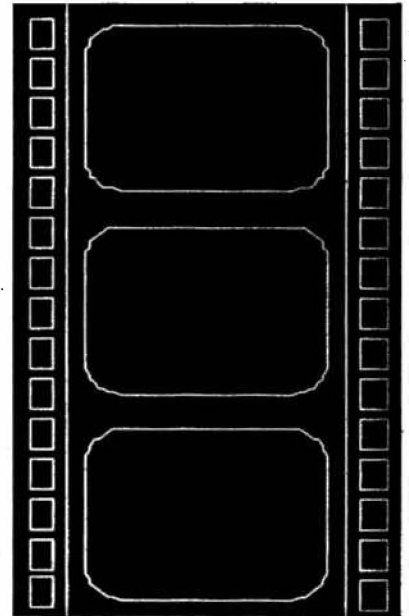
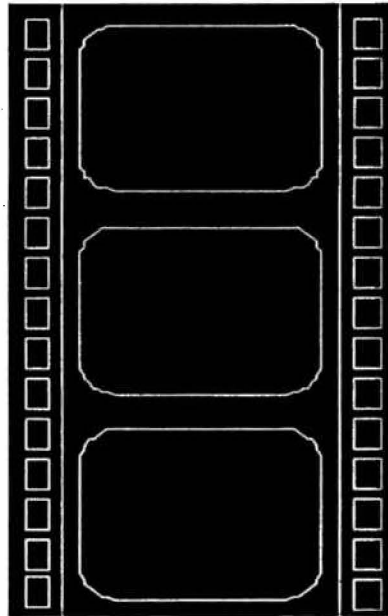
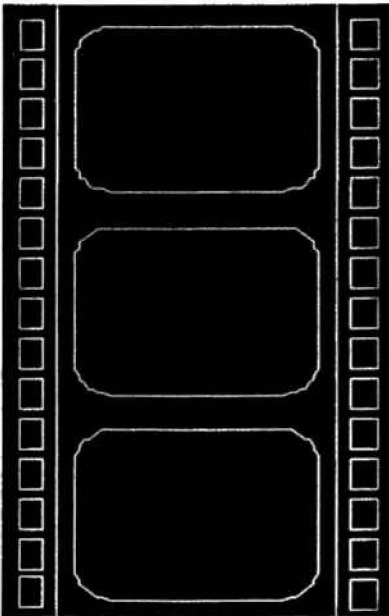


SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

A.B.9





place in SE Minutes Book

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710

JOHN R. GAMBLE
Superintendent

HERBERT R. STEFFENS
Director
Office of Educational
Accountability

January 28, 1977

MEMORANDUM

TO: Advisory Commission
Competency-Based High School Diploma Program

FROM: Jim Kiley

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH ASSEMBLY AND SENATE COMMITTEE AND EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

Chairman Bob O'Connell has sent letters to John Vergiels, Assembly, and Jack Schofield, Senate, regarding meetings with the Education Committees on February 9, 1977. Tentative arrangements are for a 9 AM meeting with the Senate Committee and a 3 PM meeting with the Assembly Committee. It is my understanding that the times are still tentative, thus we will probably contact each of you by telephone if any changes are made. The opportunity to meet with the two committees is an unexpected privilege. An additional meeting does place more demands on your busy schedules, but we hope that each member will make an effort to attend the sessions with the legislative committees.

Dr. Joseph Crowley, University of Nevada Reno, has indicated an interest in inviting Commission members, Department staff and State Board members to attend an Educational Seminar on February 23rd. Dr. Crowley is the administrator of a Kettering Foundation Grant that provides funds to states to enable interested citizens to learn about current issues and concerns in education. Dr. Crowley is inviting a representative from the Denver Public Schools to attend the seminar and describe the minimum competency program that the district has operated since 1960. The seminar will begin at noon with lunch, and the speaker and discussion period will follow. If necessary, we can reconvene the Commission meeting after the seminar.

Jim
JPK/mg



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710

JOHN R. GAMBLE
Superintendent

January 27, 1977

Jack Schofield, Senator
Nevada State Legislature
Carson City, Nevada 89710

Dear Jack:

During the January 26, 1977 meeting of the Advisory Commission for the Competency-Based High School Diploma Program I was asked to explore the possibility of arranging a meeting with the Senate Health and Welfare Committee. Because of the widespread interest in minimum competency requirements for high school graduation, Commission members would like to have the opportunity to inform legislators about the program that is now being conducted by the Department of Education and Nevada school districts.

Participants in the meeting would include Advisory Committee members, State Board of Education members and Department of Education personnel. A brief description of the status and expected accomplishments of the present program could be provided and representatives of the Commission, State Board and Department would be prepared to answer any questions raised by members of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee.

It is my understanding that February 9, 1977, might be a mutually acceptable date for such a meeting. Your consideration of this request is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Robert O'Connell, Chairman
Advisory Commission
Competency-Based High School
Diploma Program

RO:mg
cc: Advisory Commission ✓



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710

JOHN R. GAMBLE
Superintendent

January 27, 1977

Dr. John M. Vergiels,
Assemblyman, Nevada State Legislature
Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710

Dear John:

During the January 26, 1977 meeting of the Advisory Commission for the Competency-Based High School Diploma Program I was asked to explore the possibility of arranging a meeting with the Assembly Education Committee. Because of the widespread interest in minimum competency requirements for high school graduation, Commission members would like to have the opportunity to inform legislators about the program that is now being conducted by the Department of Education and Nevada school districts.

Participants in the meeting would include Advisory Committee members, State Board of Education members and Department of Education personnel. A brief description of the status and expected accomplishments of the present program could be provided and representatives of the Commission, State Board and Department would be prepared to answer any questions raised by members of the Education Committee.

It is my understanding that February 9, 1977, might be a mutually acceptable date for such a meeting. Your consideration of this request is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert O'Connell".

Robert O'Connell, Chairman
Advisory Commission
Competency-Based High
School Diploma Program

RO:mg

cc: Advisory Commission ✓



NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710

JOHN R. GAMBLE
Superintendent

HERBERT R. STEFFENS
Director
Office of Educational
Accountability

January 31, 1977

MEMORANDUM

TO: John Vergiels

FROM: Jim Kiley *Jim Kiley*

SUBJECT: ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING JANUARY 26, 1977

I wish that you could have attended this meeting as all of the Commission members really contributed a constructive critique of the materials produced by the teachers. You would have enjoyed participating in the discussion, hearing the questions and posing questions or comments of your own. However, I do know that a legislator has more demands on his time than there are hours in a day!

John Gamble said that you would like to receive all of the materials distributed during the meeting, so I have enclosed copies of everything. A Department staff member described each of the products produced by the teachers (arithmetic, reading and writing) and the Commission discussed each product as it was presented. The materials are quite brief and probably serve best as foundations for discussion. The arithmetic group did have time to begin establishing content limits for each skill--I think four or five skills have the content limit specifications. The writing group did have the opportunity to identify, with some specificity, the skills by major areas. Reading, as could be predicted, proved to be the most complex content area. Teachers in the reading group had to devote a large amount of time to the definition of minimum competency, and they had just enough time to make a laundry list of skills considered important in reading. Thus, no content limits by skill were produced by the reading group. I think that the specification of limits by skill will improve communication and hope that we make good progress in this area before the next Advisory Commission meeting.

January 31, 1977

We are very fortunate in having such a great group of teachers on Task Force I. The small group size (11-12) helped them get acquainted quickly and the group interaction was excellent. They worked through coffee breaks and took work home with them the first night. They are interested in the program, very constructive in their comments and have adopted unanimous consensus as their operating mode. They agreed that it might not be possible to adhere to unanimous consensus during the next two meetings, but they want to continue until the process proves unworkable. As you read the lists of skills you will undoubtedly see some that appear inappropriate. However, if one teacher wanted the skill included, it was added, and they will reconsider it later as they begin to note prerequisites and, perhaps, inappropriate skills.

The Commission reviewed each definition and all of the skills. All of the definitions were questioned as being too vague for the lay citizen. As I mentioned earlier, the questions were constructive and the Commission recommended that the teachers work to improve all three. Many of the skills were questioned and we will relate the concerns and recommendations to the teachers. Our next meeting with the teachers is scheduled for February 7-8, 1977, Ponderosa Hotel and Casino, in Reno.

Please let me know if you wish additional information or if you have any questions about the materials.

JPK/mg

Enclosures

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COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

TASK FORCE I

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE ADVISORY COMMISSION

1. If a test is developed to measure the minimum competencies of students in arithmetic, reading and writing, a student should be re-evaluated only in areas of deficiency. Once a student demonstrates minimum competency in a required area (e.g. passing score in reading and writing, but below passing score in arithmetic) the student should not be required to re-take the test.
2. Members of Task Force I want to have the opportunity to review any tests that may be developed to measure minimum competencies of students in reading, writing and arithmetic.
3. Members of Task Force I want to have the opportunity to communicate with the Advisory Committee.
4. Members of Task Force I want the Advisory Commission to consider the development of alternatives for students who can't/don't pass minimum competency measures that may be required for high school graduation.

JPK/mg
1/24/77

ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 9—ASSEMBLYMEN DREYER, MANN, SCHOFIELD, HAYES, WEISE, VERGIELS, BANNER, BREMNER AND BARENGO

JANUARY 17, 1977

Referred to Committee on Education

SUMMARY—Requires pupils in public high schools to complete course of study and show proficiency in basic skills as prerequisites to receiving high school diploma. (BDR 34-529)

FISCAL NOTE: Local Government Impact: No.
State or Industrial Insurance Impact: No.

EXPLANATION—Matter in *italics* is new; matter in brackets [] is material to be omitted.

AN ACT relating to courses of study in public schools; requiring pupils to complete a course of study and demonstrate proficiency in basic skills as prerequisites to receiving a high school diploma; requiring school districts to periodically assess the basic skills of pupils; requiring the state board of education to adopt a course of study, minimum academic standards for graduation and provide tests for assessing proficiency in basic skills; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

The People of the State of Nevada, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 389 of NRS is hereby amended by adding
2 thereto the provisions set forth as sections 2 to 4, inclusive, of this act.
3 SEC. 2. 1. A pupil shall not receive a diploma of graduation from a
4 public high school who has not completed a course of study prescribed by
5 the state board of education.
6 2. Requirements for graduation shall include the study of:
7 (a) American government;
8 (b) American history;
9 (c) English;
10 (d) Mathematics;
11 (e) Science;
12 (f) Physical education, unless the pupil has been exempted as provided
13 by law; and
14 (g) Other subjects as may be prescribed.
15 3. Alternative means for pupils to complete the prescribed course of
16 study shall be adopted and may include practical demonstration of skills,
17 work or other outside school experience, interdisciplinary study, inde-
18 pendent study, and credit earned at a postsecondary institution. Require-
19 ments for graduation and specified alternative modes for completing the

1 prescribed course of study shall be made available to administrators,
2 teachers, pupils, parents and the public.
3 4. The state board of education shall adopt and distribute to each
4 school district maintaining a middle or junior high school or a senior high
5 school minimum academic standards for graduation including perform-
6 ance indicators.
7 SEC. 3. 1. A pupil shall not receive a diploma of graduation from a
8 public high school who has not met standards of proficiency in basic
9 skills prescribed by the state board of education.
10 2. Standards of proficiency in basic skills shall include, but not
11 necessarily be limited to, reading comprehension, writing and computa-
12 tion skills, and shall be such as will enable individual achievement and
13 ability to be ascertained and evaluated.
14 3. Different standards of proficiency may be adopted for pupils with
15 diagnosed learning disabilities.
16 4. The state board of education shall prepare and distribute to each
17 school district maintaining a middle or junior high school or a senior high
18 school tests for assessing pupil proficiency in basic skills.
19 SEC. 4. 1. The board of trustees of a school district shall ensure that
20 pupils progress toward proficiency in basic skills and shall assess their
21 progress during the regular instructional program at least once during
22 the seventh through ninth grade and at least twice during the tenth
23 through eleventh grade, except that the progress of any pupil who dem-
24 onstrates proficiency in basic skills need not be reassessed.
25 2. If a pupil does not meet prescribed standards in basic skills, an
26 appropriate school official shall arrange a conference between the pupil,
27 the principal or the principal's designee, the parent or guardian and,
28 whenever practicable, a teacher familiar with the pupil's progress to dis-
29 cuss the results of the individual pupil assessment and the need for
30 instruction in basic skills. The pupil and the parent or guardian shall be
31 requested in writing to attend the conference. Within 5 days of the time
32 the written request is postmarked, the school shall make a reasonable
33 effort to contact the parent or guardian by telephone to communicate
34 directly the information contained in the written request.
35 3. Instruction in basic skills shall be provided for any student who
36 does not meet established proficiency standards in basic skills and shall
37 continue until the pupil has been given repeated opportunity to achieve
38 prescribed standards of proficiency.
39 SEC. 5. 1. The state board of education shall prepare and distribute
40 to each school district maintaining a middle or junior high school or a
41 senior high school:
42 (a) A course of study, including minimum academic standards for
43 graduation and performance indicators, by August 1, 1977;
44 (b) Test of basic skills by February 1, 1978; and
45 (c) Standards of proficiency in basic skills by June 1, 1978.
46 2. The provisions of sections 2 and 3 of this act shall not preclude
47 graduation of any pupil prior to July 1, 1980.

COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

TASK FORCE I--JANUARY 20-21, 1977 MEETING

ARITHMETIC

DEFINITION

Minimum competency in arithmetic for high school graduation is the ability to use addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and practical problem solving skills.

The tentative number of basic skills decided upon is approximately 30.

Specific arithmetic skills are as follows:

Numeration

Translate from words to numbers and numbers to words (e.g. checks)

Roman numerals

Identify exponents

Comparison of numbers

Computation Skills--Addition

Add money--Add a group of no more than four numbers (not to exceed six digits) in money notation in both vertical and horizontal form.

Add fractions--a) Add two fractions with unlike denominators (denominators less than eleven)

b) Add two mixed numbers with unlike denominators (denominators less than eleven)

NOTE: Accept both simplified and unsimplified answers.

Add whole numbers

Computation Skills--Subtraction

Subtract money--Subtract numbers not to exceed six digits in money notation in both vertical and horizontal form

Subtract unlike fractions including mixed numbers

Subtract whole numbers

Computation Skills--Multiplication

Multiply two digit numbers times money notations

Multiply fractions (including mixed numerals)

Multiply decimals times the decimal

Multiply whole numbers

Computation Skills--Division

Divide a two digit divisor into money notations (assume whole numbers)

Name a fraction as a percent or decimal

Divide whole numbers

Measurement

Identify time and calendar dates

Use proper units of measurement

Make linear measurements

Geometry

Find area, using English and metric systems

Find perimeter, using English and metric systems

Identify basic shapes

Volume

Problem Solving

Find percent of item at a percent discount

Compute interest using percent (simple)

Estimation, approximation

Problem Solving continued

Fill out IRS 1040-A form

Identify money values (e.g. making change)

Compute with denominate numbers

Interpreting graphs (including thermometers, etc.)

Averaging

Identify missing operational sign

Linda Busboom, Churchill HS, Fallon
Dave Green, Pershing County HS, Lovelock
Joe Beery, Eureka HS, Eureka
Thomas Booth, Clayton Middle School, Reno
Marjorie Sill, Sparks HS, Sparks
David Thomas, Pahrnagat Valley HS, Alamo
Ruth Williams, Rancho HS, Las Vegas
Dennis Smuskiewicz, Basic HS, Henderson
Edward Plawski, Eldorado HS, Las Vegas
Allan Graham, Kit Carson Elementary, Las Vegas
John Hunter, Carson HS, Carson City

Jim Kiley, Coordinator, Nevada Department of Education
Victor Hyden, Recorder, Nevada Department of Education

JPK/mg
1/25/77

COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

TASK FORCE I--JANUARY 20-21, 1977 MEETING

READING

DEFINITION

Minimum competency in reading for high school graduation means that students will be able to demonstrate mastery of reading skills in vocabulary development, comprehension, and work-study skills

Vocabulary Development

contemporary survival words
basic word lists

Reading Comprehension

pictures and illustrations
 details
 main idea
 sequence

paragraph
 details
 main idea
 sequence

drawing inferences
 predict outcomes
 cause and effect relationship
 expand literal meaning
 sensory imagery
 draw conclusions
 infer relationships not stated
 traits of character
 antonyms
 synonyms
 distinguish fact from fiction; fact from opinion
 make comparisons
 determine word meaning, using context clues
 homonyms

Reading Comprehension continued

following directions

oral
written

time relationships

tense

Work Study Skills

parts of a book

preface
table of contents
index
glossary
title page
copyright page

alphabetizing

words to the 1st letter
words to the 2nd letter
words to the 3rd letter
words to the 4th or more letter

reference sources

dictionary
encyclopedia
atlas
thesaurus
library skills

organizing information

outlining
classifying into logical sub-groups
summarizing

use of dictionary

guide words
pronunciation
definitions
syllabication
accent

charts/graphs

circle
line
bar

skimming and scanning

locate main idea
locate details

Peggy Reavis, Gardnerville Elementary, Gardnerville
Alberta Merritt, Silver Peak Elementary, Silver Peak
Linda Noble, Hawthorne Elementary, Hawthorne
Dr. Kathleen Waite, Gabbs Elementary, Gabbs
Ellen Grangaard, Clark HS, Las Vegas
Robert Parker, Eldorado HS, Las Vegas
Judith Massa, Spring Mtn. Special School, Angel Peak
Florence Beebe, Fremont Jr. HS, Las Vegas
Gordon Bina, Reno HS, Reno
Frances Terras, Lincoln Park Elementary, Sparks
Lily Boyer, Northside Elementary, Elko
Patricia Potter, Carson Jr. HS, Carson City

Jerry Nielsen, Coordinator, Nevada Department of Education
David Rivers, Recorder, Nevada Department of Education, LV

JPK/mg
1/25/77

COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

TASK FORCE I--JANUARY 20-21, 1977 MEETING

WRITING

DEFINITION

Minimum competency in writing for high school graduation is the ability to demonstrate those specific skills necessary for clear, purposeful communication.

