State Improvement Plan

December, 2004

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

State legislation requires that the State Board of Education develop a state improvement plan. The Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 385.34691 (Appendix A) establishes the requirements for this plan. Under state requirements, the Board must submit the plan or revised plan to the Governor, Legislative Committee on Education, Legislative Counsel Bureau, Board of Regents of the University of Nevada, the Council on Academic Standards, the board of trustees of each school district, and the governing body of each charter school, on or before December 15 of each year.

Participants in the development of the state improvement plan (as required by NRS) were as follows:

- Employees of the Nevada Department of Education
  - Gloria Dopf, Deputy Superintendent
  - Paul LaMarca, Assistant Deputy Superintendent
  - Frankie McCabe, Director, Office of Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement Programs

- At least one employee of a school district in a county whose population is 100,000 or more, appointed by Nevada Association of School Boards
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  - Mike Watty, Assistant Superintendent, Carson City School District

- At least one representative of the statewide Council for the Coordination of the Regional Training Programs (NRS 391.516) appointed by the Council
  - Lynn Sawyer, Director of Northwest Regional Professional Development Program

Additional participants in the development of the state improvement plan were as follows:

- Representatives of higher education
  - Tom Pierce, Interim Dean, College of Education, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

- Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau
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- Other persons whom the State Board determines appropriate:
  - Charlotte Petersen, Superintendent, Humboldt County School District, President, Nevada Association of School Superintendents
  - Karleen McCormick-Lee, Assistant Superintendent, Clark County School District
  - D.J. Stutz, President, Nevada Parent Teacher Association
  - Nancy Hollinger, Trustee, Washoe School Board
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  - Craig Butz, Administrator, Odyssey Charter School
  - Linda Young, Director, Equity and Diversity Programs, Clark County School District
  - Wayne Tanaka, Previous Charter School Administrator and previous Clark County School District Administrator, Honorary Consul General of Japan in Las Vegas
  - Laura Freed, Program Analyst, Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau

- Kathy St. Clair, Jacquie Moore, Kirsten Gleissner, Leslie James, Cindy Orr, Aldo Aguirre, Fawn Lewis, Peter Reynolds, and Syna Erb, Nevada Department of Education staff support

The Student Achievement Gap Elimination (SAGE) process:

The Nevada Department of Education developed a Student Achievement Gap Elimination (SAGE) process which has been utilized in working with Title I schools identified as In Need of Improvement. When the Nevada Department of Education Improvement Planning Team began meeting to develop a draft of a state improvement plan, it used this same process to investigate the improvement needs of the Nevada education system. The Nevada Department of Education Improvement Planning Team undertook the following steps: (a) comprehensive needs assessment, (b) inquiry process, (c) master plan design, and (d) implementation and evaluation. Once the initial plan has been developed and implemented, the four steps are repeated and become part of a continuous improvement cycle.

The state improvement plan includes the following components outlined in NRS:

- **Data Analysis**: A review and analysis of the state mandated accountability data and problems or factors common among school districts or charters schools based upon the accountability data.

- **Strategies**: Strategies that strengthen the core academic subjects that are based on scientifically-based research, improve academic instruction, and provide information to students, teachers, administrators, counselors, and parents in the state.

Needs Assessment Summary:

Successes Found: During the past decade, the State of Nevada has built an infrastructure supporting standards-based reform. The state organizational system and culture support professional development through resource allocation and improvement planning. Putting effort toward planning for and providing a safe environment is a fundamental feature of Nevada's educational process. Through various state initiatives, the state has made information about Nevada's schools and their performance much more readily available to parents and the public. Attendance rates of students are relatively high and there are some successes in English Language Arts (ELA) and math performance at the school level among all student groups. There is also a trend of greater participation on the college entrance examinations and higher rates of college attendance of graduating seniors.

Areas of Concern: There is not a specific process in place to ensure that district curricula are fully aligned to the state content and performance standards. At this time, professional development can be planned at the school, district, Regional Professional Development Program (RPDP), and state levels without a specific requirement for alignment to improvement goals identified through improvement planning processes. In addition, consistent definitions for behavioral violations have not been established for Nevada's school districts, and the need for increased parental involvement in education remains an ongoing concern across the state. Disparities between ethnic groups in test performance and graduation rate are significant and longstanding. Similar disparities are exhibited when special populations (low socioeconomic status, students with disabilities, and Limited English Proficient students) are compared with the state as a whole. Additional resources are needed for training in proper interpretation and use of data. With the identification of more and more schools In Need of Improvement, as well as the emergence of district and state sponsored charter schools, the lack of capacity and flexible resources to assist these schools becomes increasingly apparent.

From the data analysis, it was concluded that across grades and with respect to ELA and math, there is a consistent pattern of achievement gaps. A coordinated effort by all education partners will be necessary

to address the following priority needs: (a) raise student achievement in core content areas and decrease the achievement gap between overall student performance and the ethnic groups and special populations, and (b) establish, support, and sustain student performance in a cohesive system that aligns curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development, involving state, regions, districts, and schools for improved teaching and student learning.

The following goals were identified to fulfill the requirements of NRS:

- To engage the full community in a cohesive and collaborative statewide improvement planning process that drives all levels (school, district, and state) and that supports improved student performance by maintaining a focus on teaching, student learning, and parental involvement.

- To use consistent and relevant data at all levels (school, district, and state) to drive the improvement planning process and to evaluate the effectiveness of planned programs and activities in order to provide feedback for plan revisions.

- To identify research-based strategies in order to set performance expectations to improve instruction in core academic subjects, to reduce achievement gaps, and to improve the performance of all students.

- To implement a statewide approach to research-based professional development and educator pre-service preparation primarily focused on data-driven needs as identified in school, district, and state improvement plans.

- To implement a statewide initiative to focus on secondary education, including strategies to improve academic achievement, increase graduation rates, decrease dropout rates, improve distribution of information to the public, and increase post-secondary program enrollment and success rates.

An action plan has been developed to accomplish these goals. The plan will take several years to implement and to demonstrate improvement in the targeted areas. The goals and action steps will be prioritized, evaluated, and reviewed on a continuous improvement schedule.

INTRODUCTION

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) puts forth the expectations that all students will benefit from learning within safe educational environments, be taught by highly qualified teachers, be tested annually in at least reading and math and in science at certain grades, and that students, schools, school districts and states will be judged annually with respect to adequate yearly progress (AYP). The Nevada Legislature in 2003 passed legislation that, in certain areas, surpassed the requirements of the NCLB, taking progressive steps to best position Nevada's schools and school districts for success. Among the expanded expectations was the requirement that, regardless of AYP performance, improvement plans be developed, revised and implemented annually by schools, school districts, and the state through its State Board of Education (SBE).

Research has concluded that improvement initiatives require a consistent culture and belief system that drives goals, strategies and resources across all levels in the education system while maintaining a focus on improved teaching and student learning. Carefully crafted, implemented, and sustained standards-based school improvement planning is arguably the best chance for long-term success even among those schools that are currently performing at a level that exceeds performance expectations. The culture behind Nevada's improvement planning embraces high expectations and is built upon the foundation of the following beliefs:

- The work of schools is student learning.
- All children can learn and every teacher can be an expert.
- Content should be aligned, rigorous and relevant.
- Key indicators of success are achievement/proficiency scores, graduation rates, dropout rates, percent of highly qualified teachers, and adequacy and equity of funding for all public schools.
- Improvement is continuous.
- Parental support and involvement are critical to improved student performance.

Additional, research shows that much care is required in developing a plan that can acknowledge and be sensitive to the many complex issues and concerns. Comprehensive plans of this nature will take several years to implement and to demonstrate improvement in the targeted areas. The goals and action steps within the plan must be prioritized, evaluated, and reviewed on a continuous improvement schedule. Currently, prioritization is embedded within the timelines for reaching the goals in the action plan found after the data summary section of this document.

