

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Seventy-Third Session
February 14, 2005**

The Committee on Education was called to order at 3:50 p.m., on Monday, February 14, 2005. Chairwoman Bonnie Parnell presided in Room 3142 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. All exhibits are available and on file at the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ms. Bonnie Parnell, Chairwoman
Mrs. Debbie Smith, Vice Chairwoman
Mrs. Sharron Angle
Mr. Kelvin Atkinson
Mr. Joe Hardy
Mr. Brooks Holcomb
Mr. Garn Mabey
Mr. Bob McCleary
Mr. Mark Manendo
Mr. Harvey J. Munford

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. William Horne (excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Carol Stonefield, Committee Policy Analyst
Rachel Pilliod, Committee Manager

OTHERS PRESENT:

Curt Chapman, President, Nevada Association of School Boards, Carson City, Nevada
Dr. John Soderman, Superintendent, Douglas County School District (DCSD), Douglas County, Nevada
Dr. Mary Pierczynski, Superintendent, Carson City School District, Carson City, Nevada
Paul Dugan, Superintendent, Washoe County School District (WCSD), Reno, Nevada
Dr. Carlos A. Garcia, Superintendent, Clark County School District (CCSD), Las Vegas, Nevada
Barbara Myers, Member, Nevada State Board of Education
Keith W. Rheault, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education, State of Nevada

Chairwoman Parnell:

[Meeting called to order and roll called.] Today will be presentation only. The individuals here today are at the request of myself to present to the members of the Education Committee the very important parts of iNVEST [Investing in Nevada's Education, Students, and Teachers]. Mr. [Curt] Chapman will be first and will give us an overview and the historical information of the iNVEST program.

Curt Chapman, President, Nevada Association of School Boards, Carson City, Nevada:

To give you a little background in the iNVEST program. It started back in the 2001 Session, when representatives of our school districts and superintendents visited with Governor Guinn and discussed how issues in education in Nevada can be addressed from a budget standpoint. The Governor rightfully informed folks at that point that it was a little late in the process, that we need to start further ahead of time. He challenged us to develop a comprehensive plan that would look at addressing student achievement in Nevada.

Out of this, iNVEST was born ([Exhibit B](#) and [Exhibit C](#)). iNVEST is "Investing in Nevada's Education, Students and Teachers." The idea here was to put together this comprehensive plan that looked specifically at the issues that would lead to improve student achievement and what it would take to implement those. This iNVEST plan was introduced in our 2003 Session, and I think it's fair to say it was met with some sticker shock when the numbers were looked at. It's a framework. It's a roadmap to show what specific issues we feel are important to improving student achievement and what it would take to get there. It was not expected that you all take out your checkbook and fund it all right then and

there, but it set us on the course. Despite those significant costs, about one-third of it was ultimately addressed and funded in the last session. We made some great progress there, and that was greatly appreciated.

[Curt Chapman, continued.] We are back with iNVEST '05. We have updated and brought it current, reflecting some of the issues we're currently facing and the progress that was made last time. Again, we see this as a road map, as the direction that we would like to continue to work and head in our efforts to support and improve education. So, we expect to be back in a couple of years and back in four more years, as we push this process forward and continue to work on our education system.

Both the original and the 2005 plan have been endorsed by all 17 school districts in the state and the State Board of Education, so we feel very good about putting together a solid plan that has gotten broad support.

The changing needs and the challenges that are facing our teachers and schools continue to grow. One thing we feel that has stayed very solid is the commitment of the 17 superintendents, the 17 school boards, and the 107 elected school board trustees across the state. We are committed to continuing on this process and doing all we can to improve the student achievement in our state.

Right now, addressing education issues is as important as ever, more so than ever. We have a coming together of several things right now that make that so. We think that never before have the standards been set so high for our students, teachers, and schools. In addition to the Nevada Education Reform Act of 1997, we now have the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and Nevada's implementation of that. We face the Adequate Yearly Progress and high-stakes testing in addition to our high school proficiency exams. Nobody is shrinking away from accountability and from setting standards high. I think everybody is in favor of that, and we all see that there is a benefit to that. We also see that you have to have the tools to get the job done, so that's one of the things that we are very concerned about.

In addition to having standards set high, never before have we ever had so many challenges for our students. We see the numbers of students living in poverty, and the levels are certainly increasing. English language learners' (ELL) percentages are increasing, presenting a great challenge to many of our schools. We have more students from families where parents have little formal education. We understand the importance of education but, perhaps, lack some of the ability to provide proper support and encouragement for those students. There are a lot of other negative social indicators in our data, as reported in a

number of ways, including the Child Advocacy Report Card. Unfortunately, we're on the top of the bottom of some of the lists we'd rather not be in this state.

[Curt Chapman, continued.] The third thing is that, in addition to these challenges facing the schools and facing our students, we have the issue of funding. It so frequently comes down to money, but it simply does. We find ourselves ranked rather low on national levels. We're not asking for funding for funding's sake. That's one of the things that I really appreciate out of this plan. It's very logical; it's laid out. Here are specific things that are impediments that would be improvements to education, and here, by the way, are the costs associated with those. They are very real and tangible in my mind. We see ourselves faced with rising health care costs. Labor and employees are the largest expenses for districts. So we have health care costs, retirement, and energy costs rising. Those are outstripping the increases in funding, so the only result is that you divert money away from the classroom to address these other things. It's an unfortunate cycle here that we're not catching up.

In spite of all these challenges, we have 17 school districts, with boards of trustees and 17 superintendents, who have really pulled together and continued to be a great commitment to addressing these needs and to try and overcome everything we can, so that we can push forward student achievement.

I'm someone who never saw myself being an elected official. Out before me was this issue of education and it was a little self-serving perhaps, because I have three children in elementary and middle school, and I see great need to have them educated.

From a professional standpoint, I'm in business and I see the needs of our labor force constantly struggling to find qualified people to work in our industry. I'm involved with economic development in northern Nevada, and I see the competitiveness between cities and states around this nation. Everyone's vying for the high-quality companies that provide quality jobs, and it's just so key to our future here in Nevada. One of the first things they look at is the quality of your education system. It's a quick barometer they will check on, and it's meaningful. There are so many things that have come together here to make this the most important thing I can imagine at this point.

I'm certainly pleased to have the opportunity to talk to this Committee. We see a partnership here: us—the elected officials—and the brains behind it all, our educational professionals, our superintendents, and their staff. We have such a qualified and committed bunch of people that are behind all of this and put this

all together. We look forward to working with you folks in this session to address some of these needs.

Chairwoman Parnell:

I'm so glad that you brought out your perspective as also a business person. A lot of times we don't connect the two, but I appreciate seeing what you deal with—looking for a workforce that's workforce ready and educated—and being able to really merge that with the needs of the school district.

