

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

**Seventy-Fourth Session
March 12, 2007**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Bonnie Parnell at 3:49 p.m., on Monday, March 12, 2007, in Room 1214 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/. In addition, copies of the audio record may be purchased through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (email: 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 Dina Titus, Senate District No. 7
Assemblywoman Barbara Buckley, Assembly District No. 8

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kristin Roberts, Committee Counsel
Carol M. Stonefield, Committee Policy Analyst

Minutes ID: 488



Kelly Troescher, Committee Secretary
Rachel Pilliod, Committee Manager
Trisha Moore, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Brandon Miller, Student, Reno, Nevada
Jim Rogers, Chancellor, Nevada System of Higher Education
Keith Rheault, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education
Mary Pierczynski, Superintendent, Carson City School District; President, Nevada Association of School Superintendents
Walt Rulffes, Superintendent, Clark County School District
Nat Lommori, Superintendent, Lyon County School District
Dawna Ogden, Program Coordinator for Kindergarten, Washoe County
Elisabeth Noonan, Superintendent of Elementary Education, Washoe County School District
Karlene Lee, Assistant Superintendent, Clark County School District
Michael O'Dowd, Principal, Lamping Elementary School, Clark County School District
Mary Beth Kellerman, First Grade Teacher, Scherkenbach Elementary School, Clark County School District
Marty Gardner, Principal, Staton Elementary School, Clark County School District
Dana Robinson, Kindergarten Teacher, C.T. Sewell Elementary School, Clark County School District
Donna Anspach, President, Nevadans for Quality Education
Mary Jo Malloy, Member, Nevadans for Quality Education
Alison Turner, President, Nevada Parent Teacher Association
Kerri McGinnis, Parent, Clark County School District
Karina Rodriguez, Translator for Gabriella Rosas, Washoe County School District
Gabriella Rosas, Parent, Washoe County School District
Lynn Chapman, Vice President, Nevada Families
Sheila Ward, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada
Janine Hansen, President, Nevada Eagle Forum
Joe Enge, Education Policy Analyst, Nevada Policy Research Institute
David Schumann, Vice Chairman, Nevada Committee for Full Statehood
Richard Ziser, Chairman, Nevada Concerned Citizens, Las Vegas
Bill Parker, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Carole Vilaro, Representing Nevada Taxpayers Association, Carson City
Eugene Paslov, Executive Director, Government Affairs and Strategic Relationships, Wireless Generation, Carson City

Peggy Lear Bowen, Private Citizen, Washoe County
Sheila Shaver, Kindergarten Teacher, Wengert Elementary School, Clark
County School District
Eunice Deputy, Kindergarten Teacher, Wengert Elementary School, Clark
County School District

Chair Parnell:

[Meeting called to order at 3:49 p.m. Roll called.] We have a quorum. Today we will be hearing Assembly Bill 157, which provides for full-day kindergarten.

Assembly Bill 157: Provides for full-day kindergarten. (BDR 34-817)

Before we get started, I would like to remind members of this Committee, anyone in the public, and anyone wishing to testify today that this is the policy committee. We will be discussing and hearing testimony only on the policy components of this bill and not the funding. Assembly Bill 157 was concurrently referred to the Ways and Means Committee. That is where the conversation regarding the fiscal impact to our State will take place. I would also like to remind everyone that *Nevada Revised Statute* (NRS) 392.040, which sets the compulsory school-age attendance is not being amended in this bill. The ages for compulsory school attendance remain 7 to 17. Before the age of seven, a parent may elect for the student not to attend kindergarten. As we discuss the merits of this policy, we should keep in mind that kindergarten, whether full-day or half-day, will still remain optional for all parents. The State only asks that children have a kindergarten experience prior to entering first grade. With that, I will open the hearing on A.B. 157.

I will ask Speaker Buckley to come forward with an overview of the bill. With Ms. Buckley today is Senator Titus.

Assemblywoman Barbara Buckley, Assembly District No. 8:

Senator Titus has worked on this issue for many years. I would like her to start with her introductory remarks.

Senator Dina Titus, Senate District No. 7:

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

Assemblywoman Buckley:

[Spoke from prepared text ([Exhibit D](#)). Handed out PowerPoint ([Exhibit E](#)).]

It is insulting to parents to say the only reason they want full-day kindergarten is because they want a state-paid babysitter. People want the best for their

children. They want the opportunity for that child to learn, to grow, and to blossom.

[Continued to speak from prepared text ([Exhibit D](#)).]

One of the reasons I am such a strong advocate of full-day kindergarten is because I have a seven-year-old who was in both half-day and full-day kindergarten last Legislative Session. He was in full-day kindergarten in Las Vegas prior to my coming up for the Legislative Session, and in half-day kindergarten up here. The experience was night and day. The classroom teacher has two hours—barely enough time to get the children out of their coats and for them to be handed some information on letters. In contrast, with a strong full-day program, he was almost reading by the time he came up here.

Involved parents are tired of the curriculum and the schooling not being strong enough in the early grades. They tell me they want their children to learn more. They wonder why it is not more challenging. If children start out at different levels, the first-grade teachers are spending all their time with children who did not have the advantage of full-day kindergarten, or who do not have the advantage of two involved parents already working to have the child read by first grade. Their time is spent bringing up the other children. That is the problem with our school system. We can look at changing that by making sure everybody has the strong foundation and starts at the same rung, so that each rung can get stronger and stronger, leading to better academic achievement.

[Continued to speak from prepared text ([Exhibit D](#)).]

Chair Parnell:

You have given us much to ponder. I was looking at the last slide you had on the cost of incarcerating an inmate. One thing you did not note that I think is appalling is that we can casually discuss, with no controversy and no one in opposition, spending \$20,000 per inmate when we are still spending about \$6,000 per student. Thank you, Speaker, for all the hard work and passion you have on this issue. I would also be remiss in not mentioning Speaker Perkins from last session, who brought forth the full-day kindergarten bill in the 2005 Session.

Are there any questions from the Committee for either Speaker Buckley or Senator Titus? [There were none.]

I would like to note to the Committee members a few things that are in your folder today. You probably noticed you have a copy of Speaker Buckley's PowerPoint. There is also a page from the iNVEST proposal ([Exhibit F](#)) that was

referenced earlier in the comments relating to full-day kindergarten. There is a copy of the curriculum guide ([Exhibit G](#)) for kindergarten classes for the Carson City School District. There is a copy of A.B. 157. You also have a notebook in front of you from Washoe County School District ([Exhibit H](#)) and a spiral-bound book with background information ([Exhibit I](#)).

On behalf of the members of this Committee, I would like to say to all the individuals who have emailed me and members of the Committee, we did not personally get back to all of you. A few of us were at a conference yesterday discussing how guilty we feel when we have so many emails that we cannot respond to personally. For all of you who emailed, please know we did read them, and we take both positions under consideration. We always look forward to finding out more information, regardless of whether it is the position we have stated. It is important for you to keep contacting us. There is also an email ([Exhibit J](#)) that the sender requested be put in your folder. I would like that individual to know the members of the Committee received a copy of your email, and that it is also in the contents of the members' folders.

Would Brandon like to come to the table now? Welcome to the Committee.

Brandon Miller, Student, Reno, Nevada:
[Spoke from prepared text ([Exhibit K](#)).]

Chair Parnell:

Would you like to read *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*? I think it would be fun for all the people who were not outside at the rally today to hear. It also reminds us of some really good rules of thumb to live by. I would like to hear it again.

Brandon Miller:

All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten, by Robert Fulghum.

Most of what I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be, I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sandbox at Sunday School. These are the things that I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Live a balanced life—learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some. Take a nap every

afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together. Be aware of wonder.

Assemblyman Beers:

Brandon, this is a very nicely written piece of work. Going through it, and listening to you and the performance you just did, I have to take issue with your last part of this statement: You are smart!

Chair Parnell:

Additional questions or comments for Brandon? [There were none.]

As you can see, we have a large crowd, both here and in Las Vegas. Before I go on to the adult speakers, I would ask that, in the interest of time, everyone keep their remarks as brief as possible, that remarks be germane to the policy discussion of A.B. 157, and that if your concerns have already been addressed, rather than restating the same point, please provide a simple statement in support or in opposition. That way we will probably get out of here before 9 o'clock, which would not be possible if everyone kept repeating the same statements.

Jim Rogers, Chancellor, Nevada System of Higher Education:

I strongly support your program for full-day kindergarten. I had 13 years in grade and high school, and nine years of college. I wish I had even more education to help me solve the problems I face. When someone starts to talk about not supporting increases in education, I panic.

The fact that full-day kindergarten has some shortcomings does not mean that full-day kindergarten is not absolutely essential. You could go through all 12 grades and find they all have shortcomings. If perfection is the standard, why not eliminate first grade because many children are not socially prepared for first grade? Or why not eliminate seventh grade when the kids become monsters? Or the tenth grade when their hormones start to control their lives and studying is their least important activity? If money is the issue, think how much money you could save if you eliminated even one more grade.

One of the major problems higher education faces is having students enroll who require remediation. Remediation is necessary because high schoolers either have not been required to take a full load of courses in their junior and/or senior years, or because they have not been forced to take difficult courses. More education in high school is the only cure for college remediation.

There are a few absolute rules in life. One of those rules is that less education under any circumstances is never better. If funding full-day kindergarten is a

problem, do not use alleged but irrelevant shortcomings as an excuse not to fund it.

Chair Parnell:

I would like to compliment you on the work and the cooperation you have given to all of our public school superintendents and your dedication to the concept of P-16 Council (Senate Bill 239). It has been long-needed in this State, and you really have been the voice of reason in seeing what we can do to improve the transition from high school into our university system. Not only are you bringing our college-age students together, but you are also considering our very youngest students. The members of this Committee applaud you for that.

Jim Rogers:

I appreciate your comment, but let me say it is such a simple concept that I cannot understand why it has not been done for years. The relationship that higher education has established between and among all 17 superintendents throughout the State has proven to be very productive and will continue to be very productive going forward. As I told Walt Rulffes more than a year ago, in every one of those instances, his problems and his solutions are our problems and solutions. We will support K-12 in every way we can.

Keith Rheault, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education:

I know you are going to be inundated with paper today, but I thought it would be helpful if I put together a one-page fact sheet ([Exhibit L](#)) providing the data on current students in kindergarten and in the current program. Most of the information on it is self-explanatory, but I wanted to point out a few things. If you want to look at the trends of the type of students we will be serving in middle and high school in the future, all you have to do is look at the kindergarten class from Clark County School District last year. I have noted that 28.3 percent of the students were either non-English speaking or limited-English speaking, which represents over 6,000 students from a class of 23,000. Clark County's enrollment accounts for 75 percent of the State. That was last year's kindergarten class. It has been that way for the last few years, double the rate we currently have for non-English speaking students in our system last year. It is almost doubling from what we are serving currently.

