

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

**Seventy-Third Session  
February 16, 2005**

The Committee on Education was called to order at 3:51 p.m., on Wednesday, February 16, 2005. Chairwoman Bonnie Parnell presided in Room 3142 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada, and, via simultaneous videoconference, in Room 4401 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, Las Vegas, 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. Joe Hardy  
Mr. Brooks Holcomb  
Mr. William Horne  
Mr. Garn Mabey  
Mr. Mark Manendo  
Mr. Bob McCleary  
Mr. Harvey J. Munford

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Mr. Kelvin Atkinson (excused)

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

None

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Carol Stonefield, Committee Policy Analyst  
Rachel Pilliod, Committee Manager

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Karyn Wright, Director, K-12 Teacher Development, Clark County School District (CCSD), Las Vegas, Nevada  
Laura Dancer, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources, Washoe County School District (WCSD), Reno, Nevada  
Keith W. Rheault, Ph.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education, State of Nevada  
Carol S. Harris, Coordinator, Professional Development Center, Carson City School District, Carson City, Nevada  
Ananda Campbell, Teacher, Carson Middle School, Carson City, Nevada  
Terry L. Hickman, President, Nevada State Education Association (NSEA), Las Vegas, Nevada  
Dr. Mary Pierczynski, Superintendent, Carson City School District, Carson City, Nevada  
Randy Robison, Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Boards  
Ray Bacon, Executive Director, Nevada Manufacturers Association (NMA), Carson City, Nevada  
Frank Brusa, Legislative Advocate, representing Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA)

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

[Meeting called to order and roll called.] Our first order of business today is the hearing on A.B. 5.

**Assembly Bill 5: Provides for development and implementation of pilot program for mentor teachers. (BDR S-478)**

**Carol Stonefield, Committee Policy Analyst, Legislative Counsel Bureau:**

I was the primary policy analyst for the Legislative Committee on Education during the past interim. I am here in that capacity to present A.B. 5. As a member of the staff of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB), I will neither advocate nor oppose any of the provisions of A.B. 5. I will try to provide you with some of the background information on the bill. The Legislative Committee on Education did not specifically seek testimony on mentoring programs for beginning teachers. The issue has been introduced in the Legislature for the last two sessions. Senate Bill 226 of the 72nd Legislative Session was introduced by the Senate Committee on Human Resources and Facilities, and Senate Bill 168 of the 71st Legislative Session was introduced by Senator Rawson. Neither

of these bills left the Senate. The Assembly did not ever hear any presentations related to those bills.

[Carol Stonefield, continued.] Nevertheless, the Committee did hear testimony on mentor teacher programs. In a presentation from Dr. George Ann Rice from the Clark County School District (CCSD)—in the context of the district's alternative teacher certification program—she mentioned mentoring. A staff person from the Education Commission of the States (ECS), who was giving a presentation on teacher evaluation systems for growth and improvement, also mentioned the importance of mentor teacher programs. She said that research that ECS has compiled would suggest that between 40 and 50 percent of beginning teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching.

Also, a gentleman from the Education Trust spoke of mentoring teachers in the context of closing the achievement gap. Mentoring as a vehicle for enabling teachers to become highly effective, their research shows, plays a major role in student achievement. Based on that, the Committee also considered the number of teachers that must be recruited every year in Nevada, and in its overall interest in closing the achievement gap, the Committee decided to address the issue of mentoring teachers.

Assembly Bill 5 would direct the Commission on Professional Standards in Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop a pilot program. They would submit their plan to the Legislative Committee on Education during the 2005-2006 school year. The bill specifies April 1, 2006, which would be in anticipation of implementing it in the 2006-2007 school year. The districts could apply for State funds to launch the pilots. It is anticipated that the appropriation would include an evaluation for an outside vendor. That would be made in the 2007-2009 biennium. The pilot would receive a fixed appropriation. The bill specifies \$1 million, and that was the figure that was discussed during the work session of the Interim Committee. That, of course, would be subject to action by the Legislature.

The report in subsection 4 of Section 2 would most likely be a very brief status report, since the pilot project would have, at that time, only about one semester of actual implementation. The Committee anticipated that there would be some provisions made to track teacher retention and student achievement beyond the 2005-2007 biennium. The elements of the program that are to be designed by the Commission on Professional Standards would include a selection criteria and training for mentor teachers, responsibilities of a beginning teacher committee, selection criteria for a beginning teacher to participate in the program, and then the overall design of the mentoring program, which is not addressed in the bill. That is the background of the bill.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

I'd like to add that Mr. McCleary and Mr. Horne sat on this Committee during the interim. If you have anything you would like to add, please feel free to.

**Assemblyman McCleary:**

Carol, I think you mentioned 40 percent of teachers that are in the trade leave the profession within the first five years. Is that correct?

