their accountability system is how to take into account the correlation of test scores with socioeconomic status of the students. Both states take into account two types of measures when reporting scores and ranking schools: Absolute levels of test scores and the year-to-year gain in scores.

Both states keep close scrutiny on the number of students tested. In Texas, 92 percent of students are tested and the only students excluded are those with very limited English proficiency and certain categories of special education students.

Ms. Botts continued with the Goals Panel study which indicated that in both states more local control and flexibility is provided to administrators and teachers—acknowledging that teachers and administrators could not be held accountable unless they were given the authority and flexibility locally to determine how to meet the standards. In both states, many statutes were repealed, fewer constraints were placed on how money is spent, and an expressed policy was identified which allowed schools to take different approaches to achieving objectives.

Ms. Botts noted that in both states the Departments of Education were downsized and refocused to the assessment and accountability programs. In addition, a gradual shifting of more resources to schools with disadvantaged students was evidenced. The shift was partially the result of judicial decisions requiring the state to more equitably fund school districts. The study found that resource levels can make a significant difference in achievement and that disadvantaged students benefit more from increased educational resources.

One common factor present in both states that played a key role in developing the strategic reform initiatives and providing decisive support in the legislature for passage was the business community. Strategic plans in both states were generally opposed by the coalition of education interests. These included various state associations representing school boards, principals and teachers. In both states, the business community was the single most stable, persistent and long-term influence for the reform agenda. Business interest was motivated by the strong belief that the long-term economic development of their state was dependent on high quality K-12 education. In each state, leading businessmen were appointed to key policy-making positions in the educational system.

The role of the political community involved leadership from different offices: The Governor, the Lt. Governor, or key legislators. Neither state had continuity in party affiliations of the key offices, and both states experienced significant turmoil around education issues during this period.

Ms. Botts related that the state of Texas formulated the Texas Business and Education Coalition (TBEC). The Executive Director of that organization has indicated a willingness to speak to the Committee. They also formed an independent lobbying organization, "Texans for Education" which represented the business perspective in education reform. In North Carolina, the North Carolina Public School Forum, a group of businessmen, educators and policymakers, was formulated and paralleled very closely the same efforts in Texas. They implemented school report cards and linked teacher career development to student performance. They also called for stronger training of principals and early childhood programs. North Carolina's reform efforts were assisted by a "booming" state economy. Increasing state revenues allowed for both increased state funding for schools and tax cuts, thereby avoiding much of the political conflict that occurs with a more limited budget. North Carolina placed more emphasis than Texas on its teaching force. North Carolina also changed the structure of teacher pay to develop career paths and a statewide pay schedule.

Ms. Botts said the report concluded that several main elements were present in both states:

- Standards were set by grade;

- All students were held to the standards;
- Assessments were closely-linked to the standards;
- There were consequences for performance on the assessment;
- Local control and flexibility was provided;
- Data by means of a computerized feedback system was important in planning and tracking improvement;
- There was a shifting of resources to more disadvantaged students; and
- An infrastructure involving business was established to sustain reform.

Ms. Botts said she received a study on successful Texas school-wide programs conducted by the Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas. After studying 26 schools with at least 60 percent of the enrollment low-income, that study found seven common themes:

- Focus on academic success for every student;
- No excuses;
- A spirit that encourages experimentation;
- Everyone in the school is considered part of the solution;
- Sense of family;
- A spirit of collaboration and trust; and
- A passion for learning and growing.

Ms. Botts concluded her presentation and asked if she could answer any questions. Chairman Raggio recognized Senator Rawson who asked what the cost per pupil was for North Carolina and Texas. Noting that the class-size reduction in both states was reported at 17.1, Senator Rawson asked what percent was applied to salary and what percent went to administration. In Nevada, approximately 87 percent of school funding is applied to salaries, and he was curious to see how that compared with North Carolina and Texas figures.

