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Roxanne Boyce, Librarian, Boulder City High School District
Testimony before the Assembly Committee on Education on AB-407
April 2, 2003

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the Assembly Committee on Education, my name is Roxanne Boyce. I am librarian at Boulder City High School Library.

I am speaking today in support of AB-407.

Assembly Bill 407 is a wonderful idea because many high school students in Las Vegas don't have easy access to public libraries after school and on weekends.

One positive aspect to be aware of for all Nevada students is that students who have a computer at home have access to online databases purchased by the State of Nevada. These databases provide students with access to information 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I believe in online libraries which are never closed and would like to see the State of Nevada purchase additional databases so that all Nevada residents have 24 hour access to periodicals and a wider variety of reference information.

But, I realize that many students and adults do not have a home computer with Internet access. There does need to be a library within close proximity to adults and students where they may search online for information and check out books. Not all information sources are available online. There is still a great need for informational books and fiction books which our libraries provide.

Due to the support of Dr. Hardy, Boulder City HS and the City of Boulder City opened BCHS library to students and the public for two years from 2:40 PM to 5 PM. Funding for staffing was provided by the City of Boulder City Parks and Recreation Department. One library adult aide and one student aide were hired. The purpose of this arrangement was to give the public and students access to computer workstations and books because the Boulder City public library was moving into a new facility from a very small, old facility. We experienced no problems and found the experience enjoyable. Adults used our online computers but very few choose to check out any of our books because we don't have adult fiction, many nonfiction titles of adult interest, or many periodicals. This year we did not continue the after school program because our new public library is in very close proximity to the high school and there are adequate online computer workstations at the public library, however I would highly recommend that school libraries be opened to the public in areas where public libraries are not easily accessible.

My concerns about opening school libraries after school hours and on the weekends are:

1. Funding
2. Staffing
3. Security

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SUBMITTED BY: ROXANNE BOYCE

Funding: Collection funding needs to be considered by the legislature because high school libraries are curriculum based. We have very few adult fiction titles or nonfiction books which would interest adult library patrons and our budget allows nothing for purchases which don't support Nevada high school curriculums. High school libraries would have a difficult time serving the public and high school populations.

As an example of funding issues, I would like to tell you about Boulder City High School which is very small high school with only 700 students. The book budget is 4.65 per pupil or \$3,255.00 per year. Please note that book budget funds must also purchase periodicals(magazines & newspapers). The average cost of a high school circulating book is \$22.00, while the cost of a reference book ranges from 75 to 140 dollars. Our library has allocated funds to purchase less than 150 new books each year. We solicit donations to purchase magazines and newspapers so that we may purchase a few additional books. Additionally, the Boulder City High School collection is very old because of years of inadequate funding. Four years ago, the average copyright date of library books in BCHS was 1967. Significant fund raising efforts have been undergoing for the last four years.

Staffing: School libraries would need to have two staff members available for after school and weekend hours. At the Boulder City after school program, BC Parks and Rec. Dept paid for one library adult aide and one student technical expert for the program. The legislature needs to look at how the after school library staffs would be funded.

Security: Security also needs to be addressed if school libraries are kept open into the evening hours. Schools in Las Vegas would need security on campus to ensure the safety of library patrons and staff. Many Las Vegas public libraries have security guards in place during evening hours, this would also be a need for school libraries.

Computer Access: Most high school libraries in CCSD have 15 workstations. This is insufficient for a high school class and certainly would not meet the needs of patrons during extended library hours. There should be a minimum of 32 patron library workstations available in each high school library. Again, funding is an issue.

Thank you. I feel that allowing the public access to high school libraries is a good, needed idea, but please consider adding a funding component to AB407 which would make implementation possible.