

Nye County School District Accountability Analysis

Nye County School District continues to comply with both the spirit and letter of the law regarding accountability reporting. The only area missing was a comparison of tests scores in high-transiency schools. Low parental participation is a concern that the panel raised.

1. *A summary of the student performance and school characteristics deemed relevant to the evaluation of the district's school performance based on data submitted to the State Board of Education and LeBEAPE in Part I school reports and Part II district-wide reports.*

Number of Pupils

Enrollment for 1998-99 was 5,274 students, a decrease of 0.2% over the previous year. The Nye County School District is located in central Nevada and encompasses 18,064 square miles. There are 16 schools district-wide: four elementary schools serving grades K-5, six elementary schools serving K-8, one middle school, three high schools, one junior/senior high school, and one K-12 school.

Student Attendance Rate

The student attendance rate was at 93% for both 1997-1998 and 1998-1999.

Teacher Attendance Rate

The teacher attendance rate was up slightly from 92% in the previous year to 94% in 1998-1999.

Dropout and Non-Promotion Rates

The overall high school dropout rate in 1998-1999 was 6% compared with 11% in the previous year. Nye County retained 4% of kindergartners; 7% of the first graders; 5% of grade two; 1% of grade three; 2% of grade four, and 1% of grade five. Grades six, seven, and eight retained 1% or less.

Truancy Rate

The 1998-1999 truancy rate rose to 9% compared with 5% in the previous year.

Transiency Rate

The reported transiency rate for the district's elementary schools ranged from 22% to 44%. Two elementary schools, Johnson and Manse, reported rates higher than the state average of 37.5%. The secondary school rate ranged from 9% to 42%. Pahrump High School was above the state average.

Student/Teacher Ratio

In the year 1998-199 average class sizes for grade K ranged from 5:1 to 29:1. Grades one and two ranged from 11:1 to 19:1, and grade three had a range of 12:1 23:1. Classes in grades four, five, and six ranged from 13-28 students. Secondary class sizes for four the core subjects ranged from 4-24, averaging 13 in science and 19 in English.

Student/Counselor Ratio

The counselor/student ratio varied widely in 1998-1999. The elementary school ratio ranged from 1:318 to 1:615. Duckwater had no counselor. The average elementary ratio was 1:495. The secondary ratio ranged from 1:168 to 1:535. The average secondary ratio was 1:357. District-wide the number was lower than the statewide average in 1998-1999 and lower than the district average in the previous year.

Suspension/Expulsion Rate

Instances of suspension or expulsion due to violence to other students numbered 271 for all schools in 1998-1999. Clarke Middle School accounted for 175 of the cases. There were 5 cases of violence to school staff; 20 instances of possession of weapons; 4 cases of distribution of controlled substances; 7 instances of use of a controlled substance, and 3 cases of alcoholic beverage use. These figures represented a general decrease from 1997-98 school figures, except in the case of possession of weapons, which doubled, from 9 cases to 20 cases.

State Mandated Test Results: Terra Nova: Fourth Grade

**Terra Nova Results
4th Grade**

SUBJECT	% BOTTOM QUARTER			% TOP QUARTER			AVERAGE PERCENTILE RANK		
	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
Reading	23	21	21.7	17	14	16.0	47	48	48
Language	31	29	22.7	18	15	23.0	44	42	52
Math	26	33	17.4	16	15	25.6	45	41	57
Science	23	13	23.4	15	19	16.3	47	53	47

Fourth grade reading scores remained at the state average (48th percentile). Language scores showed improvement, from the 42nd percentile to the 52nd percentile, in the last two reported years, but the district was still below the state average of the 56th percentile. Math performance showed a gradual improvement, and the 1999 scores (57th percentile) were slightly above the state average. The science scores for the district mirrored exactly the state average scores. Only Aramagosa Valley Elementary School scored consistently low with average percentile scores of 17, 27, 23, and 26 in reading, language, math, and science. Eligible students tested in the elementary schools ranged from 100% to a low of 84.2% at Round Mountain.