**Carol Stonefield:**

Yes. The research from the ECS would say between 40 and 50 percent of beginning teachers.

**Assemblyman McCleary:**

That is a big number.

**Carol Stonefield:**

A mentoring teacher program would be aimed at beginning teachers.

**Assemblyman Holcomb:**

I was talking to my wife this morning. She has 30 years of teaching kindergarten. She has gotten nothing but outstanding reviews. She's had so many parents ask her to stay in one more year. I thought, maybe they could have a program where they capitalize on people like my wife. I've been to her class, and it is outstanding. She's had students come back to her, praise her, say what they've done, and how she has changed their lives. I'm very excited to see this, and I will have to share it with her. Would you be hiring somebody like that—a retired teacher—to go in and mentor? Do you know how the mechanics would work? Would they advise or would they show them how they ran their class?

**Carol Stonefield:**

The bill itself does not address any of those questions. It directs the Commission on Professional Standards to develop a program and use the first fiscal year to design the program in cooperation with the Superintendent of Public Instruction, submit the program to the Legislative Committee on Education for review and comment, and then in the second year of the biennium they would receive the funding. Then, it would actually be implemented in pilot schools.

**Assemblyman Holcomb:**

My compliments to the Committee on Education for having a bill like this.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

We will be hearing from some individuals this afternoon that have either been the mentor or the mentored. You will see how Carson City School District has been working on a grant. They are here to talk about the success of the program and how it worked.

**Assemblyman Munford:**

Is this primarily for beginning teachers who need to be prepared for what to expect? If they show signs of lacking skills and abilities, is this supposed to help them improve their abilities so they will be able to improve student performance? Is this also for veteran teachers—who have experience and have been around—as well? I know that teacher development days are supposed to take care of some of these things, such as improving instruction.

**Carol Stonefield:**

I don't believe that the bill actually prevents mentoring of experienced teachers. That would be up to the Professional Standards Commission to design and address the needs as it considers them. As I recall, one presentation that the Legislative Committee on Education received was from the Washoe County School District (WCSD) on their evaluation program. There was comment, then, about providing assistance for teachers where the evaluation showed that there might be some need for improvement. Further, the staff person from the ECS—who talked about teacher evaluation for improvement—also talked about mentoring teachers. The movement now is toward assisting teachers to improve, rather than to terminate.

**Assemblyman Munford:**

That is the way and the direction it should take. Sometimes an experienced teacher, especially after an evaluation, is told that they have some problems or that they need some improvement. They have a tendency to resent that to some extent, because they have been there so long and think that their style or method was acceptable. It causes morale problems and relationship problems with other teachers.

I think mentoring has some merit. I don't know what the perfect teacher is, but how would you determine a teacher that didn't need mentoring? I don't know. I think the perfect teacher, in many respects, is one who would be judged on class performance and being able to motivate the students. As you said, evaluation plays a major role in determining who needs the mentoring. That is what I would think.

**Assemblywoman Smith:**

Along those lines, I think the latest report that is out from the RPDPs [Regional Professional Development Programs]—the evaluation of the programs—strongly points toward mentoring any teachers who need assistance. That is a valuable component to getting up to speed with standards, student achievement, and what is working with teaching styles.

**Karyn Wright, Director, K-12 Teacher Development, Clark County School District (CCSD), Las Vegas, Nevada:**

I am here today to speak in support of A.B. 5. The CCSD does support and promote mentoring for teachers new to the profession. As you know, we recruit each year in approximately 40 states, and we hire approximately 2,000 teachers. I checked that number today, and as of today, we've hired 2,489 teachers for this school year. Because of our intensive recruitment effort, we do want to retain our effective teachers each year. It has been stated that the teaching profession is the only profession without an apprentice phase. Novices are expected to perform as effectively and efficiently as experienced teachers. The first-year teacher is held to the same standards as the 15-year veteran.

Because new teachers are learning to teach at the same time they are teaching others to learn, much support and assistance is need. Estimates vary, but most researchers maintain that approximately 30 percent of teachers leave the profession within the first five years—with a staggering 50 percent in urban and isolated rural areas. This represents a tremendous cost, both human and economic. Teacher preparation programs do provide the foundation for teachers entering the profession. However, once the new teacher is confronted with the challenges of real students presenting real situations, they sometimes feel totally overwhelmed. This is why current research supports the value of a structured mentoring program for these new teachers.

