

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

**Seventy-Fourth Session  
April 18, 2007**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Vice Chair Debbie Smith at 3:51 p.m., on Wednesday, April 18, 2007, in Room 3142 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4406 of the Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at [www.leg.state.nv.us/74th/committees/](http://www.leg.state.nv.us/74th/committees/). In addition, copies of the audio record may be purchased through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (email: [publications@lcb.state.nv.us](mailto:publications@lcb.state.nv.us); telephone: 775-684-6835).

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Assemblywoman 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

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell, Chair (excused)



**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Kelly Clark, Conservation Education Chief, Department of Wildlife, Nevada  
Chris Vasey, Regional Outdoor Education Coordinator, Department of Wildlife, Nevada  
Jill Olson, Western Region Wildlife Education Coordinator, Department of Wildlife, Nevada  
Jane Nichols, Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs, Nevada System of Higher Education  
Crystal Abba, Nevada System of Higher Education  
Bryn Lapenta, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Washoe County School District  
Elisabeth Noonan, Superintendent, Elementary Education and Regional Center for Teaching and Learning, Washoe County School District  
Troy Parks, Principal, Lemmon Valley School, Washoe County School District  
Keith Rheault, Superintendent, Public Instruction, Department of Education

**Vice Chair Smith:**

[Meeting called to order at 3:51 p.m. Roll called.] We have a quorum. I would like to welcome our guests for our presentation of Trout in the Classroom.

**Kelly Clark, Conservation Education Chief, Department of Wildlife, Nevada:**

We are here today to talk about an exciting program that the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) brought into the schools, "Trout in the Classroom." As you know, the mission of NDOW is to protect, preserve, manage, and restore wildlife in its habitat for the aesthetic, scientific, educational, recreational, and economic benefits to the citizens of Nevada and the United States. We also promote the safety of persons using vessels on the waters of this State.

The Conservation Education Bureau at NDOW is responsible for the agency's information education programs and our volunteer program. We have three education programs: Hunter Education, Angler Aquatic Education, and Wildlife Education. "Trout in the Classroom" is one aspect of our Angler Aquatic Education Program. It provides fifth graders with an exciting way to learn science and math skills. Over the last seven years, it has proven popular with teachers and students in the State.

We have a copy of our curriculum and resource guide that we have developed. It is a Nevada-based guide for you to look at. It is provided as part of the training materials given to teachers when we go through the training in spring. We also have a copy of the video available ([Exhibit C](#)).

I would like to introduce Chris Vasey and Jill Olson, our Outdoor Education Coordinators for the western region. They are going to talk more about the program.

**Chris Vasey, Regional Outdoor Education Coordinator, Department of Wildlife, Nevada:**

I am in charge of the Hunter and Angler Education Programs. I am going to give you a bit of history on "Trout in the Classroom." The program originated in Washington and California. A sportsman group, the Truckee River Fly Fishers, started the program in the early 1990s. After they started it, it got so big that they came to NDOW asking for help. They had support from our Fishery Bureau, but they needed more help on the education end. They wanted to expand the program statewide.

After 2000, we took on the program. We expanded the curriculum and tied it into the fifth-grade State standards. It has been running ever since. Approximately 165 classrooms participate in the program every spring. We recently completed many of our releases. The program has been funded by the Sport Fish Restoration Fund which draws its revenues from excise taxes and angling equipment in boating. This program also has many sponsors and volunteers, which will be mentioned in a video ([Exhibit C](#)) you will see at the end of our presentation.

I will hand it over to Jill who will tell you about how some of the things are tied into the State standards.

**Jill Olson, Western Region Wildlife Education Coordinator, Department of Wildlife, Nevada:**

"Trout in the Classroom" is a great program. It works to get students excited about learning math and science in the classroom. Teachers and principals are

seeing a difference. One principal in Cold Springs noted that she has seen progress with all students. She noted one student in particular who, prior to the program was having problems putting one or two sentences together on writing assignments, but during the program, was so excited that he was filling pages front and back with his observations. In addition, we have heard from teachers who have said the curriculum we supply has better prepared students for their Criterion Reference Test (CRT). One school in Las Vegas found that the average math scores of students in fifth grade have increased as a result of this program and the math and science that is worked into the curriculum. In a time when our children are so often disconnected from nature and our environment, this program is able to bring a piece of our ecosystem into the classrooms and give our kids a hands-on experience that makes math and science real to them.

For the teachers "Trout in the Classroom" provides a packaged, easy-to-implement six-week program that is accessible and easily adapted for a variety of classroom activities and learners.

We have a video ([Exhibit C](#)) we would like to show you that gives you a better idea what the program is about.

**Vice Chair Smith:**

Do you train the teachers, and then they do the presentation, or does your staff do it?

**Chris Vasey:**

Every year we train the teachers prior to them picking up the trout eggs. They apply through our website to get eggs and participate in the program. They have to meet our requirements to qualify. We are only putting one program in each school due to staffing. If we already have one in a school, we move on to the next application for the schools that do not have "Trout in the Classroom." They get a full-day, eight-hour training where we go over all aspects of raising trout, the lifecycles of the trout, what it takes to care for them, and what they are going to need to know upon releasing the fish. We also walk them through the resource guide and the curriculum.

**Vice Chair Smith:**

How do you develop the curriculum to interface with academic standards?

**Jill Olson:**

The curriculum itself was designed using State standards. It touches on math and science standards. Within the curriculum binder, we offer a variety of activities that meet language arts, reading, and writing standards as well.

The program is such that it is easily adapted to meet the needs of the teacher as far as meeting the standards in their classroom.

**Assemblyman Segerblom:**

Do teachers get credit for taking your eight-hour class?

**Chris Vasey:**

We have in the past. We tied it into a grant through the Department of Education (NDE). We have not tied it in for credit in a few years. Many of the teachers I approached on it did not need the credit at the time. They wanted to do the program because it applied to some of the curriculum they were already using in their classroom.