Ms. Botts replied 87 percent of school operating costs in Nevada are for salaries and fringe benefits, which includes instructional and administrative salaries. She stated she could obtain that information for Texas and North Carolina if that was desired.

Senator Rawson said the assumption was that factors such as educational level and class-size reduction do not affect change, but maybe those two states have a low or optimal level in those areas. However, if Nevada does not compare with those states then perhaps some other areas of infrastructure should be reviewed.

Mr. Sturm showed some of the changes and characteristics for North Carolina and Texas—noting that on page 13 of the report, the real per-pupil expenditure in Texas and North Carolina is below the average of other states with both states spending approximately \$5,300 per pupil, compared to the average across the

states of \$6,000 per pupil. Senator Rawson commented that the State of Nevada's per pupil rate was approximately \$5,500 so all else being equal, we should see similar changes.

Ms. Botts stated she would provide the information Senator Rawson requested. Senator Rawson observed that a class size of 17.1 in North Carolina and Texas, shows that they have put money into that program. Even though that program did not see any changes during the time period tested, the same results may not have occurred if the rate was 25.1. Therefore, careful use of the information in the study is warranted. Ms. Botts concurred and stated that oftentimes class size reduction numbers are derived at a national level by dividing the number of children by the certified staff. In the Nevada Class-Size Reduction Program, the districts are required to report how many pupils are actually assigned to a teacher and that generally generates a much higher number.

Senator Raggio said in the interest of time, the Committee would accept the report from the National Education Goals Panel and, perhaps, at the next meeting they could allow more time to discuss its contents.

Ms. Botts concluded by stating that on the 1996 NAEP in mathematics, Texas ranked among the top states at the fourth grade level and above the national average at the eighth grade level. Disaggregations of NAEP results indicated that African-American, Hispanic and low-income students in Texas are outperforming most of their counterparts throughout the nation. She stated that Nevada first participated in NAEP in 1996 and placed 31st out of 43 states in fourth grade math. An insufficient number of schools chose to participate in the test at grade eight, which prevented Nevada from obtaining an eighth-grade score. Chairman Raggio asked the Committee to review the report in greater detail.

PARTNERS-IN-EDUCATION

Judith Simpson, Washoe County School District, introduced nine educators from Bosnia who were here to learn how citizenry can participate in government. The Committee recognized and welcomed the visitors.

Joyce Woodhouse, Director of the School Community Partnership for the Clark County School District, stated the program began 15 years ago with a mission aimed at unifying business and community resources with school resources to enrich the educational experience for students. The pilot program began with seven business partnerships and the program has grown to over 600 programs and partnerships presently, ranging from K-12 tutorial programs, scholarships, science activities, and fine arts programs. The business partnerships are multi-level and all schools are involved.

Ms. Woodhouse said the business partnerships in Clark County are curriculum based, with an emphasis on human resources. Partnership ventures are designed to support, supplement and compliment the curriculum of the district. The partnerships are not fundraisers for the school. The goals they seek to achieve are:

1. To increase student knowledge and skill levels to make student learning applicable to the world of work.

1. To increase student understanding and appreciation of various occupations and professions.

2. To increase the community and business involvement in the school system.

The partnership reports quarterly to the advisory board which consists of business and community leaders. The board is chaired by William Martin, President and CEO of Pioneer Citizens Bank. The advisory board has served as a resource for contacts in the community and has provided insights into trends in the business community that impact students.

Ms. Woodhouse described several partnership programs at the Clark County School District:

- **PAYBAC** – This stands for Professionals and Youth Building a Commitment. This program focuses on students in middle schools and alternative high schools. They send two volunteers, "career speakers," into every classroom during a particular time period. The major message sent by the career speakers is to "stay in school." They do this by talking to students about goal-setting and looking to the future. This program includes over 2,800 speakers impacting over 38,000 students every year.

Senator Raggio asked how they were able to obtain that many volunteers. Ms. Woodhouse said they have spoken with a lot of people.

