

## DISCLAIMER

Electronic versions of the exhibits in these minutes may not be complete.

This information is supplied as an informational service only and should not be relied upon as an official record.

Original exhibits are on file at the Legislative Counsel Bureau Research Library in Carson City.

Contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or [library@lcb.state.nv.us](mailto:library@lcb.state.nv.us).



## NEVADA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

Dr. Jim Hager, President  
P.O. Box 30425  
Reno, Nevada 89520  
(775) 348-0399 (Phone)  
(775) 348-0304 (Fax)

Mrs. Charlotte Petersen, Vice President  
Dr. Mary Pierczynski, Secretary-Treasurer

May 2, 2003

Senator Bill Raggio, Chair  
Members, Senate Finance Committee  
Nevada Legislature  
Legislative Building  
401 S. Carson Street  
Carson City, NV 89701-4747

Dear Senator Raggio and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

The Nevada Association of School Superintendents (NASS) and Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB) recognize that each state faces critical decision-making in order to successfully mesh the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) with its existing assessment and accountability laws. We commend the Nevada Legislature's efforts to make this transition toward the student academic achievement envisioned first by the Nevada Education Reform Act and now by NCLB.

In response to your request for various assurances, this letter is intended to set forth what the superintendents and school boards can ensure regarding the implementation of NCLB and Senate Bill 191.

### ***SEPARATE NRTs and CRTs—***

Spring testing as proposed in the White Paper focuses upon the timing for test administration. Moving test administration from fall to spring has no overall effect on the total time spent on assessment. As stated in our testimony on April 3, 2003, we believe that separate NRTs and CRTs, as described in the White Paper, will not result in over-testing of Nevada's students.

NASS and NASB support NRTs in 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grades, as stated in the White Paper. We note that—in the initial draft of Senate Bill 191—the Committee apparently intends to replace the 10<sup>th</sup> grade Iowa Test of Educational Development with either the PSAT or PLAN. We assume that substitution satisfies the Committee's desire for an NRT in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and we do not propose a second NRT—in addition to the PSAT or PLAN in 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

NASS and NASB affirm that we will use the state-mandated CRTs for the purposes stated in the White Paper. As stated in our testimony on April 3, 2003, when the final state testing structure is defined by the 2003 Legislature, school district superintendents

and boards of trustees must evaluate district testing programs and determine what they need to do with regard to assessment.

There are at least four reasons why a school district might continue to test its students with its own school district CRT or other school district assessment:

1. The Nevada Legislature required the Council to Establish Academic Standards to prioritize Nevada's academic standards. That prioritization included indication of whether mastery of the standard would be tested at the state or local level. Because of this, districts are responsible for assessing mastery of some standards at the local level, which may or may not involve administration of a district CRT.
2. The U.S. Congress, through NCLB, also requires districts to assess student mastery of standards not tested by their respective states, which may or may not involve administration of a district CRT at the local level.
3. Some Nevada school districts have established academic standards that are higher than Nevada's standards and which may include more benchmarks. Those school districts must reserve the right to test student mastery of their district standards at the school district level, which may or may not involve administration of a district CRT.
4. At least four Nevada school districts currently use the Northwest Evaluation Assessment (NWEA) leveled-test system to provide information to teachers on student performance. Without augmentation, the leveled tests do not satisfy the requirements of NCLB because they do not necessarily test students on the standards at their current grade level. Some districts, however, may choose to continue to use those tests in some way.

### ***SPRING vs. FALL ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATION—TIMELINES***

It should be noted that NASS and NASB have prepared a second revision of the timeline to accommodate the Committee's interest in having both the NRTs and CRTs administered in the spring. A copy of that revised timeline is attached for your reference. This timeline differs from the original White Paper proposal of administering the CRTs in the spring and the NRTs in the fall.

Based on the Committee's proposal that the NRTs and CRTs be administered in the spring, school districts would have their students' scores on both tests returned to the school districts by the end of May. Preliminary designations would be made by NDE by the end of June.