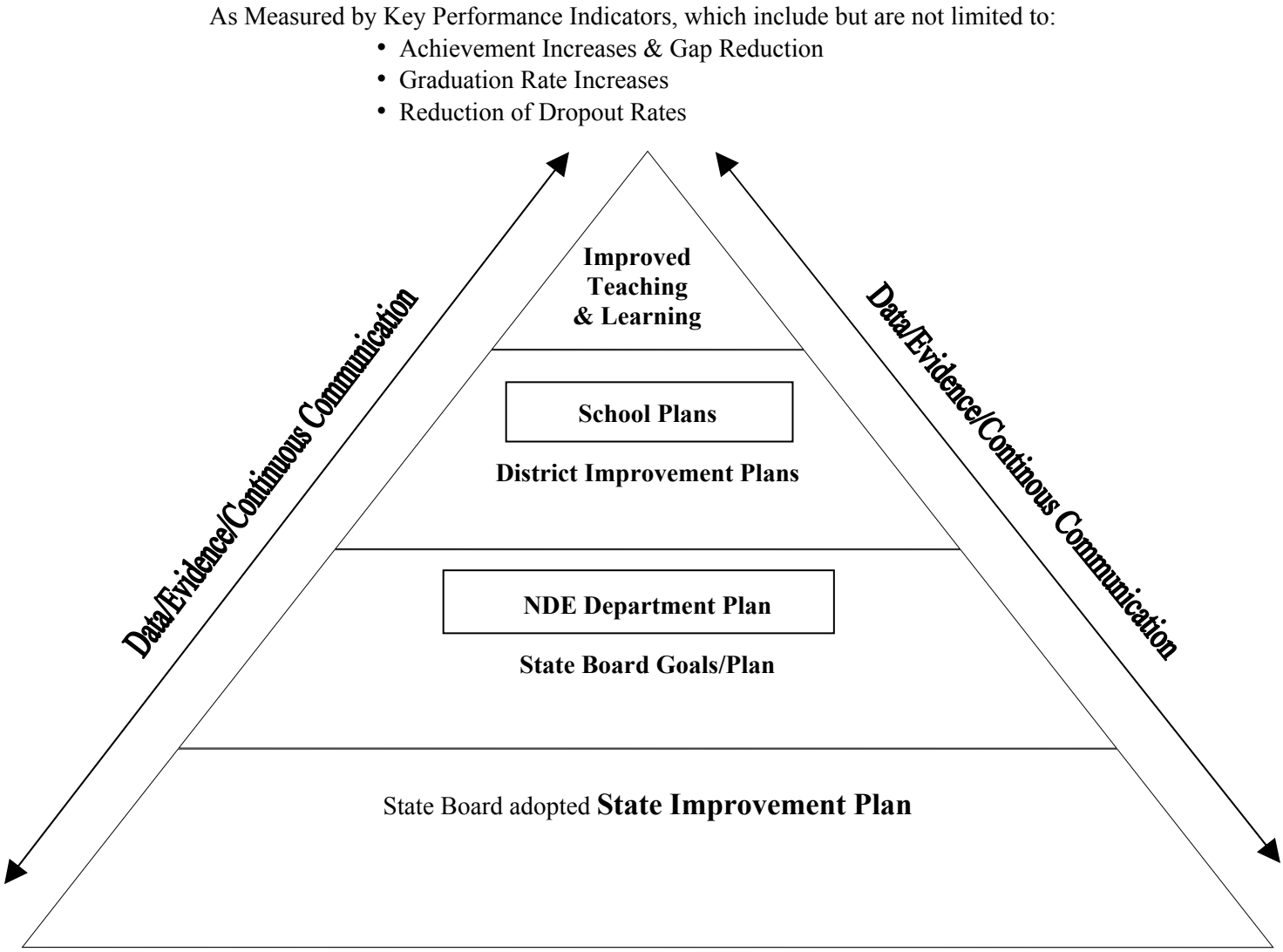
The State Improvement Plan

The state developed a research-based school improvement process called Student Achievement Gap Elimination (SAGE) to assist school and district improvement efforts. As a school goes through this process, it carries out the following steps: (a) a comprehensive needs assessment, (b) an inquiry process, (c) a master plan design, and (d) implementation and evaluation. As in Nevada's schools and school districts, the State Board of Education is required to develop a state improvement plan. Under state requirements, the Board must submit the plan or revised plan to the Governor and others on or before December 15 of each year. The SAGE process was used to investigate the improvement needs of the Nevada education system as a whole in order to develop the state improvement plan.

Statewide Improvement Planning Model

The planning team generated a model to reflect the coordinated efforts needed to address the priority areas related to improved teaching and student learning in the state. Figure 1 illustrates the improvement planning relationships within entities of the Nevada educational system reflected in this model.

Figure 1 – Focused/Integrated/Aligned Statewide Improvement Planning Model



COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA SUMMARY

The following narrative of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment is organized to correspond with areas analyzed. The narrative is followed by goals generated from the priority needs identified in the needs assessment and an action plan.

STATE EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

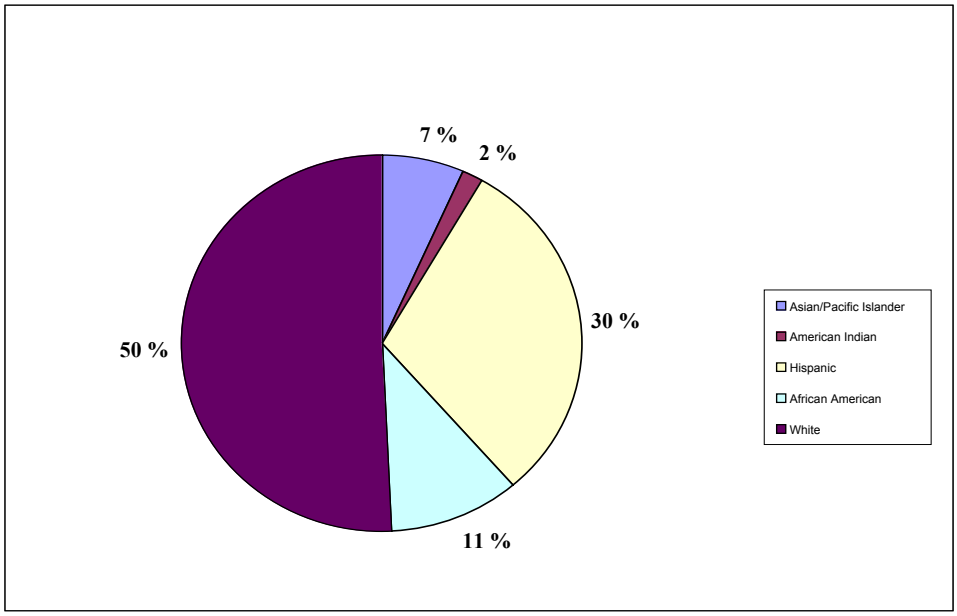
The General Population

According to the 2000 Census, there were 1,998,257 people living in Nevada. As of 2003, the population was projected at 2,241,154, a 12.2% increase over the 2000 figures. Of the total population, 65% are White, 20% are Hispanic and less than 10% are in each of three other major ethnic groups. Together, the school-aged and retirement-aged populations equal almost half of Nevada's total population. Approximately 75% of the adults in the state (25 and older) do not have a college degree. Only 6% of adults have a graduate or professional degree.

Students in Nevada

During the 2003-2004 school year, 385,414 students were enrolled in Nevada public schools. This number reflects an 8% increase from the 2001-2002 school year. Nevada's Hispanic student population has grown at a particularly rapid rate, increasing from 26% of the total student population in 2001-2002 to 30% in 2003-2004. There has been a corresponding increase in the number of students who do not speak English as their first language. Of the 54 different languages spoken, Spanish is by far the most common, with 92% of Limited English Proficient (LEP) learners listing Spanish as the language spoken at home on the Home Language Survey. Figure 2 shows the distribution among ethnic groups in Nevada schools during the 2003-2004 school year.

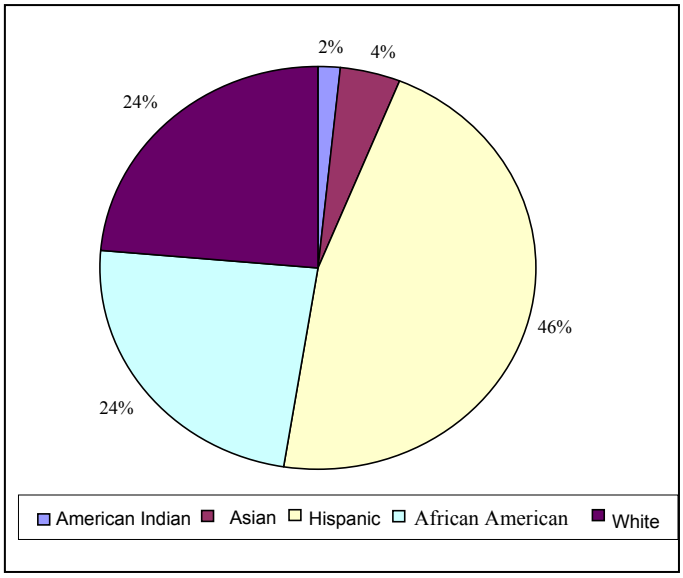
Figure 2 – Percent of Ethnic Groups in Nevada Schools 2003-2004



Another trend is the significant growth among ethnic groups traditionally considered "minority groups" such that, taken together, these groups of students will soon constitute a majority of the student population in Nevada. The student population is currently 51% White (down from 56.7% in 2001-2002).

A significant percentage of Nevada public school students have been identified as having a low socio-economic status (low SES), as determined by eligibility for free or reduced price lunches (FRL). According to the 2002 Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT) data, 33% of third graders were eligible for FRL. In 2004, the number increased to 43%. Figure 3 shows that of the total number of third graders eligible for FRL in 2004, close to a half of Hispanic students and close to a quarter of African American and White students were identified as low SES.

Figure 3 – Percent by Ethnicity of Third Graders eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch 2003-2004



By making a comparison of the total number of third graders in each ethnic group to the number of third graders in each ethnic group that are eligible for FRL, the percentage of low SES students within each ethnic group is determined. Table 1 shows that almost two thirds of Hispanic third graders and more than half of American Indian and African American third graders have been identified as low SES.

Table 1 – Percent of low SES within each Ethnic Group

	Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch		Total Number in Ethnic Group
	Number	Percent	
American Indian	278	53%	529
Asian	600	27%	2,187
Hispanic	7,094	68%	10,435
African American	1,886	57%	3,285
White	3,617	24%	15,045

Nevada's Teachers & Paraprofessionals

There are 23,568 licensed educators teaching Nevada's students, according to the March 2004 Research Bulletin published by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE). Among Nevada's teachers, 44% have between 1-5 years of prior Nevada teaching experience (this figure does not take into account prior teaching experience before coming to Nevada). In contrast, 18% of Nevada's teachers have more than 15 years of Nevada teaching experience. Eleven thousand two hundred fifty eight (11,258) of Nevada's teachers (48%) hold an advanced degree.

According to the 2003-2004 State Accountability Report, approximately 8,800 teachers (38%) reported earning degrees from Nevada universities. Many of Nevada's teachers earned their teaching degrees in other states: California (1,875); Arizona (1,568); Utah (1,084); Florida (1,000); Massachusetts (955); and New York (685). Nevada currently ranks 24th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia in average teacher salary at $41,603, according to information from the National Education Association. This compares to the national average of $45,822.

Data from the Nevada Teacher Contract Report, which reported all contracted licensed personnel hired as of October 1, 2003, indicated that 64% of core classes were being taught by teachers who met the "highly qualified" criteria established by the state in response to the NCLB. Data from the Nevada State Report Card indicate that students who attend high poverty schools are more likely to be taught by teachers who do not meet the "highly qualified" criteria than students who attend low poverty schools. In low poverty schools, 75% of core classes are taught by "highly qualified" teachers, whereas in high poverty schools, 59% of the core classes are taught by teachers who met the highly qualified definition. In addition, the teacher population does not reflect the diversity of the student population, with the vast majority of Nevada's teachers (86%) being White. Hispanics and African Americans, each, represent only 5% of the state's teachers, even though these groups constitute 30% and 11% of the student population respectively. The number of teachers in each ethnic group has increased in recent years, with the exception of American Indians.

Paraprofessionals play an important role in student learning. As of October 2004, 66% of Title I paraprofessionals meet the NCLB requirement for being a "highly qualified" paraprofessional. The August 2004 accountability report shows that 72% of all paraprofessionals meet the NCLB definition of a "highly qualified" paraprofessional.

