

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES AND EDUCATION

Seventy-third Session

February 23, 2005

The Senate Committee on Human Resources and Education was called to order by Chair Maurice E. Washington at 1:36 p.m. on Wednesday, February 23, 2005, in Room 2135 of the Legislative Building, Carson City, Nevada. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. [Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster. All exhibits are available and on file at the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Maurice E. Washington, Chair
Senator Barbara K. Cegavske, Vice Chair
Senator Joe Heck
Senator Bernice Mathews
Senator Valerie Wiener
Senator Steven Horsford

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Senator Dennis Nolan (Excused)

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Marsheilah D. Lyons, Committee Policy Analyst
Leslie K. Hamner, Committee Counsel
Patricia Vardakis, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jennifer Stoll-Hadayia, Public Health Program Manager, Washoe County District Health Department
Michelle D. Washington, Health Educator, Washoe County District Health Department
Gerold Dermid, Health Educator, Washoe County District Health Department
Martha Sutro, Client Services Manager, The Grow Network
Gloria Dopf, Deputy Superintendent for Instructional, Research and Evaluation Services, Department of Education
Paul LaMarca, Assistant Deputy, Assessment, Program Accountability and Curriculum, Department of Education

Dorothy (Dotty) Merrill, Washoe County School District

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

We will have a presentation from The Grow Network and the Washoe County District Health Department.

JENNIFER STOLL-HADAYIA (Public Health Program Manager, Washoe County District Health Department):

I oversee the District's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program. We have grown significantly in the past year due to the generosity of this Committee and the Task Force for the Fund for a Healthy Nevada. We have more than doubled the number of tobacco awareness projects in our community. We have extended our reach into the community through the addition of two new tobacco health educators.

Our presentation will consist of two parts, tobacco and chronic disease. We will provide an overview of the tobacco program as a whole, including our population priorities. Then we will describe our two new tobacco awareness projects for disparate populations in Washoe County. We will conclude the presentation with a brief discussion of the role of tobacco in the prevention and control of chronic disease.

In 1998, the Master Settlement Agreement between the attorneys general and the major tobacco companies infused the public with much-needed resources for addressing tobacco use and exposure. In addition to providing a method for health care costs reciprocity, the agreement also provided access to information about how the tobacco industry markets its product. This was a turning point for tobacco education. By learning how the industry markets its product, particularly to youth, the tobacco field learned how to effectively counter-market. Today tobacco programs across the country use counter-marketing techniques to prevent tobacco use and exposure for all populations.

In Washoe County, we conduct tobacco counter-marketing activities in five priority areas. We work to prevent initiation of tobacco use by partnering with Saint Mary's Regional Medical Center to educate teens using public service announcements developed by teens. We promote quitting smoking through a second television advertising campaign focused on adult smokers. This public service announcement was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention and has been proven to help smokers quit smoking. This is also the result of a partnership with Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield and the Nevada Tobacco Users' Helpline. We work to eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke by encouraging restaurants and other public spaces to become smoke free. We will monitor campaign data by conducting an adult tobacco survey in Washoe County for the first time. We work to reduce disparities in tobacco use through two new projects sponsored by a task force grant. These two new projects focus on the populations in Washoe County that are experiencing a disproportionate level of tobacco use compared to their populations nationwide. Page 2 of Tobacco and Chronic Disease in Washoe County: An Opportunity for Prevention ([Exhibit C](#)) shows the percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds that smoke is higher in Nevada than it is for the nation. Also, 24 percent of the Latino community in Nevada smoke compared to 17 percent nationally. While Nevada is experiencing a declining trend in tobacco use, the use of tobacco in these two groups continues to rise. Few education and cessation resources exist for these two groups in the State. In response to these trends, the Washoe County District Health Department received funding from the task force in July 2004 to launch two tobacco use prevention projects. One is tailored for the 18-to 24-year-old population and the other is tailored for the Latino population. Both of these campaigns are launching now in Washoe County.

MICHELLE D. WASHINGTON (Health Educator, Washoe County District Health Department):

I am the health educator for the social marketing project, ATTRACT TRUTH. This project will provide outreach to the 18- to 24-year-old population in Washoe County through college campuses, employers, and the project Web site and through strategically planned events. In Washoe County, the population of 18- to 24-year-olds is 10 percent and approximately 36,000 residents fall into this age group. There are 10,204 members of this age group attending the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR).

