

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

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

The Committee on Education was called to order at 3:52 p.m., on Monday, March 14, 2005. Chairwoman Bonnie Parnell presided in Room 3142 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada, and, via simultaneous videoconference, in Room 4412 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. Kelvin Atkinson
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:

None

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Richard Perkins, Assembly District No. 23, Clark County

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Carol Stonefield, Committee Policy Analyst
Kristin Roberts, Principal Deputy Legislative Counsel
Rachel Pilliod, Committee Manager
Paul Partida, Committee Attaché

OTHERS PRESENT:

Vincent Fillipone, Kindergarten Student, Agnes Risley Elementary School, Sparks, Nevada

Harriet A. Egertson, Ph.D., Independent Consultant, Early Childhood Education, Temecula, California

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

Nat Lommori, Superintendent of Schools, Lyon County School District, Yerington, Nevada

Dr. Carla J. Steinforth, Superintendent, Northwest Region, Clark County School District (CCSD), Las Vegas, Nevada

Diane P. Reitz, Director, K-12 Literacy, Curriculum and Professional Development Center, Clark County School District (CCSD), Las Vegas, Nevada

Ruth Johnson, Member, Clark County School Board, Clark County, Nevada

Judy Piccininni, Kindergarten Teacher, James Bilbray Elementary School, Las Vegas, Nevada

Aviana Glover, Kindergarten Student, James Bilbray Elementary School, Las Vegas, Nevada

Bonnie Fahrenbruch, Kindergarten Teacher, Empire Elementary School, Carson City, Nevada

Joanne Green, Kindergarten Teacher, Empire Elementary School, Carson City, Nevada

Pat Carpenter, Principal, Empire Elementary School, Carson City, Nevada

Joanne Boyd, Private Citizen, Parent of Kindergarten Student, Las Vegas, Nevada

Michelle Jordan, Private Citizen, Parent of Kindergarten Student, Las Vegas, Nevada

D.J. Stutz, President, Nevada State Parent-Teacher Association (PTA)

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

David K. Schumann, Independent American Party of Nevada

Lynn Chapman, Vice President, Nevada Eagle Forum, Sparks, Nevada

Dr. Dotty Merrill, Assistant Superintendent, Washoe County School District, Reno (WCSD), Nevada

Pati Falk, K-6 Administrator, Regional Center for Teaching and Learning, Washoe County School District (WCSD), Reno, Nevada

Dawna Ogden, Kindergarten Teacher, Agnes Risley Elementary School, Sparks, Nevada

Terry L. Hickman, President, Nevada State Education Association (NSEA)

Rita M. Hemmert, Early Childhood/Kindergarten Program Coordinator,
Regional Center for Teaching and Learning, Washoe County School
District (WCSD), Reno, Nevada
Carolyn Edwards, Member, Nevadans for Quality Education (NQE)
Dr. Craig Kadlub, Director, Government Affairs, Clark County School
District (CCSD), Las Vegas Nevada

Chairwoman Parnell:

[Meeting called to order and roll called.] As our first order of business this afternoon, I will open the hearing on Assembly Bill 198.

Assembly Bill 198: Provides for full-day kindergarten. (BDR 34-1197)

Chairwoman Parnell:

I'd like to remind everyone that our Committee is the policy committee. It is our task only today to determine if the opportunity for full-day kindergarten would be a good educational policy for the state of Nevada. We are not here today to debate the fiscal impact. Also, when we are talking about our youngest of our students, it is important to remember that this bill would not change current law regarding kindergarten experience or mandatory compulsory age of school attendance as defined in NRS [*Nevada Revised Statutes*] 392.040. A.B. 198 was introduced by Speaker Richard Perkins, so at this time, I will ask the Speaker to come to the table and provide us with an overview of A.B. 198.

Assemblyman Richard Perkins, Assembly District No. 23, Clark County:

[Read from prepared testimony, Exhibit B.]

I am here today to present to you Assembly Bill 198. I want to begin by thanking you for referring Assembly Joint Resolution 2 to the Assembly Floor last week. Providing a dedicated, stable funding source for new textbooks will certainly make Nevada a better state. But that is just one step, a long-term step. I am here today challenging this Committee to act now for Nevada students.

Picture the kindergartener raised by a middle-income family, enrolled in a Nevada school district at age 5. After a year of half-day kindergarten, he enters a first grade class where many of the students had access to early education. Some went to preschool, and maybe others had access to full-day kindergarten. This student, right out of the gate, will be behind his classmates

both academically and socially. He faces embarrassment and disappointment when he has to struggle to keep up with his classmates.

[Assemblyman Perkins, continued.] Meanwhile, the parents of this student have to confront additional challenges in raising their child. They have to work just as hard as he does to make sure he does not fall further behind the class. They must work harder to protect their child's self-esteem and to ensure that he does not face burnout from having to overcome the hurdles the students around him do not.

And the first grade teacher of this class struggles as well. The teacher has the responsibility to ensure that the whole class is learning to its optimal ability, but faces the dilemma of whether to slow down her entire class or to risk leaving those children who are not as well equipped behind. If we expect to hold teachers accountable, we must first hold ourselves accountable to creating a structure that allows our children to thrive. In this situation, everybody loses.

In recent years, many states have lengthened their days so that now, nationally, about 60 percent of kindergarten students attend between five and six hours per day. Nevada is behind the curve. There are increased standards of accountability in the kindergarten curriculum, a higher number of educationally and economically disadvantaged pupils, and an ever-increasing number of pupils with limited English skills. Full-day kindergarten is necessary to meet these challenges.

Some would contend that our youngsters are not ready for full-day kindergarten, that they should be eased into the educational system. But our children's young and curious minds are excited and ready to learn; they are sponges for information. In raising five children, I never heard one of them say, "I want to be dumb when I grow up." No child does.

Young children want to learn, and we have a responsibility to teach them and prepare them for the world that they will inherit. Study after study has shown that students enrolled in early education programs are better equipped for success in the short and long terms than those who are not given the opportunity. With added hours of learning and more individual attention from teachers,

students can focus more on honing basic math and reading skills. This extra time yields great results for the student's future. More will go on to graduate from high school, more are employed at age 40, and fewer will be arrested over the course of their lifetimes.

[Assemblyman Perkins, continued.] Unfortunately, Nevada's poorest students are also ill-served by our current system. Our underprivileged youth consistently score well below the national and state averages on reading tests. Nevada is a fast-growing state whose urban population is exploding. The achievement gap between white and minority students is growing, as shown by language, math, and science scores. Disturbingly, Nevada's minority students are overrepresented in special education programs. Minority and economically disadvantaged students in full-day kindergarten programs meet with great success. Full-day kindergarten is the first step we as a state can take to close the achievement gap.

Full-day kindergarten will provide access to early education programs to all Nevada families, giving every student the opportunity to succeed. It levels the playing field for those families who cannot afford such programs, while alleviating the financial burden some families risk to enroll their children. Nevada's families deserve the best our state can provide. With a better education, these students will be better equipped to go to college, better equipped to enter the work force, and better equipped to lead our state into a more prosperous future.

Assembly Bill 198 ensures that by 2006, all of Nevada's promising youngsters will have the opportunity to enroll in full-day kindergarten. It makes changes to the state's Distributive School Account (DSA), increasing the distribution given per kindergarten student to account for full-day enrollment. It also provides \$12 million in fiscal year 2005-06 to build necessary facilities and nearly \$60 million during fiscal year 2006-07 to start the program. Madam Chair and members of the Committee, in essence, we lifted the numbers and the efforts to integrate our state into full-day kindergarten out of the iNVEST Program put forward by the superintendents. But it is more than just a fiscal outlay. This proposal shows real commitment to bettering our state's educational system and means promise for all of our state's students and families.

[Assemblyman Perkins, continued.] Today is the day to act on this. Every day we do not offer our students a full and proper education is another day we are failing Nevada. Each of the top ten states ranked in the field of education offers full-day kindergarten to its students. And what's good enough for students in Kentucky or Florida is good enough for students here in Nevada.

To me, the choice here is simple: either you are for Nevada students getting a better education or you are not. You want to talk about leaving no child behind? This is the single most successful way to do that. Nevada students deserve no less than those from other states. Thank you for allowing me to speak today. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have. But first, I'd like to invite a friend, Vinny Fillipone, to read you a story.

Vincent Fillipone, Kindergarten Student, Agnes Risley Elementary School, Sparks, Nevada:

[Read his story, "Baby Bear Goes Fishing."]

Chairwoman Parnell:

Thank you so much for showing us what you can do and probably what so many other students your age can do, and I'm sure it surprises all of us. Good going.

Assemblyman Perkins:

In speaking with Vinny's family, he apparently had a great deal of difficulty with letters, phonetics, and that sort of thing before school started. He has done an outstanding job with his teacher guiding him along the way, and these are the types of successes that all of Nevada's students should enjoy.

Chairwoman Parnell:

I take it Vinny is in a full-day kindergarten, and maybe somebody will be speaking eventually about the program that Vinny has been in.

Assemblyman Holcomb:

You implied that a student who completes a half-day of kindergarten is not as prepared possibly as a full-day student. My wife has been teaching kindergarten for 30 years, and she said that she has students come that are very well prepared for kindergarten, they progress very nicely through her program, and then go right on into the first grade. She said most students could benefit, but not all students need full-day kindergarten, and definitely there are students that do need full-day kindergarten. These are the ELL [English language learners] students, handicapped students, or deficient when they come in, because

parents aren't involved in their education. Are you clumping all students into one and saying that they all need full-day kindergarten?

Assemblyman Perkins:

I would use a different verbiage; I would say that all children will benefit from full-day kindergarten. Some have the opportunity to go to preschool and other types of programs that prepare them not only for kindergarten, but for other curricula in our school systems. As we took the Education Committee around the state and met with folks in all corners of our state, the number one request was for full-day kindergarten, because every student in our state would benefit from that. They would then move along through their school experience at a higher rate.

Assemblyman Holcomb:

My wife says that there are two classrooms at her school: one is a half-day for one teacher, and the rest of the day, the facilities sit there empty. She teaches two programs, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. What you could do is for the one that sits empty for half the day, you could hire a full-day teacher and have those students who need and would benefit from full-day kindergarten having that as one classroom. Those other students—who come prepared and in an advantageous situation, that do benefit from the half-day—could move on. Wouldn't that be much more cost-effective? I know we aren't going to get into cost, but wouldn't that be just as effective? This way, you'd only need one full-day teacher, rather than a half-day teacher, rather than four teachers and two additional classrooms, if you are going to have full-day kindergarten for that particular school.

Assemblyman Perkins:

There are others behind me that can more statistically correctly answer your question, but I would tell you that I think every student would benefit. It makes sense to me that if you spent 2 1/2 hours studying reading, like Vinny has in his full-day class, or anything else in a full-day setting, if you can spend 5 hours doing that, you are going to learn that much more. As we take a baseline of our students in fourth grade and compare them to students in every state across the country—and we are near the bottom in terms of how our reading and math scores are—to me, this is one way to raise our students up. Being near last in the country, in Nevada, is not acceptable to me. This is the primary reason why I'm bringing this to this legislative session.

Assemblywoman Angle:

In my reading of the bill, am I to understand that this is going to be mandatory full-day kindergarten? The second part of my question is that we already have

some full-day kindergartens. This would be expanding this to every kindergarten to be full-day? Could you clarify that for me, please?

