

**LEGISLATIVE BUREAU
OF
EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY
AND
PROGRAM EVALUATION**



ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2006-07

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INTRODUCTION

The following report is submitted in compliance with NRS 218.5356, which requires that a written report of the findings of the Legislative Bureau of Educational Accountability and Program Evaluation be filed with the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau on or before December 31st for transmission to the Legislature in even-numbered years or to the Legislative Commission in odd-numbered years.

Nevada Education Reform Act

The Legislative Bureau of Educational Accountability and Program Evaluation (Bureau) was created by Senate Bill 482 (Chapter 473, Statutes of Nevada 1997). This comprehensive school reform package, called the Nevada Education Reform Act (NERA), combined education initiatives proposed by the Governor with those of the Senate Finance Committee and provided nearly \$41 million in General Fund appropriations to improve public education. Through the Nevada Education Reform Act, the following occurs:

- The school accountability program is strengthened;
- A system for the adoption of high, measurable statewide standards in academic subjects is established;
- A series of statewide tests linked to those standards is implemented;
- Use of educational technology for classroom instruction is increased; and
- A process for legislative review of education reform is established.

To facilitate legislative review of educational matters, the NERA established two new entities within the legislative branch: the Legislative Committee on Education and its staff component, the Legislative Bureau of Educational Accountability and Program Evaluation.

Education matters commanded much of the Legislature's attention again during the 2007 Legislative Session and the 23rd Special Session. The following summarizes some of the more significant legislation passed by the 2007 Legislature concerning K-12 education.

Senate Bill 4 (23rd Special Session) requires the Committee to consider studying testing issues, issues relating to truancy, the effect of long-term substitutes on student academic achievement, and the governance of K-12 education.

Senate Bill 110 limits the district-wide tests, examinations and assessments that a school district may administer to those that were adopted prior to July 1, 2007 (i.e., no expansion of the testing program in a school district).

Senate Bill 184 revises the system of public school accountability by:

- Requiring the reporting of 8th grade dropouts in accountability reports;
- Revising provisions regarding school support teams (SSTs);
- Eliminating technical assistance partnerships (TAPs);
- Authorizing the State Board of Education to review academic standards proposed by the Council to Establish Academic Standards and make recommendations for consideration by the Council;
- Directing the Commission on Educational Technology to conduct a needs assessment of educational technology in the school districts during the spring semester of each even numbered year for submission to the Legislative Committee on Education. For the spring 2008 needs assessment, the Commission on Educational Technology must include an assessment of the feasibility of using laptop computers in lieu of textbooks and integration of technology to improve student academic achievement;
- Requiring every school district to provide a default curriculum for graduation that consists of four English courses, four courses in mathematics, three science courses, and three social studies courses. A student may opt out of the default curriculum with the approval of the parent and a school administrator. The default curriculum will be required of 9th grade students, beginning in the 2007-08 school year; and
- Requiring a student who has been retained one time in 8th grade and fails again to meet the necessary requirements to successfully complete a remedial program before being promoted to 9th grade.

Finally, this bill appropriates from the state General Fund to the Interim Finance Committee the sum of \$340,200 for a consultant to conduct a study to measure the alignment of classroom assignments given to pupils at selected grade levels with the content and performance standards established by the Council to Establish Academic Standards. The Legislative Committee on Education will select 100 schools to be included in the study. Results of the study will be presented to the 2009 Legislature.

Senate Bill 238 establishes a program of empowerment schools in Nevada. No more than 100 schools will be selected to participate in the program of empowerment during the 2007-09 Biennium. Schools included in the program will be empowered to determine budgetary needs, academic needs, and staffing needs that will support increased academic achievement of pupils in the school. To support the program, the Legislature authorized \$180,000 in FY 2007-08 and \$8.9 million in FY 2008-09. The funds will be allocated to selected schools based upon a per pupil amount not to exceed \$400 per pupil.