**Assemblyman Segerblom:**

I suggest talking to the Professional Development Education office in Clark County to see if they want to offer your services. They are always looking for new classes.

**Vice Chair Smith:**

We just heard a bill last week about teachers who are unable to get their continuing education (CE) credits. It becomes a problem. They are always looking for opportunities to do that in a Saturday class.

**Assemblyman Beers:**

How many schools will be getting the aquarium chillers this time?

**Chris Vasey:**

Most of the chillers will be going to the southern region. We are currently maintaining what we have in the western region. As of now, there are only two of us working with the program. We have over 100 tanks in the western region that we are responsible for. We follow up and do the releases with the teachers. We walk them through everything. Right now, we are putting a hold on the western region and expanding the southern region. The eastern region is also an area we are trying to maintain.

**Assemblyman Beers:**

Do you have the number of schools that are participating in the south?

**Chris Vasey:**

The current number is about 45. Since we founded the program here because of the Truckee River Fly Fishers, and we expanded it from there, the western region has gotten a head start. They will catch up to us soon.

**Assemblyman Bobzien:**

First of all, I want to commend you on the work you are doing. I would like to give kudos to the different sports organizations that are doing this, as well as all the volunteers who are involved. I know it is an extremely large project. One of the potential values I see is the ecological educational opportunities that are here. With that in mind, what is the involvement with our State fish in this program? What fish are put in the aquariums?

**Chris Vasey:**

We currently do not use Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (LCT). If we are putting them in the Truckee River system, we use a hybrid so we do not interfere with any management that is going on with the LCTs. The reason we do not use them is because the availability for the eggs does not coincide with the same time school is in session. The eggs for the LCTs are available in the spring. With spring break and everything else that goes on in the school groups, those eggs are not ready for us to use to make it work for the school programs. We use Rainbow Strain. They have used LCTs in the past. It is based on availability. Two of our hatcheries are being rebuilt right now, so this year I had to order eggs out-of-state. We have to make sure we are managing our program and have eggs available when the time rolls around every year to meet with the teachers.

**Assemblyman Bobzien:**

I appreciate those technical challenges. Any time you are dealing with LCT management, it is a difficult thing. This may be lost on kids who are in elementary school, but nonetheless, in pointing out the natural systems of the Truckee River and other waters, I think there should be some mention of LCT in the program.

**Chris Vasey:**

It is in our curriculum. We emphasize native species, and we make a point to emphasize the native species of Nevada.

**Assemblyman Bobzien:**

Thank you for distinguishing.

**Kelly Clark:**

We are going to show the video ([Exhibit C](#)).

We want to thank you for allowing this time to make our presentation.

**Assemblyman Stewart:**

It looks like this is a wonderful program. Can you tell us exactly what is in the kit you provide? Is this on Saturday or during the week? Do you pay for the sub service and the field trips? Where do they deposit the trout in Southern Nevada?

**Chris Vasey:**

As far as the equipment is concerned, we provide a tank, a chiller, and a power head. The power head maintains the oxygen flow. The chiller keeps the water at a constant temperature. Trout need water around 56 degrees. The chiller is the main cost at around \$300. Everything else is fairly inexpensive.

The teachers get the curriculum as well. They get a PowerPoint on both the fisheries end and our end, the Conservation Education Bureau. Those PowerPoints are used in the classroom, so it is resource material. They also receive training on how to use all the resources.

As far as where the southern region releases its fish, they typically have release sites in some of the urban ponds where we already put trout. It is around the same time we are putting the trout into the urban ponds anyway. The fish are not used for population increase—it is more for the educational value of the program so they learn the life cycle of the trout. The likelihood of their fish actually surviving in some of those conditions are not good. They go over habitat conditions when they do their releases. The teachers ask whether or not it would be a good habitat. In the north, we do many of our releases on the Carson and Truckee Rivers, which are great habitats for the trout to be released. We try to emphasize that throughout the program.

**Kelly Clark:**

Statewide this is sponsored financially the Sport Fish Restoration Fund. It is about a \$15,000 program. We would usually provide the General Fund as a match for this, but we have volunteers, so we have been able to use volunteer match in lieu of the State General Fund.

**Assemblyman Bobzien:**

The program has been in place since the early to mid 1990s, is that correct?

**Chris Vasey:**

It has been in place since the early 1990s with the Truckee River Fly Fishers. They took it on, and it had between 10 and 15 tanks. In 2000, we took on the responsibility of the funding to try to expand the program and curriculum.

**Assemblyman Bobzien:**

You have some history now. Is there any long-term narrative or anecdotal information about kids coming back from college saying they want to be a wildlife biologist because they took "Trout in the Classroom?"

**Chris Vasey:**

Absolutely, I have heard a huge amount of feedback from students who have gone through the program and are older now. They say what a great program it was and how much they learned. I have friends who are anglers, who wish this would have been available to them when they were going to school because it would have given them an interest in science and math. You never hear anything bad about the program. The teachers love it because they can apply so many disciplines to it. When it comes to what you can do with the curriculum, the possibilities are endless.

**Vice Chair Smith:**

Are there any other questions from Committee members? [There were none.] Thank you for your presentation. It was very informative.

Now we are going to have a presentation by Dr. Jane Nichols.

**Jane Nichols, Vice Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs, Nevada System of Higher Education:**

I have come to you today because after I presented this to the Board of Regents at the March meeting, they expressed their desire for more people to know what the data is and what it indicates. Some aspects have made the newspapers. I want you to think about this as a story that addresses some of the ideas and myths about education, particularly higher education, in Nevada. [Handed out PowerPoint presentation ([Exhibit D](#)).]

I titled this "Planning for Nevada's Future." I want to talk to you about what we know, or what we anticipate, based on the best projections about what is going to be happening in Nevada in the future. I am going to look at population growth; growth in the number of high school graduates; the educational preparedness of our work force, both now and in the future; what we anticipate our economy and job demand will be; and our enrollment trends, especially in Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), for the future. Finally, I am going to end up with the discussion about what our challenges for higher education are, given this scenario.

