

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

August 14, 2009

Las Vegas PBS  
3050 E. Flamingo  
Multi Purpose Room 122  
Las Vegas, Nevada

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL BOARD RETREAT**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Anthony Ruggiero, President  
Dr. Cliff Ferry, Vice President  
Christopher Wallace, Clerk  
Jan Biggerstaff, Member  
Gloria Bonaventura, Member  
Willia Chaney, Member  
Dave Cook, Member  
Ken McKenna, Member  
Craig Wilkinson, Member

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Charlotte Hill, Member (excused)  
Zhan Okuda-Lim, Student Representative (excused)

**DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT:**

Dr. Keith Rheault, Superintendent of Public Instruction  
James Wells, Deputy Superintendent, Administrative and Fiscal Services  
Gloria Dopf, Deputy Superintendent, Instructional Research and Evaluative Services  
Doris Arnold, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Karen Johansen, Administrative Assistant to the State Board of Education

**LEGAL STAFF PRESENT:**

Dr. James E. Irvin, Deputy Attorney General

**AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE:**

David Flatt, Nevada PTA  
Michele Robinson, Charter School Association of Nevada  
Dr. Dotty Merrill, Nevada Association of School Boards  
Carolyn Edwards, Nevada Association of School Boards and Clark County School District Board of Trustees  
Kathleen Conaboy, Executive Director, Governance on K-12 Inc.  
Tom Axtel, Vegas PBS  
Lynn Warne, Nevada State Education Association  
Crystal Abba, Nevada State Higher Education

Ralph Cadwallader, Executive Director, Nevada State Education Association  
Carol Lark, Superintendent, Douglas County School District

## **CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL; PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE; APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

President Ruggiero reconvened the meeting at 9:00 a.m., attendance as reflected above. He asked those in attendance to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance

### **1. Tour of the Vegas PBS Facility**

The Board shared their enthusiasm for the tour of the Vegas PBS Facility they participated in at 8:30 a.m. They agreed the facility, which is licensed by the Clark County School District, is a tremendous state resource.

### **2. Overview of Retreat Agenda**

**Theme:** *How can the State Board of Education use the information that has been or will be heard to prepare a K-12 Education Governance Structure Proposal to meet the needs of Nevada's students?*

President Ruggiero stated the goal is to develop a State Board position that would be brought to the Legislature during the interim utilizing legislation that passed or failed during the 2009 Session. He said the idea was to focus on three broad issues, policies, charter schools and governance defining the issues more as time goes on. He noted these issues continually come up during legislative sessions and taking a proactive approach to anticipate the issues at the 2011 Legislative Session is the best strategy to being invited in the discussions. President Ruggiero shared his appreciation for the letter received from Walt Rulffes, Nevada Association of Schools Superintendent. Mr. Rulffes expressed the general consensus of NASS, that too many functions have been created over the years that are independent of the Nevada Department of Education.

President Ruggiero opened the discussion to the Board members for perspective on what they are trying to accomplish.

Member Ferry commented that yesterday the Board determined they did not want to sponsor Charter Schools in the future. He inquired what role the Board should have. Discussion continued about the vote to recommend the creation of an Institute of Charter Schools to sponsor charter schools that occurred during the Regular Meeting.

President Ruggiero redirected the meeting stating the State Board's Retreat Agenda was drafted so Subcommittees would meet and make recommendations that would be brought before the full Board for further discussion. Further opinions and recommendations would be brought to the State Board Meeting October 8-9, 2009.

### **3. Dr. Keith Rheault, Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**Subject:** *Review of Current Governance Structure and Authority, Nevada K-12 Education*

Dr. Rheault gave an overview of the State Board discussing the structure of K-12 governance in Nevada. He stated that Senator Horsford's Senate Bill 330 addressed a governance structure change in Nevada for a world class education. He continued that the question is how do we do this, and why are we asking a restructure occur? He suggested the following points to keep in mind when recommending a governance structure:

- Does it eliminate a duplication of services?

- Does it allow for addressing a problem faster?
- Does it allow for a quick and easy implementation of the new statute or laws?
- Which Commissions and Councils do you want to keep?