The tentative number of basic skills decided upon is approximately 12-15.

Mechanics--The student will demonstrate the ability to use correctly:

Punctuation

end punctuation
the comma: series, dates, interrupters, addresses
the apostrophe: possessives and contractions

Capitalization

capitalization at the beginning of sentences, "I", and proper nouns

Usage/Grammar

subject/verb agreement
pronouns (ref/case)
verb forms (use of tense)

Manuscript Form

by writing legibly and following established format

Spelling

by spelling working vocabulary correctly

Sentence Structure

by writing a complete sentence (no run on, run through, comma slice, fragment)

Diction/Vocabulary

by using language appropriate for the purpose

WRITING

Thought-----The student will demonstrate the ability to establish a main idea and a support idea with two or more details, with examples or reasons.

Organization--The student will present ideas in a logical order.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEASUREMENT

1. Student allowed the use of dictionary.
2. Emphasis be placed on writing sample(s) rather than on objective test items.
3. Writing sample section be accompanied by a specific "check list" of those skills on which student writing will be evaluated--check list to be accessible to student and evaluator.
4. Subject for writing sample paragraph be taken from a list of several choices of an expository nature.

Writing Samples:

Paragraph--The student will write a 75-100 word paragraph demonstrating his ability to meet minimal standards of mechanics, thought, and organization.

Letters/Forms--

| | |
|--|--------|
| Jean Crawford, Yerington HS, Yerington | Absent |
| Roberta Dalbey, White Pine HS, Ely | |
| Rulan McGill, Albert Lowry HS, Winnemucca | |
| Steve Larsgaard, Mary S. Black Elementary, Battle Mtn. | |
| Charlotte Martin, Storey Cty. HS, Virginia City | |
| Nancy Manfredi, Wooster, HS, Reno | |
| Rita Hambleton, Hug HS, Reno | |
| Marcia Storey, Chapparral HS, Las Vegas | |
| Betty White, Valley HS, Las Vegas | |
| Mabel Mitchell, Eldorado HS, Las Vegas | |
| Jane Burrough, Western HS, Las Vegas | |
| Leontine Bennett, Carson City HS, Carson City | |

Ed Howard, Coordinator, Nevada Department of Education
Hal Mathers, Recorder, Nevada Department of Education

JPK/mg 1/25/77

Appeal Editorial

Declining quality

Declining quality of education has been a steadily worsening problem and a matter of growing concern in Nevada in recent years. There have been alibis and buck-passing but the simple fact is youngsters are graduating from high school knowing less and less. You just don't realize how bad it is until you get an unintelligible letter from a high school senior girl or see a high school boy stymied by the challenge of making change from a five-dollar bill.

The Nevada Legislature is tackling the problem of declining quality of education on at least two fronts: compulsory attendance and performance standards for graduation from high school. The actions have elicited comments from a member of the State Board of Education — most of which miss the mark.

Both the Senate and the Assembly are suggesting the lowering of the age of compulsory attendance from 17 to 16. (AB 110 and SB 119). The argument is: any kid who's there against his will isn't going to perform anyway.

There is an Assembly bill that would require seniors to pass tests on reading writing and arithmetic before qualifying for graduation.

Cynthia Cunningham, a state education board member, says "hooray" for the former and "boo" on the latter. We believe she's got it backwards.

AB 110 on compulsory attendance would allow eighth grade graduates to slip out of full-time high school attendance to accept employment or enter an apprenticeship. That's fine. Any 16-year-old who knows where he or she wants to go in the trades should be encouraged.

The Nevada Taxpayers Association, an organization we can agree with 99 times out of a hundred, says all compulsory education should be abolished. The NTA occasionally suggests throwing the baby out with the bathwater when it comes to cutting education costs — and this is one of those times. The offer to lower the age from 17 to 16 is apparently on the order of a compromise with NTA.

Student: "I can't stand it. One more day in Miss Goober's English class and I'll throw up. I'm gonna get me a job and make some money and quit wasting my time!" There's not a high school student, past or present, who hasn't said that out loud or to himself at one point in time.

Drop mandatory attendance and you'd probably lose most of your marginal and failing high school students. That would probably thrill the school district and the taxpayers association. But what about the rest of us citizens who will have to feed and house those functional illiterates and their offspring?

Wouldn't it be wiser to insist those who need it the most stay in school and hope maybe, through exposure, some learning might be absorbed through osmosis?

That brings us to part two — setting up minimum standards. Begging your pardon Ms. Cunningham, but why shouldn't the legislature set minimum standards — since the school boards around the state refuse to. Sad fact is, educators have been lowering graduation standards to meet the steadily declining quality of their classroom product.

What's the present situation? A student can collect a diploma by doing little else but showing up regularly and contributing to the superintendent's federal impact statement. That be the lone criterion, dropping attendance laws is a reasonable request.

Just suppose we were to keep the attendance requirement. And then suppose we were able to warn a student, say mid-way through his junior year, that he would have to meet certain minimum requirements or he will get no diploma.

No diploma? Little chance to get a job in the business world? Not qualified to hold most of the state jobs offered? Be a hiring prospect unpopular with even unpicky people like military recruiters?

Being denied a diploma that means something might be a bigger motivation than automatically receiving one that means nothing.

We don't think for a minute that setting up a program for browbeating Nevada's high school students is going to provide the final answer to the problem.

The crafts are honorable professions and are fine career goals. Those interested in crafts and skills should receive encouragement and assistance in reaching their goals. But even the potter, the welder and the auto mechanic have to know how to read, add a column of figures and make change.

There will be some who won't perform and a few who can't perform. No amount of effort can change that. But, we do not think it is unreasonable to expect a teenager to stay in school long enough, under pressure of the law if necessary, to learn the basic tools of survival.

And it's about darn time somebody stood up and told our educational executives what is acceptable and what is not acceptable from our graduating seniors.

The quality of education is in an obvious and steady decline. The legislators are correct in seeking to set standards for graduates. The educators themselves have pretty well indicated they can't handle it.

And we urge the legislators to not get stampeded into a decision to cut compulsory school attendance. Lowering or dropping compulsory attendance is a short-cut proposal offered by experts seeking to treat a symptom instead of the disease.

FACT SHEET

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

By a motion of the State Board of Education in January, 1976, Department of Education staff was directed to "conduct a study of the feasibility of establishing policies and regulations for the issuance of the high school diploma based on competency measures and to complete this study by July, 1976." Accordingly, Department staff conducted a study of the legal, political, developmental, and implementation feasibility of such a program. Following is the Department's Recommendation 1, contained in its report to the Board in July, 1976:

"It is recommended that the State Board of Education direct the staff to develop, in cooperation with the Nevada school districts and other interested parties, over a period of time, a listing of basic competencies in reading, writing and arithmetic deemed necessary before receiving a high school diploma, a statement of the required proficiency levels of each of these competencies, and a statement of how these will be measured."

At the July meeting the Board then directed staff to proceed with Recommendation 1 (above). Staff reported back to the Board at its October meeting a design for the implementation of Recommendation 1.

To initiate the design the Superintendent of Public Instruction appointed an advisory commission and two task forces. The commission recommends to the Department policies for the task forces and reviews the work accomplished. The commission consists of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, three school district superintendents, four persons from business and industry, members of the legislature and selected representatives from education-related associations.

In considering a competency-based high school diploma program, a distinction is made between competencies as developed in the K-12 period and adult competencies. While the two sets of competencies are obviously highly related, this program addresses itself only to the former, as indicated in the recommendation approved by the State Board of Education. Task Force I has been appointed to define the competencies and proficiency levels in arithmetic, reading, and writing. District Superintendents were asked to appoint outstanding teachers from their districts to serve on the task force. Thirty-five classroom teachers were appointed to serve on the task force and each school district has at least one teacher on the committee. Department staff members have been assigned to work with the task force. It is expected that the work of Task Force I will be completed by March 4, 1977.

Task Force II will be appointed to develop recommendations to the Department regarding the measurement of the competencies produced by Task Force I. It is expected that this task force will review existing measurement exercises, procedures and systems in the preparation of recommendations to the Department. One representative from each school district will be asked to serve on the task force. Work of Task Force II is scheduled for completion by May 15, 1977.

The final report of the Department's Committee on the Competency-Based High School Diploma Program will be presented to the State Board of Education in June, 1977.

COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMISSION

| <u>Name</u> | <u>CATEGORY</u> |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Dr. Kenny Guinn, Superintendent Clark County School District 2832 East Flamingo Rd. Las Vegas, Nevada 89121 Telephone: 736-5310 | School District Superintendent |
| Mr. Robert J. Scott, Superintendent Humboldt County School District P. O. Box 1070 Winnemucca, Nevada 89445 Telephone: 623-2027 | School District Superintendent |
| Dr. Marvin E. Picollo, Superintendent Washoe County School District 425 East Ninth Street Reno, Nevada 89512 Telephone: 322-7041 | School District Superintendent |
| Mr. Frank Johnson, Corporate Vice President Las Vegas Hilton 3000 Paradise Road Las Vegas, Nevada 89109 Telephone: 732-5111 | Business and Industry |
| Mr. Robert E. O'Connell, Manager J. C. Penney Co., Inc. 3542 Maryland Parkway Las Vegas, Nevada 89109 Telephone: 735-5131 | Business and Industry |
| Mr. Lee Dewey, Office Manager Nevada Power P.O. Box 230 Las Vegas, Nevada 89131 Telephone: 385-5011 | Business and Industry |
| Mr. Daniel Hickey Hickey Distributing Co. 1621 Highway 395 Minden, Nevada 89423 Telephone: 782-3609 | Business and Industry |

| <u>Name</u> | <u>CATEGORY</u> |
|---|--|
| Mary Lou Moser, Budget & Research Analyst Institutional Studies & Budget Office of the Chancellor University of Nevada System 405 Marsh Avenue Reno, Nevada 89509 Telephone: 784-4901 | Nevada Parent-Teacher Assoc. |
| Mr. Joseph G. Newlin, Executive Director Nevada State Education Association 151 East Park Street Carson City, Nevada 89701 Telephone: 882-5574 | Nevada State Education Assoc. |
| Mr. Roy Smith, Assistant Superintendent Elko County School District P. O. Box 1012 Elko, Nevada 89801 Telephone: 738-5196 | Nevada Association of School Administrators |
| Dr. Jack B. Selbig, Director Counseling & Testing Student Services University of Nevada Reno, Nevada 89557 Telephone: 784-6810 | University System |
| Mr. Warren J. Scott, President Nevada State School Boards Assoc. Humboldt County School District P. O. Box 1070 Winnemucca, Nevada 89445 Telephone: 623-2594 (bank) | Nevada State School Boards Assoc. and Employer (First National Bank of Nevada) |
| Dr. John Vergiels Nevada State Assembly College of Education University of Nevada 4505 South Maryland Parkway Las Vegas, Nevada 89109 Telephone: 739-3011, Ext. 232 | State Legislature |

| <u>Name</u> | <u>CATEGORY</u> |
|---|----------------------|
| Mr. Richard H. Bryan, Attorney Nevada State Senate 225 East Bridger, Suite 710 Las Vegas, Nevada 89101 Telephone: 382-5222 | State Legislature |
| Nancy Gomes Nevada State Assembly 1650 Rayburn Drive Reno, Nevada 89503 Telephone: 747-0726 | State Legislature |
| John R. Gamble, ex-officio member Nevada Department of Education 400 W. King St., Capitol Complex Carson City, Nevada 89710 Telephone: 885-5700, Ext. 270 | State Superintendent |

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

James Kiley, Chairman
Edward Howard
Victor Hyden
R. H. Mathers
Pat Miller
Jerry Nielsen
David Rivers, LV

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
400 W. King Street, Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710

mag 1/31/77



NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710

JOHN R. GAMBLE
Superintendent

HERBERT R. STEFFENS
Director
Office of Educational
Accountability

February 9, 1977

MEMORANDUM

TO: Advisory Commission Members
Competency-Based High School Diploma Program

FROM: Jim Kiley

SUBJECT: MINUTES OF JANUARY 26, 1977 MEETING

Enclosed is a copy of the minutes of the last Commission meeting. You will each be receiving an invitation from Dr. Joseph Crowley to attend an Educational Seminar, February 23, 1977. Since the seminar may continue until late afternoon (speaker at 1:30 PM and questions after could last to 3-3:30 PM), you may wish to plan your travel accordingly. I hope that you will have time to attend the seminar as the speaker from Denver should be able to answer, from actual experience, many questions about competency-based high school diploma programs.

Jim
JPK/mg

Enclosure

MINUTES OF THE
COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM
ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING

TIME: 9:15AM to 12:40PM, Wednesday, January 26, 1977

PLACE: State Board Conference Room, Department of Education, Carson City

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Lee Dewey, Office Manager, Nevada Power, PO Box 230, Las Vegas, 89131
Nancy Gomes, NV State Assembly, 1650 Rayburn Drive, Reno, 89503
Daniel Hickey, Hickey Distributing Co., 1621 Hwy. 395, Minden, 89423
Frank Johnson, Corp. VP, LV Hilton, 3000 Paradise Rd., Las Vegas, 89109
Mary Lou Moser, Budget & Res. Analyst, UNR, 405 Marsh Ave., Reno, 89509
Robert O'Connell, Mgr., JC Penney Co., 3542 Maryland Pkwy. Las Vegas, 89109
Marvin Picollo, Supt., Washoe Cty. School District, 425 E. Ninth St., Reno, 89512
Robert Scott, Supt. Humboldt Cty. School District, PO Box 1070, Winnemucca, 89445
Warren Scott, Pres. NSSBA, PO Box 1070, Winnemucca, 89445
Jack Selbig, Dir. Counseling & Testing, UNR, Reno, 89557
Roy Smith, Asst. Supt., Elko Cty. School District, PO Box 1012, Elko, 89801

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Richard Bryan, Attorney, NV State Senate, 225 E. Bridger, Suite 710, Las Vegas, 89101
Kenny Guinn, Supt., Clark Cty. School District, 2832 E. Flamingo Rd., Las Vegas, 89121
Joseph Newlin, Exec. Dir., NSEA 151 E. Park St., Carson City, 89701
John Vergiels, NV State Assembly, UNLV, College of Ed., 4504 S. Maryland Pkwy.,
Las Vegas, 89109

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STAFF:

John Gamble
Ed Howard
Vic Hyden
Jim Kiley
Jerry Nielsen
Herb Steffens

NEVADA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION:

Shirlee A. Wedow

MINUTES

Chairman Robert O'Connell opened the meeting at 9:15 A.M. and indicated that he intended to begin all Commission meetings promptly at the time specified on the agenda.

Minutes of the December 15, 1976 meeting and the agenda for the January 26, 1977 meeting were approved.

Overview of January 20-21 Task Force I Meeting

Jim Kiley reported that the first meeting of Task Force I was very productive. Every school district superintendent cooperated with the request to appoint teachers to Task Force I, and all but one teacher attended the meeting. A teacher from Lyon County School District could not attend the first meeting because of a conflict with the district six-weeks testing program. However, the teacher has indicated that she will attend the February 7-8 Task Force I meeting in Reno.

The teachers expressed many of the same concerns about the program that were discussed by Commission members during their first meeting. They are interested in maintaining close communication with the Commission and wish to be able to review the measurement strategies and tests that may be recommended by Task Force II.

