



**NEVADA LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION'S COMMITTEE TO STUDY GOVERNANCE
AND OVERSIGHT OF THE SYSTEM OF K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION
(Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 2, File No. 89, *Statutes of Nevada 2009*)**

SUMMARY MINUTES AND ACTION REPORT

The first meeting of the Nevada Legislature's Legislative Commission's Committee to Study the Governance and Oversight of the System of K-12 Public Education (A.C.R. 2) was held on January 21, 2010, at 9 a.m. in Room 4412 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 2135 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. A copy of this set of "Summary Minutes and Action Report," including the "Meeting Notice and Agenda" ([Exhibit A](#)) and other substantive exhibits, is available on the Nevada Legislature's website at <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/interim/75th2009/committee/>. 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; telephone: 775/684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:

Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Chair
Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Vice Chair
Senator Barbara K. Cegavske
Senator Steven A. Horsford
Assemblyman Paul Aizley
Assemblyman Lynn D. Stewart

OTHER LEGISLATOR PRESENT:

Senator William J. Raggio

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Melinda Martini, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division
H. Pepper Sturm, Chief Deputy Research Director, Research Division
Kristin C. Roberts, Senior Principal Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Maryann Elorreaga, Senior Research Secretary, Research Division

OPENING REMARKS

Chair Parnell called the meeting to order and introduced the Committee members and Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) staff assigned to the Committee. She said the Committee has been directed to conduct a study regarding the governance and oversight of the system of K-12 public education in Nevada and determine the extent to which the structure supports:

- Ø Streamlined communication across all entities;
- Ø Efficient use of resources;
- Ø Fiscal responsibility; and
- Ø The delivery of a high quality education for all students.

She said it was her goal, as Chair, is to determine the deficiencies in Nevada's education governance system, and make recommendations to correct those deficiencies.

REVIEW OF ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 2 AND THE COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

- Melinda Martini, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division, LCB, said Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 2 directed the Legislative Commission to conduct an interim study concerning the governance and oversight of Nevada's K-12 public education system. The Legislative Commission was directed, through the legislation, to appoint three members of the Senate and three members of the Assembly to the Committee. Based upon the findings of the interim study, the Committee will recommend such actions as may be necessary for the efficient and effective operation of the governance and oversight of Nevada's system of K-12 public education and to ensure the steady progression of Nevada's public schools and the achievement of its pupils. Ms. Martini reviewed the Committee work plan and the resource materials provided to the Committee members.

OVERVIEW OF NEVADA'S K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Nevada Education Reform Act of 1997

- Senator William J. Raggio, Washoe County Senatorial District No. 3, said the Nevada Education Reform Act (NERA) was enacted to accomplish several things: it completed the formation of the accountability program by linking achievement data with school improvement; it provided policymakers at all levels with the data needed to make informed decisions concerning Nevada's system of public education; and it provided for responsible implementation of technology in public schools. He said that, more importantly, it created a cohesive structure for education reform by:

- Ø Implementing statewide academic standards in core subjects;
- Ø Linking statewide tests to those standards;
- Ø Holding schools accountable for performance, as measured by improved statewide accountability reports;
- Ø Establishing a process for individual student remediation and school improvement; and
- Ø Providing for legislative review of the entire process.

Senator Raggio noted the entities that were created by, or as a result of, NERA those bodies include: the Legislative Committee on Education; the Legislative Bureau of Educational Accountability and Program Evaluation; the Regional Professional Development Programs; the Council to Establish Academic Standards; and the Commission on Educational Technology. He gave a brief history and description of each of the entities. Senator Raggio outlined some basic principles that had guided him in establishing the governance changes under NERA, noting the Committee might find them useful in its deliberations.

1. Remember the ultimate goal is the provision of a high quality education for Nevada's children. It is not to serve the interests of the adults associated with the system.
2. Remember to separate yourselves from focusing on the people that currently hold the positions you are considering. The structure itself must be the primary focus, otherwise opinions rule the process. Look at functionality, not personality.
3. Define who is in charge at the State, district, and school levels, and pay special attention to who sets policy.
4. Define the duties and responsibilities of every entity within the governance structure, including who is accountable to whom and for what. Verify that each entity has sufficient authority to carry out those responsibilities and determine if the authority is spelled out in statute. Determine what the consequences are for noncompliance.
5. Understand that communication issues must be addressed within and among the governance bodies. Determine how communication will take place, how often and under what circumstances.

In conclusion, Senator Raggio said that entities needed to continue to work together to ensure that all of Nevada's children receive a quality education from schools that have high, rigorous standards in place; that there is a corps of effective teachers and principals; and that the structure Nevada's public education system continues to support those goals.

- Chair Parnell thanked Senator Raggio for his presentation and commented that it was very informative.
- Senator Cegavske asked about the participation of Nevada's universities in teaching education students the academic standards.

Senator Raggio replied that the deans of the colleges of education from both the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and the University of Nevada, Reno had committed to redesigning their programs to ensure that the education students would be taught to teach the academic standards.

