

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

**Seventy-Seventh Session  
April 29, 2013**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Chairman Elliot T. Anderson at 3:15 p.m. on Monday, April 29, 2013, 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 [nelis.leg.state.nv.us/77th2013](http://nelis.leg.state.nv.us/77th2013). 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:**

Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson, Chairman  
Assemblywoman Marilyn Dondero Loop, Vice Chairwoman  
Assemblyman Paul Aizley  
Assemblywoman Lesley E. Cohen  
Assemblywoman Olivia Diaz  
Assemblyman Wesley Duncan  
Assemblyman Andy Eisen  
Assemblywoman Michele Fiore  
Assemblyman Randy Kirner  
Assemblyman Harvey J. Munford  
Assemblywoman Dina Neal  
Assemblyman Lynn D. Stewart  
Assemblywoman Heidi Swank  
Assemblywoman Melissa Woodbury

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Clark County Senatorial District No. 5

Minutes ID: 1025



Senator Pat Spearman, Clark County Senatorial District No. 1  
Senator Aaron D. Ford, Clark County Senatorial District No. 11

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Todd Butterworth, Committee Policy Analyst  
Jacque Lethbridge, Committee Secretary  
Ashlynd Baker, Committee Assistant

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Beth Wells, Executive Director, Nevada STEM Coalition  
Mark Newburn, Member, State Board of Education  
Rorie Fitzpatrick, Interim Superintendent of Public Instruction,  
Department of Education  
Tray Abney, representing The Chamber  
Christine Miller, representing the Nevada Association of School Boards  
Craig Stevens, representing the Nevada State Education Association  
Nicole Rourke, representing Clark County School District  
Omar Saucedo, representing the Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce  
Mary Pierczynski, representing the Association of School Superintendents  
Barbara Clark, President, Board of Trustees, District C, Washoe County  
School District  
William T. "Toby" Holmes, Principal, Oran K. Gragson Elementary School,  
Clark County School District  
Deanna LeBlanc, 2012 Nevada Teacher of the Year, East Valley  
Elementary School, Lyon County School District  
Morgan Fisher, Intern, Senator Patricia Spearman, Clark County Senatorial  
District No. 1  
Silvia Villanueva, representing the Las Vegas Metro Chamber  
of Commerce  
Constance Brooks, representing the Nevada System of Higher Education  
Lonnie Shields, representing the Nevada Association of  
School Administrators  
Steven Augspurger, representing the Clark County Association of School  
Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees  
Calli Fisher, representing Washoe County School District

**Chairman Elliot T. Anderson:**

[Roll was taken. Committee protocol and rules were explained.] We will open  
the hearing on Senate Bill 345 (1st Reprint).

**Senate Bill 345 (1st Reprint): Creates the Advisory Council on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. (BDR S-700)**

**Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Clark County Senatorial District No. 5:**

I am here to present Senate Bill 345 (1st Reprint) for your consideration. This measure creates an advisory council on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, which I will refer to as the Advisory Council on STEM. [Continued to read from written testimony ([Exhibit C](#)).] I have with me Beth Wells from the STEM Coalition, Mark Newburn is in the Southern Nevada office, and there are others who would like to testify as well.

**Beth Wells, Executive Director, Nevada STEM Coalition:**

I am Executive Director of the Nevada STEM Coalition, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 2006. On behalf of the Coalition, I want to thank the Legislative Committee on Education for this opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 345 (R1). [Continued to read from written testimony ([Exhibit D](#)).] Our consultant, Rich Rosen, who is the founder of the Ohio STEM Coalition, said, "Where you are in your level of planning and efforts for STEM education is in the middle of the pack." [Continued to read from written testimony ([Exhibit D](#)).]

Principles for STEM Policy Advisory ([Exhibit E](#)) and the Nevada STEM Coalition Report and Strategic Plan 2013 ([Exhibit F](#)) are on the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS).

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

On page 12 of the Report and Strategic Plan, eighth-grade teachers say they have all or most of the resources. This weekend I sat in a teachers' gripe session with the Clark County Education Association, and they said the opposite. We know that somewhere in 2005 or 2007 we lost a significant number of teachers. They also said we have not reclaimed those teachers. How do we plan on implementing this program if some of the things that are missing are the actual components of who is going to do the work? If we are missing teachers, does this mean we do not have the correct mapping in terms of how we do math and science within the district? How do we make STEM work?

**Beth Wells:**

A strategic plan that would come out of the Advisory Council has to look at the teacher workforce. From the President of the United States on down, there have been recommendations that we look specifically at building our workforce of science and math teachers. Nevada needs to look at the certification programs, give teachers an opportunity to go back to school, or provide more

requirements for them to build their skills. It would not just be the STEM council. They have to work with all of the other committees. It will have to be a partnership to look at the big picture.

**Senator Woodhouse:**

One of the important reasons to put this under the Department of Education is to coordinate with professional development, certification, and recertification of teachers to make sure that elementary teachers going into the classroom have the training they need. When I started teaching first grade in 1966, my skills at teaching science were totally ineffective. It took recertification and additional coursework at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) for me to feel comfortable that I was doing what was right for my students. I think I was good with reading, writing, and math, but the science instruction I had in my preservice was not sufficient for what my children needed. Over the years, we have done a much better job. I do think we need to continue to coordinate with the Department of Education and school districts to make sure we are providing the right coursework and recertification opportunities for teachers so that they are ready to teach science, math, engineering, and technology at the level they should.

**Beth Wells:**

I heard that complaint, that we lost science teachers who are going out of state in frustration. A lot of educators blame it on No Child Left Behind. There was so much emphasis and evaluation in schools on math and reading that the sciences were put under the table. The only way you are going to attract teachers from out of state is for Nevada to have a strong commitment to science education and to a broad well-balanced curriculum, not just science, reading, and math. We need to make that known to employees as well.

**Assemblywoman Cohen:**

You briefly touched on girls and minorities with science and math education and the belief that they are not as interested. I do not see anything stating specifically that the Advisory Council needs to address this.

