

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

**Seventy-Fourth Session
March 28, 2007**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Bonnie Parnell at 3:59 p.m., on Wednesday, March 28, 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
Trisha Moore, Committee Assistant



OTHERS PRESENT:

Ron Norton, Chief Executive Officer/Development Director,
ComputerCorps, Carson City
Bill Hanlon, Director, Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development
Program
Cory King, Librarian, Carson City Library
Keith Rheault, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of
Education
Kimberly Merriweather, Youth Coordinator, Anderson Elementary School,
Reno
Steve Schumacher, Volunteer, ComputerCorps, Carson City
Duane Schumacher, Volunteer, ComputerCorps, Carson City
Travis Thompson, Technician, ComputerCorps, Carson City
Tchad Rogers, Student Graduate, ComputerCorps, Carson City
Dorothy McDonald, Counselor, Kate Smith Elementary School, Sparks
Sal Garsa, Volunteer, ComputerCorps, Carson City
Lisa Davis, Prevention Coordinator/ D.A.R.E. Officer, Carson City Sheriff's
Office
Sid Gesh, Governmental Affairs Director, ComputerCorps
Leroy Bernstein, Pediatrician, Las Vegas
Luana Ritch, Chief, Bureau of Health Planning and Statistics, Department
of Health and Human Services
Neena Laxalt, Government Relations Consultant, Nevada Nurses
Association
Craig Kadlub, Director of Government Affairs, Clark County School
District
Sheila Story, Chief Nurse, Carson City School District
Bill Arensdorf, Director of Fiscal Accountability, Department of Education
Tom McCormack, Fiscal Accountability, Department of Education
Leigh Berdrow, Administrator, Academy for Career Education Charter
High School
Frank Schnorbus, Chairman, Nevada Homeschool Network
Silvia Marin, Principal, Academy for Career Education Charter High
School, Reno
Craig Butz, Executive Director, Odyssey Charter Schools, Las Vegas
Steve Knight, Executive Director/Principal, Silver State High School,
Carson City
Dotty Merrill, Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Boards
Craig Kadlub, Director of Government Affairs, Clark County School
District
Anne Loring, Representative, Washoe County School District

Sean McClenahan, Representative, Agassi Preparatory Academy, Las Vegas

Michael Cate, Chief Executive Officer, Pavers Plus, Inc., Reno

Josh Griffin, Representative, Nevada System for Higher Education

Chair Parnell:

Meeting is called to order [at 3:59 p.m.]. [Roll was called. Quorum present]. I will open the hearing on Assembly Bill 566 and introduce the bill. I will turn the gavel over to Assemblywoman Smith.

Assembly Bill 566: Makes an appropriation to ComputerCorps to provide refurbished computers to certain pupils and their families. (BDR S-984)

Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Assembly District No. 40:

Within a few years ComputerCorps has made remarkable steps towards providing computer access to our students and their families that have the greatest need. There is an increasing importance of computers and Internet access for education in the twenty-first century. To illustrate this point, I would like to ask you, "When was the last time you reached for an encyclopedia instead of doing a 'Google' search online?" For many of our students and their families there is limited computer access and many do not have one in their home. This bill aims to resolve that problem by getting recycled and rebuilt computers to the homes of the students with the greatest need. Providing computers to the students increases the information and educational opportunities available to them and to their families, outside of the classroom. A study on literacy and computer access by *Statistics Canada*, reported in 2005 that, "people with low literacy skills also tend not to have access to computers, compounding a distressing disadvantage in a knowledge-based society." The report went on to say, "people with the lowest skills who may stand to benefit from the opportunity afforded by new technologies are not using those technologies." I would like to offer an amendment to this bill. In discussions about the bill we had talked about the programs that ComputerCorps offers and hoped to propose a bill that focuses first on K-5 access and then on older students. The focus should primarily be on getting a computer into the home. To maximize the use of computers delivered to the homes by this allocation, I would like to ask that lines 11 and 12 in the bill be deleted. That is where "TechCamp" is referenced. While it is a great program, we want to start by first getting computers into every home. I would like to add further clarification to lines 9 and 10 so that the bill reads, "provide a one-time group training to the pupils and their families who receive a refurbished computer in the set-up and basic operation of the computer system." This gives ComputerCorps a better idea of the training that would be required of them.

**Ron Norton, Chief Executive Officer/Development Director, ComputerCorps,
Carson City:**

It is a necessity to have a computer in the home in this day and age ([Exhibit C](#)). We have a problem, which is a lack of computer literacy and skills in Nevada. There are many reasons that a child would use a computer in their home—computer learning, navigation, school assignments, educational software, communication, e-mail, and chatting. Using basic software, they can do word processing, spreadsheets, et cetera. They can also use the computer to play games. National studies show that the appropriate use of technology can help students achieve better grades, increase school attendance, and improve school behavior. Home computer access is a prerequisite for young people to get a full range of benefits that technology can offer them these days. Students in Nevada have less access to computers and are connecting to the Internet at a far lower rate than students in other states. There are 425,000 students in Nevada's School system, K-12. It is estimated that nearly 130,000 students do not have an adequate working computer in this State.