There are 340 public schools in Nevada that offer kindergarten. I am sure the 114 schools that received the at-risk program funds this past year are thankful for that, but if you look at the number of students being served, it represents about 62 percent of our students who are not getting the benefit of full-day kindergarten solely because they were in a school that did not have 55 percent or more free-and-reduced-lunch students. With that, as State Superintendent, I strongly support the implementation of the bill and full-day kindergarten. I

believe in the benefits for the students. I would like to add that for the past four legislative sessions, the State Board of Education has either had its own bill draft supporting full-day kindergarten, or has supported iNVEST that includes full-day kindergarten.

Assemblyman Stewart:

I am a teacher of 34 years, and I am strongly in favor of giving the best for our kids. On page 17 of the booklet provided at each meeting by the Committee ([Exhibit M](#)), the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) for fourth-grade students, our Nevada average is better than the national average. You will see on page 19 for the test for the seventh-grade students, we fall behind. When we turn one more page for the tenth-grade students, we fall even farther behind. If we had unlimited funds, we could spend it for all grades, but we do not. I would advocate that perhaps we need to spend more in the seventh and tenth grades. I taught twelfth grade, and I had difficulty trying to get students interested while in the classroom. We have shown that in career and technical education (CTE), dropout rates among students is much lower and graduation rates are much higher. With the limited funds we have, would it not be better to put more money into junior high and high school where the Iowa Test shows we are going down?

Keith Rheault:

I have testified in favor of CTE. Providing funding for that would be a quick fix in many cases to get students who are currently in high school to stay in school. I think the long-term fix is providing full-day kindergarten in that if you can get students to read, they can learn. Even though we are above the average, over half the students are not proficient by the fourth grade reading according to the tests you are referencing. Those are the students we have to get to read and know math, so when they move into middle and high schools, they are prepared. I know there is limited funding, but I think full-day kindergarten is a long-term fix. You will not see the benefits immediately, but it will pay dividends down the road.

Assemblyman Stewart:

I notice in the iNVEST study, we have \$186 million for full-day kindergarten, in which there are studies that go both ways. For CTE, there is only \$14 million. I would like to see those balanced out a little more.

Keith Rheault:

I would gladly support anything the Legislature can come up with to increase that amount for CTE. There are great needs everywhere. Whether it comes out of the full-day program or some other program, we need as much funding for

K-12 education as we can get. We have been under-funded in a number of areas. I cannot tell you where to get the money, but I know we need it.

Chair Parnell:

In 1989, I was appointed by then-governor Bob Miller to serve as the State's first literacy coordinator. I worked in that job with adults who were illiterate. I think what you are trying to say as part of your answer is that we have two different issues. Probably nothing in education is more valuable than learning to read. Even if you have a tough adolescence through middle school that causes a test drop, or if once you get into high school, you are not sure of your direction and you take detours, if you at least learn to read, you have the foundation of reading, reasoning, and a base knowledge. No matter what that child's choice ends up being or what path he takes, he will have that. I think we need to look as individuals, parents, and legislators at giving our very youngest that base knowledge. Today's kindergarten experience is much different than the kindergarten we had even a few years ago. Those who have testified to this point have shown that in today's full-day kindergarten, we have children reading. We are giving children those skills that they will carry through life at five and six years old. It is important to have a balance of what we can do for our very youngest to give them a successful high school, including CTE choices and classes that we need to have readily available to keep kids interested in school.

Assemblyman Munford:

My district, District 6, is an at-risk district. We have full-day kindergarten already in existence. I have not as yet seen any type of assessment or any type of data released based on how it has been performing. However, the feedback I get from teachers, the community, and parents is that they are 100 percent in support of it. I spoke to some teachers this weekend, and they recommend it for the entire State of Nevada, if it is possible, because it has been so successful. The teachers are very excited about it. Personally, I am too. With my district's at-risk students, the most important thing for them is having the opportunity to learn and get a leg up when it comes to reading. There is no question about that. I think it creates an interest and concern about how valuable an education is.

In terms of CTE, Clark County School District has already taken some positive steps. They have a building for regional career and technical schools on the table. My district is already targeted for one of those schools. It would be a tremendous asset to my district because in the disadvantaged area I represent, there are quite a few schools that are experiencing a high number of dropouts. I do not know what exists in the entire State of Nevada, but I know that Clark County is taking positive steps.

**Mary Pierczynski, Superintendent, Carson City School District; President,
Nevada Association of School Superintendents:**

I am here today not only representing Carson City, but also representing the Nevada Association of School Superintendents (NASS). This organization includes all 17 counties and 17 superintendents in Nevada. A few weeks ago, you graciously allowed the superintendents to talk to you about iNVEST '07, our roadmap for educational excellence in Nevada. We remain firmly united in believing that the initiatives outlined in this program are the programs that are needed to improve student achievement in our schools. Among those initiatives is full-day kindergarten. As you know, superintendents first brought iNVEST to the Legislature for consideration two sessions ago in 2003. We returned in the 2005 Legislature with iNVEST '05. Full-day kindergarten was, and continues to be, one of our initiatives. We were delighted when the Legislature appropriated funding in the 2005 Session so our schools could offer full-day kindergarten to the students who need it the most. We commend you for your support and encourage you to not only maintain the funding, but to increase it. As educators, we believe all students benefit from increased time on task. In particular, our kindergarten students, who have less than three hours of instruction per day in half-day programs, need a longer school day in order to be fully prepared for first grade. Children who are behind when they begin first grade spend the rest of their lives trying to catch up. Full-day kindergarten is important for all students, but especially for the children who live in poverty, or who have not yet mastered the English language.

Our organization, NASS, has done some research regarding full-day kindergarten. I have provided copies of a summary that we compiled ([Exhibit N](#)), and I would like to point out a few of the findings. In the February 2006 issue of the *American Journal of Education*, a study reported that full-day kindergarten programs provided within a regular academic year the equivalent of one additional month of schooling. It reported that, "Children attending schools that offer full-day kindergarten evidenced considerably greater academic learning compared to their academically and socially similar counterparts in half-day schools." The WestEd Policy Brief of April 2005 summarizes several studies conducted over a period of 25 years. They find the following benefits from full-day kindergarten: increased school readiness, higher academic achievement, improved school attendance, improved literacy and language development, and enhanced social and emotional development. In particular, WestEd indicates that the cost of implementing full-day kindergarten may be partially offset by the savings realized when full-day kindergarten participants are not required to repeat future grades. One study found that such students are twice as likely to stay on grade as students who did not attend full-day kindergarten programs. I will let you review the document I provided for additional information.

I will close with a few additional comments. On January 17, 2007, the *Deseret Morning News* reported [in the article, "Studies Tout the Benefits of Full-Day Kindergarten,"] that Brigham Young University studied two Utah school districts and found that "full-day kindergarteners made greater gains in literacy exams—especially kids learning English as a second language—than children in half-day kindergarten programs." One of the authors of the study, which is planned for publication, explained that these gains could be attributed to the increased length of the school day. A legislative priority for Utah's Republican Governor John Huntsman, Jr., became full-day kindergarten. The option of full-day kindergarten for low-income, at-risk students was approved by the Utah Legislature before it adjourned on February 28, 2007. The Legislature appropriated \$30 million for the program.

In iNVEST '07, we are not proposing that NRS 392.040 be changed. Some parents may believe their child is not yet emotionally or intellectually ready for full-day kindergarten. We believe parents should have the option of sending their children to full-day kindergarten. The superintendents thank you and your colleagues for the funding already in place for kindergarten students who are provided the benefits of a full-day kindergarten program. We encourage you to continue to systematically increase that funding, focusing first on those at-risk students who will benefit the most, until every kindergarten student in Nevada has the opportunity to attend a full-day kindergarten program.

Assemblyman Stewart:

On page 4 of your document ([Exhibit N](#)), you list three studies that question the long-term effects of full-day kindergarten. Can you comment on that, please?

Mary Pierczynski:

I have provided those for your perusal. The RAND study, of course, goes back to the long-term effects. The second thing that is brought out is the subsidizing of childcare cost. It has a direct effect of reducing the tendency of single mothers to rely on welfare. I believe they also looked at some of the studies of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. I am sure there are people here this afternoon who will comment further on those.

Assemblyman Beers:

We had a report by a remarkable young man earlier today. It was obvious that his parents were deeply involved in his education. My wife and I were involved in our son's education as well. It is proven that parental involvement is, by far, the best enhancement of an education. Is there anything that can be done at the kindergarten age to reach out and grab more parents and get them involved?

Mary Pierczynski:

Parent involvement is always an issue we look at. I believe there is legislation to try to increase the amount of parent involvement. When most parents see their child who has attended the full-day program able to come home and read and do math, they get excited about education for their children. They are more willing to come in and get involved. When they see the progress their kids are making, I think it enthralls the parents as well. I hope that will be the case. I, with you, agree that parent involvement is a key issue. Paying attention to what your children are doing and what they are studying is important. Full-day kindergarten gives parents an opportunity to see how much these kids can learn and do, and hopefully spark some enthusiasm and interest. We have many parents who are involved in our full-day program here in Carson City. It has raised the level of awareness of what these children can do.

Chair Parnell:

I would like to recognize that Assemblywoman Susan Gerhardt and Senator Steven Horsford are in attendance.

Walt Rulffes, Superintendent, Clark County School District:

You heard Chancellor Rogers talk about the need to have students prepared to go to college. He and I talk about that almost every month. We have the same issue in the public schools—we need children who are ready to go into the first grade. It is every bit as important. There is a tenet—which is applicable to almost all we do in life—that correlates directly to the degree of proficiency. This is true whether you are an adult learning a new skill, a 16-year-old learning to drive, or a kindergartener. It is not surprising that there is abundant credible research that shows the benefits of full-day kindergarten, especially for those who are English Language Learners (ELL) or students from families in poverty. On "count day" in September of this year, Clark County School District had over 23,000 students enrolled in kindergarten. About one-third of those students are enrolled in the ELL program. In other words, one-third of those students have an English proficiency problem. Just under 11,000, almost half, of those students are from families of poverty. As you just heard, research clearly shows that students in these categories reap the largest benefits from full-day kindergarten.

Currently, 116 of our 199 elementary schools in Clark County School District have at least one full-day kindergarten class right now. Those are funded through a number of ways including: the kindergarten dollars the Legislature allocated in 2005, Senate Bill No. 404 of the 73rd Legislative Session funding, federal funds to a very limited extent, or parents who are willing to pay tuition. We currently have 416 classrooms serving about 11,000 students, which is roughly 47 percent of the kindergarteners. The point needs to be made that

there is really not a question of whether we are going to have full-day kindergarten or not, the question is who gets it, and why. The Clark County School Board recently had a public planning meeting in preparation for its 2008 bond. At that meeting, they authorized the Facilities Division to work with architects to develop an elementary school design that has a capability of having kindergarten space added, so if the funding for full-day kindergarten is provided, the next generation of schools in Clark County School District would have the ability to house them. It troubles me when opponents of full-day kindergarten criticize it because its benefits allegedly do not last in perpetuity. I disagree. I cannot grasp the idea that bringing students up to grade level for however long it lasts is a waste. If one of my children had needed a tutor in the first grade, and then again in the fifth grade, I would not have concluded that getting her a tutor in the first grade was a waste. Instead, I would have concluded that tutoring kept her on track for several years, and that additional assistance would again be beneficial. This tends to tie in with Mr. Stewart's comment about needing more help at the secondary level—middle school. The longer a student is not proficient, the more behind he gets. That may account for those middle-school students who are not doing as well as they apparently did in the fourth-grade testing. It is not a surprise that some students will need extra help, not just in kindergarten, but in other grades as well. The fact is a full-day kindergarten improves children's academic outcomes, results in fewer grade retentions and fewer special education referrals, and has positive impacts in children's behavior and engagement in schools. Clark County School District is often referred to as the "600-pound gorilla in the room," bringing up or down the averages of student performances for the rest of the State. Clark County School District also has the largest population of children living in poverty and children who do not speak English. These are the early populations who stand to gain the most from full-day kindergarten. I encourage the Legislature to provide the funding needed to ensure the students who need full-day kindergarten the most are able to receive this service.

