

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

**Seventy-Fourth Session
March 14, 2007**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Bonnie Parnell at 3:46 p.m., on Wednesday, March 14, 2007, in Room 3142 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4406 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/74th/committees/. 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

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Kristin Roberts, Committee Counsel
Carol M. Stonefield, Committee Policy Analyst
Denise Dunning, Committee Secretary
Rachel Pilliod, Committee Manager
Kelly Troescher, Committee Secretary
Trisha Moore, Committee Assistant



OTHERS PRESENT:

Bryn Lapenta, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Washoe County School District

Andrew Kelly, Principal, Hug High School

Sue Denning, 7-12 Administrator, Washoe County School District

Lauren Kohut-Rost, Deputy Superintendent, Clark County School District,

Susan Segal, Principal, Basic High School

Richard Carranza, Principal, Eldorado High School

John Barlow, Principal, Del Sol High School

Kim Boyle, Director of Guidance and Counseling, Clark County School District

Sam King, Representative, Nevada Women's League of Voters

Bill Parker, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada

Phyllis Dryden, Director of the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education, Department of Education

Jim Cooney, Public Policy Chairman, Nevada Association for Career and Technical Education

Barbara Clark, President, Nevada State Education Association

Kelly Jesch, Program Coordinator, Washoe County School District

Michael Pennington, Public Policy Director, Reno-Sparks Chamber of Commerce

Sam McMullen, Representative, Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce

Ray Bacon, Representative, Nevada Manufacturers Association

Joyce Haldeman, Representative, Clark County School District

Alison Turner, Representative, Nevada Parent Teacher Association

Anne Loring, Representative, Washoe County School District

Chair Parnell:

[Meeting called to order at 3:46 p.m. Quorum present. Roll called.] We have a bill draft request (BDR) waiting for Committee introduction. It is BDR S-417.

BDR S-417 — Requires the legislative committee on education to study certain issues during the 2007-2009 interim. (Later introduced as [Assembly Bill 333](#).)

ASSEMBLYMAN SEGERBLOM MOVED TO INTRODUCE BDR S-417.

ASSEMBLYMAN KIHUEN SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Our first bill today is Assembly Bill 212.

I have sponsored this legislation on behalf of the Education Committee, so I will turn the gavel over to Vice Chair Smith while I present the bill.

Vice Chair Smith:

I would like to open the hearing on A.B. 212.

Assembly Bill 212: Provides for high school reform. (BDR 34-118)

Assemblywoman Parnell, Assembly District No. 40:

I have been concerned for some time. We passed the Nevada Education Reform Act, concentrating on our youngest students. We have made sure that the literacy skills were taught, the standards were in place, that we were doing everything we could to close the achievement gap in our schools and all the while we put our high school students on the back burner. We need to look at what is missing in our high schools and how to make sure that the students in high school transition into the system. The kids should be excited by what they are doing, challenged by their curriculum and have a meaningful experience in their high school years, so that when they leave, they are prepared for higher education and/or workforce ready. For those reasons, I started looking at what other states are doing and read a lot of literature on high school reform. A.B. 212 is an attempt to shake up our high school model. It is time to address the needs of our high school students. We need to decrease our dropout rate and increase our graduation rate. More than that, we need to provide an academic study that kids are excited about. I have a passion for Career and Technical Education (CTE). We found that CTE does keep kids in school. We need to go beyond that and address the issues of a greater number of our students rather than just those in CTE classes.

A.B. 212 increases the students' opportunities to develop a sense of belonging to the school and to participate more directly in their path to graduation. Many of our students get lost when they are transitioning from a moderate sized middle school to a large high school. It is my hope that the passage of A.B. 212 will begin to address the needs of Nevada's older students. There are five very important sections in this piece of legislation. Section 2 requires that each student develop a four-year plan for graduation. Schools do the students' input, their parents' input, and the input of the school counselor. They sit down as freshmen in high school, decide what they want to be able to do, and what classes they want to take. An example is the Culinary Arts class at Carson High School. It is a wonderful CTE class. So many students want to get into the class that younger students get turned away. Once they miss that first or second year, they cannot catch up because they need the earlier years to

continue through the program. Those are the issues that I hope will come to light by requiring this four-year graduation plan. I was watching the news last night and a program in Georgia was being profiled. Each student there had a graduation coach. That was someone at the school, similar to a mentor, who kept in touch with that student, making sure that they were getting into the classes that they initially set out to take and being there to guide them along. Schools across the country are seeing the need for this.