Structured mentoring programs provide the ongoing support and assistance that new teachers need as they progress through the phases of their first year. When mentors receive appropriate training, they are able to assist new teachers in a variety of ways. These include:

- Providing emotional support and encouragement
- Providing information about the daily workings of the school and the cultural norms of the school community
- Giving insight regarding ways to communicate effectively with parents and/or guardians, as well as cognitive coaching

[Karyn Wright, continued.] Cognitive coaching promotes self-reflection through the collection and sharing of classroom data. This assists the new teacher with appropriate decision making regarding classroom instruction. It has been noted that both the new teacher and the mentor gain from the mentoring experience. According to current research, when new teachers have felt supported and are provided assistance during their first year, the retention rate has been higher. Current research conducted by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) indicates that students in classrooms with new teachers who were mentored during their first year achieved significantly higher academic gains. Because we want our new teachers in the CCSD to not just survive their first year, but be as effective as they can be, we do support A.B. 5. It will give us the opportunity to design and implement a pilot program for mentor teachers. The results can then be used to make informed decisions regarding our overall current district induction program.

**Laura Dancer, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources, Washoe County School District (WCSD), Reno, Nevada:**

I am also here to speak in support of A.B. 5. Washoe County School District (WCSD) has had a small mentoring program for novice teachers for several years. We've examined the results of our own small group and found that the retention of those teachers has been more than twice that of the novice teachers who were not able to have a mentor. We've been able to maintain more of them within our workforce. We've also looked at their performance evaluations over the first and second years of their employment. Mentored teachers have slightly higher performance evaluation ratings in the four domains of teaching, which is WCSD's framework of evaluating teacher performance against some recognized standards.

The indications to us from our small program are that mentoring makes a difference. It is an important difference economically—we want to be able to maintain teachers in our workforce, because the cost of replacing them is significant. There is a declining available pool out there of teachers to replace them with, and from a human standpoint, there are not many other professions that ask a person to jump out of college into a room where they close the door and don't have an awful lot of feedback or opportunity to ask questions in their first few years on the job. Mentoring really does matter, and it makes a difference.

We have maintained our very small mentoring program with a small commitment of district money to allow the mentor teacher—the senior teacher—to have training, meet with the mentee once per week, and provide some feedback. These are teachers who already have full-time teaching assignments. It is hard to ask people to take that on for a very small stipend and continue to offer their

expertise year in and year out. It is too small of an available pool. I would urge that this pilot program be approved and expanded so that we can have people who are dedicated—full-time mentor teachers—released from their teaching duties and allowed to dedicate all of their time to influence the first and second years of our novice teachers, to dedicate more of their attention to that.

**Assemblyman Holcomb:**

My wife is part of that mentoring program in Washoe County. She is going to be retiring this year. I have been to her class, and I've seen the way she has conducted it, and she tells me about the programs that she has in the class. She has their complete attention in the classroom. Would this be a program that you feel she could be a constructive part of the program, after she retires, to go back? Would this include somebody like that, with 30 years of kindergarten teaching experience?

**Laura Dancer:**

I'm not certain that the bill prescribes the selection process or who would be eligible for serving in the role as a mentor. Certainly, experienced retired teachers have a tremendous amount to offer and may be willing to do that. As I understand the bill, the selection process and the criteria are charged to the Commission on Professional Standards to flush out.

**Assemblyman Holcomb:**

She is teaching two classes now, and then she mentors the other teacher. Under this program—I don't know whether they are going to establish the parameters—but to have a teacher that can devote full-time rather than trying to teach two classes plus mentor another teacher, which she is doing now.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

I think that would be a legitimate area to consider when the design is being formulated.

**Assemblywoman Smith:**

Would it be possible, with your small group, to do a cost analysis of the potential savings of stipends and other hiring costs to give us a cost/benefit analysis?

**Laura Dancer:**

We certainly could do that; we can prepare that and get it to the Committee.



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

[Handed out prepared testimony, [Exhibit B](#).] I'm here today to support A.B. 5. I think it has already been mentioned that there have been hundreds of research projects that show that mentoring works. I don't know if we have to establish that as part of the bill. The most cited things are improved teaching performance by having a mentor, increased retention, and increased well-being—feeling better about themselves—of the teacher, by knowing how you do a little bit of the paperwork of the school and knowing they have someone to answer questions. That part of it is pretty well established. Sixteen states currently fund full-time mentors for teachers. If you look at states like Delaware, Iowa, and North Carolina, they are actually fund-specific for two or three years. They include beginning teachers for the first two or three years in the programs, although the norm of the 16 that I mentioned are one-year programs.

When I looked at the bill and we were asked to provide a fiscal note to it, I remembered submitting an almost identical bill draft in 1999 on behalf of the Commission on Professional Standards. It was back then they, through the Department, wanted a bill draft that outlined about \$1 million to support a pilot mentor program. I know they would probably be very supportive, as their normal duties of outlining the criteria for it. When you look at the bill, I think it is specific enough. You have all of the categories that you want the program to address, without being too specific to limit what we might look at.