There are 30.6 percent of the 18- to 24-year-olds that smoke. This age group is the fastest growing group of smokers in the nation. Since the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement ended and prohibited the tobacco industry from marketing cigarettes or other tobacco products to youths, 17 and younger, the tobacco industry began to focus on a new target audience, the 18- to 24-year-olds. The tobacco industry has begun to invade college campuses and other areas throughout the nation. They are marketing

aggressively toward young adults and their activities of choice creating a need for an anti-tobacco intervention.

The ATTRACT TRUTH project is using the social branding strategy. This translates commercial branding practices into viable prevention strategies by fostering experiences that associate identity images of at-risk youth with healthy behaviors. This process allows public health professionals to understand and influence youth culture to better change behaviors. Commercial branding has been able to tap into human desire by associating behavior with identities. Commercial brands do not sell the product, they change behavior and behavior buys the product.

The ATTRACT TRUTH project activities include providing educational information and outreach through social marketing. Over the last six months, this project has collaborated with a number of community partners and stakeholders including: the American Lung Association, St. Mary's Regional Medical Center, Washoe Health System, WILD 102.9 FM radio station, UNR, Truckee Meadows Community College and local trade school campuses. The project also collaborates with the UNR Student Health Center, the Associated Students of the University of Nevada, the Flipside Programming Board, Student Life, Resident Life and Group Life. We collaborate with employers to develop and deliver messages and information to target employees. The ATTRACT TRUTH project will organize and sponsor strategic events to engage the targeted population. ATTRACT sponsored the first annual Great American Smokeout at UNR with Resident Life. We also cosponsored the 2005 Welcome Back Week. We provide educational information and materials. We featured the film, "Ray." During the movie we held a tobacco counting contest to make the students aware of one of the many ways the tobacco industry markets their product to them. Our project will also develop a functional Web site that appeals to the targeted audience.

St. Mary's Regional Medical Center offered the Washoe County Tobacco Program the remaining materials and Web site from their anti-tobacco youth campaign. We piloted the track materials and received positive feedback from our core group members at UNR. Wearing apparel with empowering statements and Web sites are functional for our campaign and are appealing to our target population. Our Web site is being updated to include an educational and cessation module. In the educational module they can inform themselves about

the tobacco industry and how they are targeted. In the cessation module we will survey the user to gauge their stage of change.

Two key determinants of social branding include identification amongst the target market and their awareness of the brand's position on the risky behavior. This theory states that the target market only needs to be aware of the brand's position, as the actual change will come from identification or the individual identifying with the brand.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:
What is a tobacco count contest?

MS. WASHINGTON:
The film industry glorifies smoking. Actors will smoke more during a scene in a movie than in real life. We count the scenes and how many times they light a cigarette on-screen.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:
Has there been an increase in the use of tobacco products by film makers and are actors smoking more?

MS. WASHINGTON:
Yes. We are bringing this fact to the attention of the targeted population.

GEROLD DERMID (Health Educator, Washoe County District Health Department):
The Latino Tobacco Education and Prevention Project's purpose is to provide culturally appropriate educational outreach and social marketing to the Latino community in Washoe County. The bottom of page 4, [Exhibit C](#) indicates that 85 percent of cigarette smoke ends up in the air. Where do you think that smoke goes later?

Some activities of the project included conducting focus groups. Throughout November we held five such groups throughout the community with a total of 46 participants that set the baseline for the planning of our project. We researched and developed appropriate messages based on the result of the focus groups. We researched messaging from a variety of sources, which included the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other health departments throughout the United States. We are in the process of placing media messaging within the local Latino community. Printed advertisements,

billboards, radio and television spots will be inundating the local Latino market. We provide bilingual educational materials at health fairs and community events targeted at the Latino population.

Our project is unique because it was created for the community and by the community. The community developed the theme for the project, "para la familia y la comunidad todos ganamos," which means, "for the family and the community we all win." The scope of our projects is concentrated on the focus groups, but we have a Latino advisory board of community leaders and stakeholders that provide constant guidance to our project. Community feedback is received before we produce or market any tobacco prevention message. Our project appeals to the family and to their tradition. We offer messages and resources in Spanish and English to reach all of the Latino community. We have collaborated with St. Mary's Regional Medical Center's Breathe Easy Program to offer a bilingual tobacco cessation program to the local Latino community.