Section 3 requires the 9th grade "school within a school" design. It is called various things and this bill does not say that every 9th grade school within a school program needs to be called this. You will see in your folder that there are examples of other names that schools are using ([Exhibit C](#)). This would be required in high schools with a student body population of greater than 1,200. This increases the adult to student ratio and separates the 9th graders into an area away from the older high school students during the transition period from middle school into these huge high schools. Some schools may decide to have a school counselor assigned to that class in the 9th grade and the school's counselor would then follow that class through the four years of high school. You would get to know the kids at your school. We have students in our high schools who are lost. That is when you start seeing serious issues of truancy and kids not keeping up with the credits they need to graduate.

Section 4 requires that the State Board of Education prescribe a uniform grading policy, including one for advanced placement and honors classes. We have found, through studies, that if you take Advanced Placement (AP) government at a high school in this State, everyone on this Committee would assume that all of those students are being graded on the same grading scale for an AP class. That is incorrect. We are not doing that. Some school districts grade on a 5.0 scale for AP classes and others are grading on a 4.0 scale. That means that we are not offering a level playing field to our graduating high school student when they try to enter into colleges and when they try to qualify for the Millennium Scholarship.

Section 5 requires the adoption of a policy, by the local school board, that limits the amount of time counselors spend on test coordination. I have an example of how that could work. A retired counselor is contracting with another school and is paid just to be the test coordinator. She works during the heavy test times and becomes the expert with the testing.

Section 6 expands the age of compulsory attendance to 18 years old from 17 years old. Currently the age of attendance is from 7 to 17 years old. We have 17-year-olds who have not yet graduated who can legally walk away from

high school. We need to encourage every child to stay in school and to graduate or to at least take the General Education Development (GED) Test.

The Executive Summary ([Exhibit D](#)) is in your folder. You may want to take time to read this. I have been told by high school principals that this is what guides them. What is in this bill is reflected in that document. There is a sheet ([Exhibit E](#)), which is from the *Las Vegas Sun*. It is an article about the pupil-counselor ratio. The other sheet ([Exhibit F](#)) is from the Nevada Manufacturers Association. It is their latest newsletter. It talks about what they think are important changes necessary for our State's high schools.

Assemblyman Beers:

It is very sad to have to write a law to tell the schools to let the counselors do the job that they were hired to do.

Assemblyman Hardy:

The State Board will be able to adopt regulations to do an honors class that will be worth 4.25 — is that what we are allowing on that?

Assemblywoman Parnell:

Yes.

Assemblyman Hardy:

Homeschoolers will not be affected by this part of the statute or will they? If a kid is gifted and has done what he needs to do by the time he is 14 years old, will this affect him?

Assemblywoman Parnell:

This will only affect students who have not graduated, do not have a GED, or are not on a path to graduation. Students who have graduated will not be affected.

Assemblyman Stewart:

On page three, line 33, it says that school districts with over 1,200 students will be affected by this. I am concerned about the smaller schools in Clark County such as Boulder City High School. They have two counselors and an assistant principal. It would be difficult for them to assign a counselor to one class and one to the other three classes.

Assemblywoman Parnell:

That is why it states that the "school" population has to be 1,200 or more. If the student body population is less, then you would not have to implement this

program. The schools and the school boards will decide the best way to make this work at their school.

Assemblyman Stewart:

Maybe you could change the language then to say that any high school within a district that has 1,200 students or more.

Kristin Roberts, Committee Counsel:

The language says that the Board of Trustees of each school district which includes at least one high school with enrollment of 1,200 or more. The intent was to apply to just those high schools.

Assemblyman Munford:

Without question, the most critical age for the transition to high school is in the 9th grade. If we get them on the right path you have solved a lot of problems. Counselors will tell you that the biggest issue they have is that they are administering tests and do not have enough time to spend on the students. I support this bill.