State Mandated Test Results: Terra Nova: Eighth Grade

**Terra Nova Results
8th Grade**

SUBJECT	% BOTTOM QUARTER			% TOP QUARTER			AVERAGE PERCENTILE RANK		
	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
Reading	30	23	24.4	21	19	18.6	46	49	45
Language	29	25	28.5	16	17	16.2	43	46	43
Math	37	41	35.8	8	12	14.7	35	34	39
Science	29	14	27.8	13	19	15.2	42	52	43

District reading, language, math, and science average percentile scores over the three-year period have remained well below the state average as shown in the table. Reportedly 97.6% to 100% of the students were tested at the various school sites. In reading, Beatty Elementary scored at the 60th percentile and Tonopah Elementary at the 57th percentile. Clarke Middle School scored low in all subject areas.

State Mandated Test Results: Terra Nova: Tenth Grade

**Terra Nova Results
10th Grade**

SUBJECT	% BOTTOM QUARTER			% TOP QUARTER			AVERAGE PERCENTILE RANK		
	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
Reading	17	25	25.1	24	25	25.1	56	50	50
Language	20	23	22.3	20	17	21.9	51	49	52
Math	31	27	22.7	17	18	19.6	43	44	48
Science	13	7	17.0	27	23	24.7	58	59	56

Reading scores for 1998 and 1999 at the 50th percentile were 3 percentile ranks below the state average of 53rd percentile. Language scores were slightly below the state average and math scores were well below the state average. Only in science did Nye tenth graders perform better than the state average. Reportedly the percent of eligible students tested ranged from a low of 89.4% at Pahump High to 100% at Beatty High.

State Mandated Test Results: Writing Exam

**Writing Examination
4th and 8th Grade**

MEASURED TRAIT	PERCENT PROFICIENT					
	4 TH GRADE			8 TH GRADE		
	97-98	98-99	99-00	97-98	98-99	99-00
Ideas	NA	NR	49.0	57.0	77.0	75.0
Organization	NA	NR	44.0	54.0	80.0	70.0
Voice	NA	NR	44.0	50.0	79.0	66.0
Conventions	NA	NR	50.0	66.0	68.0	67.0

Percentages of Nye County **fourth graders** demonstrating proficiency on the writing exam in 1999 ranged from 44% in organization and voice to 50% in writing conventions. Their writing proficiency was slightly below state averages in each area.

Writing of Nye County **eighth graders** improved from 1997-98 to 1998-99 in all categories, but proficiency percentages were still below the state average in each of the four categories.

State Mandated Test Results: High School Proficiency Exam

High School Proficiency Examination									%		
PERCENT PASSING									DENIED DIPLOMA		
READING			MATH			WRITING					
96-97	97-98	98-99	96-97	97-98	98-99	96-97	97-98	98-99	96-97	97-98	98-99
100.0	99.0	99.0	100.0	99.0	99.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	NA	NA	0.0

Nye County has a solid record in this area of achievement. Nye students have passed at the rate of 99% or 100% in the reading, math, and writing sections of the high school proficiency exam for each year from 1997 to 1999.

ACT/SAT Results

ACT Results

% SENIORS TAKING ACT			ACT COMPOSITE SCORE		
1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99
47	36	31	21	20	20

SAT Results

% SENIORS TAKING SAT			SAT VERBAL AVERAGE			SAT MATH AVERAGE		
96-97	97-98	98-99	96-97	97-98	98-99	96-97	97-98	98-99
15	34	5	498	497	467	498	491	475

The percent of seniors taking the ACT college admissions test declined from 47% in 1997 to 31% in 1999. The ACT composite averages were 21, 20, and 20 for this three-year period. The percent of seniors taking the SAT admissions test declined from 15% in 1997 to 5% in 1999. The SAT verbal average score declined over the three-year period from 498 to 467. The SAT math average score showed a similar decline, from 498 to 475.

Special Programs

District-wide, 42% of students in Nye County schools participated in the free- and reduced-price meal program in 1998-1999. Thirteen percent of the students participated in special education programs at both the elementary and the secondary level. Four percent of the elementary students and 2% of the secondary students were enrolled in the English as a Second Language curriculum, and less than 1% in the migrant education program. One percent participated in programs for the gifted and talented, with slightly less participation at the secondary level. Art, music, and physical education classes were provided for all elementary students district-wide while only 46% of the secondary students enrolled in music or art classes. Computer education was provided for all elementary and secondary students. Fifty-four percent of secondary students were enrolled in occupational education and 41% in foreign language classes. Less than 1% participated in the advanced placement classes.

