

**Technical Advisory Committee to Develop a Plan to
Reorganize the Clark County School District**

(Section 26 of Assembly Bill 394 [Chapter 543, *Statutes of Nevada 2015*])

**FINAL REPORT OF THE FINDINGS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO
REORGANIZE THE CLARK COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**



June 2016

Prepared by the Research Division
Legislative Counsel Bureau

**FINAL REPORT OF THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO
REORGANIZE THE CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

(WITH APPENDICES INCLUDED)

JUNE 2016

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FINAL REPORT OF THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO REORGANIZE THE CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the Nevada Legislature enacted [Assembly Bill 394](#) (Chapter 543, *Statutes of Nevada*), which calls for a plan to reorganize the Clark County School District (CCSD). Due to the growth of the greater Las Vegas area and the way Nevada has organized school districts on a countywide basis, CCSD has grown to become the fifth largest in the country with 320,000 students. Many have looked to restructuring CCSD into something more manageable as a solution to our State's consistently poor educational rankings. The bill created an Advisory Committee, composed of legislators, and a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), composed of members of various communities, to develop a plan to reorganize CCSD. The role of the TAC is to provide the legislative Advisory Committee with technical expertise, input, advice, and assistance.

The TAC held a public meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada on June 17, 2016. A majority of the TAC Committee was present. The findings in this report were derived from recommendations made during the three hearings TAC held exclusively for interested community groups. The findings were approved unanimously and without modification by the TAC during its June 17, 2016, meeting.

Each member of the TAC submitted recommendations, which the members asked the TAC to consider including in its report. The approved recommendations, some of which were modified during discussion amongst the members, are also included in this report. The members' recommendations appear in their original form in Appendix B.

The full report will be forwarded to the Advisory Committee to Develop a Plan to Reorganize the Clark County School District and to the consultant to the Advisory Committee for their consideration as they develop the plan to reorganize the school district.

A. COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND STAFF

Section 26 of A.B. 394 prescribed the appointments to the TAC, which consists of the following:

- One member appointed by the governing body of each incorporated city located within Clark County—Carolyn G. Goodman, Mayor, City of Las Vegas; Andy A. Hafen, Mayor, City of Henderson; Kraig Hafen, City Council Member, City of Mesquite; John J. Lee, Mayor, City of North Las Vegas; and Rich Shuman, City Council Member, City of Boulder City;

- One member appointed by the Governor—Daniel Stewart;
- One member appointed by the State Board of Education—Allison Serafin;
- One member appointed by the CCSD Board of Trustees—Dr. Linda E. Young, President;
- One member appointed by the Clark County Board of County Commissioners—Mary Beth Scow, Commissioner;
- One member appointed by the Legislative Commission from a list of recommendations made by the Clark County Education Association (CCEA)—John Vellardita;
- One member appointed by the Legislative Commission from a list of recommendations made by the Urban Chamber of Commerce—Hannah Brown;
- One member appointed by the Legislative Commission from a list of recommendations made by the Las Vegas Latin Chamber of Commerce—Tom Rodriguez;
- One member who is a parent or guardian of a CCSD pupil appointed by the Legislative Commission from a list of recommendations made by the Nevada Parent Teacher Association—Stavan Corbett;
- One member appointed by the Legislative Commission from a list of recommendations made by the Las Vegas Asian Chamber of Commerce—Duncan R. Lee; and
- Any other persons who have knowledge, experience, or expertise in the matters before the Advisory Committee, appointed by the Chair of the Advisory Committee—Senator Becky Harris, Chair, TAC; Senator Michael Roberson; Assemblyman David M. Gardner; Vikki Courtney; Brent Husson; Marsha Irvin, Vice Chair, TAC; Brian Knudsen; Ashok “Ash” Mirchandani; Dr. Larry Moses; and Pat Skorkowsky, Superintendent, CCSD.

The Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) provided staff services to the TAC. Research Division staff included Kelly S. Richard, Principal Research Analyst; Janet Coons, Principal Administrative Assistant; and Christina Harper, Senior Research Secretary. Risa B. Lang, Chief Deputy Legislative Counsel, and Karly O’Krent, Senior Deputy Legislative Counsel, provided staff services from the Legal Division. Julie Waller, Senior Program Analyst, provided staff services from the Fiscal Analysis Division.

B. MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES

To date, the TAC has held nine meetings. Three of those meetings consisted exclusively of presentations by interested community groups, including the Asian Chamber of Commerce; the Latin Chamber of Commerce; the Urban Chamber of Commerce; the cities of Henderson,

Las Vegas, Mesquite, and North Las Vegas; Clark County; Laughlin; Moapa Valley; Sandy Valley; the Clark County Black Caucus; Honoring Our Public Education; and the Nevada Parent Teacher Association.

