

STATE OF NEVADA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

COUNCIL TO ESTABLISH ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MINUTES

June 14, 2007

1. Call to Order; Roll Call

Acting Chairperson Senator Cegavske called the meeting of the Council to Establish Academic Standards for Public Schools to order at 10:08 a.m. in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, at the Airport Plaza Hotel, Reno, Nevada. Roll call showed the following individuals present:

Senator Barbara Cegavske, Acting Chairperson  
Evelyn Allred, Member  
Sharon Beatty, Member  
Assemblyman David Bobzien, Member  
Dr. Benjamin Hart, Member  
Steve Laden, Member  
Kellie Crosby-Sturtz, Member  
Elaine Wynn, Member

Staff Present:

Dr. Keith Rheault, Superintendent  
Gloria Dopf, Deputy Superintendent  
Charmaine Martineau, Administrative Assistant  
Christopher Cross, Contractor  
Tracy Gruber, Consultant, Office of Assessments, Program Accountability and Curriculum  
Cindy Sharp, Consultant, Office of Assessments, Program Accountability and Curriculum  
Stephanie Hartman, Consultant, Office of Assessments, Program Accountability and Curriculum  
Robinette Bacon, Consultant, Office of Child Nutrition and School Health

Audience in Attendance:

Pat Painter, Clark County School District  
Jennifer Peterson, Clark County School District  
Diane Reitz, Clark County School District  
Jodi Huff, Clark County School District  
Linda Sherer, Clark County School District  
LeNora Bredsguard-Brown, Clark County School District  
Margaret Kiser, Clark County School District  
Abigail Kirst, Washoe County School District  
Kristi Pettengill, Washoe County School District  
Jane Detweiler, University of Nevada, Reno, English Department  
Lisa Fontana, Western Regional Professional Development Center  
Denise Karpelenia, Clark County School District  
Elizabeth Spalding, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance was led by Acting Chairperson Senator Barbara Cegavske.

3. Approval of Agenda

Member Allred stated she would like to move agenda item #11 to #4, because of the possibility of her needing to leave before the end of the meeting. Acting Chairperson Senator Barbara Cegavske stated that it is possible to move that agenda item. Member Wynn moved to approve a flexible agenda, seconded by Member Allred. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes from the Joint Meeting of January 11, 2007

The following correction was made to the January 11, 2007 Joint Meeting minutes: Page 8, last paragraph, "technology is a powerful *tool*". Member Bobzien moved to approve the January 11, 2007 Joint Meeting minutes as corrected, seconded by Member Laden. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Proposed Meeting Schedule 2007-08

Member Wynn moved to approve the following meeting schedule, seconded by Member Beatty. The motion passed unanimously.

September 12, 2007	Las Vegas
November 13, 2007	Reno
January 17, 2008	Las Vegas
June 17, 2008	Las Vegas

5. Information on 2007 Legislative Session Bills/Budgets that were passed that affect the Academic Standards Council

Dr. Rheault provided a packet containing some of the legislative bills passed by the 2007 Legislature. He stated that there was only one bill that impacted the Standards Council as far as how the Council moves forward, which was Senate Bill 184. He stated the bill doesn't change any of the responsibilities of the Council, but it does allow the State Board to send the standards back to the Council if they have any concern with them during the Public Hearing. Dr. Rheault stated that the Standards have always gone to the State Board for Public Hearing because the Standards Council doesn't have authority to put them into regulation. He stated that the previous wording of the law said that the State Board must pass the standards that were adopted by the Standards Council. He stated that effective July 1, 2007, any standards going forward will be sent to the State Board. The State Board will then, if they object to something heard during a Public Hearing, be able to request that the standards be sent back to the Council with some recommendations for consideration. The Bill does not mandate that the Standards Council make changes; it says that the Council will consider the recommendations and send them back to the State Board. Dr. Rheault stated that the way he reads that, is that after the Council considers the recommendations and sends them back, then the State Board would have to adopt them on the second go-around. He stated that this was the only change that affected the Standards Council at this time.

Dr. Rheault reviewed the part of Senate Bill 540 which would have affected the Standards Council. Senate Bill 540 did not pass this session. The bill did pass the Senate but didn't get heard on the assembly side.