**Beth Wells:**

That is probably just an inadvertent omission in the wording of the bill. The Nevada STEM Coalition is concerned about minorities and women being underrepresented in the sciences. The strategic plan has to be cognizant of that and have a strong plan for implementation. We are starting to develop a STEM experts database or speakers bureau that will be available on our website. If teachers are doing an engineering unit, they can go online and look in their region for an engineering expert who might be willing to come to the school.

In the recruitment process of getting those STEM experts listed in our bureau, we want to find minorities and females.

**Assemblywoman Diaz:**

I want to commend you for bringing forth STEM in Nevada. I have heard this terminology around the nation, but it has not been brought up much in Nevada. I think this is a great starting point. As an educator, it is difficult to be the expert to teach all subject matter: math, science, reading, social studies, and writing. Science is one of those fields that is so intricate. There is so much to plan for that you need to take a look at what we have in place and possibly do things a little bit different in order for children to benefit and get real science and not just textbook science. How many teachers will be on this council?

**Senator Woodhouse:**

The council does not identify the number of teachers. I would hope the appointments made by the Governor, Speaker of the Assembly, and the Senate Majority Leader would take that into consideration. I think we need to have representation from the education community, especially folks who have been involved in this area, because they can help guide us as we move forward.

**Chairman Anderson:**

Section 1, subsection 2, says, "The members appointed pursuant to paragraphs (b), (c) and (d) of subsection 1 must be persons who are professional educators . . . ." That is the way I read it.

**Senator Woodhouse:**

That is correct.

**Assemblywoman Diaz:**

It also says "or persons who represent business that employ persons in careers . . . ." If there is an "or" option, I want to make sure we do not leave anybody out of the important conversations. The elementary realm is different from the secondary. In the secondary, you have teachers with more expertise in the science field. Sometimes when we spell things more clearly, we get the composition of the council we want. You might want to stipulate two or three teachers. As I read it, we could have a council that just has people employed in the business side and no educators.

**Senator Woodhouse:**

I would be more than happy to work on an amendment that does define more clearly what we would like to see regarding educators and business people. We do want both groups involved.

**Chairman Anderson:**

I would echo what Assemblywoman Diaz said. We do need to have folks that are employing graduates so we know exactly what the demand and need is.

**Assemblyman Stewart:**

I applaud this bill. I think we need more emphasis on STEM. I am concerned about the emphasis on women. The studies I have read over the past ten years show we have fewer male graduates in most every field. It used to be a 60/40 male advantage and now in most all fields it is the opposite. It is 60/40 female. We constantly emphasize the female aspect. I think this is a crisis in America. More and more males are not focusing on education. All of the studies I have read in the past ten years show that. I think we need to make it a balance between males and females and not continually emphasize the female side.

**Assemblyman Kirner:**

Your bill is set to expire in 2017. What is the necessity to expire?

**Senator Woodhouse:**

I would prefer it not to expire. Our committee felt it was necessary. Originally, it did say 2015. We extended it to 2017 in order for the council to get going and get the strategic plan and recommendations in to the Board of Education so we could start moving forward. It would be my intent that we would continue the STEM Council as long as it is needed in Nevada.

**Assemblyman Kirner:**

If you are going to go through the effort to do all of those things, I do not see a need to have an expiration date.

**Assemblyman Duncan:**

In other states that have implemented STEM programs, have you seen an increase in participation?

**Beth Wells:**

Each state is doing it so differently that it is hard to do comparatives across states. The STEM movement is rather new so we are getting anecdotal information right now. What we are seeing is that elementary schools that put science back into the classroom see an increase in engagement with the kids. They see the kids' test scores rising across the board. The kinds of hands-on activities in science that are done properly are engaging and address how children learn. It is a positive way to engage children. We have known that for years. This is not a new thing; what we are doing is going back to some of the old inquiry practices. The new science standards are going more in depth rather

than being so broad. I would like to see the STEM Council do research and put together a package that helps us understand what is most impactful around the nation, and we can model some of those practices.

**Assemblyman Duncan:**

Are we seeing a link between overall student achievement by pursuing this?

**Beth Wells:**

Yes. I am going to put together data from Washoe and Clark County School Districts and will it share with the Committee. Smithridge STEM Academy in the Washoe County School District is starting to see some data as well as some of the schools in Clark County School District.

**Chairman Anderson:**

Are there any other questions from Committee members? [There were none.]

**Mark Newburn, Member, State Board of Education:**

I am speaking today as a 30-year STEM industry veteran in support of S.B. 345 (R1). [Continued to read from written testimony ([Exhibit G](#)).] Hispanic and African Americans represent 28 percent of the nation's population, but only 5 percent of the STEM workforce.

**Rorie Fitzpatrick, Interim Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Education:**

We greatly appreciate the work of the STEM leaders for bringing this concept forward and are especially grateful to Senator Woodhouse for moving the bill along. We appreciate in particular the receptivity with regard to making sure the State Board of Education is a player in this work and that the information comes back to the Board so that we can ensure this is not a great set of ideas that sit on a shelf in a report, but are in fact acted upon through robust activity that will result in changed outcomes for children.

**Tray Abney, representing The Chamber:**

We strongly support S.B. 345 (R1) and appreciate Senator Woodhouse bringing this forward. We think this is important for our future workforce, for economic development, and to enhance and increase our international competitiveness.

**Christine Miller, representing the Nevada Association of School Boards:**

I am here to support S.B. 345 (R1) on behalf of the Nevada Association of School Boards. [Continued to read from written testimony ([Exhibit H](#)).]

**Chairman Anderson:**

Are there any questions from Committee members? [There were none.] Is there anyone else in Carson City wishing to testify in support of S.B. 345 (R1)?