**Dr. John Soderman, Superintendent, Douglas County School District (DCSD),
Douglas County, Nevada:**

We certainly do appreciate this chance to share the iNVEST plan with you. We appreciate the support and are willing to help along the way to help realize some of the goals of iNVEST. My task is to talk about the first two tenets of iNVEST, which would provide adequate basic support and attract and retain a high-quality workforce. This plan has not changed drastically since the last time, so I'll just hit some of the high points and some of the changes for some of you who may have seen it.

I'm proud of the work, because it does spell out what we do think is important and how much that costs, and it's fairly self explanatory. The first one in the iNVEST plan, in terms of providing adequate, basic support, is including annual inflation in the DSA [Distributive School Account]. This is critical that it be considered, because we understand that, in the last ten years, things like gas and milk have at least doubled, and we need the Legislature and the Governor, when they're building their budget, to be conscious of that, so that the basic items that we're trying to put before our students and help with are funded. To give you a perspective about why that's so important, roughly 85 percent of all of our General Fund budgets go to salaries and benefits. We're turning on the lights, buying the paper, and doing everything else with the 15 percent that's left, so when that is not covered, we are in the position of having to cut something to make up the difference. We are 100 percent reliant on the Legislature for our funding, and some way or the other, it's up to the Legislature. Looking at the DSA, we've calculated what a 3 percent cost of living adjustment would mean in the line items that we have.

Next, we very much appreciate the \$50 of textbook money that was provided by the last Legislature. One of the things we found is that, because a lot of textbooks are being done in software, and other things like Plato and remediation and intervention programs are software, we had money for textbooks, but we would like to expand this \$50 support for textbooks to software and other materials. Otherwise, it's essentially the same thing that we were provided last year and greatly appreciate.

[John Soderman, continued.] Protecting ending fund balance: this is our rainy day fund. We know that the Legislature and the Governor are very concerned about having had to utilize their rainy day fund last year, due to the economic situation they found themselves in and the things that were brought before them that they felt were important to fund. The ending fund balance is our bank account and is our rainy day fund. One of the confusions about this—that I want to be sure no one leaves with—is that we're not trying to cut programs or cut spending to get a 5 percent balance. Many districts would be very lucky to get a 5 percent balance. It's suggested to have 8.3 percent, which is about one month. This has to do with our bond rating and all kinds of things. Sound fiscal business would indicate we should have a fund balance. We'd like to have 5 percent, once we're lucky enough to have 5 percent protected from arbitration. One of the problems that we have is that we can't have our fund balances taken in arbitrations, which are binding, and those fund balances are not an ongoing revenue source. It's like a bank account, and if we have to pay something out of it, we have to back fill that. So, that's a real problem for us.

Next are salaries, and we do appreciate the Governor and the budget recognizing a 2 percent increase, because the recent history would indicate that 2 percent is good for us. There were some years when we had 0 percent. The concern is that, according to Nevada JobConnect, inflation has risen by 3.5 percent, so our employees are actually losing money to inflation. So, not to look a gift horse in the mouth, but it is important that we don't become known as the state that is continually losing money to inflation. The other part about salary increase is that all teachers are much better shoppers of jobs in education. They're much more volatile and able to move around. Having a high salary is definitely an attraction, and one of the things that you're well aware of is that Clark County needed over 2,000 teachers, 1,300 of whom didn't come from the state of Nevada. We're out scrambling for teachers all over the United States. That's not just a phenomenon in part, but of course when you get to Clark, everything is exaggerated. In Douglas County—where I'm a superintendent—and all other counties, we have positions that still remain vacant this far into the year, because we can not find teachers, nor can people around the United States. An attractive salary is definitely something folks are looking for when they're shopping Nevada to come and teach. You'll hear about incentives and other things as we go along.

Another area of critical importance, as the State is wrestling with their own employees, is that of health benefits. This proposes a 12 percent increase in the cost of health insurance, which is pretty conservative. Most industries would tell you it's going to be between 10 and 15 percent. If I understand the synopsis of the Governor's budget, what was put into the budget for health and accident insurance was 2 percent in FY2006 and 3.5 percent in FY2007.

Remember the 85 percent salary and benefits. Either people are going to have less benefits or do cost sharing. Health and accident insurance is just as difficult, if not more so, for school districts as it is for all other businesses, because we don't have a way to make up the difference unless it's cut out of something else. I think we're going to end up short, based on the budget as I understand it, but we would appreciate a very serious look at health and accident insurance for our employees.

[John Soderman, continued.] The next one is incentives for licensed personnel. This continues the 2 percent signing bonus that the Legislature has provided in the past. We would like to expand it because, unfortunately, we did not include librarians, counselors, and other certified staff that we also have difficulty hiring. The cost differential, I think, was \$5 million last time. It's \$11.6 million this time, and that's because we included other certified personnel that we had neglected the first time—and we certainly heard about that—but more importantly, we need those folks and they do complement our certified staff. We're looking at the 2 percent signing bonus to be continued, and we need to look for other incentives in other areas to help attract people in those hard-to-fill positions. We found that the last time we did look at that one-fifth retirement, it became a real difficulty. Not only did it not get funded completely—which put us to funding, I believe, about 40 percent of it—but if it applies to schools in need of improvement, you have a huge spending issue coming your way as more and more schools end up in need of improvement.

The other problem with an incentive like that is that it's counterproductive. You get people at the beginning that aren't necessarily thinking about retirement, but if you pay for additional years 20 years down the line, they're leaving sooner. So you're kind of backfilling where you're creating a problem. This is strictly a 2 percent bonus for new folks. It's what you might call a first and last month's rent kind of thing. That's what our new teachers need to get established, particularly when 1,300 of them are coming from outside of our state.

Assemblyman McCleary:

I had a question concerning the ending fund balance. You said this is like your rainy day fund?

John Soderman:

Yes.

Assemblyman McCleary:

You want this to be about 5 percent, and you said that 8.3 percent is suggested. Who suggests that?

John Soderman:

It's in the NAC [*Nevada Administrative Code*]. It represents basically one month's cost of running a district. No one has anything close to 8.3 percent, I don't believe. In fact, many of us struggle to get 5 percent. We would like, once we get an ending fund balance, to be able to protect it from arbitration and use it for the kinds of things that ending fund balances are expected to be used for. For example, in Douglas County, we had a mercury spill that was widely known. We ended up being able to cover that cost, but had that been more significant, we would have run into significant costs just to have the school year continue to deal with that mercury spill. It's for those kinds of things.

Assemblyman McCleary:

Do you have full discretion with this balance? Can you plug any hole you need?

John Soderman:

Yes.

Assemblyman Mabey:

What's the average age of retirement for a teacher in Nevada, and when they retire, how many years have they worked?

John Soderman:

Keith Rheault may be better able to answer that question than I, but it's a good question and I'll certainly get an answer. If I had to hazard a guess, I'd say you're looking at people that have 25 to 30 years in the system. Some buy in those years. This is just based on my experience, having worked in HR [human resources] and as a superintendent. How many in Nevada would be kind of all over the map. That's one I wouldn't be able to give you as good an answer.

Assemblyman Mabey:

Could I get the answer without the buy in?

