

**NEVADA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
NEVADA STATE BOARD FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

March 19, 2009

Department of Education
Board Conference Room
700 East Fifth Street
Carson City, Nevada

MINUTES OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CHARTER SCHOOLS – March 19, 2009

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dr. Cliff Ferry, Chair
Jan Biggerstaff, Member
Christopher Wallace, Member
Willia Chaney, Alternate

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT:

Dr. Keith Rheault, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Gloria Dopf, Deputy Superintendent, Instructional, Research and Evaluative Services
Bill Arensdorf, Director, Office of Fiscal Accountability
Tom McCormack, Consultant, Office of Fiscal Accountability
Doris Arnold, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent of Public Instruction

LEGAL STAFF PRESENT:

Dr. James E. Irvin, Deputy Attorney General

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:

Pam Abercrombie, Vice Chair, Indian Education Advisory Committee and Education Director, Yerington Paiute Tribe
Sandy Foster, Washoe County School District
Dr. John Hawk, Executive Director, Nevada State High School
Mark Brandon, Imagine School at Mountain View
Ricci Rodriguez-Elkins, Charter School Liaison, ETECHS
Mark Pingle, UNR Economics Professor and, Treasurer, ETECHS
Lee Ky Good, ETECHS
Jodie Anderson, Board Member, ETECHS

Call to Order; Roll Call

Chairperson Ferry called the meeting to order at 2:50 p.m. Roll call was heard and a quorum of four members was determined.

1. Application Status Review of the new application for Entrepreneurial-Technical & Engineering Charter School (ETECHS) for a Subsection 7 charter

Bill Arensdorf, Director, Office of Fiscal Accountability, explained ETECHS had submitted a similar application in October 2006 and had been granted a Subsection 7 Charter, but was not able to comply with finding a location for the school or had the financial backing to go forward. A new application was submitted in September 2008. The school was requesting to open in the fall 2009 with grades 9 and 10 and for an additional grade to be added each year until grades 9-12 was established. The school would provide a 1:1 ratio of student to computer technology education. Department staff learned upon review that there were a need in business to have students with more technological experience and that parental support would be an integral part of the school. Students would focus on engineering, health science, and computer technology. Higher standards would be set as students progressed to higher grade levels. Department staff recommendation was to grant a Subsection 7 charter.

Tom McCormack, Consultant, Office of Fiscal Accountability, noted school findings began on page 21 and 22 of Subcommittee packets and that a draft Subsection 7 charter was listed on page 31.

Mr. Arensdorf requested that the following e-mails from Mark Pingle, Michael Williams, and Ted Oleson be entered into the record:

Mark Pingle – “I am writing a quick note here in support of the E-TECHS Charter School application that will be considered at the State Board meeting this coming Thursday. (Ms. Arnold, I am told that you can forward this letter of support to the State Board members, so I would ask that you do so. Thank you) Back in about the year 2000, I worked with Keith Rheault, Dave Cook and many others on the team that developed the first set of economic standards for Nevada, within the social studies standards revision that occurred back then. Since that time, from my position at the University, I have worked with K-12 teachers and administrators on economic education. Recently, I expanded that effort to include entrepreneurial education and financial literacy. In particular, I am working with a group of entrepreneurs, educators, and government officials on an effort called Entrepreneurship Nevada, which seeks to enhance economic development and improve education by building a culture of entrepreneurship. Because I perceive the E-TECHS charter school as a fundamental cog in the Entrepreneurship Nevada effort, I have joined the E-TECHS board and am working with the many others who want to see this school become a reality. The school will provide a place where students who demonstrate an interest in entrepreneurship can focus on developing their abilities, providing a means for accelerating the production of young entrepreneurs. This school has significant community support, and a very experienced leader. Ricci Rodriguez has been the primary driver behind E-TECHS, and it is planned that she will become the school’s principal. Ricci has demonstrated an exceptional ability to organize a team, motivate, learn the hoops to jump through, and follow through to get things done. She is backed by a board that includes significant community leaders, a former UNR dean, and other experienced educators. I have every confidence that E-TECHS will hit the ground running and soon become a model charter school, providing our youth with an opportunity that is not currently provided. I ask you to support this valuable effort.”