From June onward, the NASS and NASB revised timeline includes all mandatory pieces of the federal requirements for generation and implementation of school improvement plans:

- ✓ This timeline provides the mandatory thirty-day day appeal window for a school to appeal a designation of "in need of improvement."
- ✓ This timeline provides ninety days from final designation for a school to complete its school improvement plan, which would respond both to the AYP designation based on the CRTs and the potential for NERA funding based on the NRTs.

- ✓ This timeline provides forty-five days from a school's completion of its school improvement plan for the school district to review and approve the school improvement plan. Implementation of the plan would begin upon approval. It is important to note that the school would have developed a school improvement plan during the first year of designation and only need to revise the plan—if it failed to make AYP for a second year.

In practice and with administration of both the NRT and CRT in the spring, a school that did not have to appeal its designation could begin to implement its revised school improvement plan as soon as approved by its district—early in the school year.

If NERA funding cannot be distributed until the last school has applied, that would likely be the final piece of the school improvement plan implementation, but even that could begin in the school year following the designation.

NASS and NASB point out that there will be an increased cost associated with the additional testing, reporting, planning, and implementing of the assessment and accountability requirements for NCLB and Senate Bill 191. None of us can predict with total certainty what those exact costs will be. We believe, however, that spring testing will be fiscally neutral when compared to fall testing.

#### ***SPRING vs. FALL ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATION—PARENT NOTIFICATION***

We wish to note that NASS and NASB have asked the NDE for assurances on two points regarding this issue. In turn, the NDE received clarification from the US Department of Education (USDOE) during the peer review of Nevada's plan on the two points:

1. What must be distributed to parents before the beginning of the school year?
2. When must school and district improvement plans be revised and implemented?

Also, NASB conferred directly with the USDOE regarding these two questions, speaking with Grace A. Ross, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, USDOE (202/260-0967), on April 4, 2003.

NCLB requires that parents having children enrolled at Title I schools that fail to make AYP for two consecutive years be notified of their ability to choose a different school on the first day of the school year. We all apparently agree that is not acceptable. What has been twice confirmed is that the only information that parents must receive is test information that will enable them to make informed decisions about school choice. In other words, the entire accountability report card is not required before the beginning of the school year. In response to the second question, also now twice confirmed, it has been learned that the school improvement plan must be completed within ninety days of the school's designation and approved by the local school district within forty-five days after its submission. The plan must be implemented immediately upon its approval, which may be after the beginning of the school year.

In the White Paper, we argue that spring testing matches the intention of NCLB with regard to the required assessment of student mastery of the state's grade level content

and performance standards. With spring testing, for example, each school district will know at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade whether a child has successfully mastered 3<sup>rd</sup> grade content and performance standards. We do find that preferable to a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher finding out four months or more into the school year that the 4<sup>th</sup> grade child had not successfully mastered the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade content and performance standards, which is what happens with fall testing. As stated during our testimony on April 3, we are comfortable changing the testing system to a summative process for students.

As a result, we are convinced that it is preferable for parents to know how their 3<sup>rd</sup> grade child performed on 3<sup>rd</sup> grade content and performance standards at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade year rather than six months later in December of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade year, which would happen with fall testing. We share your concern stated on April 3 that parents must be kept informed all along. With daily or weekly classroom assessments generated by the teacher, progress reports, report cards, and conferences with teachers, parents will be kept informed of their child's progress throughout the year. These various, on-going assessments will be confirmed by the state-mandated CRTs of content and performance standards in spring of the school year.

Spring test reports will be delivered to teachers prior to the end of the school year. As we testified on April 3, this will show whether students have met the standards for that year. The following year, teachers of those students also receive the individual student scores and can focus instruction on deficiencies evidenced from those reports.

With the timeline proposed for spring testing, parents at the overwhelming majority of Nevada schools would receive formal notice of school choice six to seven weeks—not two to three weeks—prior to the beginning of the school year. Please note the date of July 1 for "issuance of parent letter explaining choice options" on the timeline. Yes, we are comfortable with that.