Chairwoman Parnell:

Dr. Rheault is in the audience, so when the presentation is completed, perhaps he could come up and give us a little more information on that to answer your question.

Assemblyman Manendo:

Just out of curiosity: on the ending fund balance, is that about two days of operating expenses?

John Soderman:

If 8.3 percent is a month, and if you take that about two-thirds of that, it would be about three weeks. At one point—I think that may have come from last year's iNVEST plan—we suggested that some counties have two days or less of ending fund balance. These are our two biggest counties, I believe.

Dr. Mary Pierczynski, Superintendent, Carson City School District, Carson City, Nevada:

As you know, iNVEST is really a plan for student achievement. I'm going to be talking to you about some of the ways we can help our students achieve here in Nevada. Attachment 7 ([Exhibit C](#)) talks about AYP for all students. The emphasis on this proposal is on providing additional time and opportunities for students performing below standard. As it used to be, if you put your time in and you went to class and you behaved yourself, you did the work, you got your diploma.

I remember in 1987, when I came here as a guidance counselor at Carson High School, the high school proficiency exam (HSPE) was located in my filing cabinet, and I had students who took the test if they missed the big administration of the test. I just put them in the copy room next door, and they took the test. We had about 1.7 percent of the kids in the state that did not pass the HSPE. It was a very simple test to do at that time. We've come a long way. We demand a lot more. Achievement now is what our students need to reach, not just sitting in the seats.

NCLB [No Child Left Behind Act of 2001] has increased the stakes for students in schools. NCLB requires schools to measure the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) of specific groups of children, including ethnic groups, children in poverty, and those with learning disabilities. If one of the above groups does not make Adequate Yearly Progress, then the entire school is labeled in need of improvement. Currently in Nevada, we have 127 schools that are listed in need of improvement. We have another 103 schools that were added to the watch list this year. That means that if they don't make it this year, they will also be in need of improvement. You have to keep in mind that we have about 537 schools in Nevada.

How can we help our kids achieve? There are several things we can do. Mediation and help for students doesn't mean that students are just coming to school, falling asleep, and not doing their job, and now we have to add extra time onto the day for them. We have students that need two hours to learn something that another student can learn in one hour or 20 minutes. That's why we need extra help for some kids. Summer school, tutorials after school, intersession in our year round schools, strategies for our English as a Second

Language (ESL) students, and distance education opportunities are some of the ways that we can help our students reach the achievement level that they need to reach.

[Mary Pierczynski, continued.] Why is providing this a problem for our students? First of all, tuition is often required, because summer school, for instance, in this state is not paid by the State. You either charge tuition or you have to have grant money. We use a lot of grant money when it's available for our students, but grant money is not consistent, and it's very difficult to build ongoing remedial programs without grant money. How will you know whether your money has been well spent if you provide extra help for students? You know because test scores will go up, we should have a decrease in our dropout rate, and we should have more students who are passing the high school proficiency exam. Adequate Yearly Progress is very important.

The next attachment I'd like to address is attachment 8, aid funding for English language learners (ELLs). Nevada, as we know, is one of the fastest-growing states in the nation. ELLs are the fastest segment of our population. Education Week recorded that from 1992 to 2002, in the United States, ELLs grew at a rate of about 73 percent, but in Nevada, the growth was 457 percent, and in Clark County, it was 517 percent for the same period of time. Keep in mind that right now, in Clark County, one out of five students—20 percent of the students—are ELLs. Fourteen percent of them are ELLs in Washoe. Even in Carson City, a much smaller county, 18 percent of our students are English language learners. In the Nevada schools right now, 65 different languages are spoken. English language learners participate in all the tests that determine AYP for our school. The first year that they're in our schools, they have to take the test for the participation rights. The second year, their scores start to count. We all know that it takes a student about six years to really grasp a language and, certainly, to grasp a language well enough that you can read a science book or biology book and know what you're reading.

In fiscal year 2004, the statewide average expenditure for services for ELL students was about \$286 per student, and it cost about \$18.7 million to help these students. All of this money came from the General Fund, because there is not additional money to help English language learners. We're proposing in iNVEST that \$300 per student be allowed to be put out there to help students who are struggling with language. What would we do with the \$300? The first thing we would do is train our teachers in methodology, called SIOP [Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol]. How do you handle a classroom where you have several students who do not speak English? They may speak Spanish or Vietnamese. We have some in Carson City who speak Russian. So we need to train our teachers to work with students who are of a different language. We

need welcome centers in some of our urban areas to help integrate these students, bilingual and TESL [Teaching English as a Second Language] endorsements for more teachers, smaller class sizes for our ELL students, and then supplemental materials for them are some of the ways that we can help.

[Mary Pierczynski, continued.] ELL students are growing at an average rate of 18.6 percent per year statewide, and the cost to help these students, we're proposing, would be around \$60 million. What will you see with the money? You'll see improved test scores and fewer dropouts. A lot of our ELL students are dropping out. We need to stop the dropout rate. We're losing a lot of brain power when they leave school. You'll see English language learners who will be verbally functional in regular classrooms within three years and proficient reading and writing within five. We're proposing that we can accomplish that.

Attachment 9 deals with full-day kindergarten. Full-day kindergarten results in academic and social benefits. We know this from a lot of the research that's been done. There were some very interesting studies done on schools in Indiana and in Pennsylvania that have had full-day kindergarten. They have resulted in higher long-term achievement for students, higher reading scores and yearly grades, higher test scores, and greater progress and social skills for disadvantaged and low-income children. A more relaxed, less hurried day with more varied experiences for children has helped them grow. The study on the school in Evanston, Indiana was very interesting. They saw that the students who had been in full-day kindergarten progressed ahead of kids in half-day kindergarten all the way through seventh and eighth grade. These were very interesting studies. I think Mr. [Carlos] Garcia is going to tell you about some of the successes they've had in Clark County, where they have 54 full-day kindergarten programs.

The full-day kindergarten would result in a reduction in retention of students in the first and second grades and less students referred to special education. That's what the research shows us. It would also increase the academics in the primary grades.

If I could digress for just a minute, I'd like to tell you a little story. I was in a kindergarten classroom last Friday afternoon, in one of our high risk schools. Seventy percent of our students are on free and reduced rate lunch there. Over 60 percent of our students there are ELLs. When I walked in, these students in kindergarten were sounding out their letters, knew how to read, and were reading the very first parts of the "Success For All" kindergarten program. They were able to do that. They were able to write a sentence about what they had read. When they were finished, I was sitting in the classroom, and you know how little kids are. They all came running over, and the little one said to me,

"Do you want to hear me read?" And I thought back to going into a kindergarten four years ago, where a little girl came up to me and she said, "Do you want to help me glitter?" And I thought, we've come a long way to "Do you want to hear me read?" from "Do you want to help me glitter?" So, there's a big change in kindergarten. Now, in regard to full-day kindergarten, I asked, "What would you do if you had more time?" and she said, "We'd be working on our math just like we're working on our reading now." This is phenomenal what these students can do. So we're proposing full-day kindergarten, and the cost that you see in the iNVEST booklet includes the portable classrooms that we would need for them.