- **FOCUS SCHOOL** – This program matches high-need schools one-on-one with businesses to bring additional resources to those schools. The program began eight years ago with two schools and two businesses. They now have 48 schools matched with 50 businesses. The program provides tutors, mentors, readers, incentives, recognition, facility enhancement, and classroom volunteers. In addition to the business partners, Household Bank has provided a grant for the past four years to fund a part-time facilitator to recruit additional partners and maintain those relationships.
- **STAY-IN-SCHOOL MENTORING PROGRAM** – This program began as a collaborative between United Way and the school district. It provides mentors for students in at-risk middle schools. Mentors are recruited, interviewed, fingerprinted, background checked and trained. They volunteer one hour per week on the school site to work with mentees. This program began as a pilot last spring in three junior high schools or middle schools, and they now have 14 schools with 100 mentors. Target Stores provides footlockers, games and activities for the mentors to use with students.

In the interest of time, Ms. Woodhouse, provided a brochure and additional information regarding the Partners-in-Education program, along with her written testimony for the record ([Exhibit H](#)). She concluded by stating that they also facilitate annual parenting seminars, health and dental programs such as "Miles for Smiles," Kindergarten roundups, three career days, back-to-school faires, a multitude of student incentives, many art, music, and drama programs, and leadership projects. She encouraged the Committee to look through the information she provided in the folder and indicated she would be available to discuss the programs. Ms. Woodhouse assured the Committee that the business community is actively involved with Clark County School District.

Senator Raggio asked whether the Partners-in-Education program worked specifically with remediation programs. Ms. Woodhouse said the mentoring program is beneficial to remediation, but they would look at additional programs with that focus in mind.

Judith Simpson, Washoe County School District, informed the Committee that the Partners-in-Education program in Washoe County began 12 years ago through the efforts of the Greater Reno-Sparks Chamber of Commerce, Washoe County School District, and Harrah's Reno, in an effort to direct business community interests into schools to assist students. Ms. Simpson stated they have six major program areas which are detailed more fully in the packet of materials supplied ([Exhibit I](#)). She mentioned one of the major programs, "Adopt-A-School," involves 165 businesses working with 75 schools. These partnerships enhance and enrich educational opportunities for students.

Ms. Simpson said this year they focused on the eight schools in Washoe County that were deemed to have inadequate performance based on test results. Additional people are working with second graders in a program, "Read to Succeed." With the help of the business community, the next time those students are tested, they will no longer be designated inadequate. They are asking business representatives to make subjects taught in school and help to make them more relevant to students.

Ms. Simpson said she recently worked with women engineers from the University of Nevada, Reno, who prepared science classes for fifth and sixth grade students. There are a number of opportunities where students learn better in an out-of-school situation. For example, there was another program established by the K-16 Council in Washoe County called, "Career Exploration Day" whereby 500 eighth grade students spent time in the job market so they could see that what they learn in school is applicable in the workplace. This also gives them an opportunity to see themselves as potential workers.

Ms. Simpson said their two mentoring programs match 500 students with an equal number of volunteers. In addition, Washoe County has received a great deal of recognition for a program they established, "From Crayons to Computers" which is based on the concept that "your trash is the treasure for some teacher." Almost \$1 million in supplies from businesses have flowed to teachers and schools as a result of that program.

Continuing, Ms. Simpson said that Partners-in-Education actively works in the area of helping students to advance their academic pursuits. This is done through the program "The Worthy Student Fund" where assistance is provided to students who are proceeding to higher-level competitions, based on the belief that if you excel at something, you can excel at life.

Ms. Simpson said they have had the opportunity, through the Center of Civic Education, to work with other programs that extensively involve the business community. They present a mock trial program, and with help from legislation sponsored by Senator Raggio from the 1997 session, they were able to implement the "Project Citizen" program in the middle schools in both Washoe and Clark County, and hopefully by next year, in Elko County. Project Citizen is aimed at helping students to become policy-makers. She commented that Assemblyman Pat Hickey has been very instrumental in the program, and they are saddened that he will no longer be in the Nevada Assembly.

