

STATE OF NEVADA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

COUNCIL TO ESTABLISH ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
June 17, 2008

MEMBER PRESENT

Senator Barbara Cegavske  
Elaine Wynn  
Kelly Crosby-Sturtz  
Assemblyman David Bobzien  
Sharon Beatty

MEMBERS ABSENT

Dr. Benjamin Hart (absent)  
Steve Laden (excused)  
Evelyn Allred (excused)

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Dr. Keith Rheault, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nevada Dept of Education  
Lori Johnson, Secretary to the Council, Nevada Department of Education (NDE)  
Robinette Bacon, Health Consultant, NDE  
Stephanie Hartman, Social Studies Consultant, NDE  
Kim Vidoni, Consultant, Educational Technology, NDE  
Cindy Sharp, Consultant, Assessment and Standards, NDE

AUDIENCE IN ATTENDANCE

Christopher Cross, Consultant  
Linda Hurzel, P.E. Specialist@ Bray-Broderick, Carson City School District  
Dr. Christy Keeler, Grant Coordinator for Teaching American History,  
Clark County  
Stephanie Hirsch, Teacher, K-12 Social Studies, Clark County  
Jan Biggerstaff, Member, State Board of Education  
Craig Stevens, Nevada State Education Association  
Dr. Mark Pringle, Professor of Economics, UNR  
Dr. Jesus Garcia, Professor of Social Studies Education, UNLV  
Karen Sedoti, K-12 Literacy Coordinator, Clark County School District  
Deborah Becker, Teacher 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Elko County School District  
Sue Davis, Director for Teaching American History Grant, Washoe County  
Karlye Mull, K-12 Social Studies Project Facilitator, Clark County School District

1. Call to Order; Roll Call

The meeting of the Academic Standards Council was called to order at 10:03 a.m. The Chair asked that attendance be shown as recorded above.

## 2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair conducted pledge of allegiance.

## 3. Approval of Agenda

Chair asked for approval of a flexible agenda. Member Wynn made a motion to approve. Member Beatty seconded that motion and the vote was unanimous.

## 4. Approval of Minutes

The motion to approve the minutes for January 17, 2008 with one correction of the spelling of Member Crosby-Strutz, was made by Member Beatty. Member Wynn seconded the motion. The motion carried.

## 5. Review FY08 Council Operating Budget and FY08 Consultant Contract Budget

Dr. Keith Rheault explained both budgets noting the Legislative Commission on Education provided these funds, not from the general fund. The Council has spent about half of the operating budget, if there are leftover monies, they will revert to the General Dept of Education budget. The same amount for operating the Council has been budgeted for 2009.

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

Christopher Cross from Cross & Joftus, LLC. discussed his handout from the Ed Week research center, regarding graduation rates for Nevada. He discussed the issue of Nevada being rated at the bottom of this survey and talked about the actual "Diploma Counts" report that was just published. He commented that this particular issue is funded by the Gates Foundation since that is one of their main focus of interest is increasing graduation rates.

Mr. Cross discussed the issue and concern of Nevada's 9<sup>th</sup> grade bubble, caused by the reclassification 5 years ago. Another main concern is Nevada is ranking of 45.4%, which is the lowest in the United States and is almost 10% difference between the next lowest rated state, Louisiana. He asked when Nevada will move to the National Governor's Association methodology for computation of these rates.

Dr. Rheault answered that the first COHORT reporting will begin in 2010.

Mr. Cross evidenced the dropout rate, which starts predominantly in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. A lot of the reported rate drop contains minorities who are transient and may not ever enroll into 9<sup>th</sup> grade in Las Vegas.

As noted per county, Clark County is the fifth largest school district in the United States and is rated with the fifth lowest percentage of graduates. Demographics play a big part in the ranking. The economically depressed and minorities students are more prone to dropping out starting at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level.

Senator Cegavske commented that this survey contains only dropout rates starting with the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. She agreed that the middle school dropout rate is even worse.

Dr. Rheault noted that one Legislative Bill that passed in the 2007 Session is going to require the NDE to monitor 8<sup>th</sup> grade students that drop out of the school system.

Mr. Cross reiterated the need for Nevada to take action and provide resources to improve graduation rates. He noted that the data available in other collections prove out the Diploma Counts assertions are correct.

Mr. Cross discussed information regarding P-16 councils, Nevada being one of only 16 states who created a P-16 Council through statutory authority; unfortunately, the State did not fund or staff this Council so it is hard to make any real progress in policy initiatives. He also discussed that reaching a consensus regarding alignment of standards for preparation of teacher in Higher Education overlaps between this Council (K-12) and P-16 Council.