The next issue is electronic waste. Nevada discards 360,000 computers a year out of 400,000 computers that are sold each year in Nevada. 100 percent of these systems need to be kept out of the landfills. At least 40 percent need to be recycled. We found that up to 60 percent of these systems can be reused by refurbishing them. The solution to this problem is ComputerCorps and our "Every Home A Classroom" program. Our mission is to provide this access and technology training to underserved families in Nevada while eliminating electronic waste in our landfills. Our goal is to collect this electronic waste, to refurbish them with the help of volunteers, to recycle the unusable parts, to distribute the reusable items into the community at little or no cost and to train the recipients of the computers. We also maintain a help desk for the recipients. Our focus is to provide computers to low income families with school-age kids.

We have over 3,000 individuals and over 1,800 businesses that have donated computers. Most of them are donating on an ongoing basis. We also receive donations from the county, city, federal, state and tribal governments. When the computers come in we sort them out and determine whether they are reusable or not. If they are not, we take them and destroy the data on the hard drives, we disassemble them, sort them, recycle the metal and plastic, and receive income from those recycled components. That income is sent back to the refurbishing side, for the good computers, and the computers are delivered to the schools who distribute them to the families. Most of the work is done by volunteers. We have had over 2,000 volunteers donate more than a quarter of a million hours to this project. We distribute the computers through a variety of different programs. Our main program is our "Every Home A Classroom"

program. We work with the schools, the school districts, and the school counselors to ensure that every family that has school-aged kids has a computer in their home.

ComputerCorps provides all of the licensed software, the monitor, keyboard, mouse, CD-ROM; and they are all Internet-ready for either high speed or dial-up. We ask that when a family enrolls in this program, each member of the family who uses the computer donate 10 hours of community service to the school that enrolled them into this program. The school counselors identify the students and enroll them into the program. The counselors also help coordinate the distribution day event. We deliver the computer to the schools, who in turn hand them out to the families. The students will be able to do their homework on the computer and online instruction will be available to them. Our goal is to provide 21,000 computer systems to underserved Nevada families over the next 2 years. Each system costs us about \$93.25. We are seeking \$2.9 million from the State in order to accomplish our goal.

Assemblywoman Parnell:

Bill Hanlon had shown me how to access the Regional Professional Development website that students can go to for help with homework. I asked him to come and discuss this issue with us today.

Bill Hanlon, Director, Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program:

I would like to show you what the students would miss out on if they do not have access to a computer ([Exhibit D](#)). I will go through some examples of study and test help available to them on their computer. Kids can go through multiple problems to study for a test. If they do not know how to do a problem, they can hit the "hint" key and get help. If that does not help, they can get the answer to come up. If a student is having a problem in a certain subject, they can hit a key on their computer and a definition will come up. This is a great study tool. The point that I would like to make is that we have math, English, science, social studies, and English language learners software to help the students, if they have access to the Internet. With access to computers, the students could really benefit academically.

Assemblyman Denis:

Does ComputerCorps provide Internet access for the families?

Ron Horton:

We do not provide Internet access for the families. We are working with service providers asking them to donate Internet access.

Assemblyman Denis:

Is the training in both English and Spanish?

Ron Horton:

We have interpreters at the schools that provide the training in Spanish.

Assemblyman Denis:

What if they have a technical problem?

Ron Horton:

We have a help desk set up.

Cory King, Librarian, Carson City Library:

As a librarian I know how important technology is, especially to young people and their academics. We have seen many kids come through the library who need to use our computer resources. We provide as much as possible to kids who do not have that resource at home. They need word processing and PowerPoint in order to do their assignments for school. In terms of the Internet, the library provides database access to many resources which includes the online encyclopedias and also a database that the students can use to practice for tests. We try to keep computers that are accessible to the students and feel that having a computer in the home would benefit them.

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

ComputerCorps has made several presentations to the State Board and I have met with them. I am very impressed with their program. If this bill will help them get the 21,000 computers out to the students, then we are 100 percent in support of this bill.

Kimberly Merriweather, Youth Coordinator, Anderson Elementary School, Reno:

The area that I service is low income. We do not have even one homeowner in our district. Most of the children that receive these computers, and last year it was 20 families, have parents that cannot speak English. These computers, even without Internet access, help the children considerably. Through this program the children are able to get various grants that have opened up. Many of the grants have to be applied for online. I think this program is needed, especially in the area I work.

Steve Schumacher, Volunteer, ComputerCorps, Carson City:

ComputerCorps and their volunteers have done so much with computers without any funding. We want to expand to Reno and to Las Vegas. The program needs the funding in order to get the computers out to these kids. My

son did his Eagle Scouts project with ComputerCorps and will tell you about his experience with them.

Duane Schumacher, Volunteer, ComputerCorps, Carson City:

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

[Vice Chair Smith entered the room at 4:34 p.m.]