[Mary Pierczynski, continued.] We're proposing 73 modulars throughout the state, which would lead to 146 classrooms, and Clark County has said that they could handle the housing of the full-day kindergartens through their capital improvement program, which would be a great boost to the state. The other thing that we would have to do with full-day kindergarten is that students are currently paid at 60 percent of what the student per pupil allocation is. That would have to be a full student allocation with us all day long.

Attachment 10 talks about the professional development for student achievement. Currently, our teachers are able to have five days out of the 180 days in the student calendar for professional development. Research clearly shows a link between teacher training and increased student achievement. Professional development of teachers and staff has always been important, but it is doubly important now as new programs are being implemented to affect the changes abandoned by NCLB. Time is taken off for the teachers to learn; the students are out of the classroom and not learning. Time on task is important for student achievement. Attachment 10 attempts to address the dilemma faced by school districts by increasing the teachers' contract year by five days, so that the full 180 days can be spent teaching students in the classroom.

Assemblywoman Smith:

If we may go back to the ELL issue, one of the things I notice is that when we talk about best practices, you have increased parent involvement, but there's really not anything about it in the accountability. I think we very clearly know that with the cultural differences, particularly with the growing Hispanic population. That's a big issue for us and one that we need to strive to do better and overcome, so I'd like to see your organizations include that in the accountability portion, because we absolutely have to do better in that area.

Assemblyman Mabey:

I've visited with Joyce Haldeman in Las Vegas quite a bit on AYP for all students. My kids go to public schools, and I'm proud of that. They're bright

kids, and they've been in the GATE [Gifted and Talented Education] programs and in the AP [advanced placement] classes, and my concern is that they and your average students are getting squeezed for the ELL and these other special needs. I see a bus that drives by, picks up a child that lives close to my home, takes them two or three miles, and then they have one or two teachers that spend all day with this person, and then they get a little bus and they drive home. I know there are federal rules and laws, and that is the way it has to be, but these really talented kids, I think, are shortchanged. They drop out too, because maybe they're not stimulated well enough. It seems like in Clark County, we're doing more AP classes—which I think is great for the high school kids—but can you address what you and this iNVEST program will do for the advanced placement children and the GATE children?

Mary Pierczynski:

Well, I think that iNVEST is talking about student achievement, and when we're talking about student achievement, it has to be across the board. You have the same sentiments about students who are special education students—severely and profoundly handicapped, for instance—and the amount of resources that go for those students is a frustration for parents like you and for school leaders who see some very gifted kids who do not get that kind of money thrown their way. Obviously, though, there's a federal government, and they have laws on their side. I think that when you're looking at iNVEST, and what we can do for students throughout the gamut, when you are adding intersessions and extra summer sessions, the students who are gifted have to have things offered for them as well. In our summer school program, for instance, here in Carson City, part of the program has been for remediation, but it's also been for our advanced kids who are doing science camps and some special things like that. I think that money that's given for summer schools has to take your children into consideration, too.

John Soderman:

That very question has been a real concern in Douglas County. We actually started with what we call our "competency system" before NERA [Nevada Education Reform Act of 1997]. It insisted on some high graduation rates, like tenth grade reading, to get out of high school. One of the fears was that, as we worked with the students that struggled, the students that were at the top of the academic heap would not progress. We've looked at data in regard to our achievement level test, and we have not found that to be the case, particularly if you take students that are struggling and give them extra time out of the class. In the regular classes and within the programs offered at Douglas, what appears to be the most important thing is when you do staff development and you focus on good teaching.

[John Soderman, continued.] One of the things an accountability system does is it drives effective teaching practices, and when you do staff development that helps students learn, actually, all students benefit. What we found is that the students, even when adjusted for the top quartile—not just the gifted, but we’ve separated off the gifted to see how they do, and we’ve separated off the top quartile—all of those students have been growing at a higher rate than they would be expected to grow as top students. We need to drill a little deeper in that. We also found that honors classes don’t necessarily convey any honor, because some do well and some don’t. It has to do with a curriculum and if it’s being taught. It appears as if when the tide comes in, all the boats are lifted. Good instruction focusing on student achievement seems to help all students, and I would refer you to the Ed Trust at www.edtrust.org. They’ve studied this phenomenon across the states, and it seems to be true everywhere they’ve focused on closing the gap. All students are better off.

Assemblyman Holcomb:

I have two questions regarding kindergarten on page 13 (of [Exhibit C](#)). You state here, “Compared to half-day kindergarten, full-day programs are typically associated with”—a bullet halfway down says—“more time spent in individualized instruction.” How much time are we talking about, versus a half-day kindergarten?

Mary Pierczynski:

In talking with teachers and looking at some of the research, one of the advantages that the researchers pointed out in several of these studies was that almost double the amount of time can be spent with these kids when you’re working with them in large groups reading. Then you have the opportunity to break out into small groups in the afternoon with students and break into three and four students where you can have kids clustering, working on specific problems, or reading certain areas. It doubles your time with students. Part of the research showed that one of the big advantages was the student feeling comfortable and feeling that one-on-one attention from a teacher that they’re not getting when the teacher has thirty of them just in the morning.

Assemblyman Holcomb:

For a full day, what are we talking about the length of instruction? You said double. You’re talking 6 hours?

Mary Pierczynski:

You’re talking a full day, as all the students in school.

Assemblyman Holcomb:

Approximately how many hours are we talking about?

Mary Pierczynski:

About 6 hours. Most of them are going about 2 1/2 hours now.

Assemblyman Holcomb:

My wife is a kindergarten teacher, and she's been teaching for 30 years. She'll be retiring this year. She stated that she teaches 2 1/2, but it could easily be extended 3 hours. She said that the 6 hours that you're proposing, when you have snack, rest, lunch, and recess times, would come closer to 4 hours of instruction time, versus 3 hours for a half day. You're really possibly getting an additional 1 hour for a full day kindergarten. Would you say there is?

Mary Pierczynski:

I think right now we're still dealing with a 2 1/2 hour period of time, and if I may, I'll use Carson City, because obviously I'm most familiar with that. The students come in and we have them for 2 1/2 hours, but during that time, maybe one day they have music and another day they have computers. You have your little "pull-out" programs. Four days out of the week you bring the children in and get them settled, and they have a little recess, so they're not getting 2 1/2 hours of instruction during the day. That's for certain.

Assemblyman Holcomb:

How would you compare early child education funding and the benefits from that versus a full-day kindergarten?

Mary Pierczynski:

I'm a big proponent of that as well, obviously, if you're talking the four-year-old programs. The primary national early childhood program has been Even Start, which has been very good because it not only has the component for the children, it has the component for the parent as well, and many of the programs. I think it's very helpful. It's especially helpful among the early childhood, four-year-old programs when you have ELLs and you're trying to give culture to a group of children. It's extremely helpful to have that extra time with them. I can remember being in an Even Start classroom the first day, and children were handed little safety scissors. They didn't know what it was and didn't know where their fingers were supposed to be and had never seen something like that. Those kinds of things are very helpful to go through in the early childhood programs. I think they're very worthwhile too.