The picture at the bottom of page 5, [Exhibit C](#), states if you smoke around your children they can inhale the equivalent of 102 packs of cigarettes by the age of 5 years. The Washoe County District Health Department plans to declare the month of March as, "Washoe County Latino Tobacco Awareness Month" to coincide with the launch of our local media campaign. The month will be highlighted with the Celebration of Life on March 12, 2005, at the Reno Hilton. The celebration will be an all-day, smoke-free community event for all ages. At this event all our media messaging will be unveiled. The community will have the opportunity to attend a bilingual cessation class at the event. We will have a special guest, El Fumor, who will make an appearance. Our goal is to reach 90 percent of the Latino population, which are nearly 50,000 people.

Ms. STOLL-HADAYIA:

In addition to conducting the program activities described to you, we also implement strategies to ensure future success. We will work to sustain funding through reapplication to the task force and to other funding sources. We will take steps to sustain community buy-in by nurturing current partnerships and creating new ones.

In the coming months, we will have several ongoing district-wide social marketing and tobacco use prevention projects. We will strive to change tobacco policies. Earlier this year, at the request of the tobacco program, the

Washoe County District Health Department passed a resolution in support of a tobacco-free school district. Mindful of the importance of measuring the impact of our activities on the public's health, we will monitor existing data systems and conduct our own tobacco surveys. Through data collection we will continue to learn how to use counter-marketing most effectively.

We will have a strategic plan for addressing tobacco and other behaviors as risk factors for chronic disease. It is no surprise chronic disease is the leading cause of death and disability in the United States, in Nevada and Washoe County. By chronic disease, we are referring to those diseases that are lifelong, require ongoing management and do not have a cure. The graph on page 7 of [Exhibit C](#) depicts the top-four leading causes of death in Washoe County, all are chronic diseases. For three of the four the mortality rate is higher in our county than it is for Nevada and for the nation. Chronic disease also has a fiscal impact. In Nevada, health care costs for individuals with chronic disease account for an estimated 78 percent of the State's total health care costs compared to 75 percent for the country.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

Did you say 78 percent of the State's health care costs?

MS. STOLL-HADAYIA:

According to our State Health Officer, Dr. Bradford Lee, chronic disease accounts for 78 percent of health care costs in Nevada.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

Are these among the two groups that you are targeting?

MS. STOLL-HADAYIA:

This is across the board. Across the nation it is 75 percent for the cost of chronic disease. In Nevada our estimates are higher than it is for the nation.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

Is it because of tobacco products?

MS. STOLL-HADAYIA:

It is one of the reasons. The three primary risk factors for chronic disease are physical inactivity, poor nutrition and tobacco use.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

What percent does tobacco products contribute?

MS. STOLL-HADAYIA:

It would be difficult to estimate. We do have some data which isolates the cost of tobacco in Nevada.

Although chronic diseases are among the most common and costly of health issues facing us, they are also among the most preventable diseases. Data shows that if preventative measures are taken now, the future health and fiscal costs of chronic disease can be alleviated. Preventative measures must target the three primary risk factors. By applying prevention strategies to these risk factors we can have an impact on almost all chronic disease.

We have completed a strategic plan that outlines our strategies for chronic disease prevention. A copy of that plan, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention: A Strategic Plan for Washoe County ([Exhibit D](#), original is on file in the Research Library), has been provided for your review. In this plan we identify five strategies for addressing chronic disease: collaboration, education, policy change, community wellness programs, and evaluation. All strategies focus on improving the three risk factors. The Washoe County District Health Department will implement this strategic plan throughout the coming year. We will establish a Washoe County Chronic Disease Coalition in order to pool community resources and identify opportunities for collaboration. We will conduct community education on those risk factors encouraging regular exercise, healthy eating and quitting smoking. We will continue to work with the Washoe County School District to implement healthy food and physical activity curriculum for the students. We will establish walking programs at sites throughout the county and gather data to measure our impact on obesity. We will continue to collaborate with our fellow health authorities to build a statewide chronic disease program.

SENATOR CEGAVSKE:

I have been told the grants for the smoking cessation program have been eliminated from the State this year. Is that a grant you use?

MS. STOLL-HADAYIA:

Our funding comes from two sources, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Task Force for the Fund for a Healthy Nevada.

SENATOR CEGAVSKE:

There were several grants. The grants were helpful to the children who were in recovery. The grants enabled introduction of the Smoking Free Sensation information and gave facts to the children that were using drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

Has your agency decided to collaborate with the Washoe County School District Trustee Board to reach the students in elementary or high school?