Assemblyman Perkins:

The first question is not addressed by the bill. There is a current law that addresses compulsory attendance, and this bill does not address that. It would fall under the current structure of compulsory attendance. The second question's answer would be, yes. Every student in Nevada would have the opportunity to go to full-day kindergarten. There are some Title I schools throughout the state that use their Title I monies to provide full-day kindergarten. There are some other situations. I know in Elko they have an extended-day program, but this would provide full-day kindergarten for every student in the state and give them that extra time to learn the curriculum that is provided for kindergarteners today.

Assemblyman Munford:

What if a student doesn't grasp the concepts and doesn't do as well in the reading as this young man just demonstrated? Would he be subject to being held back, or does he have to pass a test to be promoted or go to the next level? Some might not get it, and if they don't get it, what will happen to them?

Assemblyman Perkins:

I will have to leave that to the educational experts who will be coming up to testify. There are a number of folks here from the school districts who can address that question.

Back to the previous question—in terms of providing full-day kindergarten for all students—there are some longitudinal statistics to show that those students who had the opportunity to go for a full day, as opposed to those who go half day, experienced a better growth and are much better prepared for their first grade experience.

Chairwoman Parnell:

I'd like to direct the members of the Committee to their folders. You should find Dr. Egertson's biography and résumé, as well as her handouts and copies of the slide presentation that she will be giving. We have color-coded them so that hopefully, it will be easier for the members to identify all of the information in their folders today. The Speaker also mentioned some statistics and reports that show how far some children have achieved and how great the progress has been for those children who have attended some full-day programs across this country. If you have a minute, I'd appreciate you glancing at the additional information in your folder.

**Harriet A. Egertson, Ph.D., Independent Consultant, Early Childhood Education,
Temecula, California:**

[Handed out [Exhibit C](#).] I am an advocate for full-day kindergarten. I have spent over 30 years observing the development of kindergarten across the country and considerably longer than that in the field of education, having begun my teaching career in the very early 1960s. I have worked around the issues of full-day kindergarten since the mid-1970s. In fact, the first article I ever wrote about full-day kindergarten was called "What Matters is What Happens There."

I am going to try very hard not to overstate things, as advocates often do. I want to be very forthright with you about what we do know about full-day kindergarten and about what the opportunities are that it presents to very young children. I like to use the term "closing the opportunity gap," rather than "closing the achievement gap," when we are talking about very young children, because they really haven't had the opportunity yet to develop their capacity for achievement. But if we don't help them overcome the gaps that are so apparent at the time that children come to us at the kindergarten level, then we never will have the opportunity within the education system to close the achievement gap later on. What we know is that gap is getting wider, because our expectations are going up radically and very quickly; at the same time, we cannot claim in this country that the well-being of young children is necessarily improving.

You have already heard that full-day kindergarten is getting much more attention as one of the ways that we can improve the opportunities for children, especially those from more vulnerable circumstances, in that over 60 percent of children in the country now attend full-day kindergarten. There are wide differences in the level of opportunity. For example, in the South, 84 percent of children are able to attend full-day kindergarten, while in the West it is only 38 percent. There are some interesting reasons why they are doing better around those issues in the South, and one of them is that they were late in getting around to kindergarten. When they did start it, they started it based on what we know now, rather than what we knew 100 years ago. The southern states look better than they typically do in educational terms.

It is important for us to understand that full-day kindergarten was really the norm prior to the early part of the 1900s. It was only at the time of the Depression and the baby boom that followed World War II that kindergarten was cut back to a half-day program because, as it was imported to the United States from Germany, it typically was a full-day program and it typically was offered to families who came from more vulnerable circumstances—usually immigrant families and those who were less affluent.

[Harriet Egertson, continued.] We do live in an amazing time, but as I mentioned, we are not doing as well as we could for our young children. Today, children are considerably more diverse than they were in previous times. We are seeing, at the time that young children enter school, more mothers without a high school education, and that is a very high predictor of achievement as children progress through school. I noticed in reading the paper here in Nevada this morning that it has recently been learned that there are 84 languages being spoken in southern Nevada. The degree in which young children are able to access capacity in English is really greatly related to how they do in those early years of school. Offering full-day kindergarten is one of the ways that we know we can do better.

I put this [slide 4 of [Exhibit C](#)] in because it so dramatically demonstrates the differences that come because of the differences that children present at the time that they come to school. This is a very simple graph that shows the number of words that children have heard at the time that they are reaching 4 years old, depending on the income level of their families. This was research that was done in Kansas beginning in the 1960s, and these children have been followed for a long time. The age of the children is shown at the bottom. The differences range from only 10 million words that children have heard if they come from a low-income family up to nearly 50 million words for children who come from higher-income and better educated families.

Those are the sorts of graphs that don't come together unless we do something significant to change them. Those differences keep getting wider as time goes on, as children are in school. I present some very brief capsules of research that has been done about full-day kindergarten, and I want to draw your attention to this handout from the Education Commission of the States, which is a very recent compilation of the research. It is not a very long piece to read, and I would encourage you to do that when you have the time. Overall, we have had studies going back into the 1970s on full-day kindergarten. What we know now is that those studies are getting better than they were in those days, because we are getting better at tracking children's achievements. As someone pointed out to me, one of the outcomes of the increased federal interest in education is that we are tracking children's achievement to a much more refined degree and are able to look at individual groups of children in a more pointed way and in a way that helps us serve them better.

This highlights studies that were done in three states (slide 5 of [Exhibit C](#)):

- Ohio
 - Reduced retention in primary grades
 - Increased academic and social performance

- New Jersey
 - Children in full-day kindergarten performed higher in all areas—academic and social—in first grade than did half-day kindergarten counterparts.
- Indiana
 - Title I children in full-day kindergarten performed significantly higher academically—especially language and literacy, math—and somewhat better in personal/social than half-day kindergarten.

[Harriet Egertson, continued.] They all demonstrate that children's achievement over the primary level was both better in academic and social ways. Other studies that have done meta-analyses or have taken a look at groups of studies show that that children who participate in full-day kindergarten benefit, because they get more participation in small group and individual learning than they do in a half-day program.

[Slide 6 of [Exhibit C](#), PowerPoint presentation.]

- More participation in small groups and individual learning; benefits included:
 - Greater social interaction
 - Higher language arts and math scores
 - Increased parental satisfaction
 - Higher rates of attendance
 - No difference in fatigue factor between full-day kindergarten and half-day kindergarten
- Child-centered full-day kindergartens have higher ratings for children's achievement:
 - Children had higher personal expectations for academic success
 - Were less dependent on adults for permission to engage in activities
 - Had higher motivation

Academic and social advantages that come from full-day kindergarten include (slide 7 of [Exhibit C](#)):

- Improvement in language and literacy, math
- More independent learning, greater classroom involvement
- Increased productivity with peers
- Greater reflectiveness
- Children who more readily approach teacher for positive reasons
- Less anger and blaming behaviors
- Less shyness

[Harriet Egertson, continued.] I personally would like to see us spending a lot more time in the kindergarten on helping children understand scientific learning. I don't necessarily mean that we would have science classes, but we would help teachers feel more confident about presenting scientific concepts to young children. I believe that's the content they are interested in at that age. Think about how many questions children ask that have their basis in science and how many of us don't know how to answer them.

Children who have these positive experiences in a full-day kindergarten do better throughout the primary level of school. We know less about how they do beyond the primary level, not because they don't do better, but because our research has not been refined enough to do that kind of follow-up. That kind of longitudinal study is very difficult for schools to carry forward, and it has not been an area of research that has been well funded. The thing that is important to understand about the research on full-day kindergarten is that there have been no detrimental effects found for children who have participated in full-day kindergarten. There is hardly anything we can say that strongly about many other interventions.

Here are some of the ways that we know about how full-day kindergarten works. We know that through the experiences of teachers and parents. I might mention that I have worked with a number of teachers who have taught half-day kindergarten for a very long time and who are very uneasy about moving into full-day programs. The curious thing is that I've never known a single teacher who changed from working on a half-day basis to a full-time basis who didn't think it was absolutely the most positive thing that had ever happened in his or her career.

These are some of the things that teachers say about full-day kindergarten, who have participated in it (slide 8 of [Exhibit C](#)):

- Less hurried pace with more in-depth teaching opportunities
- More time for one-on-one and small group instruction and less time spent on whole group instruction—amount of one-on-one time is a high predictor of academic achievement
- Are better able to assess children's progress and make curriculum adjustments accordingly
- Reduced feelings of stress
- Greater feelings of professional and personal satisfaction

Again, not only are there no detrimental effects for children, but teachers are highly positive about it as well.

[Harriet Egertson, continued.] Then we can move on to what parents say about full-day kindergarten (slide 9 of [Exhibit C](#)). Parents:

- Like the fact that full-time kindergarten reduces the number of overall daily transfers for children
- Report a higher level of satisfaction with the kindergarten program
- Appreciate the more relaxed pace
- Like their children's participation in more in-depth exploration and learning
- Tend to know more about the program
- Like the increased attention that their children receive from the teachers

Some of them may express some anxiety about it and some concern about children being in a program for a full day at the beginning, but overall, once parents have the opportunity for their children to participate, they are very positive about it. In Nebraska, it was a little bit different situation than you have here with this bill; it was a much more gradual growth there. We would often recommend to a district that they offer a half-day option within the transition to full-day kindergarten. Almost without exception, not very far into the school year, all the parents wanted their children to be in the full-day program. That is the way it happens.

I would be less than honest if I didn't talk about the fact that there are things that worry me. It is one of my jobs; I call it the "Chicken Little Phenomenon." I always go around saying, "The sky is falling." There are things that worry me about full-day kindergarten, and some of them are related to the greater pressure that we are putting on children to learn all through school, but particularly in the early years.

Sometimes I worry that we are increasing the requirements at a greater pace than we can ever begin to bring children up to that level, and we also have to ask ourselves about whether it is really a good idea. Ultimately, the kinds of experiences that we should be offering children in the early years are those that extend and broaden their understandings. The children who heard 50 million words didn't hear those 50 million words in a highly formal setting. They came to school with those 50 million words. Those words launched them into a career of being able to read. They didn't get that in formal lessons, so the kindergarten has to provide a language-rich setting in which children can hear those 50 million words over time.

Worrisome issues (slide 10 and slide 11 of [Exhibit C](#)):

- Additional time is not used to extend children's learning in positive ways.
- First grade curriculum is further pushed down to the kindergarten.
- Parental concern about pressure leads to more children being held out for a year.

- Teachers do not get the support they need to implement effective programs.
- Policymakers and school leaders think full-day kindergarten is a cheaper alternative to preschool.

[Harriet Egertson, continued.] We can't do it all with one thing, but full-day kindergarten does show enormous promise for really helping to close that gap between children that go to preschool and children that can't afford to do so. When full-day kindergarten is done well, there are huge quality-of-life benefits for children, parents, and teachers.

