

COMMISSION ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

March 12, 2008

Locations:

Grant Sawyer Building
555 East Washington Avenue, Room 2134
Las Vegas Nevada

Elko County School District
Regional Training Center Room
1105 Fairgrounds Road
Elko, Nevada

Legislative Building, Room 2134
401 South Carson Street
Carson City, Nevada

Elko County Library
2203 Progressive Drive
Jackpot, Nevada

Owyhee High School
Modular Building, Room 257
100 Academic Way
Owyhee, Nevada

Wendover Elementary School
Modular Building 7-1
2000 Elko Avenue
Wendover, Nevada

MINUTES OF MEETING

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Caroline McIntosh, Chair
Melinda Brown (Las Vegas)
Bob Chesto (Las Vegas)
Debbie Duty Deery
LeAnn Morris
Roy Parker (Las Vegas)
Dr. Keith Rheault

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:

Michele Paul

DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT:

Gloria Dopf, Deputy Superintendent, Instructional, Research and Evaluative Services
Doris Arnold, Executive Assistant
Homa Anooshehpour, Consultant, Special Education, ESEA and School Improvement
Frankie McCabe, Director of Special Education, ESEA and School Improvement
Kulwadee Axtell

LEGAL STAFF PRESENT:

There was no legal staff present.

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PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:

Elizabeth Christiansen, Center for Program Evaluation, UNR
Ron Remington, Evaluation, White Pine Middle School
Nancy Remington, Evaluation, White Pine Middle School
Carol Lark, Douglas County Superintendent
Bryn Lapenta, Washoe County School District
Anne Loring, Washoe County School District
Paul Dugan, Washoe County School District
Shaun Heusser, LCB Audit
Joi Davis, LCB Audit
Carol Stonefield, LCB Audit
Mindy Martini, LCB Audit
Ron Beck, Clark County School District
Diane Neese, Voyager Expanded Learning
Karen Holley, Nye County School District
Jerry Hill, Nye County School District
Kellie Ballard, Clark County School District
Stan Hall, Clark County School District
Jan Biggerstaff, Board member, State Board of Education
Brian Saffle, P.H.D., Clark County School District
Natalie Mazzullo, Clark County School District, GDA
Denna Atkinson, Clark County School District, GDA
Theodore Mills, Clark County School District, GDA
Ray Medina, Clarke County School District, GDA
Kevin Biesinger, Clark County School District, GDA
Shannon Schumm, Clark County School District, CPD
CM Rick Hardy, Lincoln County Schools
Donna Rancho, Clark County School District, DM Cox ES
Dr. Doug Reeves, Leadership and Learning Center (New York)

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chairperson McIntosh called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., with attendance as reflected above. She welcomed individuals in attendance at Las Vegas and Carson City and Elko County schools linked in via the Internet. At the request of Chairperson McIntosh, Commission members introduced themselves.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Dr. Rheault moved to approve a flexible agenda. Commissioner Deery seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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Due to technical difficulties for agenda item 3, Chairperson McIntosh requested agenda item 4 be heard next. It was reported representatives from Jackpot and West Wendover were also in attendance in Las Vegas.

3. UPDATE ON SELECTION OF EVALUATION CONTRACTOR FOR THE 2007-09 REMEDIATION AND INNOVATIVE GRANTS AUTHORIZED BY SB 185 (formerly Agenda Item 4)

Gloria Dopf, Deputy Superintendent, Instructional, Research and Evaluative Services, explained how the evaluation of SB185 programs originated from the 2007 Legislative session and that it would be conducted by the Reeves Group to review improvement and achievement of students involved in SB185 programs. Formal approval to continue the evaluation process was received therefore approval of the Reeves Group and of the evaluation process by the Legislative Committee on Education would be agendized for the LCE's March 27, 2008 meeting. Pending approval by the LCE, approval by the Board of Examiners would be agendized for their May 13, 2008 meeting. Documents for approval by the Board of Examiners would have to be submitted by April 5, 2008. Ms. Dopf stated for the record the May BOE meeting would conflict with the May CEE meeting, but they were required to have the primary representative at the BOE meeting. She explained how the next round of evaluations would have to take into consideration the group of schools that wanted to continue their projects that began under SB404; new projects; and, replacement of district grants. She also commented on how the budget shortfall would impact the implementation of the evaluation.

4. OVERVIEW AND RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION CONDUCTED FOR THE REMEDIATION AND INNOVATION GRANTS PROVIDED TO NEVADA SCHOOLS FOR THE 2005-07 BIENNIUM THROUGH S.B. 404 STATE FUNDS. (Commissioners will utilize the agenda item to have an open discussion with Dr. Reeves on the results and recommendations/implications for future Remediation and Innovation Grants) (formerly Agenda Item 3)

(Via New York) With presentation material, Dr. Doug Reeves, Leadership and Learning Center, reported public accountability had been provided with the evaluation to find out how the funds were used and if funding was used effectively. Nevada 2006-2007 CRT scores were reviewed to evaluate student achievement. In addition, interim assessment results and local assessment results were also reviewed as well as observation of school districts with rubrics. There were also extensive interviews conducted and documentary evidence. Key findings were as followed: improvements in student achievement; a relationship between the degree of implementation of state-funded programs and improvement of student achievement in other areas; strong emphasis on technology; implementation impact was non-linear; improvements in discipline and student engagement; and that shallow implementation of various programs did not achieve the same results had there been deep implementation of fewer programs. Criterion Reference Tests (CRTs) were not sufficient. Returns could be maximized on future public investments when tools developed during the evaluation were implemented. He commented on how a decrease in the drop-out rate would result in an increase in savings and revenue for the State.