She related that they are currently working with approximately 1,800 businesses and run about 600 programs. She stressed that the Legislature does not need to look at another state to see how they use the business community to benefit education, because both Washoe County and Clark County school districts have been successful in their endeavors. They are both very aware that the success of their programs would not be possible without business leaders and the joint support of their respective school boards.

Senator Raggio commended Ms. Simpson and Ms. Woodhouse for their dedication to the programs they described and for their summary of the Partners-in-Education process.

Ms. Simpson said they have discovered that the people most critical of education are the people in the business community. Allowing the business community to become part of the solution facilitates joint success.

Senator Raggio thanked the speakers for their presentation. The Committee recessed at 12:50 p.m., and reconvened at 2:10 p.m., without a quorum.

Update on Parental Involvement

Shirley Barber, Trustee from District C, Clark County School District, introduced Ruth Johnson, Trustee from District B, Clark County School District, and chairperson to the school district's standing committee on legislation, and Dr. Bob McCord, Deputy Assistant Superintendent for Educational Accountability and Government Relations. Mrs. Barber provided a copy of the written testimony and overhead displays that would be used during their presentation (Exhibit J). She said when she appeared before the Committee in September 1998, Chairman Raggio challenged her to work cooperatively to identify programs designed to

increase parental involvement. In addition, the Chairman said he would provide her with a medal if she could meet that challenge.

Mrs. Barber asked Dr. McCord to address the major points of their proposal. Dr. McCord recollected that the Chairman, during the September 1998 meeting, outlined three key factors to building parental involvement:

- Sound religious foundation;
- Involvement in student activities; and
- Direct involvement in student learning.

Senator Raggio clarified that he was quoting someone else when he made the above comments. Dr. McCord said the Board of Trustees in the Clark County School District agreed with those three factors and they have developed programs and have the following suggestions to increase parent involvement:

Parent Engagement Idea No. 1:

- Side-by-Side Learning. This is particularly effective with English Language Learners' families. Parents learn English in the school right alongside their children, which provides strong modeling of the importance of learning English. He noted that recently Senator Regan visited the program along with Assemblywoman Chowning.
- The GED program. This is another strong area in modeling and mentoring because parents return to school to obtain their GED program and that shows their children the importance of graduating. With some encouragement from the Legislature, these programs could be expanded.

Parent Engagement Idea No. 2:

- Extended-day Library and Computer Center. The Legislature has made a substantial investment toward computer technology in libraries, computer centers and schools. Parents come to the computer centers to pick-up their children and that provides another opportunity to capture the parents in this environment to teach them about computers and how their children are using computers. Extended days in the Computer Centers would help show parents how they can assist their children with homework. Parents are willing to do this before or after school.
- Tutorials have also proven effective. This allows parents to review material at home and then help their youngsters with the material. This is an area where new computer equipment could be used with the aid of parents in the computer lab.

Parent Engagement Idea No. 3:

- Some programs that have been implemented in schools designated as inadequate include parental involvement components. These programs can be disseminated using the money provided by the Legislature. The elements of such programs as "Success For All" and "Accelerated Reader" could be more widely spread to other schools. The Department of Education can help disseminate some of these ideas by putting more information on the web-site. Providing information electronically helps get the information to parents. In fact, Dr. McCord noted that last month there were 620 hits on the Clark County School District web-site. Parents are interested.

Senator Raggio asked what the Clark County School District did with parents who do not come to school. Dr. McCord said that was very difficult but they have found that many parents do not participate because their language skills are weak or they feel deficient in their own education and do not feel comfortable participating in any capacity. The side-by-side learning has helped in that regard.

Parent Engagement Idea No. 4:

- Focus on parent training prior to Kindergarten. They believe that parents want their children to be prepared and are interested in providing that support but often new parents are overwhelmed.