Assemblyman Holcomb:

I concur with you.

Chairwoman Parnell:

I have just a couple of questions before we go on. They're actually for your information, for the Committee. The State Standards is the document—it's not in this—that goes along with AYP. My comments are going to address AYP. Could you just share with the Committee briefly how those proficiency levels differ so greatly among the states? I was actually very shocked when I saw the numbers. I just assumed that the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 came with a standard level of proficiency that all the states had to meet. I would think that many members of this Committee assumed that as well. Could you briefly share with us how they differ?

Mary Pierczynski:

I'd be happy to share with your Committee a two-page study that was done by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) out of Oregon. What they tried to do was equalize the tests that are given throughout the states. Their methodology was quite simple. Students took the Criterion Reference Test (CRT) that was offered by that state and within a month they took a test that NWEA had prepared, and they compared the two. Basically, their conclusions are interesting in that—if I may read just a couple of paragraphs—it says here: "The eighth grade math proficiency level varies from the thirty-sixth percentile in Montana to the eighty-ninth percentile in Wyoming, based on NWEA percentiles." Therefore, in these similar adjacent states, one could expect over twice as many students in Wyoming to be identified as being the low proficient. This would occur even if the students in the two states have exactly the same achievement. Being proficient in one state doesn't mean you're proficient in another state. I guess that unless you go to a standardized national curriculum with a test like NAEP [National Association for Primary Education] as the great leveling field to it all, we're going to see this. Proficiency means a great difference in one state from another state.

Chairwoman Parnell:

It's that level of proficiency that determines whether or not your child's school made AYP. I think that's important to know. The numbers you see from one state to another might differ greatly solely because of the level of their proficient basis, their benchmark.

Paul Dugan, Superintendent, Washoe County School District (WCSD), Reno, Nevada:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to introduce myself to you and to join my colleagues in presenting to you the various issues in iNVEST '05. My goal this afternoon is to share with you three pieces of this collaborative vision for education in Nevada. Beginning with attachment 11 on page 15, this section focuses upon the important issue of addressing 2 or 3 percent of our students

who make decisions that lead to their interruption of learning to other students and who impede the teacher's ability to provide quality learning opportunities to the class. Having been involved in education as a teacher, counselor, and administrator, I'm confident that 97 to 98 percent of our students come to the classroom prepared to learn and to be involved in the classroom educational experience in a very positive way. Unfortunately, others do not. This attachment proposes funding to make possible the implementation of effective classroom discipline programs along the lines of the pilot programs contained in Assembly Bill 521 of the 70th Legislative Session. This proposal allows for the uniqueness of each school district in addressing such needs and proposes to fund effective programs developed by districts. The Nevada Department of Education would review school district proposals and allocate funds for them.

[Paul Dugan, continued.] Attachment 12 on page 16 is one that I have publicly made a priority for the Washoe County School District (WCSD), as it focuses on the important area of career and technical education. We need to prepare a capable workforce to meet the challenges and demands of the Nevada businesses in these very competitive and technical times. Recognizing that goal, the needs increase for school districts to provide appropriate, up-to-date equipment for teachers for these programs. Each school district has a number of students who earn diplomas, because they're interested in career and technical vocations and not college vocations. All school districts have an obligation to meet this interest. We superintendents hope to be able to do more to provide what it takes to improve career and technical education opportunities across this state. This special appropriation of \$12 million would help school districts move closer to achieving our goals for these crucial programs.

The last attachment of the iNVEST '05 proposal focuses upon class size reduction flexibility and is on page 17 of your document. In 2001, Elko County School District was given flexibility with the use of class size reduction funds, enabling them to adjust class sizes in grades one through six as the district deemed to be most educationally beneficial for their students. During the 2003 Session, similar flexibility was extended to all Nevada school districts except Washoe and Clark Counties. The authorization for this flexibility ends in June of 2005. This section of iNVEST '05 first proposes to have flexibility permanently enacted by the Legislature. In addition, Washoe and Clark seek the same flexibility as has been afforded the other 15 school districts. There is no cost for this proposal, because class size reduction funding would continue at the current level. Dollars would simply be used in a different method for accomplishing the goal of smaller class sizes across the grade levels.

Assemblywoman Smith:

I feel a little frustrated that we're talking about \$12 million for advancing current technical education and then \$66 million for classroom discipline. That's a bit of a frustration to me, because we hear across the board out in the community, talking to business, that the career and technical education issues are so important and so necessary. I'm a little bit frustrated about that.

Madam Chairman, could you get the report from the Elko School District regarding their findings with the class size reduction program there? I've heard anecdotally that the report looks good, and I'd like to see that.

Paul Dugan:

Both Clark County and Washoe County have done a study on this that we were required to do by the last Legislature, and that will be shortly presented to you.

Assemblywoman Smith:

I'm curious on the class size issue. When we look at the numbers on average for districts, we know from the old class size reduction testimony that the high numbers vary greatly from the averages, so I'd be interested in looking at Elko as an example of what happened with the high end of numbers in classrooms as compared to what we're seeing as average. I just want to make sure that we don't get too out of whack as we start looking at that. Is my request making sense?

John Soderman:

One of the things that is true of class size reduction you can get and appreciate in the law is about district averages. It's very hard to hit those averages in any given school. I don't know if that's your question, but in some schools, you're going to hear, "I still have thirty kids." Let's say that you are at 22:1 in Elko. I'm not speaking for Elko, but I know enough about staffing, having been a kindergarten principal. If you have 30 children and you divide it by 2, you have 15. You can't hit 22. Someone else is sitting on 15 if you have a 30, would be my guess. Hitting it at any school is difficult, and legislators are going to hear, "Well, I still have a fairly big class." But if you look at the district average, how we're funded, and how we have to staff, those numbers should be good.

Assemblywoman Smith:

I absolutely understand, and that's why I'm asking the question. I don't want to see us get too far away from the intent of class size reduction by going with a flexible number. I want to look at what the high numbers are. What's the highest end we're getting to in the classroom? In addition to knowing that they're meeting the required average, I want to see real numbers.

Assemblyman Munford:

What are the current figures on gang activity in Washoe County? I'm from Clark County, I was a teacher for 36 years, and I just retired this past June, and I'm listening to a lot of things. Part of the bottom line is probably discipline; a lot of it is class size. As you know, gang activity has a lot to do with discipline. A lot of those are factors, and discipline is so necessary because if you don't have class control, you cannot instruct. You have to do something to minimize interruptions, distractions, and all of these types of things. Two-thirds to three-quarters of my teaching tenure was in secondary education, and I taught U.S. government for most of those years. I had seniors who had discipline problems.

