

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

**Seventy-Fourth Session  
February 26, 2007**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Bonnie Parnell at 3:44 p.m., on Monday, February 26, 2007, in Room 3142 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4406 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at [www.leg.state.nv.us/74th/committees/](http://www.leg.state.nv.us/74th/committees/). In addition, copies of the audio record may be purchased through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (email: [publications@lcb.state.nv.us](mailto:publications@lcb.state.nv.us); telephone: 775-684-6835).

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Chair  
Assemblywoman Debbie Smith, Vice Chair  
Assemblyman Bob Beers  
Assemblyman David Bobzien  
Assemblyman Mo Denis  
Assemblyman Joseph P. (Joe) Hardy  
Assemblyman Ruben Kihuen  
Assemblyman Garn Mabey  
Assemblyman Harvey J. Munford  
Assemblyman Tick Segerblom  
Assemblyman Lynn D. Stewart

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Senator William J. Raggio, Senate District No. 3

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kristin Roberts, Committee Counsel  
Carol M. Stonefield, Committee Policy Analyst  
Kelly Troescher, Committee Secretary

Minutes ID: 309



Denise Dunning, Committee Secretary  
Rachel Pilliod, Committee Manager  
Trisha Moore, Committee Assistant

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Loretta Evenson, Representing Steering Committee for Nevada Parent  
Involvement Summit  
David Schumann, Nevada Committee for Full Statehood

**Chair Parnell:**

[Meeting called to order at 3:44 p.m. Roll called.] There is a quorum present. We will be expediting the meeting this afternoon. Representative Shelley Berkeley will be addressing the Assembly this evening in Chambers at 5 p.m. Today you will hear an overview of the work done by the Legislative Committee on Education during the interim. That Committee was chaired by Senator Raggio and was vice chaired by myself.

Senator Raggio, it was a pleasure serving as your vice chairman. I learned a lot.

In your folder you will see the brief ([Exhibit C](#)) that compiles everything that was covered by the Committee. It has a lot of information in it. It references the bill draft requests (BDR) and general discussions we had. If you would like to follow along with that it would be great.

**Senator William J. Raggio, Senate District No. 3:**

[Spoke from prepared text. ([Exhibit D](#))]

**Chair Parnell:**

It was interesting for me. For those of you who are new, when we have interim committees, it is half represented by one political party and half the other. The Chair was of one party from the Senate and I was from the other party in the Assembly. It is always enlightening. It makes you feel good when you work together. There were times when we would have somebody testifying and Senator Raggio and I had the same reaction at the same moment. It shows how much transcends political party affiliation. It comes down to what is for the best and what we can do to help out. I think that Committee really showed that.

**Senator Raggio:**

With very few exceptions, I think the partisanship should end when the elections are over. When we get here, particularly when you have a divided Legislature, you need to be working together and understanding that there are

different points of views. Unless you want to have a lot of special sessions, at some point you must work together and compromise.

**Assemblyman Mabey:**

Although I do not sit on the Education Committee during the interim, my office becomes an interim education committee when teachers come in to see me. Most of them tug on my ear if they are a middle school teacher. Many of them are frustrated and bring up what the interim committee found – that some of the students do not take all of their classes seriously. They know they have to pass some of them, but they do not think they have to pass all of them. I echo what the Committee found. We need to put more emphasis on the middle school, and we need to make sure that students understand they need to learn every subject. Otherwise, when they get into high school, they will not be prepared. They are set up for failure, dropout, or remediation.

**Senator Raggio:**

We found in most cases that students in the seventh and eighth grades are not aware of what lies ahead of them in high school, nor are they aware that what they are doing then can have a great impact on their ability or inability to go to a higher education facility. It starts then. We need to make sure they are prepared to meet the curriculum requirements and standards that they will face in high school.

**Chair Parnell:**

When I was a middle school teacher, we were telling eighth graders there were two classes they had to pass: math and English. If you were a Social Studies, Science, or Home Economics teacher, it did not make any difference. We came up with legislation that will require all core subjects to be passed in the eighth grade.

**Assemblyman Beers:**

The Committee findings are a profound effort that I think is going to carry a lot of weight. I also like you mentioning the mentoring of new teachers. As a point of disclosure, my wife is in the process of becoming a new teacher. She was fortunate enough to have a couple of mentors. It makes a difference. Many people do not realize that theory is well and good, but when the application starts coming down on you, it is very helpful to have somebody to turn to. You can learn how to make something relevant to the class without having to discover how to do so on your own.