First of all, Nevada is the second fastest growing state in the United States. All race and ethnic groups are growing substantially, with Hispanics expected to account for the majority of future growth. I might add that this is the first year



we have been second—we have historically been first in rate of growth, but Arizona has now taken over that spot. The growth is rapid, but uneven, across Nevada. There are very high growth rates for Clark County, and surprisingly high growth rates in Nye and Lyon Counties. There is moderate but substantial growth in Washoe and surrounding counties, plus Lincoln. There is declining population projected in the rural areas. The data I am working from is prepared by the Nevada State demographer.

If you look at a map of what the growth in Nevada will look like, you can see the patterns that we believe will occur ([Exhibit D](#)). Clark County will obviously be growing rapidly, followed by the yellow counties, Nye and Lyon. The blue counties come in between a 25 and 50 percent rate of growth in the 20 years after 2006. The brown areas are the areas that are anticipated to decline. They decline at different rates. If we look at this as a chart, you can see the rate of growth comparison for the various counties. The counties are given at the bottom in alphabetical order. The overall rate for Nevada is projected at 66 percent, but you can see that Clark County has 76.7 percent, and the rate of growth is on a high population. That will obviously be driving the State of Nevada. We have some concerns about the rural counties. You can see the projected decline in population for those.

Who will be in this new population? If we look at the percent change in Nevada's population in race and ethnicity for the same period, 2006 to 2026, you are going to see that the highest rate of growth is in Hispanic population. The White non-Hispanic rate of growth is 37.6 percent. You can see the various other ethnic groups, including Black at 69 percent, American Indian at 54 percent, and Asian, surprisingly high, at 94.5, for a total growth rate of 66 percent.

That is the rate, and not the actual numbers, but if you want to get a sense of what Nevada will be like by 2026, you can look at the projected population by ethnicity for 2026. You can see the largest group is still White, not of Hispanic origin, at 2.2 million. You can also see Hispanic origin of any race at 1.46 million. The smaller numbers are in the other groups. We know that the new Nevada population will be increasingly Hispanic, Asian, and Black, compared to today. The Nevada K-12 system is already seeing this change. It will continue. This chart ([Exhibit D](#)) shows the percent of change in public high school graduation in race and ethnicity from 2004 to 2017 and 2018 as projected by the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) and the Nevada Department of Education (NDE). Again, you see that same pattern of growth with the Hispanic graduates increasing in the blue, the black, and the red lines on the chart. The White, non-Hispanic declines over the same period. What that is telling you is that for our younger population in Nevada, it is clearly

going to be primarily a Hispanic and Black population growth. The total in public high school graduation in growth percent change by 2017 and 2018 is about 60 percent.

This raises many flags, which I will be talking about as I go through this because, historically, we have not done a very good job of educating those populations that are growing the fastest. You can see the percentage of students who graduate from high school on time is as follows: 72 percent of White students; 79 percent of Asian students; 51 percent of African American students; 52 percent of Latino students; and 54 percent of Native American students. We have to do something if we are going to get our students graduated. We need to change something that we are doing.

To compare Nevada to the nation, the chances for ninth graders in Nevada to graduate from college within what is considered the standard measure—150 percent of the time or 6 years for university and 3 years for community colleges—we start out with 100 ninth graders ([Exhibit D](#)). For the nation, the number of graduates from high school is 70 of the 100; for Nevada, the number is 51 of the 100. For the nation, the number who enters college is 39; for Nevada, it is 28. For the nation, the number who is still enrolled in college by their sophomore year is 27; for Nevada, it is 19. For the nation, the number who graduates from college is 18; for Nevada it is 10. The problem is clear, we are still not successful enough in getting Nevada high school students to graduate and to go and finish college.

If we look at our college continuation rate, we started out at the very bottom as far as the percentage of students who go on to college. We have seen a dramatic increase in the college-going rate, primarily fueled by the advent of the Millennium Scholarship. In 2005, of all the students who go on to college from Nevada high schools, there is a 51.7 percent rate of continuation; those who transfer to our schools have a 41 percent rate. That is great news, but it is a drop from the year before. We have seen a big increase, but we are concerned about what is currently happening and why. If you look at the Nevada college continuation compared to the U.S. college continuation, you will see that we have made great progress, going from 32.4 up to 56.1 percent at our high point. The nation has also continued to do better, but we continue to lag.

Since we broke down the population by county, let us break down our capture rate—from what parts of the State are the students going on to college, and where are they not? About 50 percent of our high school graduates stay in Nevada and go to public Nevada colleges. The smaller counties, Eureka and Storey, have fluctuating numbers from year to year because a few students can make a big difference. You will see some of the rural counties do well.

The counties that drive this picture are Washoe County, which has a 62.5 percent college-going rate, and Clark County, which has a 47.5 percent college-going rate. We have known for some time that our success in getting students to continue their education is lower in Clark County than it is in Washoe County. Both school districts are working hard to address that, as we are, with our institutions.

I often hear that people enroll in college later in life, so if we are not getting recent high school graduates to go to college, that may not be a problem. They may not have the straight-into-college mentality, but if we look at all Nevadans who are in our colleges and universities, this is not the case. We are 49th in the nation in terms of the percent of our total population enrolled in college. We only have 7.2 percent of our population enrolled in any kind of college, public or private, in Nevada. Some think Nevada is still okay because so many people move here from out-of-state with college degrees, but this is not the case.

This map ([Exhibit D](#)) of the United States shows the percentage of adults age 25 to 64 with an Associates degree or higher in 2005. We had 28.6 percent of our population with an Associates degree, ranking 46th in our educated population. If you look at those with a Bachelor's degree or higher for the same year, we are still 46th, with 21.2 percent of our population holding a Bachelor's degree or higher, ages 25 to 64. We limit this to ages 25 to 64, as do most national studies, because that is the traditional workforce.