Variability of Nevada's Districts & Resources

Nevada's 17 school districts reflect the unique population distribution within the state. Clark County is currently the fifth largest school district in the country, having in excess of 250,000 students. An adjacent school district, Esmeralda, has fewer than 100 enrolled students. There is a corresponding variability in community makeup ranging from urban to rural, and even remote. In addition, the first statute authorizing charter schools in the state was passed by the Legislature in 1997. For the 2004-2005 school year, there are 15 district-sponsored and four state-sponsored charter schools in operation.

Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 387.121 guarantees the per pupil level of financial support. The current average per-pupil expenditure in the State of Nevada is $6,051, a 1.5% increase over the previous year. Depending upon the source of data and formula used to derive per-pupil expenditures, the per-pupil funding in Nevada is anywhere from $1000 to $1500 below the national average. All 17 school districts in the state receive Title I funding, yet only 124 schools out of the 261 eligible schools in the state receive Title I funds.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE

A Safe Environment

Nevada strives for a learning environment for students that is safe, motivating, and conducive to academic success. School districts and schools each have safety plans prepared specifically to help the staff at the building respond to various emergency situations. Parents receive an annual handbook of procedures, which includes a description of student behavior expectations. Parent and/or student concerns/complaints about alleged violations or failure to apply school/district rules and regulations are dealt with by each district's board of school trustees. The NDE provides technical assistance and training on matters of school safety and discipline as requested by local school districts. While no schools in Nevada have been designated as "persistently dangerous" based on state criteria established in compliance with NCLB, there have been documented incidents of violence to students and staff in Nevada's schools.

Student Behavior

In the broadest sense, student behavior includes attendance, graduation rates, retention and transiency rates. Attendance rate data for Nevada's schools show that the state, as a whole, exceeded the pre-NCLB requirement of 90% previously in state law. In 2001-2002 the attendance rate was 93% and in 2003-2004 it was 94%. The student population in Nevada is highly mobile, with one-third of Nevada's students changing schools at least once during the 2003-2004 school year. Student retention rates were highest at grades one (1.83%); six (2.23%); and eight (2.34%). This information has not traditionally been based on disaggregated student group membership, so differential retention rates by student groups cannot be determined.

Information on the behavior of Nevada's students is primarily tracked through the state accountability system. Information collected pertains to student discipline and truancy. Detailed information regarding student behavior can be found at www.doe.nv.gov, the Nevada State Report Card website. Table 2 presents a summary of state-level figures concerning discipline and truancy records.

Table 2 – Discipline Incidents, Habitual Discipline Problems, and Habitual Truants 2003-2004

State/ Districts	Number of Incidents						Number of Students	
	Suspensions or Expulsions						Habitual discipline problems (expulsion only)	Habitual truants (no suspension or expulsion)
	Violence to other students	Violence to school staff	Possession of weapons	Distribution of controlled substances	Possession or use of controlled substances	Possession or use of alcoholic beverages		
Nevada	7983	174	975	130	857	395	119	2786

The state-level data (Table 2) shows that violence and truancy are a concern. Although not as serious a problem in Nevada as in some other states, it still warrants attention. Behavioral incidents are roughly proportional to school district student populations. Incidents involving

violence by students to other students far exceed any other incident categories. No schools in the state reported criminal citations that would cause them to be deemed "persistently dangerous."

A Culture of Improvement

Title IV funding in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is available to districts to assist in supporting programs that bolster student esteem and resiliency. The State Millennium Scholarship program provides scholarships to eligible Nevada students seeking post-secondary education in the University and Community College System of Nevada (UCCSN). Many other public and privately-funded scholarships are available to Nevada's students who wish to pursue higher education within Nevada.

Some of Nevada's teachers have received recognitions beyond the "highly qualified" criteria. Since 1983, 33 science teachers and 30 math teachers in the state have been honored as recipients of the Presidential Award for Excelling in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Other recognitions include the Nevada Teacher of the Year Awards, Superintendent of the Year Award, Nevada Public Education Foundation's Education Hall of Fame Educator Award, and the Milken Educator Awards. National Board Certification is an opportunity for teachers to demonstrate their mastery both of their chosen content areas and of the pedagogy of teaching. Completion of the program ensures that the individual earning Board Certification has indeed achieved the status of "master teacher." Since 2001, 125 of Nevada's teachers have achieved National Board Certification. All of these awards are peer-nominated with panels making final decisions. Each award celebrates excellence in education and dedication to the profession.

Schools also have opportunities to earn designations and awards, such as the Blue Ribbon and the Title I Distinguished Schools recognitions. Through the state accountability system, schools can earn Exemplary Achievement and High Achievement recognition for impressive student achievement on statewide assessments and for exceeding the requirements for AYP. This talent pool of accomplished teachers, principals, other educators, and recognized schools in Nevada may be better utilized to help with systemic improvement efforts.

PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The State of Nevada has systems in place for parent and community involvement in the educational process, as well as for communication with parents. State law requires that each school district develop a parental involvement policy consistent with the State Board's policy. The Nevada accountability statute requires annual accountability reports to be disseminated to Nevada's parents. Among the information included in these accountability reports is information pertaining to parental involvement in schools.

NDE communicates with parents and the community through the NDE website (www.doe.nv.gov), press releases, and through various sources responsible for disseminating relevant information (primarily assessment results). Parents and community members can learn about schools and districts through the websites sponsored by school districts. Thirteen of the districts maintain independent websites, and the other four districts subscribe to Greatschools.net.

Many parents are involved in parent organizations such as the Nevada Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and Nevada Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP), a group representing the interests of parents of students with disabilities. Parent organizations such as Nevada PTA and PEP are also actively engaged in the legislative process through lobbying activities. The Nevada Open Meeting Law ensures that the public can communicate with their school district's local Board of Trustees and with the state through the State Board of Education's regularly scheduled meetings.

As a requirement of both state and federal statutes, school districts inform parents regarding their rights to specific information about both their children's teachers and schools. Parents are informed when their children attend schools that have been designated as "In Need of Improvement," when their children are eligible to receive supplemental educational services, and when a school is deemed "persistently dangerous" under federal law.

Parents of students who attend Title I schools are notified of their right to send their children to another school if the Title I school is "In Need of Improvement," and of the qualifications of the teachers and paraprofessionals who work with their children. In addition, parents of LEP students who attend Title I schools must be notified of the reasons why their children have been identified as LEP and of their right to refuse to have their children placed in a LEP program.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Curriculum and instruction is guided by Nevada content and performance standards. Revised content and performance standards in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science were developed by the Council to Establish Academic Standards and adopted during the 1998-99 school year. Other subject area standards followed suit. Content standard indicators in the core subject areas have been classified through a systematic review process as being enduring, important, or worthwhile and as either appropriate for state testing or more appropriate for local testing. All of Nevada's districts and schools are required to adopt and implement grade-level curriculum that will enable students to meet or exceed the state standards in all core content areas. The intent is that all standards will be taught to all students and that student performance relative to the standards will be evaluated through a combination of state and local assessments. The content and performance standards are available at the NDE website.

The state provides assistance with the standards through regulation and resources. The state allocates funding to the Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs), authorized as part of the Nevada Educational Reform Act of 1997 (NERA), to assist and support districts in curriculum training and implementation activities. NDE compiles a list of the curricular materials and textbooks that have been reviewed and adopted at the district/site-level and then forwarded to the SBE for acceptance and inclusion as approved materials. The state also provides districts, schools, and teachers with a set of guidelines (developed and disseminated by the Nevada Council on Technology) for the review, selection and procurement of technology and software.

Curriculum in Nevada's Districts

The Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) requires districts and schools to develop and put into practice written curriculum which implements the Nevada content and performance standards.

This must occur at a minimum in core content areas, including ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies. The state has established protocols to guide district evaluation, decision-making, and selection of curriculum resources, textbooks, and instructional materials. RPDPs provide technical assistance and staff development support to facilitate district- and school-based activities in curriculum mapping projects. Districts monitor the selection of curriculum materials and are responsible to ensure that materials selected follow state content standards. At the present time, there is no mechanism for the state to monitor and review curriculum development and implementation to ensure alignment with state standards.

Standards-Based Instruction

The state has high achievement expectations for its students as indicated through its standards and aligned assessments. The Nevada Content and Performance Standards provide a comprehensive conceptual framework within which explicit content is identified in a K-12 sequence of study. The criterion-referenced testing program is designed to align standards-based assessment with standards-based instruction.

A determination, at the state level, of instruction being standards-based requires observation of the classroom. At the current time, the state does not have a systematic method for observing classrooms and collecting data on instructional strategies. In order to observe instructional strategies in use in schools the Teach for Success Classroom Observation Model available from WestEd Regional Laboratory was used in a sample of schools during the 2003-2004 school year. Observations were conducted in 44 Title I and non-Title I schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The instructional strategies focused on in this model were chosen based on research that shows their direct impact on student learning. The purpose of these observations was not individual teacher evaluation, but to collect data on the usage of these research-based instructional strategies in classrooms to support student learning. The data collected from the observations were presented to each school as a summary report of schoolwide teaching strategies. This information allowed the school staff and principal to collaboratively make decisions about future professional development based on the feedback given to the whole school.

A general summary of the data from the observations is presented in Appendix B.

These key points were found:

- *Teacher-Led Instruction* (the teacher provides explicit instruction) and *Student Seatwork with Teacher Engaged* (the students work on an assignment) were the leading styles of teaching in 70% and 71% of the observations, respectively. This is an indication that the teaching styles in the classrooms observed were predominantly teacher-based as opposed to student-based. Research supports that student-based classrooms show a higher rate of achievement than teacher-based classrooms.

- *Student Engagement* (students participate through speaking, writing, signaling, performing, thinking, etc.) fell below sixty percent in 42% of the observations. Schools with higher rates of student engagement show higher rates of achievement, as shown in reasearch on engagement and instructional practices.

- *Level of Cognition* (levels of thinking) tended to be at the basic levels. Of 3,607 observations of cognitive activities, only 267 were at the level of Analyze-Evaluate-Create. As indicated in research in cognitive demand, students at basic levels of thinking are not challenged adequately in higher levels of thinking.