Senate Bill 185 requires the Commission on Educational Excellence to establish guidelines for the review, evaluation and approval of applications for grants of money from the Account for Programs for Innovation and the Prevention of Remediation. The guidelines must include the Commission's consideration of a list of priorities of schools, ranked according to AYP and federal Title I eligibility of schools. The guidelines must also require that the Commission review and approve any application for funds from the Account prior to allocation of the funds to a grantee. The legislation also provides that the Commission shall not award a grant of money from the Account to provide full-day kindergarten.

Senate Bill 185 also revises the components required for the annual report submitted by the Commission. The report is required to include the total amount of money allocated to school districts, public schools, and those schools that were included on the priority lists for AYP and Title I eligibility. The report must also include a description of the programs funded, including whether the program provides services directly to pupils or provides instructional support services that have an indirect effect on pupils.

Finally, this legislation limits the amount of money the Commission may spend from the Account on travel for program reviews and the costs to hold meetings or best practices conferences concerning the programs funded by the Commission to \$50,000 each biennium. In addition, the amount of money that may be utilized for evaluation of the programs funded by the Commission is limited to \$450,000 each biennium.

Senate Bill 312 requires the State Board of Education to prescribe alternative criteria that a pupil may satisfy to receive a standard high school diploma if the pupil has passed the mathematics and reading portions of the High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE), but has not passed the remaining portions of the examination (currently the Writing Examination). Alternative criteria include an essay, a senior project, or a portfolio of work.

Senate Bill 485 relates to truancy and requires that the truancy advisory boards review school attendance and establish truancy prevention and enforcement programs that include coordination of community services to assist with intervention, diversion, and discipline of truants. Clark and Washoe County School Districts must establish at least one school attendance council to implement a truancy prevention and enforcement program; all other school districts may establish councils.

Assembly Bill 2 (23rd Special Session) makes several appropriations over the 2007-09 biennium relating to statewide education programs, including:

- \$800,000 for Gifted and Talented programs, including hiring a Parent Involvement Coordinator position in the Department of Education;
- \$915,000 for pilot programs for alternative programs of education for disruptive pupils;
- \$100,000 for pilot programs to teach the English language to children who have limited English proficiency during the summer before they attend kindergarten; and
- \$358,000 for deaf and hard of hearing education programs. Programs include \$10,000 for signing bonuses for teachers of students who are deaf or hard of hearing; \$75,000 for training stipends for teachers and interpreters for students who are deaf or hard of hearing; and \$273,000 to establish a magnet or regional elementary school pilot program for students who are deaf or heard of hearing.

Assembly Bill 3 (23rd Special Session) appropriates \$5 million in each fiscal year of the biennium to the Department of Education for distribution to school districts to design and implement a program of performance pay and enhanced compensation for licensed educational employees. The program may include:

- Career leadership advancement options to maximize the retention of teachers in the classroom;
- Professional development;
- Group incentives; and
- Multiple assessments of individual teachers, with primary emphasis on individual pupil improvement and growth in academic achievement.

Assembly Bill 3 also appropriates \$475,000 in each fiscal year to continue the services of a consultant to provide a web-based system to provide student results on state assessments to parents.

Legislative Committee on Education

Pursuant to NRS 218.5354, the eight-member Legislative Committee on Education is charged with reviewing statewide programs of:

- Accountability;
- Class-Size Reduction; and
- Automated student records (System for Accountability Information in Nevada (SAIN)).

The Committee may review any other fiscal or policy concerns associated with public education in Nevada, as it deems necessary, and make recommendations to the Legislature concerning the manner in which public education may be improved. The Committee also prescribes standards for the review and evaluation of the state and school district accountability reports required by NRS 385.3469 and NRS 385.347, in addition to any standards prescribed by the Department of Education. The NERA requires the Committee to recommend to the Department of Education programs of remedial study that have proven to be successful in improving the academic achievement of pupils for each subject tested in the state-required examinations. The Committee is also charged with recommending to the Department of Education providers of supplemental education services under the NCLBA. Finally, the Committee must review the progress made by the state in complying with the federal NCLBA.