Nat Lommori, Superintendent, Lyon County School District:

I was asked to represent the rural counties. We are the fourth largest district, but we still have five attendance areas, so we do not have many of the bigger schools that even smaller districts have within our State. Like many rural districts, we bus about 75 percent of our students to school. If parents are able to allow their children to go to school, that can become an issue. The second part of that is in many rural communities, day care is an issue, and a wonderful preschool is a thought or desire, but is many times not offered. The children who need it the most cannot benefit from those opportunities that a larger or urban population would have.

I brought to you today three pages ([Exhibit O](#)). This is the Yerington Elementary School. Yerington Elementary missed being funded full-day kindergarten from last session by 0.4 percent. They had 54.6 percent free and reduced lunch because we were not serving kindergarten students. They were not being fed lunch. They wrote a 404 Grant and received it, and initiated the program.

The handout also describes the characteristics of the school. You can see that they now qualify if the 55 percent rule stands. They are now at 57.6 percent. I would hope they would be considered because they are fighting tremendous odds. They also have 35.6 percent Hispanic students in the school. With the other subpopulations, over 48 percent of the student body is of ethnic diversity. They have great daily attendance: 95.3 percent. They were under the category of a school in need of improvement for a third year. They made adequate yearly progress (AYP) last year. We are excited about that.

The most distinguishing thing is on the third page. It is very difficult to get statistics on a semester, but we are finding some good news. In comparing 2005-2006 half-day kindergarten students, you can see that on the Developmental Reading Assessment Growth Chart, we had 33 out of 96 students not proficient, about 34 percent. This year we only have 19 percent of students not proficient. That is a significant gain. By having students in school and giving them an opportunity to learn, it is not an issue of whether or not they can come to school. Parents are allowing their children to attend because transportation is not an issue for those families.

I would greatly urge the passage of this bill for all of Nevada. Rural children deserve the same opportunities as some of the more urban areas. We are not any more affluent than anyone else. In fact, in small communities, what you see is what you get in our schools. All those children come to one school. It will have an effect on the population of the school.

I would like to answer a couple of Mr. Stewart's questions. In the same book of quick facts, you will see that in iNVEST '03, the superintendents asked for about \$1,000 per student to get us to the national average. In iNVEST '07, we are now \$2,149 behind. We have lost ground in the funding for all pupils. If we had the \$2,149, every student in all of those grades would have an opportunity. We would have more CTE; better opportunities for class-size reductions in fourth and fifth grade, which really suffer with the first-, second-, and third- grade class reductions; and middle schools and high schools will have more program opportunities for students just by being funded to the national average.

Dawna Ogden, Program Director for Kindergarten, Washoe County:

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

Elisabeth Noonan, Superintendent of Elementary Education, Washoe County School District:

[Read letter from Paul Dugan, Superintendent, Washoe County School District ([Exhibit Q](#)). Spoke from prepared text ([Exhibit R](#)).]

Assemblyman Hardy:

This is the first time I have seen the studies we keep hearing about in one place. I appreciate it. The question I have is on what I call "404 and More." We have used 404 dollars, as we have heard from the testimonies. We have also heard the testimonies of certain at-risk kids benefiting from those moneys. I think that is one of the ways that we need to look at this process. How can we use the structure that apparently is already in place, where you apply for the grant? Maybe you could elaborate on how 404 is used in full-day kindergarten in either rural or Washoe County experience and how it came about.

Elisabeth Noonan:

On the issue of S.B. No. 404 of the 73rd Legislative Session funds, we have six elementary schools currently offering full-day kindergarten this year to some or all of their students by way of that grant application process. If the schools were here to speak with you today, one of their concerns would be the short amount of time given. It took almost a whole year to get ready to implement that grant once they got the good news that it was going to be available. Now they are offering it without any of us promising to see future years available because we will not know the outcome until the legislative session ends. The short nature of it has been a concern, but the grant has made full-day kindergarten available for some children who otherwise would not have had the opportunity this year.

Nat Lommori:

We only had Yerington Elementary write the 404 Grant for full-day kindergarten. I have 10- and 12-year veterans who were teaching half-day and now are teaching full-day. I cannot tell you how much joy and light came into their faces when I asked them what they thought. They said to give them this opportunity. They said it is amazing what they can actually get instilled in the children when they have the time to do it. Their mid-year tests are well ahead of where they were in the past. They do not think there is much difference in the caliber of kids they received this year; it is just the opportunity to teach.

Assemblyman Hardy:

My question was a little more toward the 404. How did you get it? Did you have hoops that you jumped through? Were they onerous? Were they pleasant? Was it worth it?

Nat Lommori:

I have always said to our principals that individually we are bright because our teachers are highly educated with bachelor's degrees or better, and our principals have master's degrees. We have the highest educated workforce in Lyon County. Independently, they are bright, but collectively, we can be brilliant. We got together and looked at what the opportunities were for our district through 404. It was a collaborative effort through the principals, school-site team leaders from our school improvement team's teachers, and our office. After three meetings, we looked at what would be best for our district. We looked at school-site coaches who would be in the classroom every day looking at opportunities for improving teacher training to instill good lessons for students. It has been phenomenal. On Wednesday we are presenting some information at the Best Practices conference. We have been able to review the information, are now having consistent lessons, and are able to find out what kids are really lacking. One example is the test scores of one individual. The student was just below the passing mark for math, but when drilled on the subject, we discovered he was missing geometry. He was above the mark on all of the other grade-level math needs, but geometry was dragging him down. In a ten-week effort of helping that child with what they call "second chance," that child gained all the geometry information and scored four to five points above the mark. We are looking at an individual education plan for every single student.

Karlene Lee, Assistant Superintendent, Clark County School District:

I am aware that there have been some misunderstandings and misconceptions regarding a recent study that was done in the Clark County School District ([Exhibit S](#)). I would like to take a moment to clarify some information and vocabulary used in the study, as well as some of the limitations and the positive information that was found within the studies. First of all, the most recent study is part of a series. In the year 2004-2005, Clark County School District began the full-day kindergarten study that had five different technical reports as a part of the one-year study. At the end of 2004-2005, there was a final year-one status report. The purpose of that report was to take a look at not only the positive impact of full-day versus half-day kindergarten, if indeed there was one, but also to take a look at the three programs that the Clark County School District used for full-day kindergarten: the Voyager, Breakthrough, and Trophies.

We had very specific purposes in the first year of 2004-2005. What we indicated in the recommendation at the end of 2004-2005 was to look more closely at the free-and-reduced lunch and English language learner (ELL) students. In the year 2006-2007, we have a second portion of this study, recently released in an interim report. The first of three that will be released this year, the interim report only reports information from assessments that were given in September and October of the second-grade year. That is an important thing to realize. The students who were in kindergarten in 2004-2005 are now in second grade. The recently released study is specifically for assessments that were given in September and October of 2006. It is essentially a baseline for their second-grade year.

Another important item to mention that was causing confusion is terminology. You are receiving a three-page handout ([Exhibit T](#)) that is intended to be a very fast, graphically-centered report regarding the most recent information. First of all, it is important to note that in each of the studies, the one in 2004-2005 and the one in 2006-2007, an assessment was given to the children called Dynamic Indicators for Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). This is a nationally known, nationally used, widely recognized assessment for early literacy skills. In the original study, it was given to all of the students in four different areas. In the second-grade study, it was specifically given in oral reading fluency. Oral reading fluency is the ability to translate letters to sounds and words fluently. Therefore, it is a predictor of future success. If you take a look at the DIBELS literature or the literature from the University of Oregon where this particular assessment was initially generated, they divide the students who perform in this assessment into three areas. This is the specific area that caused some confusion in terms of the study. The DIBELS reports the information in three categories: low risk, at risk, and some risk. Students who are found to be in the low-risk category are likely to achieve benchmark goals throughout the rest of the year and in following years. This is a predictor of performance in the future. Low-risk students will most likely be successful. Students who are found to be in some-risk category may need some help and some intervention in the future. Many people are confused by the term at-risk being tied to free-and-reduced-lunch students. In this study, and in this particular case, it is specifically tied to the DIBELS assessment. It says that students who are categorized as at-risk will likely need intensive support to help them reach benchmarks in literacy for the future. Hopefully that provides some clarification.

In terms of the document I handed out ([Exhibit T](#)), I would like to point out a couple of areas. It shows the categories: at-risk if they score below 26 as a scale-score, some-risk if they score between 26 and 44, and low-risk if they score higher than 44. The information that is provided for you is provided in two ways. The chart on the left indicates the mean literacy score. Did they

score a 26, a 36, or a 44? On the left-hand side, the first chart indicates that half-day students scored a mean score on the DIBELS assessment of 45.8. Full-day's mean score is 48.9. That is a difference of 3.1 mean score. It is not a percentage. The reason I point that out is because there has also been some confusion regarding percentage versus mean score.

On the right-hand side, we took a look at the percentage of students who fell in each of those three categories. Half-day had 29.3 students who are in the at-risk category, meaning they probably will need intensive support in the future, as opposed to full-day students who only had 24.1. If you go all the way over to the low-risk, 51.9 of the full-day students are at low risk. They will probably be fine, based on this predictor, in the future in terms of their literacy skills. I have provided you with various groups, and this is all of the students.

If you turn the page, you will see the same information—mean scale score on the left, percent in each of the categories within the DIBELS assessment for the free-and-reduced-lunch on the right, the ELL is at the bottom. I would like to point out that it is a significant difference in terms of the 8.8 on the mean score for free-and-reduced-lunch and 13.9 percent more students for free-and-reduced-lunch scoring in the low-risk area. At the bottom of the page, ELL students in full-day kindergarten had an 18.2 percent higher mean score. On the literacy risk categories, there are 16 percent more in the low-risk area. That means out of all full-day kindergarten students, there are 16 percent more students not likely to need any further intervention in the future for reading.