Quality-of-life benefits include (slide 12 and slide 13 of [Exhibit C](#)):

- Provides greater consistency of day-to-day activities
- Reduces ratio of transfer time to instruction time
- Potential to better meet individual children's developmental and learning needs
- Allows integration of new learning with past experiences through project work
- Potential for less time spent in large group instruction—more one-on-one time
- More emphasis on language development and early literacy experiences
- Involves children with firsthand experience with objects, other children, and adults
- Helps children see connections among various curriculum areas
- More sharing of information about children with their families
- Can provide staff with more time for professional development

What I want to emphasize in this is that when children are not in a full-day program, given the proportion of families that are currently in the workforce, more often than not children who come from low-income circumstances are in less than high-quality child care. That is really working against them in terms of being able to be successful when they come to school. There are some important bottom-line benefits from full-day kindergarten.

When full-day kindergarten is done well—the bottom line benefits (slide 14 of [Exhibit C](#)):

- Increased learning in primary grades
- Reduced retention in grade
- Reduced Title I placements
- Fewer referrals to special education
- Improved behavior
- Higher motivation equals greater likelihood of school completion

[Harriet Egertson, continued.] Retention eats the resources of a school system in ways that are generally hidden. The State of North Carolina did a study of the costs of retention a couple of years ago and they were phenomenal. I didn't bring the number on that, but it was in the millions of dollars, in terms of how much it costs to retain children in grade. What we know about retention is that it doesn't help children. Something like full-day kindergarten, which we know helps children, is a far better way to spend that money than to spend it on retention.

I think the improved behavior has a lot to do with not having to cope with more than one social setting outside of your home. Children who are in child care, kindergarten, and their families have all these adults telling them what to do, and it is no wonder that they might not behave as we would like them to at all times.

I ran across this quote (slide 15 of [Exhibit C](#)) the other day when I was preparing this presentation. I think it speaks to this issue of full-day kindergarten. All of us are endowed with certain capacities at the time we are born, but it is our nurture—the way we are nurtured throughout our lives, but particularly when we are very young—that is the key that opens the lock that comes with what our given talents are. I think that full-day kindergarten goes a long way towards closing the achievement gap and increasing the opportunity gap for young children. I commend all those of you who have had a hand in preparing this legislation. I think it is a surefire way to make a difference.

Chairwoman Parnell:

That is some fascinating information that you shared. I saw that article this morning. I think that Las Vegas is one of the most language-diverse cities in the United States. For those of us who live in Carson or in some of the rural areas, I think to hear that puts it into perspective that we are dealing with something much greater than what many of us are used to seeing.

Assemblyman Mabey:

I want to understand something. When you were in Nebraska, they phased this in. Is it still on a phase-in, or is everybody required to go full-time?

Harriet Egertson:

In 1991, they changed the state aid formula. Prior to that, schools only received half a share of state aid for offering kindergarten, because it was half-day. Any school that offered full-day kindergarten was punished for it, because they couldn't get paid for it. In 1991, they changed that so that a district that offered full-day kindergarten received full-day state aid. It took the schools a long time to figure that out. It phased in naturally, which, in conservative

Nebraska, worked out quite well. I have been retired for 2 years now. At the time that I left, I estimated that by 2010 we would have more schools offering full-day kindergarten than we would have school districts. The number of school districts was dropping at a high rate and it was going to cross over. Even by now a significant number of districts are offering it.

[Harriet Egertson, continued.] I heard the day before yesterday that there is a bill to fund pre-kindergarten in Nebraska beyond what it previously had been. We had a small pilot program that was funded by grants, and it was a bill to greatly increase that. It is actually similar to what you are proposing with full-day kindergarten. There has been an amendment proposed that would require districts that receive the money from pre-kindergarten to offer full-day kindergarten as a follow-up to their pre-kindergarten program. I think that is a very interesting concept.

Assemblyman Mabey:

What do I tell the mothers who don't want to send their children to kindergarten all day? You addressed that, but they are mothers, they are not working, they want their children to go to kindergarten in the morning or afternoon, and they want to spend the rest of the day with them. They say, "I don't want little Johnny to go to full-day kindergarten." They want to spend more time with them.

Harriet Egertson:

I am not sure what your requirements for attendance are, but we did have districts that offered the half-day option. It went away, and it was only an issue in the first year that the school offered the full-day kindergarten. By the time the second and third years came around, those mothers did not say they wanted that.

Assemblyman Hardy:

I received an email from a PTA person in support of A.B. 198, maybe more than one. This particular email was interesting in that it quoted 7 studies on education, particularly about full-day kindergarten. As has been my experience with the educational studies, they are not real tight on a scientific basis. I had the opportunity to hear the whole language thing, and all of those studies went back to the 1960s and they called them "science."

Going back to those studies, it was a problem. One of the things that intrigued me was that the lines which I got were:

- "It's a good thing..."
- "It improves progress..."
- "Readiness for first grade, significantly higher for full-day children..."

- “This study provides a true experimental design...”

[Assemblyman Hardy, continued.] In the next one, although the full-day kindergarteners in the study did score “significantly higher” in reading than the other students, it was unclear whether this was related to the scheduling difference or to the teacher’s approach to reading instructions.

Then the next study was about doing a 15 to 1 student-to-teacher ratio, rather than, the other side, being 22 to 1. Therefore, it might be hard to isolate full-day as a main factor for higher achievement.

The next study on the long-term effects of full-day kindergarten found no major long-term effects related to the length of the kindergarten day. They did find, however, that students in Title I schools who attended full-day kindergarten were generally better prepared for first grade than were their counterparts who attended half-day kindergarten.

The next study found that the students who had attended full-day kindergarten were 26 percent more likely than former half-day kindergarteners to make it to the third grade without repeating a grade, although by fourth grade they had higher achievement in science only and higher attendance. The authors acknowledged that more research is needed on the content of the curriculum, how additional time is used, parent education levels, pre-kindergarten educational experience, and various other variables.

Minneapolis released the next study showing that Native American, Hispanic, and African-American full-day kindergarten students had made significant gains in literary achievement compared with their peers in half-day kindergarten.

I am all over the map on the literature, which doesn’t surprise me. When I start looking at the science of what does what, a lot of that intuitively makes sense, but what we know intuitively doesn’t really convince people as much as other ways. My personal intuition is that the at-risk child who is going to be in full-day is going to benefit more in the percentage increases than a child who is not at risk or in an at-risk school.

My district is very diverse. Some schools in my district are desperate for full-day kindergarten, and others are in a community that doesn’t want anything to do with full-day kindergarten. I suspect if we looked at communities that have the option and start comparing those that have a population that is not at risk versus an at risk population, I would be curious if there are studies that look at that particular thing. An opt-in/opt-out, have the ability for a child to go to full

day when it's needed, but not mandatorily required to, if not needed. What is your experience there? You are the expert.

Harriet Egertson:

It is important in educational research to look across the studies and try to isolate the ones that have the better science. You are right; there are a lot of educational studies that don't meet the mark around the science issue. I don't pretend to be a researcher, so I usually try and look for these meta-analyses that have been done by people who understand good methodology and can pick out the studies that have those kinds of controls. Nobody is ever going to be able to control all those variables, because we can't put children in a laboratory and isolate all those variables.

Even the situation that you last posed is not possible, because it is not possible to make clear distinctions about who needs it and who doesn't. Because of the development of children at this age, even when they appear to come from more affluent environments, there may be a lot going on in that situation that isn't exactly present. I think we have to look at the whole thing and consider the achievement differences that we can document strongly for children who come from more vulnerable circumstances, particularly children who are poor and children who come from second-language families. Those are pretty clear, at least through the primary grades.

The fact that they don't look so different after the primary grades I never thought was a bad thing. If we can get children through the primary level in a positive way, we have lots of evidence to show that children who do well early in school have a snowball effect. They stay in school and they do okay. The fact that children start to look more alike is okay; we want everyone to have the opportunities. I am not arguing for mediocrity; I am simply saying that we have to be careful that we don't use this to keep escalating the expectation. That is not a positive thing for children. I spoke with a principal in California last year who was proud that they had gone beyond the state expectations for mathematics in kindergarten. They didn't require their children to count to 100; they required them to count to 1,000. That is ludicrous. We have to be careful that all of this emphasis on achievement doesn't get us into that kind of thing, doing harm by doing well.

Assemblyman Horne:

We have heard different things on kindergarten students at risk and those not at risk and the various benefits they would likely receive from full-day kindergarten. Bear with me; I'll brag on my son for a moment to make my question. Spanish is the primary language spoken in our house. Before age 20 months, he was counting to ten in both English and Spanish. He turns

2 years old next month, and he is already counting into his teens and recognizing all of the letters in the alphabet. He is starting with words now and recognizing those. When he is ready for kindergarten, and he keeps progressing at this pace, he is going to be reading. He is going to be a little bit advanced. How is he going to benefit in kindergarten with other students who are where they are expected to be at the kindergarten level or behind in a full-day kindergarten situation? Will he benefit as much as the child who comes from a background where he didn't receive the opportunity to learn to read and write at a young age?

Harriet Egerton:

I would certainly hope so. It depends on what kind of kindergarten teacher he gets and what the curriculum looks like. We would look for a curriculum in the kindergarten that offered students the opportunities to engage in the investigation of topics in some great depth. In a good kindergarten, we talk about children doing projects around topics of interest either to them individually or to a small group or to the class, and they spend time on those projects and learn in-depth about whatever that topic is. They need to be topics that are worthwhile. A whole lot of what goes on in early education settings, preschools, kindergartens, and first grades, I'm sorry to say, are often trivial pursuits. That is one of the reasons I had under my worrisome issues this issue of teachers getting the kind of support they need to do good programming. Good programming in kindergarten is very intellectually rich. A child that is doing what your son is doing would carry that topic on to fairly great depth. A child that was not that far advanced would not be punished in that setting, but they would perhaps learn a lot from your son, from interacting.

Assemblyman Horne:

You wouldn't recommend that full-day kindergarten should be focused only for those students that are in need, and those who are more advanced could not benefit from it—all could benefit from it—and you wouldn't foreclose it to one group?

Harriet Egerton:

All could benefit from it.

Assemblywoman Angle:

Some of the things that you saw as you phased in full-day kindergarten; did you see a correlation between diagnoses of ADD [Attention Deficit Disorder] and ADHD [Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder] in children? Also, was there a difference between achievements for boys and girls as they went from the half-day to the full-day kindergarten experience? Did you find any behavioral problems, social things? Were those an increase, or did they stay the same?

Harriet Egertson:

In general, these studies, which were reported in here, looked at those issues. The social outcomes are very positive for full-day kindergarten. The behavior issues improve in full-day because there is a greater depth of relationship between the teachers and the students and, more importantly perhaps, between the teachers and the parents. The teachers are interacting with half as many parents as they would typically have if they had two sessions of kindergarten in a full day. Trying to keep track of 50 parents is an arduous thing for a kindergarten teacher.

The special education referrals are less as a result of full-day kindergarten. Whether it is isolated out as to ADHD or specific disabilities, I don't know. I'm sure you could find that buried in some of these studies, but I don't know that anybody has reported that specifically. I have thought for a long time that some of those diagnoses in the very early years were very much related to the way that we interacted with children, in terms of our expectations and the nature of classrooms.

Assemblyman Manendo:

I don't think this bill has anything to do with NRS [*Nevada Revised Statutes*] 392.040; it doesn't change anything in statute. I'm not sure what your order is, but maybe when the districts come up they could think about what type of flexibility or options that are offered in each particular district and the feasibility of doing a half-day option to parents.