Also included in the packet, were two letters from the Assembly Education Committee. The Assembly Education Committee heard several bills which would have required that the Council to adopt standards in very specific subject areas. The first one was tied to Assembly Bill 78. The committee heard compelling testimony from individuals who had contracted skin cancer. The committee did not pass Assembly Bill 78, but chose to send a letter to the State Superintendent, who directed it to the Standards Council. The committee is requesting that when the health standards get reviewed, they consider trying to build in at least some standards that could address the skin cancer issue. Dr. Rheault did provide this information to the Health Standards Revision Committee and stated that it was timely because at the time the review committee had just begun to meet. Dr. Rheault stated there was another bill that would have mandated that the standards include information on criminal gang activity and that those were the only two bills this session that would have mandated new standards.

Dr. Rheault stated that if there's an interest, he is in the process of preparing a summary of all education bills from the 2007 session and that he could provide a copy to council members when finished.

Dr. Rheault stated that the operating budget for the Council was approved. It is for \$10,205.00 for each year of the biennium, which is about what the Council has been receiving the last two years.

9. Update on Educational Activities, Recent Reports, and Issues from a National Perspective

Mr. Cross reviewed the re-authorization of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act. He stated that there are bills being drafted now by both Chairs of the House and the Senate, which to some degree changes the situation in terms of the re-authorization. He stated that there was a substantial increase in Title I funding, which was 11% and was the biggest dollar increase the program has ever had. There was also a substantial increase in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding, and substantial increases in other parts as well, including Teacher Professional Development. There were major decreases in some places too, such as the Reading First Act. Some things such as the High School Assessment Act will not be funded at all.

Dr. Rheault stated that he just received the fiscal year 2008 projections. He looked at the individual school break-outs in Title I, which used new updated census data, and with Nevada, that has a significant impact. He stated that with the Title I, Hard-to-Serve At-Risk Students, Clark County is going to get a 6% increase in their funds. He stated that when you do that for 75% of the students, that means somebody else is losing money because the overall pot of money stayed constant. Based on this, every school district, except Washoe and Clark Counties, will see a reduction because of that recalculated formula.

Mr. Cross shared information from a report released by *The National Assessment of Educational Progress* on state proficiency levels. He stated Nevada's proficiency standard in 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading is above about two-thirds of the states, and in 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading, Nevada is actually above the median mark, so that means that the proficiency standard in Nevada is equivalent to the NAEP standard.

Mr. Cross stated that if you look at the national assessment and compare it with standards around the world and how our students are doing in proficiency level, the U.S. is 15<sup>th</sup> among approximately 42 countries. In the world, in terms of looking at 8<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics, which is the benchmark, the U.S. is below almost all the Asian countries and a lot of European countries.

Mr. Cross reviewed a report from *Education Week*. He stated that for graduation rates, Nevada is 50<sup>th</sup>. He stated that Clark County is the factor, and that of the fifty largest school districts in the country, Clark County is 35<sup>th</sup> in terms of graduation rates.

Member Wynn requested, for the record, for Mr. Cross to share his feelings about what's causing this dreadful situation, which is so frustrating for a decade of work to produce the results or lack thereof. She stated that despite the change in demographics and the increasing population of non-English speakers, she doesn't think this is significant enough to warrant the horrible statistics.

Mr. Cross stated that there would really need to be some studying done and that is why he would encourage a comprehensive statewide meeting. He stated that the issue of getting the right people in the right classroom, with the right kind of credentials, with the right kind of support so that they can be doing the teaching which is needed for the students in the classroom today is tremendously important. He believes if you don't have the right leadership in schools, it makes all the difference in the world. He also stated that certainly the enormous dropout rate, being so significant in Clark County, drags everything down. Also, that if we're not keeping students in school and not attending to their needs, then we would need to look at the curriculum to see what's driving students out, particularly in Clark County. He stated we also need to find incentives to keep kids in school and that there may need to be many more programs at the high school level in terms of differentiation of programs, and there may need to be more high schools that are smaller and have more focus on specific areas.

A discussion was held on qualifications of administrative staff in Clark County schools, and long-term substitute teachers. A discussion was also held on the possibility of the Council holding a work session. Mr. Cross suggested that Dr. Doug Reeves would be a good resource for a work session.