Dr. Rheault gave operating and background information about the Commission on Educational Technology, the Commission on Educational Excellence, the Advisory Council on Parental Involvement, the P-16 Council, the Legislative Bureau of Educational Accountability and the Statewide Council Regional Professional Development Programs.

Member McKenna asked Dr. Rheault if he would be willing to draw a flow chart of the K-12 Governance Structure in Nevada that he thinks would best serve the students in Nevada.

Dr. Rheault replied that after today's discussion he would draft a prospective flow chart with his recommendations to present with the Superintendent's Report at the October 8-9, 2009, State Board meeting.

#### **4. Input from Organizations to the Board and Board Discussion**

- **Nevada Association of School Superintendents (NASS)**  
Carol Lark, Superintendent Douglas County School District, thanked the Board for their interest and the invitation from the State Superintendents to attend the State Board Retreat. She said the District Superintendents speak with one voice and listen carefully to the needs of the north and south both. She commended Dr. Rheault and his staff for the support the Superintendents receive from his office.

President Ruggiero thanked the Nevada Association of School Boards for providing lunch today.

- **Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB)**  
Carolyn Edwards, Legislative Representative for the Nevada Association of School Boards, said they are looking forward to working with the ACR 2 Legislative Interim Subcommittee and move forward. She commented on the fragmentation of the flow chart as an indicator that things are not working. She suggested consolidation under the direction of the State Board of Education, and that they are accountable for their authority.

Dr. Dotty Merrill, Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Boards, said one of the concerns the Association communicated to Senator Horsford and other legislators about SB 330, was the complicated process included in the bill for the selection of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. She said the process seemed to be designed in such a way that highly qualified and potentially effective candidates would not apply because of the extended process. Dr. Merrill stated that when Dr. Rheault decides to move on to a different chapter in his life and a new Superintendent must be selected to replace him; the Association would advocate a different process than outlined in SB 330. However, she said the Association did not have a specific process to suggest at this time. She added that the Association is in support of ACR 2 as opposed to SB 330 because it begins and opens discussions. Dr. Merrill spoke about a bill that failed the last night of the 2009 Legislative Session and contained a piece to develop college readiness standards. She added the State Board could move forward with the standards and would look forward to being involved in those discussions. Further discussion continued regarding hiring the Superintendent.

- **Nevada State Education Association (NSEA)**  
Lynn Warne, President, Nevada State Education Association, echoed looking forward to working with the State Board and participating in the ACR 2 study. She indicated NSEA had many concerns

regarding SB330. She said part of the answer is to have a governance structure that serves the students of Nevada to achieve their full potential.

Member Biggerstaff asked if Ms. Warne would be coming forward with proposals on funding that the Board could look over prior to making decisions on what they want to support.

Ms. Warne said funding spoke about an increase in room tax that will go into the general fund. In the future that money will be set up in a special supplemental account for K-12 education. She said the concern is that the language remains the same and that the funding stays in the K-12 education account. The association has begun conversations with legislators regarding possibilities for funding and said she would come back to the Board about the discussions. Nevada is consistently at the bottom of the list and that needs to be changed by funding K-12 adequately. Ms. Warne added the association supports Professional Standards standing autonomous.

Dr. Rheault discussed the benefits to having licensure separate.

President Ruggiero called a recess at 10:30 a.m. The meeting was reconvened at 10:52 a.m.

Ralph Cadwallader, Executive Director, Nevada State Education Association, stated he has been going to the Nevada Legislature since 1969 and has closely watched legislation regarding education. He said it appears legislators periodically think they can solve problems with over simplification and a bill draft to eliminate the Superintendent of Instruction and the Nevada State Board of Education along with the whole Department of Education. Mr. Cadwallader explained the Superintendent of Instruction has many masters, not only the State Board but the 63 Legislators during session, the interim committees and the superintendents from the 17 districts making it an extremely difficult job. The Legislature has continually added responsibilities to the Department of Education without the authority to implement procedures. He said his recommendation is “no” to changing the elected structure of the Board, and “yes” to everything that streamlines and simplifies the Department structure. Mr. Cadwallader concluded by stating he is looking forward to participating in the ACR 2 Interim Legislative Committee.