I might mention, for example, the retired teachers would be a great source, or someone close to retirement, someone that you would have available and wouldn't have to pull out of a classroom. One of the keys to that might be whether a mentor program position could be classified as a hard-to-fill position or a critical labor shortage position. I happen to be the person with the authority to approve those in the state at the request of school districts. When this comes, we could discuss that and maybe agree that if a retired teacher—so it wouldn't affect their retirement—wanted to come back as a full-time mentor, that might be enough to entice them to do that. There are things to look at in that category.

When we looked at it previously, I brought along a WestEd document that talks about designing support for beginning teachers. WestEd is the regional lab that does research for Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and California. It's a pretty good document. They talk about high-intensity mentoring and low-intensity mentoring. They don't really recommend low-intensity. What they talk about there is that you assign mentoring by a teacher who already has a full-time job, you don't pay them anything else, and that isn't as effective. With

high-intensity, you reduce class amount for a teacher, and you pay them extra so that they are actually being paid to do the mentoring job. I think that is what we proposed previously. At the high school level, it is a lot easier to buy one or two periods for a top-notch teacher during the day so they can go visit with the new teachers. At the elementary school, it is probably a little more difficult unless you go to a retired teacher, because you can't just take an hour out of an elementary school teacher's day, and then what do you do with their kids at that time? You either need to hire full-time mentors or work out some other arrangement. I'm very supportive. The bill is specific enough that we can effectively put together a program. There are all kinds of examples of what works already.

[Keith Rheault, continued.] The only other thing: is \$1 million enough? Looking at the figures from 2004, there were 2,122 teachers that had zero experience last school year. That is the number I threw out there. Will \$1 million of mentor costs pay for everyone to get mentored? I'm not sure, at least when we looked at it in 1999. That probably isn't enough to get to every new teacher in the state. You may have one at an isolated rural school, two here, and five here. It will depend on how we can craft the program itself. I hope that we can get to most of them.

We have an alternative route to licensure program in the state, and it has been in the state about six years. That is the program where if you have a bachelor's degree—let's say in math—but never took education courses, because math is a hard-to-fill subject, the school districts can utilize them under the alternative route, get them into the classroom, and then they take education courses for the next three years. As part of that, we've required school districts to assign a mentor teacher to an alternative route teacher, because we know if they are not familiar with the education culture, they would probably last one year or less and leave. The mentor teachers have been very effective there, and we've required it. It's been an added expense for the districts to use this, which I think has limited our alternative route, because they are paying for it on their own at this point.

**Carol S. Harris, Coordinator, Professional Development Center, Carson City School District, Carson City, Nevada:**

[Handed out prepared outline, [Exhibit C](#).] We currently run a mentor program in Carson City. I started the position in professional development about 10 years ago. It was at that time I realized that there was no way that I could service all of the new hires in the district by myself. I was only in the job one year. In 1996, I sat down with the superintendent of that time and said, "We need to mentor some of our new hires." That particular year we had about 65 new hires in Carson City. Currently, we have 45 new hires. We wondered if we could pilot

a mentor program, kind of like what you are proposing right now. We piloted that first year, giving these experienced teachers a small stipend to mentor the new hires in their building. It was a great success, so we decided to expand it, and it has been in existence for nine years now. Currently, we have 24 mentors in Carson City. They are each paid a small yearly stipend, and the money comes out of a federal grant, Title V, which is the teacher enhancement program.

[Carol Harris, continued.] It started off that we were paying the stipends under district funds. Since then, we have tried to take them out of Title V. In talking to Bonnie Parnell, I have found that George W. Bush is going to be cutting a huge amount of money from the education budget. This is one that I do not want to be cut. It is highly supported by our teachers, principals, and the district administration. Besides having the mentors in the program, look down at Roman numeral II ([Exhibit C](#)), the expectations for mentors. What do they do? First of all, I meet with all of the new hires as they are hired on in the summer. We have what is called an "effective instruction for new hires." We start with that group of new hires in August, before they enter the class. The mentors come to that training before the teachers are into the classroom, and that is where they get to know their mentor and mentee. Then, the mentor is also supposed to attend a cognitive coaching training that I do with them.

The mentor is a coach. They are not an evaluator. That is a real strong definition that has to be set for everyone. If the new hire felt that this was an evaluator coming into their classroom, they would not be as free to open up and talk about the difficulties that they were having in the classroom. It has to be a coaching stance, not an evaluative stance. That is why all mentors have to attend this cognitive coaching training. They also have to support the confidential nature of the interaction. When a mentor goes into a classroom and talks about what is going on, the new hire cannot feel that information is going to their administrator. Otherwise, they would never bring up some of the difficult issues that they are having in the classroom.