Historical Overview of Nevada's K-12 Public Education Governance Structure

- H. Pepper Sturm, Chief Deputy Research Director, Research Division, LCB, referred to an LCB Research Division issue paper ([Exhibit B](#)) and gave an historical overview of certain elements of Nevada's K-12 education governance structure. He addressed the histories and functions of:
 - The State Board of Education;
 - The Superintendent of Public Instruction;
 - Nevada's Department of Education;
 - The Legislative Committee on Education;
 - The Legislative Bureau of Educational Accountability and Program Evaluation;
 - The Commission on Professional Standards in Education;
 - The Commission on Educational Technology;
 - The Council to Establish Academic Standards in Public Schools;
 - Regional Professional Development Programs; and
 - The Commission on Educational Excellence.

Senators Cegavske and Horsford asked that the Committee be provided with several specific pieces of information about the DOE, including the duties of its staff and the locations of services. Chair Parnell asked staff to provide the information prior to the next scheduled meeting.

NATIONAL OVERVIEW OF STATE EDUCATION GOVERNANCE MODELS

- Kathy Christie, Chief of Staff, Education Commission of the States, conducted a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation ([Exhibit C](#)) and discussed the following Governance Models:
 1. Governor Appoints Board, Board Appoints Chief;
 2. Elected Board, Board Appoints Chief;
 3. Appointed Board, Elected Chief; and
 4. Appointed Board, Appointed Chief.

She noted the good points and bad points of each model and cited some examples of education governance in other states.

OVERVIEW OF DATA FROM THE SURVEY OF OPINIONS FOR THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION'S COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT AN INTERIM STUDY OF THE GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT OF THE SYSTEM OF K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION

- Melinda Martini, previously identified, reviewed reports of the results of the Survey of Opinions related to the Council to Establish Academic Standards for Public Schools ([Exhibit D](#)), the regional training programs for the professional development of teachers and administrators ([Exhibit E](#)), and the Commission on Educational Technology ([Exhibit F](#)).

DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN EDUCATIONAL ENTITIES INCLUDED WITHIN NEVADA'S CURRENT STRUCTURE OF GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT OF THE SYSTEM OF K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION

Presentation of the Council to Establish Academic Standards for Public Schools (Nevada Revised Statutes [NRS] 389.510)

- Senator Barbara K. Cegavske, Chairwoman, Council to Establish Academic Standards for Public Schools (Council), said as Chair of the Council she was present to answer questions posed to each of the entities under review by the A.C.R. 2 Committee. The questions, along with Senator Cegavkse's answers are listed below:

1. What is the primary charge of the entity?

The Council addresses the establishment and revision of the State's academic standards.

2. What is the annual budget that supports the work of the entity?

State funding of approximately \$10,000 in each fiscal year and State funding of \$35,000 contained in the budget of the Legislative Committee on Education (LCE) for contract services for the Council over the biennium.

3. Who provides administrative support for the entity?

Nevada's Superintendent of Public Instruction provides professional support and the Superintendent's Administrative Assistant provides administrative support.

4. With which groups does the entity communicate?

The council communicates with the State Board of Education, reports to the LCE regarding student performance on the criterion-referenced tests, and with the Regional Professional Development Programs.

5. Which group oversees the work of the entity?

Ultimately, the Council must answer to the Legislature, as it is the body that created the council. The Council provides periodic reports to the LCE and the State Board reviews and adopts the academic standards. The State Board may make recommendations for revisions but the Council is not required to make the revisions.

6. Is there duplication of duties with any other entity in the K-12 Governance Structure?

I do not believe there is duplication of duties. The duties of the Council are necessary for the adoption of rigorous, high-quality academic standards.

7. How does the work of the entity ultimately benefit students in the State of Nevada?

The work of the Academic Standards Council has assisted our State to adopt rigorous, high-quality standards. These standards have helped prepare our students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and careers and to be prepared to compete globally.

8. What recommendations do you have for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the entity?

The responses from the survey were eye-opening. Every recommendation submitted should be considered by this Committee.

Senator Cegavske ended her portion of the presentation by noting that Nevada has joined the Common Core Standards Initiative. She asked Dr. Rheault to provide the Committee with the status of this Initiative and what it means for Nevada. She also asked him to comment on the effect of the Common Core Standards on the Council to Establish Academic Standards.

- Keith W. Rheault, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education, gave a brief overview of the Common Core Standards Initiative. He said, initially, adopting those standards was voluntary but when the qualifying criteria for the Race to the Top (RTTT) grant were issued, the adoption was no longer voluntary for a state applying for RTTT funds.

There was a discussion among the Committee members and Dr. Rheault regarding adoption of the Common Core Standards and the potential effects that could have on Nevada's system of education.

Dr. Rheault said he thought whoever has the authority to adopt academic standards should have the authority to put them into the regulations.

Presentation of the Regional Training Programs for the Professional Development of Teachers and Administrators and the Statewide Council for the Coordination of the Regional Training Programs (NRS 391.512 and NRS 391.516)

- Bill Hanlon, Director, Southern Nevada Regional Training Program, answered the questions posed by the Committee, which are:

1. What is the primary charge of the entity?

The primary charge is to provide high quality professional development to teachers and administrators throughout the State.