Before I came up to the Legislature, before I came for the first session last week, I did a little road traveling to try to get up to date. I didn't think that I was that far out of the focus of what was going on, because I'd just been in the trenches. There are still some of the comments, and some of the teachers told me that there's still a problem with discipline and class size. There's still concern with that and I don't know. I just feel that there is something that can be done in that area that would help to eliminate a lot of the problems. Share with me a little bit about Washoe County and your situation with gangs and that type of thing.

Paul Dugan:

Assemblyman, I can't quote you figures, but I will definitely sit here in front of you and tell you that gang issues are a serious concern for the WCSD. We have a Gang Task Force; we have tried to address it, especially at our high schools. Unfortunately, we are seeing it go down as low as our elementary too, with the beginnings down there. You are absolutely right; the gang issue has a direct relationship to discipline in the classroom. It carries over. It's a community issue. It starts in the community, and it carries over into the schools and then into the classroom. With regard to specific numbers—how many gang related activities we've had—we have those, but I don't have those at the top of my head. It is a serious concern for Washoe County and will continue to be.

**Dr. Carlos A. Garcia, Superintendent, Clark County School District (CCSD),
Las Vegas, Nevada:**

Before I begin my remarks today, I want to take an opportunity to thank you, because for once we're having a dialogue really to start off the session on educational issues. To us, there is nothing more important on this planet than our children. I believe that all of us are here with that in mind, that we're going to work together to provide the best possible education, because our children are our future. You've heard from my colleagues all the great things that they've brought, all the different components of iNVest. I just want to remind

everyone that this has been a long time coming. We've spent over four years developing iNVEST and to get it to where it is today, and it really, truly is a comprehensive vision of what should and could be. I know that it would be unrealistic to come here and say that we want it all. Bernard Shaw said, "I dream things that never were, and I say, 'Why not?'"

[Carlos Garcia, continued.] Well, why not? How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. We're going to start here. We started last session taking a few bites out of the elephant, and we're here to ask you to keep munching away, because we have a big elephant in front of us. If it's like last session, we know that we can improve student achievement. I think the frustrating thing for all of us in our districts is sometimes people view us as: "You can't figure it out! How come you're not getting better test scores? Why aren't you doing better with students?" We've figured it out. We actually have model programs that, as the session goes on, we'd love to share with you. They are showing phenomenal success. The problem is that we don't have the resources to assure that those programs take place for every single child in all our districts, and I feel like all our other superintendents feel that what's good enough for any child has to be good enough for all children in Nevada, because there truly is only one Nevada and it has all our children in it.

When you look at this long list of things, we were always leery about prioritizing this. Not that we don't trust anybody, but once you prioritize things, people start picking it apart. But all of the superintendents this year with the iNVEST program got together and we really had a secret ballot. And this is what it came out: Number one of the iNVEST plan would be a full-day kindergarten; it was a three-way tie between ELL [English language learners], AYP [Adequate Yearly Progress], and inflation and teacher salaries.

Since full-day kindergarten was identified as the top priority, I would like to share a few of the results that we have now from an experiment that we've been conducting in Clark County ([Exhibit D](#) and [Exhibit E](#)). In Clark County, we felt so strongly about the importance of full-day kindergarten that we took most of our Title I and Title II funds that we received from the federal government—and in the past, we used those for a lot of different things—and it didn't make us really popular. We took those funds and decided to do full-day kindergarten at 54 of our most at-risk schools in the county. By directing these funds to that, we had to give up other programs, including some teacher aides, some specialized materials, in-house suspension programs, and some of the programs for 4-year-olds. Don't get me wrong; it wasn't that we didn't want these programs, but we have limited resources and we really wanted to get as much bang for our buck.

[Carlos Garcia, continued.] We truly believe that the full-day kindergarten would make the greatest impact on student achievement, so we gave up all those other programs to see if it would actually work. In Clark County, like all districts today in America, we're data driven, so a program might sound good, but if the proof is really in the pudding. If it isn't showing effects, then why have the program? So, I've provided you a handout that I'd like for you to look at ([Exhibit E](#)). On this graph on the first page, it shows the progress the kindergarten students at some of our most at-risk schools have made. These results, after only one semester, show some dramatic increases in improving student achievement when the extra time is made available to all-day kindergarten. It allows the curriculum to be targeted and comprehensive teacher-directed literacy programs.

At the beginning of the year, the students were preassessed, and we found that 1,952 students were classified as struggling, 483 as emerging, and 54 as on track. In the second assessment, which we took at the semester, there were a lot of different results. The number of struggling students was reduced by more than half, to 884. The number of emerging more than doubled, to 1,008; and the number of students on track increased more than 10 times, to 597. All-day programs provide teachers time and resources needed to provide quality literacy instruction. Although many studies demonstrate the children living in poverty and children for whom English is a second language benefit the most from these programs, other studies show that all students benefit from these programs. Although students in affluent communities don't qualify for our Title Programs, we decided to test the waters and see what we could do in some of our more affluent areas, using a fee-based full-day kindergarten program. In communities where there was space available and in the schools where parents were supporting, we offered an all-day "Pay for K Program." There are now 320 students in 12 schools in the Pay for K Program.

In the handout, we gave you a different handout here. It's labeled "Dibels Assessment Comparison" ([Exhibit E](#)). You see the first names of children and a full-day kindergarten program in a Summerlin school compared with children attending the half day program in the same school. The students in the all-day program have an average percentage increase of more than three times that of students in the half-day program. While these are only preliminary results, they demonstrate what all the superintendents believe to be true. All-day kindergarten will increase the opportunities for all students to learn.

The other priorities for the superintendents, ELL and funding for students' AYP, were just as important. I want to talk about a little bit about the ELL issue having been first generation here. When I started elementary school, I only spoke Spanish. I had to learn English. English is actually my second language.

I had the experiences of what it takes to go through a program and learn it. Statistics speak for themselves. It's not a question of whether those students are going to be here and we start preparing for the future, because just in Clark County, in 10 years, there was a 717 percent growth of ELL students—one out of five students.

[Carlos Garcia, continued.] Assemblyman Mabey, you mentioned earlier that you take away from some students for another. Well, imagine you're a teacher and one out of the five students in your classroom doesn't speak English. So that means you're going to have maybe three or four students who don't speak a word of English. How are you going to educate those kids? Do you just immerse them and put them in, and they're all going to catch up? Thirty-eight states in this country provide additional funding for ELL, because they've learned a long time ago that if you don't do that, it's a lose-lose for everybody. It's a lose-lose where it takes that teacher and that Clark County classroom time to go and spend with those four or five students. Meanwhile, what are those other students doing? They get further behind. This is a quality-of-life issue that we need to address, because it's not going away. Right now, in Nevada, we have 66,000 ELL students; 10 years ago, we had a handful of those. Where are we going to be in the next ten years—over 100,000 or 120,000 students? It's the fastest-growing segment of the entire population throughout out districts in the state. Like they say, you can pay now, or you can pay later.