The mentors are expected to document all of their time, and they send that documentation to me on a monthly basis. They are also expected to have regularly scheduled mentor meetings. The next page ([Exhibit C](#)), you can see some of the suggested topics. There are many of them for each month and are appropriate for the month—for instance, in September, all of the different types of routines that are expected of them. You don't learn these things when you are in college. You don't learn setting up IEP [Individualized Education Program] schedules, the routines of the schools, the framework for effective teaching, the long-term mapping that they have to do, how you plan a back-to-school night, and all of those things that teachers are expected—from the time they walk in

the door—to know. They don't know those things. That is why our mentors assist them and hand-hold them into this new career that they are going into.

[Carol Harris, continued.] Mr. Holcomb, you mentioned your wife being an exceptional teacher. We also notice that. About five years ago, I looked at some of our wonderful teachers that were retiring and I thought that we can't lose that expertise. They have developed this art of teaching. It truly is an art. We can't lose these people's skills. In fact, before I came here, I was meeting with a past teacher of the year in the Carson City School District, and he is going to be retiring. I was asking him to please come back next year when he is retired and help us as an instructional coach.

If you look down in area III, it says "Expectations for Instructional Coaches." We have four instructional coaches, and they are all retired employees. Some of them have been administrators, and they have all been teachers. I have contracted one secondary teacher, one elementary teacher, one special education teacher, and one math teacher. Those particular people work for us on an hourly wage, and they have the ability to go into the classroom at any time of the day. If a teacher says, "My third period, I don't know what to do with them," I can call the instructional coach, and they can go over there and work with those people.

The instructional coaches go into every new hire's classroom and they observe them teach. If it is the secondary instructional coach, they go into the secondary schools. If it is a special education coach, they go into the special education teacher's classroom and assist them in writing those IEPs. We have used those retired folks. It has been a huge success. The hard part is keeping them out of retirement. Sometimes they say that they really want to be retired now. It is a wonderful program, and I highly support this. I always have exit interviews with some of the people that have left. Usually, they are not leaving because we don't support them, because in Carson City School District, we truly support our new people and we also support our struggling teachers. That is all part of the mentor program and part of the instructional coach program.

**Assemblyman Holcomb:**

I'd like to give you an example. A teacher was having a profound discipline problem in another class last year or the year before. The teacher asked my wife, "Could you take this child for the rest of the day?" They didn't want to send the child to the principal. The nicest compliment at the end of the day: the little boy came over and asked if he could become part of her class. She runs such a beautiful class. I had visited her class a couple of times, and I was amazed at the attention. Here was a little boy that was literally climbing the

walls, and at the end of the day, he asked if he could become part of her class. That says it all right there.

**Carol Harris:**

She has the art of teaching.

**Assemblyman Holcomb:**

She really does. I agree with you; we can't lose people like that. I told her this morning, coincidentally, that it is too bad that they don't have a mentoring program where we can get people like her to go ahead and mentor. She is doing mentoring now, but she has two classes to run. I look forward to seeing her tonight and sharing this with her.

**Carol Harris:**

I think it's really important to realize that becoming a distinguished teacher does not happen on day one. It takes that hand-holding, that support, and sometimes just listening to the tears of this person finding out how stressful this job truly is. If you don't have a mentor or someone to turn to, many times that person will quit.

**Assemblyman Holcomb:**

I suggested this to my wife; I said that if they ever have a mentoring program, I should've introduced a bill like this myself. She has such a skill and such an ability to do this. If she were mentoring, she went into a new teacher's classroom and said, "Let me run the classroom for a day, and you watch how I run it and how I deal with the children." Do you do that sort of thing?

**Carol Harris:**

We do some of that. However, my feeling is that this is the teacher's job and they are going to have to learn how to handle it on their own. The instructional coach generally observes the teacher. The whole idea is that the coach doesn't solve the problem. If the coach were to solve the new hire's problem, the problem will become part of the instructional coach's problem. The whole idea of a coach is to help the new hire think through the problem on how they can be successful, getting them to be the professional. It is just like raising your kids; you have to let them fail sometimes.

**Assemblyman Holcomb:**

The school of hard knocks, to make sure they are mentored and to help them right along.

**Carol Harris:**

Yes. Learning is not a race; it takes time.

**Assemblyman Holcomb:**

How long would that mentoring process last for a mentoring teacher if you have her, for example, in a kindergarten classroom? Would that be a week or 30 days; what is the normal amount of time?

**Carol Harris:**

The new hire has the resource of the instructional coach for the entire year. Anytime they need that person, they can call them.

**Assemblywoman Angle:**

When I went to school at UNR [University of Nevada, Reno], I took methods classes, I had my student teaching, and I did a lot of substitute teaching, and that is where I learned a lot of these things that are in your paper. I didn't learn in my methods class or in my student teaching experience some of these things that you have outlined here. Why aren't we getting some of that done at the university level? Are we speaking to the universities at all about what they are teaching our teachers when they come out? Some of these things, I would think, we could take care of before we actually throw them into the classroom situation. That is basically how it goes when you substitute. What kind of dialogue are we having with the universities at that level, or have you even spoken to them about what you need from teachers when they come into the classroom?