All of the teachers were interested in the program and, as will be noted during the next presentations, they all worked very hard during the two-day session. After the first general session, the teachers met in small groups by content area to develop working definitions of minimum competency in arithmetic, reading and writing. As expected, the development of definitions proved quite difficult, but the discussions did enable members of all three groups to share ideas and attain group consensus about preliminary definitions. The second day of the meeting was devoted to the refinement of definitions and the selection of skills consistent with each definition. The reading group had the greatest difficulty in producing a definition of minimum competency. Therefore, the group could not spend much time selecting appropriate skills. Since each group was small (11-12 members), every teacher had the opportunity to contribute to the discussions. The teachers agreed that all decisions would be made by unanimous consent and they maintained an attitude of openness throughout the two-day meeting.

Minimum Competency in Reading

Jerry Nielsen distributed copies of the definition and skills produced by the reading group, and gave an explanation of the many ideas shared by the reading teachers in the development of the definition and selection of skills.

After discussing the definition and skills, Commission members agreed that they had a better understanding of what the reading group intended to communicate, but members expressed doubt that the definition would communicate to the general

public. Use of the words "readability level" and "secondary concepts" makes the definition difficult to understand. The Commission agreed to recommend that the reading group develop a definition of minimum competency in reading that does not contain technical, educational words or phrases. Commission members stated that they appreciate the difficulty of the task, but they agreed that clear communication is essential to the program. Until such time as the reading group refines the definition, the Commission agreed to change the definition to read "Minimum competency in reading for graduation from high school means that students will be able to demonstrate mastery of reading skills in vocabulary development, comprehension and work study skills."

Several Commission members asked that the teachers consider the desirability of including an introductory statement to each definition to indicate that the vast majority of high school graduates will develop skills far above the minimum competency levels. Some statement may be needed to convince the public that high school instruction will not be limited to "minimum" levels of competency in basic skills. Care should be taken to ensure that the general public does not perceive minimum competencies to be the maximum level of performance sought by the schools for all pupils. The general feeling expressed was that, in some manner, the definitions should indicate that the minimum competencies are applicable to a small percentage of high school graduates.

The Commission asked that the reading teachers be commended for their work and encouraged the teachers to develop a definition that communicates clearly minimum competency expectations in reading.

Minimum Competency in Writing

Ed Howard distributed the definition and skills produced by the writing group. He described the procedures followed by the teachers and the small-scale experiment that will be conducted to determine the validity of the teacher-developed criteria for evaluating student writing skills.

Advisory Commission members recommended that the writing group develop a definition that will indicate, more precisely and in lay terms, the minimum writing skills expected of high school graduates. Ed Howard described the various categories of writing skills identified by the teachers and answered questions about the definitions of words used to describe various skills. Commission members discussed the possibility of listing the skills in some order of priority as many felt that penmanship and spelling are the most important writing skills. Members were pleased that "completing forms" was listed as a minimum skill because of the number of times people must complete forms in everyday life. Ed Howard reported that the definitions of skills will become more apparent as the teachers begin to establish specific limits in each area. The Commission asked that the writing teachers be commended for their work.

Minimum Competency in Arithmetic

Jim Kiley described the work produced by the arithmetic teachers. Commission members reiterated the need to devise some method to advise the lay public, in

the definition, that most students will achieve skills far above minimum competency expectations. They also indicated that, while redundant, it might be useful to indicate that students will "use correctly" or "use accurately" addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and practical problem-solving skills. Other questions raised by Commission members regarded the need for students to know Roman numerals, exponents, the metric system, and whether accuracy will mean knowledge of the correct process or the ability to arrive at the correct answer. Commission members also expressed concern about the use of technical or educational terms (i.e. denominate numbers, exponents, etc.) in the listing of skills. Jim Kiley mentioned that as the teachers had the opportunity to delineate specific content limits by skill the meanings of words should become clearer. He indicated that the problem of clarity in the definitions is a difficult problem to solve because the precise meaning of the definition is provided by the lists of specific skills.

The Commission commended the arithmetic teachers for the work that had been produced, and requested that the teachers continue their efforts to produce definitions and skill descriptors that can be understood by the lay citizen.

Task Force I Recommendations to the Advisory Commission

The following recommendations were presented to the Advisory Commission:

1. If a test is developed to measure the minimum competencies of students in arithmetic, reading and writing, a student should be reevaluated only in areas of deficiency. Once a student demonstrates minimum competency in a required area (e.g. passing score in reading and writing, but below passing score in arithmetic), the student should not be required to retake the test.
2. Members of Task Force I want to have the opportunity to review any tests that may be developed to measure minimum competencies of students in reading, writing and arithmetic.
3. Members of Task Force I want to have the opportunity to communicate with the Advisory Commission.
4. Members of Task Force I want the Advisory Commission to consider the development of alternatives for students who can't/ don't pass minimum competency measures that may be required for high school graduation.

Commission members expressed serious concern about recommendation #1. The general public seems most interested in the competencies demonstrated by students just before graduation. To some members, the recommendation suggests the possibility that students could be prepared, through intensified instruction, to pass the test in the ninth grade and many students might forget the skills by graduation time. For example, some students take general mathematics the first year in high school and never take another class that requires the use of mathematics skills. Some of the students forget the skills before they graduate.

No consensus was reached regarding the recommendation but the Commission members asked that Task Force I consider the concerns that have been expressed.

Department Committee members were asked to consider procedures that could meet the request made by the teachers in recommendations #2 and #3. Recommendation #4 is a mutual concern between the Commission and Task Force I. The June, 1977 report to the State Board of Education should contain some recommendation regarding the concern and the Commission would like to receive suggestions about the matter.

Senate and Assembly Education Committees

Members discussed briefly the provisions of Assembly Bill #9 and asked if there had been any feedback from legislators regarding the materials sent by Chairman O'Connell to all members of both houses of the legislature. Since members indicated that no response had been received as yet, Chairman O'Connell asked John Gamble to explore the possibility of arranging a meeting between the Commission and the Education Committees of the Senate and Assembly. The purpose of such a meeting is to inform legislators about the current work being performed in the Competency-Based High School Diploma Program. Commission members will be advised if arrangements can be made for such a meeting.

Educational Seminar

Jim Kiley reported that Dr. Joseph Crowley, University of Nevada, Reno, has offered to host a seminar on competency-based high school diploma programs for Commission, Department and State Board members. The seminars are conducted to inform interested citizens about current issues in education and Dr. Crowley thought that the Commission might wish to obtain information about some specific aspect of the competency-based high school diploma program. Jim Kiley suggested that the Commission might wish to hear from an expert in the field of testing. (someone who could describe, in lay terms, how tests are developed, validated, kept secure, scored, how and why reliability studies are conducted and how much it costs to produce a test). Superintendent Robert Scott indicated that the Commission might wish to obtain information from an expert who has been involved in a competency-based program. Chairman O'Connell indicated that the Commission should attempt to obtain as much information as possible and he asked the Department Committee to explore the possibility of inviting people with experience in testing and competency-based programs to meet with the Commission.

Second Meeting of Task Force I

Jim Kiley reported that the next meeting of Task Force I is scheduled for February 7-8, and it will be held in Reno at the Ponderosa Hotel and Casino, 515 South Virginia Street. He reviewed the agenda for the meeting and described the various activities scheduled for the two days.

Next Advisory Commission Meeting

The next meeting will be February 23, 1977, in Carson City, and the meeting will begin promptly at 9:00 A.M.

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 P.M.

COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

OBJECTIVE

**JANUARY, 1976
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
DIRECTIVE TO COMPLETE
FEASIBILITY STUDY BY JULY, 1976**

LEGAL FEASIBILITY

POLITICAL FEASIBILITY

DEVELOPMENTAL FEASIBILITY

IMPLEMENTATION FEASIBILITY

**COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM
PROCEDURES**

LEGAL FEASIBILITY-----ANALYZE PERTINENT NEVADA REVISED STATUTES

POLITICAL FEASIBILITY-----SURVEY OPINIONS OF NEVADA CITIZENS

**DEVELOPMENTAL FEASIBILITY-----REVIEW OF LITERATURE, ATTEND APPROPRIATE MEETINGS
AND CONFERENCES REGARDING TOPIC, OBTAIN INFORMATION
FROM OTHER STATES AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS, ETC.**

**IMPLEMENTATION FEASIBILITY-----EVALUATE RESULTS OBTAINED FROM PRECEDING
ACTIVITIES AND PREPARE REPORT OF IMPLICATIONS
FOR NEVADA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM
TASK FORCE I AND II PRODUCTS

TASK
FORCE
I

1. DEFINITIONS OF MINIMUM COMPETENCIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION IN THE BASIC SKILL
AREAS OF ARITHMETIC, READING AND WRITING

2. LISTS OF SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE SKILLS, CONSISTENT WITH DEFINITIONS OF MINIMUM COMPETENCY
EXPECTATIONS, IN ARITHMETIC, READING, AND WRITING

TASK
FORCE
II

3. RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEASUREMENT PROCEDURES TO BE USED TO DETERMINE STUDENT
ATTAINMENT OF MINIMUM COMPETENCY IN ARITHMETIC, READING, AND WRITING

**COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM
STATUS OF ACTION PLAN FEBRUARY 9, 1977**

ADVISORY COMMISSION

**TWO MEETINGS HELD
THIRD MEETING FEBRUARY 23, 1977**

TASK FORCE I

**TWO MEETINGS HELD
THIRD AND FINAL MEETING MARCH 3-4, 1977**

TASK FORCE II

**APPOINTMENTS TO BE COMPLETED IN MARCH
MEETINGS TO BE HELD IN APRIL AND MAY**

COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM
CALENDAR OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

JANUARY, 1976.
STATE BOARD
DIRECTIVE TO
COMPLETE
FEASIBILITY
STUDY

JULY, 1976.
FEASIBILITY
STUDY
COMPLETED

STATE BOARD
DIRECTIVE TO
COMPLETE ACTION
PLAN BY OCTOBER,
1976.

OCTOBER, 1976
ACTION PLAN
COMPLETED

STATE BOARD
DIRECTIVE TO
IMPLEMENT PLAN

NOVEMBER, 1976.
ADVISORY COMMISSION
APPOINTED

DECEMBER/JANUARY
1976. 1977
TEACHER TASK FORCE I
APPOINTED

MARCH, 1977
TASK FORCE II
APPOINTMENTS

WORK COMPLETED
FOR TASK FORCE I

MAY, 1977
WORK COMPLETED
FOR TASK FORCE II

JUNE, 1977
ACTION PLAN REPORT
DELIVERED TO STATE
BOARD OF EDUCATION



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Capitol Complex
Carson City, Nevada 89710

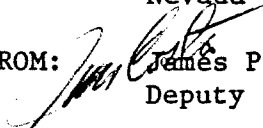
JOHN R. GAMBLE
Superintendent

JAMES P. COSTA
Deputy Superintendent

February 10, 1977

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Nancy Gomes, Assemblywoman
Nevada State Legislature

FROM:  James P. Costa
Deputy Superintendent

SUBJECT: Dropout Rate, 1974-75

During the joint hearings on A. B. 110/S. B. 119 yesterday, you questioned the validity of the 3.11 percent rate of dropouts that was used in my written statement. Perhaps I did a less than adequate job of explaining, since I felt that you continued to find it difficult to accept that rate. Please let me try again.

During the course of the school year, there are many student withdrawals from the public schools. Most of these students re-enter school in another state, in other school districts within this state or even within other schools in the same district. This type of withdrawal was not covered in the report that was cited in yesterday's hearing.

We call the report a "dropout study" because it includes two kinds of withdrawals: 1) Those for which there is a known reason for the student not re-entering a public school in a given school year, and 2) those where the student leaves the school and the student's records are not requested by another school. The combination of these types of withdrawal is what makes up the 3.11 percent.

I am sorry for not having explained it more to your satisfaction during the hearing. I have supplied a copy of the report to the secretary of the Assembly Education Committee if you should want to see it.

Please let me know if I can respond to any other questions.

JPC:maj

copy: ✓ John Vergiels, Chairman, Assembly Education Committee
Jack Schofield, Chairman, Education, Health, Welfare and State Institutions

VERBATIM TESTIMONY BY DR. KENNY C. GUINN,
SUPERINTENDENT, CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

ASSEMBLY WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE
Wednesday, February 16, 1977

Chairman Mello, early in the hearing, asked for comment why "our kids can't read and write nor add and subtract,"... "what happened to the lost art of writing coherently"... why students spend so much school time out of basic school activities.

Dr. Guinn: I tried to list some of the questions that you asked me at the beginning, because, again, I wouldn't apologize but I know you've been sitting here for a long time and I know you have long days and long nights and any one of those items that you're talking about could take a detailed discussion, and I would say, a very intellectual type, philosophical, when you get into a lot of those areas. But I think I would say, "Yes, we in education throughout America are in real trouble. There's no doubt about it." And we need to stand up and say that and I think there are a lot of reasons for it. I don't know that you can support it with research because people are working fulltime on research and one research study will come out and say one thing and another will come out and say just the opposite, so we have a true dichotomy. But I think that we have made progress in the State of Nevada, primarily because of the support of the citizens, the taxpayers, and the legislative body. And I would have to take you back a few years ago and try to accept the fact that whatever I'm saying is not an excuse of any kind, because if I had the answers, I would be one of the richest men in America today because you could bottle it and sell it to everybody. Everybody's looking for the answers, not only educators, teachers, parents, administrators, legislators, just everybody is looking for it. So, yes, we are in a state of flux and uncertainty throughout America and probably in the worst condition

of all are the metropolitan school systems in the metropolitan areas. I like to say to people, "No, the Clark County School District is not taking into consideration the needs of every individual youngster because we have 83,000+ students." and I say to you that we've been identifying some of the youngsters over the years. We're just now getting into the area of learning disabilities which we know so little about. I've seen youngsters come from the same family where one youngster will be gifted and another youngster who cannot read because of a learning disability. We're just now learning to be able to identify those areas and are trying to get them specific help. But as we go back, also the times have changed. There are more and more demands being placed on education. Marvin talked about the breakfast/lunch program, and I'm all for those things, and I'm saying it's more of an administrative burden, but I think the end results are paying off.

From 1969, I became superintendent of schools, we were going through the 1960's at that time; let everybody do their own thing in education - open campus - let a junior high school youngster decide that he's going to take three classes and sit down in the student activity's time for reflection for the rest of the day. When we started analyzing that, we also had money problems in 1969, not only from the salary category but from the staffing. If you go back and look at the classroom size in 1972-73, you will see that there are many sixth grade classes in Clark County with between 38 and 42 students in one class. You cannot ask the most outstanding teacher to take that many youngsters and eliminate all the problems that we have. Especially in a metropolitan area, many times we have both parents working and the high turnover rate. But we started a program at that time along with this body's help, and in 1971 I can remember K, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, I can remember classes of 34,35,37, which was even more difficult

because that was the time we should have been initiating the reading programs. This legislative body that came out of the assembly in 1971 passed a resolution supporting and encouraging people to spend their money at the local level to put no more than 30 students in any K, 1st or 2nd grade class. It was just this past September, without an additional resolution, we have now gone K-6 where we have a maximum class size of 30. So classes average about 26-27, which is entirely different than 40-42.

We need to start giving teachers special help with unique problems. We were able through the funding out of this body here to go back and add a special reading teacher to every elementary school in the Clark County School District who would help students 3rd grade and below. We need more than one, but at least we're attacking the problem. We have library programs because students have to know how to use the resources of the library. We're going to miss youngsters out of 80,000 that go through the classes, but when we started checking the 7th to 12th grade in 1969, we did not have a single reading teacher. We moved immediately to try to get the elementary type reading teachers to move into the junior-senior high schools. All of these schools have people with reading backgrounds.

In the 50's and 60's the dropout rate was tremendous. Today in Clark County we're maintaining 85-95% of those children because of alternative programs. We're still going to miss some of the kids.

We tried an attendance rule of 70/30. If you miss more than 30%, you fail because we don't think you could be there. After 30 days, he comes to school a tremendous trouble-maker. You kick him

out - and we have due process now. Have to go through that procedure. What about the superbright kid who says, "I can miss the whole class and come in and pass."

The fire drills - they're required by the fire department. We have no alternative; there are rules and regulations. That is by statute. We have programs for the library, yes.

The diary document came out of Clark County, and I would like an opportunity to present the views of the other staff members of that school and the principal, because you have a one-sided report. A lot of those things in there are true, and I am concerned about it but there are some things you have to take into consideration.

Under the scholastic aptitude tests for the State of Nevada, under the verbal, the score in the national level is 431; for Nevada, 456. So we are doing very well compared to the nation. You will find we are spending less money than is spent on average in the nation. Under math, the national is 472, and Nevada is 497. Under the American College Test Program, which is probably more extensive, overall the composite national is 18.3, and Nevada is 18.3.