MS. STOLL-HADAYIA:

Our most direct collaboration with the Washoe County School District is in our chronic disease program. We are part of a pilot committee that is developing healthy eating curriculum for the schools. Our chronic disease program is interracially involved in that collaboration with them.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

There are members of this Committee who are actively pursuing obesity issues. What are you doing about the obesity issue?

MS. STOLL-HADAYIA:

In Washoe County, the work on obesity has become very active. The Health Division of the Department of Human Resources is developing a statewide obesity plan. As part of that process we have developed an obesity coalition, and one of its goals is to work with the school district to improve healthy eating and physical activity.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

What is your funding outlook?

MS. STOLL-HADAYIA:

We are continually looking for other funding sources.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

Do you know what level your funding is at present?

MS. STOLL-HADAYIA:

Our funding from the State is on an annual basis that we anticipate will be continued. For the task force, the grant is two years, which began in July 2004. We will reapply if it is made available to us.

SENATOR WIENER:

Have the school district personnel changed their attitudes concerning nutritional standards?

MS. STOLL-HADAYIA:

At present, we call it a pilot policy because it is being piloted at a handful of schools in the district. The results are very promising. They are finding that the students are enjoying the healthier foods. The students were involved early in the process. The students are enjoying the healthy foods and the schools are not seeing a loss of revenue. The results are being presented to the Washoe County School District Board of Trustees.

SENATOR WIENER:

Would you keep us informed about the details? The main resistance from administrators was the fear the revenues would drop significantly. Every study has shown that revenues have not been lost. A suggestion would be to work with nutritionists on substituting nutritionally sound foods in snack boxes and vending machines. This might help students transfer their purchasing habits to healthy food.

MS. STOLL-HADAYIA:

Yes, we will.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

Our next order of business is Bill Draft Request (BDR) 34-407.

BILL DRAFT REQUEST 34-407: Revises provisions regarding refund policies and bonding requirements of private postsecondary educational institutions. (Later introduced as [Senate Bill 133](#).)

SENATOR HORSFORD:

I will be abstaining because I am the executive director of a private institution that is postsecondary certified.

SENATOR MATHEWS MOVED TO INTRODUCE BDR 34-407.

SENATOR WIENER SECONDED THE MOTION. THE MOTION CARRIED.
(SENATOR HORSFORD ABSTAINED FROM THE VOTE. SENATOR NOLAN
WAS ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

* * * * *

MARTHA SUTRO (Client Services Manager, The Grow Network):

The Grow Network, a McGraw-Hill company, provides tools for educators and parents to help them understand assessment data. The Grow Network was a small organization founded in New York City and recently acquired by McGraw-Hill.

I have provided the committee with my presentation, Working to Close the Achievement Gap in Nevada ([Exhibit E](#)). We started conversations with the State of Nevada about four years ago. We are funded by S.B. No.1 of the 72nd Session to begin developing reports and providing materials for educators and parents.

The achievement gap is generally a matter of race and class. Across the United States there is a gap in achievement that separates economically disadvantaged students and students of color from less disadvantaged students. This is one of the most pressing education policy challenges that states currently face. This was one of the challenges that helped found the type of work that The Grow Network does. The way this achievement gap is identified is through the data that comes from standardized assessments.

The Grow Network is involved with creating opportunities to learn on the basis of data. Assessment data can alert us to the achievement gap, but data in a vacuum is not going to close the gap. I have provided an older sample of a Student Report ([Exhibit F](#)) depicting the manner in which parents and teachers received test data. They still receive data in this raw form. We believe the first step is to compile data correctly, which provides a layout and organization of data that helps parents and teachers understand the report. The State Data Project is underway simultaneously with The Grow Network project. There are also district initiatives to help educate the districts in tandem with The Grow Network.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

How user-friendly is [Exhibit F](#) to a parent who has never seen such a report before?

Ms. SUTRO:

It would depend on the parent's experience and educational background. The key thing is there is no sense of what could be done to help a student.

The task The Grow Network has in Nevada is to communicate the data clearly so parents and educators understand it and want to respond. Another is to link the standards and instructional activities to the data so parents and educators immediately know what they can do to help their child succeed.