There were some questions about providing the next information that was not given in the original study. The original study was focused on free-and-reduced-lunch and ELL students. Because of that, this information was not provided in the first release of the interim report. However, I have provided it for you because we have that information. That is how the students did in terms of non-free and reduced lunch, as well as English speakers. Quite frankly, the non-free and reduced lunch indicates that there is less than a three-point difference on the scale score, and less than a one-point difference in terms of the percentage of students in the low-risk category. The difference between how those groups of students performed is statistically insignificant. If you take a look at the English proficient students, approximately six percent more of the students are in the low-risk category. I want you to be sure that we are more than willing to share all of the information when we have it; however, each of these studies focused on either the programs that were being used or the specific groups of students we chose to look at.

I would like to point out the limitations of this study. First of all, a single assessment was used. I do not want to mislead you and say that we are trying to tell you that those students are proficient readers or proficient in English. This is not a measure of proficiency; it is a predictor of future success or lack thereof. The next piece is non-free-and-reduced-lunch. I am absolutely sure about our information regarding free-and-reduced-lunch because it requires a parent to actively sign up. Non-free-and-reduced-lunch is a passive situation. It tells me that no one signed up. It does not tell me whether you are high socioeconomic status (SES), middle SES, or low SES; It tells me that no one signed up for free-and-reduced-lunch. I am not confident to define for you what "free-and-reduced-lunch" means.

As I pointed out earlier, this is merely one of three reports that were intended to come out this year. This is telling you how the children did in only their first two months of second grade. We are very interested in taking a look at the rest of this year. We are continuing the DIBELS assessment, and in August of 2007, we will provide a report for the entire 2006-2007 school year on how the second graders did. We will report it in all categories: free and reduced lunch, non-free and reduced lunch, English language proficient, and ELL.

In all of our studies, once we have run the data, we attempt to ask for data verification by an outside agency. We sent all of our raw data and raw information to Dr. Christopher Jepsen at the University of Kentucky. I will read a few sentences of his letter of data verification: "The methods used within this study are appropriate for addressing whether full-day kindergarten is associated with higher test scores than the half-day kindergarten." He is saying the methods we used within this study were appropriate. Finally, he says, "I was able to replicate all the tables in this report concerning full- and half-day kindergarten students. The statistical software used to replicate the results was Stata, an alternate statistical program." He used a different program to run our same data. The means, coefficients, and standard errors reported in all of the tables are identical to the results he found using his statistical package. We also chose him because he is in the Business and Economics Research Department, so we felt he was probably not biased in terms of his beliefs about full- or half-day kindergarten. We felt that he was a logical choice to be able to verify our data. I hope I provided some clarity regarding this study.

Assemblyman Hardy:

Why does it take so long for us to get the information? Why is it that when I ask a school board member if they have seen it, they have not?

Karlene Lee:

I would like to make this offer: if anybody here, now or in the future, would like clarification regarding any research study that is published out of Clark County School District while I am involved, please call me directly. I will make the same offer to the Board of School Trustees if there is any information they need. I think part of the problem was a miscommunication in terms of several channels trying to explain the request for information. There was no intent not to share the information. The intent was to clarify, and once it was clarified, the information was provided.

Chair Parnell:

Thank you for clarifying that. Probably 100 of the emails we received cited dishonesty or fallacy in the report. I would ask, in all sincerity, for any member of this Committee who has a question, and feels as though you did not get enough information during this presentation, to call her later and further clarify.

Michael O'Dowd, Principal, Frank Lamping Elementary School, Clark County School District:

We have five tuition-based full-day kindergarten programs. This is our third year at Lamping offering extended-day kindergarten. During the first week of the 2006-2007 school year, we had 177 kindergarten students registered. Of those students, 128, or 72 percent, were on the extended-day program, and 36 students were on a waiting list trying to get into one of our five full-day classrooms. Parents so value the educational benefits of a full-day program that rather than sit on the waiting list, many of them transfer their child to a private full-day program, which costs them over \$10,000. I think that clearly shows parents are very interested in this program for its educational benefits. They are not looking just for inexpensive day care.

The true benefits of full-day kindergarten rest in the fact that students have more time to practice and master the essential skills for literacy and math. With half-day kindergarten, students only come for two-and-a-half hours a day. Teachers always feel rushed to push through the curriculum. It is the old adage of going a mile wide and only an inch deep. On the other hand, full-day kindergarten teachers are not so rushed. They can take more time working with individual students on essential skills and concepts. Students come away with more than just recall—they are better able to understand and apply skills to the tasks at hand.

At Lamping we have found students in the full-day program are better prepared for first grade. They are more confident in their reading skills and are ready from day one to meet the challenges set before them. For the most part, students from the half-day program are not as prepared or confident, so we

have had to restructure the way we teach reading and math. Now teams of three first-grade teachers work together to meet students in homogeneous groupings to provide them instruction commensurate with their abilities. As a result, many of our first-grade students are reading chapter books and participating in an accelerated math program. Parents are very excited about these programs and frequently volunteer to assist the teachers in the classroom. The same phenomenon has taken place this year in second grade, so we have, again, restructured second grade. Students receive instruction at their ability level. As you can see, full-day kindergarten is academically valued by our community. I would ask that you do everything you can to ensure that all students have the option of attending a full-day kindergarten program.

Mary Beth Kellerman, First Grade Teacher, Scherkenbach Elementary School, Clark County School District:

As a first grade teacher, I have seen the positive outcome of students who have attended a full-day kindergarten program. Our school was able to provide two all-day programs last year. Of the 18 students in my class this year, five were in full-day kindergarten programs. Four of those students are currently in my top reading group and reading at a second-grade level. These students are also the only ones who have earned straight A's this trimester. They entered my class better prepared and academically more advanced than my students who were in half-day kindergarten programs. These students were able to adapt to the first-grade classroom environment and daily schedule much easier due to their previous experience of being in school all day. My students who were in half-day kindergarten had a more difficult time adjusting to being in school for so many hours. Some even suffered separation anxiety from their parents for the first couple weeks of school.

Having taught kindergarten myself, I am aware of how little educational time students get in a half-day program. The same objectives and benchmarks have to be met while the school day is shorter and class size is larger. Students who are lucky enough to participate in full-day kindergarten seem to academically and socially develop faster than those students who are enrolled in half-day programs.

Marty Gardner, Principal, Staton Elementary School, Clark County School District:

[Spoke from prepared text ([Exhibit U](#)). Provided handout ([Exhibit V](#)).]

Dana Robinson, Kindergarten Teacher, C.T. Sewell Elementary School, Clark County School District:

This is my 17th year teaching. I taught half-day kindergarten for seven years. This is my first year to teach full-day kindergarten. We have a 55 percent

population of free-and-reduced-lunch, so we are not considered an at-risk school, even though we really are. I had students that came to me never having held a pencil, let alone gone to preschool. I had two ELL students who did not speak any English.

Sewell Elementary School received a 404 Grant this year to pay for full-day kindergarten. If we lose that funding, we are in jeopardy of losing our full-day program. How can we go back to a half-day when our students have displayed such growth? Our students' test scores on this year's first interim test went up 40 percent from last year. They went from 42 to 73 percent in reading and 48 to 78 percent in math. Research has shown that the accomplishments at my school have occurred nationwide in schools with full-day programs.

I know from personal experience the difference full-day can make. In January, 20 out of 30 of my students knew all of their letters and sounds. As of today, I only have three students who need extra practice to learn their alphabet. To me, that is amazing. This means that from now until the end of the year, I can focus on decoding, the prelude to reading, with my students. Not one of those students attended preschool, but now they know all of their letters and sounds, are beginning to read words, and are writing. The student that had never held a pencil can now write his first and last name, all of his letters, and is beginning to make the connection to writing. Both of my ELL students are beginning to speak English. One knows almost all of her letters and sounds and is beginning to write. These students will be ready to go to first-grade. The first grade teachers will not have to take precious time to backtrack and teach kindergarten skills.

Finally, I have a friend who taught half-day kindergarten in Clark County for 11 years. She moved to Maryland this year, and is now teaching full-day kindergarten with 17 students. She tells me every day we talk how much she is able to accomplish in a day, and how much her students have learned. She is able to meet with every child in reading groups every day. That should be our end goal. Let us take the first step and make kindergarten full-day to give our students the positive start to the educational future that they deserve. We owe it to our children.

Donna Anspach, President, Nevadans for Quality Education:
[Spoke from prepared text ([Exhibit W](#)).]

Mary Jo Malloy, Member, Nevadans for Quality Education:
[Spoke from prepared text ([Exhibit X](#)).]

Alison Turner, President, Nevada Parent Teacher Association:

Nevada Parent Teacher Association (PTA) supports A.B. 157 and full-day kindergarten as a choice for parents and students in every school in Nevada. Nevada PTA supports research-based, proven programs. Studies conducted with our children in our schools in Nevada, based upon our academic kindergarten curriculum, indicate that all children, no matter their socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or special needs, benefit from full-day kindergarten. With our nation-leading class size reduction in first, second, and third grades we have a unique opportunity to support the gains these children make. Yet at the present time a limited number of schools offer state-funded, full-day kindergarten while few others offer a tuition-based version. We need to provide every school in Nevada with the resources to offer full-day kindergarten.

Nevada PTA believes there is a tremendous difference between delivering our academic kindergarten curriculum to a child attending a half-day versus a full-day program. The full-day student receives the benefit of an extended day offering far more time on task and significantly enriched content. Research shows again and again that more time on task improves student achievement for all students—those who enter school academically behind their peers, those who enter school exceeding standards, and all of the children in-between.

Frequent references to other studies need to show how they apply to our demographics, special needs, phenomenal growth, and to our unique ability to support full-day kindergarten gains with Nevada's nation leading class size reduction.

It is easy to cite statistics. That is why it is vital to test things here in Nevada where we know full-day kindergarten works.

It is time for all of us to work together on education reforms that help all of our students. Full-day kindergarten is clearly one of the programs that succeeded. It is no silver bullet. It will take more than one research-based, proven program vetted for our children in our schools in our State to adequately serve all of our children.

Nevada PTA remains committed to making this happen. These meetings help to ensure that Nevadans across the State can participate in these important proceedings.

Kerri McGinnis, Parent, Clark County School District:

I am a stay-at-home mother of four. I have been pleased with the education that my children have received in Clark County. My 20-year-old son, who is a student at the University of Nevada, Reno, graduated with an honors diploma

near the top of his class. My seventh-grade daughter seems to be following suit, and our little third grader is happy and doing great. None of this, however, begins to compare with the remarkable start that our little first grader, Camille, has been given at Frank Lamping Elementary. She is an amazing reader. She does addition and subtraction with as many digits as we will throw at her. She is confident, has great social skills, and is fully prepared to face the typical school yard conflict. I know that Camille's advantage is because of her opportunity to attend full-day kindergarten.

Some argue that this program is nothing but a day care solution. I would say to them that is not so. This is a program with too many benefits to name. The children are submerged into a full day of learning from the beginning. The first grade transition to all-day school is obsolete. Children who attend full-day kindergarten not only have the extra learning time, but it is also in the loving environment that a kindergarten child needs to develop. It indeed has given my child and her peers a head start and the opportunity to grow, both academically and socially. This is also a benefit to their future teachers and society as a whole. In fact, I believe that every child should be given this opportunity regardless of their parents' ability to pay for it. I would bet that anyone who visits Lamping Elementary and sees these accelerated children and how they are thriving would feel the same. This program can only improve our schools.