In Clark County we have a more difficult problem of achievement than the smaller counties. This is usually true of metropolitan areas. We can tell this because we have some small schools where the achievement level is higher. Under math, second grade in 1972, we were at the 50 percentile, right on the national average. Once we started our programs of lowering class size, we are now in 1976, at 66 percentile. Under the fifth grade in 1972, we were at the 42nd percentile in total reading; today we're at 48%. In math, we were at 42, and today we are at 54. So we're improving. If I checked through the seventh and eighth grades, we would have some over and

some under, but we did not want to go through remediation at the junior and senior high school levels, so we put our money, time and effort at the elementary level. You can pump a lot of money into remediation and not make that kind of gain.

About other problem areas, like the intercom interruptions - yes, I'd like to go out there and pull the wires on those things because people will abuse them, just like people abuse the telephone and other things. You've got to consider those people problems. If you will keep supplying us the financial support you have in the past, we'll be able to give you reports you want.

Chairman Mello: I agree with a lot of what you say, that these clubs are necessary, but I cannot appreciate them being called out of class. Now, for the brighter students, it doesn't affect them that much as it does the one who is slow.

Dr. Guinn: Most of those student are those without grade problems. I agree that grades have become inflated all over the country. However, we're in a large metropolitan area, and some of our kids are bused 20-25 miles one way because of our desegregation program, and there is no way these kids can become involved in a daily school program unless we set aside some time.

Today the attitude and home environment of the youngster has so much to do with whether a child succeeds in school.

Mr. Glover: I can appreciate the problem with student turnover, but one thing you could control that teachers frequently mention is a big proble, is the number of programs the teachers are required to teach.

Mr. Gamble: Maybe the back to basics movement will trim some of this out.

Mr. Glover: Can we do anything to relieve you from some of these mandated programs?

Mr. Gamble: I think if you look into statute, you would find that the legislature has mandated quite a few things.

Dr. Guinn: If I'm not mistaken, it was just two years that we got the rule out that every student shall be taught the fish and game laws of the State of Nevada. The other thing is, we have a great deal of flexibility. I would be glad to discuss in detail with you in subcommittee or individually, we've gone through our high school curriculums and I can tell you that we did have programs in our high schools where a student planning to go on to college could take over 229 different electives in terms of titles. A youngster with a learning problem had a selection of about 29. We're turning that around; we've implemented a program where a student is tested for instance to determine if he needs another basic English class. But it's a slow process making changes such as these.

MINIMAL COMPETENCY EVALUATION

It is not unusual for one invited to speak to an assembly such as this to begin his remarks with reference to the individual pleasure and ego inflation that normally accompanies such an invitation.

I shall not begin this way.

I would rather begin by plagiarizing the remarks of another. William L. Pharis, the Executive Director of the Association of Elementary School Principals provides me with this opportunity. While addressing my remarks to the problem of Minimal Competency Evaluation, I must approach the problem much as a man who received a kidney transplant from a bedwetter. It is a mixed blessing at best.

Denver has had a program of minimal competency evaluation for some sixteen years established as a part of its graduation requirements. It has proven to be neither a panacea nor a dilemma. It has, however, been headlined as both by opposing factions of that self-annointed group called educational writers. I frequently refer to this same group as educational antagonists. I have never been professionally able to understand why those farthest away from the on-site experience of conducting evaluation programs in large districts are the first to be recognized for literary endeavors which tend to describe what we are doing as wrong.

Let me cite some examples of inexcusable generalizations about evaluation through testing.

TERRY HERNDON - National Education Association

"People disagree on the goals of education. Some parents want job preparation; some, college acceptance; others, mere custodial care or something else. Yet, standardized tests take for granted that everybody places equal value on whatever skill is being tested."

DR. ZACHARIAS - National Elementary Principal

"I feel emotionally toward the testing industry as I would toward any other merchant of death. I feel that way because of what they do to the kids. I'm not saying they murder every child --- only twenty percent of them."

An educational historian who rises to the occasion to accept the challenge of recording the story of American education during the confusing era of the seventies must include at least one chapter on testing and the misuse of test results especially in the area of minimal competencies.

We are living in an educational age during which professionals and nonprofessionals alike seem eager to use test results to prove or disprove divergent points of view.

Let me illustrate this:

At a recent board meeting I reported on the apparent effects of pupil mobility on achievement scores. My remarks were immediately interpreted by one board member to "prove" that mandatory bussing (an

interpreted form of mobility) had a direct effect on the child's achievement.

As lay persons and professionals alike examine any given set of test scores, the necessary use of basic statistical terms frequently creates unnecessary problems. Such problems are usually reflected through misinterpretation of results to prove or disprove an isolated theory. This may be seen when two parties misuse the same set of statistics to "prove" opposing points of view.

Tests are a means to an end--not an end in themselves. They are a necessary step in understanding the learner, in planning instruction to meet his needs, and in total evaluation.

This is the sixteenth successive year of Denver Public Schools' participation in the Proficiency and Review program. The Denver Board of Education adopted this program as a part of the high school graduation requirements for the Denver Public Schools. In effect, the P & R program means that each senior not only must meet the credit requirements for graduation but must also demonstrate his competence in basic skills in arithmetic and in English as measured by proficiency tests. Many educators may view this type of a program as one of supplementary testing. Let me emphasize--we in Denver look upon it as a complimentary part of our total program of evaluation. Success either in college or in business and industry is directly dependent on a working knowledge of basic skills.

It is as a testing program that the Proficiency and Review instrument has been most criticized. Some persons say that it imposes undue hardships upon pupils who end up without a high school diploma. However, the experience in the Denver Public Schools indicates that most of those pupils who fail one or more of the four P & R tests can and do finally pass the tests. They ultimately receive their high school diplomas.

This is not accomplished without time and hard work expended by the students and their teachers. Schools have had to provide opportunities for pupils who fail with refresher work in the skills with which they have had trouble. Generally, the experience with the P & R program in the Denver schools has been gratifying. Numerically, with over 60,000 seniors tested since 1962, a relatively high percentage of pupils - varying from school to school - originally failed one or more of the sub-tests. All but about three to four percent finally receive their high school diplomas, however.

The instrument selected for measuring these skills is a cooperative design of the California Test Bureau, a Division of McGraw-Hill Book Company, and of the Denver Public Schools.

The four tests which were constructed are: Numerical, Spelling, Language, and Reading Proficiency. Each of these separate tests has undergone periodic revision.

The decision to adopt such a program as the P & R was also a cooperative one made by both the community and the schools. From the results of Denver's regular follow-up studies of high

school graduates in business and industry, in which employers make suggestions and criticisms, came the primary reason for Denver's taking the action it did. Occasional criticisms from college professors concerning the basic skills performance by some of Denver's high school graduates provided yet another reason.

Denver awards but one type of diploma. The superintendent and Board concurred that a P & R program such as the one adopted would lend additional dignity to and respect for the high school diploma awarded in Denver.

Before the 1968-69 school year, the Proficiency and Review program tested only twelfth grade students in October of their senior year. Those who failed - and those unable to take the tests in October - were retested in April, prior to graduation. This April testing followed a time schedule in which ample opportunities existed for those who failed to take refresher work. Special classes were set up in each high school. Seniors who failed to pass one or more of the four Proficiency and Review tests after having had refresher work were placed on the summer school graduation list. Again, ample opportunity has been provided for them to attend special classes in summer school where they may concentrate on the basic skills. If they then pass the tests, they may obtain their high school diplomas from the principal of the high school from which they attended.

Again, let me emphasize--in reality, the P & R program cannot be isolated as a testing program rather it proves to be an integral part of an ongoing process of curriculum evaluation and improvement within a school system.

Denver's comprehensive annual achievement testing program has taken on new meanings. Using Form S of the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills, seven grades each year are tested in the areas of reading, arithmetic, and language. Counselors and teachers in all grades thus have frequent indications of their pupils abilities through analysis of individual test results. By trying to help their pupils immediately overcome weaknesses in essential skills they are using test results for improving instruction.

Teachers in elementary schools and in the junior high schools have been conscious of the importance of training in the basic skills, and they continue to do a good job in teaching such skills. Since the P & R program began, senior high schools have provided increased opportunities for pupils to use the skills they often forget after they finish the eighth grade.

Denver's experience prompts the following suggestions for school systems contemplating or adopting such a program.

1. The first year's program should be primarily experimental in nature. It is quite possible that some school administrators might be dismayed at the number of potential graduates who fail on the first trial testing.

2. If such a program is designed exclusively for qualified seniors during the twelfth year, the tests must first be administered early in the year. Doing this will give counselors time to schedule into appropriate refresher classes those who fail. Tests should be administered again in the spring and possibly once more in the summer school.
3. The Board of Education and the school administration must be prepared to adjust the budget to provide for refresher courses in the areas needed. The refresher courses can be short term. Those pupils needing them might possibly be scheduled from a study hall or from a counseling period.
4. The program must be clearly communicated to and understood by teachers and counselors at all levels in the district. They must realize that they have a definite responsibility to their pupils.
5. Parents and community groups must understand the program when they once see that it is a genuine attempt to increase children's mastery of necessary basic skills, these groups will endorse the program.

6. If such instruments are used in the grades below twelfth, refresher courses must be available and retesting must follow the completion of refresher courses.

Perhaps at no other time in educational history have the differences between pupils' abilities and their educational achievement been more apparent than now. The boys and girls in a high school graduating class today represent a microcosm of the complex society from which they have emerged. Yet it is this same graduating class that the tax-paying public uses to evaluate the quality of what the educational objectives for high schools should be and about what is meant by quality.

It is difficult for the public to differentiate among high school graduates and to evaluate the total high school program by judging the performance of the total graduating class. Typically a large majority of the better students usually continue on to college and thereby absent themselves from the local community for a few years. Many of the graduates who move on to college may never return to the community. If they do—their educational success and status is attributed to the college or the university which they attended and not to the local high school.

Poorer students remain in the community, however, as visible proof of the school's lack of success. If one of these graduates cannot spell, the generalization is made--"*High school graduates can't spell.*"

Frequently the number of scholarship winners from a particular high school or the percent of the graduating class going on to college is used as a criterion for evaluation. The records of the better students count and those of the poor students do not. In other instances, the average academic performance of the graduating class becomes a reference point. But the average does not give information about either the best or the poorest student in the graduating class. Such typical situations suggest the adoption of realistic and recognizable standards of educational performance for all high school graduates.

The P & R program of the Denver Public Schools, in effect, sets such minimal standards. One of its results is a definition of minimal quality for its high school graduates. Thus, that does not depend upon college matriculation as a measure.

The Denver Public Schools do a continuing follow-up study on their graduates, both those who attend college and those who do not. A Denver Public School's study reported on the job status of 5,077 graduates. Of these graduates 668 were found to be employed in the Denver metropolitan area by 361 employers. Each of the employers was interviewed personally by a member of the Denver Public Schools interview team. An historical review of some of the findings of these teams during the past ten years seems relevant to a discussion of the P & R program and appropriate at this time.

In the early sixties, eighty-five percent of the employers interviewed indicated that the graduates they had employed from a single graduating class were adequately prepared in basic knowledges and skills. Ninety-three percent felt that the graduates were adequate in specific job skills and preparation. Only thirteen percent expressed the opinion that there was need for additional school work in order for graduates to advance on the job. Nine percent of employers stated that the schools could have given additional training to graduates.

In a later survey the question was asked of employers, "*Do you feel that Denver high school graduates coming to you for employment have an adequate educational background?*" While the affirmative response continued to remain above eighty percent, some employers expressed the feeling that Denver public high school graduates needed some additional background and made two hundred fifty-six separate suggestions for improvement. Topping the list of areas needing additional preparation were spelling, mathematics, English, and penmanship.

In subsequent surveys the affirmative responses were slightly below eighty percent. As are many throughout the country, we in Denver are beginning to feel the need of employers for not just graduates but for graduates who can assume jobs requiring some technical skills and those demanding commercial and business training. However, the areas of needed additional preparation identified by employers included (first) spelling, (second) English, (third) mathematics, and (fourth) business

education. When the question was asked, "*What areas of high school preparation do you feel are most valuable or important for employment in your company?*" Employers interviewed responded by making 689 separate suggestions. Among these in descending order were the needs for general education in basic skills (47%), commercial and business skills (28%), mechanical and technical skills (12%) and getting along with people (8%).

While Denver has been able to elicit a rather consistent pattern of response from employers about the need for additional school preparation in the basic skills, this percentage is high enough to indicate that a problem of sufficient magnitude exists to warrant further study. The school system must therefore take whatever action it can to remedy the problem.

The average and above average high school students offer no major problem in this respect since they bring these skills with them to the job. These students have the basic skills: that is reading, arithmetic, language, and spelling. In most instances, pupils will have acquired them before they reach high school and used them as a basis for growth and improvement thereafter.

However, in most high schools there exists a considerable number of pupils who have not acquired sufficient skills. These are those who have attended high school for four or more years, have a variegated collection of course credits which do not comprise a sequential program of study, and have extremely low academic

abilities. It is with such pupils that questions arise about procedures the high school should use in certifying the quality of education provided.

In an attempt to answer these questions Denver's high schools certify pupils meeting minimum requirements as high school graduates and award them diplomas. Those pupils not meeting the minimum requirements get certificates of attendance. Evaluating the educational experience of these latter pupils is a most difficult task. Their grades--a traditional measurement--are invariably low. The courses that they have taken usually do not reveal a sequential or meaningful pattern. If tests are used, these are frequently of the general educational type; scores from them indicate that pupils know very little about basic subject matter because the items of these general educational tests are primarily content-oriented. It is never clear from the scores whether the pupil has had difficulty with the content or with the basic skills prerequisite to knowing the content. In essence, test scores elicit what a student does not know rather than what he does know.

Accordingly, Denver met this problem head-on trying to find out the proficiency of these pupils as measured against minimum standards of educational performance. Minimum standards meant avoiding areas of content and stressing the ability to read, to do arithmetic, to use the language, and to spell. In other words, Denver was concerned more with what pupils can do than with what they know.

In general, the high schools assume that all entering students have a "solid" foundation in the basic skills upon which the high school curriculum is built. The Denver Public Schools have and are continuing to conduct research studies that will lead to the early identification of pupils who will have difficulty with the Proficiency and Review tests as high school seniors.

Results of these studies will have implications for guidance, as well as the curriculum, at the late elementary school grades and in the junior high schools.

Perhaps one of the most interesting recent developments in this program of Proficiency and Review testing evolved from a combination of House and Senate bills introduced in the 1975 session. The original bills faulted the program as one biased, unnecessary, and threatening. Arguments in favor of the program carried to the House Committee on Education by representatives from the District and subsequent reactions from educationally oriented members of the legislature results in modifications of the original bills and final passage and approval by the Governor, which in the eyes of many has strengthened the program.

We are now required, as are other districts in the state, who choose to use any proficiency exam as a graduation requirement, to administer it beginning in Grade 9: twice a year testing at Grades 9-12; notification of parents of failing scores; and remedial and tutorial offerings to all students failing any part of the test.

In reality what we had been doing for many years, because of identified needs, is now law.

We believe the Proficiency and Review program is developed to provide a basis for setting minimum standards for a high school diploma. It is a test containing core items on which one would expect mastery or nearly perfect performance by any high school graduate, the performance of pupils on core items can be evaluated against this standard.

The Denver Public Schools in developing this program in cooperation with the publisher have as their immediate objective to bring to as high a level as possible the performance of all Denver graduates in the basic skill areas whether the graduate continues in college, remains in Denver to work in the labor market, or moves to other areas. The ultimate objective is continuing to raise the level of quality in the Denver educational program.

In the fall of 1967 I was invited to address the education committee of the California State Legislature. It was at this time that the state of California was examining the possibility of establishing minimum proficiencies for students throughout the state. Following my remarks, which in part are the ones I have addressed today, the reaction of the committee was such that I felt many of them had listened but few had heard. The gist of the questioning that followed my presentation was, *"This then solves all of your evaluation problems in the Denver schools?"*

As I have indicated today, our minimum proficiency test for secondary schools is but a very small part, a complimentary part of our total evaluation program.

At the present time we are in process of re-examining the total evaluation program with a very careful look being taken at the proficiency and review part of the program anticipating a complete revision of the instrument. Our superintendent and board have faith in this program. I say this because of the most recent directive that has been given our department. They wish a similar instrument to be developed, not as a graduation requirement, but rather as a measure of basic proficiencies at the end of the primary grades and at the end of the intermediate grades. In other words we are now beginning to develop a series of proficiency and review exams to be administered to all third and sixth graders. Again, the results of the test in themselves leave much to be desired. The accompanying deficiency identification profile is probably the heart of the program.

The demonstration of minimum proficiency as measured by our instrument is defined in the title - minimum proficiency. There is no attempt to measure skill application - There is no attempt to measure the pupil's achievement based on the secondary instructional program - There is no attempt to evaluate the pupil's minimal skills in terms of national norms.