Travis Thompson, Technician, ComputerCorps, Carson City:

I started at ComputerCorps in 1997 and it really opened my eyes. I volunteered for 3 years while I was in high school. I went into the Army for 4 years and when I came back I went to work for ComputerCorps. I teach the "Every Home A Classroom" program. I teach a two-week course about how the computer works. It is a great program.

Tchad Rogers, Student Graduate, ComputerCorps, Carson City:

I started with ComputerCorps when I was 16 years old as a volunteer. It changed the course of my life. I really enjoy working with computers and went on to get a computer science degree. I am the Information Manager for an employer in Reno. If it was not for ComputerCorps, I do not know where I would be today. It made a huge difference in my life. Having access to a computer at home and having the training at ComputerCorps was very important to me. It is easier to learn to use a computer at a young age and, in my opinion, getting computers into a kid's home is essential. The expectation when you get into college is that you are proficient in applications such as Excel, Word, PowerPoint, and in doing Internet research.

Dorothy McDonald, Counselor, Kate Smith Elementary School, Sparks:

ComputerCorps did a fantastic job at my school. Last year 49 families got computers from ComputerCorps, all in one day. All 49 of those kids are still with us and still using the computers. The counselors are the link between ComputerCorps and the kids. As a counselor, we are very careful about the families that we refer for a free computer. The parents volunteer at the school if they receive a free computer, which makes them feel better about receiving the computer and also helps the school out. Also, parents can use the computers to check on their child's status by logging on to the school's website.

[Chair Parnell left the room at 4:44 p.m.]

Sal Garsa, Volunteer, ComputerCorps, Carson City:

I have worked for ComputerCorps for several years as a volunteer. I work with the Hispanic community in Reno. We are doing more to work with Internet

providers and I think that ComputerCorps has done a great job working with the community.

Lisa Davis, Prevention Coordinator/D.A.R.E. Officer, Carson City Sheriff's Office:

ComputerCorps is a partner with the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program. Every child that goes through the D.A.R.E. program has to complete a D.A.R.E. essay. They compete and ComputerCorps provides gift certificates for the kids that win on their essay. They are able to obtain a computer, upgrade their current computer, or purchase software with the gift certificate. I read 650 D.A.R.E. reports per year. The children that do not have computers are ashamed of their reports and express that to me.

This program is a valuable tool that helps kids with their writing skills. ComputerCorps has provided us with four certificates per school for six elementary schools per year. They have enabled me to refer families that were not able to buy their own computer. ComputerCorps also participates in a program called "Cops and Kids," which is an "open house." For these reasons, I support this bill.

Sid Gesh, Governmental Affairs Director, ComputerCorps, Carson City:

About 90 percent of the people that work for ComputerCorps are volunteers. In supporting this bill, we impact needy families in this State. ComputerCorps and the volunteers not only provide the computers to needy families, we also provide the training for the systems and we provide opportunities for people to volunteer at ComputerCorps.

Assemblyman Denis:

Is there anyone doing the training in Las Vegas?

Ron Norton:

We have volunteers in Clark County that provide the training. Nye County also has someone that picks the computers up and delivers them to that area and provides training in that area.

Vice Chair Smith:

I will close the hearing on A.B. 566. [Recess at 4:52 p.m.]

[Assemblyman Mabey entered meeting room at 4:54 p.m.]

Vice Chair Smith:

Meeting called back to order [at 4:54 p.m.]. I will open the hearing on Assembly Bill 387 and welcome Assemblyman Mabey to the table to provide testimony.

Assembly Bill 387: Requires physical examinations of children before initially enrolling in a public school in this State. (BDR 34-1032)

Assemblyman Mabey, Assembly District No. 2:

A.B. 387 is a bill that I brought by request of a pediatrician, Dr. LeRoy Bernstein, who lives and works in Las Vegas. Dr. Bernstein has felt that students should have a physical examination before entering school, performed by a health professional. Other states such as Illinois require that students entering preschool, kindergarten, 5th grade, 9th grade and/or transferring from an out-of-state school have to have a physical examination, as well as immunizations. Nevada requires immunizations. There are some screenings that are performed by a nurse, but no physical examination is required. The cost is a concern for some people. The waiver has been brought to my attention as another concern. Dr. Bernstein will explain.

Leroy Bernstein, Pediatrician, Las Vegas:

My concern is that children have defects, problems, or illnesses that are undetectable by anyone but a trained professional. It does not have to be a pediatrician. I feel that a qualified nurse practitioner, a family practitioner, a physician's assistant, or a senior pediatric resident would be qualified to identify problems. Problems could include things such as heart murmurs, enlarged kidneys, dislocated hips, vision and/or hearing problems. I would like the children to have at least one examination before they start school. A 2-year-old was in my office for a routine examination. While examining his abdomen I found a large tumor. Fortunately, it was encapsulated and removed intact. If it would have ruptured, he would not be with us today. Any qualified practitioner would have likely found that tumor. I discovered another little girl who had a problem with her heart, which we call a gallop rhythm. She was in heart failure. She was 2 1/2 years old. She likely would have had heart failure by the age of 13 or so. The problem was found early, she is currently being treated for the condition, and is doing well. In terms of cost, what is the cost in suffering for a child who has developing scoliosis who suddenly needs a brace and expensive surgery? If a little wedge, that costs \$30 or \$40, is put in the shoe to level the hips, there would be savings in the long-run.

