

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

**Seventy-Eighth Session
March 9, 2015**

The Committee on Education was called to order by Chair Melissa Woodbury at 3:15 p.m. on Monday, March 9, 2015, in Room 3142 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 4401 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/App/NELIS/REL/78th2015. In addition, copies of the audio or video of the meeting may be purchased, for personal use only, through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (email: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775-684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Melissa Woodbury, Chair
Assemblyman Lynn D. Stewart, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Elliot T. Anderson
Assemblyman Derek Armstrong
Assemblywoman Olivia Diaz
Assemblywoman Victoria A. Dooling
Assemblyman Chris Edwards
Assemblyman Edgar Flores
Assemblyman David M. Gardner
Assemblyman Pat Hickey
Assemblywoman Amber Joiner
Assemblyman Harvey J. Munford
Assemblywoman Shelly M. Shelton
Assemblywoman Heidi Swank

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

None



GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Assembly District No. 17
Assemblywoman Ellen Spiegel, Assembly District No. 20

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

H. Pepper Sturm, Committee Policy Analyst
Kristin Rossiter, Committee Policy Analyst
Joan Waldock, Committee Secretary
Trinity Thom, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Tiffany Tyler, Ph.D., Chief Operations Officer, Nevada Partners, Inc.
Nicole Rourke, Executive Director, Government Affairs, Community and
Government Relations, Clark County School District
Liberty Leavitt, Graduation Initiative Coordinator, Community and
Government Relations, Clark County School District
Henry Thorns, President, Hen-Hen Dogcatchers Foundation, Las Vegas,
Nevada
Curtis Coleman, Founder/President, Save Our Sons, Las Vegas, Nevada
Bruce Soares, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Marlene Lockard, representing Nevada Women's Lobby
Jaclyn Sicilia, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School
Superintendents
Lindsay Anderson, Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County
School District
Stephen Augspurger, representing Clark County Association of School
Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees
Steve Canavero, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement,
Department of Education
Ed Uehling, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Brian Patchett, M.P.A., M.S., C.R.C., President/CEO, Easter Seals Nevada
Bobbi Gang, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada
Janice Flanagan, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada
David W. Carter, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada
Erin McMullen, representing Communities in Schools of Nevada
Nick Vassiliadis, representing R&R Partners Foundation, Las Vegas,
Nevada
Sam Lieberman, Government and Community Relations Specialist, Easter
Seals Nevada

Chair Woodbury:

[Committee protocol and rules were explained. Roll was called.]

I will open the hearing on Assembly Bill 205. Assemblyman Thompson is here to present.

**Assembly Bill 205: Creates the Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring.
(BDR 34-116)**

Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Assembly District No. 17:

I represent mainly the City of North Las Vegas and a few county islands. I have a brief PowerPoint presentation on mentoring that has been uploaded to the Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS). Then I will walk you through the bill. Lastly, I will open it up to supportive testimonies in Carson City as well as Las Vegas. [Read from slideshow ([Exhibit C](#)).]

I want to give you an overview of some of the larger projects or viewpoints throughout our state about mentoring. Clark County School District is the fifth-largest school district in the country. In this school district we have 320,000-plus students. They have an umbrella initiative called "Reclaim Your Future" that is geared toward mentoring. The Stay in School program is specifically for elementary and middle school; the Graduate Advocate program is trying to reach out to those students who are credit-deficient, to get them back on track so that they can graduate on time, improving our graduation rate. Washoe County does not have this program but is very interested in a model such as Reclaim Your Future, which may be discussed a little bit later. Lastly, in rural communities, as we know, there are mentoring programs. [Returned to reading from ([Exhibit C](#)).] Defining statewide mentoring standards is very important for communities to receive dollars that can be shared with mentoring programs. We need those resources to keep things going. Defined and established mentoring standards, procedures, and ways in which we can help build capacity are important. One big part of this advisory commission is to help recruit community volunteers. Something I hear that disturbs me is that national statistics show that Nevada does not volunteer well. I would definitely love to prove differently. Many of us here know that is not the case. We volunteer a lot in our state. Lastly, the Commission will be composed of diverse stakeholders. We always hear that it takes a village, and it truly does. We want to ensure that our business and faith-based communities, educators, and people in our neighborhoods are a part of this process. That concludes my presentation. I will move on to the bill.

Section 2 of Assembly Bill 205 establishes the Commission. Throughout the document, the Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring will be referred to as

the "Commission." Section 3 notes the Commission membership, which is a diverse group of people within our state. There will be three positions appointed by the Governor. We will also have representation from a school district superintendent or his designee from a school district in a county with a population of 700,000 or more, and from one with a population of less than 700,000 but more than 100,000. We will have a member appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate, one by the Speaker of the Assembly, one by the Minority Leader of the Senate, and one by the Minority Leader of the Assembly. Four members will be appointed: two from the Juvenile Justice Commission under the Division of Child and Family Services of the Department of Health and Human Services, and two positions will be filled by members of the business community, specifically those businesses that are focused on mentoring. Section 3 also discusses how vacancies will be filled and compensated—no one will be paid, but there will be a per diem allowance and travel expenses available, if needed.