Bryn Lapenta, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Washoe County School District:

The Washoe County School District (WCSD) supports the concepts described in this bill. Many of these incentives have already been undertaken in the WCSD.

Andrew Kelly, Principal, Hug High School:

[Read from prepared testimony ([Exhibit G](#)).]

Assemblyman Bobzien:

Could you comment on the section in the bill that deals with the compulsory attendance age?

Andrew Kelly:

I believe that this bill is talking about putting teachers in a place to thrive. Kids stay in school because they are engaged in a rigorous curriculum that makes a real world connection for them and is meaningful. I fully support the idea that we do not want any of the kids dropping out of school with less than a high school diploma, and I believe that we should prepare them to go to college. However, I also believe that great teachers are what is going to keep kids in school, not necessarily legislation.

Assemblyman Beers:

What was the genesis of the counselors becoming test givers and not counseling?

Andrew Kelly:

At our school, counselors do not engage in test administration activities. I agree with the fiscal impact of having the counselors doing all of that work. I would suggest that the teachers are heavily burdened by that testing work also. The structure at my school is that of four student support teams centered within each one of our houses. They consist of a counselor, a vice principal, a dean, and a secretary whose sole responsibility is to administer and support the education of the 300 kids in their smaller school. The administrators know their students well. It is easier to keep track of the kids and easier to build relationships with the parents. The small-school concept that we are implementing at our school is nothing more than an attempt to give every kid what the wealthiest students in the United States have had for a long time.

Assemblyman Beers:

Children will do better if they feel that they are part of a team and are competing against another team.

Sue Denning, 7-12 Administrator, Washoe County School District:

We are well aware that the transition from middle school to high school can be difficult. We have Edline which is a system that allows parents to check their students' grades online. We have ConnectEd that schools use to communicate with kids' parents through blanket telephone messages advising them of particular activities at the schools. Our counselors play a large role with transition. They meet with the kids going into 9th grade and advise them of what they will need in order to graduate. They help them make their plan and follow up throughout their high school years. They provide 8th Grade Parent Night for students and their parents to get them familiar with the high school, meet teachers and get information regarding programs.

Most schools also offer a 9th Grade Parent Night. Counselors go into 9th grade classrooms and provide guidance units on credits and what it will take for the students to graduate. The counselors track the students' progress, do grade checks, and follow-up with students who are not doing their work successfully. We received funding last session for our summer Jump Start Program at four of our highest risk high schools. That involved a three-week summer session for students that were identified as being in the lowest 33 percent in their 8th grade Criterion Reference Test (CRT) scores. They were provided with three weeks of instruction in literacy, math skills, study skills, and specific orientation to their own high school. This year we are able to offer this again. These are examples of some of the things that we are doing. Most of the schools offer tutoring and some have special peer arrangements where upper classmen provide academic tutoring to the students. We believe that we have strong

programs in place. They are different programs for the different needs of each school.

Lauren Kohut-Rost, Deputy Superintendent, Clark County School District:

[Read from prepared testimony ([Exhibit H.](#))]

Susan Segal, Principal, Basic High School:

We started a freshmen academy approximately three years ago and we were able to do this through a Smaller Learning Communities grant. We started institutes in law, health, business communications, and the arts. Nearly 500 students, out of the 800 plus freshmen, are going into that building on a daily basis. We have fourteen teams of teachers, and the students get strong academic support. We know that we are limited in space for the classes, so we do not have one spot for all freshmen, but we do the best that we can. We have counselors who work with the students through the four years. That is broken down alphabetically. One counselor will have 400 students through the entire four years. We hope to start career studies in the student's sophomore year. We also offer mentoring programs, which is brand new. We have trained some of our seniors to come into the freshmen classes. The mentoring class is offered once a month and every licensed person in the building has a group.