#### 6. Review and Possible Adoption of the Revised English Language Arts Content Standards

Tracy Gruber explained how an oversight committee was established to make final recommendations for the new English Language Arts (ELA) Content Standards. She distributed a draft copy of the new ELA Content Standards to the Council. Ms. Gruber stated that the introduction page sets the purpose of the standards. She stated that the term "with assistance", was added to mean three things: 1) that many skills require more than one year for a student to master; 2) that support could be provided either from a peer, a teacher, or resources that are deemed appropriate; and 3) these skills will not be tested at the state level at that grade level. Cindy Sharp stated the committee made sure these skills were scaffolded so that the students would have better access to the skills that are needed to become confident readers.

Ms. Gruber reviewed the English Language Arts Standards document. She stated that the committee added the "E" for enduring knowledge, which may be tested using a performance task. The committee believes that the only way they can test the depth of knowledge is to have the "E" designation. Ms. Gruber reviewed the K-12 Overview, stating that the committee wanted a parent resource in which parents would be able to get a quick understanding of what their child would be learning at each of the 12 grade levels.

Ms. Gruber reviewed Process Standards for reading and writing. She stated that the committee believes that these Process Standards have fundamental skills that occur in grades K-12. She stated that the Process Standards will only differ on complexity of vocabulary, test, etc, which will increase at each grade level.

Ms. Gruber reviewed Indicators and what the committee believes Indicators should include. The committee believes that: 1) they are based on literary text; 2) they are based on grade appropriate text and skills; and 3) that they are to aid comprehension.

The committee also believes that at a minimum, students will maintain previously-learned skills because if the indicator was in a prior grade level, students are still responsible for all standards prior to that grade level. The committee believes the skill should be mastered, but if it is not, that's where intervention would come from, previous skills. Ms. Gruber stated that the document was reformatted to become one K-12 document.

Ms. Gruber reviewed the Glossary of Terms, which she stated are terms the committee felt would be appropriate to have a clear, consistent definition for everyone across the state.

Ms. Gruber provided the Council with a change document. She explained that the document was broken down by grade levels and content areas and reviewed the new standards based on current reading research. She stated that all previous indicators have been addressed, as well as the new ones. Ms. Sharp stated that the new indicators are primarily in the early grades, based on "*Reading First*." She also stated that the committee took a lot of time to look at *Reading First* and documentation from the *National Reading Panel*.

Ms. Gruber stated that the committee realized they were out of compliance with what the document looked like as far as Performance Standards. So for each indicator, they worked on what it "looks like" when students are working in the classroom at each level. As the committee was working on this project, they found some amendments they felt necessary to bring to the Standards Council. Ms. Gruber reviewed the amendments with the Council, which were mainly verbiage changes. Ms. Sharp stated that she thinks the intent of the standard, regardless of the change, has always been the same, but that the document is much clearer now. Ms. Gruber stated that she would like to point out that there were some minor technical typos in the document which would not change the intent of the document.

Ms. Gruber introduced the members of the Nevada English Language Arts Standards Revision Team who were present at the Council meeting. Each member of the team presented highlights from their research on the project of revising the English Language Arts Standards.

A discussion was held regarding the revised Standards. The Nevada English Language Arts Standards Team answered questions and addressed concerns from the Standards Council Members. Member Allred stated, for the record, she wanted to make sure the Performance Indicators will be added. Tracy Gruber stated that they are being written and will be called Achievement Indicators, which is a synonymous term for Performance Indicators. Dr. Rheault stated that the Achievement Indicators will come back to the Standards Council to be adopted. Recommendations were made by Member Crosby-Sturtz to look at the holes in the "Kindergarten" Standards, and fill in those holes. Further discussion was held regarding the specificity of the revised Standards. Ms. Sharp stated that when the Achievement Indicators are developed, that is when you will see the specificity applied. Ms. Gruber stated that the Achievement Indicators are contingent upon the Revised Standards being approved. She stated that they need to use the approved Revised Standards to create the Achievement Indicators.

Acting Chairperson Senator Barbara Cegavske reviewed the possible amendments discussed, which were:

- a) page 78, the "climax" definition will change;
- b) page 17, the "I/L" and I/S", remove "with assistance";
- c) minor typographical corrections if found;

- d) a possible reference to a book list;
- e) possibly reformatting the glossary; and
- f) recommendations on “kindergarten” standards.