Section 4, subsection 5, talks about the appointment of a Mentorship Advisory Council consisting of five members, representing organizations that provide mentorship programs throughout the state. This is important to ensure that the Commission remains focused on its mission and goals. The last thing we need to do is have a commission established and really not meet the marks and needs of mentoring groups.

Section 4, subsection 6, deals with accountability, the reporting that will go to the Governor. There will also be reports that will be given to the Legislature when we are in session, and to the Legislative Commission when we are out of session.

Section 5 will have an amendment. I have had discussions with a few of my colleagues. The amendment will read, "The Commission shall, within the scope of its duties, support and facilitate mentorship programs that exist in this state for the purpose of addressing issues relating to education, health, criminal justice, and employment with respect to children. Yet, an emphasis will be on those disproportionately at risk of: (1) being deprived of the opportunity to develop and maintain a competitive position in the economy; and (2) failing to make adequate yearly progress in a school." We are removing "public school" only. We want it to deal with children in the various types of schools that we have in our state. Really important will be those right on the cusp of entering into our juvenile justice system. We want to put that mentor in as a diversionary method.

Section 5, subsection 1, paragraph (a), focuses on capacity-building and recruitment of volunteers. In southern Nevada, these efforts have already been

started through various workshops, community think tanks, and the My Brother's Keeper initiative which will be highlighted by a speaker here today, Dr. Tiffany Tyler, with Nevada Partners, Inc. I am also happy to announce that Dr. Chris Stream of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), School of Environmental and Public Affairs will be joining these efforts. We have our Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) and UNLV establishment helping with the statewide mentoring standards and the business models that are noted in this section. That is an awesome partnership for us to have with the university system.

Section 6 of A.B. 205 talks about the terms of appointment for the Commission. On NELIS we have letters of support. We have one from Mr. Tony Sanchez ([Exhibit D](#)) who is with NV Energy. We went to high school together. It is great to see that he is still very involved in the community and to have that letter of support from a big industry. I am pleased and excited that Dr. Robert Green sent a letter of support ([Exhibit E](#)). Dr. Green was an educational advisor and a mentor for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I also have a letter from Mr. Brian Pauling ([Exhibit F](#)), who is the executive director and national president of the 100 Black Men of America, Inc. He was in Nevada but has been doing such great work that he has been promoted to be their executive director over all the 100 Black Men of America chapters. We have letters from Mr. Joe Jones ([Exhibit G](#)) and ([Exhibit H](#)), who is the local chapter president of the 100 Black Men of America in Las Vegas. Here in Carson City, we will have Dr. Tiffany Tyler from Nevada Partners, Inc., speak, and in Las Vegas, Ms. Liberty Leavitt with the Clark County School District. You will also hear from Ms. Nicole Rourke. I have worked closely with Ms. Leavitt and Ms. Beverly Mason on the A.B. 205 concept as they head up the partnership office that is in dire need of getting volunteers to be mentors. This commission is not going to be a program, but truly a commission that helps support and sustain a lot of our programs.

Within the Clark County School District, there exists a great background check process. When people come in and say they want to be mentors, they go through an extensive background check. They then are required to mentor for at least one hour a week.

I also have Mr. Henry Thorns, the founder and executive director of Hen-Hen Dogcatchers Foundation, which is a grassroots organization that has been around for 33 years. They provide sports and mentoring in our community. Lastly, I have Mr. Curtis Coleman, co-founder of Save our Sons, which addresses the high rates of men of color that have been gunned down in our communities. He will be speaking as well.

Assemblyman Armstrong:

Mr. Thompson, I participated in a mentorship program while I was in high school. It was a great opportunity for me. You said that there would be an amendment that emphasizes the "socioeconomically-disadvantaged child," rather than identifying it. I wonder about the average student. Are we excluding middle class children, the average students?

Assemblyman Thompson:

No. That is what my amendment is centered around. We are removing the term "socioeconomic." We will use the phrase "with respect to children," meaning we include all children; however, it is very important as a state that we hone in on the three key areas: those deprived of the opportunity to develop and maintain a competitive position in the economy; those who are doing poorly in school—that has no color or ethnic or cultural value to it; and those who are right on the verge of entering our juvenile justice system. These are going to be our focus areas. In essence, it meets all of the kids within our state, regardless of their economic background.

Assemblyman Armstrong:

I see those keys as limiting toward the focuses program, where it should be a mentoring program for all children, because all children can benefit from a mentoring program.

Assemblyman Thompson:

I will work with the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) on the wording. The point that I want to get across is that this is an inclusive program, for every and any child. We are not going to turn a child away from mentoring. What we are saying is that we need to focus on these three key areas because it has a lasting effect on the various systems within our state if we do not address them as immediately as others.