Richard Carranza, Principal, Eldorado High School:

We have a high school with 3,200 students. This year we have undergone a rigorous process of self-examination. We looked to see if we are providing the best learning and optimal learning environment for our students. What we came up with is almost word for word what this bill is proposing. We decided to use smaller learning communities and themed academies. We are implementing the practice of the counselors following their students for the entire four years of high school. Our students receive a five-year plan. This is the idea that the students start with their freshmen year through post-high school, whether it be college or some other activity. As part of the redesign plan, our freshmen class next year will be placed in a freshmen academy. We are calling it the Eldorado Prep Academy. The portion of the bill that talks about geographically separating freshmen is a wonderful idea that is strongly supported in literature. However, in our situation, what poses a problem is that we do not have any separate geographical areas. Our campus has 36 portable classrooms, so this would create an issue. We will address this issue in another way in order to house the freshmen academy. The freshmen will transition the following year into a series of three-or four-themed academies which are under development. The themed academies are going to be based on the relevant research. Some of the academies that are being explored include a Science and Technology Academy, a Business and Finance Academy, and a Humanities in the Arts Academy. We also have a significant amount of English Language Learners (ELLs)

students—approximately 630 students. We have been able to address their language needs by putting them in a Newcomer Academy. We have seen tremendous success in having those students progress out of the levels of ELL. They have been able to move into mainstream classes from the Newcomer Academy. We offer college-bound curriculum for students that perhaps never planned on going to college. We provide tutoring in that regard.

John Barlow, Principal, Del Sol High School:

I have had the opportunity to be a certified trainer for the Breaking Ranks Program. I am one of five in Nevada and have implemented many of the strategies. As a result, we feel that building relationships with the students is one of the most important things that we can do. When you try to blend nine school communities into one, we recognize that we need a transition program in place, so we created the Link Crew. We build on the belief that students can help students succeed. The crew trains members of the junior and senior class to be Link Leaders. As positive role models, Link Leaders are motivators, leaders, and teachers who guide freshmen to discover what it takes to be a successful high school student. The Link Leaders invite the freshmen to attend many of the school events to keep them involved in the school's ongoing activities. The program includes honoring the freshmen who exceeded in academics as well as in citizenship. We also have a Freshmen Fire-up Program, where we select about 140 freshmen students who have earned two to five Fs on their report cards. We recognize that these students need additional support. Through funding we have been able to hire teachers to work extra hours after school to coach these kids. We also have an activity bus which is funded through our programs. This activity bus leaves our campus every day at 4:15 p.m. and we even staffed our library with additional resources so that the students can go there and complete their homework prior to leaving the campus and know that they have transportation to and from school.

Our Newcomer Academy has educational goals and language acquisitions in reading, writing, pronunciation, grammar, and communication skills. This program is designed for the student whose principal language is not English. Non-English speaking students are enrolled in courses that accelerate language acquisition. Additional supports are in place in core classes to enhance the learning and target language. These classes are co-taught with a content-certified teacher along with another teacher trained in language acquisition strategies or special education strategies. Del Sol High School has 380 ELL newcomer students and has had success in the transition to classes that support the continuation of learning English as well as the other core classes.

Kim Boyle, Director of Guidance and Counseling, Clark County School District:

For many years incoming 9th grade students and parents were sent a graduate profile envelope and had to maintain all high school records at home. Counselors were provided color-coded folders by grade level to house student records. Transfer students' folders were moved from school to school. With the increased growth and transient population, the handling and maintenance of the records became increasingly impractical and often unobtainable. A counselor task force determined that a web-based educational plan that follows the student from school to school would be best for the district.

For the past four years the Guidance and Counseling Department has established district-wide goals. One of the high school academic goals for this year is to assist 9th grade students with the completion of the Clark County School District (CCSD) web-based educational plan. The educational plan provides students the opportunity to select a possible career cluster with post-high school goals and to choose a course of study and degree options. The plan also tracks their grades from courses that they have already taken. The plan provides for a postsecondary goal for the student to study each year and is linked to the Nevada Career Information System website. High school counselors will work with the current 9th grade students to evaluate and revise their plan. This will be revisited each year. Parents are encouraged to review their child's education plan and to assist their child to strive to obtain their postsecondary goals.