On a personal note, one of my favorite constituents, Perry Turner, happens to be my nephew. My family couldn't afford for him to go to full-day kindergarten. I called him on the phone today and spoke to him about this issue. He said he really wanted to go to full-day kindergarten and if that was available, my sister, her husband, and Perry would love for him to go to full-day kindergarten. He could read and write before he was in kindergarten.

Chairwoman Parnell:

To clarify a couple of things while we are waiting for our superintendents: as I said in the comments prior to the testimony beginning, this does not change current law, NRS 392.040, regarding compulsory age of attendance. That is age 7 and will remain 7; it does not change. This state does not have "mandatory kindergarten." It does require some kind of kindergarten experience. I think it would help in the testimony today if we keep that in mind. This bill presents an opportunity for students for a full-day kindergarten; it does not mandate attendance in that program. This bill has nothing to do with changing the mandated compulsory age of attendance. I know that is an issue with some

in the room, so if you want to get a copy of that NRS, we would be happy to supply you with it.

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

I want to thank you for allowing me to be here today on behalf of the 17 school districts superintendents and their boards of trustees, who in our iNVEST '05 Plan endorsed full-day kindergarten as one of the primary ways to increase student achievement in the state of Nevada. We appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf and in support of A.B. 198. The research shows that full-day kindergarten results in academic and social benefits for children. I will highlight a few things.

In the studies that we looked at from Evansville, Indiana, and Cincinnati, Ohio, the research showed:

- Children from full-day kindergarten demonstrate higher long-term achievement.
- Children from full-day kindergarten have higher reading scores in the early grades.
- Disadvantaged and low-income children from full-day kindergarten make greater progress in social skills.
- Children from full-day kindergarten have higher test scores in general, including Criterion Referenced Tests.
- There were fewer referrals to special education.
- Children from full-day kindergarten have less recidivism rates as a result of the experience.

There were some interesting studies done in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where they looked at the lessening of retention in first and second grade and determined that they saved almost 19 percent of what it costs them to have full-day kindergarten, just from that savings on retentions.

Kindergarten is no longer naps, cookies, and milk. I told you about a recent visit to a kindergarten classroom when I spoke to you before about full-day kindergarten. Children came up to me and said, "Do you want to hear me read?" I remembered going into kindergarten classrooms about 4 years ago where children came up and said, "Do you want to help me glitter?" That is certainly a big difference. The expectations are certainly different now. The iNVEST '05 Plan supports all-day kindergarten for the above reasons and the research that we read. We stand behind A.B. 198 and believe passage of this bill will promote academic achievement in our state.

**Nat Lommori, Superintendent of Schools, Lyon County School District,
Yerington, Nevada:**

I'm here in support of A.B. 198. As the superintendents of the state worked on iNVEST '05 to determine what would have the greatest and most significant impact on children in our state and to meet the ever-increasing demands of NCLB [No Child Left Behind Act of 2001], full-day kindergarten became our priority. Most feel that this was more Clark County-driven; I have had that asked to me by a few Assemblymen, which is not the case. I can tell you that I believe all 17 school districts are very much in favor of a full-day kindergarten.

In Lyon County, we have extended-day programs from our Title I money. In talking to the principals that offer those, they can assure you that it may be the best thing that we have ever done in education. It catches these students up and helps them become successful in the primary grades.

One issue that some brought up was the case of mandatory kindergarten. I don't want to squish this, but it is difficult to teach someone when they are not there. Some families choose not to send their children. That is going to be an issue no matter what. For those who do have children in full-day kindergarten, we operated that in the extended day, keeping low class sizes. As kids progressed, we actually bring in a second tier, usually in the second semester, and catch more children up. It is not an issue of having the parents' support in that all-day program. We are here to urge your support in the passage of this.

Assemblywoman Angle:

You sparked my interest. What do you do? You said, "It was hard to teach if they are not there." What will you do with those who decide not to send their children to full-day kindergarten?

Nat Lommori:

We do what we are doing currently. Under the law it is not optional nor are they required to come to first grade. When those children show up, we take them in, and there are some testing requirements under current law for first grade to make sure that they are ready to go to first grade. Should they not choose to go, they start behind and we try to catch them up.

Dr. Carla J. Steinforth, Superintendent, Northwest Region, Clark County School District (CCSD), Las Vegas Nevada:

[Read from prepared testimony, [Exhibit D](#).]

We thank you for the opportunity to talk with you and share the work that we have been doing in our district with regard to full-day kindergarten. Our superintendent, Carlos Garcia, sends his regrets.

He is in Washington, D.C., today and would like to have been here to discuss a program that we feel greatly impacts student achievement at a very early age.

[Carla Steinforth, continued.] As has already been discussed, the implementation of an all-day kindergarten program is one of the top priorities of the superintendents' iNVEST plan. In Clark County School District, we felt so strongly about the importance of an all-day kindergarten that we used our Title I and Title II funds to provide all-day kindergarten at 54 of our most at-risk schools. We also offered in 12 school communities, where space was available and parents were supportive, an all-day kindergarten for a tuition fee. By implementing the all-day program in these schools, we increased the instructional time of our kindergarten children from 150 minutes to 310 minutes.

Since the beginning of the year, we have been tracking the impact of the added instructional time on student achievement. I will tell you that we are seeing substantial gains in student achievement and are finding additional benefits as well. Diane will share with you some of the results that we have found with our all-day kindergarten in some of our most at-risk schools. After she is finished, I will share with you what we have found with the all-day, fee-based kindergarten program in the 12 schools.

Diane P. Reitz, Director, K-12 Literacy, Curriculum and Professional Development Center, Clark County School District (CCSD), Las Vegas, Nevada:

[Read from prepared testimony, [Exhibit D.](#)]

On the handout I've provided for you ([Exhibit E](#)), the graph on the first page shows the progress the kindergarten students have made at some of our most at-risk schools. These are results after only one semester, but they show the dramatic difference in the achievement when extra time made available through all-day kindergarten allows the curriculum to target a comprehensive teacher-directed literacy program. At the beginning of the year, students were pre-assessed.

You can see that in first assessment, as illustrated by the white bars, 1,952 students were classified as "struggling," 483 "emerging," and 54 as being "on track." In the second assessment, taken at the end of the first semester, the red

bar graph shows that the number of “struggling” students has been reduced by more than half to 884. The yellow bar shows the number of “emerging” students more than doubled to 1,008. And the number of “on track” students, as illustrated by the green bar, increased more than 10 times to 597. These results clearly show that all-day programs are providing the time that teachers need to deliver quality literacy instruction.

Carla Steinforth:

[Read from prepared testimony, [Exhibit D.](#)]

Traditionally thinking, you would think that the position that an all-day program is successful primarily for children living in poverty and children for whom English is a second language. Research studies have shown that children in a typical kindergarten classroom come to school with a wide range of experiences and varied levels of development extending from 3 years old to 8 years old. This wide range exists regardless of the socioeconomic level of the community. We saw this wide range firsthand in our tuition, fee-based kindergarten programs. Because of the fee requirement, our all-day tuition-based kindergarten programs were located primarily in affluent communities.

You see in your handout ([Exhibit E](#)) a brochure that was used to advertise our program and ones that had questions that parents asked, and you can see the schools that participated in that.

In the handout entitled “Dibels Assessment Comparison,” you can see the preliminary achievement results comparing students in a full-day fee-based kindergarten program in a Summerlin school with students attending the half-day program in the same school.

Here ([Exhibit E](#)) you have a wonderful opportunity to see the same community and look at the results in a full-time, full-day versus a half-day.

In the tuition-based, all-day classroom, the first column of raw scores—the range of beginning assessment scores—range from a low of 5 to a high of 246 on the first assessment in October. When you compare the achievement of both classrooms, you can see that the students in both programs showed growth; however, the students in the all-day program showed an average percentage increase more than 3 times that of the students in the half-day program. Notice also the size of the classrooms. Traditionally, you

would think that just by lowering the class size in the half-day program you could produce the same, if not better, results. Note that the all-day class has 29 students with 1 teacher and an instructional aide, while the half-day class has 16 students with 1 teacher. The substantial achievement gains recorded in the all-day class with more students truly demonstrate the impact that the additional instructional time can have on student achievement at the kindergarten level.

[Carla Steinforth, continued.] We know that the increased achievement is not only a factor of increased instructional time, but also teacher expertise. Ninety-nine percent of the teachers who are teaching our tuition, fee-based kindergarten programs are trained in K-GRIP; it is the State of Nevada Governor's Reading Initiative Program. We feel that the K-GRIP training in combination with the additional instructional time has impacted student achievement. Just recently, we received the results of a K-GRIP assessment given to the student in our all-day and in our half-day kindergarten classes. We are finding that in our full-day classrooms, 47 percent of the kindergarten students have already achieved the highest score possible, which is 12 on the K-GRIP assessments. You would expect that achievement at the end of the year. This was achieved by January. These students are now working in small, guided reading groups. Only 5 percent of the students in the all-day program have a score lower than 8.

We are also seeing interesting results in terms of attendance in our all-day tuition fee-based kindergarten programs. Looking at the handout ([Exhibit E](#)) with the attendance percentages, you see that the all-day program is maintaining an average daily attendance rate of 95 to 98 percent, while the half-day attendance rate extends from 93 to 98 percent. Eight of the 12 schools have equal to or higher attendance rates when comparing the all-day classroom with the a.m. and p.m. half-day classrooms.

Perhaps one of the most telling benefits we are seeing in our all-day kindergarten program is evidenced in student writing. Writing instruction is time intensive. The all-day program allows time for more thorough instruction. We are seeing significant increases in student writing skills. More students are able to write complete sentences, as well as write a series of sentences on a single topic. The additional time given to science and social studies

curriculum is clearly reflected in the vocabulary and the writing that we are seeing.

[Carla Steinforth, continued.] If you look at the writing samples in blue ([Exhibit E](#)), at first we have Alyssa. Alyssa entered kindergarten with little letter identification or letter sound knowledge.

- At the beginning of the year, this student only expressed herself through pictures.
- On the second sample that was taken in November, you see "I LB." Now Alyssa is gaining knowledge of letter and sounds of each word. She is beginning to use the beginning sounds of the words that she wanted to write. She wanted to write, "I like butterflies."
- On the back you have Alyssa's third writing sample taken in February. "Playing with Mom. I love when my mom plays in the yard." Alyssa is now sounding through words, using sight words, spaces, a title, and experimenting with punctuation.

If you look at the next one by Chandler, Chandler came in with some letter and sound knowledge, but a fear of writing.

- At first Chandler drew a picture of three turtles. He could verbalize his story about turtles, but he did not want to write. He was hesitant to write words because he wanted to be sure that he could spell them correctly.
- If you look at the second sample taken in November, Chandler is now saying, "I have three turtles and they are hibernating. One is named Buster." Chandler overcame his inhibitions to write and is now writing sentences with detail and experimenting with punctuation.

When you look at the next one, and you would say this is a very highly skilled student. Jackson came in with a wealth of knowledge.

- Notice the first sample in September: "I saw a deer." Correct spelling, but is lacking some detail.
- If you look at the second sample: "I went to the Riverbanks Zoo. I saw seals and gorillas and penguins and elephants." Now Jackson is including a main idea and some supporting detail.

- The third: "The Sleepover. Lucca is coming to my house and having a sleepover." Jackson has now advanced to experimenting with a title and punctuation.

