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April 9, 2003

RE: Testimony on AB264, against section 49

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Assembly members, and staff. My name is Carol Williams, I wish to speak to you today as a former public school teacher, home educator and as the current chairman for Northern Nevada Home Schools, a non-profit organization that supports and encourages home educators in Northern Nevada.

I found out about AB264 just one day after I had submitted April's front page article for our newsletter. This article addresses standardized achievement testing and expresses how thankful home schoolers are and should be that we have the freedom and the choice to decide when, how, and why our children should be tested. It also gives information about what norm-referenced tests are, how the tests can be used to benefit a home school, and points to other resources in the newsletter where parents can find out about how to access standardized achievement tests for use in their home school.

The reaction to section 49 of AB264 among many home schoolers has been one of shock, since it was not that long ago that this requirement was removed. Mandating home schoolers to take proficiency and/or achievement tests would create unnecessary bureaucracy, unnecessary expense, and unnecessary trauma to home school families. The research shows that home schoolers thrive with little or no regulation, and the most remarkable research shows that even the education level and income level of the parent has little bearing. So what is the determining factor? I believe it is the profound sense of responsibility that home school parents have for their children's education and the willingness to do whatever it takes.

For these reasons, home schools have built-in accountability. Assessment occurs every moment of every day in a way that is so natural it would make any public school teacher envious. Mastery is of course the key, not percentiles or passing scores. Because of the flexibility of home schooling, skills and knowledge can be fully mastered before moving on to something new. And while many home schoolers may choose to use standardized tests as a tool for assessment, it should remain a choice and not a mandate.

Please do not take away the freedoms that home schoolers deserve, have rightly earned, and in no way abuse. Please remove section 49 from AB264.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol Williams
775-475-0209
Shermanwilliams@starband.net
Reno, Nevada

ORIGINALS ARE ON FILE IN THE
RESEARCH LIBRARY *20 pages total*

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION
DATE: 4/9/03 ROOM: 3143 EXHIBIT J
SUBMITTED BY: CAROL WILLIAMS

J 1/3

Monthly Gazette of Northern Nevada Home Schools, Inc.

There's no
place like

Home



April 2003

Volume 3, Issue 4

"Support and Encouragement for Home Schoolers"

What About Testing?

As homeschoolers in Nevada we are lucky that we have a choice when it comes to testing or not (thank you to those veterans who work so hard to give us that choice!) So now what? Since this is the time of year many homeschoolers are thinking about assessing their children's progress we thought we would share with our members some of the articles and resources we have found helpful when making testing decisions. I will offer this disclaimer: I'm no expert, and don't presume to be offering you the most complete and comprehensive information on this issue, that would take a book!



Thank you in advance
for your support.

Carol Sherman Williams
Chairman, NNHS

For the purposes of this issue, we are primarily talking about standardized achievement tests such as the California Achievement Test (CAT); Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), which includes the "Terra Nova", Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), etc. that are norm referenced. Norm-referenced tests compare a student's score against the scores of a group of students who have already taken the same exam. The results can give you an indication of how your child scored compared to the "norm", which of course many homeschoolers secretly (and not so secretly) worry about from time to time!

Achievement tests can be useful at showing strengths and weaknesses in different subject areas, and an even better test can give you tips and strategies on improving in weak areas. These tests can also be used to show growth in different areas, either by testing in the fall and then in the spring or by testing every year or every few years. And of course the reality is that in your child's lifetime, they will be faced with taking some sort of standardized test and it can prove extremely valuable to give them practice. The nice part for homeschoolers is that many of these tests can be given in the privacy of your own home or one homeschool parent could administer the test to a group of homeschoolers.

Much of the controversy surrounding achievement testing is due to the "high stakes" attitudes adopted by many. Should a test score determine whether or not your child should go on to the next grade, graduate, be put in school, or in some cases taken out? Millions of dollars are at stake and school accountability is on the line because of these tests. As homeschoolers in Nevada how much "stake" you put into testing is entirely up to you. Isn't freedom great?!