Denver enjoys a reputation throughout the nation of being a pioneer in using test information to report honestly the status

of its public school system. It was in the fifties when the "Why Johnny Can't Do Anything" syndrome became a part of the American educational scene. At this same time, the Denver Public Schools tested large groups of its pupils and informed the public of the results. Much of the professional world was struck with amazement at such a brash move intended to answer the system's more severe critics; questions with honest answers.

This general pattern of self-evaluation has continued for a quarter of a century with varied results. Educational antagonists have identified reported weaknesses with an I-told-you-so attitude and have subsequently attempted to destroy innovations designed to attempt to meet the needs of children in a rapidly changing society. Others have identified only with the strengths of the system and have attempted to obscure the realities of today's educational complex.

While IQ and ability testing are done only on request, our most recent evaluation endeavors have been extended to provide diagnostic services as a part of the required status testing program; multiple testing in the basic skills areas with diagnostic profiles being provided for each pupil at the request of the teacher; pre- and post-tests to assist in program evaluation; and an expanded staff development program to assist teachers in their efforts to help all pupils realize the benefits of the quality education.

Test results provide no panacea for the educational ills of the large-city system. They do provide, however, a wholesome

collection of usable information designed to assist the professional and the non-professional alike to seek solutions to identifiable problems.

Tests are an essential contributing part of our total instructional program. They provide us with measures of status in basic skills or content areas for the individual pupil, the class, the school, and the district. They help us to identify the particular needs of individual pupils and the level at which instruction must be developed.

I choose to summarize my remarks today with a philosophical quotation which hopefully describes our approach to the development of minimal competencies through measurement and evaluation.

Thoreau is credited with saying, "it is not enough to be busy...the question is: What are we busy about?"

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS at UNR COMPETENCY-BASED LUNCHEON
February 23, 1977

- Q. Do you favor a student achieving a certain competency before becoming involved in electives?
A. No, that will increase the drop out rate.
- Q. What percentage of pupils will never pass the competency tests? What do you do with them?
A. It was 3.5 in '75 and 1.6 in '76. We issue a certificate of attendance.
- Q. Do those not in a regular program take the test?
A. No, only regular students.
- Q. Do early tests tend to classify a child as a "slow learner?"
A. No. (See NY Times, 1/31/77, report by Maerott)
- Q. How do you determine your proficiency levels?
A. Arbitrarily. In our case, it's 32 out of 50.
(Referred to work being done in Portland, Ore., as well as Denver)
- Q. How long would it take for us to develop our own test? As a small state, would we be better off doing that?
A. Be sure the legislature gives you money, make sure it is an experimental test and have plenty of teacher input.
- Q. If a student failed, would the problem lie with the student or the educator?
A. Naturally, if an abnormally high percentage failed, we would look into it, but the test is not meant to measure teacher competency. The test is given several times at various years to provide ample time for students to master basic skills.
- Q. Do you change tests?
A. We have three forms at present, stored centrally. There is some cheating, yes.
- Q. What percentage pass? How many girls, ethnic breakdown, etc.
A. That's an illegal question.
- Q. Costs per pupil?
A. The California Testing Bureau charged \$1.25/pupil for the first test, then \$1.00/pupil for succeeding ones. Denver bought the test for \$28,000, now costs 5-cents/pupil
- Q. How do you evaluate writing and penmanship?
A. We don't at present. Hope to do something about that.
- Q. What is volume of children tested?
A. In the ninth grade, 12 - 14,000 children twice a year.
- Mr. Cavanaugh stressed this is not a proficiency or comprehensive test, but a test of basic skills only.

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February 16, 1977

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Chairman and Members of the Assembly Committee on Education

FROM: Donald A. Rhodes, *Don* Chief Deputy Research Director

SUBJECT: Alternative Approaches for Competency-Based Education Measures

This is in response to your request for suggestions concerning alternative approaches for the various so-called competency-based education bills your committee is reviewing.

I have reviewed the competency-based education material we have in our library and discussed this topic with some of the people in the Department of Education who are working on competency-based education and have come up with a few suggestions. They are:

1. Require the Department of Education to establish educational standards for all grades, kindergarten through the 12th grade, which will enable students to demonstrate minimum proficiencies in "basic survival skills" by graduation.
2. Define the basic skills carefully so as to relate them to definite minimum educational competencies needed in adult life (i.e., reading, writing and computation). Other subjects (American government, American history, citizenship, physical training, physiology and hygiene, thrift, driver education, environmental education) are already covered in NRS chapter 389. The concept of basic skill can vary depending on an individual's particular bias. (I happen to like biology and music myself.) Most agree, however, that reading, writing and computation (arithmetic) are definite basic educational skills which everyone should have to "survive" in adult life.

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3. Require the Department of Education to develop definitions and tests for the basic skills and require that it reevaluate such definitions and tests every 3 years. Time can change society's standards concerning what constitutes basic academic skills.
4. Require that the proficiency test for basic skills be administered to all students in grades 9, 10, 11 and 12. Also require tests to be given on multiple occasions (twice a school year or maybe once a school quarter) to students in grades 11 and 12 who have not yet passed them.
5. Specify that once a student passes the proficiency tests in the basic skills he does not have to take them again. Require, however, students to continue taking proficiency tests in the basic skill areas in which they do not demonstrate minimum proficiencies until they pass such tests or leave school. For example, if a student passes the writing and reading tests but fails the computation test, require him to continue taking this test until he passes it or leaves school.
6. Require that the granting of a high school diploma be contingent upon a student successfully passing all of the basic proficiency tests required by the state board of education and the law. This requirement for a diploma should be in addition to any course work required by the board and the NRS.
7. Provide a "certificate of completion" for students who complete all 12 grades but who do not successfully pass all of the basic proficiency tests. Require that a certificate of completion indicate any of the proficiency tests which a student has successfully completed. Such a certificate

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will give an ex-student the ability to demonstrate to a potential employer or vocational school the fact that he did "complete" high school. It will also give him the ability to show them that he has certain basic skills in areas that might be of importance to them. For example, some potential employers or vocational schools may not care if a potential employee or student is a "Longfellow" but may care if he can do arithmetic and read. Perhaps a requirement could also be included allowing an individual who has a certificate of completion to be granted a regular high school diploma if, at some time after he leaves school, he can successfully pass the basic skills tests.

8. Require that the records of students who successfully pass the basic proficiency tests reflect such success and require that such students be given a certificate showing that they have passed the tests. This will, as noted above for certificates of completion, enable children who leave school before finishing high school to demonstrate to potential employers or vocational schools that they have skills which might be of importance to such employers or schools.

What I have tried to develop in these recommendations is a tiered approach to demonstrating secondary school educational achievement. The high school diploma will be the highest level of achievement. To get a diploma, a student must complete course work established by the state board of education and demonstrate proficiencies in certain basic "survival" skills: reading, writing and computation. If a student completes high school course work but does not demonstrate the basic skills, he receives a "certificate of completion." Such certificate indicates any basic skills (i.e., reading, computation) the student is proficient in. If a student

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demonstrates proficiencies in one or more of the basic skills prior to completing high school, he is eligible to receive a certificate so indicating.

The above noted three-tiered approach should help alleviate any confusion that the successful completion of the basic skills test indicates completion of high school. The tests would be only what they purport to be: A means of measuring the attainment of certain basic educational skills which are necessary for an adult in today's society.

As you may know, the Department of Education has assigned two task forces to analyze the various aspects of competency-based education. The first task force is developing definitions of competencies and listings of specific measurable skills in arithmetic, reading and writing. The second task force will analyze these definitions and determine how the basic competencies should be measured.

DAR/jd

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March 8, 1977

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Chairman and Members of the Assembly Committee on Education

FROM: Donald A. Rhodes, *Chief Deputy Research Director*

SUBJECT: Competency-Based Education

Attached is various material, pertaining to the Department of Education's activities concerning a competency-based high school diploma program, which I thought you might be interested in. Included is:

1. A "Fact Sheet" prepared by the department describing the activities of the State Board of Education, the department, an advisory commission and two task forces, relating to the implementation of a competency-based high school diploma program for Nevada schools.
2. The final suggested minimum competencies for reading, writing and arithmetic prepared by Task Force I. As you may recall, Task Force I, comprised of 35 teachers representing all of the school districts in the state, was appointed to define the minimum competencies and proficiency levels in arithmetic, reading and writing.
3. A listing of suggested activities and responsibilities for Task Force II. This task force will be appointed to develop recommendations to the department regarding the measurement of the competencies defined by Task Force I. The department says Task Force II's activities will include defining:

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- (a) Measurement techniques to be used in assessing minimum competency.
 - (b) When minimum competency assessment shall take place.
 - (c) How many times minimum competency assessment shall occur.
 - (d) How the minimum competency assessment program will be implemented.
 - (e) Who shall be responsible for assessing student minimum competency in arithmetic, reading and writing.
4. A listing of the members of the Competency-Based High School Diploma Program Advisory Commission members. The commission is charged, according to the department, with recommending policies for the task forces and reviewing the task forces' work. The membership of the commission consists of the superintendent of public instruction, three school district superintendents, four persons from business and industry, certain members of the legislature and selected representatives from education-related associations.

DAR/jd
Encl.

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

By a motion of the State Board of Education in January, 1976, Department of Education staff was directed to "conduct a study of the feasibility of establishing policies and regulations for the issuance of the high school diploma based on competency measures and to complete this study by July, 1976." Accordingly, Department staff conducted a study of the legal, political, developmental, and implementation feasibility of such a program. Following is the Department's Recommendation 1, contained in its report to the Board in July, 1976:

"It is recommended that the State Board of Education direct the staff to develop, in cooperation with the Nevada school districts and other interested parties, over a period of time, a listing of basic competencies in reading, writing and arithmetic deemed necessary before receiving a high school diploma, a statement of the required proficiency levels of each of these competencies, and a statement of how these will be measured."

At the July meeting the Board then directed staff to proceed with Recommendation 1 (above). Staff reported back to the Board at its October meeting a design for the implementation of Recommendation 1.

To initiate the design the Superintendent of Public Instruction appointed an advisory commission and two task forces. The commission recommends to the Department policies for the task forces and reviews the work accomplished. The commission consists of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, three school district superintendents, four persons from business and industry, members of the legislature and selected representatives from education-related associations.

In considering a competency-based high school diploma program, a distinction is made between competencies as developed in the K-12 period and adult competencies. While the two sets of competencies are obviously highly related, this program addresses itself only to the former, as indicated in the recommendation approved by the State Board of Education. Task Force I has been appointed to define the competencies and proficiency levels in arithmetic, reading, and writing. District Superintendents were asked to appoint outstanding teachers from their districts to serve on the task force. Thirty-five classroom teachers were appointed to serve on the task force and each school district has at least one teacher on the committee. Department staff members have been assigned to work with the task force. It is expected that the work of Task Force I will be completed by March 4, 1977.

Task Force II will be appointed to develop recommendations to the Department regarding the measurement of the competencies produced by Task Force I. It is expected that this task force will review existing measurement exercises, procedures and systems in the preparation of recommendations to the Department. One representative from each school district will be asked to serve on the task force. Work of Task Force II is scheduled for completion by May 15, 1977.

The final report of the Department's Committee on the Competency-Based High School Diploma Program will be presented to the State Board of Education in June, 1977.

COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

TASK FORCE I -- MARCH 3-4, 1977 MEETING

MINIMUM COMPETENCY IN WRITING

DEFINITION

Minimum competency in writing for high school graduation is the ability to demonstrate those specific skills necessary for clear, purposeful communication.

COMPETENCY

Student competency in writing shall be demonstrated in two written exercises: an expository paragraph and a business letter. The expository paragraph will be evaluated on the basis of 60 points for items A-E and 40 points for item F. The business letter will be evaluated on the basis of 55 points for items A-D and 45 points for item E. A score of 70 points on each writing sample shall be required for minimum competency.

I. Expository Paragraph

Given the choice of five topic sentences, the student will write an expository paragraph of five to ten sentences.

The student will:

- A....copy or rephrase the topic sentence within the paragraph. (5 points)
- B....develop the idea of the topic sentence with at least two supportive details or specifics. (15 points)
- C....present ideas in sequence or order. (15 points)
- D....use correct words for the meaning and purpose. (15 points)
- E....write or print legibly. (10 points)
- F....demonstrate minimum competency in mechanics. (40 points)
 - 1. The student will demonstrate the ability to use the following skills with no more than three different errors combined in usage/grammar and sentence structure. (25 points) The student will:
 - a....write complete sentences, avoiding fragments or run-ons.
 - b....make subjects and verbs agree in number.
 - c....use the past tense of verbs correctly.
 - d....use personal pronoun form required in a "subject" or "object" position.
 - e....use personal pronouns that agree with the words they stand for.

2. The student will demonstrate the ability to use the following skills with no more than four different errors combined in punctuation, capitalization and spelling. The student will:
 - a....capitalize beginnings of sentences.
 - b....capitalize the pronoun "I".
 - c....capitalize only proper nouns.
 - d....spell correctly the words used.
 - e....indicate sentence endings by placing a period or a question mark as needed.
 - f....separate with commas a series of three items or more. (When the last two items in a series are joined by a conjunction, the comma is optional).
 - g....avoid using the comma when the conjunction joins only two words or phrases.
 - h....use commas to separate the day of the month from the year and the city from the state.
 - i....use the apostrophe to indicate singular or plural possession of nouns when needed.
 - j....use the apostrophe to indicate omitted letters in a contraction.

II. Business Letter

Given the choice of five situation, the student will select one situation and write a business letter of three to eight sentences. The student will:

- A....use a consistent recognized business letter form including return address, date, greeting, body, closing and signature (inside address is optional). (15 points)
- B....respond only to the selected situation in the body of the letter. (15 points)
- C....use correct words for the meaning and purpose. (15 points)
- D....write or print legibly. (10 points)
- E....demonstrate minimum competency in mechanics. (45 points)
 1. The student will demonstrate the ability to use the following skills with no more than two different errors combined in usage/grammar and sentence structure. (20 points) The student will:
 - a....write complete sentences, avoiding fragments or run-ons.

- b....make subjects and verbs agree in number.
 - c....use the past tense of verbs correctly.
 - d....use personal pronoun form required in a "subject" or "object" position.
 - e....use personal pronouns that agree with the words they stand for.
2. The student will demonstrate the ability to use the following skills with no more than five different errors combined in punctuation, capitalization and spelling. The student will:
- a....capitalize beginnings of sentences.
 - b....capitalize the pronoun "I".
 - c....capitalize only proper nouns.
 - d....spell correctly the words used.
 - e....indicate sentence endings by placing a period or a question mark as needed.
 - f....separate with commas a series of three items or more. (When the last two items in a series are joined by a conjunction, the comma is optional.
 - g....avoid using the comma when the conjunction joins only two words or phrases.
 - h....use commas to separate the day of the month from the year and the city from the state.
 - i....use the apostrophe to indicate singular or plural possession of nouns needed.
 - j....use the apostrophe to indicate omitted letters in a contraction.

COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM
TASK FORCE I -- MARCH 3-4, 1977 MEETING
MINIMUM COMPETENCY IN READING

I. DEFINITION

Minimum competency in Reading for high school graduation means that students will be able to demonstrate mastery of the listed reading skills as measured on an evaluative instrument.

II. GIVEN

Who = Students

When = Prior to Graduation

Level = Selections used to measure the mastery of Reading.
Comprehension shall contain in any 100 word sample
120 to 135 syllables in 5 or 6 sentences.

III. MINIMUM COMPETENCIES

1. Given a paragraph of not more than six (6) sentences, the student will identify the main idea.
2. Given a paragraph of five (5) or six (6) sentences containing causes and effects, the student will relate each cause to its effect.
3. Give a factual paragraph containing four (4) elements which support a conclusion, the student will identify the conclusion.
4. Give a paragraph that contains both fact and opinion statements, the student will be able to distinguish between fact and opinion.
5. Given a selection containing four (4) sequential events, the student will be able to identify the time relationship.
6. Given ten (10) words the student will arrange the words in alphabetical order up to the third letter.
7. Given a book the student will demonstrate the use of the table of contents, the index, and the glossary.
8. Given a situation requiring the location of information the student will identify an appropriate reference source.
9. Given an encyclopedia, an atlas, and a dictionary, the student will be able to use the appropriate source by locating word meanings, interpreting and using maps, symbols, and legends, and locating information related to a specific subject.
10. Given a selection containing a set of four (4) step directions the student will follow the directions.