[Carla Steinforth, continued.] You will be hearing from Judy Piccininni, who is the teacher of these children. Enclosed, we thought you might be interested in seeing her lesson plans. They are on a modified track and are not back in class until April 4, and you can see the literacy and math plans that she has been doing. You will also be hearing from Aviana, who wanted to share her story with you about what she is learning in kindergarten.

While these are only preliminary results, they clearly demonstrate what the state superintendents believe to be true: All-day kindergarten will increase the opportunity for all students to learn.

I can tell you to date that we have evidenced three major findings:

- Achievement has increased significantly in at-risk and affluent settings.
- The additional time clearly has a positive impact on student achievement.
- Teacher training has made a difference in how teachers use that additional instructional time.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our preliminary findings. We are looking forward to sharing with you the future progress of our children. We are very excited about what we see.

Assemblywoman Smith:

Will you be doing longitudinal tracking that will look at the cost benefit of fewer remediation classes? We talked earlier about retention, and I am also thinking about the time and money spent on remediation.

Carla Steinforth:

I know that they are tracking the children and intend to track the children that are in the program now to see the longitudinal data, in terms of achievement. Also, Judy Piccininni has two students in her class who would be very intense in a special education classroom. She is seeing tremendous results from those two students participating in an all-day kindergarten and feels that some of the interventions that normally would have had to be done are not necessary because of the extra instruction they are now receiving.

Assemblywoman Smith:

That is what I am interested in. Could you pass that on? I think everything that we look at, we have to be looking at the cost and analyzing if it is making a difference in a variety of ways. [Ms. Steinforth answered in the affirmative.]

Assemblyman Holcomb:

What would you say is the downside of having all-day kindergarten for students who are struggling, students who are at risk, ELL, and students who have attention spans of 5 minutes, versus half-day classes for students who are on track? They basically have come to kindergarten well prepared, their parents have spent time with them, and they can read little books and they memorize them, because the parents read them over and over again. A child can read a whole book, but give them another book and they can't read it. Give the one book and they can read it, because they have memorized it. What would you say the downside would be to give all-day kindergarten to the struggling students and having a half-day kindergarten for those students who are really "on track" and don't need that all-day kindergarten?

Carla Steinforth:

I believe that our chart ([Exhibit E](#)) notes that very well. When you say "don't need it," if you would look at Andrew, who is on our chart here, he was the one that came in with the raw score of 246. He increased to 304. Barbara came in at 159 for her raw score and increased to 232. It accelerates the learning of all children. I would say even though I have a child who maybe comes in with some skills, why not let my child accelerate also?

Assemblyman Holcomb:

If the child is on track and can perform very well in the first grade and has, then they come in and the teacher can tell which ones need the additional time—and all-day kindergarten would be very beneficial—but she can also tell whose parents have invested the time, and these children are going to perform well in the first grade. That is the idea of kindergarten; it is to prepare them for the first grade. Is there a downside, other than what you said, with providing that additional time?

Carla Steinforth:

I don't see a downside from the standpoint that we carry children as far as we can take them and that it actually enriches their instruction. As you see from the writings that we had, obviously, Jackson was very skilled. Look at how skilled that writing is now. In the classroom, where you have children that are of this level and children who are below that, what a wonderful experience for them both to accelerate at the time. Also, these gains that the children see,

I have read some research that they continue on. It is not that they come to a certain point, and then level out.

Assemblyman Holcomb:

The reason that I brought that up is that there is no question that they would benefit, but it is a balancing. In my wife's case, she's been teaching. They have two classrooms. If they have all-day kindergarten, you will have to hire two additional teachers and build two additional portables, whereas under the present situation, they have two classrooms and they can very easily hire an all-day kindergarten teacher and have that program for the students who would really need it and would benefit in preparing them for the first grade. As one class is being underutilized, it would be fully utilized, and then the teacher could continue teaching two half-day classes for those who are on track. For those who are on track, it might be more enriching and they would benefit more, but they will go on to the first grade and do very well.

Chairwoman Parnell:

As a 27-year teacher, when I looked at the scores that are in your packet which Mr. Garcia shared with us during the iNVEST presentation, I was shocked. I don't think that I have ever seen any kind of assessment on that very short term basis, where Calvin showed a 2,080 percent change from pre-assessment to post. To me, that says volumes. Another point that you made in the packet ([Exhibit E](#)) regarding attendance, we have a kindergarten here in Carson that has a real concern about attendance. We have transportation provided one way and then parent pickup on the other half, or vice-versa, depending on if it is morning or afternoon kindergarten program. She is starting to see a problem with attendance in general. If the parent doesn't have transportation that day, the child most likely doesn't come to school. I am glad to see it confirmed in the research you did on the attendance rates. I would imagine that is because that transportation is at the front and back ends of the day, which has probably helped to increase those numbers.

Carla Steinforth:

Absolutely.

Ruth Johnson, Member, Clark County School Board, Clark County, Nevada:

I'm the past president of the Nevada Association of School Boards, and I echo the support for this legislation that has unanimous support from the 17 school boards and the 17 superintendents. Additionally, in 1997, the Legislature passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 8 of the 69th Legislative Session, promoting community school boards, so that school communities could have a stronger voice in public education. I took that resolution very seriously, and I come before you today representing 4 formally organized community education

advisory boards. These boards represent 3 cities, 4 townships, the Moapa Indian Reservation, and hundreds of families stationed in Nevada at Nellis Air Force Base. The families I represent are primarily low- to middle-income families who don't qualify for the special government programs, such as Head Start and Title I programs. They can't afford private preschools, either. The full-day kindergarten issue would greatly benefit these families.

[Ruth Johnson, continued.] I have served on my local school board for 9 years, and full-day kindergarten has consistently been an issue that my constituents have advocated for. They feel strongly that students would benefit from full-day kindergarten, and they beg you to support the issues represented in A.B. 198. I am also the mother of four children who attend Clark County School District schools, and I think that each of them would have benefited and would have enjoyed a full-day kindergarten experience as well. I have at the table with me Mrs. Judy Piccininni, who is an excellent kindergarten teacher at a school that I represent. She has here with her one of her students, and they will both address you. I want to tell you that the handwriting of this young student is incredible, as is the story she will share with you. I thank you for the opportunity to be able to communicate with us in southern Nevada and we appreciate your knowing how much we support this bill.

Chairwoman Parnell:

Judy, I personally and on behalf of the Committee congratulate you being named a recent Milken Award winner—quite a coveted award. We are interested in what you have to say, and you obviously do a terrific job.

Judy Piccininni, Kindergarten Teacher, James Bilbray Elementary School, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I come to you today to speak from two separate perspectives, one as a teacher looking at teacher quality. Not only have I been able to teach the extended-day program, but I have also been able to teach the half-day program in order to compare the two. I have also been able to instruct teachers all over Clark County—kindergarten and first grade teachers—on curriculum issues. As far as teacher quality, last year I had 66 students. With these students I had to monitor their assessments and design their instruction. This year, I have 26 students. I am able to know if my children have grasped the curriculum, rather than just be able to teach the curriculum. Assessment, we know, drives instruction. Time and fewer students have allowed me to know my students, to know their levels, and where to go next. This year, as opposed to last year, I am a better teacher. I know my students and I can take them to further levels.

The next perspective is on student achievement. I have heard many people talk about students exceeding expectations and going into first grade well beyond

the expectations of kindergarten. My students have exceeded expectations for the most part, not because I have pushed down a curriculum, but because I have extended their learning.

[Judy Piccininni, continued.] With the extended time:

- We are able to talk.
- We are able to have discussions.
- We are able to write more.
- We are able to expand our mathematics instruction.
- We are able to have time to do brief lessons and talk about our learning.
- I can meet in small groups more often.
- We are able to increase a child's academics.
- I can help to close the gaps.

I really find that this year my students have become closer to me. I know that I speak to every student 15 times per day and hug every student 15 times per day. There were days last year where I thought, with 66 students, how often did I speak to each student individually? I find with that, the gaps have closed in their education. The small group instruction has allowed me to meet with them, know where they are, and take them to a new level. The students who come to me with increased knowledge, those are my students for the most part who were older students, and some of them missed the cut-off by one day.

To give them the opportunity of an extended-day curriculum, I think, not only enhances their learning, but helps parents understand that we do have our guidelines as far as setting that date and having students enter on a certain date. And though they are disappointed that they only missed it by a short period of time, they can come in the next year for an extended program and expand their learning. I am an advocate for this program and I hope to see it become a bill soon. With me today I have Aviana Glover, one of my students. Aviana came to me as one of my students who could read and write somewhat when she came to me. She has blossomed, and I am thankful to have given her the opportunity that the class has given her. She is here to read a story that she wrote.

**Aviana Glover, Kindergarten Student, James Bilbray Elementary School,
Las Vegas, Nevada:**

[Read a story that she wrote.]

**Bonnie Fahrenbruch, Kindergarten Teacher, Empire Elementary School,
Carson City, Nevada:**

I have been asked to speak about what our schedule is currently in a half-day kindergarten setting. We have 2 hours and 45 minutes with our children. I teach both morning and afternoon kindergarten, so we have two sets of kids.

On the half-day kindergarten schedule:

- We come in during the morning.
- Put our things away.
- Our kids sign in.
- We do our pledge.
- Our morning message.
- Then they are off to their special classes 4 days per week, such as music, physical education, and computers.

When we come back from their classes:

- We do our calendar program.
- Then our 30-minute reading program.
- After reading we do themed learning labs:
 - Math
 - Listening lab
 - Science
 - Dramatic play
 - Literacy
 - Art

After our learning labs we do math 3 times a week for 15 to 20 minutes, since it is difficult to get it in every day, then the other 2 days we work on our writing. Then we do our story tree activities, and our stories are also theme-based. With that, generally, we have about 10 minutes and then they are out the door, and 1 hour later we get our afternoon class. That is our half-day kindergarten schedule.

**Joanne Green, Kindergarten Teacher, Empire Elementary School, Carson City,
Nevada:**

I would like to talk to you about what we would do with a full-day kindergarten, a lot of what has already been said: incorporate social studies and science, not being in such a rush, being able to study more in depth, and all of these things would increase the vocabulary. That is such a high issue for the kids to succeed even more. Math and writing, we'd be able to get that in every day—more phonemic awareness, which is essential for increased reading and writing. The list can keep going on. The main question I am always asked is, "Are the kids

ready for it? Will they be able to sit there?" Through a good kindergarten program, yes, they would, because it would be active and hands-on. It would include varied levels for the kids in each level. They can, and through a good program it would be very successful, I believe.

Pat Carpenter, Principal, Empire Elementary School, Carson City, Nevada:

I would like to address Dr. Egertson's worrisome issues. As an administrator at the school, I believe that is our primary responsibility to take care of some of these issues that people have concerns about. For instance, not wasting the increased time; is it going to be longer time to do what we are already doing? As you have heard, our kindergarten teachers have put a lot of thought into what the increased time would be. We would, of course, go through a period of transition where we would have to examine our current program and look at how we could do a better job.

Don't push down the curriculum; of course, we don't want to be doing what would be in first grade. But then again, don't we want our students to reach their full potential? We want every child to reach their full potential, not only the students that we see at risk, but every student can reach their full potential. The third concern that she had was about students being held out of school because of their parents. Truthfully, at our school, I think it would be the opposite. I think it would be the same in a lot of schools. I would find it very difficult to explain to some parents why some students have the opportunity for an all-day kindergarten, while their student does not. They can only go for half a day. I think I would have a fight on my hands with some of the parents, because they really do want their children to reach their full potential.