Parent Engagement Idea No. 5:

- Involve the Universities to ensure that new teachers will perform better. Perhaps establish a Parent Training Institute at the universities. There are good ideas within the university faculties to help with parental involvement. When training teachers, university faculty should instruct students on how to involve parents in instructional programs.

Parent Engagement Idea No. 6:

- Legislative Mandates. A BDR is coming forward on "Kids Count" which they hope will give perspective and in turn promote parent involvement. When parents know more about their children, they become more involved. Parenting skills programs and information on parenting can be disseminated more widely to improve involvement.

Senator Raggio asked where parenting skills programs are held. Dr. McCord replied that twice per year a wide variety of parenting skills seminars are held at Clark County high schools. In response to Senator Raggio, Dr. McCord replied that as many as 600-700 parents and as few as 200-300 have attended these seminars, depending on the time of year and location.

Parent Engagement Idea No. 7:

- Accountability. Dr. McCord related that the Clark County School District has fully complied with the laws under Senate Bill 482 of the 1997 Legislature and they strongly believe in education reform. Parent involvement in the school improvement process is essential. They believe the Legislature can be effective in helping them to expand the capacity to establish Area Service Centers in the community with teams of people to help parents with information about schools or related activities. Senator Raggio asked if the Area Service Centers were located in schools. Dr. McCord answered they have two Area Service Centers located in shopping centers. He extended an invitation for any of the Committee members to visit one of the Area Service Centers.

Dr. McCord asked that when the Legislature reviewed the agency's budgets this session, he hoped they would be sensitive to parent involvement matters. In addition, the Clark County School District would be happy to cooperate with any agency that would like to get more involved in parent engagement in schools.

- Student Activities. Dr. McCord said it is essential that students become involved in activities. An incentive program should be created to allow more children to get involved in athletics and clubs.

Senator Raggio agreed and stated that it should not be limited to just school activities but outside activities as well. Dr. McCord commented that allowing kids to perform in front of people is a key to getting parents involved because parents will come to school to watch their children perform. He said that Clark County School District is the "performingist" school in the country because that is the key to getting parents into the school.

Parent Engagement Idea No. 8:

- Legislative Recognition. This could be easily performed by the Legislature. He suggested that the Legislature visit schools that have involved their community in school activities; focusing particularly on middle schools. The Legislature should also recognize school-friendly businesses or government agencies. Recognizing businesses that are school-friendly would encourage their employees to be more involved.
- Parent Involvement in Governance. The Area Service Centers already contain a parent governance system, but there could be other ways in the state where recognition of parent involvement in governance.
- Model Parent Involvement. Parent Teacher Organizations work extremely hard but get little recognition and they believe that the Legislature could highlight parent-teacher groups to show their importance.

Senator Raggio said he was particularly interested in the area of recognition and encouraged other school districts in the state to concentrate on parental involvement.

Mrs. Barber commented on two of the engagement ideas outlined by Dr. McCord:

- Preschool and new parent involvement. Mrs. Barber mentioned that ten years ago the Committee on Economic Development issued a report entitled, "Children in Need" which stated that for every \$1 invested in quality preschool education a \$4.75 return is shown in lower costs in special education, public assistance, and crime.
- Accountability. The business community, churches, governments, Area Service Centers, and parent training efforts all must work together to increase parent involvement. Mrs. Barber suggested that all new programs under consideration for funding should be examined to see whether parent involvement will be improved under the new program.

Senator Raggio assured Mrs. Barber that her concerns would be addressed when state agencies come forward with their budget requests.

Ruth Johnson, Clark County School District Trustee, said that Dr. McCord showcased what the school district does to engage parents and she would show what the Board of Trustees does to be proactive in that area. Regarding the preschool component, Mrs. Johnson said they are looking at using kits similar to those designed for rural Kindergartners who cannot make it into the classroom to provide preschool opportunities for children that qualify for federal grants

Mrs. Johnson handed out a brochure that was prepared by the Board ([Exhibit K](#)). She said the brochures are available at board meetings, committee meetings, and through the area service centers. The brochure outlines several ways parents can be involved in their childrens' education even if they only have a few minutes per day or week to spare. A copy of the Clark County School District's Internet websites was also provided ([Exhibit K](#)).