Chair Cegavske question the thoughts behind removing home economics and other hands-on technical classes during 1980's push that all kids must have a college education has actually harmed our current work force. Now people with sewing or auto mechanic skills need to be imported from outside of the United States.

Mr. Cross emphasized that the pendulum has swung again, back to Career Technical classes that combined manual skills with the need for more technical and computer skills. A worker now needs mastery of math and science in addition to being physically able to perform manual labor.

Chair Cegavske asked Mr. Cross for his comments on the revisions of standards that are before this Council today.

Mr. Cross talked about the use of verbs such as "scribe" which is not descriptive, precise or informative, plus the use of the word "concept" with explaining the concept. He suggested looking at State of Massachusetts Standards, which are rated among the highest. Those standards have a clear context and very descriptive.

Member Wynn asked everyone to look at the article in Ed Week, regarding Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (Exhibit 1), which she sees as a blueprint for Nevada to use to achieve success.

Chair Cegavske mentioned that the Council should also look at Arizona's plan for reform that came out of the Goldwater Institute.

Member Beatty commented that she talks to students who do not envision attending college but do envision themselves as a chef or plumber, yet finds the path or support for such careers unavailable and drop out of school.

Mr. Cross mentioned that using the business community to mentor those types of students in order to keep them in school and graduate.

Mr. Cross also suggested reading the report “Sizing up State Standards” put out by the American Federation of Teachers. Shown are specific examples of both strong and weak standards. He also mentioned that perhaps Nevada should look at California whose standards are highly rated.

Mr. Cross said that his main problem with the History standards is that it is not evident how to translate these standards into assessment and instruction.

Member Wynn commented that instead of continually rewriting the standards she would like the teams to research best practices for formatting of standards.

Senator Cegavske brought up the idea of getting the Western states together to build common collaborative standards.

Mr. Cross said that he would place a call to Roger Samson, the new Executive Director for the National Governor’s Association to try to arrange a meeting with some of the people responsible for the adopting Standards.

#### 6. Review and possible adoption of Revised Health Education Content Standards

Robinette Bacon, Health and Social Behavior Consultant, NDE introduced the timeline and summary for review and revision cycle of content area for the Health standards. These draft standards have been on NDE website for review. She also presented the public review and comments made via the survey.

Linda Hurzel, a member of the Health Standards writing team, gave a brief description of the writing team process and the collaborative membership of the writing teams. She also stated that the minimal time frame for teaching health studies is 9 weeks for middle school and one semester in High school. The team used the National Health Standards as a guideline. Students in Nevada are not tested on Health Standards.

Ms. Bacon described the eight core concepts matched with grade bandwidths.

Chair Cegavske asked about Ms. Bacon to define the statement, “ the standards were written so that all students can understand and be able to obtain the core content”.

Chair Cegavske was concerned that the standards may have been “watered down” to just the minimum basic information.

Ms. Hurzel stated that the directive to writing teams was to make the revisions more concise and not redundant.

Member Beatty said that as a school administrator, she wants to be able to identify mastery of a standard, which is hard to do when the document seems to be so general.

Chair Cegavske said that a major issue, and the reason for our low ratings of Nevada Standards, is that there is not clear direction of content for the teacher.

Ms. Bacon relayed that the writing team's concern was that the content standards strands be clear and non-repetitive. She commented that they tried to stay true to the National Health Standards. She referred to the document titled "The Healthy Behavioral Outcomes of a Comprehensive Health Education Curriculum" which the National Health Education Organization has identified as the gold standard for all states. The document analyses the process used by a district to map their curriculum and eventual textbook adoption.

Chair Cegavske read from page 4, section 2.3.1. "discuss nutrition and physical activity in a diverse family" and asked what tools does the teacher use for this discussion?

Ms. Hurzel said this standard document would be used in conjunction with a textbook and classroom discussion.

Member Beatty stated that while she appreciated the multi-cultural aspect, she has been interviewing for P.E. and Health teachers. Many of the teachers are qualified in course content though not necessary disciplined in leadership and goal setting. She feels these standards are trying to cross over different curriculum. Member Beatty asked how these standards devolved into looking at other disciplines rather than concentrating on health and physical fitness.

Ms Bacon stated that the skill building contents within the Health standards had been part of the previously approved health standards. These current revisions are not that different from previous standards.

Chair Cegavske asked if Ms. Bacon could bring a side-by-side comparison of past and present standards to the next meeting.

Member Beatty said she would be interested in looking at content standard "8" which she considers advocacy and how that differs from previous standards. She understands that this process has been difficult, but in her opinion, everyone on the Council has gained insight and have become more practiced in what the Council would like to see having lived and worked with these current standards for several years.