Adequate programs: we currently are a Success for All school. In order to do the Success for All program, we have to pick and choose. We cannot do the whole program. We have to do what we have adequate time to do. There is much more that we can do, as Joanne and Bonnie have mentioned. One of the key things that you saw on the charts is vocabulary. Every child can increase their vocabulary. We have found the two key things are vocabulary and that they can increase their writing abilities. The adequate programs would need to be provided by the schools during this transition period.

One of my primary concerns is that people are looking at this as a replacement for preschool. You should come to our school and take a look. Our 4-year-old program for preschool is fabulous. We have really seen a difference with those students who come into our kindergarten classroom. To watch them going down the halls—our 4-year-olds are actually going into the computer labs, operating the mouse, and doing all the other things that our other students can do.

[Pat Carpenter, continued.] In closing, I would like to address something that has come up: the difference between preventive and corrective. As a former counselor and having worked in K-12 grades, I am a firm believer in preventive. This is what this is all about. I don't care what kind of remediation programs that you have; they are more expensive. Not on the dollars, but the human cost of doing remediation. Once a child has identified himself as "I can't" or "I don't want to," then you have your battle on your hands. As I mentioned before, every child needs to reach their full potential, not only the kids that are at risk, but all of our students do. We know that parent involvement can make a difference. How do we know how far these children can go unless we give them the opportunity? We speak on behalf of Empire Elementary School, and we speak on behalf of a lot of schools.

Joanne Boyd, Private Citizen, Parent of Kindergarten Student, Las Vegas, Nevada:

My son Peyton is attending 1 of the 12 fee-based kindergarten programs here in Las Vegas. When I was asked last year by our principal to put the word out that there would be a paid program for all-day available, I knocked on doors and made phone calls to parents who were preparing to enroll their children in either the standard half-day program or a private school that offered all-day. I knew, without ever seeing statistics or education reports, that this is what my child needed to give him the best start and adequately prepare him to enter public school in Las Vegas.

When my daughter was in the half-day program, I worked weekly in the classroom and became frustrated with the lack of time available to the teacher to effectively engage 5- and 6-year-olds in an activity and spend the time needed to successfully master the task given them. When she reached first grade, I watched as students were frustrated and unprepared to handle the expectations presented to them. I realized it was not that the teachers hadn't given it their best shot; they just didn't have the necessary time to work with them. I cannot begin to tell you how different things are this year. Again, I spend time weekly in the classroom and see such a change in the children in their level of learning.

Any of the concerns from the parents in the beginning, such as kids getting tired and not being able to stay all day, have never been an issue. The kids love every minute of it, not only because they are learning, but because they have time to ask questions and get it right. My son loves going to school and is so proud of his reading—not memorization—and writing skills. I walked down the hallway leading to the classroom the other day and noticed the stories posted on the wall. I was certain the first graders had written them, but it was the kindergarten class. I credit their teacher, Mrs. Howser, with the huge success,

but I know that being able to spend extra time with them makes all the difference.

[Joanne Boyd, continued.] The only complaint I have is that he is reading the Las Vegas billboards far earlier than I was prepared to explain them. With the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), more pressure has been placed on the students and teachers to achieve higher expectations. Getting a good start will only increase the learning capability of these children, and, consequently, increase test scores. When some of us parents were growing up, not many of us had the advantage of preschool or day care to teach us the basics such as scissors, glue, and staying quiet in line. That was left to the kindergarten teachers.

Now a number of children step into kindergarten with a year or two of cut-and-paste under their belts and are ready to read and write. They are learning science, math, and big kid behavior that they are more than ready to take on. The sad thing is that not every parent can afford to pay for their child to attend all-day kindergarten. The cost now can't be compared to the high cost later when our kids can't make the grade. We have all committed to leave no child behind in their pursuit of a quality education. Funding all-day kindergarten is the best way to start.

Michelle Jordan, Private Citizen, Parent of Kindergarten Student, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am speaking today to highly recommend the expansion of the extended-day kindergarten program in Clark County. My son, Jackson, was an early reader, having taught himself to read at age 3 and not only by rote memory, and he entered kindergarten already possessing many of the skills at that grade level. Even so, I think he has benefited greatly from the extended-day program. The more in-depth instruction allowed by the longer kindergarten day, as well as the variety of topics the students are able to cover, has helped him keep motivated and interested in school. I had a fear that he would get lost in his half-day program of 30 children, whose needs for instruction were greater than his own. In the full-day program, his teacher has been able not only to recognize his need for more challenging work, but to meet that need. For Jackson, the social skills provided have been as viable as the academic skills. He is able to go to recess, lunch, physical education, art, and library. It is due to these types of benefits that I feel children who attend extended-day kindergarten will not only academically ready for first grade, but socially prepared as well.

D.J. Stutz, President, Nevada State Parent-Teacher Association (PTA):

Last April, the delegates came together at our annual convention to vote on a resolution regarding full-day kindergarten. I can't say that it was a

much-debated issue, because there wasn't much debate. This motion passed quickly and easily. By the discussion from the floor it was easy to see that this was an issue that our membership greatly supports, and on behalf of those delegates, I come before you to ask for your support of A.B. 198. In the year 2000, Dr. James Elicker, an early childhood researcher at Purdue University, published the findings of a 2-year evaluation of a Wisconsin full-day kindergarten program.

[D.J. Stutz, continued.] Among Elicker's conclusions are the following:

- Students participating in full-day kindergarten consistently progressed further academically during the kindergarten year, as assessed by achievement tests, than students in either half-day or alternate day programs.
- There was tentative evidence that full-day kindergarten has stronger, longer-lasting academic benefits for children from low-income families or others with fewer educational resources prior to kindergarten.
- There was no evidence of detrimental effects of full-day kindergarten.
- The full-day curriculum, if developmentally appropriate for 5- and 6-year-olds, did not seem to overly stress or pressure the kindergarten children.
- Kindergarten teachers and parents strongly valued the increased flexibility, opportunities to communicate, and individualized instruction for children offered by the full-day schedule.
- Additionally, practitioners and parents contributed several benefits to full-day kindergarten:
 - There was more time and opportunity to explore with language.
 - A more flexible individualized learning environment.
 - More individual and small group interactions with the teacher than is possible in most half-day classrooms.
 - Provided an opportunity for lower-income families to enroll children in a higher-quality early education program, which might otherwise be unaffordable in the private market.
 - Parents reported increased opportunities to get involved in their children's classrooms and communicate with their teachers.
- Teachers reported:
 - A reduced ratio of transition time to learning time.
 - More time to spend with students individually and in small groups.
 - More time to get to know and communicate with parents.
 - More time to assess students in individualized instruction to their needs and interests.
 - Fewer total students, as compared to half-day classrooms.

[D.J. Stutz, continued.] Last Thursday and Friday, I was in Houston, Texas, working with the Regional Advisory Committee for the United States Department of Education. Among the individuals sitting with me on that Committee was Maria Ott of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Over the 2 days, Dr. Ott and I had the opportunity to discuss full-day kindergarten and her experience as LAUSD has begun implementing a 5-year plan to have full-day kindergarten in all schools, starting with high-needs areas. Dr. Ott explained that curriculum training for teachers occurred during the summer and Saturday session.

Furthermore, teachers work cooperatively in the development of in-service methodologies, and those teachers new to full-day curriculums were paired with master teachers as mentors. Dr. Ott stated that schools in their first year of implementation have already seen an increase in literacy readiness assessments. More kindergarteners are reading earlier in the year, and the ELL [English language learners] students are testing at higher levels than their counterparts of the previous year.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Committee, we all recognize what is at stake. No Child Left Behind is forcing us to take a critical look at the education of our students. We must prepare these students for an education that is becoming more demanding each year. Many of our children come from families where every resource is available and used to help them achieve, but many of our children come from homes where resources are not available or understood. It is our job, yours and mine, to do everything in our power to see that each child is offered the opportunity to grow, learn, and contribute. Full-day kindergarten is a step in the right direction. It is the right thing to do.

Chairwoman Parnell:

A couple of us on this Committee have been involved in some of the more contentious issues in doing the PTA legislative platform. It is pretty startling to know that it was not contentious. I also want to compliment you; I think more of the members of the Education Committee, if they were on their computer this weekend, spent most of this weekend responding to all of the PTA members who were letting us know how they feel. That is a hard thing to do. Congratulations for that grassroots effort.

D.J. Stutz:

I'd like to acknowledge Barbara Clark's assistance in getting that PTA involvement as well.

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

My opposition is not hardcore opposition. I think there is more than adequate research that shows that full-day kindergarten does have substantial advantages. However, if you take a look at the problems in Nevada, when you take a look at our fourth grade NAEP [National Assessment of Educational Progress] scores, we are among the worst; in fact, I think you can arguably say we are forty-ninth or fiftieth in the learning gap between our haves and have nots. If we phase in full-day kindergarten by starting off with the at-risk students—not the at-risk schools; what we are currently doing is at-risk schools—so that you wind up with a full-day program and a part-day program in most of the schools, we start to close that gap.

Theoretically, what should happen is that we should make life easier for elementary school teachers all the way through, because you start to narrow the range of what you are asking our teachers to do all the way through, I think, once you have a few years' worth of data doing that. And, I noticed in D.J.'s comments that LAUSD is starting with their at-risk schools or their at-risk students. The other thing I will point out is that we are one of the few states that has not faced a legal challenge on our school funding issues. If you focus on at-risk students, I would contend that there is absolutely no way you will ever wind up with a lawsuit.

If you focus on "at risk" schools, you are going to wind up with that at-risk parent who happens to have their student in an affluent school that doesn't get the benefit. At some point in time, one of those parents is going to sue. They will have a very good case. If you focus on the at-risk students, two things are going to happen. Number one, you start to close the gap, which is desperately needed. Second, you have eliminated the potential for lawsuits. Perhaps more important than that is you have now created an ability for us to advance the school program at every single level, because you have started to narrow the range of what you wind up with in the first grade, the second grade, and on up through the grades.

At least that is the way to start the program; it drastically reduces the capital expenses for new facilities and things like that to start off with and allows you to go in and, as you are building new schools, build the additional classrooms that go to full-day kindergarten across the board. Where you don't have that, you are going to have the expensive portables and things like that. By phasing it into the "at risk" populations first, you can close that gap substantially.

David K. Schumann, Independent American Party of Nevada:

A snippet from *A Nation at Risk*, which is a book about education that was published in the 1980s: "All through our history, each generation of Americans has succeeded its parents in educational level and earning ability. For the first time, Americans will not surpass, will not equal, and will not even approach the education earning level of their parents." In 1945, we went to kindergarten for a half-day. During the other half of the day, children had excess energy to burn and were outside somewhere. I went to school in Philadelphia where there were fields and playgrounds all around. A gentleman who is a contemporary of mine, much better known and a couple of years older than me—Bill Cosby—I can guarantee you he also had half-day kindergarten, because the school district of Philadelphia didn't have full-day kindergarten. Somehow he managed to make it through and get a Ph.D. in education.