Why are we not doing better if people are moving here with college degrees? If you look at our in-migration patterns, we are primarily in-migrating uneducated people. The pattern of migration rates ages 22 to 29—the workforce expected to come here to begin a career, to begin a family, or to settle in—from 1995 to 2000 primarily has less than a high school education, a high school education, or some college education. Some have Associate's degrees, some have Bachelor's degrees, and a few have Master's or Doctoral degrees. We ranked first on the wrong end of that scale in terms of in-migration of an educated workforce—50th.

To further explore the in-migration of Nevada's population, we compared it to the data for the western states. We had more current data available for us in 2005. If you look at the migration rate of residents 25 years and older coming into states, Nevada has 16.1 percent of residents who have less than a high school education. The rest of the west has 14 percent. For high school educated, Nevada is 27.3 percent. The rest of the West gets only 20 percent. For some college or Associate's degree, Nevada is again on the wrong end. We have more with some college or Associates degrees than we do those with Bachelor's. The difference is more substantial with those who have graduate or

professional degrees. We are not getting an educated workforce moving into Nevada the way it is in many other states. Our challenge is that this means we have a serious problem with the educational attainment of our workforce.

If we look at the 2005 U.S. Census Bureau data for ages 25 to 64, 28.6 percent had an Associates degree or more—we ranked 46th ([Exhibit D](#)). For the same age group, 21.2 percent had a Bachelor's degree or more—we ranked 46th. If we look at a comparison with other states which we want to be competitive with in jobs and industry, we are ahead of Kentucky, Louisiana, Arkansas, and West Virginia in the Associate's degree category and Kentucky, Arkansas, Mississippi, and West Virginia in the Bachelor's degree category.

If you look at the educational attainment of only our young workforce, ages 25 to 34, we have 23 percent with an Associate's or more and 17 percent with a Bachelor's or more—we rank 50th. The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) predicts that Nevada will lose ground in the percentage of its workforce that is college-educated. The most substantial growth will occur in the "less than high school" and "high school only" populations in Nevada in the years to come if current trends continue.

Perhaps Nevada does not need college graduates because our jobs do not require them. I have heard that since I moved to Nevada in 1983, and it has historically been true. If you look at the employment by occupation in 2000, you will see the largest employment area is arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services. Gaming, more than anything else, is driving the employment. You can break that down further to see the college-educated jobs. Historically, we have had a workforce that did not demand a college degree. Nevada seemed to do well with what we have had in the past, but we have fallen sharply. Many people are not aware of our per capita personal income, but in 1960, we were sitting at 127 percent of the national average. We have steadily gone down since then, and we are now sitting at 103 percent. The per capita personal income for the nation is \$33,000; for Nevada, it is \$33,800.

We have an unusual story in Nevada. Our "Chance for College" ranking is 49th. The enrollment of our population in higher education is 49th, yet our per capita personal income is ranked 17th and is higher than the national average. We have an unemployment rate of 4.5, which is lower than the national average of 4.6. We have always done well because there were jobs for people, and we had a low unemployment rate. Historically, education has not been pursued, nor was it necessary in Nevada for employment at higher-than-national salaries. However, the future projections for jobs in Nevada tell a different story.

If we look at the change in Nevada's workforce in population, ages 19 to 64 from 2006 to 2014 ([Exhibit D](#)), the red lines are those fields that will require the highest percentage of employees to have either college or some college in order to work in those areas—for example, you see healthcare, computer and mathematics, business and financial operations, and management. If you talk to anyone in the business community today, I think they will agree that we need a change. We are going to see more and more jobs requiring college degrees. If we break this down into Las Vegas and Clark County, we will find this is also true. The highest area of growth is computer and mathematics—not the service industry, which does not require higher education. If you look at the Reno workforce in Washoe County's population, healthcare again leads, but computer and mathematics and engineering is not far behind. If you look at the balance of the State excluding Clark and Washoe Counties, the greatest driver is healthcare. Where are the healthcare workers going to be coming from to fill those healthcare positions for the rural counties?

The National Governor's Association expects a 47.7 percent growth of need for people with an Associates degree for occupations in Nevada. We will have a 45.1 percent growth in the jobs nation in the anticipated growth rate of jobs that will require college degrees. We know that more jobs will be requiring more college for all people. To reinforce the problem we have, our growth is going to be in those populations that are traditionally undereducated, perhaps not even finishing high school. If Hispanics, Latinos, African Americans, and Native Americans achieved the same low-level of education in Nevada as Whites by 2020, Nevada's personal income would increase by \$2.2 billion in adjusted 2000 dollars. This is an economic issue of major proportions. We have to have more college educated Nevadans in the context of a rapidly growing, diverse population. Then, I have to turn the camera on us to question whether higher education is doing its part. It is not a story that we are too proud of. We have a lot to do.

If you look at the graduation rates for Nevada universities, they are only first-time, full-time college students. These are students who declare they want to get a degree, and they start out as full-time freshmen. They are the ones we would anticipate to graduate college in five years. Our rate for the State in 2004 and 2005 is 46 percent. That is not good. If you look at the community college graduation rates, you can see that the rates of graduating with an Associates degree in 2005 are only at 21 percent for Western Nevada Community College (WNCC); 10 percent for Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC); 16 percent for Great Basin Community College (GBCC); and 5 percent for Community College of Southern Nevada (CCSN).

If you look at who goes to college in Nevada, family income, college participation, and who is in college, the national average in 2005 for 18 to 24 year olds enrolled in college from low income families was 25.4 percent. The college participation rate for Nevada students from low income families is 14.9 percent. Only one other state has a lower rate—Alaska—in enrolling people in higher education than Nevada. We know that family income is a barrier in Nevada.

If we look at the chart for what we also think is a predictor—attendance patterns—for students who go part-time and students who go full-time, you will see the percentage of each state's students who are part-time versus full-time. Montana and Mississippi are at the bottom with about 32 percent of part-time students. In Nevada, we are 111 percent. More of our students are part-time than full-time—we rank 49th. The attendance patterns show how important they are if we look at the retention of students from fall 2005 to fall 2006 by institution. The blue line on the chart is full-time students and the red line is part-time students. In every case at every institution, regardless of anything else, part-time students do not continue at the same rate as full-time students.