In the Nevada Parent Report ([Exhibit G](#)), the reading and mathematics scores are broken down in different ways. We try to educate parents in the structure of these tests and how the levels vary. The stoplight color scheme is designed to bring their attention to the places where the child might need more emergency intervention. On page 4 of [Exhibit G](#), there is information concerning a parent's rights and responsibilities. This is an evolving document.

I use the Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability Web site at <http://nevadareportcard.com>, which was launched this year. I encourage parents to use it to obtain all types of information about the school. The idea is to bring the parent into an awareness of what type of information they can use.

We gave reports to every parent across the State whose child took a standardized test. In the spring of 2004, we provided printed reports for educators on the basis of the norm-referenced test (NRT), the Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT) and the High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE). We used the online resources to go around the State and show educators the tools they had and preview the parent report with them. This fall we provided parent reports to students in Grades 4, 6, 9 and 11. There were over 100,000 reports distributed. We printed reports and gave online resources to educators at 232 schools in Nevada.

After we signed our contract, Clark County determined they were in the midst of a data initiative rollout, a tool for educators that requires educators to follow a log-in procedure that requires a user name and password. They requested The Grow Network not distribute the educator reports and resources to

Clark County, because they were in the midst of working with their district-specific initiative. We decided to do a deeper parent involvement piece in Clark County.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:
How do you distribute these reports?

Ms. SUTRO:
We send the reports directly to the schools. There is a black-and-white and a color copy of the report on every student. The color copy of the report goes to the parents and the black-and-white copy remains in the school.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:
Is it mandatory that the school forward the report to the parents?

Ms. SUTRO:
It is mandatory in the sense that we have asked the districts and have their support for report distribution. It is not on the basis of parental inquiry. In the future, if schools would like The Grow Network to mail the reports directly to the students' homes, we would explore that possibility. The idea is to create the opportunity for a conversation between the parent and a teacher.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:
The reason for the question is to explore this concept of parental involvement and closing the achievement gap. One piece of the puzzle is the cultural difference between ethnicities and races. Would it be beneficial for the parental report to be received prior to parent-teacher meetings?

Ms. SUTRO:
We designed the project plan to meet the standard calendared parent-teacher conference night, which is generally around November 1 for the majority of schools in the State. Our goal was to get reports to schools in a timely fashion.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:
Is there anything the Legislature can do to make sure there is a timely distribution of reports?

MS. SUTRO:

Yes. It would be helpful to instill urgency on the part of the schools. There is an existing urgency, which largely relies on The Grow Network's effort to expose schools to the urgency behind the timely distribution of reports.

The Grow Network will report on the results of the NRT, CRT and the HSPE that are currently being administered in Nevada schools. We will send over 160,000 reports to students in Nevada based on those tests.

On pages 2 and 3 of [Exhibit G](#), the activities are age- and level-specific. They are custom designed for each student. The student's raw score in each standard is given in reading and mathematics. There is a comparison score and recommendations for the parent in English, to enable them to understand what those numbers mean and then the activity portion suggests what can be done. Linking the numbers to action is very explicit. The idea is to draw the parents to our Web site. We understand not all parents have access to the Web; that is why we provide a printed report. We provide bilingual parent workshops. We also provide schools with training modules so the school personnel could work with parents. We ensure that all the language on the reports is simple and easy to understand. As shown on page 1 of [Exhibit G](#), the words "emergent/developing" may lead some parents to believe their child is doing all right, but we put the red box next to the description to clarify that it is in the bottom quadrant of performance. We translate reports into four languages. The reports are designed to take the mystery out of the educational system.

Often the bright and disadvantaged students are among those left behind because they are not pushed to the next level. The activities we use and develop are crafted by educational experts who are concerned about equity and the advancement of all students. We have a relationship with the Family Math Program that has developed activities that are tested to work with diverse families, including Spanish language activities. All of the activities and approaches at The Grow Network are designed for three levels of students: students who need fundamental help in understanding a standard, students who understand the basics of a standard and students who are ready for advanced work.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

Can you use the raw data to assess each school's staffing and each class to determine what type of teaching methods are being used? Can you determine

whether students are retaining what they learn or whether changes are needed in the teaching methods?

Ms. SUTRO:

We collect assessment and enrollment data to report on the assessment data and provide tools to drive instruction on that basis. To study the types of information to which you are referring, we would need to start working with a control group of teachers and work on a specific curriculum. The Grow Network's instructional tools are standard-spaced instructional tools designed to be used in conjunction with a curriculum. It is not a tool that follows teacher practice beyond looking at how teachers use data to drive instruction, which is the model we promote. We do report on annual yearly progress (AYP) in some other states and districts.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

As Legislators, it is our responsibility to make sure the policies we set in place meet the federal mandates for No Child Left Behind, as well as to know what is happening in the classroom.