- *Instructional Practices Related to Standards/Curriculum/Students* (strategies aligned to the state standards, district adopted curriculum, and/or the identified needs of students) showed that in 83% of the observations, standards were either seen posted in classrooms or teachers were seen using standards-based materials and/or heard referring to the standards. This indicates that the teachers observed are focusing on standards-based instruction.

- *Instructional Practices Related to Standards/Curriculum/Students* also shows that only 31-33% of the classrooms observed used strategies in the following areas: key vocabulary; scaffolding techniques (verbal responses or instructional practices that build success); and opportunities for elaboration (time for students to extend their thinking and understanding). As supported by research, these strategies support the achievement of diverse learners. Increasing the usage of these strategies would positively effect the learning of all students, with particular attention to diverse learners.

The key points above indicate that there is room for improvement in infusing research-based strategies into classroom instructional practices and collecting data to evaluate that these practices are resulting in increased student achievement.

Another consideration regarding the relationship between instructional practices and student achievement is that state law precludes achievement results from being used for the purpose of teacher evaluation.

Intervention and Remediation Processes

The state and NDE provide funds, technical assistance, and support resources designed to help local schools plan and implement improvement initiatives. The state has developed a research-based school improvement process, SAGE, mandatory for Title I schools and often chosen for use in other schools and districts. State law requires all schools and districts to develop a school improvement plan whether designated as needing improvement or not. A template for school plans has been developed and aligns with the requirements of the SAGE process. NDE has held informational meetings and institutes to build the capacity of districts and the RPDPs to support schools that are required to develop improvement plans.

Additional resources for intervention and remediation purposes are available. A "List of Effective Remedial Programs" and a "List of Tutoring Providers" have been compiled. State remediation dollars are available for specified schools to purchase programs from the list. These funds may not be used for other purposes identified through school improvement plans, e.g., professional development, and may not be used to meet district-level needs identified in district improvement plans. State tutoring funds are limited to providers on the state list. Additionally, eligibility for funds is based upon students not meeting AYP requirements; however, AYP is not calculated on an individual student basis. Funds must be applied for by eligible schools only, even if other schools have students in need based upon their test scores. If a child's test scores would make the child eligible for services, but the child does not attend an eligible school, the child is not able to receive tutoring services through these funds. Tutoring funds are also limited

to specific grade levels. Consequently, some students not at these grade levels are not eligible to receive the services.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The state's organizational system and culture support professional development as evidenced by the Nevada State Board of Education Plan, the RPDPs and Statewide Coordinating Council, the Nevada SAGE School Improvement Process, and a Remedial Funding initiative that replaced its predecessor established by NERA. In addition to the NDE, school districts, RPDPs, and institutions of higher education, other professional development providers available to Nevada's teachers include the Northern and Southern Nevada Writing Projects, Silver State Reading Association, the Nevada Mathematics Council, Nevada State Science Teachers Association, and WestEd Regional Educational Laboratory. State Department, institutions of higher education, regional and district education agencies, and other institutions offer programs that provide new teachers a variety of opportunities to acquire support and/or assistance with instruction.

The state has the SAGE school improvement planning process in place to ensure that professional development activities focus on student learning and are aligned with a school's specific goals and instructional programs. NDE has provided professional development and technical assistance to teachers and administrators within the state, as well as grant funding that supports professional development as an integral part of district and school improvement plans. The state has also submitted an application for a $3.3 million State Action for Education Leadership Project II Grant. Nevada's goal is to develop key linkages between leader development and conditions of leadership at all levels of the state system to improve student achievement.

Federally funded professional development must be based on scientifically based research demonstrating the effectiveness of the professional development. It must be of sufficient intensity and duration to have a positive and lasting impact on the teachers' classroom instruction. NDE professional development efforts, including the SAGE school improvement process and the Teach for Success Observation Protocol used for classroom observation of classroom practices, are research based.

Nevada Professional Development Standards (Appendix C) have been prepared by the RPDP Statewide Coordinating Council. The RPDPs have used these Standards to develop five-year plans that include content, pedagogy, administration, and assessment topics. Some RPDPs have reported that they are moving away from courses and introductory workshops to sustaining the improvement in individual classrooms. Coordinators have begun to work closely with individual teachers modeling lessons, observing and providing feedback, and coaching. RPDP coordinators and district administrators provide many examples of professional development that are job-embedded, with peers helping to teach one another on an ongoing, communicative basis. The professional development focus being provided is intended to meet the needs of a diverse range of students.

Districts have identified areas of need in their professional development planning. For example, 13 of Nevada's 17 school districts have implemented or planned a Professional Learning Community (PLC) school infrastructure for sustained, intensive professional development to increase student achievement. A significant shared concern is finding creative ways to provide sufficient time for meaningful collaboration on a regular basis. Another area of concern to address is the change process. The critical phases of the change process (i.e., initiation, implementation, and institutionalization) are addressed in the planning and design of some of the

professional development programs, but four out of eleven of the districts that responded to the survey on professional development expressed concerns that they did not adequately address the change process.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, ASSESSMENT, AND OTHER INDICATORS

Nevada has maintained a heightened focus on student achievement for over ten years through a variety of means. This includes a lengthy history of high stakes student accountability founded on the High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE) program (dating back to the early 1980s) linked to graduation with a standard diploma, an established system of accountability reporting, and a more recent (mid 1990s) system of school designation that identifies schools that are In Need of Improvement.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Results

A dominant aspect of the NCLB Act is its prescription for determining AYP and the requirement that it be used to judge all schools regardless of Title I status. A detailed description of the Nevada AYP components and the designation process can be found in the *Guide to NCLB & AYP Analyses in Nevada* and the *Nevada 2003-2004 AYP Technical Manual* at www.doe.nv.gov/nclb/ayp.

Classification of a school, school district, and/or state as making or failing AYP is relative to performance on the AYP indicators. A very significant aspect of the legislation is that judgments must be considered separately for major ethnic groups and special student populations. Not meeting the participation rate, achievement level, or other indicator, by any student group, results in the classification of the school, school district, and/or state as not making AYP. Schools (school districts and/or the state) that fail to make AYP in two consecutive years are identified as In Need of Improvement. Designated schools are faced with specific consequences, and as the number of successive years of designation increases so does the significance of the consequences. Schools and school districts that are designated as In Need of Improvement are entitled to technical assistance and support from the state.

Based on performance, schools and school districts that make AYP can be designated as demonstrating Exemplary or High Achievement. This designation is based on the percentages of students at or above proficiency and the reduction in percentage of students that are not proficient. To achieve Exemplary status, both criteria must be met. Meeting either criterion results in being designated as a High Achieving school. Schools and districts that earn these designations are publicly recognized. Schools that fail to make AYP can still be recognized for making significant improvements towards the state proficiency targets.

After two years of implementing AYP classifications, the following summary portrays the current state of the state. The state has identified itself as In Need of Improvement based on two consecutive years of failure in the areas of ELA participation and achievement and in math achievement. Table 3 illustrates the AYP indicators that were not met and the student groups for whom the targets were not met.

Table 3 - State Level AYP Status – Listing Groups that Did NOT Meet the Indicators

Level of Instruction	ELA Participation	ELA Achievement	Math Participation	Math Achievement
Elementary		Hispanic IEP LEP		African American IEP LEP
Middle	African American IEP			African American IEP
High	Hispanic African American IEP LEP Low SES	IEP Low SES		Hispanic African American IEP

In the state as a whole, nine of Nevada's 17 school districts have been identified as In Need of Improvement. Eight of the nine school districts designated as In Need of Improvement did not make AYP at more than one level of instruction. In most instances, school districts also did not make AYP in both subject areas. No school districts received Exemplary Achievement or High Achievement designations in 2003-04.

Nevada's data are consistent with AYP trends across the nation. The specific elements which comprise AYP and the NCLB requirement to evaluate progress by each specific student group have resulted in an increasing number of schools designated as In Need of Improvement.

Table 4 – AYP Results 2003-2004

2003-2004 AYP Results				
AYP Summary Results	Elementary	Middle	High	State
Number of Schools/Programs Judged	331	117	119	567
AYP School Classification				
Made AYP	240	60	57	357
Did Not Make AYP	91	57	62	210
Reason For Not Making AYP				
Missed ELA Only	42	11	10	63
Missed Math Only	12	12	4	28
Missed Other Indicator (OI) Only	0	0	2	2
Missed ELA & Math	37	30	42	109
Missed ELA & OI	0	1	1	2
Missed Math & OI	0	0	1	1
Missed ELA, Math, & OI	0	3	3	6
Reason Not Meeting ELA Criteria				
Missed ELA Participation Only	5	21	19	45
Missed ELA Status Only	68	6	8	82
Missed ELA Participation & Status	6	18	29	53
Reason For Not Meeting Math Criteria				
Missed Math Participation Only	5	8	6	19
Missed Math Status Only	40	20	31	91
Missed Math Participation & Status	4	17	13	34
AYP School Designation				
Exemplary	1	7	4	12
High Achieving – Status	27	7	14	48
High Achieving – Growth	1	18	3	22
Adequate	200	28	36	264
Watch List	49	19	31	99
In Need of Improvement (Year 1 - Hold)	6	0	0	6
In Need of Improvement (Year 1)	31	35	31	97
In Need of Improvement (Year 2 - Hold)	5	0	0	5
In Need of Improvement (Year 2)	9	3	0	12
In Need of Improvement (Year 3)	2	0	0	2

Table 4 details the AYP results in the 2003-2004 school year. In two years many schools (122) have been identified as In Need of Improvement. Although some schools have been identified based solely on test participation rates, the large majority of identified schools did not make AYP in ELA and/or math. Based on the 2003-04 results, past performance, and a federally required increase in state annual achievement goals for the 2004-05 school year, Nevada anticipates that in excess of 200 schools will be In Need of Improvement following the 2004-05 designations and that this number will likely grow to more than 300 schools after 2005-06.

The AYP summary points to significant areas of concern at the state, school district, and school levels. However, the information provided through accountability is too general to identify the specific strengths and weaknesses necessary to plan effectively for change. A look at the

performance data from the state assessments more clearly characterizes the general areas of strength and weakness.