2. What is the annual budget that supports the work of the entity?

Each regional professional development program is allocated funds through the Nevada Legislature.

3. Who provides administrative support for the entity?

Each regional program has a director and a local school district in the region acts as the fiscal agent for the program. The administrative support for the Statewide Coordinating Council is normally taken care of by the region in which the chair resides.

4. With which groups does the entity communicate?

The Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs) communicate and work with the DOE, State superintendent, superintendents of local school districts, local school boards, the Nevada System of Higher Education, the Council to Establish Academic Standards, the Commission on Professional Standards, the Legislative Committee on Education, the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means, the Senate Committee on Health and Education, and the Senate Finance Committee.

5. Which group oversees the work of the entity?

The RPDPs have their own governing boards which were created in statute. The governing boards are responsible for hiring the director, approving the program, evaluation and budget. The Statewide Coordinating Council coordinates the activities

statewide and ensures consistency in reporting to the Nevada Legislature and informally reports to LCB.

6. Is there duplication of duties with any other entity in the K-12 Governance Structure?

The DOE has a small group of educators that provide professional development as do some of the larger school districts. We work closely with those entities to ensure there is no duplication of services.

7. How does the work of the entity ultimately benefit students in the State of Nevada?

The RPDPs provide professional development to teachers based upon the State's academic standards by way of workshops, in-services, newsletters, and videos, to assist students and teachers to become more aware of what is expected of them.

8. What recommendations do you have for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the entity?

Rather than having a formal Statewide Coordinating Council that meets four times per year, I would suggest going back to the original format with the directors meeting regularly on an informal basis to coordinate activities and reports.

- Eric Feeney, Director, Northwestern RPDP, said he did not have anything to add to Mr. Hanlon's presentation.
- Hugh Rossolo, Director, Northeastern Nevada Regional Training Program, said his was the only professional development training available in the rural school districts and activities were based on the school improvement plans. He noted many of the districts were adopting standards-based report cards.
- Senator Horsford asked if the Statewide Coordinating Counsel was required to report to the DOE regarding training.
- Melinda Martini, previously identified, responded that each of the RPDPs produced its own report which lists all of the training sessions and the individuals receiving training.

Presentation by the Commission on Educational Technology (NRS 388.790)

- Jhone M. Ebert, Chair, Commission on Educational Technology, conducted a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation ([Exhibit G](#)) and discussed the composition and duties of the Commission. She also reviewed the three major goals of the State technology plan which are:

1. Infrastructure and connectivity fostering digital-age learning and teaching;

2. Professional Development; and
3. Technology integration across the curriculum to engage digital learners.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Knight Allen, Las Vegas Resident, presented a one page document titled “Nevada’s Education Bureaucracy 2005” ([Exhibit H](#))
- Bill J. Slentz, President, Oasis Online, said he had served on the Commission on Educational Technology for the past four years and thinks it is an important entity.
- Ray Bacon, Nevada Manufacturer’s Association, spoke about the book *Liberating Learning* and said instead of focusing on the hardware for connectivity Nevada should be looking at the software for effective use of technology for remediation.
- Lee Ann Morris, Computer Teacher, Empire Elementary School, Carson City School District, said the Commission has been very instrumental in helping all Nevada schools obtain the instructional technology currently in place.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maryann Elorreaga
Senior Research Secretary

Melinda Martini
Senior Research Analyst

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Chair

Date: _____

LIST OF EXHIBITS

[Exhibit A](#) is the Meeting Notice and Agenda provided by Melinda Martini, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB).

[Exhibit B](#) is a Research Division, LCB Issue Paper dated January 21, 2010, titled “History of Selected Components of Nevada’s Public Elementary—Secondary Education Governance Structure,” provided by H. Pepper Sturm, Chief Deputy Research Director, Research Division, LCB.

[Exhibit C](#) is a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation dated January 21, 2010, titled “State Education Governance,” provided by Kathy Christie, Chief of Staff, Education Commission of the States.

[Exhibit D](#) is a report on the results of the Survey of Opinions regarding the Council to Establish Academic Standards for Public Schools, provided by Melinda Martini, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division, LCB.

[Exhibit E](#) is a report on the results of the Survey of Opinions regarding the Regional Training Programs for the Professional Development of Teachers and Administrators, provided by Melinda Martini, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division, LCB.

[Exhibit F](#) is a report on the results of the Survey of Opinions regarding the Commission on Educational Technology provided by Melinda Martini, Senior Research Analyst, Research Division, LCB.

[Exhibit G](#) is a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation titled “Commission on Educational Technology,” provided by Jhone M. Ebert, Chair, Commission on Educational Technology.

[Exhibit H](#) is a document titled “Nevada’s Education Bureaucracy,” submitted by Knight Allen, resident of Las Vegas, Nevada.

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 or telephone: 775/684-6827.