Mrs. Johnson stated that the representatives on the Clark County School Board of Trustees have Parent Advisory Committees (PAC) that meet once per month. She said that she represents over 40 schools in her district and she helps train those parents on how to navigate the district, who to talk to when they have a problem, etc., and then those parents help advocate for the children in their schools. Mrs. Johnson said they also prepare newsletters for parents. Senator Raggio asked how the newsletters were distributed. Mrs. Johnson replied that the newsletter is provided at each of the PAC meetings and they have a mailing list to whom the newsletter is sent each month.

Mrs. Johnson said that through Senate Concurrent Resolution 8, they have been able to implement Community Education Advisory Boards. The first one began in Boulder City and the second one will be commenced in Mesquite. The school board members have helped begin those boards. The governing committee of the group in Mesquite is all parents. Senator Raggio asked how the parents serving on the advisory board promote additional parental involvement. Mrs. Johnson replied that she sends out letters to parents in the community inviting them to attend meetings. Senator Raggio said he was more concerned with parents who would not be willing to participate in an advisory board capacity. Mrs. Johnson related that in both Boulder City and Mesquite the meeting rooms are packed with parents.

Lastly, Mrs. Johnson discussed the Area Service Centers, stating that these centers have brought the school district to the community. The pilot program is located on East Charleston Street and is doing very well. The governing committee at that location is polled to find out what the parents need. The response to those forums has been good. A second facility was opened in Henderson, and a third facility is under construction in North Las Vegas. There is another building in the planning stage for the central area and one in the Summerlin area. There are tentative plans to run a bus with those same types of services to circulate throughout the district's rural areas. She assumes the responsibility, as a board member, to keep parents involved and informed. It is important to keep in touch and know what concerns and desires parents have for education.

Senator Washington inquired of the Board of Trustee members what involvement, if any, they had with Family Resource Centers. Mrs. Barber replied that Clark County does not have any Family Resource Centers. However, they have programs for three and four-year-olds and they encourage parents to get involved in those programs. The Area Service Centers are designed to allow families to take advantage of the programs offered in that center. She would like to establish a preschool at the Area Service Centers and require parents to volunteer time at the preschool.

In follow-up, Senator Washington noted that many funds have been allocated to Family Resource Centers and he was curious if any duplication of efforts was taking place in two different locations. Dr. McCord agreed, adding that there are so many children in need of services, any duplication at this point does not even begin to match that need. Nonetheless, Dr. McCord stated they will be watchful and observant of any duplication in their program and other similar programs. Mrs. Johnson added that when their first Area Service Center was established, they applied for cross-funding from the resources allocated for the Family Resource Centers but they were not accepted under the plan. She would encourage efforts by the Legislature to reduce duplication.

Mrs. deBraga said she has visited several Kindergarten classrooms and teachers continually tell her that they would like to see Kindergarten students attending class for more hours in the day. She asked if the early childhood pre-school programs would replace that concept.

Mrs. Johnson replied that she would like to see a partial day used for the early childhood program and a full day for Kindergarten. Mrs. Barber agreed that both the early childhood program and the extended-day Kindergarten are needed programs. Dr. McCord said there currently is a Chapter I full-day Kindergarten program in economically disadvantaged schools for needy youngsters, and they would like to expand that program. He noted that Kindergarten is a complete curriculum that has many concepts for the child to learn. The preschool program has many readiness skills to prepare for Kindergarten that require much concentration.

Mrs. deBraga said that Kindergarten teachers demonstrated to her that the first 45 minutes of the day is often spent on hanging up your coat and determining who has had breakfast. A shared aid came to the classroom she visited for a part of the time which allowed that the teacher to test the children she needed to test. Without that shared aid, the teacher would have to find some other time to test her students. Dr. McCord said

the caseload in Kindergarten is high. Over 97 percent of first graders have had the Kindergarten experience so they have a high level of Kindergarten participation in the Clark County School District.