During the 2005-07 interim, the Committee held eight meetings and considered a wide range of topics relating to elementary and secondary education, including:

- Parental Involvement;
- P-16 Council;
- School Governance;
- Pupil Achievement;
- Academic Standards;

- Accountability;
- Educational Technology;
- School Personnel; and
- The Commission on Educational Excellence.

The Committee held its work session on August 29, 2006 to consider recommendations for bill draft requests (BDRs). Members of the Committee adopted 33 proposals geared toward improving student academic achievement.

In addition to its regular meetings, Section 23 of Assembly Bill 388 (2005) required the Chairman of the Committee to appoint a Subcommittee to study the effectiveness of career and technical high schools. The Subcommittee was charged with determining the number of career and technical high schools in Nevada, the current enrollment in those career and technical high schools, and the success of the existing career and technical education (CTE) programs. The Subcommittee was also directed to identify effective practices and determine the need for expanding career and technical high schools in Nevada.

The Subcommittee held five meetings during the 2005-2007 interim and adopted ten proposals with regard to CTE in Nevada, including joint facilities and operations, program support and expansion, career advising and exploration, personnel, and accountability reporting. In addition to bill draft requests, the Subcommittee adopted several statements to be included in its final report and agreed to draft a letter to the Nevada Congressional Delegation concerning continued federal support for CTE programs. Major recommendations include proposals to:

- Authorize two or more school districts in cooperation with community partners to establish career academies for high school students;
- Establish a fund to provide grants to school districts and charter schools for CTE programs and provide an appropriation; and
- Include CTE data measures in accountability reports.

For a detailed report on the Committee's activities and recommendations during the 2005-07 Interim, refer to *Bulletin 07-14, Legislative Committee on Education*. For a detailed report on the Subcommittee's activities and recommendation during the 2005-07 Interim, refer to *Bulletin 07-04, Subcommittee to Study the Effectiveness of Career and Technical High Schools*.

Legislative Bureau of Educational Accountability and Program Evaluation

Bureau Structure

The Legislative Bureau of Educational Accountability and Program Evaluation (Bureau), which was placed within the Fiscal Analysis Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB), consists of two employees: an Education Program Analyst and a Program Analyst. This unit is supervised by a Senior Program Analyst and works closely with the Senior Research Analyst assigned to education issues in the Research Division of the LCB.

As part of the Fiscal Analysis Division, the Bureau also has duties of a fiscal nature; Bureau staff are assigned budget accounts to monitor and analyze. This involves reviewing the state agency budget requests, analyzing the Governor's recommendations, soliciting additional information from the state agencies as needed, preparing for budget hearings and formulating information and recommendations for the money committees during session. Staff track legislation affecting education and related agencies and prepare bill explanations and summaries. Staff is also responsible for tracking state revenues for education and must be knowledgeable about federal funds available for educational programs. All of the budget accounts pertaining to public education are handled by Program Analysts, who work closely with the Bureau, or by Bureau staff.

Bureau Responsibilities

The Bureau is responsible, pursuant to NRS 218.5356, for:

- Collecting and analyzing data and issuing reports related to the Nevada Education Reform Act's (NERA) provisions and statewide programs in accountability, testing, class-size reduction, and special education;
- Evaluating the performance and progress of public education in Nevada; and
- Monitoring implementation of the NERA and expenditures of funds appropriated to support the NERA.

