

**Proposal:** The Advisory Committee to Develop a Plan to Reorganize the Clark County School District was directed in section 27 of Assembly Bill No. 394 (2015) to:

(a) Contract with a qualified consultant to perform a study and assist the advisory committee with:

(1) Developing the plan [to reorganize the Clark County School District into local school precincts not later than the 2018-2019 school year]; and

(2) Studying the distribution of federal, state and local funds and the impact of local school precincts on public school financing.

This proposal requests approval to allocate \$150,000 to hire a consultant as required by A.B. 394, and to provide for additional research and support as may be necessary.

**Consultant:** Mr. Michael Strembitsky proposes to act as the consultant to the Advisory Committee to Develop a Plan to Reorganize the Clark County School District. During the last hearing of the Advisory Committee, Mr. Strembitsky presented information regarding his experience in reorganizing the Edmonton Public Schools in the Alberta Province of Canada. As consultant to the Advisory Committee, Mr. Strembitsky would assist in the development of a plan to reorganize the Clark County School District in a manner which similarly devolves much of the decision-making from the central administration to the individual schools. The plan will establish principles of organization to address the structural and cultural changes necessary to effectuate this radically different management design.

**Research:** The Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities proposes to provide support to Mr. Strembitsky upon request. Such support may include conducting research on specific topic areas necessary to the development of the plan by Mr. Strembitsky, assistance with any necessary report writing and community outreach. Work would be performed by the Guinn Center upon request of Mr. Strembitsky and approval by the contract administrator.

**Qualifications of Michael Strembitsky:** Mr. Strembitsky served as the Superintendent of Schools for 22 years for Edmonton Public Schools. During his tenure in Edmonton, Mr. Strembitsky changed the organization of the schools so that resources were allocated directly to schools and decisions regarding the use of the resources remained with the schools. The role of the central administration was dramatically restructured from a regulatory to a service orientation. Edmonton has received international acclaim for its successful model which has been one of the most studied and emulated in North America. In addition, Mr. Strembitsky has extensive experience consulting with school districts and governmental entities concerning the restructuring and installation of management frameworks. Mr. Strembitsky assisted in establishing educational reform in Hawaii and helped develop legislation enacted by the Hawaii Legislature entitled “An Act to Reinvent Education.” Mr. Strembitsky has consulted with the State of California and has also previously consulted with Clark County School District and

Washoe County School District in Nevada with a concentration on the development of empowerment schools. Mr. Strembitsky has also served as a consultant to the governments of Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Israel, England and has served as a consultant to the Department of Defense Schools in Washington D.C., Germany, Panama and Japan. A full biography is attached.

**Qualifications of the Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities:** The Guinn Center has a team of researchers who will be available to assist with this project. Dr. Nancy E. Brune, Executive Director of the Guinn Center will oversee any research or other projects requested of the Guinn Center. A list of the team members with their qualifications is attached.

**Approach:** Mr. Strembitsky intends to work in consultation with the Clark County School District. Although the plan developed will be independent of the school district, he will obtain relevant information from the school district and ensure a thorough understanding by the school district of the recommendations and the steps necessary to carry out the recommendations that are adopted by the Advisory Committee.

**Goals:** The goal of Mr. Strembitsky will be to develop a plan to reorganize the management structure of the Clark County School District. In the year of the rollout in the school district, all schools within the school district will become empowerment schools. The new management structure will ensure greater accountability by schools, will provide for greater autonomy in decision-making by schools, will provide more transparency, will provide greater communication with stakeholders including parents, staff, students and the community, and will provide greater equity throughout the school district.

**Phases of the Project:** Initially, Mr. Strembitsky will develop a work plan to be approved by the Advisory Committee which outlines the various tasks required to be undertaken and establish stages of implementation. Mr. Strembitsky will work directly with the Clark County School District to assist the district in implementation and report to the Advisory Committee concerning implementation. Mr. Strembitsky will consider and report to the Advisory Committee concerning the manner in which to define “precinct” as anticipated by A.B. 394 and will review the distribution of funding to schools in the district. Mr. Strembitsky will also work with staff of the Legislative Counsel Bureau who will provide administrative assistance and research as needed and to develop regulations to present to the Advisory Committee. The intent of the regulations will be to codify and implement the plan.

**Timing of the Project:** Mr. Strembitsky will begin immediately upon approval of the funding by the Interim Finance Committee to begin work on the project. Mr. Strembitsky will report back to the Advisory Committee concerning findings and recommendations. The goal will be to develop regulations by September. Section 28 of A.B. 394 requires the Board of County Commissioners of Clark County to conduct at least six public meetings once a plan is developed. Mr. Strembitsky will assist in the presentation of the plan at those meetings.

## **MICHAEL STREMBITSKY**

Mike Strembitsky served Edmonton Public Schools for 38 years, with the last 22 of those years as Superintendent of Schools. Edmonton Public Schools today is a district with 210 schools, 90,000 students, and a staff of 8,000.

Mr. Strembitsky initiated “school site decision-making” in seven schools in 1976. Based on the successful experience of those schools, he spearheaded the district’s restructuring of its highly centralized mode of operation to a school site model. This required a total change in administrative structures and practices and the development and installation of entirely new support systems as well as a change in strategy to discard the obsolete and redundant previous operation. This restructuring resulted in Edmonton becoming a lighthouse in public education, allocating the resources to all schools, the authority to plan and deploy the resources and be held accountable for results.