The decision to pay for full-day kindergarten was not an easy one. I am a stay-at-home mother, and my husband is with the fire department. With four children, one of whom is in college, this seemed like a huge financial burden. After weighing the benefits and adjusting our budget to pay the tuition, I can tell you it is one of the best sacrifices that we have made. I believe that Camille will benefit indefinitely from her experience. I would like to thank the staff at Frank Lamping Elementary and her wonderful kindergarten teachers, Ms. Mahoney, and her aide, Ms. Nakashima, for participating in this effective program that has given my Camille such a wonderful head start.

Chair Parnell:

I would like to acknowledge Assembly Majority Leader John Ocegüera is in the audience, as is Assemblyman Kelvin Atkinson.

Karina Rodriguez, Translator for Gabriella Rosas, Washoe County School District:

I will be translating for Gabriella Rosas.

Gabriella Rosas, Parent, Washoe County School District, Nevada:

[Spoke in Spanish translated by Karina Rodriguez.] I am here representing Anderson Elementary School in Reno, Nevada. This year I am seeing and have

been experiencing the great importance that kindergarten has. I am seeing a great difference between my two children—my six-year-old, who is in kindergarten, and my eight-year-old, who is in third grade. My six-year-old can already read. I am seeing that this is an incredible preparation for her future. She is already prepared to go into the first grade. One of the best things that I am seeing is that there is no fear in my daughter. There is no fear of participating, of speaking English, of being a child who is excluded from the rest of them. She is included, she is prepared, and she is enjoying her experience.

Assemblyman Kihuen:

Do your kids learn English or Spanish first? Which was the first language?

Gabriella Rosas:

[Responded in Spanish, translated by Karina Rodriguez.] The first language is Spanish, second is English.

Assemblyman Kihuen:

Have your children learned English faster now that they are in full-day kindergarten?

Gabriella Rosas:

[Responded in Spanish, translated by Karina Rodriguez.] With my daughter, I am seeing that she is more prepared. She is more assured. She has lost her fear. The changes that I see in her are fantastic. With a lack of fear, she raises her hand, she participates, and she shares all of the wonderful things in kindergarten with her classmates.

Assemblyman Denis:

Did your third-grader go to full-day kindergarten?

Gabriella Rosas:

[Responded in Spanish, translated by Karina Rodriguez.] No.

Assemblyman Denis:

Was the difference between them caused by the different characteristics between them, full-day kindergarten, or other factors?

Gabriella Rosas:

[Responded in Spanish, translated by Karina Rodriguez.] A child who learns English, albeit their second language, from an early age does not have fear. My eight-year-old son is frightened. He gets very nervous when he has to stand up in front of his classmates. That is because he did not start learning English as early as my daughter.

Assemblyman Munford:

Do you and your husband speak Spanish around the house once the children are at home? What is the language primarily spoken at your residence? Do you watch Spanish television or English television?

Gabriella Rosas:

[Responded in Spanish, translated by Karina Rodriguez.] We primarily speak Spanish at home, although honestly, I have to tell you that when my children come home with funny games their teacher has been showing them to learn English, and they share them with us, we have been learning English with their help. We have been learning English from our children, who are learning it at school.

Assemblyman Munford:

What about television? Do you usually watch Spanish programming, or do you watch English programming? Sometimes you can pick up the language that way.

Gabriella Rosas:

[Responded in Spanish, translated by Karina Rodriguez.] When I am with my children at our house, I am watching mainly programs in English. For this reason, I understand much better than I speak.

Lynn Chapman, Vice President, Nevada Families:

There is a handout ([Exhibit Y](#)) that I brought for you to look at. It is about the *New England Primer*. The contents of the present edition, with the exception of the little blue book I am passing around, are camera reproductions of the 1777 *New England Primer*. The *New England Primer*, introduced in Boston in 1690 by Benjamin Harris, was the first textbook printed in America. For 100 years after its introduction, the *New England Primer* was the beginning textbook for students. Until 1900, it continued to be the principle text in all types of American schools: public, private, semi-private, home, parochial, et cetera. The founders, as well as most of the Americans, learned to read from the *New England Primer*. Originally, the *New England Primer* was a text for students just beginning to read. Since there were no grade classifications in American schools until the 19th century, it was simply called a "primer"—a small, elementary book for teaching children to read. It is the current equivalent of a first-grade text or reader; however, it is probably well above the reading and vocabulary level of today's typical first graders—a potent commentary on the difference between the educational system of our founders and of today.

The other two books are the *McGuffey Readers*. I homeschooled our daughter, and I used the *McGuffey Readers*. However, we did not use the *Primer* and we did not use the first reader because my daughter was already well beyond that by the time she was five. I went to the library with my daughter almost every week, and we would pick books. I would read to her constantly. She learned to read because I taught her. I brought the *McGuffey Readers* because I wanted to show the difference between the *New England Primer* and the *McGuffey Readers*. The *McGuffey Readers* came later in the 1800s. They are both very good books, and I just wanted you to see that children were taught with the *New England Primer*.

An early childhood longitudinal study concluded when comparing half-day kindergarten and full-day kindergarten that there is little meaningful difference in the level of children's end-of-year reading and mathematics knowledge and skills. The study was conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics and is the most comprehensive study on full-day kindergarten. It traced 22,782 students in 1,277 schools who entered kindergarten in 1998. The study also revealed that what little benefit was acquired disappeared by third grade. The Education of the States drew a similar conclusion: There is currently not strong evidence showing that academic gains made in full-day programs last beyond first grade. The Long Beach Unified School District in California concluded that those few studies that have looked past second grade found no effect on academic performance. Kansas Department of Education looked at Evansville full-day kindergarten and concluded that any academic benefit of full-day kindergarten over part-time kindergarten seems to diminish. In the past 10 years, participation in full-day kindergarten has increased from 10 percent to 50 percent. National reading scores have not.

Full-day kindergarten serves two purposes. First, it provides tax-funded entitlement in the form of childcare. Secondly, it strengthens the already powerful teacher's union.

Sheila Ward, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:
[Spoke from prepared text ([Exhibit Z](#)).]

Janine Hansen, President, Nevada Eagle Forum:

I have had a lifelong commitment to children. I care about them very much. Not only do I have four children, but I also have six grandchildren—one is almost five, one is four, one is two-and-a-half, one is 20 months, one is six months, and one is soon to be born. I have a great interest in this issue. I have also spent a lifetime teaching children in classes and teaching children music. I have a degree from Brigham Young University in child development and family

relations. I have a passion about what is important and what is good for children.

I hope all of you will have the opportunity to look at the book *School Can Wait* by Dr. Raymond Moore. My copy is in Elko. *School Can Wait* is a wonderful book that covers some 6,000 different studies about how going to school early can actually be harmful. I have read the book several times. One of the things that really stands out in my mind is the issue of how it can affect one's vision. I think it is an issue that we do not often consider. They did a study on Alaskan children and how their parents and grandparents never needed to have glasses. However, when they were put in a closed environment at a young age, many developed myopia.

One of the other points I would like to make is that full-day kindergarten discriminates against little boys. I have four brothers, two sons, and a grandson. Boys are especially affected by an early structured school environment because they develop at a slower rate than girls do. By the time they go to kindergarten, they are at least a year behind developmentally. This type of situation can frustrate and depress them, producing rebellious behavior, not to mention a dislike of learning. The report from the Study of Early Child and Youth Development demonstrated the correlation between the incidence of severity of stress and behavioral problems and children spending long hours in day care. The same conclusions were reached in a study in the Institute of Child Development in Minnesota.

The use of tranquilizers, such as Ritalin, to force boys, and increasingly girls, to endure this endlessly structured environment is a terrible national scandal. Child development psychologist Jean Piaget has research indicating that children's mental processes developed according to sequential levels of growth. Babies and children are still puttering along at the same rate. Today's children do not have less ability to learn than other children. Most children can be taught to read by the end of the first grade when using phonics. Children five years old and younger do not need to be stuffed into a structured school situation five days a week. They need time running and playing at home with their parents and families.

I would like to give you a personal example. When my son was six years old, he went to first grade. He was a little older than most of the first graders. I had to go to a national meeting, and I was out of town. I got a call from my mother that my son had come home from school covered with dollar-sized hives. I told her to not send him back. I ultimately determined with all the problems he had that I would pull him out of school, and I did. I did not send him back to the first grade until he was seven. At that point in time, he was

ready to go. He excelled, was in the gifted and talented program, was at the top of his class, and he received all As. At age 15, he went to Truckee Meadows Community College. He took many classes there. Now he is 28. He has three children, he and his wife have two businesses, and he is very successful. He was not ready to go to school early. His little boy, Alarick, often likes to go to church with me. When he does, they have a nursery class and a class for three-year-olds called Sunbeams. Alarick will not go. He only wants to be with me. However, his sister, who is two-and-a-half, loves to go. There is another example of the differences between the developmental levels of boys and girls. Recently, Alarick has been willing to go to the nursery class, which is for children who are 18 months to three years old, but he is now over four years old. He is a very bright child, hard to keep up with, and always keeping me on my toes. This is an important issue that maybe we have not thought about, but I am very concerned about it.

I have given you some other information ([Exhibit AA](#)). On page 7 of that document, there is a quote at the bottom from David Elkind, a professor of child development at Tufts University. [Ms. Hansen read from the article.]

Elkind explains that children who receive academic instruction too early—generally before age six or seven—are often put at risk for no apparent gain. By attempting to teach the wrong things at the wrong time, early instruction can permanently damage a child's self-esteem, reduce a child's natural eagerness to learn, and block a child's natural gifts and talents. He concludes,

There is no evidence that such early instruction has lasting benefits, and considerable evidence that it can do lasting harm ... If we do not wake up to the potential danger of these harmful practices, we may do serious damage to a large segment of the next generation ...

On page 10, you will notice that I have given you some of the resolutions passed at the National Education Association's (NEA) 2006 convention in Orlando, Florida. The *Education Reporter* is one of the only organizations that publishes this nationally every year. As you can see, A-14 is full-day kindergarten. You can peruse some of the others. This is a goal of the NEA.

National Eagle Forum has its own curriculum for teaching children to read. It allows every mother, grandmother, and neighbor to be able to teach her own child, grandchild, or neighbor how to read. It has been especially successful in areas where they receive grants for at-risk children. Every child can learn to read. This is one of the problems we have had—we do not focus on

systematic, intensive phonics. We are here because we care about children. We care about your children, our children, and the children in Nevada. That is the reason we have been willing to come and discuss this with you today. Thank you for your consideration. We oppose full-day kindergarten.

Assemblyman Kihuen:

My question is directed to Sheila Ward. During your testimony, I heard you mention that minority families tend to be transient, and it tends to be a waste of time to teach the students. I was wondering where you got your statistics that proves that these people are transient. You also mentioned the immigration issue. I am wondering how immigration is relevant to full-day kindergarten at all.