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Chairperson McIntosh requested to know if there would be a part of the next evaluation that would acknowledge gifted students. Dr. Reeves stated he would like to identify instruments of advancement rather than trying to design the perfect instrument that measured advancement. He cautioned that there was no universal instrument that measured gifted students.

Chairperson McIntosh opened up discussion with public comment.

Carol Lark, Douglas County School District Superintendent, asked for more information regarding how standards were impacted by the professional practices of teachers, administrators and school boards. Dr. Reeves provided examples of how standards had been impacted. Ms. Lark requested to know if a handout regarding best practices of implementation would be provided to school officials. Dr. Reeves stated best practices had been catalogued and may be posted on the Nevada Department of Education website, but he would consult with Department staff on how to best provide that information.

Kevin Biesinger, Clark County School District, GDA, requested to know if CRT data was differentiated for schools that had full scale programs versus programs that targeted a certain population of students and, if so, how so. Dr. Reeves agreed analysis of smaller groups needed to be conducted in order to review results more closely. Mr. Biesinger requested to know if summary of progress reports were used in the evaluation. Ms. Dopf explained how the reports would be used in future evaluations.

Commissioner Chesto commented on how SB404 provided empowerment to school districts in the State and how negative comments about the evaluation would result in positive trends.

Dr. Rheault requested further information about going beyond CRTs and what was meant by implementing pre-assessments and implementation audits. Dr. Reeves stated he was not suggesting replacing CRTs, but that evaluations should review both State data and additional local data if it could assist with student achievement. Regarding pre-assessments, Dr. Reeves stated he was suggesting adding one line to grant requests approved by the State.

Chairperson McIntosh complimented the public displays at the Best Practice Fairs and requested to know what was envisioned for future public displays. Dr. Reeves commented more Best Practice Fairs should be held, but that the focus should always remain on the teachers showcasing their best practices rather than on speakers.

Chairperson McIntosh requested to know what was anticipated from changes such as with the consortium grants. Dr. Reeves stated one of his recommendations would be to push the unit of analysis level lower, but that there would always be consultation with school district superintendents.

Chairperson McIntosh asked for recommendations on how to show the importance of funding to Legislators so it would be approved again during the Legislative cycle. Dr. Reeves commented on how cutting funding for drop-outs would be “financial suicide”. He acknowledged providing funding was a risk.

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Dr. Rheault requested to know how to get schools to work with vendors in implementing programs to the highest level. Dr. Reeves explained how the generic rubric was a beginning, but that vendors should be challenged.

Chairperson McIntosh asked what principals and officials at a district level would be told to pay attention to as far as implementation at the beginning of a grant. Dr. Reeves explained how teacher leadership and administration go hand in hand in achieving success with implementation of the programs as well as their knowledge of what good instruction is. Dr. Reeves provided some examples using literacy. He also commented on streamlining. At the District level, Dr. Reeves stated he would encourage departmental accountability and provided some examples.

Chairperson McIntosh requested a summary of the action research presentation given by Dr. Reeves and how it may relate to the SB185 initiative. Dr. Reeves reported what was learned was the relationship between strategy and student behavior and that the influence on teacher practices was direct contact with other teachers. He commented on how there was a need for leadership from the classroom to the boardroom.

Dr. Rheault asked if there was any difference between implementation of programs during after school or Saturday programs and implementation of programs during the school day. Dr. Reeves replied he did not know. He cautioned that after school programs were mostly supported by the Federal Government, but that he had heard teachers say students who needed the after school programs did not stay after school for those programs. He commented on how in-school intervention was most important for students in need.

5. DISCUSSION ON POSSIBLE VISITS BY COMMISSION MEMBERS TO SCHOOL SITES RECEIVING SB 185 FUNDING

It was discussed and decided that Commission members would visit school sites alone on their own time schedule accompanied by District staff and that Commission members would provide personal feedback to the Commission rather than gather data when visiting schools due to the fact that data gathering made school staff uncomfortable.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. April 17, 2007 Minutes – Commissioner Deery moved to approve the April 17, 2007 meeting minutes. Dr. Rheault seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

7. FUTURE MEETING DATE & AGENDA ITEMS

Chairperson McIntosh reported the next meeting would be held on May 13, 2008 in Carson City. Budget amendments would be reviewed.

Homa Anooshehpour, Consultant, Special Education, ESEA and School Improvement, reported the deadline for budget amendments was April 15, 2008.

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Commissioner Chesto requested to know if the budget amendments would be to SB185 and not consortium amendments. Dr. Rheault reported both consortium amendments and individual school amendments would be reviewed therefore both would need to be submitted by April 15, 2008.

Chairperson McIntosh announced the August meeting would be held on August 12, 2008 in Las Vegas.

Dr. Rheault requested discussion of implementation of best practices at the next meeting and an update on whether or not the LCE and the BOE approved of a continuance of the evaluation conducted by the Reeves Group.

Chairperson McIntosh requested video-conferencing the next meeting.

Ms. Dopf suggested discussion of what was anticipated from the evaluation.

Chairperson McIntosh requested a report of the school site visits.

8. COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC

There were no public comments.

9. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS

Commissioner Deery thanked staff for their efforts.

Dr. Rheault clarified the Legislative Committee on Education meeting would be held on March 27, 2008 and an update on the CEE may be agendaized for the meeting.

10. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Commissioner Deery moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:40 a.m., seconded by Commissioner Morris. The motion carried unanimously.