

**NEVADA LEGISLATURE**  
**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**  
(*Nevada Revised Statutes [NRS] 218.5352*)

**SUMMARY MINUTES AND ACTION REPORT**

The fifth meeting of the Nevada Legislature's Legislative Committee on Education was held on Friday, April 23, 2004, at 10:30 a.m. at Southside Elementary School, 501 Lamoille Road (physical address 501 South Ninth Street), in Elko, Nevada. A copy of this set of "Summary Minutes and Action Report," including the "Revised Meeting Notice and Agenda" ([Exhibit A](#)) and other substantive exhibits, is available on the Nevada Legislature's Web site at [www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/72nd2003/Interim](http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/72nd2003/Interim). In addition, copies of the audio record may be purchased through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (e-mail: [publications@lcb.state.nv.us](mailto:publications@lcb.state.nv.us); telephone: 775/684-6835).

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Assemblyman Richard D. Perkins, Chairman  
Senator Bernice Mathews  
Senator Maurice E. Washington  
Assemblyman Jason D. Geddes  
Assemblyman William C. Horne  
Assemblyman Bob McCleary

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:**

Senator William J. Raggio, Vice Chairman  
Senator Ann O'Connell

**OTHER LEGISLATOR PRESENT:**

Assemblyman John C. Carpenter

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:**

Carol M. Stonefield, Senior Research Analyst  
Kristin C. Roberts, Principal Deputy Legislative Counsel  
Melinda Braun, Education Program Analyst  
Susan Furlong Reil, Principal Research Secretary and Constituent Services Assistant

**OPENING REMARKS**

Chairman Perkins opened the meeting and identified the Committee members present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MARCH 22, 2004, MEETING**

The Committee **APPROVED THE FOLLOWING ACTION:**

SENATOR MATHEWS MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 22, 2004, MEETING BE APPROVED. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY ASSEMBLYMAN GEDDES AND PASSED.

**WELCOME AND REMARKS**

- Antoinette Cavanaugh, Superintendent, Elko County School District (ECSD), Elko, welcomed the Committee and introduced Mountain View Elementary School's sixth grade music students, who performed a musical

presentation.

Mrs. Cavanaugh discussed the challenges encountered by the Elko County School District over the past year, particularly with regard to implementing the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). These challenges include the requirement that the District hire highly qualified teachers at the outset of their careers and that it provide highly qualified school administrators. In addition, Mrs. Cavanaugh pointed out that the remote location of certain educational facilities effectively eliminates the option of school choice for some students.

Continuing, Mrs. Cavanaugh outlined measures taken by ECSD to meet NCLB, including:

1. Hiring a director of school improvement to implement strategies across the district for meeting the requirements of school improvement; and
2. Employing a new student management system that allows the District to collect data pertinent to student demographics as well as test results.

Please see [Exhibit B](#) and [Exhibit C](#) for details of Mrs. Cavanaugh's presentation.

- Joe de Braga, Director, Curriculum and Testing, ECSD, Elko, highlighted training challenges presented by the vast size and remoteness of the District and summarized professional development efforts. He also discussed testing issues, noting that errors in test booklets and in proficiency examinations undermine administrators' confidence in the accuracy of reported results. Mr. de Braga indicated the formulas for ascertaining proficiency are complex and difficult to explain and provided examples of test results that have been confusing to both parents and school personnel. Further, he pointed out that test results are not provided in a timely manner, leaving little or no time for appropriate remediation efforts. Mr. de Braga also addressed the impact of NCLB on course offerings to high achieving students.

## **REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF EDUCATION ISSUES IN RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY A PANEL CONSISTING OF ADMINISTRATORS, PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND TEACHERS FROM SCHOOLS LOCATED WITHIN THE ECSD AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

- Gerhard Heise, student, Elko High School, Elko, shared his views concerning standardized testing and discussed the challenges presented by the ECSD's remote location. He pointed out that students involved in extracurricular activities miss school in order to travel significant distances to participate in competitions and other events.
- Paul Gardner, Elko Broadcasting, Elko, appeared on behalf of the Elko Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Gardner asserted the ultimate goal of schools is to educate youth. He observed current instructional efforts appear to focus on preparing students to pass standardized tests rather than providing the knowledge and skills necessary to become a good employee or employer. He also suggested basic skills are being forgotten.
- Kim Miller, parent, Elko, discussed the loss of instructional days that result from student participation in extracurricular activities and special events that require significant travel. She suggested the ECSD explore the possibility of implementing a four-day high school schedule to address this issue. Ms. Miller also advocated implementation of an extended school year and expansion of parental involvement, possibly through funding of a parent coordinator position within each school district to recruit parents and implement a parental involvement plan.
- Joe Swabb, Principal, West Wendover Elementary School, West Wendover, Nevada, explained that West Wendover is located on Nevada side of the Nevada-Utah border, and Wendover is situated on the Utah side of the state line. He noted that Wendover and West Wendover each have its own elementary and high schools, and there has been no collaboration between the Nevada and Utah education communities to meet the requirements of NCLB. Mr. Swabb reported West Wendover Elementary School has been identified as a school in need of improvement under NCLB and provided an overview of the school's demographics.