Bureau Accomplishments

The following provides detail regarding the accomplishments of the Bureau during FY 2006-07; accomplishments are organized under ten major areas:

- Education Reform
- Accountability
- State Examinations
- Professional Development
- Class-Size Reduction
- Special Education
- Educational Technology
- Academic Standards for Public Schools
- Other Educational Responsibilities
- Fiscal Responsibilities

Education Reform

List of Effective Remedial Programs

A major responsibility of the Bureau is the evaluation of the effectiveness of educational programs. NRS 218.5354 requires the Legislative Committee on Education to recommend to the Department of Education programs of remedial study that have proven to be successful in improving the academic achievement of pupils in the subject areas of reading,

writing, mathematics and science. The Bureau, with assistance from the Department of Education and a consultant from the University of Nevada - Reno, developed a *List of Effective Remedial Programs*. This *List* was first presented to the Legislative Committee on Education in March 1998, with an updated *List* provided to the Committee each successive year. In all cases, the *Lists* have been approved by the Committee and later adopted by the Nevada Department of Education. Copies of the *List* are available from the Fiscal Analysis Division, or may be accessed on the Bureau's website at: www.leg.state.nv.us/lcb/fiscal/LeBeape.

Pursuant to NRS 385.3785, the Commission on Educational Excellence oversees allocation of funds to schools and school districts for remedial programs aimed at closing the achievement gap and innovative programs designed to prevent the need for remediation. Although programs funded are not required to be included in the *List of Effective Remedial Programs*, the Commission is required to utilize the *List* as a reference tool for programs that are considered effective in improving the academic achievement of proficiency of pupils.

Commission on Educational Excellence

Pursuant to NRS 385.3785, the Commission on Educational Excellence is required to develop a program to allocate state remediation/innovative program funds to schools and school districts. During FY 2006-07, the Bureau monitored the decisions of the Commission to allocate funds to schools and school districts.

Pursuant to NRS 385.3789, the Commission is required to submit an annual report that describes the distribution of money to schools and school districts. The Bureau worked closely with the Commission to revise the structure of the report to make the information more meaningful to legislators and other key stakeholders.

The Legislative Committee on Education received a number of presentations from the Commission throughout the 2005-07 interim and sponsored many of the provisions passed by the Legislature through Senate Bill 185. It is anticipated that the Commission will continue to provide progress reports to the Committee throughout the 2007-09 biennium.

Review of Schools

The Bureau continues to review schools to determine programs that have been effective in increasing the academic achievement of pupils. For the 2007-09 biennium, it is anticipated that the Bureau will continue its review of full-day kindergarten programs, as well as the newly implemented empowerment schools.

Data Book for Public Education

In order to provide the 2007 Legislature with updated information regarding education topics and programs, staff of the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Research Division, with assistance from the Bureau, compiled a 2007 Data Book for Public Education. The Data

Book was organized into sections reflecting topics and programs that were a continuing source of legislative inquiry during the 2005-07 Interim. The sections of the book present information concerning the state as a whole, district level information, and (when available), comparisons with the other ten surrounding western states. Major sections of the data book include:

- School finance;
- Teacher salaries;
- Statewide student assessments; and
- Demographic characteristics of the education system.

Accountability

School, District and State Accountability Reports

Pursuant to NRS 385.3469 and NRS 385.347, the Nevada State Board of Education and each school district in Nevada is required to produce an annual accountability report. The accountability reports are required to include data elements that concern school/school district characteristics (i.e., teachers, classrooms, fiscal, etc.) as well as statewide testing and AYP results. Once the accountability reports are completed, schools, school districts, and the State Board of Education are required to review and analyze the reports to determine areas most in need of improvement. Based upon the analysis, the state, school districts, and schools are then required to develop a plan to improve the academic achievement of pupils in Nevada. For further information concerning plans for improvement, please see the section of this report entitled: *School, District and State Plans for Improvement*.

School, District and State Plans for Improvement

As part of the Program for Accountability, NRS 385.34691, NRS 385.348, and NRS 385.357 requires schools, school districts and the Nevada State Board of Education to submit a plan for improvement based upon deficiencies noted in the accountability reports. The improvement plans must address those areas where student achievement is not satisfactory and must be specific and task-oriented. The Bureau reviews the plans and makes them available to the review panel contracted to evaluate the effectiveness of the accountability system in Nevada (see following section).