Ms. SUTRO:

The improvement in test scores is a complicated thing. There would need to be an isolation of The Grow Network's method of education that is controlled and driven over a period of time to assess the impact. In other places where we have worked longer, we have seen improvements in scores that come as a result of dedicated educators who are running an entire classroom on the basis of data-driven instruction.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

Would you provide the Committee with that information?

SENATOR CEGAVSKE:

How current is the data compared to when it is published?

Ms. SUTRO:

We get the data in the spring or summer and provide the related report for educators at the beginning of the next school year. Based on the data that was generated the previous spring, the educators need this data to guide instruction for their new group of students. For parents we report as soon as possible after

the spring assessments. We believe the urgency for parents is acute at the beginning of summer, because that is a time when there is a loss of learning.

SENATOR CEGAVSKE:

Is that because you cannot get the information from the local school districts or from the State?

Ms. SUTRO:

Yes, we get the assessment data from the State.

GLORIA DOPF (Deputy Superintendent for Instructional, Research and Evaluation Services, Department of Education):

The State assessment primarily is a criterion-referenced test based upon standards under S.B. No. 1 of the 72nd Session. We agreed to have the testing window in the spring so there would be time for the teacher to teach the standards and the content would then be assessed under the CRT. We have a testing window in the spring with a tight turnaround time. The test scores are available within a short period of time after the assessments are delivered. When they are available, The Grow Network or any other user of our test data gets that information.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

We are looking at it from the viewpoint you actually get the information and it is given to those who then can process the raw data so teachers and parents can use the information.

PAUL LAMARCA (Assistant Deputy, Assessment, Program Accountability and Curriculum, Department of Education):

The Grow Network reports have a relation to several different assessment programs. The CRT Program, which includes Grades 3, 5 and 8, is split in administration because of year-round schools in Clark County. For most schools, the data is returned to the State by May 20. For the year-round multitrack schools, we expect results to be returned by June 11. Once we receive the information in raw form, simultaneous reports are generated by test vendors that include student reports, school reports, district reports and State reports. We immediately go into annual yearly progress mode to comply with statutory requirements. There is a lag. After May 20, with the CRT program we could not turn information over to The Grow Network as it would be incomplete because of the split administration. After we receive the information, it takes us

two weeks to do the full annual yearly program analysis. Due to the preparation of data and the format required by The Grow Network, there is a time lag. Once they receive the information, I believe The Grow Network has a significant time period to generate reports. It is a lengthy and complex process. The high school proficiency program is similar in nature.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

We want to assess if the window could be closed. It may be a technology, human or funding issue. If we can identify the issue, then we might be able to resolve the problem.

MR. LAMARCA:

With the CRT program, we have questions that are multiple choice and constructive response questions which are difficult to score. This information is collected at the local level. The student-answered documents are sent to a test vendor. They scan all the information. They study the test results and we must make sure the results provided to students are accurate. We have an ambitious turnaround time from test vendors in the nation. Once the test vendor receives information from Nevada schools, they are required to return the data within 28 days. For the high school proficiency program, it is closer to 21 days.

SENATOR CEGAVSKE:

How does The Grow Network improve student achievement in a timely manner? On page 4 of [Exhibit G](#), the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is mentioned, but there are also Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO), which can become involved as well.

MS. SUTRO:

The Carnegie Foundation just finished a study on The Grow Networks project in New York City. They found that student achievement was directly affected by the frequency with which educators gave students the specific information about what they needed to do to improve. That is where the development of The Grow Network resources originates. If the student achievement is defined for a parent or teacher in terms they can understand, the likelihood of achievement is greater for students. The Grow Network reports are breaking down the notions of race, class and the achievement gap, and are bringing the student-by-student approach into focus.

The Grow Network has been successful in New York City because, as the system has continued with these individualized reports, a culture of handing reports from teachers to parents developed. We have seen that model increase both in New York City and Chicago where there is a parent report night in the fall of the year. Parents are asked to come into the school in order to retrieve their child's report card and The Grow Network report is delivered at the same time. When the students are aware of what they did well and what needs improvement, their chances of success are much greater.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

In Chicago, did the school district initiate the practice themselves?