This slide ([Exhibit D](#)) is graduation rate by ethnicity. As I said, the high schools did not do a very good job of getting our diverse population out of high school. Well, neither do the universities and colleges. Ethnicity makes a difference. You can see the breakdown in this chart from 2005. The blue line is White, the brown is Black, the yellow is Hispanic, and the red is American Indian. We are not doing the job we need to be doing to get all students through our colleges.

The next slide is a bit complicated, but I want to explain it because it is extremely important. Our enrollment as a percent of Nevada's population is tracked every year. One of our goals in our master plan is to increase the percentage of Nevada's population that is enrolled in NSHE. If we project the students enrolling in the coming years through 2014 based upon our own institution's best case scenario—not the budget formula or the official State projected numbers—and compare it to Nevada's population, we are losing ground. We have seen that trend for 20 years. We are not keeping up with the growth of Nevada's population in terms of who is enrolled in higher education. We are doing better and our numbers are looking better, but we are not keeping up with the growth of Nevada's population.

As if things were not bad enough, it is not solely a Nevada problem. This is a national and international conversation that is going on right now about the importance of college degrees for the future of America. I am quoting from a study that just came out a few months ago from the Making Opportunity Affordable Project called *Hitting Home: Quality, Cost, and Access Challenges*



*Confronting Higher Education Today.* Seven nations already lead the United States in degree attainment. The U.S. ranks among the top five countries in proportion of people who enroll in college. However, we currently rank 16th in proportion of young people who finish college. The American colleges award about 18 degrees annually for every 100 full-time students enrolled compared to 25 out of 100 for other countries. The U.S. needs to educate an additional 15.6 million people with either bachelor's or associates degrees by 2025. An additional 781,000 degrees a year on top of current levels, or a 37 percent increase nationally are needed, and 55 percent of the U.S. adult population needs to have a college degree. Nevada had 28.6 percent of the adult population with a college degree. If this is a national problem and all of the other states are going to be working hard to increase the number of college-educated people, we are going to fall further behind.

The next slide ([Exhibit D](#)) shows the percent of adults with an associate's degree or higher in 2003. You can see the international picture. The blue dot is the younger generation, ages 25 to 34. The red dot is the older generation, ages 45 to 54. Everywhere in the world, the younger population is getting a higher level of education than their parents did—except for the U.S. We have a less educated population in the younger group than in the older group.

Nevada's System of Higher Education's impact on the future is not only in producing college-educated citizens. I will show you some charts on research and development. In looking at the research and development expenditures in universities and colleges by state, we are 39th. If we look at the expenditures at doctorate-granting institutions ranked per capita for 2001, we are 45th.

I suggested to the Board of Regents that we must take action to recruit, retain, and graduate more students, particularly from groups traditionally underrepresented in the successful completion of educational goals. We need to create policies and strategies to improve our recruitment, retention, and graduation rates, and to build research and development productivity. We have to grow. We have to grow more need-based financial aid so that the students with lower incomes can go to college. We have to grow a clearer student-success pipeline from K through 12 to higher education, and a culture of college-going expectations for Nevadans. As long as Nevadans do not think they need a college degree, we are going to have serious problems. We also need to grow the perception that research and college degrees and certificates will help build the economic development of the State.

**Vice Chair Smith:**

Several months ago we had a group from University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), that presented a research project to the Education Collaborative regarding the trend that for the first time in history, the current generation will be less educated than the prior generation. I thought that was specific to Nevada, but it looks like by your chart that it is a national statistic.

**Jane Nichols:**

That is a national phenomenon.

**Vice Chair Smith:**

I am curious about where they are in that research project. I have not been going to the Education Collaborative meetings for a few months.

**Jane Nichols:**

I do not know. The Collaborative has been wonderful. They are data-driven and have been doing many of those projects, but I have not heard about that recently.

**Vice Chair Smith:**

This is a group that is out of UNR.

**Jane Nichols:**

I would be glad to check on it for you.

**Assemblyman Segerblom:**

What is the solution?

**Jane Nichols:**

The solution is complex. I wish I knew the answer. We have to change Nevada's perception of reality about what we need to do for the future. That includes the business community, the Legislature, the Board of Regents, and the entire State. We have to become committed to an educated population. We have to believe it is important. When the article in the paper came out, some of my most educated friends and best colleagues asked whether or not I really believed we needed more educated people in Nevada. In a presentation, the head of WICHE said if we do not change the pattern in Nevada and the direction we are moving by a concerted effort by business, by the Legislature, by the governor, by our rhetoric and resources, we will not have to worry about illegal immigration in this State because the education level in Mexico is going to surpass us. The data is very clear on that. Our education level is going down, and Mexico's is going up. If the trend lines continue, Nevada is going to be equivalent to an underdeveloped nation.



**Assemblyman Kihuen:**

What is the total amount of students who are enrolled in NSHE?  
What percentage of those students are of Hispanic decent?

**Jane Nichols:**

We track that annually in a report of the percentage enrolled and the retention and graduation rates by ethnicity. I do not know if we can pull it up today, but we can certainly get it to you.

**Crystal Abba, Nevada System of Higher Education:**

Our total enrollment across the System is just over 100,000. We have a breakdown on our website in our diversity report.

**Assemblyman Kihuen:**

What is the website?

**Crystal Abba:**

The website is [www.nevada.edu](http://www.nevada.edu).

**Assemblyman Kihuen:**

I saw the graduation rates on the presentation, but not the total number of students enrolled.

**Crystal Abba:**

All the reports we provide are under the Academic Affairs Department, so you will need to go to "Departments" and then "Academic Affairs."

**Assemblyman Stewart:**

I would guess that it is going to become more difficult for you to track ethnic groups in the future, particularly Hispanic groups. How do you track them now? Is it by their surname?