The State Assessment Program

The NDE is currently completing the construction of a statewide program of criterion-referenced tests (CRTs) that will meet the testing requirements of NCLB and which are being used to determine whether or not schools and districts within the state have met the AYP federal requirements. Nevada's high school exit examinations, which are used for graduation, have always been criterion-referenced and designed to measure Nevada's content standards. By the end of the 2005-2006 school year, Nevada must also administer CRTs in ELA and math in all grades required by law. By the 2007-2008 school year, a test in science must also be administered statewide in at least one grade at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Additionally, the state also administers a norm-referenced test (NRT) in grades four, seven, and ten which provides national comparisons and validates the results of the standards-based tests at the other grade levels. Participation in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is also mandated by state and federal law, and a selected sample of Nevada students is administered the NAEP assessments in reading and math. Table 5 illustrates the current and planned large-scale assessment system in the state.

Table 5 - Current/Planned Assessment Program

	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
Grade 3	CRT—Reading, Math	CRT—Reading, Math	CRT—Reading, Math
Grade 4	NRT—ELA, Math, SCI Performance—Writing	NRT—ELA, Math, SCI Performance —Writing	NRT—ELA, Math, SCI CRT—Reading, Math, SCI Performance —Writing
Grade 5	CRT—Reading, Math, SCI	CRT—Reading, Math, SCI	CRT—Reading, Math, SCI
Grade 6			CRT—Reading, Math, SCI
Grade 7	NRT—ELA, Math, SCI	NRT—ELA, Math, SCI	NRT—ELA, Math, SCI CRT—Reading, Math, SCI
Grade 8	CRT—Reading, Math, SCI Performance —Writing	CRT—Reading, Math, SCI Performance —Writing	CRT—Reading, Math, SCI Performance —Writing
High School	NRT—ELA, Math, SCI Performance —Writing CRT—ELA, Math	NRT—ELA, Math, SCI Performance —Writing CRT—ELA, Math	NRT—ELA, Math, SCI Performance —Writing CRT—ELA, Math

Note: Assessments indicated by the shaded areas are used as part of the state's AYP calculations.

Not shown in Table 5 is the Skills and Competencies Alternate Assessment of Nevada (SCAAN) that students with the most significant disabilities may be eligible to take. Also not shown are the Title III language acquisition test, the NAEP, and the various tests administered locally by school districts and schools.

The tables that follow describe state-level test results, focusing on those tests used to determine AYP. The state-level test results in the tables illustrate student performance at the state and school level to identify more clearly areas that need improvement. A complete set of data tables can be found at www.doe.nv.gov

READING PERFORMANCE

Tables 6-9 illustrate trends in reading performance for third and tenth grades by ethnicity and special populations. These trend graphs separate performance by year of test administration (2001-02, 2002-03, & 2003-04), allowing for across-year comparisons. Tables 10-11 illustrate the variability of performance of schools in the state, disaggregated by ethnicity and special populations.

Table 6 – Trends in Reading Performance at Grade 3

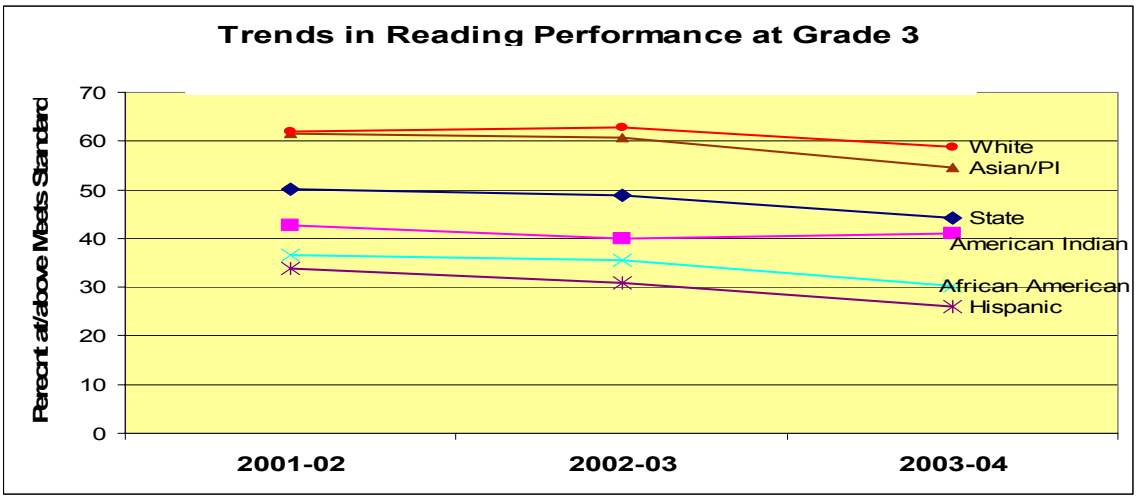


Table 6 shows the performance of third graders on the Reading CRT. The percents of proficient White and Asian students are above the state average (46%) while the percent of American Indian students is slightly below. The percents of proficient African American and Hispanic students are considerably lower than the state average. (Two factors affected the drop in overall performance from the 2002-03 to 2003-04: a significant change in the population taking the tests with greater inclusion of students with disabilities (IEP) and LEP students and a significant shift in the test administration window, moving it from approximately the 165th day of instruction to the 130th day of instruction.)

Table 7 – Trends in High School Proficiency Reading Performance at Grade 10

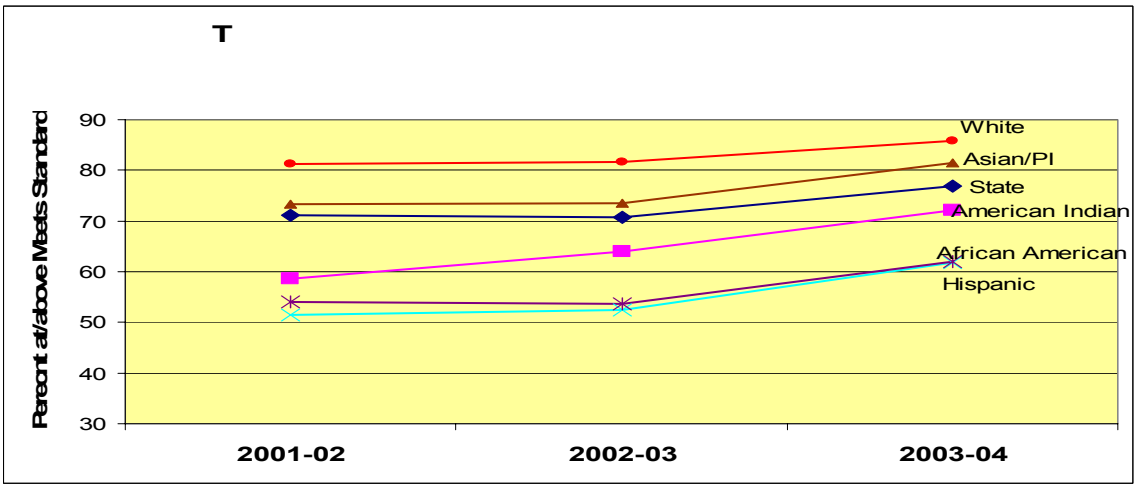


Table 7 shows the reading performance of tenth graders. The percents of proficient White and Asian students are above the state average (78%) while the percent of American Indian students is slightly below. Although the percents of proficient African American and Hispanic students are considerably lower than the state average, all groups are showing improved performance. (These calculations are made on first time administrations; students may retake the test to pass.)

Table 8 – Trends in Reading Performance at Grade 3

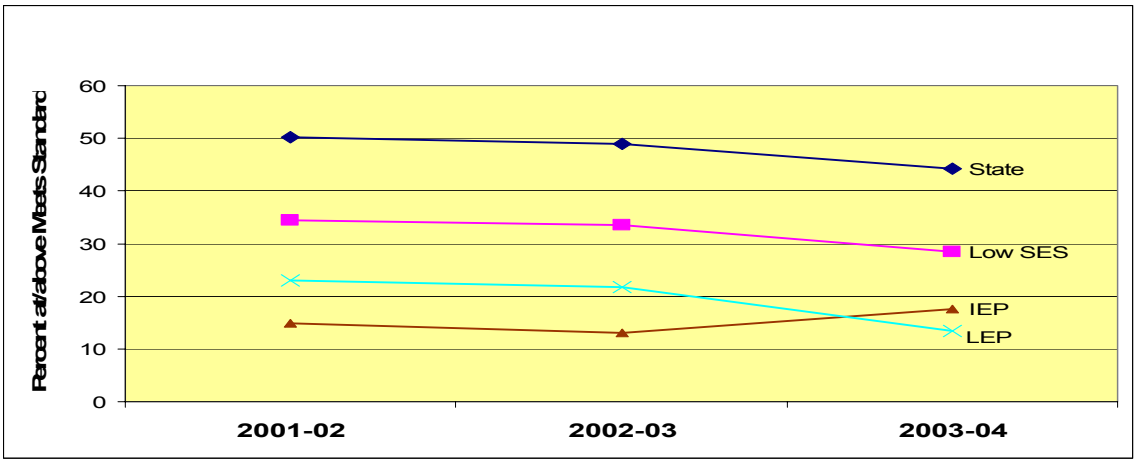
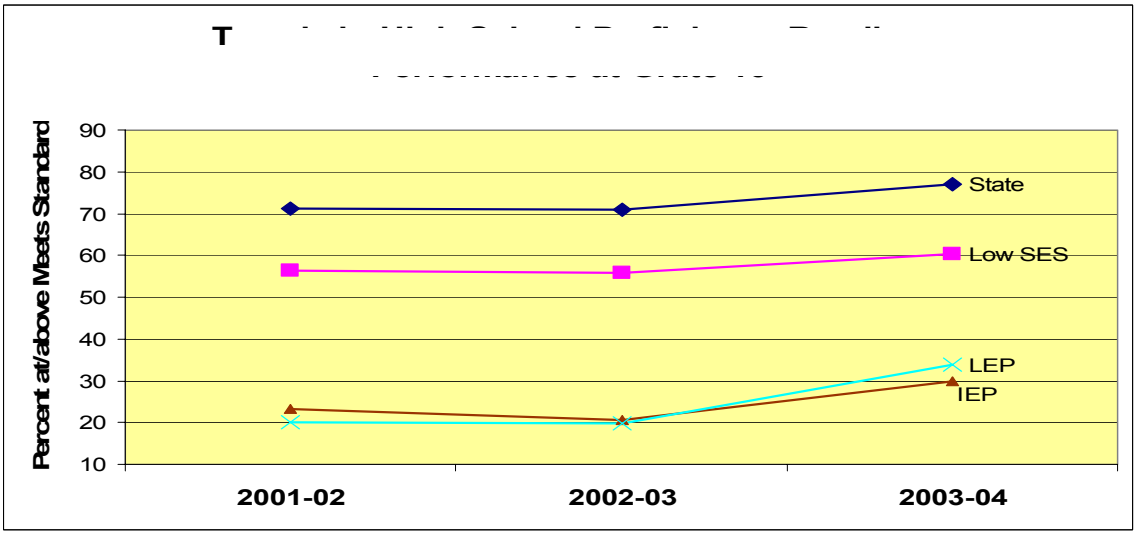