Review and Evaluation of the School Accountability System in Nevada

NRS 385.359 authorizes the Bureau to contract with a third party to evaluate accountability reports and consult with schools, school districts, and the state as needed regarding plans for improvement.

Reports of Technical Assistance Partnerships and School Support Teams

With the passage of Senate Bill 184, the 2007 Legislature eliminated Technical Assistance Partnerships (TAPs) in Nevada. As discussed in the FY 2005-06 Bureau Annual Report, a TAP is established to assist a school in its first and second years of needing improvement and the TAP is required to complete a report of findings. Based upon testimony from schools and school districts, and supported by findings by the Bureau, it was noted during the 2007 Session that the reports prepared by the TAPs did not contain information that was any more informative than the information already contained in the school's plan for improvement required by NRS 385.357. It was determined that preparation of the TAP reports for schools in the first and second years of needing improvement was more of a "paperwork exercise" than the collection of meaningful information to assist the schools in preparing plans for improvement.

On the other hand, School Support Teams (NRS 385.3721) have been found to be helpful to schools in preparing plans for improvement. A School Support Team (SST) is established for a school in its third year of being designated as needing improvement and continues to provide assistance to the school until it is no longer in need of improvement. Based upon data collected by the Department of Education, it was found that schools with school support teams rated the SSTs as very useful in assisting the school in making adequate yearly progress (AYP) under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA). Specifically, data shows that of 18 schools that had school support teams in the 2005-06 school year, 13 made marked growth during the school year, with 11 fully meeting the adequate yearly progress requirements under the NCLBA.

The 2007 Legislature in approving Senate Bill 184, revised the policy structure of the SSTs so that the Department could sponsor additional SSTs in non-Title I schools during the 2007-09 biennium. In addition, the 2007 Legislature approved state General Funds of \$1.17 million in FY 2007-08 and \$2.51 million in FY 2008-09 to fund school support teams in non-Title I schools. Title I schools receive approximately \$20,000 in federal Title I funds per team, per year to assist in SST activities. The state funding approved by the 2007 Legislature will provide \$10,000 per non-Title I school for a SST facilitator. For the 2007-09 biennium, the Bureau will continue to monitor the success of the School Support Teams established in both Title I and non-Title I schools.

State Examinations

In Nevada, CRTs and the High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE) are utilized to determine whether a school, school district, or the state as a whole has met adequate yearly progress (AYP), as required by the NCLBA. The Bureau continues to monitor the development of these examinations.

As noted previously, Senate Bill 110 limits the district-wide assessments that a school district may administer to those that were adopted prior to July 1, 2007. It is anticipated the Legislative Committee will review state and district testing policies and procedures during the 2007-09 Interim to determine the impact of Senate Bill 110 and to determine future legislation that may be required, if any.

Test Directors' Meetings

The Bureau attends Test Directors' meetings coordinated by the Department of Education to provide information regarding the status of testing in Nevada.

Criterion-Referenced Tests (CRTs)

Criterion-referenced tests (CRTs) are designed to measure student proficiency on state standards. The Department has entered into a contract with Measured Progress for development and administration of the examinations. The Bureau will closely monitor the contract with Measured Progress.

High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE)

The High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE) is a graduation test that all students must pass in order to receive a standard diploma. As noted above, the HSPE is also utilized to determine if high schools have met AYP under the NCLBA. The Department has entered into a contract with Measured Progress for development of the examination. The Bureau will closely monitor the contract with Measured Progress.