**Craig Stevens, representing the Nevada State Education Association:**

The Nevada State Education Association is in full support of S.B. 345 (R1). We appreciate what we are trying to do here and Assemblywoman Diaz talking about putting educators on the Council. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are important to our association. We have been working with the school districts, and Washoe County just received four Teacher Incentive Fund grants regarding STEM for about \$15 million. Nine schools are going to be participating in that STEM grant. They are going to be rolling it out next year with full implementation the year after. It is important if we are going to be doing all of these programs throughout Nevada that we have a central body that will help put everything in order so that the kids in Washoe County are not going to have a better program than the other counties.

**Nicole Rourke, representing Clark County School District:**

The Clark County School District supports S.B. 345 (R1) and the creation of a STEM council. We have seen some great success with our STEM program, including our Pathways to STEM initiative included in our recent award of an Investing In Innovation Fund (I3) grant. We are proud of that effort as well as of the many programs provided with our partnership program where we connect business partners with schools. We have numerous STEM programs in our elementary, middle, and high schools, including everything from our rain forest biosphere to our magnet schools at our middle and high school levels. We have many after school programs where we have robotics and a number of other STEM initiatives that provide extracurricular activities for students.

**Omar Saucedo, representing the Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce:**

The Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce is in full support of S.B. 345 (R1). Creating a focus on STEM education in our school systems will improve K-12 student performance and allow students to obtain the necessary skills for science, technology, engineering, and math careers within Nevada. By committing to STEM education, Nevada students will be prepared to fill these kinds of jobs within Nevada businesses. We believe this is sound policy for our state and the Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce is happy to support this bill.

**Mary Pierczynski, representing the Association of School Superintendents:**

The Association of School Superintendents is in full support of S.B. 345 (R1). We would like to thank Senator Woodhouse for bringing this bill forward. It will help Nevada with our economic development movement. It adds

organization to the STEM movement in our schools and will create strong business/school partnerships.

**Assemblyman Stewart:**

We got such a dismal score on the STEM race to the top. In Clark County, we have great career and technical schools. We have an excellent mining program. How do we account for that?

**Nicole Rourke:**

In the application there might not have been enough emphasis on the programs. With our I3 initiative, we put a great emphasis on STEM and were funded for those types of programs.

**Assemblyman Stewart:**

It seems we are constantly getting terrible scores but I do not see things as terribly as the evaluators do.

**Chairman Anderson:**

Are there any other questions from Committee members? [There were none.] Is there anyone else in Carson City or Las Vegas who wishes to testify in support of S.B. 345 (R1)? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in Carson City or Las Vegas who wishes to testify in opposition to S.B. 345 (R1)? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in Carson City or Las Vegas who wishes to testify in neutral to S.B. 345 (R1)? [There was no one.] Senator Woodhouse, would you care to make any closing remarks?

**Senator Woodhouse:**

Thank you. I will have an amendment suggestion to you regarding the composition of representatives that are appointed by the Governor, Assembly, and Senate.

**Assemblyman Aizley:**

I hope this project does wonders for teaching mathematics. Let me read something here called Project SEED, "Cultivating excellence in education since 1963." This has been going on for years and it does not change. I wish you a lot of luck.

**Senator Woodhouse:**

I think this is one more positive step forward.

**Chairman Anderson:**

Who would the nonprofit be that is tasked with helping implement this?

**Senator Woodhouse:**

Once the council is organized it will be part of the strategic plan.

**Chairman Anderson:**

We will close the hearing on S.B. 345 (R1). We have a presentation from Family Engagement.

**Barbara Clark, President, Board of Trustees, District C, Washoe County School District:**

The Advisory Council on Family Engagement has a diverse membership across Nevada, including Assemblywoman Diaz and Senator Kieckhefer ([Exhibit I](#)). I have spent 20 years advocating for Family Engagement. We have staff and advisors including Monie Byers, our education program professional from the Department of Education, and our parent involvement coordinator for Washoe and Clark Counties. In Family Engagement, we have a varied skill set represented by our council membership and as our advisors.

**William T. "Toby" Holmes, Principal, Oran K. Gragson Elementary School, Clark County School District:**

I serve as the vice chair of the Advisory Council on Family Engagement. The council was constructed with Senate Bill No. 143 of the 74th Session. With Assembly Bill No. 224 of the 76th Session, we were given an advisory person on staff with the Department of Education. We were given a little funding and tasks to do. We have outlined that task in terms of a two-year work plan, which you will see with the brochures we have provided you ([Exhibit J](#) and [Exhibit K](#)). This session, we are requesting additional funding for the Parent Involvement Coordinator position and the Connecting the Dots Family Engagement Summit we put on every year. Our goal is to connect family involvement, parental involvement, and family engagement with student achievement. We feel that through focusing on collaboration, communication, building respect between schools and parents, and a philosophy of co-partners between parents and families, we have a strong foundation to improve student achievement through the foundation of parents. We believe that the research is solid in this area.

**Deanna LeBlanc, 2012 Nevada Teacher of the Year, East Valley Elementary School, Lyon County School District:**

I am the teacher representative on the council in the north. I am also the 2012 Nevada Teacher of the Year. I would like to talk about some of the accomplishments we have been able to gain with the addition of

funding ([Exhibit I](#)). We have established a two-year work plan. In the brochure we left for you, part of Assembly Bill No. 224 of the 76th Session was to require new teachers requesting licensure in Nevada to have some coursework in family engagement ([Exhibit J](#)). That is an area where we were falling down. Most teachers have not had any training in family engagement or the research behind it. The council is working with the Nevada System of Higher Education to help develop that curriculum.

We are also working on school and district improvement plans. Currently there is a place for them to indicate what kind of family engagement they have, but there are no requirements. From district to district it looks very different. One district can have five sentences about their family engagement plan and another can have two pages. One thing the council is working toward is developing a matrix that will guide those districts in what are best practices around family engagement and the matrix for what that might look like in the school and district improvement plans.

We are also working on a tool kit. One of the charges of this council is to research and provide schools and districts with best practices. That tool kit will be a resource to everybody, from parents through district administration, to help support them in family engagement.