All meetings were open to the public and conducted through simultaneous videoconference between legislative meeting rooms at the Grant Sawyer State Office Building in Las Vegas, Nevada, and the Legislative Building in Carson City, Nevada. The summaries of testimony and exhibits are available online at: <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Interim/78th2015/Committee/Studies/CCSDTechAdv/?ID=60>.

II. FINDINGS OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Based on the testimony provided during the TAC's meetings and numerous supporting documents, including community outreach surveys and presentations by those with expertise in school district organization, the TAC finds the following relating to the CCSD:

A. TEACHER TRAINING

Teachers and administrators should have access to professional development training that addresses teacher, administrator, and student needs.

Professional development training should be created with specific, identifiable student achievement outcomes and be made available across multiple platforms (in person and virtual).

B. MORE CLASSROOMS/SMALLER CLASS SIZES

Class size reduction should remain a priority and be utilized to promote increased student achievement.

More resources should be allocated for special needs students.

The Nevada System of Higher Education should offer academic coursework for teachers and administrators that are aligned with the needs of Nevada's students.

C. AUTONOMY/DECENTRALIZATION

Schools currently operating with greater autonomy, from the central office, should be allowed to continue along that model. Opportunities for increased decision making at the school site level should be expanded. Greater autonomy should be allowed at the school site level for budgetary decision making, including, but not limited to, programs to support curriculum, transportation, and equipment purchases.

D. ALLOW PARENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISION MAKING PROCESSES TO IMPROVE PARENT/TEACHER/STUDENT COMMUNICATION

Pathways should be created for direct and meaningful parental participation in public schools, including parental and community input on issues such as school budgets, curriculum, discipline, and food services.

School-based governing bodies should be established that include: administrators, businesses, community members, parents, students, and teachers to address and support student achievement at the school level.

Meetings may be held after normal work hours and/or at locations convenient to the school community.

E. CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

There should be more cultural diversification among teachers and administrators.

F. EARLY PREPARATION

More emphasis should be placed on early learning programs, including early childhood education, pre-kindergarten programs, and Head Start programs.

G. EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMS

Extracurricular programs expand students' learning opportunities. Extracurricular programs should be supported and expanded, including: before and after school programs; community centers; libraries; summer science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs; and sports.

H. UPDATED TECHNOLOGY

Investments should be made to upgrade technology in classrooms. Access to technology for students outside of school should be expanded. Improving access to technology within communities outside of school would improve communication between parents and teachers.

I. TUTORING

Tutoring programs should be encouraged for students.

Mentoring programs should be encouraged for students, teachers, and administrators.

J. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING/ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE/ ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION FUNDING

English language learning (ELL) programs and English language acquisition programs should be expanded to include all children experiencing language challenges.

K. INCENTIVES TO KEEP TEACHERS LONGER

More incentives should be provided for the recruitment, hiring, and retention of qualified teachers and administrators.

L. MAGNET/CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Magnet and career and technical education (CTE) programs should be continued and expanded.

M. TRANSPORTATION

Transportation available to rural schools should be more flexible.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A. DECENTRALIZATION

Properly vet highly qualified school principals before they are placed in each school and provided with greater control and latitude in developing the budgets and curricula of their schools. Provide appropriate technical business training and assistance. Give schools flexibility in responding to the unique needs and circumstances of their students with regard to additional funding, curriculum, course and extracurricular offerings, and staff development and training, especially as age/divisional matriculation warrants (elementary, junior high, high school).

(Submitted by Carolyn G. Goodman, Mayor, City of Las Vegas)

Make each school its own precinct for purposes of the reorganization plan.

(Submitted by Kraig Hafen, City Council Member, City of Mesquite)

Provide significantly more budgetary and instructional autonomy to local schools, and transition the district to a model that enables individual schools to control at least 85 percent of their budgets at the school level, with the available unrestricted federal funds to be determined by the consultant to the Advisory Committee to develop the plan to reorganize the school

district, in part by defining what a central service agency will be, the services to be provided, and associated costs.

(Submitted by John Vellardita, CCEA)

Mandate and formalize an autonomous, site-based decision making team at all schools, including the duties of the team, membership of the team, designation of the team chair, development of an appeal process for team decisions, required meetings to review the school's plan and budget, and share achievement and attitudinal results.

(Submitted by Pat Skorkowsky, Superintendent, CCSD)

B. EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS

Increase teachers' salaries across the board. Establish educational and training requirements, along with competitive salaries, to attract and retain the best and brightest teachers for CCSD. Require CCSD to staff each classroom with a certified, licensed full-time teacher except at the high school level, in which case, specialists with high-level academic degrees may be certified because of their educational specialty and education.