READING TASK FORCE I MEMBERS

Peggy Reavis, Gardnerville Elementary - Gardnerville
Alberta Merritt, Silver Peak Elementary - Silver Peak
Linda Noble, Hawthorne Elementary, Hawthorne
Dr. Kathleen Waite, Gabbs Elementary School - Gabbs
Ellen Grangaard, Clark High School - Las Vegas
Robert Parker, Eldorado High School, Las Vegas
Judith Massa, Spring Mountain Special School, Angel Peak
Florence Beebe, Fremont Junior High School - Las Vegas
Gordon Bina, Reno High School - Reno
Frances Terras, Lincoln Park Elementary School - Sparks
Lily Boyer, Northside Elementary School - Elko
Patricia Potter, Carson Junior High School - Carson City

Jerry Nielsen, Coordinator - Nevada Department of Education, Carson City
David Rivers, Recorder, Nevada Department of Education, Las Vegas

DJR:ylm

TASK FORCE #1 - ARITHMETIC

MINIMUM COMPETENCIES

DEFINITION: Minimum competency in arithmetic is the ability to use addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and practical problem solving skills. Specific skills are:

SPECIFIC SKILLS:

Note: Each skill is to be measured at the designated cognitive level according to Bloom's taxonomy as defined in Appendix I.

1. ADD MONEY: Add a group of not more than four numbers (not to exceed six digits) in money notation in both vertical and horizontal form. Application
2. ADD FRACTIONS:
 - a. Add two fractions with unlike denominators (denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10). Application
 - b. Add two mixed numbers with unlike denominators (denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10). Application

Note: Accept both simplified and non-simplified answers.

3. SUBTRACT MONEY: Subtract numbers (not to exceed six digits) in money notation in both vertical and horizontal forms. Application.
4. SUBTRACT FRACTIONS:
 - a. Subtract two fractions with unlike denominators (denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10). Application.
 - b. Subtract two mixed numbers with unlike denominators - no borrowing (denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10). Application
 - c. Subtract a fraction (denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10) from a one digit whole number. Application

Note: Accept both simplified and non-simplified answers.

5. MULTIPLY MONEY: Multiply a number (not to exceed six digits) in money notation by a two-digit whole number in both vertical and horizontal form. Application
6. MULTIPLY FRACTIONS:
 - a. Multiply two fractions with unlike denominators (denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10). Application
 - b. Multiply a whole number (not to exceed two digits) by a fraction (denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10). Application

Note: Accept both simplified and un-simplified answers.

7. DIVIDE MONEY: Divide a number (not to exceed six digits) in money notation by a whole number (not to exceed two digits). Application
Note: No remainders.
8. USE PERCENT:
- Estimate within 10% the sale price of an item (original cost not to exceed 4 digits in whole dollars) at a commercial percent and fractional discounts. Application
 - Compute the simple interest (using whole number-rates not to exceed 20%) on a number (not to exceed four digits in whole dollars). Application
9. FIND PERIMETER AND AREA
- Find the perimeter of a rectangle with like units in Metric or English systems. Application
 - Find the area of a rectangle with like units in Metric or English systems. Application
- Note: Dimensions not to exceed two digit whole numbers.
10. TRANSLATE WORDS - NUMBERS:
- Represent in numerals a written whole number (not to exceed five digits). Comprehension
 - Represent in numerals a number written in money notation (not to exceed six digits). Comprehension
 - Express in words a number in money notation (not to exceed six digits). Comprehension
11. MAKE CHANGE: For a given purchase, determine the change in the least number of illustrated U. S. coins and bills from a given amount of money (not to exceed \$20.00). Analysis
12. IDENTIFY TIME AND DATE:
- Using pictures of dial and digital clocks, given the starting time and ending time, determine elapsed time. Application
 - Using pictures of dial and digital clocks, given the starting time and elapsed time, determine the ending time. Application
- Note: Time shall be indicated in a multiple of five minutes. Elapsed time shall not exceed four hours. Application
- Using a twelve month calendar, given an elapsed number of days (not to exceed 15) determine the new date by month, day, and year. Application

13. USE UNITS OF MEASURE:

- a. Identify appropriate English or Metric unit of common measure for length, weight, liquid volume, or temperature. Knowledge
- b. Rename, within the English or Metric system, the common units of length, weight, liquid volume, or time. Application
- c. Measure length with an appropriate English or Metric rule. Application

14. COMPARE NUMBERS:

- a. Determine the larger of two fractions with unlike denominators (denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10 and numerators not to exceed 10). Analysis
- b. Determine the larger of two decimals (not to exceed two decimal places). Analysis

15. USE TABLES AND GRAPHS:

- a. Given a Nevada State Sales tax table, determine the tax on an item costing less than five dollars. Comprehension
- b. Given a circle or bar-graph, identify the largest and/or smallest quantity. Analysis

Appendix I

LEVELS OF THE COGNITIVE VARIABLE

Levels of the Cognitive Variable emphasizing mental processes begin with the concrete behavior of knowledge and continue through the more abstract levels of analysis and synthesis. These levels are defined as:

1. KNOWLEDGE Involves the recognition and recall of facts (i.e., defining terms, recalling names, dates, persons, identifying words, etc.).
2. COMPREHENSION The learner interprets, translates, summarizes, or paraphrases given material. The person can organize the material into another language or form of communication (i.e., reading a book or musical scores, grasping the thought of material studied, ability to describe something in one's own words, etc.).
3. APPLICATION Involves the use of material in a situation which is different from that situation in which it was originally learned (i.e., the use of abstract ideas, principles, or theories in problem-solving).
4. ANALYSIS Involves separating a complex entity into its parts, drawing comparisons and relationships between the elements (i.e., ability to recognize assumptions, to distinguish cause and effect relationships, reorganization of biases or points of view, etc.).
5. SYNTHESIS Involves combining elements to form a new original entity. It involves a process of working with pieces, parts, elements, etc., and arranging them in a structure that was not clearly evidenced before (i.e., ability to produce a play, music, art forms, design products, or formulate solutions).
6. EVALUATION Involves acts of decision-making, judging, or selecting based on a given set of criteria. These criteria may be objective or subjective (i.e., ability to indicate fallacies, compare a work or an idea with known standards, etc.).

COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TASK FORCE II

The following suggested activities and responsibilities would result in the development of measurement and procedural recommendations for the Advisory Commission and Department of Education.

It is expected that Task Force II will complete the work in three, two-day sessions.

FIRST MEETING

1. Review the definitions and lists of minimum competency skills/criteria prepared by Task Force I.

2. Review available measurement techniques and strategies.

A. Type of Measurement

Examples: norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, individual tests, group tests

B. Format of Measurement

Examples: paper and pencil, oral, type of items, Blooms Taxonomy, number of items, time requirements

C. Standardization of Measurement Techniques and Strategies

Examples: administration, scoring, interpretation, reliability, validity, norms and other statistics, technical manuals, examiner manuals

D. Time and Cost Considerations

Examples: use of available tests, development of new tests

3. Recommend measurement techniques and strategies to Advisory Commission

SECOND MEETING

1. Establish when a student can begin to display minimum competencies for graduation.
2. Establish number of times a student can attempt to display minimum competencies before a decision is made if student can graduate.
3. Determine procedural guidelines if student must demonstrate periodically minimum competencies throughout high school experience.

SECOND MEETING continued

4. Establish who will be responsible for acquiring, administering, scoring and interpreting minimum competency measures.
5. Specify procedures for record-keeping related to documentation of minimum competency measurement information for individual students.
6. Determine procedural guidelines for refresher/remedial courses for students who don't/can't demonstrate required minimum competencies.

THIRD MEETING

1. Determine procedures needed for implementing the competency-based high school diploma program.

Examples: information dissemination, training activities, agendas, time schedule

2. Prepare a Task Force II position paper for the Advisory Commission to include the following recommendations:

- A. What measurement techniques are to be used in assessing minimum competency?
- B. When will minimum competency assessment take place?
- C. How many times will minimum competency assessment occur?
- D. How will the minimum competency assessment program be implemented?
- E. Who will be responsible for assessing student minimum competency in arithmetic, reading and writing?

PROPOSED CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 16, 1977

Advisory Commission Meeting

Carson City

1. Review Task Force I final products
2. Review Agenda/Expectations for first meeting of Task Force II
3. Participate in Seminar on Test Development--
Dr. Oluf Davidsen, President, American
College Testing Program

PROPOSED CALENDAR OF EVENTS continued

| | | |
|-------------------|--|-------------|
| MARCH 30-31, 1977 | Task Force II Meeting Recommend Measurement Strategies and Techniques | Reno |
| APRIL 6, 1977 | Advisory Commission Meeting 1. Review products of 1st Task Force II meeting 2. Review plans for 2nd Task Force II meeting | Carson City |
| APRIL 21-22, 1977 | Task Force II Meeting Develop guidelines and procedures for competency-based high school diploma program. | Las Vegas |
| MAY 4, 1977 | Advisory Commission Meeting 1. Review products of 2nd Task Force II meeting 2. Review plans for 3rd and final Task Force II meeting | Carson City |
| MAY 10-11, 1977 | Task Force II Meeting Prepare position paper for consideration by Advisory Commission | Reno |
| MAY 16, 1977 | Advisory Commission Meeting 1. Review final products of Task Force I and II 2. Discuss report to be submitted to the State Board of Education 3. Make recommendations regarding format and content of report | Carson City |
| MAY 26, 1977 | Advisory Commission Meeting 1. Review draft copy of report to State Board of Education 2. Recommend changes needed to improve report. | Carson City |
| JUNE 3, 1977 | STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING 1. Deliver Competency-Based High School Diploma Program Report to members of State Board | Reno |

LEVELS OF THE COGNITIVE VARIABLE

Levels of the Cognitive Variable emphasizing mental processes begin with the concrete behavior of knowledge and continue through the more abstract levels of analysis and synthesis. These levels are defined as:

1. KNOWLEDGE Involves the *recognition* and *recall* of facts (i.e., defining terms, recalling names, dates, persons, identifying words, etc.).
2. COMPREHENSION The learner *interprets, translates, summarizes, or paraphrases* given material. The person can organize the material into another language or form of communication (i.e., reading a book or musical scores, grasping the thought of material studied, ability to describe something in one's own words, etc.).
3. APPLICATION Involves the use of material in a situation which is different from that situation in which it was originally learned (i.e., the use of abstract ideas, principles, or theories in problem-solving).
4. ANALYSIS Involves separating a complex entity into its parts, drawing comparisons and relationships between the elements (i.e., ability to recognize assumptions, to distinguish cause and effect relationships, reorganization of biases or points of view, etc.).
5. SYNTHESIS Involves *combining* elements to form a new original entity. It involves a process of working with pieces, parts, elements, etc., and arranging them in a structure that was not clearly evidenced before (i.e., ability to produce a play, music, art forms, design products, or formulate solutions).
6. EVALUATION Involves acts of *decision-making, judging, or selecting* based on a given set of criteria. These criteria may be objective or subjective (i.e., ability to indicate fallacies, compare a work or an idea with known standards, etc.).

COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMISSION

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STUDENTS SLUGGING THROUGH REMEDIAL "COMPETENCY LAB" IN PORTLAND, ORE., HIGH SCHOOL

EDUCATION

How Much Must a Student Master?

"Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with," the Mock Turtle replied; "and then the different branches of Arithmetic—Ambition, Distraction, Uglification and Derision."

—*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

To many worried parents, the new math—new methods teaching that swept public schools in the '60s made about as much sense as Lewis Carroll's Turtle. When they complained that children were no longer learning basic reading, writing and arithmetic, however, no one listened. Until, that is, test scores began plunging, and legislators and officials discovered that the supposed mess in public education could be a dangerous political issue.

Devalued Diploma. The result: in the past year, "minimal competency testing" has become the hottest new catch phrase in public education. Described by educators as a "man on the street" effort to halt the devaluation of a high school diploma, minimal competency requires students to pass proficiency exams, in addition to course work, in order to graduate. So far, six states—California, Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, Virginia and Washington—have enacted minimal competency laws. Florida has also outlawed traditional "social passing," by which illiterate students eventually graduated after merely attending school enough years. In ten more states, boards of education have decreed minimal competency on their own authority, and boards of over a dozen states are on the verge of doing so. Colleges, too, have caught the fever, and are increasingly requiring students to pass a writing exam before graduating.

Politicians have been quick to recognize a test whose time has come. Says California State Assemblyman Leroy Greene: "When a youngster gets out of high school, I expect him to be able to read a newspaper article, tell me what it said, and write me a couple hundred words on it in proper English." Adds Alabama State Senator Bill King, who has just introduced a minimal competency bill: "Taxpayers see so much money going into education yet producing students without basic skills. Legislators want to account for all of that money."

Once a state has ratified minimal competency testing, however, the rhetoric ends and the problems begin. Foremost among them: What constitutes "functional literacy"? Should only reading and math be tested? Or should the exams include such "survival skills" as how to balance a checkbook or read a road map? Should standard statewide exams, which might be biased against, say, inner-city children, be used? Or should individual tests be developed by local school districts?

Both the Educational Testing Service and American College Testing Program are hurrying into the minimal competency testing field. Yet some officials are leery of using standardized exams for fear the norm would not reflect realistic competencies for minority students—part of the continuing debate in U.S. society over achievement v. entitlement, and whether the goals of equality require double standards in many areas of opportunity.

Nor do the problems stop there. When should students be tested? Many states, realizing that students must have time for remedial work if they fail a com-

petency exam, are studying programs that would test students from early elementary grades upward. Extended remedial programs, however, would clearly cost additional tax dollars which may not be available. Warns Paul Hubbard, executive secretary of the Alabama Education Association: "Without a commitment of funds, the real danger is that we'll give a test that will put the stamp of failure on thousands of Alabama young people, and no alternative course will be available."

Yet another fear is that minimal competency might turn into maximum competency as well. Says Titus Singletary, an associate state school superintendent in Georgia: "We must be wary of tailoring our programs to meet one need and concentrating so much on it that we don't teach anything else." And, of course, there is the ultimate question: What to do with the student who fails?

Perhaps the most outspoken opponent of minimal competency is Educator Arthur Wise, whose influential 1968 treatise, *Rich Schools, Poor Schools*, argued that children in both affluent and underprivileged school districts had the right to an equal education. Wise is currently working on another book, tentatively titled *Hyper-Rationalization*, which condemns competency testing for "narrowing the goals of education and prompting teachers to teach the test." Wise fears that minimal competency entails the extension to education of such business-school concepts as cost effectiveness and accountability. Says he of minimal competency advocates: "It is as if they want to set goals and objectives by numbers. There is little room for the excellent teacher." Or, perhaps, for the excellent student.



MINUTES

COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING

TIME: 9:40AM to 3:20PM Wednesday, February 23, 1977

PLACE: State Board Conference Room, Department of Education, Carson City

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Daniel Hickey, Hickey Dist., 1621 Highway 395, Minden, Nv.
Frank Johnson, Corp. Vice Pres., Las Vegas Hilton, 3000 Paradise Rd. LV
Mary Lou Moser, Budget & Res. Analyst, UNR, Reno
Joseph Newlin, Exec. Dir. NSEA, Carson City
Robert O'Connell, Manager, J.C. Penney Co., 3542 Maryland Parkway, LV
Marvin Picollo, Supt., Washoe County School District, Reno
Robert Scott, Supt. Humboldt County School District, Winnemucca
Warren Scott, Pres., NSSBA, Winnemucca
Jack Selbig, Dir. Counseling & Testing, UNR, Reno
Roy Smith, Asst. Supt., Elko County School District, Elko

MEMBERS ABSENT

Richard Bryan, Attorney, Nev. State Senate, LV
Lee Dewey, Office Manager, Nevada Power, LV
Nancy Gomes, Nevada State Assembly, Reno
Kenny Guinn, Supt. Clark County School District, LV
John Vergiels, Nev. State Assembly, LV

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION STAFF

John Gamble
Ed Howard
Vic Hyden
Jim Kiley
Pat Miller
Jerry Nielsen
David Rivers
Herb Steffens

NEVADA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Cynthia Cunningham
Shirlee Wedow

MINUTES

Chairman Robert O'Connell opened the meeting at 9:40AM. Minutes of the January 26, 1977 meeting were approved. Frank Johnson Requested that the agenda for the meeting be amended to permit John Gamble an opportunity to review legislation pending before the Nevada State Legislature. The agenda was approved as amended.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

John Gamble gave a brief description of A.B.9, A.B.293, S.B.204 and S.C.R.14. He indicated that legislators appear to be quite interested in competency requirements for school students, but there is no clear indication of the action the legislature might take. John reported that he will be meeting with Senator Richard Bryan and he will attempt to learn more about the intent of the legislature in regard to the need for legislation in the area of competency requirements. He will also seek information about the approach that the Commission, State Board of Education and Department could follow to make recommendations to legislators.