- **State Parent Teacher Association (PTA)**

David Flatt, Nevada Parent Teacher Association, said the PTA supports student involvement, student achievement and parent participation. He added he is very involved with preventing student drop-outs.

President Ruggiero asked Mr. Flatt his opinion about the Advisory Committee on Parental Involvement. Mr. Flatt responded that parental involvement is very important in preventing student dropouts. Discussion continued regarding how the Board can help Mr. Flatt and the PTA. The Board extended an invitation for the PTA to make a presentation at a State Board Meeting.

Mr. Flatt also spoke about his position on the Educational Technology Commission. Member Biggerstaff extended an invitation to Mr. Flatt to speak to the Board about where Educational Technology is going in Nevada; Mr. Flatt agreed.

- **Charter School Association of Nevada (CSAN)**

Michelle Robinson, Board President, Charter School Association of Nevada (CSAN), stated they are a new organization made up of charter schools, and currently 24 of the 25 charter schools that are operating in Nevada are members. The members pay dues to support the mission of the organization which is to promote quality educational standards by inspiring the best among charter schools. She stated CSAN strongly supports the concept of a Charter Institute and they will be working with the

ACR 2 Interim Legislative Committee. She concluded that she has been involved with charter schools for the past 10 years in Nevada and has watched the evolution of support. Charter schools have experienced challenges and growing pains, but they are going in a positive direction. She continued that CSAN measures success by student achievement. Students and families that come to charter schools are unsuccessful in traditional settings and CSAN looks for growth and confidence in the students. Discussion continued about supporting the concept of a Charter Institute.

- **Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE)**

Crystal Abba, Nevada System of Higher Education, spoke on governance and maintaining communication between K-12 and higher education. She stated Nevada is unique because the P-16 Council is established in statute and their success is dependent on the funding and abilities of their staff. In respect to SB 330, she said there was a provision revising the structure of the Board to include one non-voting member appointed by the Regents from the University of Nevada, and that the Board of Regents would need the same mechanism. She added another provision of SB 330 is the Board would collaborate with the Department of Education and the Nevada System of Higher Education to align standards, and this State Board has the authority to do that without legislation. She stated Dr. Jane Nichols would support and be available to assist the Board to pursue college readiness standards. Ms. Abba concluded that the provision in SB 330 that provides alignment of standards is the same provision that exists in statute for the P-16 Council, and SB 330 does not eliminate the P-16 Council.

President Ruggiero suggested the possibility of mandatory joint meetings twice a year with the Nevada State Board of Education and the Board of Regents. Ms. Abba replied that is a possibility the Board of Regents could consider; however, the decision was made to reduce their Board meetings from six to four a year. Discussion followed regarding reciprocity with the State Board and the Board of Regents, and the challenges with the P-16 Council. Ms. Abba agreed that a taskforce deserves consideration but stated they can be problematic by not accomplishing the goals they set.

President Ruggiero welcomed Senate Majority Leader, Steven Horsford, to the State Board Retreat.

Senator Steven Horsford, Clark County Senatorial District 4, spoke as the sponsor of Senate Bill 330. He began by saying he is a product of the Clark County School District, he believes in public schools and both his children attend public schools. He stated the reason he brought the Bill forward is because he believes the schools are not performing or doing as well as they should. According to the WestEd report, Nevada is second to last in the country with the number of students successfully completing high school. Only 60 percent of the students entering ninth grade obtain a standard high school diploma, and the numbers are worse among Hispanic and African American students. He stated we must do better. Senate Bill 330 focused on standards and clearly defined performance for those standards. He said this is based on the work of the Legislature in the creation of the Education Reform Act, about ten years prior. Standards are in place, but how are they measured on a year to year basis and how are the performance standards applied at the local level in individual schools? He continued the Bill also addressed the governance structure and several amendments were made as it went through the legislative process. The Bill passed through the Senate and went to the Assembly late in the process, but because there was not adequate time he asked the Bill not be voted out. He added he will participate with the ACR 2 Interim Legislative Committee to specifically look at governance and is hopeful they will find a consensus. He explained that federal funding will be tied to student achievement and standards for states and local school districts. Mr. Horsford added he thinks it is wrong Nevada is prohibited from getting funds from the Race to the Top Program because of provisions that are in state law regarding teacher performance. He is hopeful Nevada can show it is committed to meeting the requirements so we can benefit from the funds that come from the federal government. He said he supports choice in education to find what works best for the students. He commented the Nevada State

Board of Education has enormous responsibility in overseeing the local school districts. In conclusion, he said he is a partner with the Board and is looking forward to suggestions on how to move education forward in Nevada so all students benefit.