Immunizations are probably one of the most important things that have happened for children with the least understanding by many parents. I am

trying to get these physicals done through the schools, as immunizations are. Catching these problems early is very beneficial to the children.

Assemblyman Denis:

What is the cost of an examination?

Leroy Bernstein:

It could be \$30 to \$70 depending on the clinician.

Assemblyman Denis:

I have people in my district who would have to choose to spend \$50 to find out if their child is sick or if they are going to have food that week; I think they will chose food. Parents will do whatever they need to do to help their families. My concern would be that a parent would not bring their child if they are not able to pay for it.

[Chair Parnell returned to the meeting at 5:11 p.m.]

Leroy Bernstein:

One other point I would like to make is that senior residents would be qualified to do these examinations as part of the residency training program in rural medicine. Maybe they could do these examinations as part of their training at a reduced cost.

Assemblyman Segerblom:

Do doctors have anything similar to the pro bono requirements that attorneys have?

Leroy Bernstein:

I cannot tell you that.

Assemblyman Mabey:

There is no pro bono requirement for doctors.

Luana Ritch, Chief, Bureau of Health Planning and Statistics, Department of Health and Human Services:

In compliance with Section 1 of this bill, the State Board of Health would be required to prescribe and regulate the type of physical examination to satisfy the bill's requirements. The fiscal impact would be the cost to establish those regulations. Also, in compliance with Section 1, paragraph 5, the Center for Health, Data, and Research would have the ability to collect and maintain the data required to be reported to the Health Division, contingent on the priorities set by the Chief of the Bureau of Family Health Services. The reported data

could be compiled and analyzed by the data center staff and funded through the Bureau of Family Health Services. Potential uses for that data analysis might include: identification of children and schools with special health needs, children who have not been immunized and children who are eligible for Medicaid or Nevada Check Up. The Health Division has some resources to be able to implement this bill.

Neena Laxalt, Government Relations Consultant, Nevada Nurses Association:

I have an amendment to Section 1, subsection 2 of the bill ([Exhibit F](#)). This section states who would provide the certificates. We are asking that the Advanced Practitioners of Nursing (APNs) be added to that list.

Craig Kadlub, Director of Government Affairs, Clark County School District:

We agree with preventative medicine and ensuring that the children are healthy. We do not want these physicals to be a barrier to school enrollment. We are also concerned about the waiver process, which is not very well defined.

Sheila Story, Chief Nurse, Carson City School District:

The nurses have some concerns with this bill ([Exhibit G](#)). The first concern is limited health care access and resources for students. If the children do not have these physicals, they would not be allowed to start school and start their education. The second is screening. Currently, we do two screenings at the elementary level, one at the middle school level, and one at the high school level. According to *Nevada Revised Statute* (NRS) 392, we have to do hearing, vision, and scoliosis screenings. If we find a deficit, we send a referral letter home to the parents asking them to have their child further assessed. We currently utilize several resources. We utilize the Shriners for any type of orthopedic injuries, the Lions Club provision, as well as other organizations. It increases the demands in the school nurse environment—school nurse time, administrative time, and computer tracking of the students who have and have not had physicals.

Assemblyman Mabey:

We understand the purpose of this bill. We need to make sure the children get these examinations and can afford to do so.

Chair Parnell:

I will close the hearing on [A.B. 387](#) and open the hearing on [A.B. 334](#). The sponsor of this bill is Assemblywoman Smith.

[Assembly Bill 334](#): Revises provisions governing charter schools. (BDR 34-413)

Assemblywoman Debbie Smith, Assembly District No. 30:

This is a charter school bill originating from different sources to provide more clarity. There are some technical changes in this bill. It is an ongoing process to improve our charter school legislation. We are trying to help them achieve their goals while improving accountability and strengthening our system. Thereby, we are protecting our tax dollars and the students we serve. This bill creates a school district that is designated as the charter school district for State Board sponsored charter schools. This is technical language for the purpose of complying with federal law, which governs charter schools. We are not creating an eighteenth school district.

The bill also clarifies that upon closure of the school, the administrator of the school is the trustee of certain records. I worked on the language regarding this as, per the current statute, teachers have been designated in this role. It is hard to recruit teachers to be on the board when they are burdened with that responsibility. When the teacher leaves it can be a situation leaving no one in charge and responsible for the information. That has happened in a closure situation. It is believed that the administrator should be the one responsible and in charge of those records.

There is a technical fix that would allow charter schools to receive money for homeschool students who are taking one or more classes in a charter school. There is one place in the statute that allows this and one place that does not, so the schools were not receiving the money. This clarifies that issue and allows the charter schools to receive that money.