Tiffany Tyler, Ph.D., Chief Operations Officer, Nevada Partners, Inc.:

I am pleased to be here on behalf of My Brother's Keeper, in response to an invitation from Assemblyman Thompson, to give a few informational comments on the value of the mentoring Commission as described in A.B. 205. As the administrator for the local My Brother's Keeper initiative as well as the Graduate Advocate Initiative, I want to underscore the importance of establishing this Commission. As we seek to respond to the needs of youth, particularly those who are at an educational crossroads or are having formal affiliation with the criminal justice system, I can tell you overwhelmingly that mentoring has played a key role in turning the tide for the youth who would fall through the safety nets in our community. In the case of the Graduate Advocate Initiative, having a strong mentoring component, those youths with that support are graduating

at rates as much as 30 percentage points higher than the general student population. When we take into consideration who those youth are—aging out of foster care, homeless, pregnant and parenting, adjudicated, or youth with disabilities—with that population, mentoring and other interventions resulting in graduation rates higher than the general student population suggests that the power of mentoring is something that we should make consistent across our community.

The My Brother's Keeper initiative convened more than 40 mentoring organizations over the summer. We began to ask ourselves: How do we end the school-to-prison pipeline in some communities? How do we ensure that all youth have a viable opportunity to go off to a bright future? As a part of those meetings, we consistently discovered that there was great variation not only in terms of the types of programs they offered but even how they talk about their goals, standards, or expectations. An initiative designed to ensure there would be a community-wide network or support system in place to ensure that youths could receive intervention was a difficult task. We could not be certain about what the goals or outcomes would be as we enlisted parents to have their children participate. We looked at the capacity of organizations that greatly varied. Some were passionate and brought will but maybe not a formal background process, and others were in the work for a number of years and were using evidence-based models.

A significant challenge for us—as an agency tasked with administering a federal initiative—was the notion of return on investment and ways that ensure outcomes for youth on the one hand but also gaining enough information to invest in things that are really working. When we heard that there may be a commission put in place that would help us identify the continuum of support already taking place and begin a discussion about the expectations and hopes we could have for all youth who participate in mentoring, we were not only ecstatic but saw how it strategically responded to a number of issues addressed at that summit. Questions such as: What are some of the considerations? Should there be a formal selection process? How do you retain mentors? If someone receives mentoring from one place in the community, can we reasonably expect that will help him graduate, or go to college, or get a good job? Because those things are nebulous and ambiguous at best, a defined body that will take feedback from all the entities across our community providing that support or offering something under the guise of mentoring is critical on a number of fronts. We want to be certain as we refer youth to a support or intervention that we say will make a difference in their lives that there is some way of quantifying that to ensure it happens consistently. Also, as new organizations or new mentors hope to begin the process of standing behind our youth, we want to make sure they have the support they need, even if it is just

basic expectations about how it would look for youth. Not only do I enthusiastically support this Commission, but it is needed, and it is time.

Nicole Rourke, Executive Director, Government Affairs, Community and Government Relations, Clark County School District:

We are here in support of A.B. 205. As Assemblyman Thompson mentioned, our partnership office has worked with him on the wording of this bill, the Commission, and all the work that they do. If I may, I would like to invite Liberty Leavitt in Las Vegas to the table. She is our coordinator of mentoring programs in our school-community partnership office. She works with these programs every day, matching mentors and partners in our community with mentee students in our schools to encourage graduation and academic performance.

Liberty Leavitt, Graduation Initiative Coordinator, Community and Government Relations, Clark County School District:

We have been working closely with Assemblyman Thompson, and we greatly do support this bill. I run all of the mentoring programs. To give you an idea of what our programs entail—going along with what you were talking about, Assemblyman Armstrong—at the elementary and middle school levels is our Stay in School Mentoring Project. We target the students we see slipping through the cracks. This is a preemptive action. If people want to work with these children, we need them to come in and help them get them on track socially and academically. At the high school level, we currently work with people like Dr. Tiffany Tyler, and with seniors who are credit-deficient and need an extra hand to help push them through. These are also students that meet the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 standards under the U.S. Department of Labor.

It is important for you to understand programs and the process involved when we talk about the Commission. We recruit mentors through various activities including Take Back the City, Chamber of Commerce events, and Rotary Club meetings. Once we recruit those mentors, they have to go through extensive training with me. We then do an extensive nationwide background check. Once they meet with me and I okay them, we will place them in the appropriate school. Our program requires participation of an hour a week, every week, at the same time, on the same day, for the entire school year. Many of the students do not have the consistency that they need to have in their lives, and we try to provide that. At the elementary- and middle-school level, we hope that these mentors will want to stay on for the following year. They can follow their mentee throughout the program.

Right now I have about 250 volunteers at the elementary-school and middle-school levels and about 60 at the high-school level. I have so many students that need mentors. I see a lot of groups that are doing fantastic things. My program enables you to come into our schools. I have checked you out legally, I know that you are okay to be in our schools, and I am giving you a consistent basis to meet with our students. Those are my programs. I think A.B. 205 is a wonderful opportunity for us to set standards for our mentors and to retain them in continued programs like the Graduate Advocate Initiative (GAI) program that I currently work on with Dr. Tyler.