Norm-Referenced Tests (NRTs)

Norm-referenced tests (NRTs) are now utilized in Nevada as a check to measure the quality of the state-required CRTs; these tests are administered to pupils in grades 4, 7, and 10. Previously, the NRTs were utilized as the measurement to determine whether a school had adequate academic performance under the school accountability provisions of the Nevada Education Reform Act. The current contract for NRTs in Nevada is with Riverside Publishing for the *Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)*. The Bureau will continue to monitor the results of the ITBS, as well as the studies comparing results on the ITBS as compared to results on the CRTs.

Professional Development

Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs)

Assembly Bill 627 (Sections 10, 11, and 12) of the 2007 Legislative Session provides \$26.6 million over the 2007-09 biennium for the continuation of Nevada's Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs) and the Nevada Early Literacy Intervention Program (NELIP); this is almost \$6.0 million more than the amount approved by the Legislature for the 2005-07 biennium. Additional funding will primarily be utilized to increase the number of regional trainers, as well provide for full-time evaluators for each RPDP. As in previous biennia, this funding includes \$100,000 in each fiscal year of the biennium for additional statewide administrator training, as well as \$100,000 in each fiscal year of the biennium for a statewide evaluation of the programs.

Historically, the statewide evaluation of the RPDPs has been contracted through WestEd; WestEd is a nonprofit research, development, and service agency. For the 2005-07 biennium, WestEd submitted its evaluation of the RPDPs in February 2007; copies are available from the Fiscal Analysis Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau. For the 2007-09 biennium, it is anticipated that the structure of the statewide evaluation will be significantly revised. The revision is necessary due to the state now funding full-time evaluators for each of the RPDPs. The statewide evaluator will now be required to check the reliability and validity of the information contained in each of the evaluations submitted by the RPDPs. In addition, the statewide evaluator will conduct a more in-depth review of the effectiveness of the Statewide Coordinating Council in implementing a statewide program of professional development for K-12 teachers and administrators. The Bureau will continue to oversee the contract for the statewide evaluation and will continue to attend the Statewide Coordinating Council meetings.

Class-Size Reduction (CSR)

Class-Size Reduction Annual Report

The NERA requires the Bureau to review the statewide program to reduce the ratio of pupils per class and per licensed teacher. The Bureau reviews information received from the Department concerning the number of teachers hired and pupils taught, the resulting pupil-teacher ratios, the percentage of classrooms team-taught and funding allocated to each school district specifically for class-size reduction.

Expanded Flexibility of CSR Funding to Address Class-Sizes in Grades 4, 5, and 6.

NRS 388.720 authorizes all rural school districts (i.e., school districts that are located in a county whose population is less than 100,000) to use CSR funding to carry-out a program in which alternative pupil-teacher ratios are carried out in grades 1 through 6. The alternative pupil-teacher ratios may not exceed 22 to 1 in grades 1, 2, and 3 and may not exceed 25 to 1 in grades 4 and 5 or grades 4, 5, and 6 in school districts that include grade 6 in elementary school.

For the 2007-09 biennium, the Bureau will review reports concerning the alternative program and report findings to the Legislative Committee on Education, as appropriate.

Special Education

The NERA requires the Bureau to review the statewide program to educate persons with disabilities. In response to this, the Bureau continues to focus its review of special education programs on the following:

- Special education students included in statewide testing;
- Special education students who graduate with a standard diploma;
- The effect of class-size reduction on the number of requests for special education testing; and
- The effect of remedial education programs on the number of requests for special education testing.

In addition, the Bureau monitors changes to federal regulations regarding the inclusion of special education pupils and English Language Learners (ELL) in state assessment systems. With the enactment of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, the Bureau will continue to examine data with regard to the inclusion of special populations. In an effort to increase the academic achievement of pupils in special education programs and English Language Learners, the Bureau has also focused its review of remedial education programs as they relate to increasing the academic achievement of such pupils. The Bureau will continue to report any recommendations to the Legislative Committee on Education for possible inclusion on the *List of Effective Remedial Programs*.