- Deanne Hicks, kindergarten teacher, Southside Elementary School, Elko, discussed extended-day and full-day kindergarten programs. She explained that full-day kindergarten classes are usually conducted by one teacher who provides instruction as set forth in state standards and the district curriculum. In contrast, extended-day kindergarten students receive one-half day of instruction in the district curriculum from a regular kindergarten teacher and are provided with enrichment or developmental instruction during the extended day. She noted children are screened at nine-week intervals, and once they achieve a score at 5 points or above the benchmark, they are exited from the program to enable other students requiring such services to enter the program.
- Keith W. Rheault, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, NDE, Carson City, Nevada, discussed the challenges of providing school choice in rural areas and potential alternatives. He proposed the Committee and the state's education community suggest to Nevada's Congressional Delegation that they pursue the amendment of NCLB to:
  1. Recognize that school choice is not an option if the nearest alternative facility is over a certain distance from a school needing improvement; and
  2. Authorize such rural schools to provide supplemental services as an alternative to school choice.

## **PRESENTATION FROM SOUTHSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, DESIGNATED AS A DISTINGUISHED TITLE I SCHOOL**

Tom Klein, Principal, Southside Elementary School, Elko, provided an overview of programs and innovative initiatives implemented at Southside Elementary School. He also outlined the types of professional development available to teachers and discussed partnerships with the Boys & Girls Club of Elko and Great Basin College. Please see [Exhibit D](#) for details of Mr. Klein's presentation.

## **PRESENTATION ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NORTHEAST NEVADA**

- Nancy Remington, Director, Northeast Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (NNRPDP), Las Vegas, Nevada, highlighted the uniqueness of NNRPDP programs. Ms. Remington explained the NNRPDP concentrates its efforts on meeting the needs of the schools it serves and works closely with educators on school improvement plans. She reviewed the three five-year plans developed by the NNRPDP that were designed to maximize learning through a collaborative learning culture, effective instruction, and instructional leadership. Ms. Remington also discussed distance education and the NNRPDP's focus on literacy. Please see [Exhibit E](#), [Exhibit F](#), and [Exhibit G](#) for details of Ms. Remington's presentation.
- Robert McGinty, Regional Trainer, NNRPDP, discussed the challenges presented by the size and remoteness of some rural districts. He pointed out that meaningful change is accomplished over time.

## **PRESENTATION ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING EDUCATION FOR AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE YOUTH**

- Richard Harjo, Chairman, Board of Commissioners, Nevada Indian Commission, Reno, reported that Native Americans typically have been the lowest achievers in Nevada's educational system. While statistics have been readily available, solutions have been lacking. To address this issue, the Nevada Indian Commission created an advisory group to determine why Native Americans do not perform as well as other ethnic groups and to explore potential solutions. Mr. Harjo provided the Committee with a copy of the Advisory Committee's draft final report. Please see [Exhibit H](#).
- Sherrada James, Executive Director, Nevada Indian Commission, Carson City, highlighted the findings of the Nevada Indian Commission's Advisory Committee on Indian Education in Nevada. She explained that Native Americans are different from other ethnic groups because of their unique relationship with the federal government, pointing out that tribal governments are considered sovereign. Ms. James emphasized the importance of education officials working with the tribes to coordinate services for Native American students

who need assistance in achieving adequate progress. Further, Ms. James offered recommendations for improving the education of American Indian youth in Nevada. Please see [Exhibit I](#) and [Exhibit J](#) for details of Ms. James' remarks.

## **PRESENTATION ON EFFECTIVENESS OF ALTERNATIVE CLASS-SIZE REDUCTION PROGRAM IN ECSD**

- Kevin Melcher, Principal, Northside Elementary School, Elko, provided background information on the ECSD's 22:1 alternative class-size reduction program. Mr. Melcher summarized the evaluation and timeline and discussed the costs incurred to implement the program. He noted evaluation of the program was a collaborative effort among the Legislative Counsel Bureau, NDE, Great Basin College, and the ECSD.
- Danny A. Gonzales, Deputy to the President, Great Basin College, University and Community College System of Nevada, Elko, explained that evaluation of ECSD's class-size reduction project was modeled after the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) program. He outlined the various components of the evaluation process and highlighted the guiding principles utilized in conducting the evaluation. In addition, Mr. Gonzales summarized key findings of the evaluation and discussed the negative and positive effects of class-size reduction.

Please see [Exhibit K](#) and [Exhibit L](#) for details of Mr. Melcher and Mr. Gonzales' presentation.