Henry Thorns, President, Hen-Hen Dogcatchers Foundation, Las Vegas, Nevada:

It is an honor to be here to tell you what the Dogcatchers Youth Foundation has been doing in the community for 33 years. I was born here in Las Vegas, Nevada. I attended Matt Kelly Elementary School, Hyde Park Middle School, Ed W. Clark High School, and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), played professional football in Canada, came back to Las Vegas, and started a mentor program called the Dogcatcher Youth Foundation. I found out the youths in our community were being left out in sports, so I started sports the first year, 1982. I was a sophomore in college at UNLV. I came back to our community to stop gangbanging, fighting, snatching purses, breaking into houses, and things like that. My goal was to bring the gang members together. That is what we have done for 33 years. Crime has come down because of people like the woman who spoke, Mr. Coleman, and people at Nevada Partners. We need help. As you see, every day there is a drive-by shooting. It is not the gangbangers shooting anymore; it is the police officers shooting nowadays. We need to bring our community together.

I am a little nervous and I usually do not get nervous. Today I saw something on TV that was really shocking. The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is recruiting our children. They are not recruiting in the rich neighborhoods; they are recruiting poor children. If poor children do not have a chance of an outlet, what do you think they are going to do? We are looking for a chance to save these children. We are asking you legislators to not look at sports as sports. I have used sports to get at least 5,000 youths to college. Once you get sports, you can mentor, you can teach young people how to be leaders, you can teach them to be great students. Not only do we help them, we help their parents, uncles, and aunties too. They all come and join us. We become one village. I would like to invite you all to come see. I am not just talking, I can show you. A lot of young men have come through my program. We help everybody. I have not turned down a single person. I love everybody. I am sorry that some are rich, that some are poor, and that some have to ask for

assistance. I wish they did not; I wish I did not. I appreciate you for listening to me. I hope you will support A.B. 205.

Assemblyman Munford:

Mr. Thorns, I want to commend you for the hard work you have done in the community. I have followed you for years, even when you were competing in athletics yourself. I hope that you and I can work together to solve some of the problems in our community. I know you have been a lifelong resident of the community. You have done an outstanding job. This is your time to be recognized. You have been the best-kept secret in the community. I remember when I was coaching against you; I used to beat you all the time.

Henry Thorns:

Mr. Munford, it is a testimony to you because the students you taught are the ones who came back into the community and mentored. That is a great thing. I am a child of the 1960s. I watched Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcom X, Marcus Garvey, John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan; I watched all the great leaders. Ronald Reagan was a great guy. It is not about colors and such; it is about haves and have-nots. Let us all get together and help America. Let us help our people. That is what it is all about. Today on Facebook all my friends from Clark High School and Hyde Park have written to me because of the things going on in the community. Pat Island said, "I remember you. I met you at Hyde Park, where I met Dan Vereen. Those were the greatest times I ever had in my life. That is when black people and white people came together as one, in unity. We never saw color." That is what I am saying here—put aside color and everything that divides us, and let us help people.

Curtis Coleman, Founder/President, Save Our Sons, Las Vegas, Nevada:

Save Our Sons is a local, nonprofit organization that helps youth of our community to be better citizens. We give them a tool to be successful in the workplace. Mentoring is vital to the things we do in our day-to-day operations to support the youth to become good adults in our community. On behalf of Save Our Sons, we support Assemblyman Thompson's bill and ask that you pass it so that we can get some mentors out here to help the youth.

Bruce Soares, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

Mentoring can take many forms. I am not patting myself on the back for having been a mentor, but I was a coach. We had a program that was about a very high level of success in basketball, but we also had very high standards. I know Assemblyman Munford from way back in his days at Clark High School. Mentoring does not have to be organized. My experience was relatively short. My coaching experience was with my children, but it also helped other children. My hat is off to Mr. Thorns for he has passed the test of time. He has been

there and has done a lot of good things. There are numerous coaches who run programs.

I am involved with a program at my church, St. James the Apostle Catholic Church in the heart of the traditional west side community. We have an organization called the Knights of Peter Claver, similar to the Knights of Columbus. We have a junior knights division which is made up of young men and women. The young men are paired with older men; the young women are with older women. The program is based on religion, faith, family, and tradition—it is based on the American dream. It can involve subtle things, teaching a young man who may or may not have a male figure in his life how you tie a knot in a necktie. That seems like a minor thing, but it is something a young man needs to learn. Informally, we teach youth that when you say you are going to be somewhere at a certain time, you are there. You are responsible. You know that you have homework. Whether you have a single mom, a single dad, two parents, or grandparents, when they ask you what you learned today, it is unacceptable to say, "Nothing." Hopefully, it is something good you will have learned. I have a high passion for education. It is all about helping those who need help, not predicated on your socioeconomic status. There are, pardon the expression, rich brats out there who could just as well use mentoring. With my teams, if you could play ball and put up with me (not necessarily in that order), there was a spot for you on my team. Assemblyman Thompson knows rather well what a hard coach I was, but we were extremely successful. Not to blow my horn but to show what the students did with proper direction, we took sixth in the nation out of a competition of fifty-some teams, all of which had deeper pockets than ours. These are our children. They deserve whatever opportunities we help fill the gaps with. It would be nice if everyone had a mom, a loving dad, and a grandparent support system, but that is not reality. We should look deep inside our own hearts to help all the children we can help. They are, indeed, our future.

Chair Woodbury:

Assemblyman Thompson, we have heard a lot testimony about how wonderful mentorship programs are. I think we all agree that they help youth a lot. How would creating the Commission outlined in A.B. 205 make them better?