Our biggest goal is to align all of the state and district policies and all of the programs in Nevada that have family engagement as a component. We want to leverage best practices statewide and align everything with the six standards that were developed by the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

**Toby Holmes:**

We feel at this time it is right for parental involvement to come into play in Nevada. The Legislature was very insightful in 2007 when it set the course of action in place. Everything is coming together whether it be through the Teachers and Leaders Council, the Advisory Council, or legislative work. It is time to change the dynamic in Nevada and bring parents to the table as co-partners in the work of education, driving student education, and being a key piece in moving student achievement forward. The Advisory Council has a key piece to play in that work that has been driven by our two-year plan which we detailed in our brochure ([Exhibit J](#)).

We have connected that with our six steps that are coming out of the National PTA. We laid out a three-step process. Our first step was to create our brochure to get information out from the Advisory Council about Nevada standards and about the national standards. Second, we are going to roll out a tool kit to give our first level of involvement and support for teachers,

administrators, and parents to get involved with parental involvement. Third, we are going to create a handbook which is a foundational element that will have all of the policies, research, and strong necessary pieces to get started.

The second pamphlet we have is our first step to give teachers and administrators a key piece to get started ([Exhibit K](#)). This is our first step to disseminate information to help teachers get involved with parents beyond just an event, to make it a process to get started driving this as an ongoing step to connect parent involvement and student engagement.

**Barbara Clark:**

All of the work we are accomplishing is to provide guidelines for the implementation of family engagement across all levels and the entire state ([Exhibit I](#)). We are developing the indicators that will tell teachers and administrators what they are looking for, as well as aligning all the components so we can get to the collection of data, assessment, reevaluate policies, and accountability processes at all levels. We want to make a full circle within the next few years to start connecting the data between family engagement and student achievement.

We have many of our Advisory Council members and our parent involvement coordinator here. I would like them to stand and be recognized.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

Have you implemented this already?

**Barbara Clark:**

The brochures?

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

The brochures within certain districts.

**Barbara Clark:**

No. We have just finalized and compiled them. We just rolled them off the press. We can roll them out today and start dispersing in the fall when school starts again.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

You created them in 2007.

**Barbara Clark:**

Correct.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

This is your first brochure?

**Barbara Clark:**

No. In 2007, for a couple of years, what was outlined as far as the roles of what we needed to do, was accomplished through the Advisory Council. Unfortunately, we were not able to get into this type of work because we did not receive funding. We did not have money for travel, and we did not have support. It was not until Assemblywoman Benitez-Thompson brought forth Assembly Bill No. 224 of the 76th Legislative Session that provided us the staff person at the Department of Education, as well as funding for travel so that we were able to start meeting, facilitating, and coming up with products.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

When you roll the brochure out, I would like to be called when it applies to my district. I want to make sure that everything listed as examples of what is going to happen, actually happens. If this was actually applied, there would be transforming activities. I want to be there and make sure I see a transformation.

**Barbara Clark:**

This tool will be given to teachers and school districts voluntarily to see whether or not they choose to use it in their classrooms. We have nothing at this time that mandates it. We have made several presentations before the Teachers and Leaders Council. We believe the six standards need to be part of the family engagement component associated with the evaluation. The current smaller version is based on three metrics and has not adopted the concept of the six standards. We are working on it.

**Assemblywoman Diaz:**

Family engagement is no longer PTA bake sales and fundraising?

**Barbara Clark:**

That is correct. It is more about advocating for children at all levels to make sure it is effective.

**Assemblywoman Diaz:**

I have been fortunate enough to be on this council and I feel passionately about it. As educators, we sometimes blame parents for not being involved in their children's education. Sometimes we fail to extend or reach toward that parent to bring them into our school because the first experience they have is disheartening, or they feel it is not a place they should be. The work of this council is to try to engage as many parents as possible into our school systems.

We know if we make a bridge from the home to the school we will have a win-win for everybody involved. We will see our academics going up as well. I want to thank all of the council members who made it to Carson City today and have been involved in giving teachers and administrators the tools they need.

**Assemblywoman Dondero Loop:**

I love seeing Deanna LeBlanc here because she is our 2012 Nevada Teacher of the Year. We hear how horrible everything is, but we have a perfect example of how wonderful it is. We have three counties here with a principal who made good on his promise to parents and brought them to school. I know personally this is so important because I have that same passion. We have school boards here who are helping us along. Along with the PTA, I think the marrying of the three entities is so important. You cannot have that perfect triangle without all of the points. I appreciate all of you for being here and applaud you for what you are doing.

**Assemblyman Stewart:**

Sometimes great adversity can be overcome. Deanna LeBlanc had me as a teacher and she has succeeded greatly.

**Chairman Anderson:**

Are there any questions from Committee members? [There were none.] Thank you for your presentation.

We will open the hearing on Senate Bill 309 (1st Reprint).

**Senate Bill 309 (1st Reprint): Urges the establishment of certain mentoring programs. (BDR S-768)**

**Senator Patricia Spearman, Clark County Senatorial District No. 1:**

I wish this was my idea totally, but it came from my intern as we talked about what we might be able to do with the chamber of commerce and education; something that would make an impact in both of those arenas. He talked us through this bill. I will give the formal presentation, and I would like him to follow me. I am here to present Senate Bill 309 (1st Reprint) for your consideration. [Continued to read from written testimony ([Exhibit L](#)).]

The September 27 to October 3, 2010 *Bloomberg Businessweek* article "Young Entrepreneurs, An Incubator Hatches Student Startups in Utah" is on Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS) ([Exhibit M](#)).

**Assemblywoman Fiore:**

Thank you, Senator, for bringing this forth. Is this in works with the SCORE program? We have chapters in Las Vegas and Reno.

**Senator Spearman:**

It is not in works with SCORE. That could be another area of collaboration.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

The College of Southern Nevada (CSN) currently has a mentoring program. Professor Kevin Raiford has helped 20 student businesses get off the ground. Have you had a conversation with CSN about how they managed to mentor businesses and build an outside relationship? They work with the chambers.

**Senator Spearman:**

Dr. Constance Brooks was a part of us pulling this together with the program at CSN in mind. We hope to use the experience of that program and expand it so it is not just in one area of the state, but is in multiple areas.