Sheila Ward:

To answer your first question, that was from a personal experience when I was teaching English grammar at a local school in Carson City. I saw what was happening with one of the students. I talked to the teacher about it, and she told me what she had observed. I had also heard this observation elsewhere. It is not really a statistic, but a personal experience. We live in Nevada and our culture has many transient people. I do not mean that in a derogatory sense. They are people who move. They do not stay here, or are here for a short time.

Assemblyman Kihuen:

You are basing your statements on the whole State just by the opinion that one person gave you, correct?

Sheila Ward:

I am basing it on my experience and what we know about the State of Nevada and the movement of people.

Assemblyman Kihuen:

Could you touch on my second question, please?

Sheila Ward:

It was a question I was asking because the *Reno Gazette-Journal* (RGJ) interviewed an educator. Those are quotes out of the newspaper article. He said that is what they want to teach. Obviously, I am not against teaching English. In fact, I think English should be the first and official language of the U.S.A. This is what we speak. That is when they will really be successful. Being bilingual is great. The immigration issue came from that article. I think illegal immigration would be a problem, too.

Assemblyman Kihuen:

The only reason I mention it is because I am pro-education no matter what your immigration status is. I think kids at all levels should be educated. Obviously, being that full-day kindergarten helps these children, I think it is very important for you to understand that it is not just an immigration issue. We are talking about the children. If their parents came here illegally, that is not the child's fault. They should still have the opportunity to learn at the same level that every other child has.

Assemblyman Denis:

I have seen that in the schools. I have five kids, and the school in my neighborhood has a large percentage of Hispanic students. That changed throughout the years. It went from 25 percent to more than 70 percent. I noticed that transience rate would be high and could be a problem. I also noticed that as we put emphasis on the different programs, the education was getting better. We also got more parents involved in the school when there were communication issues. The principal would come to our PTA meetings and tell the parents that it was important for their children to be at school because they get better educated. When they saw the problem may have been a miscommunication and education got better, the transience rates lessened.

I asked Gabriella about this issue earlier—if she felt that her kids were wanting to go to school more and were doing better. She said her daughter who had been in full-day kindergarten had more of a desire to be there than her son who was older. I saw a recent study out of Philadelphia that showed that when students attended full-day kindergarten attendance went up. When we get kids to not only stay longer but want to stay longer, we will see some better results.

Joe Enge, Education Policy Analyst, Nevada Policy Research Institute:

I learned many interesting things during the earlier presentation. I did not know that John F. Kennedy was for full-day kindergarten. I heard some questions asking why we are spending money on prisons when we should be spending money on full-day kindergarten, which is making an amazing connection. I am not aware of any research or data that supports that funding full-day kindergarten will cut down incarceration rates. If it does exist, I would love to see it.

This debate started last fall during the election when Senator Titus was running against Congressman Gibbons for Governor. At her debate in Reno, Senator Titus said that all studies show full-day kindergarten works. That is not the case. We have come to the point where they are at least beginning to recognize that studies do not show the benefits of full-day kindergarten academically. I heard the explanation regarding the fade-out issue earlier saying

that it is complex and there are many variables. That does not address whether fade-out exists. Does it? Yes, it does. Maybe they do not know why it exists, but it does. This brings us back to why we are doing this.

My daughter is here. She went to school in Estonia. She never had full-day kindergarten. She actually never had kindergarten at all. In Estonia, they would say full-day kindergarten is not a good idea. They do not start school until they are seven years old. My daughter is successful without any kindergarten. My youngest is six. He had half-day kindergarten in Carson City. He did quite well with it. I agree with what Janine Hanson said. I do not think he could have handled full-day kindergarten very well. We have to be honest—boys are sometimes slower developmentally.

I have given you information by Steve Miller from last December in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* on the opinion desk, and an article I have written that was published in the *RGJ* ([Exhibit BB](#)). I am definitely against full-day kindergarten. There is a lot wrong with public education. It is not just the financial price I question, it is the opportunity costs. We should be looking to fix things that really need fixing.

Assemblyman Segerblom:

Do you have full-day kindergarten in Carson City?

Joe Enge:

Yes. That is another issue. We have it at Empire Elementary School.

Assemblyman Segerblom:

Have you talked to the parents? Do they not like it?

Joe Enge:

They seem to like it a lot, but that relates to the immigration issue. Many of the students are Spanish-speakers. It was reported at the last school board meeting that the biggest reason for having full-day kindergarten, and its greatest impact is because of the lack of English at home. The problem I found with the way we do it now is that we have the 55 percent line. If it benefits the at-risk kids and hurts the non-at-risk kids, when we have it on a school-wide basis instead having it just for the given students who may need it, we may be hitting the kids who might need it, but may also be inadvertently affecting kids who do not. We do not know which students are which.

Assemblyman Segerblom:

Are you saying that kids who do not need full-day kindergarten are currently getting it?

Joe Enge:

When we give it on a school-wide basis instead of on an individualized, student-need basis, then yes. That is what we are currently doing. We designate the whole school.

Assemblyman Segerblom:

At those schools, do you have children who are juvenile delinquents? Do you have future criminals? Do you have parents who do not like it? Is there any evidence that someone is going to be harmed by this process?

Joe Enge:

I am aware of a little bit of evidence. Janine mentioned Elkind. There is a little out there, and it is still new.

Assemblyman Segerblom:

You are on the school board. You have a school in Carson City. Do you have any anecdotal evidence from Carson City that these children are being harmed by full-day kindergarten?

Joe Enge:

We hardly have any evidence because the program is so new in Carson City.

David Schumann, Vice Chairman, Nevada Committee for Full Statehood:

Before we impose a program on little kids, the burden is on the State to show that it does no harm to the children. This recent study from Arizona showed that in those schools where they had the full-day kindergarten, reading and math scores for third graders are higher than those without full-day kindergarten or prekindergarten. By fifth grade, however, there is no difference in test scores between schools with and without these programs.

I am going to bring in somebody from a different social category than I was, and that is Bill Cosby. I am from Philadelphia, and so is he. I lived in Germantown, and he lived in North Philadelphia. When he was 13 or 14 years old, his parents made him get on the 23 Trolley Car and ride about 15 miles one-way up to Germantown High School, which is an average government school. He went there for one year, and his parents decided it was not good enough. There are two schools in Philadelphia that you have to take a test to get into: Central High, a boys' school, and Girls High, a girls' school. Each of those were on par with the numerous private schools around Philadelphia. Bill Cosby took

the tests at the old age of 14 or 15 and got into and graduated from Central High School. He then went to Temple, where I went. He is two or three years older than I am, so that is how I know. He is a graduate of Temple University. I would bet \$1,000 that Bill Cosby did not go to full-day kindergarten because they did not have it then. I heard, sadly, that they now have full-day kindergarten in Philadelphia.

Children in the first grade through eighth grade can learn languages better than anybody in this room except the children who are here. It is a process of mental maturation. The case has yet to be made that says that a five-year-old is mentally mature enough to be subjected to a formalized program. There is a maturation process that is going on, and it is going on at a much quicker rate in those minds—the five-, six-, seven-, and eight-year-olds—than it is in ours. In ours, the gray cells are dying. In children, they are dividing and multiplying. New synapses are being formed. There are not good studies that show that full-day kindergarten works. The handout I have given you ([Exhibit CC](#)) is to show that we have substandard schools.

Chair Parnell:

You have shared this document with us many times. Please make a point relating to full-day kindergarten.

David Schumann:

We are going to take these young children and turn them over to, not Nevada schools, but American schools. They are substandard. This is not a good way to learn English. The way to learn English is by English immersion. There are extensive studies on this in California. We had to put an initiative into place, Proposition 227, and we got English immersion and kicked this ELL business out. It is not the way for young children to learn. They need to go there and get English immersion.

My point is that when the schools can prove that they are better than standard, then maybe we can talk about whether we should subject little children to the mercies of these professionals. If an adult has a problem with a Ford or a Chrysler because we do not like the way they make them, we can go buy another car. The parents of these K-12 children are forced to send them to this "thing."

This is a labor issue. It will create money for bureaucrats, "educrats," and teachers. That is all it is about.

Chair Parnell:

If you were to look at all of the private schools in Minden and Carson City, including Capital Christian, St. Theresa's Catholic School, preschools, and the private schools in the Minden/Gardnerville area, can you tell me why it is that they all have full-day kindergarten programs?

David Schumann:

That is interesting. I went to the Episcopal Academy. That school is older than this country, and they did not.

Chair Parnell:

They do now. Parents are choosing to go there. You may want to talk to some people who have children attending there.

David Schumann:

I will. Thank you.

Assemblyman Munford:

Have you ever gone to one of these schools and observed?

David Schumann:

The private schools?

Assemblyman Munford:

Schools that have full-day kindergarten. Have you ever gone inside and watched the students? Have you watched a classroom in action and seen how the students were reacting and performing or seen whether they were on task? I have visited quite a few of them in my district. I have seen that students were disciplined, and the instructor seemed to be in charge. The students were very attentive. I could see that they were listening and observing, and I could tell that progress was being made. I have visited them often this year because Clark County offered many tours for Legislators if we were able to go. I think that is what you should do because some of the statements you are making are being made without justification and without actually being there to see them in action.

David Schumann:

I will do that.

Assemblyman Munford:

I think you should. It would qualify you for being able to speak on this. I do not see the connection with Bill Cosby back in Philadelphia and what it has to

do with full-day kindergarten. I went to half-day kindergarten myself, but I am not sure it had anything to with the fact that I am sitting here today.

David Schumann:

I will. That was my main point. People my age, and apparently the Assemblymen, did not go to these kindergartens. Frankly, we are better educated. One of the things in the exhibit ([Exhibit CC](#)) really distresses me, and that is global warming. When I went to school, I had the ability to check things like this out with physics, chemistry, and biology. Now they do not. They teach global warming in school, and these kids are defenseless. They will believe this nonsense. They do not have their own way to check it out.

Richard Ziser, Chairman, Nevada Concerned Citizens, Las Vegas:

You have some materials ([Exhibit DD](#)) that will be handed out to you. You have had plenty of discussion about all the statistics on both sides of this issue in terms of studies. There apparently are studies to prove almost any position you would like to take. I have a degree in engineering, and I also have a master's degree. I listened to the discussions going back and forth. I only went to half-day kindergarten myself, and so did most of the rest of us at this level. As most of you know, Nevada Concerned Citizens (NCC) is mostly concerned about moral and social issues and how they affect our families, kids, and the State in general. We are also concerned about how it affects family policy throughout the State. In the materials I have given you, almost everything in there is a repeat of what you have already heard. The links that Mrs. Ward referred to are in an email I sent to all of you, so you can link to some of the studies.

One of the main elements we put in the policy is the problem of cost versus benefit ratios that need to be determined because there is not an unlimited source of funds to accomplish everything we want to do. Because of the concerns of NCC, we looked back and wondered why there are problems today that did not exist when we were young. We did not need to have earlier childhood education in order to get to where we are today. Social structures have compounded the issues, and our teachers are dealing with that today in the classroom on a regular basis.