Ms. SUTRO:

The project is only in the Chicago public schools. It is a district-wide project that the school district initiated.

SENATOR HECK:

Is the New York City program the longest running in The Grow Network?

Ms. SUTRO:

Yes.

SENATOR HECK:

Has there been any analysis that shows the percentage of students that have moved from red to yellow to green, as depicted on [Exhibit G](#), based on the intervention of The Grow Network?

Ms. SUTRO:

I can provide the Carnegie study that does not break things down in those specific terms. It does show how The Grow Network educators and students have responded favorably in terms of achievement and instruction. The chancellor of the New York City Public Schools has said that The Grow Network has done more to improve teaching and learning than anything he has seen before. We have seen improvements in test scores in regions in New York City and areas in Chicago. It is hard to track it to The Grow Network usage. We can show the places where we worked intensively in those districts and show where test scores have gone up. There are many influences that impact student learning.

SENATOR HECK:

How is the program funded?

Ms. SUTRO:

In Nevada, it is funded through S. B. No. 1 of the 72nd Session.

SENATOR HECK:

What is the cost of the program?

Ms. SUTRO:

For the last biennium it was 1.4 million per year and for the 2005 to 2007 biennium it is 1.2 million per year.

SENATOR MATHEWS:

Has The Grow Network studied the effect of community schooling on students who are being pushed back into segregation?

Ms. SUTRO:

We have not targeted that group. This would be a unique group to work with in the future. Could you tell me about the community schooling?

SENATOR MATHEWS:

In Nevada, students go to the school closest to their home. When there is redistricting of schools, the school boards try to leave the students close to their homes to eliminate transportation costs. In my district, 90 percent of the students are black or Hispanic and therefore do not have exposure to other schools, teaching or environment. The only students that are able to attend other schools are those who do so through a waiver or scholarship.

Ms. SUTRO:

In the reports addressing every student as an individual, the report crosses through those grouping and neighborhood boundaries. The reports that the high-achieving students, the mid-range achieving students and the low-achieving students get in the black and Hispanic neighborhoods can help break down some of the groupings that already exist.

SENATOR MATHEWS:

On page 2 of The Grow Network Class Report ([Exhibit H](#)), the biggest group of students is the one comprising students that need improvement. There is my concern. Is this the type of grouping I would see in my district?

Ms. SUTRO:

Yes. You might see a grouping that is surprising. The purpose of the class report is to move students from the hard data to instructional recommendations. When a teacher uses the online account, there are activities, resources and standard-based intervention tools for them to use with those students. There is a direct alignment between the information on the class report and what needs to be done.

SENATOR MATHEWS:

Has The Grow Network worked on class size or all-day kindergarten?

Ms. SUTRO:

The Grow Network supports all the things that help make individualized instruction more possible. When class size is out of control, we support initiatives and approaches that help break down class size and groups within a class. The model is known as differentiated instruction; different groups of students getting different levels of instruction. All-day kindergarten would help children read at an earlier age, which would assist them when they reach a standardized test situation in third grade.

SENATOR CEGAVSKE:

Is it possible for the compilation of data to be e-mailed to teachers so they have the information earlier? If the teachers received the information before the end of the school year, then the teachers could inform the parents of what help the student needed before the next school year.

On page 2 of [Exhibit G](#), under Note the News, the language refers to the five Ws. Is there an explanation for people who are not familiar with the five Ws?

Ms. SUTRO:

Yes.

SENATOR CEGAVSKE:

There should be something written on the report explaining what the five Ws are for those who do not have access to the Web site.

Ms. SUTRO:

We will make your suggestion of e-mailing the teachers a part of the strategies we consider to get reports to teachers earlier.

SENATOR CEGAVSKE:

Once the data is compiled, what is the time frame to get it to the schools?

Ms. SUTRO:

We are contracted to deliver it in a month. In New York City, we have shortened that time to three weeks. In New York City, we have only one enrollment data feed, but in Nevada we work with a larger number of enrollment data feeds.

SENATOR HORSFORD:

How did Nevada arrive at the decision to move the test date?

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

The decision was made to enable the teachers to teach the content of the subject matter in a timely manner. Then the students would have the necessary instructional materials to take the test appropriately.