We have made some changes to Regulation 5121—student progress and grading. It was amended by the Clark County School District Board of Trustees in the spring of 2006. Secondary school personnel were asked to provide input regarding potential policy revisions. A committee of representatives, including personnel from regional offices—principals and teachers—reviewed the input and recommendations to ensure consistency in grading policy throughout the district. The final exam would be no more than 20 percent of the final grade for the student. The revisions from that policy were communicated to the parents, students, and the community through our *Nevada Family Magazine*. Each school's newsletter also informed parents. The information was also posted on our website.

Additionally, four years ago, CCSD made changes to Regulation 5127—high school graduation requirements. The *Student Information System* needed to be reprogrammed at an additional cost associated with the policy change. The district is charged for those enhancements any time specific changes are required to be made to our system. Grading report statistics show that there is a correlation between high school grade point average (GPA) and college/university retention. Information from the University of Nevada,

Las Vegas (UNLV), states that graduating high school seniors who earn a GPA in high school of 2.0 to 2.5 have a 60 percent chance of staying interested at the college level, while students who have earned a 3.5 or higher have an 82 percent retention rate.

Sam King, Representative, Nevada's Women's League of Voters:

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

Bill Parker, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

It is very important to have alternative programs that will keep a child's interest so they can do well in high school. I am in support of A.B. 212. My concern is in reference to Section 6 regarding the compulsory attendance area. We say students must attend school until they have graduated from high school. We should change that section so that if a student has graduated from high school, obtained a GED, or obtained a degree, that the compulsory age is waived for that student.

Vice Chair Smith:

I will ask our legal staff to comment on your concern. It sounds like it is already covered in the statute.

Kristin Roberts, Committee Counsel:

Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 392.075 does allow the compulsory school attendance to be excused for taking the GED test.

Phyllis Dryden, Director of the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education, Department of Education, Nevada:

I am speaking for Dr. Keith Rheault, Superintendent of Public Instruction, who was unable to make it today. He wanted me to relay that the Department of Education supports A.B. 212 and we particularly like section 2, subsection 1, which includes Career and Technical Education (CTE).

Jim Cooney, Public Policy Chairman, Nevada Association for Career and Technical Education:

Our Association would like to see a little stronger language in Section 2 regarding the inclusion of CTE courses and career pathways in the students' academic plan. Currently I believe it says "the plan may..." We would like to add something to encourage guidance counselors to provide the career pathway issues. CTE programs today not only prepare students for the workforce, but prepare them for postsecondary school, technical certificates, apprenticeships, associate degrees, and bachelor's and master's degrees.

Barbara Clark, President, Nevada State Education Association:

Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) supports this bill and especially Section 5 of this bill, which addresses counselors and testing. Counselors spend an inordinate amount of time on test administration.

Kelly Jesch, Program Coordinator, Washoe County School District:

I am in favor of A.B. 212 and especially Section 5. Supporting counselors being able to help students with their academic, personal, social, and career success is exciting to us. The role of the counselor is integral in this process and we are excited that section 5 has been included in this bill. This will ensure the counselors sufficient time to assist in this process and limits the extraordinary amount of time that counselors in our district are spending doing other things. By extending this time, we hope to find great success with the students in our schools.

Vice Chair Smith:

If anyone has amendments to A.B. 212 we need them in writing as soon as possible, directed to the Chairwoman, with the reasons for your amendment. I will close the hearing on A.B. 212 and turn the gavel back over to Chairwoman Parnell.

Chair Parnell:

I will open the hearing on A.B. 280 and ask that Assemblywoman Smith come to the table and present the bill.

Assembly Bill 280: Makes appropriations relating to education and licensed educational personnel. (BDR S-1051)

Assemblywoman Smith, District No. 30:

We have heard about how important it is to have highly qualified teachers in the classroom and how it is the key to the success of the students. We have also heard much about the problems in this State recruiting and retaining teachers. A.B. 280 begins to address the issue of being able to bring teachers into this State and keep them in the profession ([Exhibit J](#)). In 2004 Nevada ranked 36th in the nation for average beginning teacher salary which is at \$27,942. Clark County pay starts at \$33,073 for new teachers with a bachelor's degree. Washoe County starts at \$31,149. iNVEST tells us that the pay gap between teachers and other comparably skilled professionals has widened in the past decade. People are being lured into other jobs because they can make more money. Clark County school enrollment growth has ranged between 3.8 and 6.4 percent per year, making it the fastest growing district in the nation. The Clark County School District's teacher shortage has continued to increase to its largest shortfall in recent memory. The shortage is currently 477 teachers or

3 percent of the 18,000 full-time teachers in the district. Many classrooms are impacted by this shortage. iNVEST tells us that the growing student population and the retirement of a large number of licensed educational personnel presents a major challenge to the State's school districts. As a result of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), many school districts find it difficult to meet or exceed the highly qualified teacher requirements.