Teachers

Of the teachers in the district in 1998-1999, 76% held bachelor's degrees and 24% held master's degrees. Eight percent were new teachers, 21% had one to three years of experience, 15% had four to six years of experience, 18% had seven to nine years of experience, and 38% had ten or more years of experience. Ninety-three percent of Nye County teachers taught within their areas of licensure or endorsement.

Technology/Computers

The district computer-to-student computer ratio at the secondary level in 1998-1999 ranged from 1:7 to 1:80 among the secondary schools. Students in kindergarten through sixth grade had one-half hour per week for computer use to further instructional goals. Two elementary schools had Internet access. Access was available in the computer lab and library. Three elementary schools had no computers, and only one secondary school reported Internet access.

Remedial College Courses (UCCSN Class Enrollments)

The Nye County School District reported that 6% of their recent graduates enrolled in remedial courses.

Expenditures

The school district per-pupil expenditure for instruction rose from \$3,564 to \$4,245 in 1998-99. Nye County received \$42,686 in state remediation funds during 1998-99 for before- and after-school programs.

Parent Involvement

Attendance at parent-teacher conferences for the two-year period remained at a modest 48%. This is well below the average of most districts and should be viewed as a concern by the district.

- 2. Areas the School Districts' Part III Report identified as examples of exemplary achievement at the school site and/or areas of improvement in outcomes from those reported in the previous year and evidence that the areas were exemplary or improved.*

The Nye County School District identified exemplary and improved achievement in a number of areas. Perhaps the most notable achievement was passing the school bond for capital improvements (AB 353, \$14 million) coupled with over \$3 million in grant money. Also notable was the new elementary language arts program and subsequent teacher training. In addition, a standards document for the district was developed. The proposed High Tech Center in Pahrump is an exciting venture, coupled with the ongoing construction of a new middle school in the same town. Criterion Referenced Tests were developed for grades three through eight, and Reading Recovery was a continuing effort. Exemplary activities for each school in the district were also cited. Also a mission statement for the district was given on page one in the Nye County 1998-99 Report.

- 3. Areas the School Districts' Part III Report identified as in need of improvement at the school site(s) and evidence for any deficiencies addressed.*

The 1998-99 Report described areas in need of improvement district-wide as well as for each school site. District Terra Nova test data was used to identify areas in need of improvement and the corresponding interventions. Areas identified included attention to mathematics, implementation of the technology plan and activities, and increasing student achievement. Examples of areas in need of improvement for each school in the district were also cited.

- 4. Summary of the School Districts' plan for improvement at the school site.*

Plans for improvement at each school site were listed in the district's report. Plans responded to school test data and focused on improving student achievement. District-wide concerns focused on technology development and implementation, community relationships, and curricular areas, particularly in mathematics. Armagosa Valley Elementary School (K-8) was designated "in need of improvement."

- 5. Sources of information to be used in determining effectiveness of the plan for improvement.*

Sources of information for determining effectiveness of the plans for improvement were identified from recorded data, examination scores, and progress such as passing a major school building bond.

- 6. Missing or incomplete data.*

The Tonopah High School report in Part I on tenth grade Terra Nova scores was mislabeled and/or transposed. Two elementary schools and one high school had a higher transiency rate than the state average of 37.5%. No analysis of the effect of transiency on Terra Nova scores was found.

- 7. Recommendations of Panel members for improving analysis and use of accountability*

findings at the school level and, if applicable, at the district level.

1. Nye County School District is to be commended for its approach to the accountability process. The district has responded to the spirit and intent of the law. Continuous striving for improvement was evident throughout the report.
2. Areas identified as exceptional included the proposed Tech Center at Pahrump, the continuing implementation of the Reading Recovery program and the institution of a strategic planning process.
3. That improving parental participation at parent-teacher conferences should be a district priority.
4. The Panel recommends that the district continue moving forward to complete its strategic planning process. In addition, plans to complete the process of curriculum alignment (scope and sequence) should be given priority. Continued attention should also be given to the continuing implementation of the district's technology plan.