**Jane Nichols:**

No. We track students by their self-identification. We are anticipating a problem that you may or may not yet be aware of. The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) is proposing a change in data and the way it will be reported. Under those reported changes, we will no longer be able to track ethnicity in the way we do it now. We are concerned and will keep you informed of that. We currently use Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), the national database for students which identifies students by ethnicity with categories. The university system allows students to self-identify when they enroll.

**Assemblyman Stewart:**

How do they identify themselves? I have four grandchildren who are one-quarter Latino. "Stewart" is not considered a Latino name in most places. I think that is a problem. I also think that there has not been an incentive to go to college in the past. I tried to get my son to go to college, and after a year and a half, he became an entrepreneur. He owns his own business, and he is very successful. I think the only way we are going to get it to change is to change the philosophy and the incentive. Perhaps that is changing with the tightening of the housing market in southern Nevada. I think an economic change is going to take place that will help us.

**Crystal Abba:**

On the matter of ethnicity, students are currently requested to check one box on the admissions application. However, the situation you have just described is the reason the USDE is changing their standards for IPEDS reporting.

**Assemblyman Mabey:**

On your slide for "chance for college" with Nevada ranking 49th on page 15 ([Exhibit D](#)), do you mean that a student here has less of a chance to go to college than in another state? We are 49th, so if my kids lived in any other state except for Nevada and one other, would they have more of a chance?

**Jane Nichols:**

This reflects the patterns of what actually occurs. It does not reflect that John Smith would have less of a chance.

**Assemblyman Mabey:**

If a high school student wants to go to college, is it fairly easy for him to go or not?

**Jane Nichols:**

In Nevada, going to college is relatively easy. We have systematically built a variety of choices, starting with the community colleges, trying to make transfer easy, creating the Nevada State College, trying to keep tuition rates low, creating the Millennium Scholarship, et cetera. By any standard, we have worked very hard with the Legislature in the last 10 years to make going to college easy. The problem is not that it is not easy to do. It is just as easy to go to college in Clark County as it is to go in Washoe County, but there is a 15 percent difference in rate of those who go to college. We know it is more than just making it easy, although we think we can do more to make it easier and clearer. We are trying to put more courses in high schools to try to get students to start accumulating credits so they will feel they can do college

work. Hopefully, they will gain confidence and begin to think about and eventually go to college.

In the late 1990s, the Legislature requested we do a study of the high school student's college-going intent. We surveyed all 11th graders in Nevada, and 85 percent said they planned to go to college. However, most of them were not taking courses to go to college. They were not taking the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) or ACT (American College Testing Program). They were not planning financially. They were not being realistic. That is driven by the fact that we have one of the lowest populations with college degrees, so their parents may not know how to help them go to college. It is a combination of many factors.

**Assemblyman Mabey:**

I think we have a fairly easy way to get to college. If the kids want to go, they can. I think culture is one of the factors.

**Assemblyman Munford:**

For so long in Nevada, we have depended upon the casino industry to be our number-one source of employment. It has definitely influenced and had an effect on young people being able to acquire a decently paying job without a college education. We need to get away from letting casinos be our number-one industry. We need to recruit and bring different types of economic development that require some sort of higher education. We are so casino-driven in terms of our employment that we need something to compete with casinos to draw a job market for high-end paying jobs. We need to bring educated people here. We need to look in the direction of finding other ways to bring economics to this State.

**Jane Nichols:**

We believe strongly that the future of Nevada is dependent upon doing just that. We have seen it with different patterns across the State as the economic base is changing. It is changing and will continue to change everywhere.

**Assemblyman Kihuen:**

I know retention and recruitment are two of the main reasons we have this problem. What are some of the things that NSHE is doing to alleviate it?

**Jane Nichols:**

In our planning over the last two to five years, we have reordered our priorities to put more of an emphasis on student services and activities to allow students to continue. We have also tried to put more money into financial aid. If you think about the pattern I showed you, there are more part-time students

because more of them are working full-time. We are currently looking at a way to try to give an incentive to our students to take 15 credits. If students take 15 credits, they are likely to graduate from college, but instead, they are taking 6 or 12, and they are not finishing. You cannot finish college taking 6 credits at a time. We are trying to combine many strategies to provide more services to students who are first-generation and may not have the home support to know what to do. We are trying to provide more financial aid, particularly need-based, and we are trying to change the class-taking patterns so students are taking more credits in order to graduate.

**Vice Chair Smith:**

I know it is a big challenge. In the Higher Education budget subcommittee, we have been hearing a great deal about the financial impacts on our institutions and the situation that we are facing in this budget year. It is a big issue that will not be going away any time soon.

When I listened to the budget discussion the other day, I thought it was disturbing that we were not talking about an all-out plan on recruitment and retention until we got into this crisis. It bothers me that we had to get to this point before we began talking about recruiting and retaining our students, as well as everything we need to do to help them.

**Jane Nichols:**

I am aware that appears to be the case. In reality, two years ago when we started putting the budget together for submission to the Legislature, the number one priority set by the Board was recruitment, retention, and student support services. It shifted in its approach when we realized our enrollment was not keeping up to the level that we expected it to. It is an issue that we have been aware of for some time. We have been talking about strategies to help us improve it. Whatever happens in this budget session, the emphasis by the presidents at each institution will continue.

**Vice Chair Smith:**

I am going to open the hearing Senate Bill 151.

**Senate Bill 151: Revises provisions governing school schedules. (BDR 34-444)**

**Bryn Lapenta, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Washoe County School District:**  
[Spoke from prepared text ([Exhibit E](#)).]

Dr. Kadlub asked me to let you know, for the record, that Clark County School District supports this bill. Unfortunately he had to leave.

**Elisabeth Noonan, Superintendent, Elementary Education and Regional Center  
for Teaching and Learning, Washoe County School District:**

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

**Troy Parks, Principal, Lemmon Valley School, Washoe County School District:**

[Distributed PowerPoint presentation ([Exhibit G](#)). I want to tell you a little about what we have been able to do with the delayed starts. Last year we had an opportunity to become part of the pilot program, so we sent out informational packets to parents explaining when these delayed starts were going to occur, as well as why we were having them. What happens this year is that our buses transport, our students walk, and our parents drop-off students 40 minutes later every other Wednesday. We keep ongoing communication via our newsletter as well as our calendars. On occasion, we make connective phone calls the night before to remind everyone.