**Carol Harris:**

I think so much is learned when you are on the job. You might learn how to handle a learning disabled child in a classroom, but you really don't know how to handle it until you have that learning disabled child in front of you. When you look at the children and look at the clientele that you are dealing with now, we are dealing with many more autistic children, learning disabled children, and English language learners (ELLs). The challenges of the teaching profession have just gotten much larger than I remember when I started my career. I don't think we have the strong parent support that we used to have. Parents are working many jobs just to make ends meet. We have that situation also. You can learn the theory at your university, but you don't know how to apply it until you are in the classroom.

**Assemblywoman Angle:**

My point is that when we do our student teaching, that is where we are supposed to get that training in the classroom. I thought that we were supposed to have some kind of coordination with the university. That is my question to you. Have you talked to them about what we are turning out? I understand that we have many more issues that we are dealing with, but also when we are teaching, we are supposed to be teaching to those issues as well.

**Carol Harris:**

I had a student teacher and I remember when the student teacher, at the end of the day, had many tears. I was her master teacher and I could pick her up. In student teaching, you do have someone there to support you. That is a very short period of time. My student teacher came in January, and I had already set the stage. I had already decided what expected behavior in the classroom was, how the class was going to be run, and the waters were pretty smooth when the student teacher came in. When you have to set your own stage and your own expectations, many of our teachers don't realize all that has to go into the planning. I think they are doing a good job; however, it is just like being an Assemblyperson. It takes time to learn how to do the job.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

It is funny that you mentioned that. I was going to mention that the freshman legislators actually do have a mentor. We assign freshman legislators a mentor. They often feel the same way. They come in here, and it is nice to have somebody that they can go to and ask questions and not do it in public. It is very much the same.

**Assemblywoman Smith:**

I wanted to mention one other point along those lines, because we have been looking towards the university on some of the parent involvement issues as well, and what teachers are learning in their preparation. The big problem that we have in Nevada is that about 75 percent of our teachers are coming from out of state. Even if we work with the University System to the best of our ability, we still have a huge gap. Carol, can you provide us information without having to go through a lot of trouble with some statistics on the retention that you've observed throughout your program with new teachers, and also if there is a cost benefit analysis that you've noticed? That would be very helpful for us.

**Ananda Campbell, Teacher, Carson Middle School, Carson City, Nevada:**

Eight years ago, I went through the mentor program as a novice teacher. At that time, I thought I was prepared. I had done student teaching with two fantastic master teachers. I was ready to go, I walked into the classroom and after the first day, I was all tears. It is one thing to have another teacher next to you and to have someone that I can go to and ask questions and bounce ideas off of. All of the sudden, the door is closed, and I'm in the room by myself with thirty 14-year-olds. I have to keep them entertained, motivated, excited, and enthusiastic about learning. To suddenly find myself with the isolation that all first-year teachers find is daunting. To have a mentor meant having someone who I knew I could count on to coach me and help me to problem solve myself, because I needed to learn how to figure things out on my own—to teach me

how to ask the right questions—and someone who I could count on who wasn't going to looking at me in an evaluative way.

[Ananda Campbell, continued.] As a first-year teacher, you are probationary, and we know better than to ask the administrators or call for help from them, because we don't want them—as probationary teachers—to know that we are having trouble. We want to put our best face forward and solve problems on our own. It is interesting that you are not only discussing for new teachers, but for veteran teachers as well. I left the state and then returned. When I returned I was, again, a mentee as a veteran teacher. Although I have confidence in myself and my abilities as a teacher, more than anything, I know that I will never cease seeking professional growth. I have a long way to go. I will be improving every year. I guess when I'm done, it's time to retire. Once I have it all figured out, I guess I'm finished. Going through the program as a veteran teacher, it's invaluable as well—especially today with all of the requirements: NCLB [No Child Left Behind Act of 2001] and the high-stakes testing.

In the time that I was out of the state and then returned, there were some procedures that had changed, as simple as a fire drill—where you are supposed to go, how to stand, where to get your kids—and the new process of recordkeeping for the attendance book had changed in the time that I was gone. I needed to have someone to show me how to do those procedures. This week, I went and spoke with a mentor teacher. I had some questions about coming into my classroom and watching what I'm doing, seeing if I'm missing something. There seem to be a few kids that I don't seem to be catching; they are falling behind, and what am I missing? As a veteran teacher, I feel confident in my abilities, but I know that I still need assistance. I still need someone who I can go to and get feedback from. A mentoring program is invaluable and I support it.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

I'd like to add to something you touched on; that is the confidentiality. I think that is so important when we look at the mentor program, because you do get emotional and you want to be able to go to somebody and say, "Why isn't this working?" or "I had a really bad day." To have that person who you can go to, who you know is a master teacher, and who also has been coached to let you figure the answers out for yourself without, at that point in time, being in the administrative situation, I think, is an extremely important part of the entire mentor program and one that I hope the Commission on Professional Standards would keep in mind as they are designing their program.