Assemblyman Thompson:

Firstly, it places a value on mentoring throughout our state. Secondly, there are a lot of these programs that need capacity-building help. The Commission would help with these models, as explained in the bill. It will continue to drive this effort to permeate the state. This whole session, there will be much discussion about education. This is a very strong link that needs to be part of

all that we do. I am sure that everyone sitting here can say that there is someone significant from the community that provided that support for them, without whom the outcome of their lives would have been very different.

Assemblywoman Shelton:

All these mentoring programs we already have are doing such a great job that I am worried about some of the language in this bill. Is this allowing the state to come in and change the good that they are doing when it says that it can, "establish model guidelines and parameters." I do not want the state to come in and destroy what they have been doing.

Assemblyman Thompson:

First of all, this is all going to be voluntary. It is not saying that every mentoring program in the state must abide by what the Commission does. The Commission is going to be doing some great work to try to get some resources and dollars. You have heard in testimony that resources and grant dollars are scarce. We are bringing businesses on board that have a vested interest in our youth. We have to continue to capacity build for them. It will not be detrimental to mentoring groups; it will be a help for their efforts. Dr. Tyler talked about the 40 mentoring groups she consistently works with. One of the top issues those groups have is that they want to enhance their structure. They want to make sure they endure, like Mr. Thorns with Dogcatchers. They are looking to make themselves stronger. They are bringing in more children, so they will need more resources.

Assemblywoman Shelton:

If the Commission decides that Program A is not working well, and recommends that a mentoring program stop using Program A, if that mentoring group wants to continuing using Program A, would they still be allowed to use it?

Assemblyman Thompson:

Absolutely. Some organizations that are not even 501(c)(3) organizations approached me, concerned this might be a takeover from the state. That is not the intent. If an organization is truly grassroots, or works out of their home, we want to continue to encourage them to do so. By our keeping data and knowing where the true gaps are, we can know what dollars we need to help support as many of these programs as possible. As you see in the write-up of A.B. 205, the Commission will have the ability to accept gifts and funding.

Assemblyman Edwards:

I like the change you made in the language. It takes us a long way to being as inclusive as we were talking about earlier. Taking out "public schools" was an

additional benefit. I look forward to the final tweaks you will be working on with the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB). I think we can move this forward.

Assemblyman Thompson:

Assemblyman Edwards was one of the people who came to my office this morning to talk with me. I appreciate that conversation; it was important.

Chair Woodbury:

Assemblyman Thompson, if you have no one else to testify, I will call for general testimony in support. If anyone is in support of A.B. 205, please come forward.

Marlene Lockard, representing Nevada Women's Lobby:

We want to commend Assemblyman Thompson for his work on this bill. We strongly support this measure.

Jaclyn Sicilia, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am here representing Freedom Fighters, which is an after-school program I began because I saw a huge need for it in the Clark County School District. I was a long-term substitute teacher for two years. In those two years, I saw that the number one thing that students lacked was mentorship. At that time, I did not call it mentorship. I was trying to figure out what it was the students lacked. I asked myself over and over, "What can I do to make a difference?" I started a reading and writing club in the summer. In the summer of 2013 I saw the big difference it made for the seven young ladies to be together three days a week. Their lives were changed. They recommitted to school and to each other. The program in and of itself grew into a year-round program. Now it is a mentorship program in which I work with these young ladies from different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. This needs to be all-inclusive. I spoke with Assemblyman Thompson, in full support of the bill, seeing the great potential it has. Mr. Thompson wants to help as many youth in the community as possible through as many mentorship programs as possible.

Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents:

We are in support of A.B. 205, and think this Commission can give a helping hand to anyone who wants to take advantage of the help it can give to organizations trying to mentor our students. We have children in both urban and rural schools who can use the help.

Lindsay Anderson, Director, Government Affairs, Washoe County School District:

We are in support for all the reasons you have already heard.

Stephen Augspurger, representing Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-Technical Employees:

We, too, are in strong support of this program. All of us realize and understand the benefits that come from mentoring. This gives us an opportunity to do something with that, to extend those benefits to students who need it.

Chair Woodbury:

Is there anyone in support of A.B. 205 in Las Vegas? [There was no one.] I will take testimony in opposition to A.B. 205 in Las Vegas or in Carson City. [There was none.] Is there anyone who would like to testify as neutral?

Steve Canavero, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement, Department of Education:

I am not testifying neutral for mentorship programs. We recognize the value that effective mentorship programs have in changing the lives of Nevada students. In the area of coordination, speaking from the agency that, if it is in *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) Chapter 385, would be overseeing or having the support role for this Commission, we currently oversee 13 councils, commissions, and boards. I would appreciate if we could set some time aside to meet with the Assemblyman so that we can see if the goals of this bill may be accomplished by integrating it with the State Board of Education. That might help him and the other sponsors of this bill gain what they are looking for out of this bill, rather than having another stand-alone commission.