If you were to visit my school during one of these delayed starts, you would see teachers discussing three main topics that are focused on improving student achievement. The first is what do we want children to know? Here you would see teachers talking about their standards and curriculum. They may be planning what they are going to be doing over the next months. They may be talking about the appropriate pacing for the reading and math series. In addition, we have conversations about what it is that the students need to be successful at the next grade level so that we know we are preparing students appropriately.

The second topic is how we know when the children have learned. We look at many different types of data. If you refer to the colored page in your packet ([Exhibit G](#)), those are actually the walls of my office. As a principal, I wanted to make a bold statement because we really need to know where these students are. The red students are those we call "emerging/developing." They are very behind grade-level. The yellow students are those who are approaching the standard. The green students are those who meet the standard. The blue are those students who are exceeding the standard. In addition, teachers also keep classroom folders with that data.

Our third topic is what are we going to do about it? This is where interventions or action plans come in. We will sit in my office and discuss the students in the red category who are seriously struggling, and we will discuss what skills they are lacking and what we will do to help them move up into the yellow. We then do the same things for the yellow students. With our green and blue students, we ask ourselves how we will challenge them and what we will do to help them take their education to the next level.

When I was asked to testify about this concept, I thought a lot about what you do in committees. You get to hear from experts who have opposing and concurring views, and you get the chance to talk to each other. Because of that, you legislate better policies and better laws. We view this as a policy to better educate and improve learning at the school level.

**Vice Chair Smith:**

Is this the first year that you have used the alternative schedule to be able to do the Professional Learning Communities (PLC)?

**Elisabeth Noonan:**

Yes, we applied directly to Dr. Rheault's office at the State level and asked permission for just the 2006-2007 school year to run the pilot program, knowing that we were heading into the legislative session and anticipating this bill draft request. We wanted to have some fairly current information to share.

**Vice Chair Smith:**

Will there be tracking on the spring Criterion Reference Tests (CRT) to see how your students fair after using this?

**Elisabeth Noonan:**

Correct. We are tracking on several levels. Obviously, the State CRT is the thing we are most interested in seeing. We are also tracking teachers and surveying them twice a year, once midyear and once at the end, for how they are self-assessing their levels or using Rick DeFore's work on the research in PLCs. There are some wonderful rubrics that show the developmental stages that the teachers and the principals go through with these organized times being structured and provided. We are tracking how the teachers perceive themselves as being able to serve the children as well as the actual student achievement results.

**Vice Chair Smith:**

I think it would be great if we could have whatever information you have gathered by the end of the legislative session.

**Troy Parks:**

I think you were hoping that this would have better results. I am going to share what happened at my school this year, because of this process. Our fifth grade classes were specifically focused on writing. We assessed monthly on writing traits. We sent the tests to be scored, and the teachers would gather the data and discuss what the weak points were. They decided they needed to work on convention or how students used voice, so they focused intently on it. At the beginning of the year, we had 12 students pass, which was dismal. We were

all afraid of where we were headed. Through their work in the protected time, I am extremely proud to say that 42 students passed.

The delayed start has made a huge difference. I feel strongly that if I had have asked the teachers to find time during their day to get together, analyze the data, and figure out how they were going to help the kids, they would not have been able to do it. I cannot reasonably expect them to find time when we are teaching from bell to bell every day.

**Vice Chair Smith:**

I appreciate that because I have had a few conversations in the last month with two different national education consultants asking what we are missing and what we can do differently here. One of them is the consultant to the Academics Standards Council in this State, and I kept hearing that the ability to use student achievement data is the answer. I have talked to Dr. Rheault about how we need to do everything we can to fund our student information systems to help everyone move this along. That is right in line with what I keep being told. I am assuming that this is a huge professional development opportunity for the teachers as well to help instruct them in each area and help them get better and better at using the data to help drive their instruction of the students. It sounds good.

**Assemblyman Denis:**

Mr. Parks, how many kids do you have in your school?

**Troy Parks:**

Right now we are sitting at around 740.

**Assemblyman Denis:**

How many teachers?

**Troy Parks:**

We have 37.

**Assemblyman Denis:**

Do you find that with the size of the school, you are able to get the information the teachers need when they get together during their meetings?

**Troy Parks:**

Yes, absolutely. They normally meet in grade-level and start looking at data. Often times they are looking at curriculum or talking about best practices. It has been a tremendous help in having a protected time. Another great thing about the protected time is that I am able to attend and, for those who need

more help, I can be there to assist them. For my fifth grade, they were able to take it beyond where I would have been able to help them.

**Assemblyman Denis:**

With the higher grades having more students, are they still able to get to all the things they need to? They are talking about each student individually, and the smaller grades may not have as many students, so do the higher grades still find time to be able to get to everything?

**Troy Parks:**

I would say that it is more of a challenge. They absolutely talk about each student individually and at what level they are achieving. Because the number is more challenging and there are higher expectations in the upper grades, we are very focused on the writing element. That is a challenge. There never seems to be enough time to hit everything we need to.

**Vice Chair Smith:**

I may have sent this off track because it is interesting to me to talk about this opportunity to look at the interaction between the teachers. Keep in mind that the bill is really about flexible scheduling time.

**Assemblyman Stewart:**

I think it is a great idea to empower schools to do things like this. When the district does flexible scheduling, do they require each school to do it, or does the school have the option? I know in Clark County one of the problems would entail parents who work and have trouble transporting their children.

**Elisabeth Noonan:**

Yes. Step one for us is asking you to make a revision to the law that would allow us to apply back to the State through Dr. Rheault's office for what the actual plan might look like year after year. You are absolutely right—this is one of the ways we can empower all of our schools to design a schedule that will be tailored to the needs of their teachers, kids, communities, and parents. It will challenge the school district with transportation requirements, bell schedules, and logistics of different neighborhoods. That is why we felt it was very important to survey the parents in these seven schools midway through the year to capture some of the parents' reactions to this. We wanted to know immediately if this was going to create an incredible hardship for our parents.