In October 2005, 21.3 percent of all math classes, 20.4 percent of all science classes, and 24.6 percent of all English, reading, and language art classes were taught by teachers who were not highly qualified. In Nevada the single-salary structure, which originated in the early 20th century, operated under the promise that there should be equal pay for equal work and that this salary system does not provide a way to reward teachers for their achievements. We still do not have mechanisms to reward teachers for their great work. We passed A.B. No. 580 of the 73rd Session, which allowed school districts to apply for grants to establish performance pay and compensation for recruitment, retention, and mentoring of personnel. A.B. 280 takes some of the language from A.B. No. 580 of the 73rd Session and allows districts to extend those rewards to all classroom teachers. It provides \$30 million for a performance system, which would be developed at the district level. It would have a component based on student achievement. We have spent much time talking about what we can do to increase teachers' salaries and reward them for the work they are doing. We have to have accountability in place. The details of this plan have to be developed at the district level since there are many differences and variables within the different districts and schools. Plans are being developed across the country for pay for performance, but it does not have a long history or great models that you can look at and duplicate. We would like Nevada to be a leader in this.

A.B. 280 also provides a \$2,000 salary increase to each licensed teacher. It looks at bringing up the starting salary for teachers and provides four additional work days for that \$2,000. There would be one instructional day, one professional development day, and two days dedicated to parent/teacher conferences. We are seeing fewer opportunities for parents to connect with teachers. We also continued with the increased standards and expectations as we keep moving towards the NCLB goals. This provides more time to teach. Pay for Performance enables quality teachers to stay in the classroom while they are also advancing in their career path. We hope this will attract new teachers to Nevada. Nevada is short more than 520 teachers. This is a crisis and it is not going to get any better. Teachers are going to be retiring in large numbers, so this issue really needs to be addressed. We are short 66 math teachers statewide with 3,047 new teachers coming to Nevada to teach in the 2005-2006 school year. Still, 50 percent of new teachers are leaving within

the first five years of entry. If this bill passes, the money would be proportioned directly out to the districts, so they would have the first year of the biennium to get the plan laid out and ready to go. By the second year of the biennium, we could start seeing some of the performance awards handed out to teachers.

Assemblywoman Parnell:

The teachers are working harder than they were even five years ago. They have the extra burden of the testing as we discussed earlier. This is long overdue.

Assemblywoman Smith:

Most people assume that I am a teacher. I am not a teacher. I came to this Committee as a parent. I want to see improvements in this State in education.

Assemblyman Stewart:

We have not heard from the kids who do not have a full-time teacher. We must have adequate pay to keep our teachers. Many teachers would like to stay, but when they look at the price of houses and then at their salary, they cannot do it. They would have to pay about seven times their salary for a house. I appreciate the work that you have done and strongly support this bill.

Assemblyman Beers:

Teaching is the only profession that requires a four-year degree and a period of unpaid indentured servitude afterwards. It is also the only profession that requires a four-year degree and a beginning salary that most people would consider near the poverty line. I think this is a bill that should have come ten years ago and I strongly support it.

Assemblyman Munford:

I support giving teachers a raise without a question. In terms of merit pay, is that included in this bill?

Assemblywoman Smith:

The proposal in this bill is for performance pay bonuses, which will be negotiated at the district level with a component of student achievement included. It will be a reward system and will not affect the base pay and will not be punitive in any way.

Assemblyman Munford:

Merit pay can be hard to determine. How would you determine who would be eligible? Are you leaving that up to the districts?

Assemblywoman Smith:

There are so many differences in the schools. The details will have to be left up to the district.