Look for other articles and resources on page 3 regarding standardized testing.

Would you like to see a topic or theme addressed in an upcoming issue? Email your ideas to Chair@nnhs.org or call Carol Williams at 475-0209.

Look Inside For

**Science Fair
Winners**
Pg. 15

Sports Bill
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NNHS Notes

NNHS Board Meeting

NNHS board meetings are now scheduled for the fourth Monday of each month. The next meeting will be April 28th, at 3:00PM. It will be held at the Sierra View Library (inside the Reno Town Mall) Corner of S. Virginia and Peckham. All members and prospective members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

NNHS Email Discussion List

Are you in the loop? If not, you're missing out on lively discussions and information about events, field trips and activities that happen before or after the newsletter comes out. Come and join NNHS's email discussion list. It's FREE! Just send an email to NNHS-subscribe@yahoo.com. Our moderator will get back to you with a simple introductory questionnaire. See you online!

NNHS Web Page

If you would like your activity/event presented on the NNHS web page, please email your write-up to Patti Poston at activities@nnhs.org. Make sure your write-up contains your email address for people to contact you directly. Remember, those who contact you may or may not be NNHS members or home school families.

Care Committee Needs Volunteers

Can you dedicate an hour or two each week to helping prospective home-schoolers? The care committee picks up inquiries left on our message line, return-phone calls, answer questions on homeschooling and procedures and sends out information packets. We need several friendly and responsible volunteers to join this essential committee. Training and support provided! Call Lynn Chapman for more information at 356-0105.

NNHS Board

Chair		
Carol S. Williams	475-0209	Chair@nnhs.org
Treasurer		
Cyndi Earl	787-2924	Treasurer@nnhs.org
Secretary		
Cheryl Cardoza	746-2058	Secretary@nnhs.org
Editor		
Tracey Thibault	425-3682	Editor@nnhs.org
Director		
Gina Hawley	673-3363	Director1@nnhs.org
Director		
Joyce Hall	424-0703	Director2@nnhs.org
Director		
Irene Rushing	673-1004	Director4@nnhs.org

Committee Contacts

Activities Committee		
Patti Poston	847-9617	activities@nnhs.org
Care Committee		
Lynn Chapman	356-0105	
Conference Committee		
Irene Rushing	673-1004	Director4@nnhs.org
Resource Center Committee		
Carol Williams	475-0209	Chair@nnhs.org
Support Group Coordinators		
Reno/Sparks area		
Needed		
Carson City/Valley area		
Darla Bayer	883-9351	Popouts@aol.com

Home School Intent Forms....

ATTENTION Washoe County Homeschooler: The district's home instruction office has moved to the Glenn Hare Center. Please take or send your intent forms to:

Washoe County School District
350 Hunter Lake
P.O. Box 30425
Reno, Nevada 89502-3425
Attention: Isabella Scott
(775)333-6113

Carson City School District
1402 West King
Carson City, Nevada 89703
(775) 885-6300

Douglas County Schools
751 Mono Avenue
Minden, NV 89703
(775) 782-5134

Advertising Information

For the Gazette of Northern Nevada Home Schools, Inc

All ads must be received by the 15th of each month to be included in the following month's issue. Please send check to Northern Nevada Home Schools, PO Box 21323, Reno, NV., 89515, ATTN: Editor.

Please send all submissions in Word, Publisher or JPG format.

The newsletter is mailed to over 450 home school families around the first of each month during the school year.

	<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-members</u>
Classified ad or business card		
(2 tall X 3 1/2 wide)	\$5	\$10
1/4 page (4 1/2t X 3 1/2w)	\$10	\$20
1/2 page (4 1/2t X 7 1/2w)	\$17	\$27
full page (9 1/4t X 7 1/2w)	\$30	\$40