There is a possibility that for parents at the approximately 7 Title I schools in the state who start school before mid-August, if any of them are designated failing to make AYP for two consecutive years, there will be less time after receipt of the letter before the start of school. Even at those schools, however, parents will receive the letter as quickly as possible and before the federal deadline of the first day of school.

We are committed to meeting the revised time lines and the deadlines specified under the Act, as amended to spring testing, with regard to federally mandated time lines. These include distribution of accountability report cards; development, revision, and implementation of improvement plans; planning for school choice, supplemental services, or corrective actions for affected schools; and informing parents about their school choice option.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to go on record about these important issues for public education in Nevada's school districts.

*James L. Hager*

Dr. James L. Hager, President  
Nevada Association of School Superintendents

*Anne K. Loring*

Anne K. Loring, President  
Nevada Association of School Boards

*Mary Pierczynski*

Dr. Mary Pierczynski, Superintendent  
Carson City School District

*Ronald B. Flores*

Mr. Ronald Flores, Superintendent  
Churchill County School District

*Carlos Garcia*

Mr. Carlos Garcia, Superintendent  
Clark County School District

*John Soderman*

Mr. John Soderman, Superintendent  
Douglas County School District

*Antoinette Cavanaugh*

Ms. Antoinette Cavanaugh, Superintendent  
Elko School District

*Ben Zunino*

Mr. Ben Zunino, Superintendent  
Eureka County School District

*Charlotte A. Petersen*

Mrs. Charlotte Petersen, Superintendent  
Humboldt County School District

*Robert Smith*

Mr. Robert Smith, Superintendent  
Lander County School District

*Mr. Lorell Bleak*

Mr. Lorell Bleak, Superintendent  
Lincoln County School District

*Steven Cook*

Mr. Steven Cook, Superintendent  
Mineral County School District

*Dr. William Roberts*

Dr. William Roberts, Superintendent  
Nye County School District

*Henry J. Kilmer*

Mr. Henry Kilmer, Superintendent  
Storey County School District

### **Timeline for Spring NRTs and Spring CRTs with Other Dates**

At the hearing on April 3, 2003, LCB staff proposed that both NRTs and CRTs be administered in the spring. Below is the timeline approved by the Nevada Association of School Superintendents, the Nevada Association of School Boards, and the Nevada Department of Education that provides for spring CRT testing consistent with the requirements of No Child Left Behind as well as spring NRT testing consistent with legislative request. **Recently, SB191 has been amended to reflect spring test administration. The dates in (bold) are the dates currently reflected in the amendment for SB191 and can be supported by NASS and NASB.**

Fourth week of February: NRT testing in grades 4, 7, and 10 completed.

First week of March: NRT materials to vendors.

First week of April: NRT scores back to Districts.

Third week of April: CRT testing in grades 3-8 completed.

Fourth week of April: All materials to vendors.

Fourth week of May: CRT scores back to Districts.

Fifth week of May: CRT scores to schools and teachers.

Second week of June: CRT scores to parents.

Second week of June (June 15): AYP analyses sent to districts by NDE.

Third week of June (July 1): Preliminary designations of schools by districts.

July 1: Issuance of parent letter explaining choice options to parents of Title I schools which failed to make AYP for the second year. This letter would be preliminary notice only if a Title I school is contesting its AYP designation.

Third week of July (August 1): School designation appeal window closes and final school designations determined by districts.

August 1: Final parent choices made at Title I schools that must offer choice.

(August 15): District and school report cards completed and made available to the public.

(September 1): State Report Card completed and made available to public.

September 30: Report cards mailed to parents.

Fourth week of October (November 1): School Improvement Plans revised and completed.

Second Week in December (December 15): District review of School Improvement Plans completed and implementation of School Improvement Plans begins. **State and District Improvement Plans completed.**

(January 1): Legal deadline for implementation of School Improvement Plans.

6