**Morgan Fisher, Intern, Senator Patricia Spearman, Clark County Senatorial District No. 1:**

I am here to testify in support of S.B. 309 (R1). [Continued to read from written testimony ([Exhibit N](#)).]

**Chairman Anderson:**

Are there any questions from Committee members? [There were none.]  
Is there anyone wishing to testify in support of S.B. 309 (R1)?

**Silvia Villanueva, representing the Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce:**

The Las Vegas Metro Chamber would like to express our support of S.B. 309 (R1). We believe by encouraging mentorship of Nevada entrepreneurs, it will allow small businesses to gain the knowledge necessary to grow in the business community. While there is no way of guaranteeing how many businesses are going to fund the scholarship, the Metro Chamber supports the concept and will do the best it can to support all efforts. The Metro Chamber would also like to express its thanks and appreciates the opportunity to work with the bill sponsor.

**Constance Brooks, representing the Nevada System of Higher Education:**

I would like to congratulate Mr. Fisher on a job well done on a wonderful concept that allows for the relationship between the Nevada System of Higher Education and the business community to be strengthened. We are in support of S.B. 309 (R1). While we do have outreach programs that are in the

works, we do appreciate the business community in turn providing scholarship opportunities to our students.

**Chairman Anderson:**

Are there any questions from Committee members? [There were none.] Is there anyone else in Carson City or Las Vegas wishing to testify in support of S.B. 309 (R1)? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in Carson City or Las Vegas wishing to testify in opposition to S.B. 309 (R1)? [There was no one.] Is there anyone wishing to testify in neutral to S.B. 309 (R1)? [There was no one.]

**Senator Spearman:**

Thank you for this opportunity. I am glad Dr. Brooks touched on a couple of the unique things regarding this bill. One of the things that happens with people who are going to school is you get an academic scholarship for your classes and books. Most of us know that the age of college students is getting a little older and the national statistics show it takes those entering college about seven and a half years to complete their bachelor's degree. I look forward to Assemblywoman Neal and anyone else who can help us with this program. I believe our entrepreneurs need this push. The University of Utah's David Eccles School of Business has something similar to this where the interns are paid and have an opportunity to work for more than just a year ([Exhibit N](#)). We are looking at best practices around the country and maybe even around the world to make sure this is a success.

**Chairman Anderson:**

We will close the hearing on S.B. 309 (R1). We will open the hearing on Senate Bill 269 (1st Reprint).

**Senate Bill 269 (1st Reprint): Revises provisions governing education. (BDR 34-892)**

**Senator Aaron D. Ford, Clark County Senatorial District No. 11:**

I am here today to introduce Senate Bill 269 (1st Reprint). A couple of the presentations you had today are good segues into the topic of this conversation. One of them is parental involvement. This is similar, but it talks about more than just teachers and money when it comes to improving our schools and educational system. Like many of you, I have been in the classroom before and taught in three school districts. I have been in school districts that have a lot of money, schools districts that do not have that much money, and blue collar school districts. In all cases it was more than just about money, it was more than just about the teacher, it was more than just about the parent, it was also about the student. Students bear responsibility for their education. This bill

attempts to capitalize on one of the most sought after benefits in order to hold kids more accountable for their own education. [Continued to read from written testimony ([Exhibit O](#)).]

I was not at the gripe session that Assemblywoman Neal attended. Our chairman was there as well. I can echo some of the statements that sometimes we can get caught up in this notion of parental involvement and forget that we have to reach out. This is a way to reach out to our students to make sure they understand that we are expecting them to be responsible. You will hear some in opposition talk about the carrot-versus-stick approach. I believe that you need carrots and sticks. [Continued to read from written testimony ([Exhibit O](#)).]

The earlier version of this bill also included school grades as one of the components. It was not the intent of this bill to include that, so we immediately amended that language and took it out. This bill addresses only school attendance for habitual truancy. I want to make certain that is understood. [Continued to read from written testimony ([Exhibit O](#)).]

There are also exceptions for hardships. For example, a student may need to be able to drive because his parents are medically disabled or unable to drive. We all heard people talking about students maintaining, recognizing, and appreciating their own role in education. This bill is an opportunity for us to demonstrate that in Nevada we are very serious about a student attending school.

**Assemblywoman Fiore:**

Thank you, Senator Ford, for bringing this bill forward. We do have a truancy issue in my district as well. Has this been implemented in other states? If it has, what do you see as a success rate?

**Senator Ford:**

Twenty-seven other states have implemented some form of no-pass, no-drive. If your grade is not above a C, you will not get your driver's license. They may also attach school attendance to it. The National Conference of State Legislatures has provided information indicating the effects of these forms of bills are anecdotal. There is simply not enough evidence to put forth some statistical analysis to demonstrate the effectiveness. However, the anecdotes indicate that students who understand they cannot obtain their driver's license, or can have it removed, go to school a little more than they would have otherwise. I am confident this will demonstrate an improved attendance rate in our schools.

**Assemblyman Kirner:**

If I am truant and do not get to keep my license, might I drive anyway, and will that present a road hazard?

**Senator Ford:**

That very well may be the case. We do not have any evidence in that regard, but I imagine those are far and few between. This bill does not attempt to address every single ill out there. It provides an encouragement, for those students who we can encourage, to attend school. Their ability to get a driver's license hinges on attendance. There will be some who could care less about the lawful obtaining of a driver's license and do what they are going to do anyway. I think the vast majority of students will view this as an impediment that they cannot get around and would not be willing to break the law.

**Assemblywoman Swank:**

In section 5, I was surprised at how late the parents came into this process. They are not mentioned until an appeal. I feel as though they need a lot more engagement if their child's driver's license was going to be suspended.

**Senator Ford:**

We are certainly not advocating this as the only form of communication taking place in the schools. I get phone calls immediately when my kids do not go to school. The school district will be doing things simultaneously with the enactment of this particular statute. Those notifications about your kid missing from periods three through eight or three through six are going to be sent out periodically. By the time it gets to this level, we are talking about a habitual truant, not just someone who has missed two or three days of school, but someone who has been determined to be a habitual truant.