Commission members discussed the pending legislation and the impact that any of the bills could have on the work presently underway in the Department Competency-Based High School Diploma Program. Several members expressed the opinion that passage of any of the bills could cause costly duplication of work that will have already been completed by Task Force I and II. The fact that the work of Task Force I and II will not be completed prior to the adjournment of the legislature is probably of concern to legislators. They will not have the opportunity to know what action the State Board of Education will take in June, 1977. Thus, legislators seem to feel that some legislation is needed to ensure that the State Board will implement policies and regulations for competency-based high school graduation requirements.

Commission members were of the opinion that they should make some positive recommendation to the legislators. It was generally agreed that a concurrent resolution would be more appropriate legislative action than enactment of a state statute in regard to minimum competency requirements for high school graduation. The following motion by Mary Lou Moser, second by Jack Selbig, passed unanimously:

The Advisory Commission for the Nevada Competency-Based High School Diploma Program requests that Sections 8, 9 and 10 of S.C.R.14 be referred to the authority of the Nevada State Board of Education, and that the resolution be further amended to include the State Board of Education, Nevada Department of Education and the Advisory Commission for the Competency-Based High School Diploma Program as groups to be represented on the subcommittee appointed to conduct the study with the legislative commission.

Several Commission members stated that it would be advisable to have someone attempt to learn the feelings of the Governor regarding the need for legislation for competency measures for public school students. It was recommended that John Gamble discuss the matter with Senator Bryan and pursue the course of action recommended by the Senator.

OVERVIEW OF FEBRUARY 7-8 TASK FORCE I MEETING

Jim Kiley reported that the second meeting of Task Force I proved to be as industrious and productive as the first meeting of the group. Only one teacher did not attend the meeting and his absence was due to illness. The teachers followed the same group processes used during the first meeting as they worked to identify specific, measurable skills in arithmetic, reading and writing. Because of the time and effort that they have devoted to the project, the teachers sincerely want to be assured that their materials will be used.

They expressed concern that some representatives from Task Force I be assigned to Task Force II to ensure effective communication between the two groups. Also, the teachers feel that representation on Task Force II will facilitate the appropriate use of Task Force I materials.

The teachers discussed the Advisory Commission reaction to their recommendations that students not be expected to be re-evaluated once they have demonstrated minimum competencies. Teachers still feel that students should not be re-tested if they successfully pass minimum competency exams early in their high school experience.

MINIMUM COMPETENCY IN READING

Jerry Nielsen discussed the work completed by the reading group. Teachers agreed with the Commission about the need to modify the initial definition of minimum competency in reading. Specifications regarding readability and concept levels have been eliminated from the definition. It was decided that the two concerns would either be included as specific content limits in skill areas or as recommendations to Task Force II.

Jerry indicated that the reading team divided into two smaller groups to refine specific skill statements. Thus, there is some duplication in the listing of skills as both groups had little time available to discuss a composite listing and classification of the skill areas. Further, the group did not have time to refine the logical listing of the skill statements. The division into two smaller groups did seem to increase productivity as the teachers could each contribute to the discussion and the groups were better able to "stay on task."

Commission members felt that the reading group produced an excellent definition and that the listing of skills is very good. Questions were raised about the repetition of phrases, the apparent mis-classification of some skill statements and the order in which the skills were presented. It was recommended that the teachers review the skills classified as comprehension and work study to ensure that each statement is listed in the appropriate category. It was also recommended that the reading group consider the development of a diagram or flow chart to illustrate the classification of minimum reading skills.

MINIMUM COMPETENCY IN WRITING

Ed Howard gave a brief presentation about the writing definition, skills and criteria. He described the reliability study that is being conducted to determine the appropriateness of the criteria. Each member of the writing team is asking two colleagues to use the criteria to evaluate paragraphs and business letters written by students. Ed read several comments made by teachers who had completed the evaluations. It appears that the evaluation requires a substantial amount of time to complete and the instrument developed for the evaluation has proven to be somewhat cumbersome to use.

Commission members felt that the criterion for legibility is very important. In business, it is necessary that written communication be legible or readable. The Commission expressed interest in the outcome of the reliability study and commended the writing group for the quality of work produced during the February meeting.

MINIMUM COMPETENCY IN ARITHMETIC

Jim Kiley gave a report on the work completed by the arithmetic group. The teachers agreed to keep the definition of minimum competency in arithmetic that had been developed during their first meeting. The entire two-day meeting was devoted to the selection of skills and the development of content limit specifications for each skill selected. The teachers decided to eliminate some of the skills on their original listing. Those skills eliminated included skills that were duplicates of others already listed, skills that were not considered to be minimum skills and skills that appeared to be prerequisite, or lower level than other skills included in the listing. In addition, the teachers tabled consideration of several skills until they had the opportunity to review all skills and content limits with their colleagues. Some of these skills will be reconsidered during the March 3-4 meeting.

Commission members indicated that the arithmetic skills appeared to be at eighth-grade or junior high school levels. Jim Kiley responded that the teachers have concerned themselves with the identification of the minimum arithmetic skills that students should be expected to demonstrate before high school graduation. The teachers did not attempt to base the level of skills at any predetermined grade or school level. They discussed situations that students will probably experience in daily life, and then proceeded to identify the minimum arithmetic skills required in each situation.

Several Advisory Commission members asked that the arithmetic teachers consider including the estimation/approximation and interpreting tables/graphs skills in the listing of minimum competency arithmetic skills. This recommendation will be reported to the arithmetic teachers. It was decided at the last meeting of Task Force I that the interpreting tables/graphs skills would be included in either the reading or arithmetic listings of minimum skills.

The Commission commended the teachers in the arithmetic group for the quality of the materials that have been produced.

ACCELERATED TIME SCHEDULE

Dr. Picollo requested that the Commission consider the development of an accelerated time schedule for the completion of the work of Task Force II. He felt that the development of at least one finished product could lend credibility to the efforts that are being made by the Commission, State Board of Education, Department and school districts. The opportunity to show the legislators a finished product might help to convince them that present efforts are serious and that something will result to improve the credibility of the high school diploma. Frank Johnson agreed that an accelerated time schedule could provide needed evidence to the legislature that funds may need to be appropriated for the implementation of the program.

Since there appeared to be general interest in attempting to accelerate the time schedule, Chairman O'Connell asked that the agenda be modified so that Jim Kiley could present the tentative plan for Task Force II.

TASK FORCE II--PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Jim Kiley reviewed the suggested activities and responsibilities for Task Force II. He also discussed a suggested calendar for all activities to be completed before the June 3, 1977 State Board of Education meeting. Each Commission member received a copy of the proposed plan and calendar.

After the presentation, Commission members agreed that the nature and amount of work planned for Task Force II were such that an accelerated time schedule could be detrimental to the program. The Commission then discussed alternative ways that the legislators could be informed of the complexity of the project and the need to adhere to the present time schedule. Chairman O'Connell requested that the issue be discussed and resolved in the afternoon following the Educational seminar.

AGENDA AND EXPECTATIONS FOR TASK FORCE I MEETING

Ed Howard described the expectations for the third and final meeting of Task Force I. Chairman O'Connell will present the Advisory Commission report to the teachers at 9:00AM. Thursday, March 3. Most of the two-day session will be devoted to the development of content specifications for all minimum skills and criteria in arithmetic, reading and writing. During the afternoon of the second day the teachers will discuss the activities, responsibilities and membership of Task Force II and make recommendations to the Department committee.

EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

The Commission adjourned for the Educational Seminar luncheon. Mr. Gerald Cavanaugh, Denver Public Schools, presented the competency-based high school diploma program that the district has operated for approximately fourteen years. A question and answer period followed the presentation. Members of the Assembly Education Committee and the State Board of Education also attended the presentation. The Seminar was sponsored by Dr. Joseph Crowley, Associate Professor, University of Nevada at Reno.

LEGISLATIVE CONCERNS

The Commission reconvened following the Seminar to discuss legislative concerns. The following motion was made by Frank Johnson, second by Marvin Picollo, and passed unanimously:

The Nevada State Board of Education be advised that several bills (A.B.9, S.B.204, A.B.243, S.C.R.14) have been introduced to the 1977 Nevada State Legislature which could result in expensive duplication of, or make ineffective, the past, present and future work of the Department of Education Competency-Based High School Diploma Program. Further, that the Nevada State Board of Education be informed of the accomplishments of this program to date, and of the progress expected by June, 1977, in order that the Board may provide direction for the future of the program.

NEXT ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING

The next Advisory Commission will be March 16, 1977, in Carson City, and the meeting will begin promptly at 9:30AM. A no-host luncheon will be held at Enrico's, 1801 North Carson Street. A luncheon steak will be served at a cost of \$4.25 to include tax and tip. Either Dr. Oluf Davidsen, President, or Dr. Richard Ferguson, Vice President, American College Testing Program, will make a presentation about the development of tests to measure student performance. A question and answer period will follow the presentation. Members of the Senate Health, Welfare and Education Committee will be invited to the luncheon.

The meeting adjourned at 3:20PM.

JPK/mg
3/1/77

TASK FORCE #1 - ARITHMETIC

MINIMUM COMPETENCIES

DEFINITION: Minimum competency in arithmetic is the ability to use addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and practical problem-solving skills. Specific skills* are:

1. ADD MONEY: Add a group of not more than four numbers (not to exceed six digits) in money notation in both vertical and horizontal form. Application level.
2. ADD FRACTIONS:
 - a. Add two fractions with unlike denominators (denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10). Application level.
 - b. Add two mixed numbers with unlike denominators (denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10). Application level.

Note: Accept both simplified and non-simplified answers.
3. SUBTRACT MONEY: Subtract numbers (not to exceed six digits) in money notation in both vertical and horizontal forms. Application level.
4. SUBTRACT FRACTIONS:
 - a. Subtract two fractions with unlike denominators (denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10). Application level.
 - b. Subtract two mixed numbers with unlike denominators - no borrowing (denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10). Application level.
 - c. Subtract a fraction (denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10) from a one digit whole number. Application level.

Note: Accept both simplified and non-simplified answers.
5. MULTIPLY MONEY: Multiply a number (not to exceed six digits) in money notation by a two-digit whole number in both vertical and horizontal form. Application level.

* Each skill is to be measured at the designated cognitive level according to Bloom's taxonomy as defined in Appendix I.

6. MULTIPLY FRACTIONS:
- a. Multiply two fractions with unlike denominators (denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10). Application level.
 - b. Multiply a whole number (not to exceed two digits) by a fraction (denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10). Application level.
- Note: Accept both simplified and non-simplified answers.
7. DIVIDE MONEY:
- Divide a number (not to exceed six digits) in money notation by a whole number (not to exceed two digits). Application level.
- Note: No remainders.
8. USE PERCENT:
- a. Estimate within 10% the sale price of an item (original cost not to exceed four digits in whole dollars) at a commercial percent and fractional discounts. Application level.
 - b. Compute the simple interest (using whole number-rates not to exceed 20%) on a number (not to exceed four digits in whole dollars). Application level.
9. FIND PERIMETER AND AREA:
- a. Find the perimeter of a rectangle with like units in English or Metric systems. Application levels.
 - b. Find the area of a rectangle with like units in English or Metric systems. Application level.
- Note: Dimensions not to exceed two digit whole numbers.
10. TRANSLATE WORDS - NUMBERS:
- a. Represent in numerals a written whole number (not to exceed five digits). Comprehension level.
 - b. Represent in numerals a number written in money notation (not to exceed six digits). Comprehension level.
 - c. Express in words a number in money notation (not to exceed six digits). Comprehension level.
11. MAKE CHANGE:
- For a given purchase, determine the change in the least number of illustrated U.S. coins and bills from a given amount of money (not to exceed \$20.00). Analysis level.
12. IDENTIFY TIME AND DATE:
- a. Using pictures of dial and digital clocks, given the starting time and ending time, determine elapsed time. Application level.
 - b. Using pictures of dial and digital clocks, given the starting time and elapsed time, determine the ending time. Application level.

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Note: Time shall be indicated in a multiple of five minutes. Elapsed time shall not exceed four hours.

- c. Using a twelve month calendar, given an elapsed number of days (not to exceed 15) determine the new date by month, day, and year. Application level.
13. USE UNITS OF MEASURE:
- a. Identify appropriate English or Metric unit of common measure for length, weight, liquid volume, or temperature. Knowledge level.
- b. Rename, within the English or Metric System, the common units of length, weight, liquid volume, or time. Application level.
- c. Measure length with an appropriate English or Metric rule. Application level.
14. COMPARE NUMBERS:
- a. Determine the larger of two fractions with unlike denominators (denominators 2, 3, 4, 5, 8 and 10 and numerators not to exceed 10). Analysis level.
- b. Determine the larger of two decimals (not to exceed two decimal places). Analysis level.
- Note: No inequality symbols.
15. USE TABLES AND GRAPHS:
- a. Given a Nevada State Sales Tax Table, determine the tax on an item costing less than five dollars. Comprehension level.
- b. Given a circle or bar-graph, identify the largest and/or smallest quantity. Analysis level.

* Each skill is to be measured at the designated cognitive level according to Bloom's taxonomy as defined in Appendix I.

Appendix I

LEVELS OF THE COGNITIVE VARIABLE

Levels of the Cognitive Variable emphasizing mental processes begin with the concrete behavior of knowledge and continue through the more abstract levels of analysis and synthesis. These levels are defined as:

1. KNOWLEDGE Involves the recognition and recall of facts (i.e., defining terms, recalling names, dates, persons, identifying words, etc.).
2. COMPREHENSION The learner interprets, translates, summarizes, or paraphrases given material. The person can organize the material into another language or form of communication (i.e., reading a book or musical scores, grasping the thought of material studied, ability to describe something in one's own words, etc.).
3. APPLICATION Involves the use of material in a situation which is different from that situation in which it was originally learned (i.e., the use of abstract ideas, principles, or theories in problem solving).
4. ANALYSIS Involves separating a complex entity into its parts, drawing comparisons and relationships between the elements (i.e., ability to recognize assumptions, to distinguish cause and effect relationships, reorganization of biases or points of view, etc.).
5. SYNTHESIS Involves combining elements to form a new original entity. It involves a process of working with pieces, parts, elements, etc., and arranging them in a structure that was not clearly evidenced before (i.e., ability to produce a play, music, art forms, design products, or formulate solutions).
6. EVALUATION Involves acts of decision-making, judging, or selecting based on a given set of criteria. These criteria may be objective or subjective (i.e., ability to indicate fallacies, compare a work or an idea with known standards, etc.).

Competency-Based Diploma Project
Nevada Department of Education

TASK FORCE #1 - WRITING

MINIMUM COMPETENCIES

DEFINITION: Minimum competency in writing for high school graduation is the ability to demonstrate those specific skills necessary for clear, purposeful communication.

COMPETENCY: Student competency in writing shall be demonstrated in two written exercises: an expository paragraph and a business letter. The expository paragraph will be evaluated on the basis of 60 points for items A-E and 40 points for item F. The business letter will be evaluated on the basis of 55 points for items A-D and 45 points for item E. A score of 70 points on each writing sample shall be required for minimum competency.

I. Expository Paragraph

Given the choice of five topic sentences, the student will write an expository paragraph of five to ten sentences. The student will

- A....copy or rephrase the topic sentence within the paragraph. (5 points)
- B....develop the idea of the topic sentence with at least two supportive details or specifics. (15 points)
- C....present ideas in sequence or order. (15 points)
- D....use correct words for the meaning and purpose. (15 points)
- E....write or print legibly. (10 points)
- F....demonstrate minimum competency in mechanics. (40 points)
 - 1. The student will demonstrate the ability to use the following skills with no more than three different errors combined in usage/grammar and sentence structure. (25 points) The student will
 - a....write complete sentences, avoiding fragments or run-ons.
 - b....make subjects and verbs agree in number.
 - c....use the past tense of verbs correctly.

- d....use personal pronoun form required in a "subject" or "object" position.
 - e....use personal pronouns that agree with the words they stand for.
2. The student will demonstrate the ability to use the following skills with no more than four different errors combined in punctuation, capitalization and spelling. (25 points) The student will
- a....capitalize beginnings of sentences.
 - b....capitalize the pronoun "I".
 - c....capitalize only proper nouns.
 - d....spell correctly the words used.
 - e....indicate sentence endings by placing a period or a question mark as needed.
 - f....separate with commas a series of three items or more. (When the last two items in a series are joined by a conjunction, the comma is optional).
 - g....avoid using the comma when the conjunction joins only two words or phrases.
 - h....use commas to separate the day of the month from the year and the city from the state.
 - i....use the apostrophe to indicate singular or plural possession of nouns when needed.
 - j....use the apostrophe to indicate omitted letters in a contraction.