You mentioned earlier, Chairwoman, the fact in the differences of the states. Just think of when we look at the comparison groups. In some states, there are 200 kids in the comparison group. In our state, there are 25 kids in a comparison group. Any school that has 25 kids that are ELL—and in Clark County, just about every one of them does—if they don't meet AYP, then they're going to be a "needs improvement" school. If I take any of you and send you to China to live for a year, I doubt you're going to master enough Chinese to take an academic exam and be successful in it. Yet, that's what we do every year throughout this country under NCLB. Do you wonder why some of our test scores have gone down? If one out of five kids can't even speak English and can't take the test, what do you think that does to your test results? Those are the realities that we live in.

We are really happy to see that the Governor has put aside the \$100 million to target schools not making AYP, but we would like to see this expanded to all schools, not just to the schools that already get Title funds, because all our schools have limited English proficient, special education, and GATE students. This money needs to be used to help all our children. One of the reasons why we're asking for a lot of these things is that by adding this, it will free up some

resources for the AYP and GATE students. When we have just a very small pie, the pieces don't go around for everything.

[Carlos Garcia, continued.] A quick word about inflation. When you think of the cost of living, we can't determine what fuel is going to be. We all know how that went up. We can't determine what the utility bill we be. We look at property and all the different things, and we can't determine those things, so it just makes common sense that we have to build in some cost of living adjustments in order to survive. If we don't do that—which in essence, is what happens if it's not done through the legislative process—it means we have to reduce programs. Right now, we've cut so many programs that we can't continue to cut, because there's not much left to cut.

I also want to mention teacher salaries. Look at the iNVEST plan. In six years, we've given 6 percent raises to teachers. If you take the index of inflation—it's approximately 3 percent per year over six years—that's 18 percent. Our teachers have lost 12 percent of their earning power. Yet, we expect them to just go on? I think those are issues that are critical. We put a meager 3 percent on iNVEST, and I say "meager," because it seems to me that we can do better than that, but that is a start. We know what it takes to improve achievement, and iNVEST maybe shouldn't just be called iNVEST. Maybe it should be called "we can't wait," because our children can't wait.

On behalf of the 17 superintendents and 17 school boards across this wonderful state of Nevada, I'd like to thank each and every one of you for giving us the opportunity to discuss the most important things in our lives, education and our children. We look forward to having this good relationship with you throughout the session. Call upon us at any time. We're here to serve and give you information. We're not here to give you things you don't want to hear. We'll give you the good, the bad, and the ugly. We make that commitment to each and every one of you.

Assemblywoman Angle:

I just want to ask about your priorities. I was intrigued by how you came to that. Of all the things in that booklet, you picked out these three things. I'm wondering how you decided. What formula did you use to pick out those three things?

Carlos Garcia:

We've been talking about this for about four years. We've had good discussions and, sometimes, even an argument or two. I think all of us have realized the number one important thing for all was that we wanted to do this data research. The plan you see here is not based upon opinions; it's based upon facts and

studies. What all of us educated ourselves on—all 17 superintendents—was the fact that if you really want to invest money, kindergarten had to be where we started. The other ones fell in because of the realities that we have to face every day.

Assemblywoman Angle:

So this was a consensus?

Carlos Garcia:

Absolutely.

Assemblywoman Angle:

That's what I wanted to know, because I wasn't sure if everyone agreed that this was the number one priority, or if it was just kind of a consensus of the 17.

Carlos Garcia:

It's funny you mention that, because sometimes they see Clark County as the big gorilla. Believe it or not, some of these things in here weren't necessarily our number one thing, but we are one Nevada and we stand united.

Assemblywoman Angle:

I was kind of hoping that number one would be these accountabilities. Mine would have been this AYP.

Assemblyman Munford:

I address this, primarily, to Superintendent Garcia. His last point he made was in regard to teacher salaries. When I was running for office and I was still in the classroom, the number one thing that the teachers always said, was, "Munford, do something about the salaries." And I told them that I'll do the best that I can, but I don't know if people really realize that, because of the salaries, many teachers are required to work additional jobs. They work after school. That takes away from prep time; it takes away from a lot of things you would be able to do in order to be a much better teacher and instructor, especially when an English teacher has so many papers to grade and that type of thing. The 2 percent is—and I saw it coming the years I was there—sort of better than nothing, but I wish we could get more. Many of us are required to teach in the summer school program sometimes to help offset. I taught in the summer school program for 15 years. I don't know where it got me, but I did it for 15 years.

I wish it could at least be 3 percent; I don't know. That goes back to the fact of being able to hire new teachers. You can increase that soundly then that's important. It's very important.

Assemblyman Holcomb:

Since you're involved with the all-day kindergarten, basically with sleep, lunch, snack, and recreation time for kindergarten children, how much actual instruction time is there for an all-day kindergartener?

Carlos Garcia:

It's good that you mentioned that. This may sound cruel, but there is no sleep time or no rest time in kindergarten anymore. There is not a single one of our programs that offers that. Believe it or not, because of being able to use technology—a lot of different media sources for educating kids—the kids really stay awake. The first week was tough. I spend my first week going around to kindergarten classrooms to see how the teachers were surviving, and what we found is after the first week, they were just thrilled about it. When we interview teachers, because I spend two days a week visiting schools in the morning, they're overwhelmingly excited about having it and they just want more.

Assemblyman Holcomb:

So what would you say the instruction time would be approximately with the six hours?

Carlos Garcia:

On-task instruction by the teacher, I'd say, we have 4 1/2 to 5 hours, conservatively. Then, the snacks are built in. In fact, what we do is we actually bring carts to the classroom rather than disrupt the classroom by having them walk to the cafeteria and spending more time. We do have potty breaks though.

John Soderman:

We have a 6-hour student day, basically, if you have a 30-minute lunch and two recesses in an extended kindergarten. Let's just say you have five hours available for instruction. In the current 2 1/2 hour day, you have—as Dr. Pierczynski was mentioning—music, P.E. [physical education], and computers coming out of that. Two and one-half hours we have now, sometimes. You really more than double what you have for academics, because you get the whole other 2 1/2 hours, and you've already had computers, music, and so on. So, essentially, you'd be more than doubling the amount of time on academics that a kindergartner would have to about 5 hours per day.

Assemblyman Holcomb:

Could you extend that time? It is 2 1/2 hours. Could it be extended and still offer two classes? Could it be extended to 3 hours per day, morning and afternoon?

John Soderman:

No. We looked at that, and the problem would be because of lunch, of teacher contracts, and we wouldn't have the facilities. You'd have double bus runs, so you couldn't do it. We did look at that. Some of us have 2 1/2 hours and you couldn't go past that, because you have more than a teacher-contracted day, and we wouldn't have the facilities to do that.

Chairwoman Parnell:

I got a call from a kindergarten teacher who's concerned, because with a half-day schedule, the parent is responsible for transportation either to or from one way of that kindergarten experience. They're either bussed from home in and then they're picked up to go home, or vice versa. With a full-day kindergarten, are they then on that bus? They can be transported to school and then back home? And if so, have you noticed attendance improving because of that framework, because of that transportation being provided?