**Assemblywoman Swank:**

In section 5, subsection 4, when the order is issued to suspend the driver's license, I would like to see somewhere that it would also be in writing to the parents.

**Senator Ford:**

We would be happy to entertain an amendment in that regard.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

What was your reasoning behind limiting the child from getting their driver's permit? The driver's permit is the ability to learn how to drive and they cannot drive without a licensed person being in the car.

**Senator Ford:**

In section 5, subsection 1, paragraph (a) it says, "If it is the first time that administrative sanctions have been issued pursuant to this section because the pupil is a habitual truant, and the pupil is 14 years of age . . . ." This student is already a habitual truant at the age of 14. The notion of this bill is to attempt to encourage all students to attend school and to remove the opportunity for the privileges that the state provides, including drivers' privileges. That is the rationale behind that particular provision.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

There are kids, I do not know if the word "habitual" is placed in the letter, that are truant. My daughter has been truant for orchestra trips she has taken, and for whatever reason the teacher has not calculated how many times she has been out on a trip, or if she left to go on a legislative trip with me. She got a letter saying this was her second notice before she would be labeled truant. Although I caught it, there are parents who may not have seen the letter. I know you give the hearing and a chance to have that discussion, but I was wondering when we get into those situations, how do we eliminate that before we get to the order? You might need an exception there that says, "if error is found on the part of the school district, all of this is withdrawn."

**Senator Ford:**

Errors do occur and they will be found in the appeals process, and with the friendly amendment we are about to receive from Assemblywoman Swank to the notification process. In addition, the notifications the school sends to parents will detail what the opportunities are for correcting them. I understand some parents may not receive the notification, but this is also hand-in-hand with responsibility all around. Parents still have responsibility to ensure that absences listed as unexcused are taken care of. Your daughter's trip with the orchestra would not be considered an absence toward truancy unless it is not corrected.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

Section 5, subsection 4, paragraph (c), subparagraph (2), says, "Shall not treat the suspension in the manner statutorily required for moving traffic violations." I was not clear on that provision. What does that mean?

**Senator Ford:**

A student who comes under this provision will not have his driving record affected. When you get pulled over for a moving violation, your insurance company is notified and it might increase your insurance rate. These provisions detail what cannot occur by virtue of a student being subjected to this statute. We do not want unnecessary punishment.

Unnecessary punishment might be getting a ticket that is treated like a moving violation.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

In section 5, I did not see a provision in the bill where the student is labeled truant but within the 30 or 60 days has fixed their attendance. I see the provision where they go to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and provide paperwork to show they have attended school, but what about in between that time? You are not going to get your license, but you have fixed your attendance for 30 or 45 days.

**Senator Ford:**

If a student is brought under the provisions of this act, there are alternative presuspensions, or pre- not being able to get their license. This bill addresses *Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 392.147*, which says, "If an advisory board to review school attendance determines that the status of the pupil as a habitual truant can be adequately addressed through participation by the pupil in programs and services available in the community . . ." then we do not have to refer the pupil to the inquisition of sanctions under this act. If a student has been attending school, he will not come within the truancy provisions.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

That is not what I meant. You could have been truant and get notice that you are at risk of losing your license. If a student has cleaned up their truancy, is there a step that deals with rescinding the order?

**Senator Ford:**

After you have been declared truant and subjected to this act, you do not get your license for 30 or 60 days, as part of the deterrent for missing school.

**Assemblywoman Neal:**

In section 12, subsection 2, paragraph (b), regarding the restricted license provision, you said that it has medical and hardship language. I do not see a fiscal note on the bill, but the DMV is now in the position where they are determining what a hardship is. Why is it limited to just the medical condition?

**Senator Ford:**

It is not limited to just the medical hardship. Section 13 addresses districts where it is impractical for a student not to drive because the distance to and from school is too far. It also provides provisions that a parent can submit a letter indicating the pupil is excused from compulsory attendance pursuant to other sections of the *Nevada Revised Statutes*.

**Chairman Anderson:**

When do you stop becoming a habitual truant? *Nevada Revised Statutes* 392.140 says, "Any child who has been declared a truant three or more times within one school year must be declared a habitual truant." I understand how that would work if you had one round of administrative sanctions. It does not specify what would happen if there are three more unexcused absences after the first round of administrative sanctions. Would that then trigger the second round?

**Senator Ford:**

The statute does contemplate that is what would happen. The notion is to keep these kids in school and hold them responsible and accountable.

**Chairman Anderson:**

There does not seem to be a clear process whereby you are not a habitual truant. It seems like once the barn door is open, it is open and there is no way to close it. Why is the insurance applicability in the bill in the first place? If it is not going to be used for ratings, why is it being reported?

**Senator Ford:**

The purpose is not to include it in a report, but to indicate to an insurance company that has the information that it cannot be used for underwriting purposes or other purposes as delineated in statute.

**Chairman Anderson:**

Since it is not going to be used for those purposes, why is it included at all? Why report it to the insurance companies at all?

**Senator Ford:**

The insurance companies have a right to know if a privilege has been revoked in terms of driving for purposes of having their insurance policy be enforced or rejected when it comes to auto accidents because someone is driving when they are not supposed to be driving.

**Nicole Rourke, representing Clark County School District:**

I believe DMV pointed out that suspension of a driver's license is already reported to the insurance company. It does not impact the driving record.

**Chairman Anderson:**

Thank you. That was the answer I was looking for. In section 11, subsection 1, paragraph (d) regarding the reporting requirements, it is meant to go to the unrestricted licenses for students under the age of 18.

**Senator Ford:**

That is correct.

**Assemblyman Munford:**

Is there already a statute or policy regarding absences and losing credit after ten absences for the school year?

**Nicole Rourke:**

Yes, it is ten unexcused absences per semester.