Educational Technology

Commission on Educational Technology

The Nevada Education Reform Act created an 11-member Commission on Educational Technology consisting of representatives from school districts, public libraries, the University and Community College System of Nevada, private sector, parents, and legislators. The Commission is charged with developing a statewide plan for the use of educational technology, making recommendations for the distribution of funds for educational technology and developing technical standards for education technology and uniform specification to ensure statewide compatibility.

The 2007 Legislature approved \$10.78 million over the 2007-09 biennium for educational technology. In order to provide the Commission with greater flexibility in awarding the funds, the Legislature, for the first time, approved all of the funding (except funding for the KLVX satellite (\$440,000) and library databases (\$550,000)) be contained as a single pool of resources, rather than place a specific amount of funds into different categories. It is anticipated that the categories that will be funded will continue to be technology infrastructure (computers, servers, bandwidth, etc), technical support, professional development, high quality content material, and pilot best practices programs. The Bureau will monitor the allocation of funds by the Commission during the 2007-09 biennium.

Regarding the evaluation of educational technology, a final evaluation report was released in May 2007; copies may be obtained from the Fiscal Analysis Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau. It is anticipated that findings from the evaluation will be reviewed by the Legislative Committee on Education during the 2007-09 Interim.

SAIN – System for Accountability Information in Nevada

According to NRS 386.650, the purpose of the SAIN program is to provide an automated system of accountability that will provide longitudinal comparisons of the academic achievement, rate of attendance and rate of graduation of pupils over time. The system is required to have the capacity to analyze results of pupils by teacher or paraprofessional, classroom, and school.

The 2007 Legislature approved \$321,161 in FY 2007-08 and \$336,173 in FY 2008-09 for continued state support of the SAIN program. In addition to General Fund support, the 2007 Legislature authorized federal funding of \$442,365 in each fiscal year of the

2007-09 biennium to support the SAIN program. Since the conclusion of the 2007 Legislative Session, the Department has been awarded an additional federal grant totaling nearly \$6.0 million over three years to further improve the SAIN system for longitudinal analysis purposes. According to the Department, the new longitudinal data system will assist schools and school districts in making data-driven decisions to improve student academic achievement.

Due to the importance of the SAIN system in assisting the state in complying with the federal No Child Left Behind Act and its ability to analyze student academic achievement by teachers/paraprofessionals, the 2007 Legislature has requested the Department provide quarterly reports to the Bureau concerning the accomplishment of the SAIN program, including linking the teacher databases to the SAIN. The quarterly reports will be forwarded to both the Interim Finance Committee and the Legislative Committee on Education for review and comment.

Academic Standards for Public Schools

Council to Establish Academic Standards for Public Schools

The Nevada Education Reform Act created a nine-member Council to Establish Academic Standards, composed of representatives from the State Board of Education, parents, teachers, business leaders, and legislators. The Council is charged with developing grade-by-grade standards for kindergarten through eighth grade. The Council consists of an eight-member panel, with four members appointed by the Governor and four by legislative leadership. The Council's duties are expanded to include a periodic review, and, if necessary, revision to the standards. The Council must also recommend assessments to measure student proficiency on the standards and review pupils' performance on these assessments to evaluate areas of the standards that might need revision. The Bureau will continue to monitor the progress of the Council and provide assistance, as needed.

Other Educational Responsibilities

District Site Visits

In order to become familiar with the unique characteristics of each school district in Nevada, the Bureau has conducted site visits of numerous schools throughout the state. To date, the Bureau has completed site visits in all 17 school districts and has reviewed over 225 schools. For the 2007-09 interim, it is anticipated that the Bureau will focus on reviews of schools that have been selected to become "empowerment schools", the impact of full-day kindergarten on student academic achievement, and schools that were awarded state funds through the Remediation Trust Fund.

