

Good Morning!

Thank you for asking me to speak today. I really enjoy spending time with Nevada's PTA—you are wonderful and dedicated people! I appreciate all of your efforts to move family engagement forward, and I appreciate your support of my work!

It is hard to believe that a year has already gone by since I was hired, and the Nevada Department of Education's Office of Family Engagement opened!

When I first started, my assistant director said, "We are flying the plane and making the flight plans at the same time!" And, that's true! It is an exciting time for education in Nevada!

Much of my work has been in conjunction with the Advisory Council on Parental Involvement and Family Engagement. I am very fortunate to work with the talented members of the Advisory Council. We have some of them present today-- (Dave, Kirt, and Leticia please stand ;-)). We have a wonderfully diverse Council of expertise in family engagement.

We have met eight times in the last year to forge support systems for schools to implement best practices in family engagement. In support of the Teachers and Leaders' Council's teacher and administrator evaluations, we created a rubric of highly effective family engagement practices—that teachers can implement—based on the National PTA's six standards for family-school partnerships.

And, we provided input to the Teachers' and Leaders' Council on family engagement for the teacher and administrator evaluations.

We have also launched a three-tiered support system for teachers and administrators concerning best practices in family engagement:

- First, we designed a brochure, based on the six national standards, to be released this month;
- second, we hope to create a toolkit of easy to use, readymade family engagement practices; and,
- third, we hope to create a one-stop-shopping manual of family engagement in the state of Nevada.

These three tiers will provide best practices and resources to build ongoing family engagement in schools.

On April 29th, the Council is also having a luncheon meeting with Legislators later to share our work with them, and we hope to provide brief testimony to the Education Committees.

In related work, we are one year out from the next Connecting the Dots: Family Engagement in Education Summit that will be held in Reno! We are also discussing the possibility of a mini-summit in rural Nevada in the Fall, pending funding.

As I said, we are flying the plane and building the flight plan at the same time—we have also created a two-year plan for the Council's work, aligning it with legislative mandates.

Aside from working with the Council, I have visited thirteen school districts to share family engagement materials and strategies, and I am working on getting out to the remaining four districts.

In particular, I am working closely with Lyon County School District to create Parent Advisory Councils or PACs at the district, area, and school levels. And they are really trailblazing there with PAC purpose and membership. I hope to share their model with other rural districts.

Within the Department, I work closely with Indian Education and Title I to move family engagement forward at the district and school levels, especially with FOCUS schools.

I also have worked with the Department's Nevada School Performance Framework crew to help make their website as family-friendly as we can.

And, there are several other groups who have requested collaboration time, but I am just one person, and this is only year one!

The greatest accomplishment of the Office, to date, was the website. I am greatly appreciative to the Education Alliance at Washoe County School District for providing former PIRC funding to create, and maintain for two years, the Department's Family Engagement website. It not only contains all of the former PIRC resources, but also best practices and contacts from across the nation concerning family engagement. There is an enormous amount of family engagement information and tools on the site for schools, teachers, and families.

And, we really need to get the word out about the site. I'm going to ask you to spend some time exploring the site and sharing it with your contacts, so we can get the word out that there is FREE support available that is easy to find and to use.

As a final note, we did request additional funding for the Office and the Advisory Council, so that we can carry out all of the legislative mandates required of us. I have an annual budget of \$3,000 that has been frozen since December. I am fortunate that the rest of the Department takes me along oftentimes on their trips so I can visit school districts and schools. My joke with other consultants is, "Perhaps you would like to pack me in your suitcase and take me along!"

And I have an update about that: Senator Debbie Smith and Superintendent Rorie Fitzpatrick, with the help of Senator Denis and others, were successful in clearing the first hurdle to increase my funding to \$50,000 with \$10,000 dedicated to the Connecting the Dots Summit!!! I'd also like to thank my Advisory Council Chair, Barbara Clark, for her work on this.

If you have the chance, please thank them for all of their support of family engagement in Nevada!

I want to thank you asking me to be here today to update you about family engagement at the state level.

Does anyone have any questions at this time?

Thank you, and I'll be here today and tomorrow if I can be of any help.