Michael Williams – “This e-mail is in support of your approval of the Entrepreneurial-Technical & Engineering Charter High School (E-TECHS) becoming a charter school in Nevada. I have been elected this week to the Board of Directors of this new effort which should demonstrate my enthusiastic support of this venture. Unfortunately I cannot join you today or tomorrow at your hearings to speak for myself as I have a prior commitment to speak at a conference and with congressional staff in Washington D.C. Otherwise, I can assure you I would be in Carson City to try and secure your support for the approval of this very important charter school in Reno. I am the Vice President of Operations of the Regional Emergency Medical Services Authority

in Washoe County and the Dean of the International Center for Prehospital and Disaster Medicine located in Reno. Through both efforts, we strongly support the education of our children in the math and sciences and dedicate ourselves to secondary education that can help youngsters prepare themselves for the large number of open careers in the medical related fields. E-TECHS is a great opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills for those opportunities and, in particular, help fill a great need for careers that are in great demand in the State of Nevada. Please vote in support of this Entrepreneurial-Technical & Engineering Charter High School.”

Ted Oleson – “I am writing in support of the application by E-Techs for a school charter. I am the President of a local nonprofit organization, Sierra Nevada Journeys, which partners with schools providing experiential and place-based education in western Nevada and eastern California with emphasis on science. Our mission is to empower youth through positive risk-taking and experiential leadership, science and outdoor education. This past year, we worked with over 3000 students, teachers, and parents providing free or low cost programs for students and professional development for teachers. We have been in contact with the group development E-techs for several months and, pending their approval, anticipate that we will assist them with professional development for teachers, classroom activities for students, and possibly residential programs. We are excited by their educational philosophy and the potential to work with them on various educational opportunities in Northern Nevada. I encourage you to support their application and we look forward to working with them in the future.”

Regarding condition 4C listed on page 31, Mr. Arensdorf clarified the recommendation came from the Curriculum Department and was to allow developers to clarify why four literary indicators were omitted if literary texts were to be used in ecosystem study. He also noted the school would need to return for dual credit approval for students approaching the 11th grade.

Member Biggerstaff requested clarification that enrollment has already begun as listed on page 4. Mr. Arensdorf clarified the school has already begun recruitment, but has not received any DSA funding. He noted early enrollment was a good idea because the school would be eligible for an early DSA payment because they would be a first-year charter school. Member Biggerstaff asked if the dispute resolution listed on page 22 was normal in the contract. Mr. Arensdorf replied yes. Member Biggerstaff requested to know if there was a base standard that would reflect 20% improvement in writing over the next two years. Mr. Arensdorf stated he did not know, but the school was required to make adequate process. Member Biggerstaff noted, under emergency preparedness, it was listed to administer CPR upon death. She asked what was meant by “power school”. Mr. Arensdorf stated it was the department system for gathering student information.

The following ETECHS representatives introduced themselves: Ricci Rodriguez-Elkins, Charter School Liaison, ETECHS; Mark Pingle, UNR Economics Professor and, Treasurer, ETECHS; Lee Ky Good, ETECHS; and Jodie Anderson, Board Member, ETECHS.

In response to Member Biggerstaff’s questions, Ms. Rodriguez-Elkins explained the 20% improvement in writing would be measured by the student’s base line writing level at the time of enrollment; subject seminars would be held weekly and also in blocks. The seminars regarded foundational material for students working on projects; teachers would be trained before the new school begins in the BUCK Institute Method of Project Development; students would be charged for food and that funding would go to provide nutritious meals and to assist in some of the programs; they were required to list miscellaneous fees students may have to pay, but that fees were comparable to public school fees.

Member Chaney asked if a GPA would be required to attend the school. Ms. Rodriguez-Elkins replied no. The school was required to accept anyone who applies, according to state law and federal guidance, but the school

would talk to parents and students to determine if the school's curriculum was the proper learning environment for the student. Member Chaney requested to know if MOUs were in place to send students to achieve their objectives. Ms. Rodriguez-Elkins stated they did not yet, but they would be talking to businesses and have MOUs in place before the 9th and 10th graders begin job shadowing and the 11th and 12th graders begin internships. Member Chaney requested an update on a facility for the school. Ms. Rodriguez-Elkins reported a prospective facility was being investigated at this time.