**Assemblyman Munford:**

There are already things in place to send a message to students about how important and valuable it is to be in that seat every day. I think this is a good point if you want to add something else that affects student attendance and performance.

**Senator Ford:**

There are already requirements and punishments for attendance. Some of those have been less effective. What we intend with this bill is to touch those who have already come close to that drop-out statistic and entice them back into the classroom. The ten absences per semester does not appeal to them as a sufficient enough reason to come to class. Maybe a driver's license will. We bring them back in and are able to increase our graduation rate.

**Assemblyman Munford:**

You are affecting their social life by taking the car from them. That matters a lot to young people today.

**Assemblyman Duncan:**

In the process of making this bill, did you also think about linking it to grades?

**Senator Ford:**

Yes, I did think about it. I opted not to pursue it at this time. There may be several reasons why a student's grades are suffering that are difficult to deal with in this legislation. For me to be comfortable with presenting that form of legislation, I would need more information about how we would address some of these things. You may have special education needs associated with it, or several other issues that are difficult to address through this legislation. That is not to say that next time I come back, I may have that as an option.

When I was in seventh grade in Texas, Ross Perot started advocating "no pass, no play." You could not play sports if you did not pass your classes. There was a big uproar in a number of communities about that; how it would

ultimately hurt people more than it would help. Now it is a staple of existence when it comes to playing sports. It has increased academic performance. It could very well be we do not need no pass, no drive here, because if it is no go to school, no drive, it is sufficient.

**Assemblyman Stewart:**

I think there are enough protections by teachers and principals who want these students to come back, that it will not be abused. I think this is a good bill and I am in favor of it.

**Chairman Anderson:**

In section 5, are there any notice requirements before the investigation starts? Is that anywhere else in statute when there is a truancy issue? If there are not any notice requirements to declare someone a habitual truant, I think that might be necessary.

**Nicole Rourke:**

I am not sure if it is in statute, but we certainly do follow a process for notifying parents when students are absent from school and at risk for being considered habitual truants as indicated by the letters Assemblywoman Neal referenced earlier.

**Chairman Anderson:**

Before we put someone up for an investigation or hearing we should have some notice first. It would make it more legally sound, too. Excused absences versus unexcused absences: if a parent sends a letter stating they are taking their child on a family vacation or to a funeral, is that taken care of as far as absences?

**Nicole Rourke:**

An excused absence requires a note from the parent or a call to the school to explain the situation. I do not know if that covers vacations, but it would cover other circumstances such as a family funeral.

**Senator Ford:**

Last week, Take Your Child to Work Day was observed. Every year my kids have been able to come with me and all I have to do is fill out the form. They would not be declared a truant because of that. That would be an excused absence that would fall under the purview of this particular statute.

**Chairman Anderson:**

I just wanted to double-check on that and create that record. If anyone was wondering later what we were thinking, it is unexcused absences. It is not directly referenced in the bill, it references other statutes that deal

with attendance. Are there any other questions from Committee members?  
[There were none.]

**Nicole Rourke:**

When we have discussions about Nevada's graduation rate, the question is always what are the school districts going to do about it? [Continued to read from written testimony ([Exhibit P](#)).] We appreciate Senator Ford extending the original deadline for the effective date to allow us time to let students and parents know about the bill and the requirements, as well as automating the process for our principals and schools. We fully accept the responsibility to educate our students, but we cannot teach them if they are not in our schools. For this reason, the Clark County School District supports S.B. 269 (R1).

**Assemblyman Aizley:**

Have you done anything to work on positive reinforcement to get the truants to attend school? Maybe if you gave them \$10 every time they showed up, you would get a better result than if you took something away from them.

**Nicole Rourke:**

While we are not paying our students to come to school, we do have a number of positive reinforcement measures in place. Schools individually run all kinds of attendance programs. There are awards for perfect attendance. We have also tried mock court in some of our schools that have higher truancy issues than others. Through those programs there are a number of incentives provided.

**Assemblywoman Cohen:**

In section 8, subsection 3, there is reference to participation in programs and services available in the community for truants. Can you give me a brief overview of those programs?

**Nicole Rourke:**

We currently have a truancy diversion program in a number of different schools. Students come before a judge, who could be a real judge or an attorney acting as a judge in that instance. Students make their case, explaining why they have not been in school, and the judge sets forth different benchmarks for that student to attain or earn certain incentives, et cetera. That is an example of a more successful program. We have worked with our juvenile courts in the past on a number of different options.

**Chairman Anderson:**

Is there anyone else in Carson City or Las Vegas wishing to testify in support of S.B. 269 (R1)?

**Christine Miller, representing the Nevada Association of School Boards:**

I serve as president of the Nevada Association of School Boards as well as on the Storey County Board of Trustees. I am here to support S.B. 269 (R1). [Continued to read from written testimony ([Exhibit Q](#)).]

**Lonnie Shields, representing the Nevada Association of School Administrators:**

We would like to commend Senator Ford for bringing forth this bill and for working with us very closely on how to handle the administrative portion of it. We are confident we can handle that job and bring it to fruition without overburdening the system. I think it is key here to remember the term is "habitual truant." It is a student who is not in school anymore and it does not look like he is planning to return. This could be just the thing we need to get him back to school.

**Steven Augspurger, representing the Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees:**

We are here to support S.B. 269 (R1). We appreciate Senator Ford's effort in bringing it forward and his willingness to work on concerns we originally had with the bill. We are supporting it in its amended form. We would like to mention that in section 4, the original language outlined the duties for the principal associated with this activity. It has been amended to include a designee as well. In section 5, the language outlines the appeal process by the parents. Originally the appeal was to be made to the principal of the school. Our concern at the time was that it was a legal process, a citation issued by a police officer, and it went to a juvenile justice court. We felt the appeal would be better handled by a designee determined by the school district. Two other issues we were concerned about have been resolved: One, the implementation date of July 1, 2015, which we think provides adequate notice for everyone to be on board; and two, the automation of this process. This is a simple process. If a student needs a letter that cites attendance, we ought to have an automated process and Clark County School District shares the concern. We are moving forward with a new computer system to make sure that process is automated and does not make an undue labor effort on the part of the school.