Ed Uehling, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I am testifying against this bill. It looks like a program to correct what the government is already doing badly. All these problems cited are caused by government. The fact that common people do not have money is caused by paying bureaucrats \$2 million, \$3 million, \$4 million, \$5 million in their lifetimes. Where does that money come from? It comes from the populations at the lower end of the economic scale. When children are not allowed to work because it is cheaper to hire older people to work in fast food establishments and other places, it is caused by government. Now we are going to create another government commission to take care of the problems created by the government already. The ideology behind this and the approach has a likelihood of creating more problems, in my view. Why not use the existing mentorship programs, encourage people to donate to those, and have those programs grow? Let us deal with the other issues about where all the money is going. We have school district people testifying that are probably making \$3 million in their lifetimes, and they are telling us that we have to have another program. In addition, they are teaching our children falsehoods, especially about sexuality, in the government schools. All these government programs and ideas are what create the problems, the components of which this program deals with.

Chair Woodbury:

Is there anyone else here to testify as neutral to A.B. 205? [There was no one.]
Assemblyman Thompson, would you like to make closing comments?

Assemblyman Thompson:

As you heard, there is dire need for mentoring in our state. There is great work being done by volunteers and organizations. Now is the time for us to have a coordinated statewide approach to mentoring. This can be accomplished by creating the Nevada Advisory Commission on Mentoring. This past Saturday, I attended a gala at which former Ambassador Andrew Young was the keynote speaker. He started off his speech with a statement that we must make the investment for our youth, otherwise we will continue paying for them on the back end, through social services, law enforcement, and the judicial system. I leave you with a quote from John C. Crosby, a legislator from the early 1900s, which I thought was appropriate. He said, "Mentoring is a brain to pick, an ear to listen, and a push in the right direction." I would encourage your support of Assembly Bill 205.

Chair Woodbury:

I will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 205 and open the hearing on Assembly Bill 206.

Assembly Bill 206: Revises provisions relating to certain notices provided to the parent or guardian of a pupil who attends a public school. (BDR 34-740)

Assemblywoman Ellen Spiegel, Assembly District No. 20:

I am especially pleased and honored to be with you today given that it is Children's Week here at the Legislature. Before we get into the details of this bill, I would like to explain its genesis to you. I have two stories to share with you. The first took place about two years ago. My husband and I were living in rental housing. Above us was an apartment that had eight or nine children living in it. One of the little girls decided that she wanted to adopt me as a friend and mentor. Between third and fourth grade, she organized the girls in the apartment complex. They came to me, asking if I would play teacher with them. What they wanted was remedial help. I did what any other childless person would do—I went on the Internet, found some workbooks, and said I would help. I began giving them remedial help in math and English. In doing this I discovered that the girl who came to me was having problems with her schoolwork—not because she was not bright, not because she was not interested, not because she was not motivated, but because she had a vision problem and could not see what was on the page. She could not read the book. She could not see the numbers in the math problems. When I asked her about

it, she said she had had glasses but they broke and her family could not afford to replace them. Because they had so many children to support, both parents worked two jobs. It was very difficult for her family. It was also difficult for me as a neighbor to try to figure out how to talk to her mother and what to say. My Spanish is not good, so that would have made it even more difficult. How do I do this without embarrassing the family, because the last thing I would want to do is embarrass somebody while trying to get them help for their children? While I was trying to figure out how to deal with the situation, the family moved so the point became moot. This was a girl who was motivated and energetic, and she had great organizational and leadership skills. She needed to be encouraged and needed help. As her neighbor, I was not able to provide that help. Her family was not able to provide it, either.

We fast-forward to last year, to Nevada Reading Week. I visited all the schools in my district, reading to children at each school. I was at Rowe Elementary School, which is in a fairly non-affluent area. The people in that part of town struggle. I was reading to a fourth-grade class. When I was halfway through the book, the teacher stopped me to tell me that over half the class struggled with literacy because they needed glasses. It was not that they were stupid or that they were not trying, it was not that she was not trying; her students could not see. She asked students who needed glasses but did not have them to raise their hands. Over half the class raised their hands. Thanks to Ms. Rourke at Clark County School District and the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB), glasses were donated for those students, but that is just one classroom in one school in Nevada. There are far too many children who need help.

I was at the eye doctor recently. For those of you who can see this little chart, it is kind of blurry. It says, "How can your children learn if this is what they see?" If they cannot see, they cannot be reading, writing, or learning arithmetic. How many children are failing just because they cannot see? I started talking to people. At the time, I did not know that groups like the Lions Club would provide resources and glasses to people who could not afford them. I came to find out that there are organizations in the community that can help with a wide variety of needs. In going door-to-door, talking to my constituents about this problem, I asked, "How do we deal with this?" One of my constituents came up with a great idea. She said, "The schools give the students vision tests. If a child fails the test, maybe the school could include with the note that says he failed a notice regarding where in the community you can go for free or reduced-price help, if that is what you need." That would make it possible for parents to help their children. Every family would get the information; nobody would be embarrassed.