I am bringing up two policy issues that need to be looked at. One is discipline in the classroom. We need to be able to give our teachers the ability to teach in the classrooms without being interrupted by students in these classes. That is taking place. My sister has been a kindergarten teacher for many years. She does not teach in the State of Nevada, but she was removed from a classroom because she had to physically constrain a child from interfering with another child. They had a policy of no-touch. That child is still in the classroom, and

the teacher was removed from the classroom. The classroom is still having problems with a child like that. I have a number of educators in my family, and one of them is a teacher in Clark County School District. She is having the same kind of problem regarding discipline abilities in the classroom. She has been to her principal and has not been able to resolve the problem. Parents have called her and told her about their children commenting on the disruptive child.

Chair Parnell:

Please have your comments pertain specifically to the issue of full-day kindergarten.

Richard Ziser:

The tie-in here is simply the question of whether full-day kindergarten is going to solve the problems, or will we still have the same problems. We need to go to the essence of the problems.

The other issue is the language problem. The Spanish-speaking mother from earlier told the story for us. If we are going to have to decide and determine what the best benefit of our spending is going to be on this, then we need to look at the fact that she said her eight-year-old boy was afraid to speak up in class because of the language barrier. I have a feeling that putting them in full-day kindergarten is not going to solve that problem. These children come home crying at night because their teachers and other students in their classes do not understand them. We need to immerse these kids and get them to understand the language that the teacher is speaking so we can educate them. We should not be putting these kids in this position. Nevada Concerned Citizens has come out against this primarily for those reasons.

Bill Parker, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I was going to speak against this issue, but I want to officially change my position to neutral. Given what I have heard here today, I believe firmly that this program would be of some benefit. It has been proven that it shows benefits to ELL, ESL, and at-risk children. There does not seem to be any arguments in any way, shape, or form against that. Also, if this program was completely free, I would back it 100 percent without question. Unfortunately, in the State of Nevada, we do not have an unlimited supply of dollars for education.

I work in the high-tech field, and have done so for 25 years. The comments I have heard indicate that full-day kindergarten would certainly help many students, but my main concern is that we seem to lose many students later on. Our students seem to do very well academically up until about grade levels four

and five. Then they drop off. The concept of bringing in CTE is fantastic. I sat on a round table chaired by Chancellor Rogers from business and education in this community three times last year. One of the biggest complaints we heard was the lack of a skilled workforce because our educational standards were so poor for our graduates. That bears out with the amount of remediation these students need when they get to college. I think we need to make sure that if our students are going to graduate, they need to be prepared to work in a technical field, a vocational field, or go to college. These should be the long-term goals of every educational program. I am not a professional educator—I have spent 25 years working in computer technology. I lecture on subjects and teach the subject matter as an adjunct instructor at some of the local schools here. I am in favor of full-day kindergarten if we can look at the students, get them evaluated, and if the student needs it, we will get it to them. I know we do not have an unlimited source of dollars.

Carole Vilardo, Representing Nevada Taxpayers Association, Carson City:

I did not sign in opposition or in support. I have a couple of observations. I am not qualified to talk about whether full-day kindergarten is good or bad, not having been to full-day kindergarten, and not having any children to put through a system to evaluate it.

The cost impact concerns me, and I will make a recommendation for your consideration. You have a finite amount of dollars. You also have many needs that the Legislature will have to meet this session. You have a number of issues involving education from mentoring teachers to various programs, which require more money. With full-day kindergarten, there is not enough money. When you get into some of the rural communities, our facilities are paid for by voter-approved bond issues. So if you do something like that, you need to look at what the facility impact might be. In some of our counties, we are at the full dollar amount of property tax that can be levied. We raised that issue during the abatement discussions two years ago when you were in session. How are you going to provide the necessary facilities to handle full-day kindergarten? That is a question that I think you need to be aware of.

I would like to suggest that there will be increased funding for education. Will it be enough to do everything that you need? Probably not. It never is, especially when you have people come before you for prisons, Medicaid, or senior issues. You have class-size reduction money. We have discussed and published this before. We believe that the school districts should be given additional flexibility to use the class-size reduction money for those programs they think will benefit their children best. You did that with a pilot program in Elko, reducing their class size to 20 students to one teacher.

In Clark County, ESL and classroom discipline are major problems. Maybe you need a full-day kindergarten for those students. It may not be needed in all schools. At this point, I think you should allow greater flexibility to the districts to utilize that money for the programs they think will work the best. There is no reason they cannot present a plan to the State Board of Education so there is some oversight and approval. If that is done for a period of time, maybe four years, you can then take a look at whether the program has done what you think it should do. For everything that you are looking at, there is going to have to be some give some place. I do not know where it is going to be. Maybe it will help you if you feel that the issue is worthwhile. We will continue to speak to that type of flexibility going to the district level to meet their needs.

Chair Parnell:

I am sure you know, more than anyone, that this is the policy committee. We have been trying to deal with policy. The money committees are the committees that have to make all the decisions about what we can fund and what will have to be set aside for another year.

Carole Vilardo:

Yes, I do know that. I will make that statement at every meeting I can, whether it is policy or money because I think it is that important.

Assemblyman Mabey:

Could you talk about the construction of buildings in Clark County as far as bond issues go? You mentioned what other counties are up against and the cap. How about Clark County?

Carole Vilardo:

In Clark County, you are not up against the cap. However, the rollover program is due to expire. I understand there will be another issue from the people in Clark County on the ballot in 2008 to continue to extend the rollover so that additional facilities can be built. The facilities that were budgeted for in Clark County were strictly to accommodate the growth of new students, not additional types of programs and utilization of the schools. In White Pine County, Mineral County, part of Nye County, Lander County, and one other, they are at full 366. Even if their voters wanted to do something to add facilities, there is no room under the cap to be able to go to the voters and ask them to approve additional classrooms.

Assemblywoman Buckley:

The capital costs of \$28 million are being sought from our capital one-shot funds, and not from any bond issues in case people were concerned.

Eugene Paslov, Executive Director, Government Affairs and Strategic Relationships, Wireless Generation, Carson City:

I am very much in support of A.B. 157. Everything that I had to say I prepared in written testimony ([Exhibit EE](#)). Read it at your leisure. I would suggest that you take a look at it. Much of it has been repeated earlier on by many others. I thought the Speaker and Senator Titus did an excellent job in presenting the case for full-day kindergarten.

Peggy Lear Bowen, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

This is my 34th year teaching. I have taught at the Boys' School in Elko, McDermitt Combined Schools, Trainer Middle School, O'Brien Middle School, Stead Elementary School, Lincoln Park Elementary School, and now again at Trainer Middle School. I have taught many different subjects. I am a retired member of the State Board of Education. I do not represent any of those schools or the State Board—I am here as a concerned citizen who cares about children.

There is a whole group of kids who will benefit if you enact full-day kindergarten because their parents could not, due to work or survival schedules, get their students to or from school. The opposition prior to this point was that we could not afford the bus trip to get the children to and from school because in present-day kindergarten a bus trip is only provided one way. With full-day kindergarten, you bring them in the morning and take them home at night. No one in the middle misses out because no one could provide a ride for them.

What I learned in kindergarten is something that may not be in the poem: I learned that if I lined my blocks up just right and connected them together, that if I get the first level really strong, then I can go upward with it continuing to touch and be supportive of one another until I get to the top. In short, if I have a strong foundation, I have a really strong building that will not fall down simply because I did not forget a block at the bottom. I did not leave a gap in the foundation.

Our children need to have a full-day kindergarten so that it is not hit-and-miss. Please do not interpret me as saying anything about what kindergarten teachers are or are not providing. They are doing a yeoman's task in a minute amount of time. I am asking you to give them the time to provide the learning experiences, and give the children the time to take in the experiences of learning. Let them take it in a viable way, so they are not in such an overcrowded, unmandated situation to the point that they may get only a moment or two of a teacher's time in a two-and-a-half hour period. Let this opening of the educational door for our children in this State be not just a crack.

Let it be a full opening of the door. Let them go forward to get the foundation they need to meet their dreams.

I mentioned to you once before the Success by Six study done by the State Board of Education years ago. This is an ancient process asking that the foundation of education be the best that Nevada can make it. Some people in this audience asked what the correlation between incarceration and full-day kindergarten was. In the Success by Six study, we went to the prisons in the State of Nevada. We got the educational accomplishments in the incarcerated situations. The people could not read. If you cannot read, you cannot go on. If you cannot go on, how do you meet your dreams? The statistics are there.

For people who think that there is a fade-out, there is not one when you create life-long learners. You might have a little bit of a fade because we have had to give up so many of the vocational, educational application programs in lieu of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) needs for math and language arts. I have students who think the other classes do not count. They only think they have to pass math and language arts because the Nevada State Legislature said so. You get three sessions of it, or you do not go onto the ninth grade. We created a middle school dropout with that. It also affects me in the classroom. This is my own opinion. In my school, I am now providing every-other-day social studies. We are also providing every-other-day science. We are doing that so we can provide every day math and language arts at double-task, double-time. When I send home a four-and-a-half week progress report, I am really sending home a two-and-a-quarter week progress report. You need to know that happens in your schools. I have children who come to me now who used to have a great deal of knowledge in social studies and government, and they barely do it now because they are so involved with reading and math at the elementary levels. They do not have time to go on and do that.

Bringing it back to full-day kindergarten, you have a child who, if their parents could take them to school, had half-day kindergarten. They sort of get a shot at reading. If you give them full-day kindergarten, we could maybe afford to have half-day social studies or science later because they could get the material, read about it, and learn for themselves. We need to have a more balanced approach. That balance cannot start until we have full-day kindergarten with our children learning and being the best they can be because you helped them get there.

Sheila Shaver, Kindergarten Teacher, Wengert Elementary School, Clark County School District:

We have a unique situation in that we have full-day kindergarten that is based on a dual-language program. Many people in the program are very proud of both their Spanish and their English. We have boys and girls who are achieving

at great levels. We have a few different test scores that we brought with us based on the DIBELS and the interim assessment ([Exhibit FF](#)). The boys and the girls are doing wonderfully.

Eunice Deputy, Kindergarten Teacher, Wengert Elementary School, Clark County School District:

We have many wonderful speakers who have been speaking on behalf of [A.B. 157](#). I would like to reiterate that Sheila and I are both on the battleground. We are both active teachers with our kindergarten students. We are witnesses to the progresses and successes that we can have with full-day kindergarten. Our handouts reiterate what progress our schools are having with the full-day kindergarten program. We feel that we do not get to accomplish all the objectives that we feel responsible to instill in our students and to keep them active and successful learners to carry them throughout their education. There is also a relationship we are able to establish with both our parents and our students when we have our students in a full-day program. They are then much more eager and motivated to be able to participate in our school programs and at our functions. That will then carry on in our students' education, as well as making parents and teachers more aware of their roles. In the full-day program, we will be able to detect students' learning needs or deficiencies, and then will be able to provide those services to students to be able to carry them on and help them be successful throughout their education. On the other hand, in a half-day program we might not be able to have the time to assess those students efficiently and provide the additional help they need.