(Submitted by Carolyn G. Goodman, Mayor, City of Las Vegas)

Transition the district office to a central service agency, charged with providing essential noninstructional services to schools, and create a leadership system within CCSD to give school leaders the relevant skills they need to effectively and accountably manage a site-based decision making team.

(Submitted by John Vellardita, CCEA)

Include in the reorganization plan new principal training and skills development that incorporate the competencies needed to operate a site-based system. This will require access and collaboration with the available resources in higher education, nonprofit think tanks, and the business community to design a training and evaluation system that adequately reflects the attainment of the required core competencies.

(Submitted by Brent Husson)

Establish a district training program, including both internal and external experts, to identify training topics and develop recommendations for methods of implementation. This delivery of professional development by district staff may include a readiness assessment, blended learning, face-to-face learning sessions, differentiated support, and onboarding of site-based decision making team members.

(Submitted by Pat Skorkowsky, Superintendent, CCSD)

C. LOCAL CONTROL AND GOVERNANCE

Establish optional (permissive) education councils that give parents and the community a greater voice in public education.

(Submitted by Andy A. Hafen, Mayor, City of Henderson)

Create site-based decision making teams for school precincts that make decisions regarding the education of students, including the principal, teachers, and support staff of a school; parents; and both elected members and members appointed by the governing bodies where the students come from (specifically, either the city council, township board, or both.)

(Submitted by Kraig Hafen, City Council Member, City of Mesquite)

Create site-based decision making teams at local schools made up of parents, teachers, support staff, and school leaders with shared decision making. Transition CCSD's current top-down administrative framework to a standard-based system for the site-based decision making model around student outcomes.

(Submitted by John Vellardita, CCEA)

At the discretion of the site-based decision making team, provide stipends for parents and family members of students who serve on local school site governance boards and engage in new models of family engagement to boost parental involvement in local schools, especially in urban areas.

(Submitted by John Vellardita, CCEA)

Request the consultant to the Advisory Committee to develop the plan to reorganize the school district to address challenges and needs unique to the rural areas of CCSD in the reorganization plan.

(Submitted by Dr. Larry Moses on behalf of Moapa Valley)

Allow site-based decision making teams to have input in the selection of teachers, administrators, and curriculum, and make decisions concerning expenditures at local schools.

(Submitted by Dr. Larry Moses on behalf of Sandy Valley)

D. PER PUPIL FUNDING

Establish an increased per pupil allocation, including a base figure plus access to additional fund allocations not limited to special needs, gifted, ELL, Title I, and other circumstances as designated by earmarked funding sources. Ensure the per-pupil increased allocation follows

each pupil to the school he or she attends, without exception, so that a firm budget is allocated to each school for management.

(Submitted by Carolyn G. Goodman, Mayor, City of Las Vegas)

Limit spending at the district level in order to make sure that money follows students and precincts are able to execute their objectives without significant financial restraint.

(Submitted by Kraig Hafen, City Council Member, City of Mesquite)

Accelerate the transition to a weighted student funding formula to ensure that local schools have the resources they need to adequately educate their student populations, and mandate any new money added due to weights on the funding formula stay with the individual students at schools.

(Submitted by John Vellardita, CCEA)

E. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Study changes to be made to attendance zones, assignments to schools, magnet schools, CTE schools, select school programs, and federally mandated programs to ensure equitable funding under the Nevada Plan, equitable access and opportunity for all students, and compliance with federal and State law, prior to adoption of a reorganization plan.

(Submitted by Pat Skorkowsky, Superintendent, CCSD)

Site-based decision making teams should address education inequity by identifying schools where inequities exist and develop a plan for each, including, but not limited to: advanced placement and gifted and talented education programs, curriculum, CTE programs, discipline disparities, facilities, and teacher shortages.

(Submitted by Marsha Irvin)

Implement the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

(Submitted by Marsha Irvin)

Consider the community schools model as a reform strategy.

(Submitted by Marsha Irvin)

Provide more access for high-quality preschool programs.

(Submitted by Marsha Irvin)

Examine existing CCSD funding and expenditures including operations, capital expenditures, and management-based (central office) budgeting/spending. Make the central administrative budget available for public inspection. Ensure the central budget is transparent and presented in an understandable format.

(Submitted by Carolyn G. Goodman, Mayor, City of Las Vegas)

IV. APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A

Assembly Bill 394 (Chapter 543, *Statutes of Nevada 2015*)

APPENDIX B

Supporting Materials for Recommendations
Provided by Committee Members