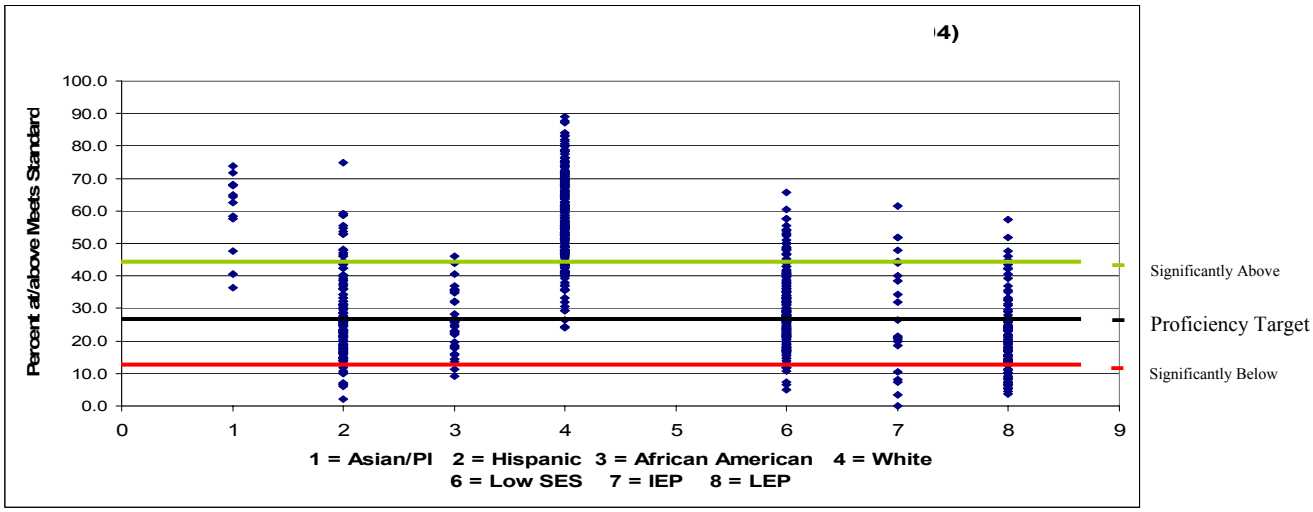
Table 8 shows special populations in comparison with the state average (46%). The percent of proficient students having a low socio-economic status is considerably lower. Students with disabilities (IEP) and LEP fell significantly lower than the state average.

Table 9 – Trends in High School Proficiency Reading Performance at Grade 10



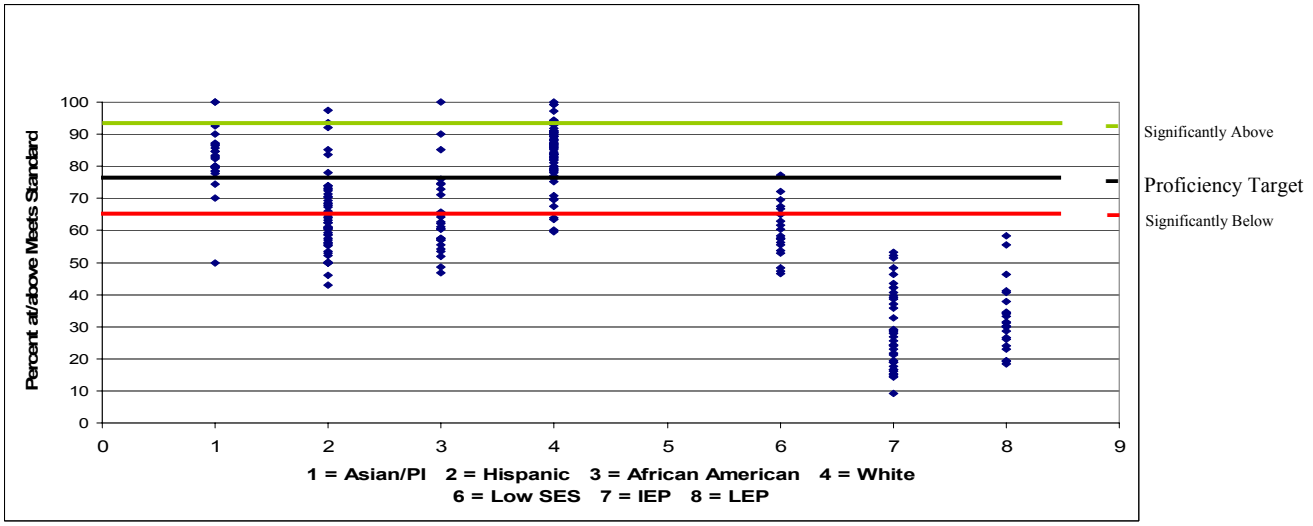
In Table 9, similar differences between the gaps in proficiency rates are shown. Although achievement gaps remain, the proficiency rates of all four groups were higher. Students with disabilities (IEP) show improvement in both grades 3 and 10, as demonstrated in Tables 8 and 9.

Table 10 – School Variability in Reading Performance at Grade 3 (2003-2004)



Focusing solely on averages without attending to variability is always limiting. Table 10 shows the variability of school performance of third graders for ethnic groups and special populations (#5 is serving as a placeholder). Each dot represents a school's average percent proficient. As indicated in Table 10, the performance of each subgroup varied from school to school. The achievement gap trend can also be seen, with schools' Asian and White student populations performing at or above proficiency, while many of the schools fell below the proficiency goal for the Hispanic, African American, low SES, IEP, and LEP student populations.

Table 11 – School Variability in Performance on the Reading HSPE at Grade 10 (2003-2004)

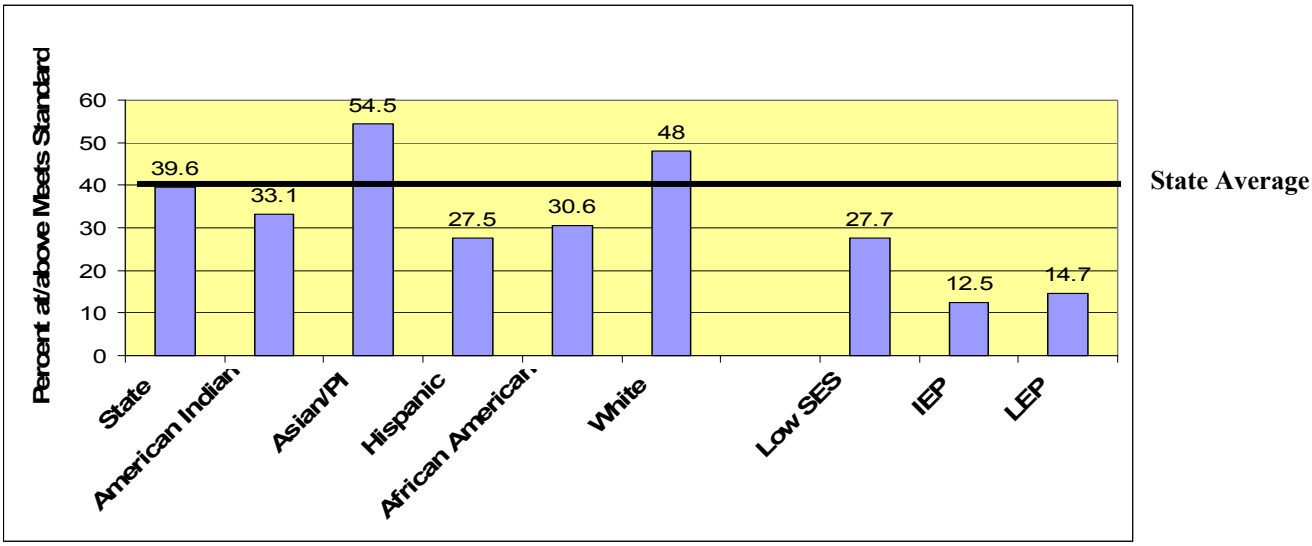


In Table 11, all the schools' low SES, IEP, and LEP student populations fell below the performance goal. A significant number of schools did not meet the performance goal for their Hispanic and African American student populations.

WRITING PERFORMANCE

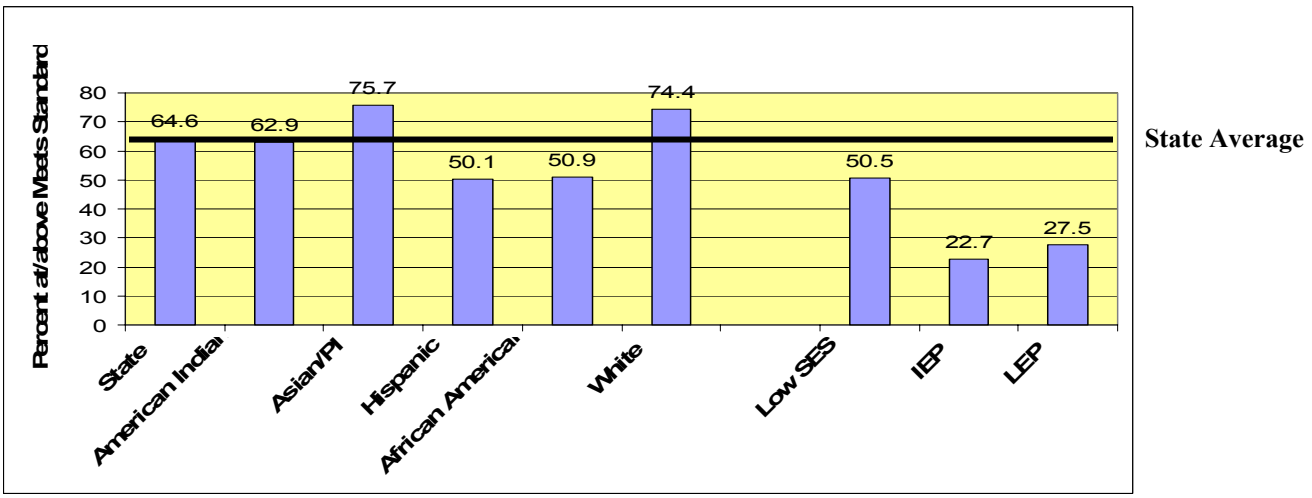
The Nevada State Writing Assessment is administered in the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades. Tables 12-13 show the percent proficient by ethnicity and special populations.