Carlos Garcia:

We haven't noticed the attendance. That's a good item we should look at. Parents really like it, because of the transportation to and from. They also like it because they get to go with their other kids to school, and that's something that has been extremely positive.

Chairwoman Parnell:

There's not a whole lot of time left in this school year, but I think that would be a really important thing to also track, to see if you generally have a much higher attendance rate at the kindergarten level when they are in the full-day program.

Assemblywoman Angle:

Now that we're on the kindergarten subject, I'm wondering how you're going to deal with the additional cost. Now, we have double the teacher time and classroom time. When you have two half days, it's different from having full days. I'm just wondering how that's going to affect your cost, as far as building costs, personnel costs, and those kinds of things. Have you figured those things?

Mary Pierczynski:

In the iNVEST plan, you'll see that we're planning to deal with the building issue by using modulars, and we have placed a figure in there for the purchase of modulars—76 of them, I believe, in the state—and those would be double classrooms. Clark County felt that they could handle the classrooms with their capital improvement program, so we are requesting money. You're correct for rooms for kindergarten students. Right now, a kindergarten student in a half-day program is funded at 60 percent of the per-pupil allocation that you get from the

Distributive School Account (DSA), and that would have to be increased to a full allocation, so the additional 40 percent would have to be added.

Assemblywoman Smith:

I wanted to go back to the discipline issue and say how pleased I am that we are talking about a best practice. I've heard a lot about the C.P. Squires Elementary School program, and I think one of the things we don't do enough of is looking up pilot programs that we ran, to see whether they're successful in trying to replicate. Sometimes they just fade off into the sunset, and so I'm glad that we're looking at that and hope we'll do more of that—really assessing what's working, even when they're small programs—to see if we can carry them forward.

Barbara Myers, Member, Nevada State Board of Education:

I've been asked today just to let you know that the State Board of Education also voted to fully endorse and support iNVEST '05. We are not one of 17 districts, but we in fact do believe that the tenets of this proposal are excellent and something that you should look at seriously.

Let me also say to you a couple of personal notes. I'm in my thirty-third year of teaching. Ten years ago I went into special education as a speech pathologist, having been a regular education English teacher in middle schools for many years. So I've seen both sides of regular and special education. I was interested today to see that the superintendents had come to some kind of agreement on what their top priorities would be, and I had not seen those before. I have to tell you that if I had been doing this, my number one would have been a combination of the kindergarten issue and the ELL issue. As Assemblywoman Angle asked, you are not going to improve AYP if you don't improve the base—the base being the kindergarten year—if those students don't have the adequate time that they need, and if Nevada doesn't look at, for example, having seven years of age as a mandatory age, which is way too late. The mandatory age really does need to be dropped in this state.

Secondly, if we're talking about a minimum of 120 minutes—by the way, the law here says 2 1/2 hours—there could be schools and there can be classrooms that are meeting 120 minutes for kindergarten. That's not adequate. If you look at the kindergarten standards that Assemblywoman Smith's commission has worked on, you can't take those kindergarten standards and meet them in 120 minutes per day. It just can't happen. So that would have been my number one choice, even though I would like a salary increase. Certainly, that would have been along with the English language learning.

[Barbara Myers, continued.] I came from southern California, where I was born and raised. I came here seven years ago and I said, when I ran for the State Board of Education the first time, that if I could make a difference and help Nevada have a plan—some kind of road map to address the ELL issue—then I would have done what I set out to do. Without a plan, I guarantee you will be in the same position California has found itself in year after year. There has not been a plan, and it's not a Spanish-speaking plan. Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) has identified over 200 languages in just that one district. You heard today that we looked at over 60 languages. We're truly looking at English language learning.

As a speech pathologist, I get those and people want to refer them to me. No, they're not language handicapped. They simply don't know English as a second language. They're not handicapped students, and so if you can come up with a road map—whether you take this in big chunks or small chunks—those two would have certainly come out on top of my list, and both of those will address your AYP.

Keith W. Rheault, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education, State of Nevada:

I'd like to respond to Dr. Mabey's question. The Department of Education doesn't collect retirement information, so it'll have to be something that we go to the districts to collect. We do keep track of all employee personnel, and I can provide it tomorrow to staff to give you the range of years of experience of currently employed teachers. I'll probably provide for the last five years, because I think the trend has been that—I noticed particularly this year—there is a lot more at the one- to five-year range than there are the 25- to 30-year range, compared to previous years. That's available; I can give you an idea of how many might retire.

The second piece I wanted to mention, since Chairwoman Parnell brought it up, is regarding comparison of proficiency scores in one state versus the other. We had a presentation at the State Board of Education meeting three weeks ago. It was prepared by NAEP [National Assessment of Educational Progress]. NAEP is given in every state now, and it's required in English and math. They took every state's exams and compared them to the proficiency levels of NAEP, and I've got a beautiful handout where they show Nevada falling in. We're right dab in the middle, comparing to our proficiency level to NAEP's proficiency. The one thing that I found curious was that the state with the lowest percentage of comparison—meaning NAEP's—Mississippi, was at the very bottom. They were one of the two lowest-scoring states in student proficiency. The state with the highest proficiency comparison to NAEP, meaning their state's standards almost matched NAEP's proficiency, was Louisiana. They were right behind Mississippi

for the worst proficiency levels for their students, so it didn't make any difference if your state set the standard here or down there. They're at the extreme ends, and they were at the bottom of proficiency.

[Keith Rheault, continued.] I think it's really a state determination. That's why the federal government let the states determine it. It's what you want to do and who you want to consider needing help. Hopefully, the new remediation money can be used for all of these then. Hopefully, it's not just a label that says you're not making adequate progress with your students.

Chairwoman Parnell:

Is there a possibility we could get that report? That sounds fascinating.

Keith Rheault:

I'm going to bring it over tomorrow.

Chairwoman Parnell:

We just have one additional order of business. We do have a Committee bill draft introduction and that is for BDR 34-477.

- BDR 34-539—Revises certain provisions regarding school personnel. (Assembly Bill 60)

ASSEMBLYMAN McCLEARY MOVED FOR COMMITTEE
INTRODUCTION OF BDR 34-477. (ASSEMBLY BILL 60)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SMITH SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED. (Mr. Horne was not present for the vote.)

Chairwoman Parnell:

Is there any other business before the Committee? I don't see any. The meeting is adjourned [at 5:23 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Paul Partida
Transcribing Attaché

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Chairwoman

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Committee Name: Education

Date: February 14, 2005

Time of Meeting: 3:50 p.m.

Bill #	Exhibit ID	Witness/Agency	Dept.	Description
	A	*****		Agenda
	B	Curt Chapman/Nevada Association of School Boards		iNVest '05 pamphlet
	C	Curt Chapman/Nevada Association of School Boards		iNVest '05 proposal
	D	Carlos Garcia/CCSD		Full-day kindergarten information
	E	Carlos Garcia/CCSD		Dibels Assessment