I think it would be very interesting of you to ask him to come and give you his opinions on confining 6-year-olds to a brick building and even a playground for a full day. This is not a good thing for children. Children at 6 years old are not mentally hard-wired yet. They have other interests than education, and rightfully so. I heard a bad phrase used here a few times: "rote memorization." It brought me back to all these neat other education fads: outcome-based education, whole language, and fuzzy math.

I used a little rote memorization in 1989 when we had an earthquake; it was 7.1 in the Bay Area. It was 5 p.m. in October; we had to go to the store to get battery powered lamps. There were 20-somethings running the check-out counters, and of course the check-outs wouldn't work because the electricity was off, so all of these old folks, like me, went up there and helped them. They did not know multiplication tables. Why? Because that is against any A-policy. It's called rote memorization. You are not allowed to do that anymore. This is more of that fuzzy math, outcome-based education, where the schools set the outcome. Outcome-based education sounds like a good idea; it's not. It is time to drop computational algorithms, which is another one of their catchphrases. There is a certain amount of educational fads that come and they go, but we got a better education—and I know we did 60 years ago—than anything they presented in the last 20 or 30 years. All we got was this one little half-day of kindergarten. Please let these kids be free to be kids and let their parents have more time with them, because who knows and has more interest in that kid than the kid's parents?

One last thing about jargon. One of the things I gave you was a handout ([Exhibit F](#)) from the Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools in 1992. "Teachers are facilitators of learning rather than imparters of information." I'm sorry, that is wrong; teachers are imparters of knowledge.

Chairwoman Parnell:

Mr. Schumann, does this pertain to the full-day kindergarten bill?

David Schumann:

Only to the extent that we are using jargon here to say what a great thing it is, and jargon is being used on the older kids in a bad way. This notion, that because they spend more time behind brick walls they will learn more, has not been proven. I wish you would get some scientific proof of that and call Dr. Bill Cosby and ask him what he thinks of it.

Lynn Chapman, Vice President, Nevada Eagle Forum, Sparks, Nevada:

I have been sitting and listening. It has been very interesting. One of the questions that came to my mind is where home schooling fit into this. Actually, home schoolers don't need 6 hours per day. It was very easy to teach my daughter to read. I taught her letters, and I went to the public library, which was free. I used books to teach her to read, I sat down and taught her to read, and it was very easy. I do have a handout ([Exhibit G](#)) and what I wanted to say something about was from the Child and Family Protection Association. According to a report by the Southwest Policy Institute, contrary to common belief, early institutional schooling can harm children emotionally, intellectually, socially, and may later lead to greater peer dependency. Moreover, research indicates that most academic gains shown by normal children schooled early do not last past the second grade. The need for early schooling for disadvantaged and at-risk children does not justify mandating kindergarten for all children.

I also wanted to point out that the Hewitt Foundation reported the Stanford Early Childhood Education Public Policy Research Team, which worked in this field for a number of years, could not find a single state that had early school mandates based on reputable research. Most of what is on the second page has to do with eye problems for young students. Dr. Shio Jean Lin, Director General of the Health Promotion Bureau, under the Department of Health in Taiwan, observed the growth of nearsightedness among young children is thought to result from reading very young and using computers very young.

Lin Lung-kuang, ophthalmology professor at National Taiwan University, said: "Myopia cannot be cured. We have to prevent children from becoming nearsighted; don't let them use their vision too early." There is quite a problem on nearsightedness.

In another study of first through sixth graders, it was noted that 70 percent of readers with visual, perceptual, or refractive problems were boys. It is significant that boys lag behind girls in their development from 6 to 12 months.

Stanley Krippner noted from his research that boys made up 90 percent of disabled readers. The other handout was the *Education Reporter* ([Exhibit G](#)) from May 2004. I did want to bring out, because this is what I brought out before on mandatory kindergarten, was the fact that we have little boys that seem to be able to sit as well as little girls, usually.

[Lynn Chapman, continued.] I know that talking with many parents over the years, from home schooling and helping parents, that most of the time it is their little boys that they don't want to put into kindergarten, because they have a hard time sitting in a structured situation. The problem is that these little boys are then noted as a behavioral problem. It is noted in their file for the rest of their school career as them having behavioral problems. That is partly due to the fact that they couldn't sit still when they were younger. I thought it was very good reading some interesting concepts. If you could read that, it would be great. Also, I have been talking to a lot of people who are not very happy about all-day kindergarten. A lot of people right now are struggling with the financial problems of taxes with their homes and losing them. I am concerned about the cost of this program.

Assemblywoman Angle:

This hits home personally; my son went to kindergarten twice. The first time he went was because he was socially immature. I even kept him home until he was 6 years old because I knew that boys sometimes don't mature. When he went the second time, he was so discouraged by that experience of flunking that he didn't want to go to school anymore. That is when I brought him home. He made up 5 years of school in 4 years. He started going back to school in junior high school and was salutatorian of his senior class. Now he is a teacher and has a master's degree, so I know that sometimes you have get boys on the right track from the very beginning. I know that when I home schooled, it wasn't very popular. Now it is becoming more and more popular. If we were to institute a full-day program, where you didn't have the choice of a half day, tell me about the home schooling movement and how it has progressed as we have put more mandates on children in school. Can you make a correlation there and what you might foresee as the future of home schooling, if this were to pass?

Lynn Chapman:

I get phone calls every day from people who are concerned about their children and they are pulling them and home schooling them. I can't see home-school moms doing an all-day kindergarten with their children at home. Their whole life is school, basically. You are always teaching your children something every day anyway, but I can't see the cost would be almost minimal. There are a lot of things that home-school parents can do that don't cost very much, and it's very easy to teach children their ABCs, reading, writing, and such. I didn't have any

money and I used the public library. It was very easy to get to, and it was free and very easy to use. I can't see home schoolers doing something like this for their children all day long. I think it would be a struggle trying to do something like that.

Assemblywoman Angle:

Do you think that there would be an increase of home schooling should this go into law?

Lynn Chapman:

I get phone calls every day from people pulling their children, and I can see this happening and see more people home schooling, because people are the experts on their own children, and they know if they are ready to go to school. I see a lot of people pulling their children for a kindergarten situation as it is. I think, yes, people will be pulling their kids.

Chairwoman Parnell:

In general, we have seen an increase in home schooling every year, I think, for probably the last 6 or 7 years. Nothing about A.B. 198 would prevent any parent in the state from continuing to make that choice.

Dr. Dotty Merrill, Assistant Superintendent, Washoe County School District (WCSD), Reno, Nevada:

Dr. Hardy was asking about a tight scientific study and advocating for better research and better science with regard to full-day versus half-day kindergarten. That is part of what we will be sharing with you in the next several moments. I have with me Pati Falk and Dawna Ogden. Pati is going to talk for a few moments about how Risley came to have a full-day kindergarten program. Dawna, the kindergarten teacher, is going to share with you some of the things that have been learned through that experience. They now have been doing it into the third year. We do believe we have some things that we can point to. Then I will talk with you about our scientific study ([Exhibit H](#)).

Pati Falk, K-6 Administrator, Regional Center for Teaching and Learning, Washoe County School District (WCSD), Reno, Nevada:

[Read from prepared testimony, [Exhibit I](#).]

From 2000 to 2004, I served as a principal of Agnes Risley Elementary School, a Title I school of 600 students in Sparks, Nevada. In the 2001-02 school year, we wrote full-day kindergarten into our Title I comprehensive schoolwide plan, becoming one of the first Title I schools in our county to offer this instructional intervention. The full-day program has now been in

place for Agnes Risley for 3 years, supported by Title I funds. The decision to fund the three full-day programs was based upon the critical need to provide additional time in the kindergarten year to address academics, oral language development, and language acquisition needs of our highly diverse student population.

[Pati Falk, continued.] Risley's full-day kindergartens are a structured and purposeful instructional program implemented by a highly trained and experienced kindergarten teaching team. All of the kindergarten teachers at Risley are trained reading recovery teachers. The decision to move to implementation of the full-day program came from their commitment to early intervention and their understanding of the power of early good first teaching. The successful implementation of a full-day program statewide will be dependent upon the knowledge and skill of the kindergarten teachers regarding effective teaching and intervention strategies for emergent readers and writers. Professional development to ensure this level of expertise in all kindergarten teachers will be critical.

The individuals who were involved in implementing the full-day kindergartens at Risley had everything to do with the success that is about to be shared with you. These are remarkable teachers with a deep level of training and expertise in early good first teaching. Our decision at Risley to make all of our kindergartens full-day was based on an urgency to provide the kind of intensive instruction that was needed to meet the diverse needs of our student populations. Most of the other points in my narrative have been made already tonight, and I encourage you to go ahead and read through that ([Exhibit I](#)). The individual that you need to hear from is Dawna Ogden, because she shares the true story of our students' success.

Dawna Ogden, Kindergarten Teacher, Agnes Risley Elementary School, Sparks, Nevada:

[Read from prepared testimony, [Exhibit J](#).]

The population of the school:

- 649 students total.
- 85 percent-plus free/reduced lunch.
- 70 percent-plus ESL [English as Second Language] population, and the 3 full-day classes have been in existence since September 2002.

After a number of years implementing school reform measures, such as training and best practices in teaching, gathering and analyzing school data, establishing ongoing professional development, peer mentoring, peer observations,

professional learning groups, and grade-level planning times, we were still, as a school, not making enough of a difference in our student achievement and success. I believe that is because we couldn't see a clear picture of what the possibilities could be with our at-risk populations.

[Dawna Ogden, continued.] At Risley, we believe in early intervention, and many of our students entering kindergarten were already 2, 3, or 4 years behind in academic literacy exposure and experiences. Things that we've heard other people talk about: exposure to books, having stories read to them, playing with sounds and words, back-and-forth conversations, songs, playing with writing, et cetera. Within the confines of our educational system, many were not able to catch up by the third grade without experiencing failure. Intervention had to come early, and we felt at the time our best option was full-day kindergarten.

[Pointed out the percentages in [Exhibit J](#).] Our question was, "What could we do in kindergarten to get them ready for first grade, and how could we hold those gains?" We began our all-day kindergarten for every student and staffed those classes with some of our most experienced expert-teachers trained in reading recovery and early literacy development and observation. Since we have implemented our full-day kindergarten at Risley, we have seen the percentage of children who leave kindergarten at or above grade-level jump from the 40, 50, and 60 percentiles to consistently high 80 and 90 percentiles in letter identification, phonics, the writing of known words, and reading levels.

We have also seen our first grade percentage of children at or above grade level jump from the 20 to 40 percent range to the 60 to 70 percent ranges in writing known words and reading levels. Even though we have lost one-third of our population from our full-day kindergartens to other schools and gained in our first grade classrooms one-third of students who had not been in our full-day program, we expect to see jumps in the percentages of children at the second grade at or above grade level this year, as our first full-day class finished second grade. Then we are looking to see the impact next year on the standardized testing, which is done at third grade.

I have included our actual percentages in your written information ([Exhibit J](#)), if you would like to look at that. I have also included writing samples, and Vinny, who read earlier, was also from our school. Large class sizes caused us to reevaluate our plan at the end of last year. In 2003-04, with 30 to 32 children per class with 1 teacher and no full-time help, we still noticed that we were not able to give enough individual or small-group attention to, especially, the lowest

children. With large class sizes, we lose instruction and intervention time to management issues.