When it came time to work on Assembly Bill 206, we broadened it because it is not just vision problems that keep our children from reading. Some have hearing problems or other problems that the school nurse or other professionals diagnosed. As a result, we included vision, hearing, scoliosis, and other physical defects that the school finds. As time went on, I became involved with some of the bullying bills you will be hearing about later this session. If somebody is found to have been bullied or is a bully, those children need help, too. The notes that go home with those investigations should include "Here is where we can get some help for your children." Parents do not know where to turn for help. If we can give them some direction, we can make a very big difference. All this bill does is say that if the school sends home a note, to the extent that resources are available and the school knows what they are, include that information in the note.

Assemblywoman Diaz:

This is more a comment. As a classroom teacher, I see this constantly. Some of my students start the year wearing eyeglasses. As the year progresses, they come in without them. When I ask where their eyeglasses are, they tell me, They are broken, and my parents cannot replace them. We know that can get in the way of their making academic gains. Dental care is also a big thing. Many of my students come in pain with lot of tooth decay. A lot of parents do not have the resources, the insurance, or the economic means to have their children treated. I value and appreciate this bill. I commend anything we can do to get help in the hands of parents to help their children and the teachers to continue the learning.

Chair Woodbury:

Is there anyone specific you brought to testify?

Assemblywoman Spiegel:

There are some people here that I have encouraged to testify.

Chair Woodbury:

If you are here to testify in support of A.B. 206, please come forward.

Brian Patchett, M.P.A., M.S., C.R.C., President/CEO, Easter Seals Nevada:

I am in support of this bill. Let me tell you a little bit about why. When I was seven years old, I started having trouble reading the chalkboard in my classroom at school. I could not figure out what that was all about. I went home and my parents were informed by the teachers that I was having trouble seeing. No matter how close I sat to the chalkboard, it did not seem to help. Because of some wonderful services that came about for my parents, I was eventually diagnosed with a visual disability that has left me legally blind. Throughout

school, that was a challenge. I experienced bullying when I was in junior high. Unfortunately, I handled it inappropriately, using my fists. The essence of this bill addresses what we deal with at Easter Seals every day—people call us looking for services because they do not know where to find them. They call us because they know we have a person at the front desk who speaks Spanish and we can find them services. So many parents do not know where they can look, or how to find organizations like Easter Seals or other organizations that can help. This is a tremendous commonsense bill that Assemblywoman Spiegel has put forward. It will have a huge impact on families once they know they can receive services.

Marlene Lockard, representing Nevada Women's Lobby:

Over the years, our lobby has worked with many voluntary organizations and other resources available to provide important assistance to women, children, and families in Nevada. We strongly support Assemblywoman Spiegel's legislation because we have worked to put this assistance in place. It only makes sense that everyone be made aware of where it is and how they can get help in certain areas.

Bobbie Gang, Private Citizen, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I was a lobbyist for the Nevada Women's Lobby for many years. That lobby supported the very first bullying bill that was before this Committee and has supported every amendment to that bill. I am here representing myself. I have daughters and grandchildren. I have seen my daughters struggle to try to find the resources necessary to help their children when they had problems in school. I cannot imagine what it must be like for parents who work full time. Now one of my daughters is working full time. She finds it very difficult to search for resources, make phone calls, and follow up during the workday. Having the school send these notices when a problem is identified is a very good idea. I hope you will support the bill.

Nicole Rourke, Executive Director, Government Affairs, Community and Government Relations, Clark County School District:

We fully support A.B. 206. We feel that we can provide a list of supportive resources in cooperation with our community partners along with our required notifications. Any time we do a screening, providing those resources would be appropriate.

Assemblyman Armstrong:

As a lawyer, I am concerned about things like the wording "to the extent that information is available." If information is not provided, would that open up a lawsuit or liability for the school district? If information was not provided and

that caused the student to get poor grades, is the school district going to be liable?

Nicole Rourke:

That has not been identified by my counsel, but I appreciate your bringing it to our attention. We can tighten up that language to ensure that it does not open us to lawsuits.

Janice Flanagan, Private Citizen, Reno, Nevada:

I am very pleased to see the anti-bullying component in this bill. Bullying, as you all know, is a serious problem for our children. If parents were provided with some access for support or advice, it would be a great help to the families. I support this bill.

David W. Carter, Private Citizen, Carson City, Nevada:

I support this bill. As an example, my lower-middle class family received such assistance when I was in school. I had a lazy eye. That means that I could be looking at you, Madam Chair, with my right eye and my left eye would be wandering over to the door by Assemblyman Munford. It was disconcerting to many people until I was able to get the training I needed. I was sent to specialists who, without surgery, were able to strengthen that eye through exercises over a two-year period—all because the school recognized there was a problem and knew people in the community that could provide that assistance. I think it is great when schools and families can work together like that.

Mary Pierczynski, representing Nevada Association of School Superintendents:

We are in support of the bill. If the language needs to be tightened up a bit to avoid litigation for schools, we are happy to work with the bill sponsor on that.

Erin McMullen, representing Communities in Schools of Nevada:

As most of you probably know, Communities in Schools' goal is to prevent dropouts by providing students with the resources that they need in order to be successful for school and for life. Many of the issues that they provide the resources for are the ones Assemblywoman Spiegel spoke of: hunger, vision, hearing, dental problems. We do this by collaborating with the school districts and community partners. Not only do we support this bill, we hope we can be a partner with the school districts to help provide that list of resources, as a number of our community partners already provide them.