Chair Parnell:

I would like to remind everyone that this is not the only opportunity everyone will have to speak. This has a way to go through the process, as anyone who follows legislation knows.

Sheila Shaver:

Someone had mentioned how to get more parents involved in full-day kindergarten. I have not yet met one parent who has said they did not want full-day kindergarten. Our parents whose children have full-day kindergarten are the ones who come to the school meetings, are very involved, and always give us support. They help their kids at school because they get information at meetings on how to better help their students at home. As a parent myself, I ask that you please give the parents the opportunity to decide whether or not they would like to have their children in full-day kindergarten.

Chair Parnell:

I do not believe anyone else is signed in, so I would like to invite Speaker Buckley back to the table to offer any concluding comments on [A.B. 157](#).

Assemblywoman Buckley:

I would like to thank you for all of your attention and for the long hearing. I think many of the speakers were quite eloquent. I am beginning to sense that there is no dispute about full-day kindergarten and whether it works. The question seems to be whether the State can afford it. I hope the answer is yes, just as I hope that is the answer to the rest of the education agenda. I heard Assemblyman Stewart talking about vocational and technical education and whether that is a priority. It is. We started that work in the last couple sessions. The Chairwoman has been chairing the interim committee. We are not putting enough in vocational and career education—things that connect students to keep them from dropping out. We are not doing enough for teacher salaries in order to attract and retain the best and the brightest. We are not doing enough on high school reform. All of those bills will come before this Committee. I hope you support the policy in all of them. In the Ways and Means Committee, I hope that we reprioritize and look at items like our prison projections. We will not have any money to improve anything for the following three sessions if we do not work on that. That is the job of the money committees. I hope it is positive.

I have one final point. We often tell the middle class that we are sorry, but we only have this program for the poor. Whether you are low-income, middle-income, or you think you are comfortable, you want the best for your kid. There are many parents in this State such as the mother who is a stay-at-home mom, doing the best she can for her kids. She is putting a kid through college, but they decided that their family was going to make sacrifices in order to afford this. I do not want to say "no" to someone in the middle class. I do not want to say "no" to someone when they want what is best for their children. As a policy decision, do we think that a child is going to learn more in full-day kindergarten than half-day kindergarten? Clearly, the answer is yes. If our State is prioritizing all of the needs in education, mental health, healthcare, et cetera in the money Committees, and we can only make a certain amount of progress, then so be it. That is what we did last session. I hope that is not the answer this session, but if it is, that is what we will decide once the economic projections come out. I want to thank you all for your hard work on education issues the entire session.

Chair Parnell:

Thank you for sticking around with us. I know it has been rather lengthy, but I think it is good to allow everyone to say what they think and make sure they feel like they have been able to be heard on the record. [(Exhibit GG) and (Exhibit HH) were submitted for the record by constituents who were unable to stay to present.]

With that, I will close the hearing on A.B. 157. I want everyone to remember that this bill has been concurrently referred to Assembly Ways and Means. At this time, I will accept a motion to Do Pass A.B. 157.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN SMITH MOVED TO DO PASS
ASSEMBLY BILL 157.

ASSEMBLYMAN KIHUEN SECONDED THE MOTION.

Assemblywoman Smith:

As you pointed out, this is a policy Committee and a policy decision. It is easy and comforting for me to make the motion to move this bill forward because I know that we have the financial piece to deal with at a later point. We have heard the local data. We have heard the national data. We have heard from professionals. I was confused about why the National Education Association support is a detriment because those are our educators. Those are professionals. They are the people who are in the classrooms. They are the people who are on the ground who are working with our kids every day. I do not see it as a bad thing to have teachers be supportive of this program. We have heard from parents. I frequently think about all of the parents who support it by default because they are sending their kids to kindergarten. Kindergarten is not mandatory in this State, but the vast majority send their children to kindergarten. I think that sends us a very strong message.

We heard from the Speaker that the number of parents who chose to opt out was almost nil. When we talk about the value and the "bang for the buck," if you will, I found it interesting because I happened to be talking to a legislator from Maryland who sponsored full-day kindergarten in that state. You probably know that Maryland is always at the top of the statistics when we look at education statistics. I asked him how they did it in their state. He said they have the business community on board because of the RAND study. He said the business community felt completely convinced that that was where it was best to invest their money. They use that information, and that is how they passed that legislation.

I appreciate all of the opposing opinions. I understand that passion. I wanted the others to be here because I wanted to say that like Mrs. Hansen, I, too, care about education and children. I have three grown children and two granddaughters, one of whom will start kindergarten this year. I want her to have a full-day kindergarten experience. My daughter desperately wants that to happen. She is a stay-at-home mom, and they sacrificed so that she could do that. She wants her child to have the full-day kindergarten experience. She has

already developed a relationship with the kindergarten teacher at the school through a family friend. She is excited about that opportunity.

For me, I think it is very clear how parents and educators feel about it. I think we have data from inside the State that shows us what we need to know. When I did my visits to the schools in my district last year, it was remarkable meeting with one of the principals who had a full-day kindergarten class funded from another source—they had their first test scores in from the kids who were in third grade, and they had over 20 percent gains in their reading and math scores. It was incredible. I asked what they attributed it to, and she told me it had to be full-day kindergarten because they have had no other big changes or dynamics in the school. It was compelling. I know it is anecdotal, although we have the statistics compiled by Washoe County School District. I think it is very clear.

Assemblyman Hardy:

I have tried to digest the information during this meeting. There is no question that full-day kindergarten teaches a child more than half-day kindergarten. I think realistically the nexus between prison and full-day kindergarten is a bit of a stretch. I do not think we need a study to tell us that the more you teach, the more you learn. I challenge the concept of taking away a five- or six-year-old who may be in a "functional" home where the mother and father read to their children and there are books everywhere. At this point, I do not feel that I can support the bill as written. I read things in the literature that talk about full-day kindergarten working best if the class size is 17 or less and each classroom has an instructional aide. If we look at those graphs that go down in fourth grade, that means we are bringing our whole educational system down. I concur with the Assemblyman Stewart about the reality that we need to get that line going up. I think we are going to have to make a fiscal policy decision about where we put all, or some, of our eggs. Although I like the concept of teaching kids, and I have some of my own, I cannot support the bill as it is written.

Assemblyman Bobzien:

I can probably speak for all the members up here that we have received a lot of email and input on this issue in recent days. I think most of us probably read every one of those emails and have thought much about this issue. In my attempt to do some more work over the weekend and to get a handle on how this is going to impact my district, I tried to get a sense of what the private schools are doing about kindergarten. I do not claim that this would withstand peer review, but by making a few phone calls to schools within and near my district, I came up with some interesting results. St. Albert the Great Catholic School, Reno Christian Academy, and Montessori Mountain View all offer full-day kindergarten. Church Academy does not offer kindergarten at all.

Sierra Nevada Academy exists as a charter school through Washoe County, so they have half-day kindergarten. What I take from this is that others recognize the value of full-day kindergarten. It is important to note that this bill does not mandate attendance in full-day kindergarten, recognizing that it is still a parent's choice. When I look at the schools that offer full-day kindergarten and do not offer half-day kindergarten, full-day kindergarten is clearly an option that parents, if able, are choosing. I think it is an option that should be available to all Nevada parents and children.

Chair Parnell:

Is there any additional discussion? [There was none.] I will take the vote.

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYMAN BEERS,
ASSEMBLYMAN HARDY, ASSEMBLYMAN MABEY, AND
ASSEMBLYMAN STEWART VOTED NO.)

Assembly Bill 157 will be referred to the Ways and Means Committee.

Peggy Lear Bowen:

I need to make a clarification about how much social studies is taught at Trainer Middle School. I meant how much it is taught in comparison to how much math and language arts is taught at Trainer Middle School so that you have an accurate assessment of my testimony.

Chair Parnell:

Are there any additional questions, concerns, or comments from the Committee members? [There were none.] I do not believe there is any additional public comment. Seeing no additional business to come before this meeting, we now stand adjourned [7:48 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Kelly Troescher
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Committee Name: Committee on Education

Date: March 12, 2007

Time of Meeting: 3:45 p.m.

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A	Committee on Education	Agenda
	B	Committee on Education	Attendance Roster
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	C	Senator Dina Titus	Prepared text
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	D	Assemblywoman Barbara Buckley	Prepared text
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	E	Assemblywoman Barbara Buckley	PowerPoint Presentation
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	F	Chair Parnell	iNVEST '07 Initiative 9
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	G	Chair Parnell	Carson City School District Kindergarten pamphlets
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	H	Washoe County School District	Full Day Kindergarten Studies (Binder)
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	I	Assemblywoman Barbara Buckley	Assembly Bill 157 Background Material
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	J	Thomas Nimsic, Nevada Voter	Email to Chair Parnell
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	K	Brandon Miller, Student	Prepared text
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	L	Dr. Keith Rheault, Superintendent of Public Instruction	Fact Sheet: Kindergarten Programs in Nevada
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	M	Committee on Education	Nevada Education QuickSTATS
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	N	Dr. Mary Pierczynski, Carson City School District	A Summary of Research: Full-Day Kindergarten
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	O	Nat Lommori, Lyon County School District	Yerington Elementary School Title-I <i>NRS 385</i> Sage School Improvement Plan
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	P	Dawna Ogden, Washoe County School District	Prepared Text

<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	Q	Elisabeth Noonan, Washoe County School District	Letter from Paul Dugan
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	R	Elisabeth Noonan, Washoe County School District	Prepared text
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	S	Karlene Lee, Clark County School District	Press Release: Senator Misunderstand Findings
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	T	Karlene Lee, Clark County School District	Full-Day Kindergarten Longitudinal Study
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	U	Marty Gardner, Staton Elementary School, Clark County School District	Prepared text
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	V	Marty Gardner, Staton Elementary School, Clark County School District	Allocation of Academic Time for Grades K-5
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	W	Donna Hoffman-Anspach, Nevadan's for Quality Education	Prepared text
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	X	Mary Jo Malloy, Nevadans for Quality Education	Prepared text
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	Y	Lynn Chapman, Nevada Families	Camera Reproduction of <i>New England Primer</i>
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	Z	Sheila Ward, Carson City, Nevada	Prepared text
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	AA	Janine Hansen, Nevada Eagle Forum	Articles from <i>Education Reporter</i>
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	BB	Joe Enge, Nevada Policy Research Institute	Letters to the Editor
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	CC	David Schumann, Nevada Committee for Full Statehood	Economic Surveys
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	DD	Richard Ziser, Nevada Concerned Citizens	Letter to Committee Members
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	EE	Dr. Eugene Paslov, Wireless Generation	Written testimony
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	FF	Sheila Shaver and Eunice Deputy, Wengert Elementary School, Clark County School District	Test scores
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	GG	Linda King, Empire Elementary School, Carson City School District	Written testimony
<u>A.B.</u> <u>157</u>	HH	Sharla Hales, Nevada Association of School Board	Written testimony