Lastly, it revises provisions regarding the administrators of charter schools. In Section 6, the language has changed from "may employ such administrators for the school," to "shall employ such administrators for the school." It defines the requirements as having a valid teacher's license, a master's degree in school administration, public administration or business administration, and if the person has at least 5 years of experience, we also added "in school administration, public administration or business administration" to flex that a little. Existing administrators are grandfathered in under the current statute. When we talked about accountability and looked at some of the problems that have taken place in a couple of the recent charter school closures, it seems that the weakness is with the administrator. If we hire administrators based on their training and background, they will be more qualified to run a school which should ensure success. We strengthened the requirements, but in fairness the people currently working as administrators will stay in their positions under the current statute.

Assemblyman Hardy:

Do we have a higher standard for charter schools than for public schools?

Assemblywoman Smith:

I will let Bill Arensdorf elaborate on that, but one of the objectives of this bill is to give flexibility that does not exist in a public school. That is why we added the public or business administration. They do not have to have the charter school experience, but they can have experiences in other areas.

Bill Arensdorf, Director of Fiscal Accountability, Department of Education:

I will answer the question about whether or not charter schools have higher standards for administrators than public schools. The answer is no, there is not. What we are proposing are three routes to be an administrator of a charter school. Section 6 of the amendment allows three different ways to get to that step. So, we are providing more flexibility with this bill.

Assemblywoman Smith:

I would like to reiterate that the big change is changing the word "may" to "shall." In one of the areas involving a difficult closure, the administrator may not have even had a high school diploma. We want the charter schools to have the flexibility they need, but not be restrained with the regulations and make sure that the students and the tax dollars are protected. I felt that this was a reasonable attempt to do that.

Assemblyman Hardy:

How do you become an administrator in rural Nevada? If I read page 5, lines 1-3, in conjunction with the word "or," on page 4, line 43, I understand that a person must possess a teacher's license, et cetera, and a master's degree in those areas *or* five years experience in public administration, school administration or business administration, comma, a baccalaureate degree. Is there a comma, a semi-colon, or a colon there?

Bill Arensdorf:

One of the amendments that I want to propose when I have the opportunity is that there is an "or" missing. On page 4, line 42, after paragraph (a), there should be an "or" added there.

Assemblyman Hardy:

On line 3, I do not understand if there is "and" a baccalaureate degree or a (d) that says "or" in one of those areas. It does not read correctly in my opinion.

Assemblywoman Smith:

The intent is that they have five years experience in those areas and a baccalaureate degree. I will ask Legal to respond.

Kristin Roberts, Committee Counsel:

Section 6, subsection 6(a), (b), and (c) the word "or" is where it should be, but the (a) is an "or." We just do not do that in drafting. The last "or" applies to all.

Assemblyman Hardy:

I thought that the semi-colon means "and," but you are saying that in legal terms it means "or?"

Kristin Roberts:

That is correct.

Assemblyman Hardy:

On page 5, Section 6, subsection 6(c), is an independent sentence and does not make sense to me. There has to be something other than a comma before the words "a baccalaureate degree."

Kristin Roberts:

We can work to clarify this. The intent is, if you go to page 4, Section 6, subsection 6, a person employed as an administrator, colon, and then go over to subsection 6(b), they would have to possess a baccalaureate degree *and* have that experience.

Assemblywoman Smith:

It probably could have the word "and" in it to clarify the intent.

Assemblyman Hardy:

I was trying to figure out if the administrator had to have both a baccalaureate degree *and* have the five years of experience.

Assemblywoman Smith:

That is the way it is now. We just added the various types of administration to make it consistent and to make the intent clear.

Assemblyman Hardy:

If the intent is that one must have a baccalaureate degree *and* meet the five years of experience, then one is not allowed to work in a charter school because he cannot be an administrator in a charter school unless he has five years of experience in a charter school. So, according to this bill, there is no training program in a charter school?

Assemblywoman Smith:

I guess that would be true unless you fit one of the other qualifications.

Assemblyman Hardy:

That is where I would have a problem with this. We do training in administration in regular schools, but now we will not allow it in a charter school?

Assemblyman Denis:

Could someone be an assistant administrator in a charter school for five years and then qualify as an administrator?

Bill Arensdorf:

If you go back to Section 6, subsection 6, it is optional on the part of the school if they want to employ an administrator, as the language is still there that says "as it deems necessary." We would not have an administrator in a public school that would be serving in a trainee position without some qualifications. That person could be doing some of the duties of an administrator, but would not have the title or the salary.

Assemblyman Hardy:

How do you become an assistant administrator when this is a type of administrator and the bill states that any administrator *must* possess these qualifications?

Chair Parnell:

We will look at this and see if we need to make some adjustments.

Assemblyman Hardy:

I think that work as an assistant administrator should count as experience.

Chair Parnell:

We can certainly take that under consideration. We have to make sure that when we have public dollars going to charter schools, that the students attending those charter schools are getting the very best. We have to make sure we have a system in place to put the very finest administrators, vice administrators, subadministrators, and such in our schools. That is the intent of this legislation.