Senator Raggio asked Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Barber to come forward. He presented them each with a legislative medal for coming forward with ideas on improving parental involvement. The Chairman credited Dr. McCord for his actions in obtaining the medals to be given to the trustees.

Mindy Braun, Fiscal Analysis Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau, stated she researched the issue of parental involvement in schools. She located the report published by the National Parent Teacher Association (Exhibit L), and she explained the booklet describes the following positive research when parents are involved in their child's education:

- Students achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status and regardless of ethnic background or the parents' education level.
- The more extensive the parent involvement, the higher the student achievement.
- Higher parental involvement equals higher student grades, higher test scores, higher graduation rates, and greater enrollment rates in post-secondary institutions.
- Student behaviors such as alcohol use, violence, and anti-social behavior, decrease as parent involvement increases.

Ms. Braun went on to state that schools where children are failing or at high-risk, improve dramatically when parents become effective partners in the education process.

The report (Exhibit L) identifies the following strategies on how to increase parental involvement:

- Increase two-way communication between parents and schools to facilitate positive relationships.
- Increase communication between parents and schools by distributing school work requiring parental comment, ask parents to review homework of students on a regular basis, and distribute a class or school newsletter. It is important that these communications are translated for non-English speaking parents.
- Encourage communication of positive student behavior rather than only calling parents when there is negative information to present.
- Welcome parents as volunteers and try to involve all parents, not just those parents who are available during the school day. Also, make the volunteer activities meaningful to the parents and initiate a survey to determine the interests and hobbies of parents so that activities of interest could be used.
- Create a climate to welcome parents. For example, Ms. Braun noted that at Booker Elementary School in Clark County, teachers greet the students that are dropped off by their parents in the morning and return the children to their parents at the end of the day.
- Include the parents in the decision-making process and provide them with current information on the policies of the school. Encourage parents to serve on committees and boards.

Ms. Braun directed the Committee to page 25 of the report ([Exhibit L](#)) which identifies steps for increasing parent involvement in schools and suggests that an action team be created including parents, administrators, and teachers. The action team would take a look at current practices and develop goals on improving parent involvement. Then, policy based on the goals could be implemented and re-evaluated if necessary.

Ms. Braun said in addition to the PTA report she also researched legislation from other states on increasing parent involvement and those laws tend to fall into three categories:

- Parent Training
- Parent Involvement; and
- Employers' Responsibility to Parents.

For example, in Arkansas, the State Department of Education is required to establish a program to train parents as their child's teacher. In Arizona, the local governing boards must develop policies to promote the involvement of parents and guardians, including parent participation in homework. The State of Indiana has enacted a law requiring that school improvement plans include developing and maintaining efforts to increase parental involvement.

Continuing, Ms. Braun stated that in Utah, state funds are targeted to train teachers and administrators to interact with parents and parent advisory groups. Looking at employers' responsibilities to parents, in California, employers with at least 25 employees are prohibited from firing or discriminating against an employee for taking up to 40 hours of leave each school year to participate in school-related activities. In Colorado, businesses with more than 10 employees are encouraged to allow each employee at least two hours per school semester to attend parent-teacher conferences, special presentations, and school-related committees.

Finally, Ms. Braun said that there are programs that can be purchased that have parent involvement as a component. Under Tab 6 of the packet ([Exhibit C](#)), four programs that have been approved by the Committee and adopted in the List of Effective Remedial Programs:

- Books and Beyond (K-8). This is a read-athon program designed to get children to read more at home.
- Lightspan (K-6). This involves a Sony machine that is provided to the family from the school and allows the family to perform mathematical problems and other programs. Lightspan is being used in Lyon County.
- Reading Recovery (grade 1). This program involves one teacher with one student for 30 minutes per day. The child writes a statement then cuts up the statement into separate words and brings it home and parents help the child put the statement back together as a puzzle. The program also includes reading at home.
- Success For All (K-6) is a program that also relies strongly on family support.