Other Educational Programs Monitored/Evaluated by the Bureau

The Act also requires the Bureau to conduct studies and analyses to evaluate the performance and progress of other educational programs in the state. In response to this, the following programs are being monitored/evaluated by the Bureau:

- Curriculum Alignment to Standards: Senate Bill 184 (2007) appropriates from the state General Fund to the Interim Finance Committee the sum of \$340,200 for a consultant to conduct a study to measure the alignment of classroom assignments given to pupils at selected grade levels with the content and performance standards established by the Council to Establish Academic Standards. The Legislative Committee on Education will select 100 schools to be included in the study and the Bureau will oversee the contract for the study. Results of the study will be presented to the Legislative Committee on Education and the 2009 Legislature.
- Reporting of Test Scores of Pupils to Parents through a Web-based System: Assembly Bill 3 of the 23rd Special Session includes an appropriation of \$475,000 in each fiscal year of the biennium to continue the contractual services of the Grow Network to provide a web-based system, the Nevada Parent Network (NPN), that reports student test scores for the CRTs administered to students in grade 3-8. The NPN is anticipated to provide action plans that will allow parents to assist their children in areas identified in the assessment as needing improvement. The Bureau will continue to provide oversight for the contract and report any findings to the Legislative Committee on Education, as appropriate.
- Contract for a Financial Analysis Model for Each School District (In\$ite): Since the 1999 Legislative Session, the Legislature has appropriated funds from the state General Fund to the Interim Finance Committee (IFC) to carry out a financial analysis model program in each school district in the State of Nevada. The Interim Finance Committee has contracted with EdMin.com (previously Fox River Learning) to implement the In\$ite program in Nevada. The In\$ite reports provide expenditure information for school districts and schools, including charter schools. The information contained in the reports is utilized for financial accountability purposes. New reports provide a summary of financial information for the population of schools designated as demonstrating need for improvement, with comparative reports for schools designated as demonstrating adequate achievement. The Bureau monitors the contract and reports any findings to the IFC and Legislative Committee on Education, as appropriate.
- Early Childhood Education: The 2007 Legislature continued funding of \$6.6 million over the 2007-09 biennium for competitive state grants to school districts and community-based organizations for early childhood education programs. As part of receiving a grant, the school district is required to submit an evaluation of the program. The Bureau reviews the evaluations and submits recommendations to the Legislative Committee on Education and the 2009 Legislature, as appropriate.

Future Educational Studies

In addition to its statutory duties, future plans for the Bureau include the following projects:

- Monitoring the implementation status concerning compliance with the federal NCLBA;
- Monitoring the status of the SAIN system;
- Evaluation of pupils' academic performance, especially data available concerning class-size reduction, parent participation, special education, limited English proficiency, programs of remedial instruction, extended-day programs, and continued monitoring of school improvement plans of low-achieving schools;
- Review of effective teacher preparation and professional development programs; and
- Expanding the review of data to include variables affecting the dropout rate of pupils.

Quick Polls

Legislative requests often include information and studies concerning K-12 education from all school districts. In order to complete the requests in a reasonable time frame, the Bureau created a Quick Poll form, which may be e-mailed/faxed to all 17 school districts to obtain a quick response that is then forwarded to the requestor.

Publications

In order to increase public access to information published by the Bureau, a website has been developed for public access: www.leg.state.nv.us/lcb/fiscal/LeBeape. The following documents continue to be available on the website:

- *List of Effective Remedial Programs;*
- *Nevada School District Accountability Program: Review, Analysis and Recommendations;*
- *Bureau Annual Reports.*

Agency Reviews

Pursuant to NRS 218.686, Bureau program analysts are assigned to examine several agencies' budgets/funds with special regard to their activities. The following lists the primary budget accounts overseen by the Bureau:

- Department of Education;
- Department of Administration (selected budget accounts);
- Ethics Commission;
- Personnel;
- Judicial Branch;
- WICHE (Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education);
- Commission on Postsecondary Education;
- Department of Military;
- Commission on Tourism; and
- Public Employees Retirement System.