Chair Cegavske reminded writing teams that the purpose of this Council is to approve these standards. Everyone is concerned and wants to be confident that the information sent to the field for actual implementation is up-to-date and covers all the core content.

Ms. Bacon drew attention to the growth and development strand complying with NRS 389.065, which is the sex education component or the HIV/AIDs mandate. The Health writing team decided that since the jurisdiction is a local level, the state did not develop these standards except where noted by asterisks showing the NRS authority.

Member Beatty suggested a possible restructuring under core themes of promoting health, and preventing disease, substance abuse and support programs.

#### 7. Discussion of Revised Social Studies Content Standards

Stephanie Hartman, Social Studies Consultant for NDE introduced members of the writing team who were prepared to answer questions regarding this revision of the standards. She explained that the K-12 continuum was easier for teachers to see what was expected per grade.

Ms Hartman continued explaining the sections. She diagramed the pages showing the Standard at the top of the page in italics, the themes or concepts are on the right hand side going down the page, and the benchmarks are within each grade.

She explained that 6th grade is banded with 7th and 8th grades because each district teaches certain courses in different grades.

Ms Hartman clarified the decision to separate the skills from the content and put them into a separate sections; literacy, oral communication, historical analysis and civic interpretation. These skills become more complex as the student gets older.

Chair Cegavske voiced her concerns that this Council as a whole must feel comfortable that the history content has not been altered or deleted. Another of the Council's concern is implementation.

Ms Hartman explained that Nevada Standards are to be used as a framework for districts. The districts then develop their curriculum and decide on courses for the different grade levels. Per Ms. Hartman, if the State developed the entire curriculum it would be a 1200 page document. If each grade had to start with the Civil War there would be no time for that grade to move on to other content areas, such as WWII and Vietnam and beyond. Given time for teaching necessitates the overlap of content as indicated on the timeline. The U.S. History book that Washoe County uses is 1100 pages but it used for 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grades.

Dr. Jesus Garcia explained that as a Professor of Social Studies and one who has worked with standards for over 20 years, he felt that this writing team, of which he was a part of, worked very hard and was very concerned about what grades content was placed in terms of learning capabilities. He was concerned that during teaching time there must be opportunity for teachers to talk about an era in depth. The biggest complaint he hears from students is they are learning social studies superficially, rather than in depth due to the limits of time.

Chair Cegavske thanked everyone for their hard work as evidenced by the document they have produced. She asked if anyone had seen the History of Nevada CD, which the Legislators and Guy Rocha developed.

Ms. Hartman addressed Mr. Enge's concerns by discussing the chart she handed out which shows how the content overlaps across the grade levels. In addressing Mr. Cross's comments about verbs being too vague, she stated the teacher assesses whether the student is learning the concepts.

Ms. Hartman told the members that they were able to turn four different documents into one document that assimilates all the concepts and they were able to reduce the number of standards from 37 to 16. She said this was done without any loss of core concepts or content.

Mark Pingle, introduced himself as a Professor of Economics, UNR and a member of the writing team starting in 2001, which was the first time economic standards were considered. At that time, Ann O'Connell, while a legislator, was also was a member of the writing team. She was of great benefit in informing other legislators about the procedures for formulating standards.

He talked about the history of the Economic standards. The original group had infinite resources. They collected standards from Colorado and Virginia plus the National Standards (20) and then we decided how far down in grade levels economics could be introduced. The problem was that everyone had an different concept. The document became so large and cumbersome it was unusable. Today, the team has taken nine standards and reduced them to four. Previously, economics concepts were not taught at all, he is thankful that a framework has now been established to show how to teach economics.

Member Wynn suggested that for the next meeting, the members could be provided a side-by-side comparison, showing the continuity with the past set of standards. She said that she is very impressed with the work that has been done, despite the enormity of the social studies standards.

Dr. Rheault will clarify with Mr. Cross regarding his comments about the number of standards and the fact that there are still four core content areas.

#### 8. Update on Activities Related to Review and Revision of Technology Education Content Standards – Review Team Membership and Timeline

Ms Vidoni, Educational Technology leader at NDE stated that it would be after August when the AYP data collection is finished, before she could gather the writing team together to start on the Educational Technology Standards.

10. Proposed Meeting Schedule 2008-09

It was agreed to poll members for future dates.

11. Council Member Comments

There were none.

12. Identify Agenda Topics for Next

Bring back the comparison of current to revised standards for both Health and Social Studies.

13. Comments From Public

There were none,

14. Comments From Staff

15. Adjournment of Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

1. Call to Order; Roll Call