President Ruggiero thanked Senator Horsford for his presentation. He said the State Board felt slighted they were not invited to the discussion when SB330 was drafted, and would like to be included in future discussion. He acknowledged much of the work can be accomplished during the Interim and is anxious to discuss changes that will move towards student achievement.

Member Ferry commented they support the standards which are at the heart of the issue, but it takes a lot of money to accurately measure student learning.

Senator Horsford replied that during Town Hall meetings over the last couple of years, people indicated they were willing to pay more for education if it produced different results. He said a willingness to transform needs to be shown while making a case for additional money and resources.

Member Wallace stated parental involvement is crucial to a student's education. He asked if parental involvement can be included in SB 330.

Senator Horsford replied that not every parent will approach parental involvement in the same way and a community ethic that values education is important. A bill recently passed that allowed parents the ability to take time off work and volunteer in schools without hardship. Discussion continued on how communities and parents can become involved in education.

Member Cook asked Senator Horsford what he is asking of the Board.

Senator Horsford responded that constituents want to know who is helping their children learn. The State Board is supposed to implement educational policies and carry them out with the local school districts. He said he is committed to streamlining the process by cutting committees and commissions with all goals aligned towards student achievement. He said attempts to abolish the Board were too extreme, and we need to find ways to work together and understand the functions that need to be carried out.

President Ruggiero recessed the meeting for lunch at 12:25 p.m. The meeting was reconvened at 1:25 p.m. He requested an audio of the Retreat for all the Board members to digest the information and discussions and come back to the October meeting to discuss the Board's positions.

## **5. Board Member Discussion**

Member Ferry stated he would like to follow the suggestion and listen to a DVD of the meeting then come back with ideas for the October meeting. Member Wallace and Member Wilkinson agreed, along with Member Cook.

Member Biggerstaff suggested after the primaries in 2010, the Board invite the candidates to the Vegas PBS location for a one-on-one and show them what technology is, and where education is going in Nevada.

## **6. Future Agenda Items**

Dr. Rheault asked President Ruggiero what he would like to see and accomplish in the October meeting.

President Ruggiero said he would like to see Dr. Rheault's dream flow chart, which will give a starting point for discussion. He continued that discussions need to go back to policy, charter schools and governance and he would like to get three substantive board positions on those issues. Then put those board positions into practicality, by reviewing them or workshops. He stated the work session would be the first item at the October meeting which should then give focus and direction to move forward and be more functional.

Dr. Rheault commented that the interim regulations from the past year must come back to be formally adopted at the October board meeting. A workshop will be scheduled one day and the public hearings on the following day, taking up to two hours.

President Ruggiero replied that Thursday could be a Workshop day, scheduling the Board in the morning and the regulations in the afternoon.

## **7. Public Comment**

Kathleen Conaboy, K-12 Inc., stated that Dr. Rheault and Mr. Wells and other staff that represent the Nevada State Board did very well during the Legislative Session. There are 63 Legislators and next session they will have 20 new seats. She added there will be more dependence on staff and with so many new people with an increased dependence on lobbyists. It is an interesting dynamic to keep in mind. She said if the Board comes with a unified voice and a strong agenda there is a better opportunity to impact change. She agreed Member Biggerstaff's idea to invite candidates for a one-on-one discussion was positive.

Member Cook asked Ms. Conaboy her opinion about supporting the concept for a Charter Institute.

Ms. Conaboy replied that she worked very hard on the Charter Institute bill during the 2009 Legislative Session and was disappointed when it got caught up in politics at the end of the session and failed. She said appointment of the Board, with a specific skill set for the Charter Institute was addressed in the bill. She added that the Charter School movement was looking at the Institute as a place to call home, and it is an important concept to keep alive.

## **8. Adjournment**

President Ruggiero adjourned the meeting at 1:55 p.m.