Table 12 – Grade 4 Writing Performance (2003-2004)



In Table 12, the percent of proficient White and Asian students is above the state average (39.6%). The percent of proficient American Indian and African American students is below the state average, while the percent of Hispanic, low SES, IEP, and LEP students is considerably lower than the state average.

Table 13 – Grade 8 Writing Performance (2003-2004)



In Table 13, the overall writing performance is higher than in grade four. However, the proficiency differences between different student populations are substantial.

MATH PERFORMANCE

Tables 14-17 illustrate trends in math performance by ethnicity and special populations. Tables 18-19 illustrate the variability of performance of schools in the state, disaggregated by ethnicity and special populations.

Table 14 – Trends in Math Performance at Grade 3

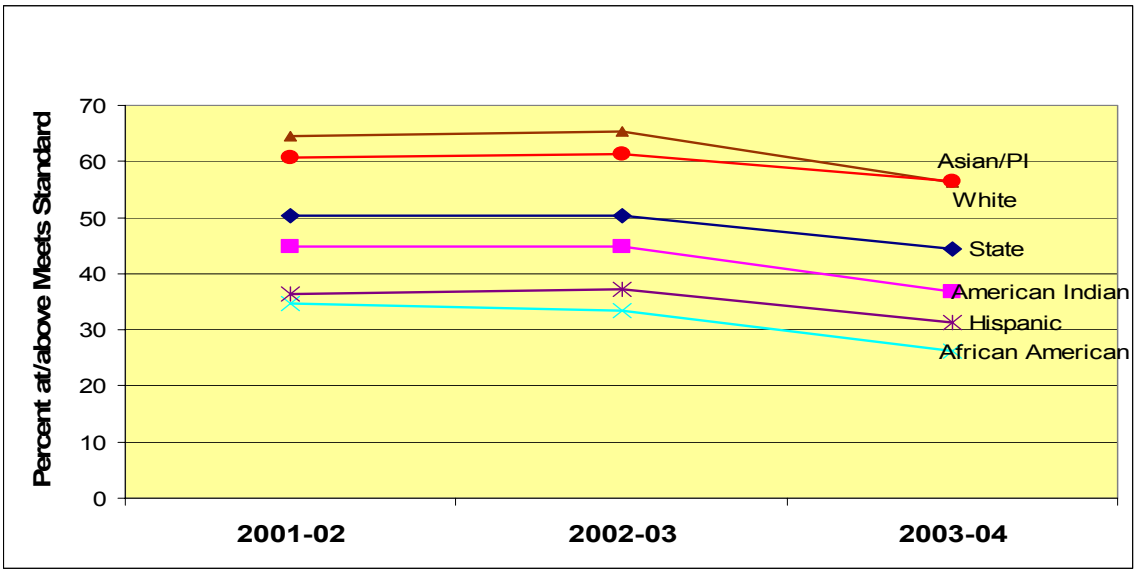


Table 14 shows the performance of third graders on the Math CRT. The percent of proficient White and Asian students is above the state average (46%) while the percent of American Indian students is slightly below. The percent of proficient African American and Hispanic students is considerably lower than the state average.

Table 15 – Trends in High School Proficiency Math Performance at Grade 10

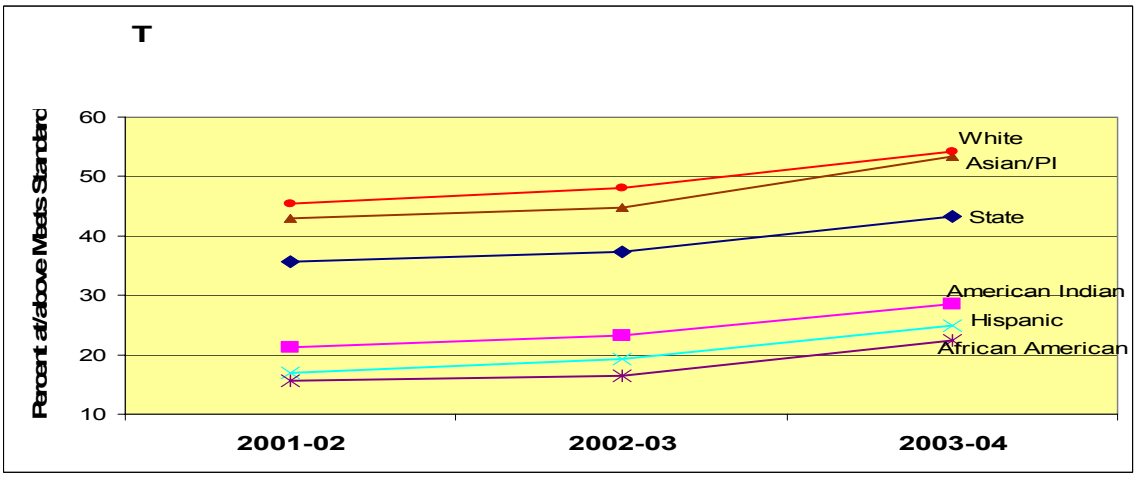


Table 15 shows the math performance of tenth graders. The percent of proficient White and Asian students is considerably above the state average (78%). The percents of proficient American Indian, African American, and Hispanic students are significantly lower than the state average although all groups showed an increased performance over previous years.

Table 16 – Trends in Math Performance at Grade 3

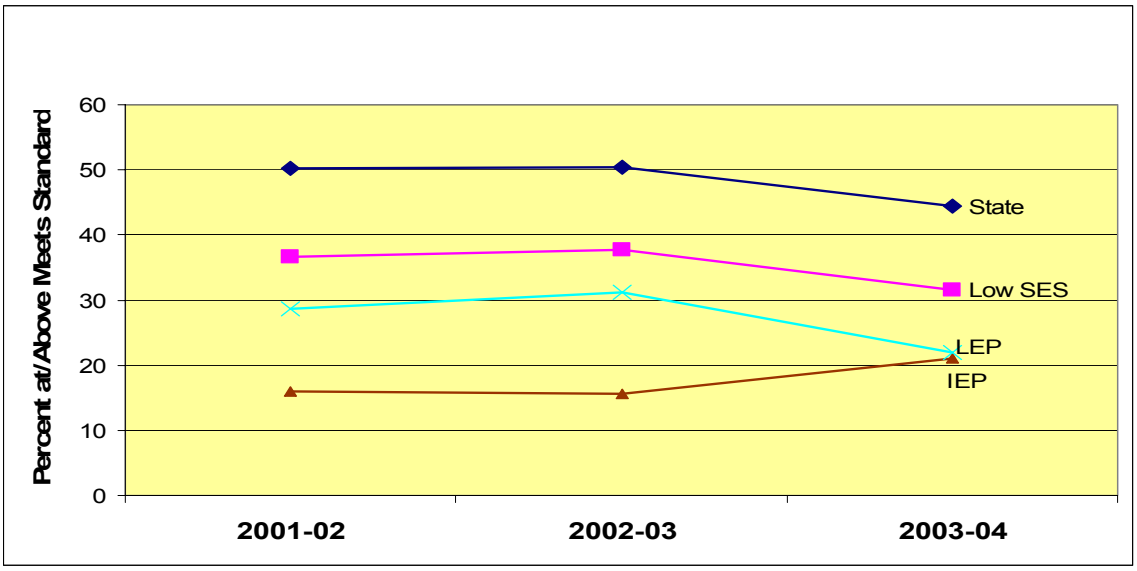


Table 16 shows special populations in comparison with the state average (46%). The percent of proficient low SES is considerably lower than the state average. The proficiency rates of IEP and LEP students fell significantly lower than the state average. In Table 17, similar differences between the gaps in proficiency rates are shown. The percents of proficient LEP and IEP students are extremely low.

Table 17 – Trends in High School Proficiency Math Performance at Grade 10

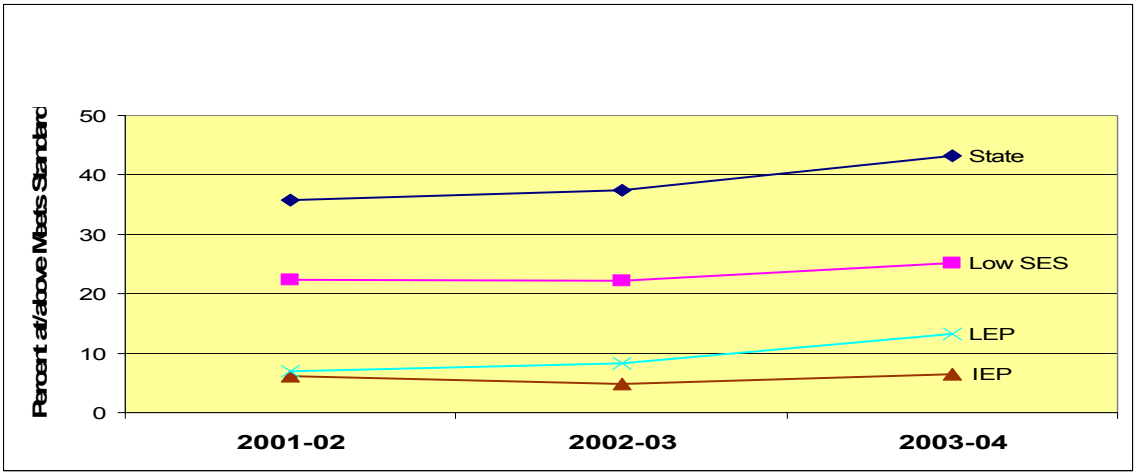


Table 18 – School Variability in Math Performance at Grade 3 (2003-2004)