Bill Arensdorf:

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

Assemblyman Segerblom:

Have any other states done this?

Bill Arensdorf:

They have. Most states that have charter schools have charter school districts. They have sponsors that are school boards or they allow charter schools to be their own Local Education Agency (LEA).

Assemblyman Segerblom:

Has the United States Department of Education recognized that?

Bill Arensdorf:

Yes, they have.

Assemblyman Munford:

In District 6, in Las Vegas, we have charter schools within a mile of each other and another one is being proposed. We have eight or nine public schools in the same district. Can a cap be put on the building of these schools? All of these charter schools will effect the enrollment in public schools. Why do we need this many charter schools?

Bill Arensdorf:

The Las Vegas School Board continues to sponsor these charter schools. The charter schools are academic institutions, but they are also businesses. It is an open market competition. I am not sure, under current statutes, that we could say that no more charter schools could open. We review them for quality and compliance with federal and Nevada law.

Assemblyman Denis:

Over the last two years, have we had any charter school applications that have been rejected?

Bill Arensdorf:

I cannot recall any applications being rejected. It is rare for a charter school application to be accepted the first time around. Our staff provides technical assistance with the developers of the application. We go back and forth with them until their application is complete and compliant.

Assemblyman Denis:

So, no applications have been rejected?

Tom McCormack, Fiscal Accountability, Department of Education:

There was an application from a proposed leadership academy that sought sponsorship by the State Board of Education that was refused.

Assemblyman Denis:

The reason I am asking is because legislation was changed to allow the State Board to reject it. We were supposed to get a report, which I have not seen.

Tom McCormack:

You are referring to a report that was due in January of this year which we did complete and submit to the Legislature.

Chair Parnell:

I received my copy of that report last week and will make sure that all of the members of the Education Committee get a copy.

Assemblyman Stewart:

Will all of the charter schools in existence have to comply with this new administration or will they be grandfathered in?

Bill Arensdorf:

There are 19 charter schools right now. The existing administrators will be grandfathered in.

Leigh Berdrow, Administrator, Academy for Career Education (ACE) Charter High School:

We are in support of this bill.

Frank Schnorbus, Chairman, Nevada Homeschool Network:

We are in support of this bill in concept. We agree with Section 5, subsection 2(b), which allows payment to the charter schools for children from a public school, private school, or who are homeschooled. Very few students who are homeschooled want to attend a public school, but there are a few who do.

Silvia Marin, Principal, Academy for Career Education (ACE) Charter High School, Reno:

ACE Charter School supports this bill.

Craig Butz, Executive Director, Odyssey Charter Schools, Las Vegas:

A group of representatives from several charter schools met this morning and are all in favor of A.B. 334. Many funds that could be available to state sponsored charter schools are not because of the LEA situation. We support mandating charter schools to provide for an administrator to see that records of

students and staff are kept for at least a period of a year. We also support the statute mandating qualified administrators. I would like to mention that a lot of times charter schools have unique programs and that some of the best people to move up in a program would be the teachers in those schools.

Steve Knight, Executive Director, Silver State High School, Carson City:

I support this bill and want to say that this is a long time coming on Section 6. We have too many charter schools go the wayside because of inexperienced administrators.

Assemblyman Hardy:

Do you have assistant administrators?

Steve Knight:

We do, and both my Assistant Administrator and I have master's degrees.

Dotty Merrill, Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Boards:

There have been five charter school closures. I dealt with two of those closures and in each case there were difficulties in having someone reliable in charge of the records. This becomes an issue for the Board of Trustees. That is why the Nevada Association of School Boards is here in support of this bill. We believe that as sponsors of charter schools, this language, particularly in Section 3, cleans up some existing problems and will provide guidance with future closures.

Craig Kadlub, Director of Government Affairs, Clark County School District:

I just want to add our support of this bill.

Anne Loring, Representative, Washoe County School District:

We would like to be put on the record that we, too, support this bill.

Sean McClenahan, Representative, Agassi Preparatory Academy, Las Vegas:

I want to give our support of this bill.

Chair Parnell:

I will close the hearing on A.B. 334 and I will call a short recess.

Vice Chair Smith:

Meeting called back to order [at 6:17 p.m.]. I will open the hearing on Assembly Bill 591 and welcome the Chair Parnell to introduce the bill.