**Terry L. Hickman, President, Nevada State Education Association (NSEA),  
Las Vegas, Nevada:**

The Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) has long supported mentoring as a key support system for educators who are new to the profession or who need assistance in developing critical skills for success in the classroom. In 1999, NSEA sponsored the bill that would have provided a mentor for every probationary teacher. That bill ultimately floundered because of a lack of available funding. The need for structured mentor programs that have substance and reliability are just as important today they were in 1999. Assembly Bill 5 is a step in the right direction. However, we believe that it must be made consistent with NRS [*Nevada Revised Statutes*] 288, its compensation, and other aspects of this bill that are mandatory subjects of bargaining. It is NSEA's position that mentors need to be appropriately compensated and that the mentoring process be collegial and non-threatening. The mentor needs to be perceived as a coach.

I have submitted to the Committee and to all the members a copy of our proposed amendment ([Exhibit D](#)) to A.B. 5, developed by our counsel for your review. We are proposing adding language to subsection 3 of Section 2 of A.B. 5. This is so that the subsection would read with the italicized subsection (b) and the sub-subsections (1) and (2) of that. NSEA supports A.B. 5 with this amendment.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

We will be taking this under advisement.

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

I'm here to add my support for this bill and also to let you know that we have felt that the mentoring program in Carson City has been very successful. We've been able to help a lot of struggling new teachers who come out, and as Mrs. Harris and Ms. Campbell so aptly pointed out, it's a struggle when you first get in that classroom. From an administrator's standpoint—as a former principal—if I had a veteran teacher who was struggling with a certain aspect of their teaching, it was very helpful to be able to call on a mentor or a coach to come into the classroom and help that particular teacher. They were able to do that in a confidential manner. They were able to help that teacher, and there was no report back to administration. It was a good and safe way to fix some problems.

**Assemblyman Mabey:**

Were the mentors satisfied with the \$500 stipend?

**Mary Pierczynski:**

I think everybody would like to have more money, and we certainly would like to be able to pay our mentors more, but we were able to secure mentors for the \$500 stipend. I will tell you that we need to increase that, or we are going to lose several of them. I think there are a lot of demands on our teachers now, and this is one more thing on the list. It is going to be difficult unless we increase the pay.

**Assemblyman Mabey:**

My impression is that \$500 isn't nearly enough. I'd rather throw in some more money and try to get some more mentors. To me, this is a program that has proven to have worked in other states. I think it is money well spent. When it is time for the work session, I propose that we put a little more money in and see what happens.

**Mary Pierczynski:**

I think that most of our mentors—if you talk with them—have done it out of the professionalism, willingness, and the desire to help others. They didn't do it for the \$500. We are going to lose them because there is a lot on their plates right now.

**Assemblyman Mabey:**

How did they come up with the \$1 million?

**Carol Stonefield:**

That was a figure that was discussed during the work session. It does not represent any particular investment one way or the other. It would certainly be subject to amendment by the Committee or the money committees later on.

**Assemblyman Holcomb:**

I have to agree with you. I think it is about professionalism. My wife has talked about when she retires, that she would like to volunteer her time without charging. This, with her background, would fit hand-in-glove. I can imagine that there are other teachers that want to give back to the community. It's not the money.

**Randy Robison, Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Boards:**

We are in support of this bill. In particular, let me advocate for some of the more rural districts in our state. For us, retention is absolutely crucial. When we can finally convince somebody to come out there with us, we want to make sure that they stay. A mentoring program like this is vital for us. We ask you to keep that in mind as this bill moves along. If it is eventually successful and you

develop the regulations and criteria, please keep in mind some of the needs of some of the more rural parts.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

That is really an important part of this. It is very easy for all of us to not be able to imagine what it's like being a new teacher in someplace that you don't have access to a lot of support. We will keep that in mind in our deliberations.

**Ray Bacon, Executive Director, Nevada Manufacturers Association (NMA),  
Carson City, Nevada:**

I think most of this Committee knows that we've been deeply concerned with the education issues for a long time. This is one of the programs that the Education Leaders Council has touted over its existence, for the last 7 or 8 years, as one of the programs that works. There are a couple of points that I think probably should be on the record. The successful mentor programs in most of the other states do some level of reducing the teacher load for the mentor teachers. In many cases, they use a combination of retired teachers and—especially at the high school level—existing teachers. They reduce the load of the mentor teacher and make it so they are actively involved in what is going on at the high school.