II. Business Letter

Given the choice of five situations, the student will select one situation and write a business letter of three to eight sentences. The student will

- A....use a recognized business letter form including return address, date, greeting, body, closing and signature (inside address is optional). (15 points)

- B....respond only to the selected situation in the body of the letter. (15 points)
- C....use correct words for the meaning and purpose. (15 points)
- D....write or print legibly. (10 points)
- E....demonstrate minimum competency in mechanics. (45 points)
1. The student will demonstrate the ability to use the following skills with no more than two different errors combined in usage/grammar and sentence structure. (20 points) The student will
 - a....write complete sentences, avoiding fragments or run-ons.
 - b....make subjects and verbs agree in number.
 - c....use the past tense of verbs correctly.
 - d....use personal pronoun form required in a "subject" or "object" position
 - e....use personal pronouns that agree with the words they stand for.
 2. The student will demonstrate the ability to use the following skills with no more than five different errors combined in punctuation, capitalization and spelling. (25 points) The student will
 - a....capitalize beginnings of sentences.
 - b....capitalize the pronoun "I".
 - c....capitalize only proper nouns.
 - d....spell correctly the words used.
 - e....indicate sentence endings by placing a period or a question mark as needed.
 - f....separate with commas a series of three items or more. (When the last two items in a series are joined by a conjunction, the comma is optional).
 - g....avoid using the comma when the conjunction joins only two words or phrases.
 - h....use commas to separate the day of the month from the year and the city from the state.

i....use the apostrophe to indicate singular of plural possession of nouns needed.

j....use the apostrophe to indicate omitted letters in a contraction.

Competency-Based Diploma Project
Nevada Department of Education

TASK FORCE # 1 - READING

MINIMUM COMPETENCIES

DEFINITION: Minimum competency in reading for high school graduation means that students will be able to demonstrate mastery of the listed reading skills as measured on an evaluative instrument.

GIVEN

Who = Students

When = Prior to graduation

Level = Selections used to measure the mastery of reading comprehension shall contain in any 100 word sample 120 to 135 syllables in 5 or 6 sentences.

SPECIFIC SKILLS* ARE:

1. Given a paragraph of not more than six (6) sentences, the student will identify the main idea. Comprehension level.
2. Given a paragraph of five (5) or six (6) sentences containing causes and effects, the student will relate each cause to its effect. Comprehension Level.
3. Given a factual paragraph containing four (4) elements which support a conclusion, the student will identify the conclusion. Comprehension level.
4. Given a paragraph that contains both fact and opinion statements, the student will be able to distinguish between fact and opinion. Analysis level.
5. Given a selection containing four (4) sequential events, the student will be able to identify the time relationship. Comprehension level.
6. Given ten (10) words, the student will arrange the words in alphabetical order up to the third letter. Application level.
7. Given a book, the student will demonstrate the use of the table of contents, the index, and the glossary. Application level.
8. Given a situation requiring the location of information, the student will identify an appropriate reference source. Application level.

* Each skill is to be measured at the designated cognitive level according to Bloom's taxonomy as defined in Appendix I.

9. Given an encyclopedia, an atlas, and a dictionary, the student will be able to use the appropriate source by locating word meanings, interpreting and using maps, symbols, and legends, and locating information related to a specific subject. Application level.
10. Given a selection containing a set of four (4) step directions, the student will follow the directions. Application level.

* Each skill is to be measured at the designated cognitive level according to Bloom's taxonomy as defined in Appendix I.

Appendix I

LEVELS OF THE COGNITIVE VARIABLE

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4. ANALYSIS Involves separating a complex entity into its parts, drawing comparisons and relationships between the elements (i.e., ability to recognize assumptions, to distinguish cause and effect relationships, reorganization of biases or points of view, etc.).
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COMPETENCY-BASED HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TASK FORCE II

The following suggested activities and responsibilities would result in the development of measurement and procedural recommendations for the Advisory Commission and Department of Education.

It is expected that Task Force II will complete the work in three, two-day sessions.

FIRST MEETING

1. Review the definitions and lists of minimum competency skills/criteria prepared by Task Force I.

2. Review available measurement techniques and strategies.

A. Type of Measurement

Examples: norm-referenced, criterion-referenced, individual tests, group tests

B. Format of Measurement

Examples: paper and pencil, oral, type of items, Blooms Taxonomy, number of items, time requirements

C. Standardization of Measurement Techniques and Strategies

Examples: administration, scoring, interpretation, reliability, validity, norms and other statistics, technical manuals, examiner manuals

D. Time and Cost Considerations

Examples: use of available tests, development of new tests

3. Recommend measurement techniques and strategies to Advisory Commission.

SECOND MEETING

1. Establish when a student can begin to display minimum competencies for graduation.

2. Establish number of times a student can attempt to display minimum competencies before a decision is made if student can graduate.

3. Determine procedural guidelines if student must demonstrate periodically minimum competencies throughout high school experience.

SECOND MEETING continued

4. Establish who will be responsible for acquiring, administering, scoring and interpreting minimum competency measures.
5. Specify procedures for record-keeping related to documentation of minimum competency measurement information for individual students.
6. Determine procedural guidelines for refresher/remedial courses for students who don't/can't demonstrate required minimum competencies.

THIRD MEETING

1. Determine procedures needed for implementing the competency-based high school diploma program.

Examples: information dissemination, training activities, agendas, time schedule

2. Prepare a Task Force II position paper for the Advisory Commission to include the following recommendations:
 - A. What measurement techniques are to be used in assessing minimum competency?
 - B. When will minimum competency assessment take place?
 - C. How many times will minimum competency assessment occur?
 - D. How will the minimum competency assessment program be implemented?
 - E. Who will be responsible for assessing student minimum competency in arithmetic, reading and writing?

PROPOSED CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 16, 1977

Advisory Commission Meeting

Carson City

1. Review Task Force I final products
2. Review Agenda/Expectations for first meeting of Task Force II
3. Participate in Seminar on Test Development--
Dr. Oluf Davidsen, President, American
College Testing Program

PROPOSED CALENDAR OF EVENTS continued

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|-------------|
| MARCH 31, April 1, 1977 | Task Force II Meeting Recommend Measurement Strategies and Techniques | Reno |
| APRIL 6, 1977 | Advisory Commission Meeting 1. Review products of 1st Task Force II meeting 2. Review plans for 2nd Task Force II meeting | Carson City |
| APRIL 21-22, 1977 | Task Force II Meeting Develop guidelines and procedures for competency-based high school diploma program. | Las Vegas |
| MAY 4, 1977 | Advisory Commission Meeting 1. Review products of 2nd Task Force II meeting 2. Review plans for 3rd and final Task Force II meeting | Carson City |
| MAY 12-13, 1977 | Task Force II Meeting Prepare position paper for consideration by Advisory Commission | Reno |
| MAY 16, 1977 | Advisory Commission Meeting 1. Review final products of Task Force I and II 2. Discuss report to be submitted to the State Board of Education 3. Make recommendations regarding format and content of report | Carson City |
| MAY 26, 1977 | Advisory Commission Meeting 1. Review draft copy of report to State Board of Education 2. Recommend changes needed to improve report | Carson City |
| JUNE 3, 1977 | STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING 1. Deliver Competency-Based High School Diploma Program Report to members of State Board | Reno |

NEVADA EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

REPORT ON FOURTH MEETING, 1976-77

SUBJECT: Competency Based Testing

SPEAKER: Gerald P. Cavanaugh
Supervisor of Development and Education
Denver Public Schools

DATE AND PLACE: February 23, 1977, Enrico's
Carson City, Nevada

ATTENDANCE: 32

*AB 400
Supp. Mat.*

BACKGROUND

The Nevada Department of Education, at the direction of the State Board, has been engaged for several months in the development of a competency based testing program. An advisory commission,* comprised of representatives of various elements of the educational community, state legislators and business and industry officials, was appointed to help in planning the testing program. The commission indicated an interest in convening a meeting of the Nevada Educational Seminar for the purpose of hearing from a spokesman for a school district with experience in competency-based testing. The specific questions of interest to commission members included the following:

1. Reasons for implementation;
2. How the program was developed;
3. Impact on curriculum, staff, parents and students;
4. How the program is operated;
5. What problems have been experienced and how such problems can be avoided or eliminated.

To address these questions, the Seminar invited Mr. Cavanaugh, who represents a school district with 16 years of experience in competency-based testing. In addition to commission members, those invited to the meeting included members of the State Board of Education, state legislators and staffers from the State Department of Education. It was anticipated that the attendance of legislators would be particularly beneficial, given the substantial interest in competency-based testing expressed by members of the legislature during the current session and the recent introduction of several bills dealing with the subject.

*The Competency-Based High School Diploma Program Advisory Commission.

SUMMARY

The format for the meeting required a departure of sorts from the custom of the Seminar. No respondents were on the program, the objective being to hear Mr. Cavanaugh's basic presentation and then his answers to questions from participants. The usual format was stretched further out of shape by the not at all unusual circumstance in which some of the legislators found themselves, namely with two meetings scheduled for the same hour. So that these legislators could hear from Mr. Cavanaugh, the lunch before business routine was discarded at the last minute and replaced by a schedule that called for the Cavanaugh presentation first, then lunch, and then the question period. This schedule disrupted program continuity, put an added burden on the speaker, caused consternation in the restaurant kitchen and forced several hungry legislators to forego the meal they had rightfully anticipated. Even so, the program was well presented and well received.

Some highlights from Mr. Cavanaugh's presentation are set forth below, along with participant questions and the speaker's responses.

Cavanaugh's Remarks

In response to an outbreak of the "Johnny Can't Read" syndrome in 1959-60, the Denver school district administered a battery of tests to students, discovered problems, interviewed employers of high school graduates and found overall satisfaction with graduates' basic skills but also encountered a myriad of suggestions for improvement. As a consequence of all this effort, a California testing firm was hired to develop (in cooperation with district officials) a series of basic skills tests. The tests begin in ninth grade (after 16 years 40% of the ninth graders fail one of the three tests, failure occurring when a student misses more than 18 of the 50 items on a test). The program -- Proficiency and Review Tests -- emphasizes minimum skills, with the level of competency set at grades seven and eight. It is not designed as a measure of the high school curriculum and is a small part of Denver's overall testing program. The general testing objectives are early identification of problems and provision for remedial work, and the Proficiency and Review Tests are intended to serve these objectives, even at the 12th grade level. For seniors, that is, tests are administered early in the year so as to allow for remediation.

The competency-based tests were attacked during the 1975 session of the state legislature, on grounds that they were discriminatory in regard to racial minorities. However, discussion in the legislature produced legislation whereby any Colorado school district may introduce a competency-based testing program (only the Denver district currently operates such a program). The law provides that, for those districts which decide to implement the tests, the program must begin by the ninth grade and make remedial help available.

The Denver program, after initial difficulties, has come to be accepted by the community. It is currently undergoing reevaluation, in terms both of its technical aspects and its timing. On the latter question, the school board is now moving toward the introduction of competency-based testing in the third and sixth grades. The reevaluation comes at a time when interest in the Denver program has mushroomed. More than 600 inquiries have been received from around the country this year, some of them arising from panic, others engendered by bandwagon psychology, and the remainder representing an interest inspired by other factors.

Noting that it was his proclivity to cite the wisdom of the dead because the dead cannot check on the accuracy of the citation, Mr. Cavanaugh closed with a quote from Confucius: "He who sweats in peace, rarely bleeds in battle." Applied to the introduction of a competency-based testing program, what Confucius can be presumed to have had in mind was careful thinking and planning prior to introduction.

Questions and Answers (Selected)

1. What percentage of students never pass and what is done with/for such students?... Three years ago, 3.6% failed to pass; last year the percentage was 1.5%. Summer school is an alternative for those who fail to pass by the 12th grade. Students who do not receive a diploma are given a Certificate of Attendance. Only those pursuing a diploma are tested.
2. Would Nevada, as a small state, be better off to start with a standardized test already developed and tried, or to develop its own test?... If you have the money, start from scratch, keeping in mind that it takes two years to develop a program. Be sure that the legislature provides funding--it is expensive. Let me repeat: it is expensive. If you go the other route, call in a professional test publisher, with lots of teacher input, have the test developed and use it on a trial basis.
3. What is the cost of starting from scratch?... We estimate that, doing the work ourselves, the introduction of testing at third and sixth grade levels would cost \$100,000.
4. Is there evidence of test-score inflation due to the "Hawthorne effect"?... No. Scores went down over the years, in some degree. Only recently has there been improvement.
5. What is the per pupil cost?... Initially, when the tests were developed by the California Test Bureau, the cost was \$1.25 for the first round and \$1.00 for each subsequent test. Denver subsequently purchased the copyright for \$28,000 and the per-pupil cost is .05¢. The original cost of development was borne by the publisher.

6. Do instructors teach to the test?... I hope they do, because it is a basic skills test. However, in an age of copying machines, it is inevitable that some teachers will not just teach to the test, but teach the test, period.
7. How do you feel about state established competency-levels?... Generally speaking, this is not a good idea; there is too much variation around the state. State minimums which locals can enhance may be OK, if the minimums are set low enough.
8. What has been the impact on curriculum?... In the lower grades, the major result has been the adjustment of levels at which skills are taught. In the higher grades, one impact has been the introduction of new courses. These are not replacement courses, and they are costly.
9. Are students required to pass a given test only once?... Yes. We believe students should be given several opportunities, so that proficiency in any given skill needs to be demonstrated only once in the last four years of school. We have encountered very little opposition to this approach.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Advisory Commission

1. John Gamble (ex-officio), State Superintendent
2. Daniel Hickey, Business and industry member
3. Frank Johnson, Business and industry member
4. Mary Lou Moser, Nevada Parent-Teachers Association
5. Joseph Newlin, Nevada State Education Association
6. Robert O'Connell, Business and industry member
7. Mrs. Robert O'Connell
8. Marvin Picollo, Washoe County School District Superintendent
9. Robert Scott, Humboldt County School District Superintendent
10. Warren Scott, Nevada State School Board Association
11. Jack Selbig, Counseling and Testing, University of Nevada, Reno
12. Roy Smith, Nevada Association of School Administrators

State Legislature

- *13. Darrell Dreyer, Assemblyman, Education Committee
14. Dale Goodman, Assemblyman, Education Committee
- *15. Nick Horn, Assemblyman, Education Committee
- *16. William Kissam, Assemblyman, Education Committee
17. Dean Rhoades, Assemblyman, Education Committee
18. Harriet Knauf, Legislative staff, sitting in for John Vergiels,
Chairman
19. Michael Olsen, Legislative staff, sitting in for John Vergiels
- *20. Don Rhodes, Legislative Council Bureau

State Board of Education

21. Cynthia Cunningham
22. George Earnhart
23. Shirlee Wedow

State Department of Education

24. Edward Howard
25. Victor Hyden
26. James Kiley
27. Pat Miller
28. Jerry Nielsen
29. David Rivers
30. Herbert Steffens

Other

31. Joe Crowley, NES Director
32. Gerald Cavanaugh

*Not present for lunch



Editorial

Legislature Must Help On Test Rules

It may be, as State Sen. Clifton Young said in a committee meeting the other day, that "perhaps education is too important to be left to educators," but certainly it's vital its fate not be decided by legislators.

Senator Young's comments came during a hearing on a series of bills that would require periodic tests of academic competency.

Some of the bills would have the test administered only prior to graduation, and they should be rejected. A young man or young woman who is allowed to advance through 12 years of schooling should not be told at the 11th hour of deficiencies in basic subjects.

System's Role

It's the responsibility of the school system to detect such shortcomings at an early age—say, not later than the fourth grade—and correct them long before high school graduation is just around the corner.

Young is the sponsor of one bill—inspired,

he said, by the reaction of 87 per cent of voters

in his senatorial district who responded to a poll. This great majority said they thought the school system should inaugurate tests in basic academic subjects.

Has Merit

Young's bill is worthy of considerable consideration because it, like several others, requires tests at several levels, beginning in the early grades.

What should be a red flag to educators, for example, is a fourth grader who can't read at the expected level of competency, do simply arithmetic—if there is any such thing any more—write and spell adequately. That's the time, and no later for real testing to begin.

There's cause here for real concern. Young people are graduating from Nevada high schools who read at the third grade level, and others show marked deficiencies in doing simple sums and in elementary spelling.

It's Ridiculous

This is ridiculous and everyone knows it, but it was only recently that the legislature showed interest in the problem.

The legislature, however, isn't qualified to determine the form of the test, but it ought to ignore the requests of educators to back away from the issue entirely.

The educators themselves have moved far too slowly in trying to determine the extent of the problem of poor readers, poor spellers and inadequate training in arithmetic, so the timetable can't be left in their hands any longer.

A Mandate

The legislature must mandate that tests be given, and at the various levels they must be administered.

Even then, the matter cannot be forgotten. Having set the timetable, the lawmakers will have to take another look two years from now—and constantly thereafter—to see if the schedules are being met by the educators.