[Assembly Bill 591](#): Revises provisions governing charter schools. (BDR 34-49)

Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Assembly District No. 40:

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

Sean McClenahan:

We fully endorse this bill. Regarding Section 15, we have had the benefit of having many private donors donate to our school so we could build our facility, but we understand that there are other charter schools that do not have the same opportunity, and funds should be made available to them. Section 17 discusses the sponsorship by the university system. Adding a university sponsorship can be beneficial to all parties involved. We have seen this first hand with an apprentice teaching program that we have with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Students from the College of Education have the opportunity to do their student teaching and practicum at our school. We have funding for this through a sponsor. However, if the school were sponsored by the university system this could be a given. This could be a lab school where the teachers could learn how to teach in a charter school and learn how to teach at-risk youth. The university could provide resources such as labs, theatres, facilities, teacher enrichment programs for the teachers at the charter school, and college preparatory school for at-risk kids. This would give the at-risk kids a chance at college and show them that it can exist for them. Section 22 sets forth the requirements of the sponsor which will clean up any inaccuracies in getting information. Section 23 allows not more than two people, which is not a major change, but allows for more openness. Section 25 refers to an itemized list of costs that the sponsor provides to the school when they pay their sponsorship fees. We pay \$30,000 a year to the Clark County School District, but we are not sure what we pay that for. It is a bill that says this is for your sponsorship fee, but does not break it down to say what all that is for. This new language will help us for accounting purposes.

Michael Cate, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Pavers Plus, Inc., Reno:

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

Leigh Berdrow:

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

Silvia Marin:

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

Craig Butz:

I am speaking in favor of A.B. 591. On average, Nevada charter schools allocate over 8 percent of their Distributive School Account (DSA) funding to leasing of facilities as compared to .04 percent spent by school districts. Some Nevada charter school budgets allocate over 20 percent of their DSA funding to

facilities. This money should be going to instruction. Parents of public charter school students pay for the bonds at the same rate as parents of school districts. Odyssey Charter School pays an annual \$460,000 per year in lease payments in addition to over \$800,000 on tenant improvement on our current facility. That is money coming from DSA. The requirements for schools to be operational for at least 5 years is fair, however time funding the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status is not equitable. District schools do not risk losing facilities contingent on student performance. As far as the annual audit goes, there seems to be some discrepancy to what audit is being referred to in the bill. It appears to be the outside fiscal audit, which is different than the monitoring that the school district does. If this does refer to the outside fiscal audit, I would not be in favor of that. If it is the district monitoring that occurs on a yearly basis, I would be in favor of that. For the record, I am representing the following schools; Nevada State High School, Silver State High School, Carson Montessori, I Can Do Anything Academy, High Desert Montessori, Rain Shadow Academy, and Explore Knowledge Academy.

Steve Knight:

I support A.B. 591. I have one concern, which is the sponsorship of charter schools by colleges and universities. I see that as a potential problem in rural areas as other charter schools will not be able to compete with the college. It will stifle charter school development and may have an adverse effect on existing schools.

Josh Griffin, Representative, Nevada System for Higher Education:

We support this bill. Anything that supports creativity and new resources in education, we will support.

Craig Kadlub:

We support the bill, but are opposed to bond funds being used for construction of charter schools. We disagree with the proposal of doing away with the annual audits. On page 26, it talks about the System of Higher Education sponsoring the charter schools. We think that multiple sponsors are a good thing for the charter communities. On page 34 of the bill, a couple of things are already possible—Section 22, subsection 3(a) specifically, and subsection 3(c). There is a provision in charter law that says charter schools can contract with the district for certain services and if a student needs extraordinary services or if a school wants to contract for the use of a bus, those arrangements could be made. With subsection 3(d) and 3(b) on that page, we feel that this would be a challenge as we are short of substitutes ourselves. We are in support of the rest of the bill.

Anne Loring:

We have not gone through this bill in great detail, but there are portions of the bill that are excellent. We agree that financial audits should be done annually. We are opposed to the portions of Section 15 and Section 27, specifically the portion that takes 1 percent of bond proceeds for charter school financing. We have a crisis with funding of new schools in our own district. We agree with the tiering of charter schools.

Dotty Merrill:

On page 25 of the bill, Section 15, line 20, we believe that clarification should be made stating whether this audit is the financial audit or the monitoring report.

Bill Arensdorf:

We also would like clarification on page 25, Section 15, number 2. We believe that the intent of the Committee on Education was to speak about the annual compliance audit. That language should probably be inserted there.

Vice Chair Smith:

I would suggest that anyone who has suggestions get those in writing to the chairwoman as quickly as possible so we can start working on revisions to this bill. I will close the hearing A.B. 591.

Chair Parnell:

I will open the hearing on Assembly Bill 563.

Assembly Bill 563: Revises provisions governing education and makes appropriations relating to education. (BDR 34-531)

This is the iNVEST bill. We have already heard the report on iNVEST, so I would like to assign a working group which will report back to the Committee, as a whole, by Monday, April 9, 2007. I am doing this with the understanding that this bill has concurrently been referred to both the Committee on Education and the Committee on Ways and Means. I discussed this with the chair of Ways and Means and he felt that this would be a good opportunity to clean this bill up and to get it ready to go to Ways and Means. I will appoint three members of this Committee that also serve on Ways and Means—Assemblywoman Smith, Assemblyman Hardy and Assemblyman Denis. Assemblywoman Smith will chair that subgroup.

[Hearing closed on A.B. 563.]

Chair Parnell:

I would like to take up a matter previously considered by this Committee, Assembly Bill 70, which was sponsored by Assemblyman Segerblom and relates to compensation for school board members. There was a general consensus on the bill and will be sent to Ways and Means. I will accept a Motion to Do Pass the bill.