## **DISCUSSION OF TOPICS AND LOCATIONS OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Chairman Perkins announced that the Committee's next meeting would be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, and invited the members to contact him with suggested agenda topics.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Michelle Hammersmark, science teacher, Battle Mountain High School, Battle Mountain, Nevada, shared her views on legislation that provided for teacher retirement purchase credit. Ms. Hammersmark also commented on progressive discipline legislation, suggesting that clarification is needed with regard to the requirement that schools select a group of parents, teachers, and other staff each year to review and develop a progressive discipline policy.
- Kristine Bell, Lander County teacher, of Eureka, Nevada, discussed highly qualified teacher requirements. She suggested school districts could provide educators with adequate time and, if necessary, funding, to enable them to acquire their master's degrees.
- Michele Oke, Executive Director, Family Resource Centers of Northeastern Nevada, Elko, explained that Senate Bill 8 (Chapter 5, *Statutes of Nevada 2003, 20<sup>th</sup> Special Session*) placed funding for the COW bus under NDE. She noted that along with this change to the funding mechanism, new requirements have been placed on organizations such as the Family Resource Centers that may ultimately restrict their ability to provide certain services. Ms. Oke suggested a single approach will not meet the needs of all providers, and she urged the Committee to consider alternatives that would enable small organizations to continue to meet the needs of their communities. Please see [Exhibit M](#) for details of Ms. Oke's remarks.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Susan Furlong Reil

Principal Research Secretary and  
Constituent Services Assistant

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Carol M. Stonefield  
Senior Research Analyst

APPROVED BY:

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Assemblyman Richard D. Perkins, Chairman

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### LIST OF EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Revised Meeting Notice and Agenda provided by Carol M. Stonefield, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada.

[Exhibit B](#) is brochure titled “Elko County School District,” provided by Antoinette Cavanaugh, Superintendent, Elko County School District (ECSD), Elko, Nevada.

[Exhibit C](#) is a document titled “Elko County School District School Configuration Data,” provided by Antoinette Cavanaugh, Superintendent, ECSD, Elko, Nevada.

[Exhibit D](#) is a copy of a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation titled “Southside Elementary, Distinguished Title I School, 2003-2004,” provided by Tom Klein, Principal, Southside Elementary School, ECSD, Elko, Nevada.

[Exhibit E](#) is a document titled “Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program,” provided by Nancy Remington, Director, Northeast Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (NNRPDP), Las Vegas, Nevada.

[Exhibit F](#) consists of three five-year plans of the NNRPDP, which focus on: (1) instructional leadership; (2) collaborative learning culture; and (3) effective instruction. These documents were provided by Nancy Remington, Director, NNRPDP, Las Vegas, Nevada.

[Exhibit G](#) is a document titled “Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program, Literacy,” provided by Nancy Remington, Director, NNRPDP, Las Vegas, Nevada.

[Exhibit H](#) is a document titled “Advisory Committee on Indian Education in Nevada for the Nevada Indian Commission, Improving the Education of American Indian and Alaskan Natives in Nevada,” provided by Richard Harjo, Chairman, Nevada Indian Commission, Carson City, Nevada.

[Exhibit I](#) is a brochure titled “State of Nevada, Nevada Indian Commission,” provided by Sherrada James, Executive Director, Nevada Indian Commission, Carson City, Nevada.

[Exhibit J](#) is a copy of a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation titled “Improving the Education of American Indian and Alaskan Natives in Nevada,” provided by Sherrada James, Executive Director, Nevada Indian Commission, Carson City, Nevada.

[Exhibit K](#) is a copy of a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation titled “Report on the Elko County School District Class Size Reduction Demonstration Project,” provided by Kevin Melcher, Principal, Northside Elementary School, and Danny A. Gonzales, Deputy to the President, Great Basin College, University and Community College System of

Nevada, both of Elko, Nevada.

[Exhibit L](#) is document titled “Report on the Elko County School District Class Size Reduction 22:1 Demonstration Project,” provided by Kevin Melcher, Principal, Northside Elementary School, and Danny A. Gonzales, Deputy to the President, Great Basin College, University and Community College System of Nevada, both of Elko, Nevada.

[Exhibit M](#) is a copy of a letter dated April 23, 2004, to Assembly Speaker Richard Perkins from Michele Oke, Executive Director, Family Resource Centers of Northeastern Nevada, Elko, provided by Ms. Oke.

This set of “Summary Minutes and Action Report” is supplied as an informational service. Exhibits in electronic format may not be complete. Copies of the complete exhibits, other materials distributed at the meeting, and the audio record are on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. You may contact the Library online at [www.leg.state.nv.us/lcb/research/library/feedbackmail.cfm](http://www.leg.state.nv.us/lcb/research/library/feedbackmail.cfm) or telephone: 775/684-6827.