Nick Vassiliadis, representing R&R Partners Foundation, Las Vegas, Nevada:

I have been before this Committee this session already, speaking about the anti-bullying provisions in other bills. We are very supportive of what Assemblywoman Spiegel is trying to do here. It is crucial for everyone to keep

in mind that this should be considered a component of parental engagement and involvement. A lot of times we want parents to become more involved, but we do not necessarily educate the parents in how they can get involved and help their students achieve academic success.

Sam Lieberman, Government and Community Relations Specialist, Easter Seals Nevada:

It is appropriate that you deal with these two bills together. Mentoring is the best way to alleviate bullying. Parental notification will be a big step in moving that process forward. Thank you for your consideration of both Assemblyman Thompson's and Assemblywoman Spiegel's bills.

Chair Woodbury:

Is there anyone else wishing to testify in support of A.B. 206? [There was no one.] Is there anyone in Las Vegas or Carson City wishing to testify in opposition to A.B. 206? [There was no one.] Is there anyone wishing to testify as neutral to A.B. 206? [There was no one.] Assemblywoman Spiegel, do you have any closing comments?

Assemblywoman Spiegel:

Thank you, especially, Assemblyman Armstrong, for your comments and your question. It is not the legislative intent to make the school districts vulnerable to lawsuits but to be able to get resources out to families. I will be working with Legislative Counsel Bureau staff, school districts, and others to make sure that we tighten up the language so that we can get resources to students without increasing liability.

Chair Woodbury:

I will close the hearing on Assembly Bill 206. We have one bill on work session today. Mr. Sturm will walk us through the work session document. If you are following along on the Internet, you can access this document on Nevada Electronic Legislative Information System (NELIS).

Assembly Bill 165: Establishes the Nevada Educational Choice Scholarship Program. (BDR 34-747)

H. Pepper Sturm, Committee Policy Analyst:

The measure authorizes the formation of scholarship organizations to provide grants for pupils of low-income families for attendance at schools of their choice in the state, including private schools. [Read from work session document ([Exhibit I](#)).]

In your work session document, there is a mock-up that follows these first two pages. The mock-up only contains sections 1 through 5. Amendment 6 is in conflict with one of the provisions in the mock-up. The mock-up itself, Proposed Amendment 9664, proposes to revise for the taxpayer concerning the approval of the application for credit against modified business tax from 10 days, as provided in the bill, to 30 days. [Continued to read from ([Exhibit I](#)).]

There was another amendment proposed by Mr. Victor Joecks that would have increased the \$10 million cap set forth in section 4, subsection (3), to \$100 million, but the mock-up itself only contains sections 1 through 5. Fiscal notes for the bill are the last few pages of the work session document.

Chair Woodbury:

Committee, do I have a motion?

ASSEMBLYMAN HICKEY MOVED TO AMEND AND DO PASS
ASSEMBLY BILL 165 WITH THE FIRST FIVE AMENDMENTS IN
THE MOCK-UP.

ASSEMBLYMAN ARMSTRONG SECONDED THE MOTION.

Assemblywoman Swank:

I need a clarification. The money for the tax credit—is this coming out of the General Fund or out of the State Distributive School Account? Do we have plans for analyzing the impact that this will have on the state budget in 2017 and ongoing years?

H. Pepper Sturm:

It is my understanding that, as amended, this would be \$5 million in revenue that eventually ends up in the State General Fund. It is not coming from that fund; it is a credit against what is owed by those businesses. Would you repeat your second question?

Assemblywoman Swank:

Are there plans to assess the impact on the state budget in the coming years for the money that would have gone into the General Fund and now will not?

H. Pepper Sturm:

My understanding is that this bill will likely go to the Assembly Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Committee on Taxation. They will take up that particular question. The fiscal note from the tax folks talks about what the maximum would be if the \$10 million or \$11 million figures were used.

Chair Woodbury:

If there is no further discussion, we will take a vote.

THE MOTION PASSED. (ASSEMBLYMEN ANDERSON, DIAZ,
FLORES, JOINER, MUNFORD, AND SWANK VOTED NO.)

Assemblyman Gardner will have the floor assignment.

On Wednesday, we will be hearing one bill, Senate Bill 101. We also have a work session. We are adjourned [at 4:35 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Joan Waldock
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Melissa Woodbury, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Committee Name: Committee on Education

Date: March 9, 2015

Time of Meeting: 3:15 p.m.

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster
A.B. 205	C	Assemblyman Tyrone Thompson, Assembly District No. 17	Slideshow presentation "Nevada Commission on Mentoring"
A.B. 205	D	Tony F. Sanchez / NV Energy	Letter of support
A.B. 205	E	Robert L. Green / My Brother's Keeper Initiative	Letter of support
A.B. 205	F	Brian L. Pauling / 100 Black Men of America	Letter of support
A.B. 205	G	Joe Jones / 100 Black Men of Las Vegas, Inc.	Letter of Support
A.B. 205	H	Joe Jones / 100 Black Men of Las Vegas, Inc.	Letter of Support
A.B. 165	I	H. Pepper Sturm / Committee Policy Analyst	Work session document