**Assemblyman Hardy:**

In the 2003 Session, we had the concept of rural school districts, including the rural schools within Clark County, so I appreciate where you are coming from. I was fascinated because this empowerment issue is real. This is a piece of



empowerment over your time and your resource management. Every bit is as important as the money. This brings me to the question of whether there were Senate Bill No. 404 of the 73rd Legislative Session funds used in this, or did you use other fiscal methods, advantages or resources when you did this?

**Elisabeth Noonan:**

No. That is what we feel most proud of in this proposal. It allows us to accomplish the need to provide structured, regularly scheduled time for teachers to work together without charging anybody another dollar. If this bill is not successful, we may feel strongly enough that we need to continue to look to find dollars to compensate people outside of the regular contracted workday. We felt the beauty of the pilot project, and what you are considering today, is allowing this flexible schedule to still provide children the instructional minutes that they are accustomed to being provided, but allowing teachers the regularly scheduled, protected contract time without it costing anything.

**Assemblyman Hardy:**

I love this concept.

**Assemblyman Segerblom:**

Does anyone know why the law was written to allow the rural districts to have these modified schedules but not Washoe and Clark Counties?

**Vice Chair Smith:**

It has been fairly common in past practice with the Legislature to give the smaller districts more flexibility to pilot projects and see how they work. Sometimes they do not ever migrate to the bigger districts due to circumstances being what they are.

**Assemblyman Hardy:**

I can give some historical perspective on this. This Committee discussed a problem the rural school districts had fitting their curriculum in due to the athletic schedules and the time that the athletes had to travel to other school districts and parts of the State. They were finding that these kids were not getting seat time unless they adapted their schedule to a different time. We talked about allowing the rural school districts to adopt this but not Clark and Washoe Counties. I raised my hand and said that the rural schools in Clark County are in my district. That is how the rural schools in Clark and Washoe Counties were included in that.

**Assemblyman Segerblom:**

The issue we are talking about today does not relate to how the original issue came up, which was over athletics, correct?

**Assemblyman Hardy:**

That is exactly correct. We bumped into a good thing.

**Vice Chair Smith:**

It lends to how different the needs are in the different districts and what leads them to needing flexibility. We have generally tended to be less flexible in the bigger districts than we have in the rural districts. This appears to be a good place for us to head.

Before we move on, you will note in your file there is a note from Dotty Merrill from the School Boards Association supporting this issue ([Exhibit H](#)). We had an email from Lonnie Shields with the Administrator's Association also supporting the bill.

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

I am here to fully support the bill. Before you wonder how I was able to approve a pilot program when it says they cannot have one, I had to be creative in looking at my authority under different statutes. I did not approve the pilot program as an alternative schedule. I had some authority to approve short days in session and professional development. That is what the pilot program is, and I was hoping it would be brought forward to the Legislature to address it. As I recall in historical data, it was for the rural districts to adjust schedules, as was stated by Assemblyman Hardy. It could allow four-day school weeks. I know they did not want Clark and Washoe Counties to go to that. This would fit in line with the school improvement plans and the empowerment schools coming online. There are other ways they can have short or longer day schedules through approved alternative programs. This will put Clark and Washoe Counties on par with the other districts, specifically to implement some of their school improvement plans. That is why I am supportive.

**Vice Chair Smith:**

Are there any questions? [There were none.] I do not see anyone else coming forward to testify, so I will close the hearing on S.B. 151.

Based on the fact that we had all the testimony in support of this bill, I will entertain a motion to Do Pass.

[The action of the bills voted on during the Committee meeting was rescinded due to violation of Assembly Standing Rule 42 and Committee Standing Rule 9.]

ASSEMBLYMAN HARDY MOVED TO DO PASS SENATE BILL 151.

ASSEMBLYMAN SEGERBLOM SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED. (CHAIR PARNELL WAS ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

**Vice Chair Smith:**

We have one additional business item before we adjourn. In the Floor session, we were referred Senate Concurrent Resolution 18.

**Senate Concurrent Resolution 18: Expresses support for vocational rehabilitation programs and services in this State. (BDR R-296)**

We have been doing blanket referrals, so sometimes they are not quite the way they should be. That bill should have gone to the Assembly Committee on Health and Human Services. To correct this, I would like to accept a motion to vote S.C.R. 18 out without recommendation and rerefer to the Assembly Committee on Health and Human Services.

ASSEMBLYMAN BOBZIEN MOVED TO MOVE WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION AND REREFER SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 18 TO THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.

ASSEMBLYMAN BEERS SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED. (CHAIR PARNELL WAS ABSENT FOR THE VOTE.)

**Vice Chair Smith:**

Is there any other public comment to come before this Committee? [There was none.] With that, the Committee on Education is adjourned [at 5:31 pm].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Kelly Troescher  
Committee Secretary

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Rachelle Myrick  
Transcribing Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Assemblywoman Debbie Smith, Vice Chair

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

**EXHIBITS**

**Committee Name:** Committee on Education

**Date:** April 18, 2007

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

<b>Bill</b>	<b>Exhibit</b>	<b>Witness / Agency</b>	<b>Description</b>
	A	Committee on Education	Agenda
	B	Committee on Education	Attendance Roster
	C	Kelly Clark, Nevada Department of Wildlife	DVD
	D	Jane Nichols, Nevada System of Higher Education	PowerPoint presentation
S.B. 151	E	Bryn Lapenta, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Washoe County School District	Prepared text
S.B. 151	F	Elisabeth Noonan, Superintendent, Elementary Education & Regional Center for Teaching and Learning, Washoe County School District	Prepared text
S.B. 151	G	Troy Parks, Principal, Lemmon Valley Elementary School	PowerPoint presentation
S.B. 151	H	Dotty Merrill, Nevada Association of School Boards	E-mail