**Senator Raggio:**

We felt it was an important program that ought to be expanded. We also felt it was worth looking at with retired teachers who have a lot of experience that

could be utilized. I should also disclose one of my daughters is a second grade teacher. She has told me the importance of relying on others who have that knowledge. She lovingly calls me not her mentor, but her "tormentor."

**Assemblyman Munford:**

Is there any reference made to try to deal with the class size at the middle school level? Another big problem at the middle school level is discipline. Maybe they can increase the number of counselors. That age group is going through a transition, and sometimes they need someone to sit down and talk with them. They need some type of inspiration and awareness. When I taught high school, many students were not prepared. It seemed like it was a lack of someone giving them solid direction.

**Senator Raggio:**

The interim committee did not address these issues. I am aware that more counselors at all levels have been requested in the past. Tomorrow (February 27), the Joint Subcommittee is going to be looking at the Distributive School Account (DSA) budgets. Those are all issues that will come before that Joint Subcommittee. It is all a question of money and funding. There is a long wish list. The Superintendents Association has iNVest. It is costly. Everybody that ran for office last time in either party, whether for the Legislature or Governor, indicated no new taxes or tax increases. We will have to work within the funding that is available not only for education, but also for everything else that has to be considered in our budget.

**Chair Parnell:**

Mr. Munford was the author of the piece of legislation last session that had the Code of Honor in it.

**Assemblywoman Smith:**

Were specifics about what would go in the parent report card talked about in the Committee?

**Carol Stonefield, Research Analyst:**

The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act requires schools to communicate with parents about parent involvement. Some of the items listed include current contact information, the child's health, immunization lists, parental participation in parent-teacher conferences, and other opportunities for the parents to attend something at school. That sort of information would be included in the parent report.

**Assemblywoman Smith:**

It would be an individual report, not a school-wide report?

**Carol Stonefield:**

As I recall, it will only occur in elementary schools that have been identified as "in need of improvement." It would include all the elementary teachers who have that child, and it would go home along with the child's report card.

**Chair Parnell:**

I would like to point out to the Committee members, especially the freshmen, that when you go through this document you will notice some paragraphs that have reference to a BDR, some with no reference, some that might be a letter, or some that might be a finding, but the ones that have the BDR language will be introduced as legislation this session. You will also see the repeat of that BDR number. That means that all of those items would be contained within one bill. We will be seeing all the legislation that was introduced from the interim committee.

**Assemblywoman Smith:**

With this particular issue, if the details are not exactly defined coming out of the interim committee, how does it happen in drafting? How do they develop exactly what it will look like?

**Carol Stonefield:**

The work session document is online at the website of the Legislative Committee on Education. It has more detail as to what the Committee was presented with and what was voted on. You essentially have a summary here of the contents of the bill draft. The staff who would be drafting the bill has the discussion from the Committee, the transcript of the discussion, and the work session document which has more detail. We would be happy to provide you with it.

**Assemblywoman Smith:**

Please do. Thank you.

**Chair Parnell:**

Any additional questions? [There were none.] I am going to call Loretta Evenson to speak on parent involvement. Then I have two other individuals signed in to speak.

**Loretta Evenson, Representing Steering Committee for Nevada Parent Involvement Summit:**

[Spoke from prepared text. ([Exhibit E](#))]

**Chair Parnell:**

Those who did attend, including myself, shared an amazing event. My compliments to the Vice Chair of this Committee, Senator Raggio, and the others that were involved.

**David Schumann, Nevada Committee for Full Statehood:**

I was present for the Augenblick presentation on adequacy. It struck me that we are talking here about some bureaucratic definitions. When this Committee talks about adequacy, I think they need to consider American kids in the world. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development did an economic survey of the United States. They found the combination of a good higher education system and a substandard primary and secondary education to be a source of widening income disparity in the United States. We need to have more talk about the "olden days." When people went to school then, a teacher who was teaching you math had a Bachelor's of Science in math. If they were teaching English, they had Bachelor's of Arts in English. When my 25-year-old son's friends were in government schools, they would have their text with them when they came home. In my opinion, those texts were hollow.