[Dawna Ogden, continued] We, this year, adjusted our full-day schedule to be an extended day for all children. All children would come from 8:55 a.m. to 1:45 p.m., and then from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. we meet with smaller groups of children grouped by similar needs or strengths on a 3-week rotating basis. This has allowed us to more specifically meet the needs of our most at-risk students as well as those of our more advanced students. This year we have 33 to 34 students per classroom, and we feel that this flexibility is critical to the success of our all-day program.

We have funded our all-day program with on-site monies, which means that we have lost the use of that money at the school for other needs.

Our programs require an extra teacher and a half allocation and the use of an extra room and a half. This has necessitated teaming situations in both first and second grades. Our music program is taught in the lunch room. It has also created issues with 90 to 100 more children present for lunch and on the playground, which have required thoughtful solutions.

The factors that continue to impact our success of our reform measures as a school and our all-day kindergarten program are:

- Our transiency rate
- Our language acquisition issues
- Physical space
- Large numbers of students
- The continual training of teachers and their level of expertise

Full-day kindergarten for our population of children has offered our students twice as much time in an academically geared and appropriate setting under good teaching, twice as much language exposure in literate activities, and opportunities for flexible and precise interventions before failure is experienced. These differences have corresponded to more school success for more of our children. Some populations of children may have more options for partaking in opportunities that promote school success. We have found for many of our students that our kindergartens are the only options that they have to prepare for school success, and our

full-day program has given us more opportunity to meet that challenge.

Dotty Merrill:

We distributed to you a two-page handout ([Exhibit H](#)), and I would like to take a moment to describe the scientific research that we have here. What we did was take a look at Risley, which is in its third year of full-day kindergarten. We tracked the students who were at Risley for all of full-day kindergarten, continued at Risley for all of first grade, and then took our district CRTs [Criterion Referenced Tests] in reading and math at the end of the first grade year. We looked, at the same time, at two other schools that do not have full-day kindergarten. We looked at their students who had attended half-day kindergarten and continued at those same schools in the same way. We were looking at similar variables in each of the three schools.

We also looked at schools that were very similar to Risley, and on the second page, at the bottom, you can see the comparative percentages, because we were looking at our first grade CRTs from last spring. We have not yet given our second grade CRTs for these children.

We looked at last year's percentages:

- Risley had 77 percent free and reduced lunch.
- School A had 83 percent free and reduced lunch.
- School B had 75 percent free and reduced lunch.

English Language Learners:

- Risley, with 49.45 percent
- School A, with 37.84 percent
- School B, with 53.98 percent

These are schools with comparable student populations—not exact, but comparable. The only distinguishing feature that we looked at was the difference between full-day and half-day experiences. As you can see by looking back on page 1, Risley had, at the end of first grade—looking at the children who were there for all of full-day kindergarten the previous year—no children in the emergent or developing category for either math or reading. No children at all. At Risley, for reading, 19 percent of the children were approaching the standard. By comparison, in School A, 67.74 percent were approaching the standard, and in School B, above 60 percent. That is in reading. You can see a less striking comparison for math, but nonetheless, only 7 percent of the first graders at Risley, with the advantage of full-day kindergarten, were below the standard and approaching the standard at a much higher percentage at either of the other schools.

[Dotty Merrill, continued.] If you then look at the third category, which is meeting standard, you will see that students at Risley certainly surpassed their peers at other schools, with 19 percent meeting the standard for reading. What I think is most phenomenal in looking at this is that 60.71 percent of the first grade children at Risley, who went there for full-day, exceeded the standard in reading, and 75 percent of those children exceeded the standard in math. This is a small study, but it is scientific in nature.

We looked at:

- 56 children from Risley
- 31 children from School A
- 43 children from School B

We tried to control variables for free and reduced lunch and English language learners, et cetera, to examine comparable schools. Those were the two that matched the best. We simply present this to you as a piece of information that we believe indicates some of the learning advantages that can be tracked from kindergarten into first grade. We will soon be administering our district second grade CRTs and we will have that data. The real test will be as these children move forward and take the State third grade CRTs next year.

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

NSEA has been a longtime supporter of full-day kindergarten and is here today in support of A.B. 198. However, we believe the potential of full-day kindergarten programs cannot be reached without putting limits on class size. I would like to read to the Committee an email I received from one of our members currently teaching full-day kindergarten ([Exhibit K](#)).

[Read from [Exhibit K](#).]

My name is Brenda Freund, and I teach full-day kindergarten at Lincoln Park Elementary School. I would like to give you “the good, the bad, and the ugly” of full-day kindergarten. We teach the SFA [Success For All] KinderCorner program, a comprehensive program that includes a complete literacy and math program. I can’t say enough good about this program. It is an accelerated program and the majority of my students are doing very well. I taught this same program last year in two half-day sessions. It was very difficult to teach the curriculum in 2 1/2 hours. I felt rushed and stressed out most of the time, as did my students. I was so excited to have this opportunity to teach a full-day program, which would allow us to take our time, have a more relaxed, comfortable learning experience, and actually have time to write. I believed the benefits

of building a foundation for learning for these students, especially my ESL students, has been phenomenal.

[Terry Hickman, continued.] The good news is that I have seen tremendous benefits come to pass this year, especially for those students who have been with me since the first day of school. Many students are blending sounds together to read words. They are also using temporary or "sound" spelling much earlier in the school year. Some of my ESL students are doing better than I ever expected. It is exciting to see.

However, there is another side to this story—the bad and ugly, if you will. I have 35 students. Of the 35, 10 are chronically disruptive and have serious behavior issues that I am trying to deal with. It is impossible to accomplish all that is expected in a full-day program with this many children. I cannot give them the quality of one-on-one time needed during our reading and writing time. With this many 5- and 6-year-olds in one class all day, there are far too many behavior challenges and not enough of me to go around. I do have an aide, but she is only comfortable doing certain things. Having a class this size is defeating the purpose of full-day kindergarten for the at-risk students. I don't feel I can teach them adequately, and I am certainly one frazzled teacher at the end of each day.

I will not continue teaching kindergarten if class size is not reduced. It is too difficult to stay sane. This is a shame because I love teaching kindergarten. I am good with that age group and had originally thought I would teach kindergarten for many years, possibly until I retire. There aren't too many of us out there that really prefer teaching kindergarten. Many teachers accept a position in kindergarten to get their foot in the door until something else comes along.

The bottom line is that I see great benefits to full-day kindergarten, as long as class size is limited. Please read this email to the legislators, so that they may know how important it is that full-day kindergarten must have class size limits to make it the most effective program possible. Thank you for taking this time. [Signed] Brenda Freund.

Assemblyman Mabey:

How many kids will typically be in a kindergarten class under how this bill is written?

Terry Hickman:

Right now I believe this bill does not include any class size. The original class size bill, I can't remember what year, was supposed to be a 15 students to 1 teacher ratio. That was in the preamble to the class size reduction bill. This bill does not come to say what the class size limits are. This member and many other members are saying that it is very important for you to consider that fact as you talk about this bill.

Chairwoman Parnell:

When class size reduction was implemented, it only dealt with grades one through three. Kindergarten class size has never really been addressed by the Legislature. It was discussed initially, I believe, in 1993 and in the class size reduction bill of 1995, but there has never been a mandate on kindergarten class size.

Terry Hickman:

That is what I was saying. There has never been a definitive statement from the Legislature.

Assemblyman Holcomb:

I like very much the email that you read, Terry. My wife, who has been teaching kindergarten for 30 years, would have fully agreed with that. She would have called it "crowd control."

Rita M. Hemmert, Early Childhood/Kindergarten Program Coordinator, Regional Center for Teaching and Learning, Washoe County School District (WCSD), Reno, Nevada:

I am in favor of full-day kindergarten, and most of the things that I have prepared today ([Exhibit L](#)) have been eloquently spoken by other people. I would like to draw your attention to this little pink book that came with my information ([Exhibit M](#)). This is a copy of the standards that Washoe County is using in kindergarten. As you look over this material, you will see that there is a lot expected of kindergarten children, as well as a lot being expected of the teacher to teach these children. I think, as we think about the opportunities of full-day kindergarten, it provides a more relaxed atmosphere to teach these standards when you have a full day to present them versus 2 1/2 hours, which in Washoe County is what our half-day programs are.

[Rita Hemmert, continued.] I think that if we give children more time to develop the concepts and to delve into them more deeply, they will be more lasting concepts, and they will serve the children better in the things that they are going to be doing as school progresses for them. I would encourage you to think seriously about this and to consider all the pros and cons that have been said today. Know that kindergarten teachers as a whole, I think, would be very thankful to have more time and to be able to have more time with parents as well to discuss their children and to make this a good experience for them.

Chairwoman Parnell:

Thank you for sharing this curriculum. I think it is the first of all the information that we have. I think it is the only document that shows what you actually are teaching to our kindergarten students.

Carolyn Edwards, Member, Nevadans for Quality Education (NQE):

We are here to support A.B. 198. I do not want to repeat everything that has been said today, but I do want to cover a couple of issues. I think you need to consider the total package that full-day kindergarten provides. It is not only about achievement, it is also about the social skills that the children learn with one another. It is about the behavioral learning that they learn and the development of discipline, to follow rules, instructions, and class activities. These learning routines and expectations that they learn in full-day kindergarten will help them in first grade. In first grade, they will not need to learn these again and will be able to move more quickly into the academics.

I would like to note here that it is not mandatory, so that parents wanting something else could certainly pursue alternatives to the full-day kindergarten. Madam Chair, you began today's hearing with this question, "Is A.B. 198 a good educational policy for Nevada?" I suggest it definitely is good policy. I find it interesting that in 1991, 14 years ago, Nebraska instituted full-day kindergarten. Today in 2005, I think it is time for Nevada to implement full-day kindergarten.

Dr. Craig Kadlub, Director, Government Affairs, Clark County School District (CCSD), Las Vegas, Nevada:

Just to clarify, iNVEST was written at a 25 student to 1 teacher ratio.

Chairwoman Parnell:

Thank you. That was very informative. I will close the hearing on A.B. 198. I will make sure that you are all notified as to when we have the work session. I would guess it would be some time next week. Is there any other business to come before this Committee? Seeing none, we are adjourned [at 6:34 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Paul Partida
Committee Attaché

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Chairwoman

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Committee Name: Committee on Education

Date: March 14, 2005 **Time of Meeting:** 3:52 p.m.

Bill #	Exhibit ID	Witness/Agency	Dept.	Description
	A	*****		Agenda
	B	Assemblyman Perkins		Prepared testimony
	C	Harriet Egertson		Prepared presentation with PowerPoint
	D	Carla Steinforth and Diane Reitz/CCSD		Prepared testimony
	E	Carla Steinforth and Diane Reitz/CCSD		Charts and graphs
	F	David Schumann/Independent American Party		<i>Nevada Appeal</i> article
	G	Lynn Chapman/Nevada Eagle Forum		Research and <i>Education Reporter</i> article
	H	Dotty Merrill/WCSD		Graphs and charts
	I	Patti Falk/WCSD		Prepared testimony
	J	Dawna Ogden/WCSD		Summary of main points
	K	Terry Hickman/NSEA		Prepared testimony
	L	Rita Hemmert/WCSD		Parent guide and prepared testimony
	M	Rita Hemmert/WCSD		Information brochure