Assembly Bill 70: Revises provisions governing the compensation of the members and certain officers of the boards of trustees of school districts. (BDR 34-878)

ASSEMBLYMAN STEWART MOVED TO DO PASS A.B. 70.

ASSEMBLYMAN KIHUEN SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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Chair Parnell:

We will open the Work Session. We have 2 bills to consider. The first one is Assembly Bill 333 and the second is Assembly Bill 485.

Assembly Bill 333: Requires the Legislative Committee on Education to study certain issues during the 2007-2009 interim. (BDR S-417)

Assembly Bill 485: Revises provisions relating to the attendance and truancy of pupils. (BDR 34-418)

Carol Stonefield, Committee Policy Analyst, Legislative Counsel Bureau:

In your binder you have documents related to A.B. 333 and A.B. 485 (Exhibit M). Assembly Bill 333 was proposed by the Legislative Committee on Education and would provide that the Committee itself would study certain issues during the next interim. This would include appointing a subcommittee to study charter schools, and the full committee would be directed to study local school governments. There is an amendment offered by Chairwoman Parnell. In Section 1, subsection 1, the amendment would provide for a review of the structure of the system of governance of public elementary and secondary education. In subsection 2, it would provide that the Committee's review of the items listed must recognize the provisions of Chapter 288 of the *Nevada Revised Statutes*.

Chair Parnell:

Is there any discussion? I would like the record to show, that before Keith Rheault left, he approved A.B. 333 as amended.

ASSEMBLYMAN SEGERBLOM MOVED TO AMEND AND DO
PASS AS AMENDED A.B. 333.

ASSEMBLYMAN BEERS SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

* * * * *

Carol Stonefield:

A.B. 485 provides for truancy prevention and enforcement and is a bill that was requested from the Legislative Committee on Education from the last interim. This bill would require that the Advisory Board review school attendance that currently exists, and would also establish a program that includes coordination of community services to assist with intervention, diversion, and discipline of pupils who are truant. It would require, in counties with populations of 100,000 or more, establishment of at least one School Attendance Council which is also known as a School Attendance Review Board (SARB). The members would have the responsibility to enforce the policies adopted by the Advisory Board in reviewing school attendance with regard to truancy prevention and enforcement. They would monitor truancy cases, document efforts to assist individual pupils to attend school, and prepare an annual report of the disposition of the cases. The bill also provides that a parent who induces a child to be absent unlawfully is guilty of a misdemeanor. The juvenile court may impose a fine on a parent if a child is adjudicated to be a habitual truant. The juvenile court may suspend a fine against a child if another court imposes a fine against a parent on the same case. The Legislative Committee on Education is also directed to establish a subcommittee to study truancy at the next interim. There is an amendment offered by Assemblywoman Parnell and Assemblywoman Smith. There is a mock-up in your binder that is quite lengthy ([Exhibit M](#)). The proposals begin on page 15, Section 3, subsection 3, and would provide for the School Attendance Council to monitor excessive absences. Page 16, Section 6, subsection 2 would provide that the Board of Trustees establish a standard procedure for reporting excessive absences. Page 17, Section 7, would be amended saying that a person, including a parent or guardian, must knowingly induce a child to be absent from school unlawfully and Section 9, subsection 1, clarifies that the parent or guardian may be fined if they knowingly induced a child to be a habitual truant.

Chair Parnell:

In the amendments, I was concerned that we were not addressing the issue of excessive absences and someone else was concerned that we were not using the words, "knowingly" and "induced" as we should.

ASSEMBLYMAN BEERS MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS
A.B. 485.

ASSEMBLYMAN SEGERBLOM SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

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Chair Parnell:

The meeting is adjourned [at 7:10 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Denise Dunning
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Committee Name: Committee on Education

Date: March 28, 2007

Time of Meeting: 3:45 p.m.

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A	Committee on Education	Committee agenda
	B	Committee on Education	Committee sign-in sheets
AB 566	C	Ron Norton, ComputerCorps	"Every Home A Classroom" (PowerPoint)
AB 566	D	Bill Hanlon, Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program	"Take it to the Mat" publication
AB 566	E	Duane Schumacher, ComputerCorps	Written testimony
AB 387	F	Neena Laxalt, Nevada Nurses Association	Proposed amendment to AB 387
AB 387	G	Sheila Story, Carson City School District	Opposition to AB 387 – statements
AB 334	H	Bill Arensdorf, Nevada Department of Education	Written testimony
AB 591	I	Assemblywoman Parnell, Assembly District No. 40	Written testimony
AB 591	J	Michael Cate, Pavers Plus Inc.	Written testimony
AB 591	K	Leigh Berdrow, Academy for Career Education (ACE) Charter High School	Written testimony
AB 591	L	Silvia Marin, Academy for Career Education (ACE) Charter High School	Written testimony
AB 333 AB 485	M	Carol Stonefield, Committee Policy Analyst	Work Session document