The fact is American children score at the bottom of the industrialized nations in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study tests. It started in 1998. Now they are called Trends in Mathematics and Science Study tests. We have not pulled ourselves up. Nothing has changed. We are still below other industrialized nations. We cannot continue to go along by relying on our older generations. We need the future, but we are not doing it.

As adults we talk about adequacy. I think adequacy should be defined as "being equal to or better than peers in other industrialized countries." In 1996, they "dumbed-down" the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Too few people were scoring 800, so they lowered the standards. That is not a good sign. This is not Nevada schools—this is schools across the country, including Nevada. My request is that when you are looking at funding, you take a hard look at content. When somebody is teaching mathematics, can they teach solid geometry, trigonometry, et cetera? Have they had course work in that at the undergraduate level? I am competent to teach arithmetic because I had math through integral and differential calculus, but I would not pretend to teach any of it because I do not have a degree in that area. You need somebody with actual course work and a degree in math to be teaching high school children math.

**Chair Parnell:**

Are you familiar with the Highly Qualified Status in NCLB?

**David Schumann:**

No, I am not. What I see is on these tests.

**Chair Parnell:**

I think if you are going to come to this Committee and say things on that issue, realize that in NCLB, which has been around for about five years, we have statistics on how many highly qualified teachers we have in our math and science classes. You now have to be highly qualified. That means you have to have a degree in that area. We are already doing what you are suggesting we need to do. Do we need to get more people highly qualified? Of course we do. Much of our discussion revolves around how we get people to go into math and science. That is why we have incentives for those areas. We, too, recognize the importance of having a highly qualified person teaching students in those areas. We are doing our best to increase the numbers of highly qualified teachers.

**David Schumann:**

I would ask you to go [www.timss.com](http://www.timss.com) and look at America versus the other countries. Our children come in at the bottom. I do not know why that is if we now have all of these highly qualified teachers.

**Chair Parnell:**

It might be that we teach all children.

**David Schumann:**

And the other nations do not?

**Chair Parnell:**

That is correct.

**David Schumann:**

So why are they coming in ahead of our children?

**Chair Parnell:**

Sir, I am not going to argue. If you would like to conclude your comments and give the website again, I am sure the members would like to assess the information on there.

**David Schumann:**

It is [www.timss.com](http://www.timss.com). It stands for Trends in Math and Science Studies. It may be ".org." You will see the U.S. at the bottom. There are statistics for 1998, 2003, and 2005. They are good in fourth grade, but by twelfth grade,

our children are below these other places. I will cut it short there. Please go and look at that website. Think about content in these courses.

**Chair Parnell:**

Before I adjourn the meeting, we have two BDRs that I would like to get introduced. The first is BDR 34-440 from the Clark County School District.

**BDR 34-440** – Authorizes the board of trustees of certain school districts to adopt a program of school choice. (Later introduced as [Assembly Bill 211](#).)

Please remember your vote to introduce this BDR does not commit you to any future support of this bill. Is there a motion for Committee introduction of BDR 34-440?

ASSEMBLYMAN BEERS MOVED TO INTRODUCE BDR 34-440 FOR COMMITTEE INTRODUCTION.

ASSEMBLYMAN STEWART SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The second is BDR 34-118 from the Assembly Committee on Education.

**BDR 34-118** – Provides for high school reform. (Later introduced as [Assembly Bill 212](#).)

Again, remember your vote to introduce does not commit you to any future support.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SMITH MOVED TO INTRODUCE BDR 34-118 FOR COMMITTEE INTRODUCTION.

ASSEMBLYMAN DENIS SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.



Is there any additional business to come before this Committee? [There was none.] Seeing none, we are adjourned. [4:35 p.m.]

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Kelly Troescher  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Chair

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

**EXHIBITS**

**Committee Name:** Committee on Education

**Date:** February 26, 2007

**Time of Meeting:** 3:45 p.m.

<b>Bill</b>	<b>Exhibit</b>	<b>Witness / Agency</b>	<b>Description</b>
	A	Committee on Education	Agenda
	B	Committee on Education	Attendance Roster
	C	Legislative Committee on Education	Bulletin Number 07-14
	D	Senator William J. Raggio	Prepared text
	E	Loretta Evenson	Prepared text