Assemblyman Munford:

What about teachers who have classes such as the AP classes, the honors classes, et cetera? Those teachers have the students who are already trying to progress as much as they can.

Assemblywoman Smith:

I believe that we are always talking about growth and the student being able to grow—the teacher being able to demonstrate growth, not proficiency.

Assemblyman Hardy:

I think that everyone, in the spirit of teamwork and cooperation, should raise the tide and therefore raising all boats. We should have a performance measure of a school, as opposed to fighting for the "I am better than you" and the competition between teachers. There are creative ways that could be done.

Assemblywoman Smith:

With A.B. No. 580 of the 73rd Session money, we did see a district that did just that. A school did show progress and the school was able to hand out checks, which made everyone feel good. It was truly rewarding.

Assemblyman Segerblom:

It is my understanding that this bonus would be negotiated between the unions and the districts.

Assemblyman Hardy:

I am looking at \$2,000 per teacher which is not being negotiated.

Assemblywoman Smith:

Before the bill gets to Ways and Means, I do intend to put a range of \$1,500 to \$2,000 because we do not know how much money we will get. We want it to be a significant amount of money. There is a request for a \$2,000 raise for all teachers and then we will negotiate on the pay for performance amount.

Michael Pennington, Public Policy Director, Reno-Sparks Chamber of Commerce:

I attended a four-day conference with many school officials. Pay for performance was one of the topics of discussion. As a result of the conference, I returned and worked with a legislative committee in preparing our Legislative Policy Manual for this session. That policy states, "Performance pay for our educators who demonstrate pursuit of teaching excellence in student

achievement and incentives for critical need education professionals." That is a support statement from the Reno-Sparks Chamber. We spent much time crafting that language and looking at three key areas to pull out: pursuit of teaching excellence, student achievement, and critical need for any at-risk area. How do you gauge these things? I think it comes down to having the academic growth, inspiring the students to move on, determining if there is a next step, and checking that goals have been achieved. We think this is a good bill. I would suggest that you make sure that the stakeholders are at the table when discussing how pay for performance will be considered.

Sam McMullen, Representative, Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce:

We are very supportive of this bill. This is a critical element in the education system. The quality of the teacher is what is the most important to our education system. This will be an incentive for teachers to do better. I understand the theory of Section 1. I would like to talk about Section 2. There is a concern about roadblocks such as union agreements. In Section 2, subsection 1, we believe that there is a strong sense of having a statewide system and a statewide set of programs and parameters that fit. We talked about and understand why it was structured in a district-by-district way. We think that there should be an advisory group or something similar, to make recommendations on how to go about this and make sure these things are implemented. We feel that there should be guidelines put together. The measurement for merit-based pay should be as solid as possible. We want to make sure that this is, as much as possible, a performance-pay system and not a combination of things.

Ray Bacon, Representative, Nevada Manufacturers Association:

I was disappointed by this bill when I initially read it. I agree with the intent, but expected more details. I was looking for a bill that was more focused on performance pay and less focused on just a basic raise in salary. I feel that these are two separate issues and need to be dealt with separately ([Exhibit K](#)). The concept of additional days in a school year should be more time on tasks. If you look at the states that are successful in performance pay, they have some sort of system in place that gives them the measurement of incremental learning. If you do not have that in place then you end up with a teacher in a high poverty area. That teacher will be at a disadvantage. My biggest concern is that the problem in the State of Nevada with the learning gap—the gap between the affluent districts and the poorer districts. There is nothing that directly addresses the gap issues. It is a good start, but has a long way to go.

Assemblyman Munford:

I agree that it has to be approached in a different way.