The teacher effectiveness and teacher learning curve coming out of the Sanders study in the state of Tennessee is very interesting, because it shows the learning curve for a new teacher to be about five years. Their data is now someplace in the neighborhood of 36 to 38 million records, showing effectiveness by subject area. They also use mentors. You may wind up with a teacher that is a very effective teacher at reading, writing, social studies, and math but, quite frankly, needs a lot of work in the science area. They will work on a specific mentor for the area of weakness, which has then turned out to be very effective.

Part of the reason that we have an issue in the state of Nevada is that we are hiring, on an annual basis, teachers from 350 to 400 different sources. If NCATE [National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education] were perfect, fixing the college program would be wonderful. Unfortunately, NCATE isn't perfect. None of us buy toilet paper from 350 to 400 different sources in our lives, let alone hire teachers from 350 to 400 different sources. That whole issue of trying to standardize and trying to fix the sources is going to be a major issue. This is one of the ways that you fix that problem. The orientation cycle we currently have may be too short to bring in teachers from that many different sources. We probably need to bring them in a couple of weeks earlier to try and meld in some level of commonality. The program does effectively

work where it is utilized. It probably should have an option of a second year for those people who need help in their second year.

**Assemblywoman Angle:**

I see lots of teachers coming out of UNR [University of Nevada, Reno] who aren't getting positions in the teaching field and having to take part-time positions. They are waiting a long time. As much as we are talking about there is a teacher shortage, we have teachers graduating who are substituting and waiting for a place to be. I am wondering why we are outsourcing so much when we are graduating our own, and we cry over the brain drain here in this state. Yet, we are forcing our kids to go outside to get jobs, because we are not hiring them. We need to be talking to the university about what they are doing there, that we are not able to take the kids that are coming out of the university and using them in our education system. Is there something going on there? I really want to get to the crux of this. Why are graduating kids not being picked up by our school systems? If we are graduating these good teachers, why do we need to re-teach them? I understand the mentoring program. I don't have a problem with the mentoring program. I'm looking to these sources. Maybe you can enlighten me a little bit.

**Ray Bacon:**

At a meeting about 6 months ago, I asked when Chancellor [Jim] Rogers and Carlos Garcia were in the same room at the same time. I said, "Carlos, potentially there is still a problem with what we are producing out of our schools, when you prefer to hire kids that come out of Phoenix and Sierra Nevada College versus UNR and UNLV [University of Nevada, Las Vegas]." Carlos was nodding his head yes, and Chancellor Rogers was new at that stage and said that it indicated that he has work to do. I'll put that in. Those are their comments, and I have to agree.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

Mrs. Angle, perhaps in the next few weeks we could get a presentation from someone involved with the colleges of education. Since we are now doing some work beginning in our community college level, I think that would be appropriate.

**Frank Brusa, Legislative Advocate, representing Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA):**

We'd like to go on record as supporting A.B. 5. Personally, as a principal, I'd like to tell you that mentoring is a great concept. If it could get on all over the state, it would be beneficial for everybody. I also supervise teachers for Sierra Nevada College. I have been in the classrooms of Douglas County and Carson City. I've seen some wonderful programs that have been going on at

both the high schools and the elementary programs. The more that you can mentor, the better the teachers are in the long run.

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

Before I close the hearing on A.B. 5, I want to remind all the members of the Committee that this was a concurrent referral to both the Education Committee and to the Ways and Means Committee. There is a tentative date of March 2 for a work session, where we will take this bill up and address the amendment ([Exhibit D](#)) that was proposed. At this time, I will close the hearing on A.B. 5. We have a bill draft request that needs Committee introduction.

- BDR 34-607—Authorizes boards of trustees of school districts to accommodate medical absences and policy for attendance of pupils at the school. (Assembly Bill 76)

ASSEMBLYMAN HORNE MOVED FOR COMMITTEE  
INTRODUCTION OF BDR 34-607. (ASSEMBLY BILL 76)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SMITH SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED. (Assemblyman Atkinson was not present  
for the vote.)

**Chairwoman Parnell:**

We stand adjourned [at 5:01 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Paul Partida  
Transcribing Attaché

APPROVED BY:

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Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Chairwoman

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**EXHIBITS**

**Committee Name:** Education

**Date:** February 16, 2005    **Time of Meeting:** 3:51 p.m.

<b>Bill #</b>	<b>Exhibit ID</b>	<b>Witness / Agency</b>	<b>Dept.</b>	<b>Description</b>
	A	*****		Agenda
	B	Keith Rheault / NDOE		Prepared testimony
	C	Carol Harris / Carson City School District		Prepared outline
	D	Terry Hickman / NSEA		Proposed amendment to <u>A.B. 5</u>