A motion was made by Member Bobzien to accept the Nevada English Language Arts Standards Revisions as noted, seconded by Member Allred. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Report on Activities Related to Review and Revision of Health Education Content Standards

The Council received a hand-out on the Health Standards. Dr. Rheault stated that the Council does not need to take action today. He also stated that the Review Committee just had a meeting last week, in which the details on what they put together will be coming back to the Council in September. They will be sent out to the Council before the September meeting.

8. Proposed 2007-08 Content Standards for Review and Revision – Social Studies and Computer Technology Education to Include Possible Funding Request to LCE to Support Council Activities

Dr. Rheault stated that included in the packet on social studies is the timeline for the proposed review process. He stated that the main thing they wanted to do today is to make sure they have the Council’s approval to start moving forward. Dr. Rheault introduced Stephanie Hartman, the Department’s Social Studies Consultant.

Member Wynn asked if there is a reason that all of the meetings are held in Reno. Ms. Hartman stated that the reason is basically that there are eight people representing the south, out of a group of 41. She stated that due to fiscal reasons, it makes more sense because of the fact that the majority of the people attending the meetings come from the north. Member Wynn also asked why there are only eight members representing the south. Ms. Hartman stated that she sent out letters to all of the district superintendents, all of the curriculum content area people, people who have participated in the past in the first writing of the revisions, principals, and to UNR and UNLV people, requesting their participation, and she had eight people respond. Member Wynn stated that she is disappointed to hear that, as she doesn’t believe that is an adequate amount of representation from the largest school district in the state and the sixth largest in the country. Ms. Sharp asked if the Council would like Ms. Hartman to resend letters. Acting Chairperson Barbara Cegavske stated yes, and that would give them an opportunity to rattle a few cages. Member Wynn stated that having said that, if we can get proper representation, she thinks we should be having meetings in both places, in case members of the Council would like to drop in. Ms. Hartman stated that one bump in the road is that because they have four content areas they are focusing on, that in order to keep the groups somewhat manageable in size, they are looking at approximately ten people per content area, and that includes a good representation of all the grade levels, districts, parents, community members, university personnel and teachers. She stated another potential bump in the road is the financial constraints that exist in transporting large numbers of people. Member Wynn stated that she believes that the travel should be supported by the budget. Dr. Rheault stated that if we can add members, we can revise the budget and then that’s what would be presented to the Legislative Committee on Education.

Member Beatty expressed her concern over whether the standards document forces a mandated economics class. Ms. Hartman stated that it does not. Ms. Hartman stated that what the document does do is list other Standards within economics that a teacher could be teaching while also teaching the Government Standards. She explained that the way it stands now, is that there are umbrella History Standards, so that History

Standard I is Chronology, then History, Civics, Economics and Government. She stated that the idea is that these are the subjects that all fit together in some shape or form, but are still discrete in their content are.

10. U.S. Department of Education Issue with Current Nevada Content Standards Alignment with the High School Proficiency Exam – State/Local Priority Designations

Dr. Rheault stated that the Department received a letter from the U.S. Department of Education informing us that the assessment plan has not been approved for the state. He stated that one of the two issues still pending is that the U.S. Department of Education is saying that the state requirements for priorities (state versus local), does not meet the NCLB requirements to test all students over the range of all standards. Dr. Rheault told them he would bring it up at this meeting. The idea of getting rid of the state versus local designation was discussed, but no decisions or even comments were taken at this time. This topic will be placed on the next agenda for discussion at the September 12, 2007 meeting.

12. Identify Agenda Topics for Next Council Meeting

Scheduling of a Work Session

Christopher Cross – More information from Washington, D.C.

Update on Social Studies Standards

A Plan for Technology Standards

Revision of Health Education Content Standards

U.S. Dept. of Education Issue with Current Nevada Content Standards

13. Comments From Public

There were no comments from the public.

14. Comments from Council Members

Evelyn Allred, requested, for the record, that the Council Members be given an updated Members List, to include home telephone numbers, private cell phone numbers, etc.

15. Comments from Staff

There were no comments from staff.

16. Adjournment of Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 2:27 p.m. by Acting Chairperson Barbara Cegavske.