Barbara Clark:

We are in support of A.B. 280. We appreciate the focus on resources for our teachers' salaries. We are aware that we have a teacher shortage and hope that this measure will make Nevada salaries competitive. Research provides strong support for the conclusion that compensation plays a key role in the recruitment and retention of teachers. The research also indicates that increasing compensation tends to increase the rate of teacher retention. In addition, the days are consistent with recommendations from A.C.R. No.10 of the 73rd Session. We do have concerns that implementation includes all school licensed employees. We are concerned that some may confuse this bill with merit pay. We oppose merit pay. This is an incentive program and allows for the continuation of A.B. No. 580 of the 73rd Session. The bill allows for enhanced compensation. This can mean that it is pay for teachers' skills and knowledge and responsibility. The bill allows districts to create a career ladder program in order to retain the best and brightest teachers. The bill will allow us to continue group incentive programs that were established around the State. Research shows that school-based performance awards are a successful way to reward the schools. There are no quotas and there is adequate and consistent funding for the plan. Research also suggests that awards should be at least \$2,000 in order to be sufficient to motivate. Assembly Bill 280 provides significant investment in teaching and allows teachers to participate in the creation of these programs through collective bargaining.

Chair Parnell:

I think it would be wise for all those that want to make comments regarding this legislation to look at the design of the programs that were developed as a result of A.B. No. 580 of the 73rd Session. It was excellent and I have read the plans of 16 of the 17 counties' programs. They were locally developed. The superintendents who we spoke to felt that it was a solid base and that they showed student growth.

Joyce Haldeman, Representative, Clark County School District:

We are in strong support of this bill. There are so many things about it that we like. CCSD has the largest number of teacher vacancies as we are nearing the end of the school year. Having the ability to attract and retain teachers with all of the various parts of this bill will be significant to us. Being able to attract and retain teachers is key. We have too many substitutes teaching our classes. The only reason that there is not an initiative that is based on pay for performance in iNVEST is because of the difficulty it would be for the 17 superintendents to agree on one plan that would work for the entire State. That is why one of the key elements in this bill is the one that allows the

districts to develop their own plans. Another key element is that pay for performance will be based on the achievement of the students.

Alison Turner, Representative, Nevada Parent Teacher Association:

Nevada Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is unable to speak to exact numbers in teacher compensation issues because there are other organizations to speak on behalf of teachers. Nevada PTA strongly supports adequate pay for teachers at every step of their career ladder as well as pay for performance. It is vital that Nevada school districts provide competitive marketplace salaries to attract and retain teaching professionals. The next step is job performance incentives to reward a job well done by those same professionals. The teachers should be recognized also. Nevada PTA is working with middle and high school students to talk about getting ready for college and why that should be important to them. We explain how their lifetime earning potential increases significantly with each additional level of education and includes salary range information at each level. We do not accept the fact that these salary ranges do not apply if they choose to pursue a career in education. Other provisions in this bill that project days and hours of instructional time are also beneficial to delivering curriculum to students.

Anne Loring, Representative, Washoe County School District:

We are strongly in support of A.B. 280. We think it combines the values from iNVEST of increasing instructional time while acknowledging the importance of parent involvement and professional development.

Chair Parnell:

I will close the hearing on A.B. 280 and invite Assemblywoman Smith back to her seat. This bill was concurrently referred to Ways and Means. There is a fiscal note on this bill. At this time, I would be happy to accept a motion to Do Pass A.B. 280.

ASSEMBLYMAN SEGERBLOM MOVED TO DO PASS
ASSEMBLY BILL 280.

ASSEMBLYMAN BOBZIEN SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

[Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.]

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Denise Dunning
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Committee Name: Committee on Education

Date: March 14, 2007

Time of Meeting: 3:45 p.m.

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A	Assembly Education Committee	Assembly Agenda
	B	Assembly Education Committee	Attendance Roster
	C	Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell	School within a School Small Learning Communities
	D	Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell	Executive Summary – Breaking Ranks II
	E	Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell	Pupil-Counselor ratio stuns Reid article (<i>Las Vegas Sun</i>)
	F	Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell	Framework for Reauthorizing the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act
AB 212	G	Andrew Kelly, Principal, Hug High School	Written testimony
AB 212	H	Lauren Kohut-Rost, Deputy Superintendent, Clark County School District	Written testimony
AB 212	I	Sam King, Representative, Nevada Women's League of Voters	Written testimony
AB 280	J	Assemblywoman Debbie Smith	Teacher Pay and Enhanced School Year Plan – Power Point
AB 280	K	Ray Bacon, Representative, Nevada Manufacturers Association	Nevada Manufacturers Association on AB 280