**Assemblyman Swank:**

How many students do we anticipate this impacting?

**Nicole Rourke:**

It would impact any student applying for a driver's license. The Clark County School District reported 1,400 habitual truants last year.

**Senator Ford:**

That is what I was about to say. I understood your question to be how many habitual truants that would affect. Whatever the dropout rate is, 40 percent, that is who we are trying to get at. We are trying to hold them accountable.

**Chairman Anderson:**

To be clear, every student 14 to 17 years old will have to get a piece of paper signed off so they can apply for their driver's license. Are there any other questions from Committee members? [There were none.] Is there anyone else in Carson City or Las Vegas wishing to testify in support of S.B. 269 (R1)? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in Carson City or Las Vegas who wishes to testify in opposition to S.B. 269 (R1)?

**Calli Fisher, representing Washoe County School District:**

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this proposal. We appreciate the bill sponsor's recognition of the importance of attendance on student achievement. [Continued to read from written testimony ([Exhibit R](#)).]

**Chairman Anderson:**

Do you think it would motivate parents to get involved? Maybe parents need their kids to help out with the responsibilities of the household.

**Calli Fisher:**

I think that is an option. Our conversations with staff have evolved around dealing directly with the students, and they do not see this is going to trigger them to change what they are doing. They feel dealing directly with parents to identify a child's issues has been most effective for us.

**Chairman Anderson:**

Can you tell me the number one reason students are truant or become habitually truant?

**Calli Fisher:**

It would be a personal guess. I will talk to staff and get back to you.

**Chairman Anderson:**

We all agree with the goal of getting students back to school. It is something we should have on the record.

**Assemblyman Aizley:**

Do you have any examples of success taking the habitual truant, finding out the cause, and getting him back to school? Is there any data to support that?

**Calli Fisher:**

Staff have said the most beneficial practice is to sit down with the family and child and identify why the student is not at school. I am happy to get with the teachers to see if we have data on the issue for the 150 annual incidents we have.

**Assemblyman Munford:**

Students that are most targeted as a habitual dropout are not usually in that socio-economic level and probably do not have access to a car. Is that what you were saying?

**Calli Fisher:**

Yes. We are not sure if what we are taking away from them is necessarily something they would have to begin with based on the students we see who are habitual truants.

**Chairman Anderson:**

Are there any other questions from Committee members? [There were none.] Is there anyone else in Carson City or Las Vegas wishing to testify in opposition to S.B. 269 (R1)? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in Carson City or Las Vegas wishing to testify in neutral to S.B. 269 (R1)? [There was no one.] Senator Ford, would you like to make a closing statement?

**Senator Ford:**

I will acknowledge this is an unabashed and unapologetic effort to hold students accountable. We cannot educate them if they are not in the classroom. Washoe County apparently has 150 habitual truants. Clark County has over 1,400 habitual truants. We need to make certain our students understand there are benefits tied to school attendance. A driver's license can be one of them. This legislation has the appropriate number of safeguards to ensure those students who have appropriate reasons for missing school can be addressed. We are happy to address Assemblywoman Swank's amendment. I urge you to support this legislation. This bill came out of our Committee unanimously, and it came out of our chamber the same way.

**Chairman Anderson:**

Are there any other questions from Committee members? [There were none.] We will close the hearing on S.B. 269 (R1). Is there any public comment?

**Assemblyman Stewart:**

Over the weekend, our colleague Assemblywoman Cohen, was mentioned in her alumni publication for her success.

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**Chairman Anderson:**

Congratulations, Assemblywoman Cohen. Is there any other public comment?  
[There was none.]

The meeting is adjourned [at 5:28 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Jacque Lethbridge  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson, Chairman

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

**EXHIBITS**

**Committee Name: Committee on Education**

**Date: April 29, 2013**

**Time of Meeting: 3:15 p.m.**

<b>Bill</b>	<b>Exhibit</b>	<b>Witness / Agency</b>	<b>Description</b>
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster
S.B. 345 (R1)	C	Senator Joyce Woodhouse, Clark County Senatorial District No. 5	Written testimony
S.B. 345 (R1)	D	Beth Wells, Executive Director, Nevada STEM Coalition	Written testimony
S.B. 345 (R1)	E	Beth Wells, Executive Director, Nevada STEM Coalition	Principles for STEM Policy Advocacy
S.B. 345 (R1)	F	Beth Wells, Executive Director, Nevada STEM Coalition	Nevada STEM Coalition Report and Strategic Plan 2013
S.B. 345 (R1)	G	Mark Newburn, Member, State Board of Education	Written testimony
S.B. 345 (R1)	H	Christine Miller, representing the Nevada Association of School Boards	Written testimony
	I	Barbara Clark, President, Board of Trustees, District C, Washoe County School District	Advisory Council on Family Engagement presentation
	J	William T. "Toby" Holmes, Principal, Oran K. Gragson Elementary School, Clark County School District	Advisory Council on Family Engagement brochure No. 1
	K	William T. "Toby" Holmes, Principal, Oran K. Gragson Elementary School, Clark County School District	Advisory Council on Family Engagement brochure No. 2
S.B. 309 (R1)	L	Senator Patricia Spearman, Clark County Senatorial District No. 1	Written testimony

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S.B. 309 (R1)	M	Senator Patricia Spearman, Clark County Senatorial District No. 1	<i>Bloomberg Businessweek</i> article
S.B. 309 (R1)	N	Morgan Fisher, Intern, Senator Spearman	Written testimony
S.B. 269	O	Senator Aaron D. Ford, Clark County Senatorial District No. 11	Written testimony
S.B. 269 (R1)	P	Nicole Rourke, representing Clark County School District	Written testimony
S.B. 269 (R1)	Q	Christine Miller, representing the Nevada Association of School Boards	Written testimony
S.B. 269 (R1)	R	Calli Fisher, representing Washoe County School District	Written testimony