DOROTHY (DOTTY) MERRILL (Washoe County School District):

The No Child Left Behind Act requires each State to establish rigorous content standards across grade levels in English language arts, mathematics and science. Nevada already had those standards in place. The law also requires the assessment that is administered within the State for determining adequate yearly progress be an assessment of the content standards. To have an assessment of the content standards for a grade level in the beginning of the school year is counterproductive because it is going to indicate that students have not mastered the standards. Teachers need the opportunity to work with students to provide instruction so that learning can occur. When the measurement occurs in the spring, it demonstrates what learning and achievement has happened over the school year regarding the standards and for that grade level.

SENATOR HORSFORD:

The previous standard may not have the goals of No Child Left Behind. Now, we have the predicament where the test is administered and the information from the test becomes available, but there is not enough time for the teacher, the parent or the child to improve deficient areas identified by the assessment. For the record, "This may need to be a topic of discussion to revisit the effects of the legislation that we passed. Just because we did it and what we had before was worse, does not mean we should stick with what we have either." Our State has invested in this program and there seems to be good results, but the time frames are too late.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

This has been an issue we have been working on for some time. The system has improved. We will work diligently to close the gap. As technology advances, we will be able to get the information out more quickly.

SENATOR MATHEWS:

"My concern continues to be for my grandchildren and my great-grandchildren, and your grandchildren and children. ... we keep changing the direction we want to go. I know change needs to occur. My kids gave me the book, "Who Moved My Cheese." I have been searching for that for 71 years. My concern is, we now have No Child Left Behind, and I watch the kids in my neighborhood being left behind every day. Under the guise that we are here to help you ... publish this in ... probably four or five more languages. I guess what you are saying is that you have to sacrifice someone in order to get to where you want to be. That is fine and good when it is not you who is being sacrificed. I keep thinking if I was a lamb going on the block and you were standing there watching to see how much I am going to bleed ... you would say start the transfusion at two pints. That is exactly what you are doing to the kids in my neighborhood. You have them on the block, they are bleeding to death, they are all going to be left behind and they are all brown, mostly. You have identified that.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

In another meeting we will be hearing information concerning No Child Left Behind and you may wish to address the issue at that time.

Ms. SUTRO:

We bring teachers and parents into the conversation using similar language so that reports are in alignment. There is a network of communication around the student; that is why the organization is called The Grow Network.

I will address the highlights of the Grow project in Nevada in 2003 to 2005, which are on page 7 of [Exhibit E](#).

On page 8 of [Exhibit E](#), I will outline the work The Grow Network will be intensifying in Nevada in the 2005 to 2007 biennium.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

There are a couple of bills concerning accountability for the AYP and the assessments that will be coming up for review. Could you work with the Senators on these bills to aid the teachers in their work?

Ms. SUTRO:

Yes. I have met with the Regional Professional Development Program group several times. They have access to The Grow Network resources and have received training in what The Grow Network offers.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

I am concerned about the instructional materials and the methods of teaching. If an educator is using a particular method of teaching and the students are not grasping the instructional information, the educator may need to change the methods of teaching.

Ms. SUTRO:

Yes.

SENATOR HORSFORD:

Who is funding The Grow Network?

Ms. SUTRO:

Our contract is with the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

SENATOR HORSFORD:

I would like more information on the data that The Grow Network has on the assessments.

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

Could you be available to provide that information to the Committee when the issue of No Child Left Behind is discussed?

Ms. SUTRO:

Yes. You can see Nevada performance, classes of students and see into the districts on our network. Also, there is a button for disaggregated data. We do report on the different subpopulation performances in each test.

SENATOR HORSFORD:

Based on what demographic or characteristic?

Ms. SUTRO:

It is based on the different criteria for defining those demographics that come out of the assessment and enrollment file.

SENATOR HORSFORD:

Would it tell me age, sex, gender and ethnicity?

Ms. SUTRO:

It will. It does not attach a name to data.

SENATOR HORSFORD:

That data is useful when you match it with census track information about income, poverty and homeownership. When we have the larger debate, I would like the benefit of seeing the raw data based on the assessments that The Grow Network is administering.

Ms. SUTRO:

We do not administer the assessments. Those come from another source. You will be able to see disaggregated data at the State level, district level and school level.

Senate Committee on Human Resources and Education
February 23, 2005
Page 25

CHAIR WASHINGTON:

There being no other issues before us today, this meeting of the Senate Committee on Human Resources and Education will now adjourn at 3:37 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Patricia Vardakis,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Maurice E. Washington, Chair

DATE: _____