Senator Raggio thanked Ms. Braun for her presentation.

Update on Student Attendance Policy

Senator Raggio stated they would accept Ms. Braun's report on student attendance ([Exhibit M](#)).

Public Testimony

Barbara Clark, Legislative Chair, Nevada Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), stated that she was delighted to see the National PTA report regarding the standards for parental involvement provided by Ms. Braun. They have sent that report to all school superintendents in the state with a request to adopt the standards outlined in the report. They did not receive much of a reply from those efforts so they are sending the report to all school board trustees.

Senator Raggio said he was certain that superintendents and board members would like to see more parental involvement and would be happy to receive the report.

Ms. Clark said that parental involvement includes getting a child up in the morning and off to school. Further, there will always be a percentage of parents that cannot be reached, just as there are a percentage of voters that do not show up to vote at election time.

Turning to the BDRs recommended by the Committee, Ms. Clark commented that parent involvement should be included in the Professional Development Centers because many teachers and administrators are not trained in parent involvement. It is important that the teacher and the administrator at all schools provide a welcome atmosphere—as that is the key component. In addition, communication can be improved and allowing parents to e-mail their child's teacher could be a great communication tool. Another factor in reaching parents is to get away from the school-day "timeframe" established as 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Try to reach parents during evenings or weekends instead. Parents are restricted at their jobs and cannot participate during the school day even though they may wish to.

Ms. Clark said there is a BDR for the upcoming session to allow parents to take leave and get involved in school. Although that is an expensive feature, businesses need to be supportive by giving non-paid or paid leave to parents during school hours.

Ray Bacon, Nevada Manufacturers Association, testified that during the last meeting of the Council to Establish Academic Standards, he learned that the State Board of Education is preparing a BDR to extend the effective date on accountability measures for the standards to the year 2003. Apparently, the extension would eliminate potential lawsuits. He stated that he was not happy when he heard about this BDR because he has been working on improving academic standards since 1984 and waiting three or four more years was unacceptable.

Mr. Bacon proposed a change to that BDR or to the statute that would require that the performance on any standardized testing or proficiency testing be listed on each pupil's high school diploma. He stated that would encourage employers to look at the diploma, and then the marketplace determines whether the performance of that student is adequate. He said that would enable the changes to occur this school year, rather than in 2003. His proposal is outlined in his handout (Exhibit N).

Work Session

Senator Raggio noted that since a quorum was not present, the Committee would be unable to act on any of the proposed recommendations.

Jeanne Botts, Legislative Counsel Bureau, directed the Committee to Tab 10 of the Meeting Packet (Exhibit C) which contained the revised budget proposals from the four school districts proposed for the Regional Professional Development Centers.

In addition, Ms. Botts noted that pursuant to a request from a previous meeting, the Committee desired information regarding suspensions and revocations of educators' licenses. That information has been discussed but is provided in written form behind Tab 9 of the Meeting Packet (Exhibit C).

Senator Rawson asked if they would be adopting the down-scaled budget proposal for the Regional Professional Development Centers; that proposal provides 90 to 100 percent of what was provided in the full-implementation for all the counties but Clark County. It would appear that the down-scaled version just reduced Clark County's request. He asked if that was what was planned when the scaled-down version was revised.

Ms. Botts responded that she asked all four school districts to develop two budgets: One for partial implementation and one for full implementation. The partial implementation might be the more realistic way to begin in view of the state's budget constraints and considering the Regional Professional Development Centers are new programs. However, some federal funding may be available for teacher training that the districts did not know about when they were developing these proposals so that may help augment some of the plans.

Date of Next Meeting

Chairman Raggio noted that with a quorum lacking, a date for the next meeting could not be made; however he would be tentatively looking at a time prior to January 6, 1999. There being nothing more to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Joi Davis, Committee Secretary

Senator William J. Raggio, Chairman

Date: _____