Forty years later, Edmonton continues to operate under this organizational model with a high level of support from staff and the community. The district received international acclaim from Times Magazine (U.S. edition) which labelled Edmonton the most emulated and visited school district in North America.

In 1994, Mr. Strembitsky was recruited by the National Center on Education and the Economy (Washington, D.C.) as Director of High Performance Management, assisting schools, districts and state departments of education across the United States in restructuring and installing management frameworks that address in a very concrete way such abstractions as democratization, governance, subsidiary and accountability.

In 1998, Mr. Strembitsky and a colleague worked for a year to implement similar concepts in the Pasadena School District in California. This was followed by several years of consulting to school districts across the United States.

In 2003, Mr. Strembitsky worked in Hawaii assisting in educational reform efforts. During a seven month period, he worked extensively with legislators, community groups, administrators, teachers and the media in promoting the basic concepts of transparency, greater involvement of schools in decisions to promote higher student achievement and accountability of the schools for student results. The Hawaii Legislature passed Bill 51, “An Act to Reinvent Education.”

In 2004, Mr. Strembitsky joined the Office of the Secretary for Education State of California, as Policy Advisor to the then Secretary Richard Riordan. This year long assignment culminated in legislation that provided for restructuring the state-to-district and district-to-school relationships for up to 20 school districts representing 400,000 students for a five-year term. Based on the five year experience, a determination would be made as to a state-wide rollout.

Prior to retirement, Mr. Strembitsky served as a consultant in Nevada with both Clark and Washoe County School Districts with concentration on work in Clark County “Empowerment Schools”.

Internationally, Mr. Strembitsky has consulted to the governments of Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Israel, England and has served as a consultant to the Department of Defense Schools in Washington, DC, Germany, Panama, and Japan.

# Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities

## OUR TEAM

### **Dr. Nancy E. Brune, Executive Director**

Dr. Brune is the Executive Director of the Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities, a statewide policy analysis and research center providing independent data on issues of economic development, education, tax and fiscal policy, and natural resource security. She is also a Senior Fellow at the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law. She is the author of over 60 peer-reviewed journal articles, reports, essays, blogs, and op-ed pieces on topics ranging from economic security, health outcomes, education, public sector reforms, energy security, public security, and natural resource security. Her work has appeared in the *IMF Staff Papers*, *Social Science and Medicine*, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, and *Americas Quarterly*. Dr. Brune received her Ph.D., Master of Philosophy and Master of Arts degrees from Yale University and her Master of Public Policy and B.A. degrees from Harvard University. She has held research fellowships at Princeton University and the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Brune has consulted for the Harvard School of Public Health, JPMorgan Chase, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and the World Bank. She has taught at the College of Southern Nevada, Nevada State College, and UNLV.

### **Dr. Erika Marquez, Director of Social Policy**

Dr. Marquez is the Director of Social Policy, having previously worked in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health at the School of Community Health Sciences, University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV). She has managed over \$2.3 million in grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Dr. Marquez has extensive experience in program design and evaluation and has designed several logic models to assess and evaluate various health-related programs. She has written several publications in the areas of health and housing. She received her Ph.D. and Masters in in Public Health from UNLV and her B.A. from San Francisco State University. Dr. Marquez sits on several local and State housing councils and committees.

### **Dr. Ken Turner, Senior Fellow**

Dr. Ken Turner has led educational change efforts in the United States and abroad. In the U.S., he provided leadership for an award-winning school, a high-performing district, a reform-minded state system of 800,000 students, and the fifth largest district in the nation.

Recently affiliated with The Lincy Institute in Nevada, Dr. Turner's efforts have chiefly focused on creating a pay-for-performance program for Clark County School District and on developing value-to-cost ratios to gauge the effectiveness and efficiency of schools, programs, and departments. Dr. Turner also led and supported district efforts to: (a) reduce disproportionality by race/ethnicity with respect to expulsion; and (b) develop models to anticipate facility failures that can halt teaching and learning or impact fund balance.

From 2007-2010, Dr. Turner was Deputy Commissioner of Education in Colorado. There he directed the revision of state standards for 13 subjects, guided reorganization of accreditation, and launched an academic growth model, which has informed similar models in 20 states. Dr. Turner has played an important role in other efforts. In 2009, he served on a 12-member team

that advised the National Governors' Association on a national assessment system. In 2006, he was a founding trustee of AdvancED, an agency that accredits 30,000 schools in 70 nations. Dr. Turner earned his doctorate at Harvard in 1991. A year later, Harvard, Columbia, and the University of Pennsylvania named him recipient of the Goldie-Anna Trust Award for dissertation of the year in the field of education.

**Megan Rauch, Director of Policy Outreach and Public Engagement**

Megan K. Rauch is the Director of Policy Outreach and Public Engagement. Ms. Rauch has extensive experience working in a variety of media, including print, radio and video. She has reported on a variety of topics, including: early childhood education, technology in the classroom, socialization for senior citizens, and sexual assault in the military. Ms. Rauch's work has been featured in U.S. News & Work Report, The Military Times, and Medill Reports. Megan's professional journey in Las Vegas began when she served a corps member in Teach for America. She taught twelfth grade English and was the yearbook advisor at Mojave High School in North Las Vegas. During that time, she earned her Masters in Education from UNLV. She also holds a Masters in Journalism from Northwestern University and a B.A. in English from Boston College.