Member Wallace commended the school's business aspect for students.

Chairperson Ferry congratulated the school on its curriculum. He requested to know if teachers have begun training. Ms. Rodriguez-Elkins stated teacher recruitment would begin on Monday after the school receives approval. Several applications have already been received. Training would begin in August. Chairperson Ferry encouraged the school to continue their project learning curriculum. He asked what was meant by place based learning expeditions. Ms. Rodriguez-Elkins explained it was hands-on learning in a community environment.

Members of ETECHS in attendance at today's meeting offered comments commending the school's curriculum to enhance business learning for students.

Member Chaney noted there had been concern about the textbooks being used for the ecosystem learning. Ms. Rodriguez-Elkins reviewed curriculum project samples that students would be taught.

Member Wallace moved to recommend approval of a Subsection 7 Charter for ETECHS with Department conditions. Member Biggerstaff seconded the Motion. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Review of charter school bills before the 2009 Legislature with possible recommendations by the Committee to the full Board, to include, but not limited to: AB 100; AB 181; SB 164; and BDR 297 *The Subcommittee on Charter Schools will discuss issues affecting charter schools under consideration by the 2009 Legislature, including, but not limited to, the above list of bills and bill draft requests. The Subcommittee may adopt a position and make a recommendation to the Board regarding the issues being considered to direct staff to take such a position before the 2009 Legislature, or take similar related actions pertaining to these issues.*

Dr. Rheault explained:

- AB100 was already approved by the State Board and heard by the Assembly Education Committee. There was one amendment to the Bill that allowed charter school students to participate in a public school activity in the district they reside even if not offered by their charter school.
- AB181 allows charter school board members to be paid similar to school district board members. The second portion clarifies 75% of 12th graders would have to pass required course work for graduation.
- SB164 was heard by Senate Health and Education and adopted by the committee yesterday. The one amendment listed on page 3 is to have one person nominated by a charter school sponsor rather than appointed. The collection of administrative fees was changed from a yearly collection to quarterly payments. The fourth portion clarifies charter schools are a part of the regional professional development program.
- BDR297 regarding the charter school institute has yet to be turned into Bill form.

Chairperson Ferry stated his report to the State Board would include discussing the charter school institute.

3. Public Comments

A. Dr. John Hawk, Executive Director, Nevada State High School, read the following statement into the record:

“My name is John Hawk and I am the Executive Director for Nevada State High School. I am asking for the following request to be put in public record and I will submit a copy to the Board's Secretary for Convenience. On January 15, 2009, Nevada State High School Governing Body approved for the school's administration to open a Satellite campus of their charter for around 40 students in Reno Nevada. Subsequent to submitting the minutes from that meeting to the Nevada Department of Education the school received a letter from the Nevada Department of Education staff stating State Board of Education adopted regulation NAC 386.340 prohibits a school from opening a satellite campus in another county. Whereas, Nevada State High School understands NRS 386.540, reads that the Department of Education is authorized to adopt regulations as it determines, are necessary, to carry out the provisions of charter school law. Pursuant to that provision, they have adopted NAC 386.340. In paragraph three of that NAC, it states “accept as otherwise provided in Subsection 4, a charter school that is sponsored by the State Board of Education may provide instruction only in facilities located in one county.” On February 19, Nevada State High School presented to Superintendent Dr. Keith Rheault for interpretation of the word “may” as discretionary and not mandatory, and in his return letter on February 26 he stated that discussion and understandings of intent by the State Board...at the time it was adopted in year 2001, that the limitation of one charter school in a county was mandatory. By example, he referred to when Coral Academy was to form two charters to operate in two different counties. Nevada State High School accepts the reason that Coral Academy Reno opened a second charter school is because they were not state sponsored. Given that the permissive language (*may provide*) of NAC 386.340, I am requesting to know if the Charter School Subcommittee would place NAC 386.340 as an action item on the upcoming meeting scheduled for Thursday, May 7, 2009 and request from the President of State Board of Education be put before the full Board's consideration on Friday, May 8, 2009?”

4. Adjournment

There being no further information, the meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.