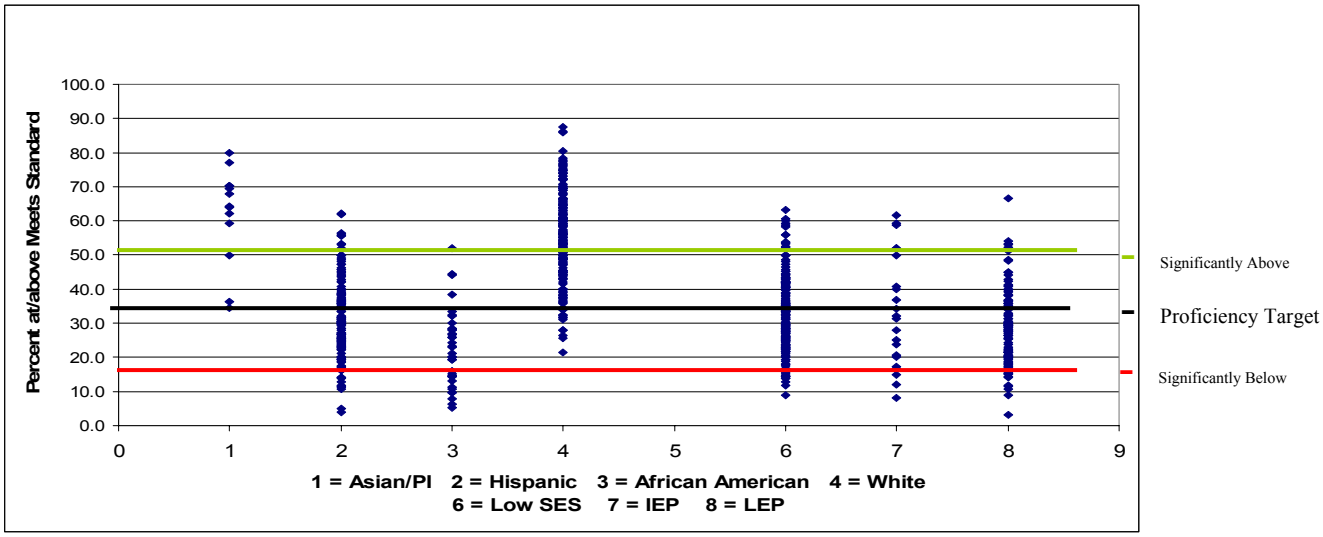
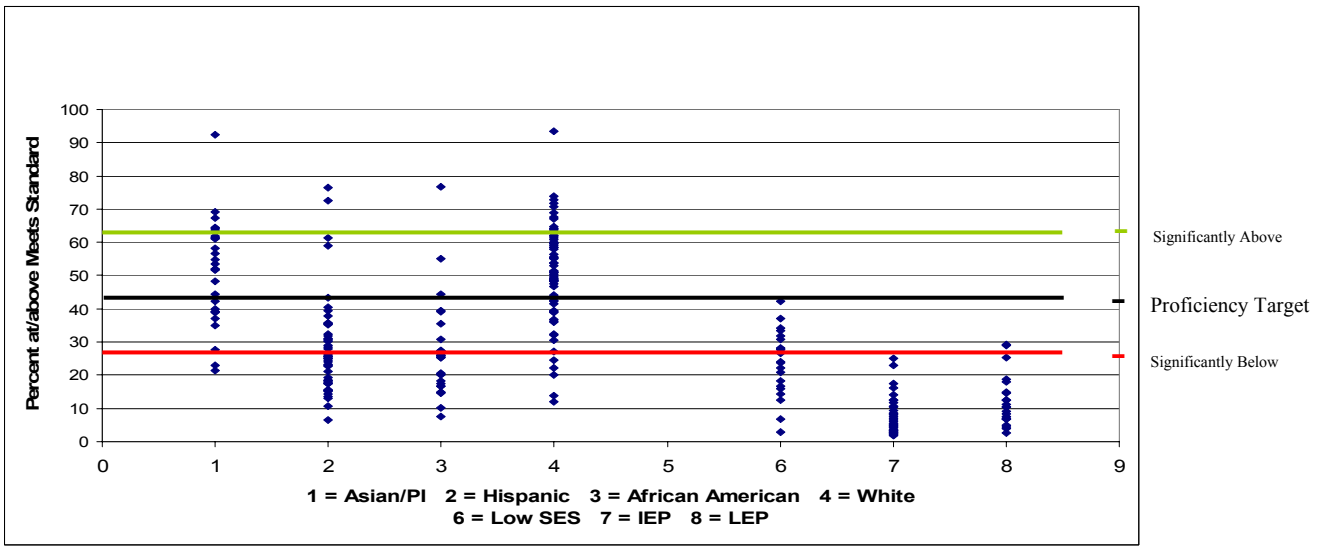


Table 18 shows the variability between schools in math performance. The performance of each subgroup varied from school to school. The schools' Asian and White student populations performed at or above proficiency, while many of the schools fell below the proficiency goal for the Hispanic, African American, low SES, IEP, and LEP student populations.

Table 19 – School Variability in Performance on the Math HSPE at Grade 10



In Table 19, there is quite a variation in school performance for the Asian and White populations, some schools doing well while others do not. For the Hispanic and African American populations, a few schools are doing very well while a large number are performing below proficiency. For the low SES, IEP, and LEP student populations, all schools are performing below proficiency.

From the tables, some interpretations can be drawn. Across grades and with respect to reading, writing, and math, there is a consistent pattern of differences between student groups. Asian/Pacific Islander and White students perform above the state average and outperform American Indian, Hispanic and African American students. Students with low SES perform below the state average. Performance among IEP and LEP students is substantially below the

performance of all other student groups. Although consistent with national data, these trends present significant challenges for Nevada.

Graduation, Dropout, and College Matriculation

The graduation rate for Nevada in the 2002-2003 school year was 75%. The ethnic groups with the lowest graduation rates are Hispanic at 63% and African American at 60%. The graduation rate for females is significantly higher than that of males, with females graduating at a rate of around 76% and males graduating at a 73% rate overall. Nevada's dropout rate was 6% for the 2002-2003 school year. Dropout rates for the Hispanic and African American student groups remain the highest in the state, at 9% for Hispanics and 8% for African Americans. It was found in the 2001-02 school-year data that the percentage of Nevada's students with disabilities who received a regular diploma (24%) was far below the national average for this student group (51%) and that the dropout rate for students with disabilities was 8%.

In terms of college matriculation of Nevada's high school graduates, Nevada ranks low among the states, with only 37% of Nevada's graduates pursuing post-secondary education. According to Measuring Up 2004, the State Report Card on Higher Education developed by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, the State of Nevada has made improvements over the past decade in enrolling students in college immediately after high school. Progress in this area can in part be attributed to the Millennium Scholarship program. However, greater improvements in this area are needed.

The Millennium Scholarship Program, funded by tobacco settlement funds, provides funding to allow Nevada's students to continue their education beyond high school. During the 2000-2001 school year, 15,268 of Nevada's graduates were eligible to apply for these scholarships. Of that number, 4,268 did apply and attend a Nevada institution of higher education. Although the number of eligible students applying and receiving the Millennium Scholarships has increased over the years, only a portion of the students eligible continue their education within state using this funding source.

In the 2001-2002 school year, 4,789 of Nevada's students took the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT). For those students, the mean score was 49 (verbal); 50 (math) and 49 (writing). These scores compare to national mean scores of 48 (verbal); 49 (math); and 49 (writing). During the 2002-2003 school year, 5,937 of Nevada's students took the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Those students' average score on this test was 1027, one point above the national average of 1026. During the 2002-2003 school year, 5,590 Nevada's students took the American College Test (ACT). The average for Nevada's students taking this test was 21, compared to the national average of 21. However, it should be noted that a smaller percentage of Nevada's students take the test in comparison to participation rates in other states. As a result, the relatively high performance of Nevada's students may not be representative of the achievement level of all Nevada's graduates.

More than 8,200 of Nevada's students took Advanced Placement (AP) tests in Nevada during the 2002-2003 school year, with a pass rate of 57% statewide. Nevada has seen a tremendous boost in the numbers of students taking the AP exams; however, there is still a large gap between the overall representation of certain minority groups in the general student population and the number of students who are taking the AP tests in those same minority groups. For instance, in 2002-2003 African Americans represented approximately 10% of the student population in

Nevada, but only accounted for 3% of the AP Calculus test participants, 2% of the AP English Language and Composition test participants, and 2% of the AP Biology test participants.

SUCCESSES FOUND

- During the past decade, the State of Nevada has built an infrastructure supporting standards-based reform. The NERA of 1997 and its establishment of content standards was the well-spring for these activities. Furthermore, the assistance being provided to school districts and schools by NDE, school districts, RPDPs, and other agencies, and the collaborative relationships among these agencies allow for standards-based reform efforts to be sustained over time.

- Special populations and diversity students are participating more fully in state assessments. Although in general their performance as a group is below state average, specific populations, e,g,., students with disabilities, American Indian, African American, Hispanic, LEP, etc., showed improved performance at specific grade levels on the ELA and Math CRTs in 2003-2004.

- Not displayed in the data directly but implied by the data displays, are concerted efforts to disseminate testing and other relevant information in different ways and in different formats. Supporting the sharing of data, significant efforts have been made to provide technical assistance in interpreting and using test data and other data. There has also been a concerted effort to use state assessment results for program evaluation and other purposes in addition to its legislated purposes. This has been done in an attempt to make informed and objective decisions.

- Information from the accountability system can be used to objectively categorize schools relative to a combination of achievement and other factors. The free public exchange of this information should be used to motivate action designed to bring about positive change.

- Through various state initiatives, Nevada has made information about Nevada's schools and their performance much more readily available to parents. This added accessibility to data should assist parents to make informed choices about their children, especially if school choice options become available. Through legislation and regulation, Nevada has also ensured that every district and the state as a whole have a parental involvement policy in place.

- The attention that has been given to efforts such as the National Board Certification program is positive and if sustained can have a significant impact on student learning. The state organizational system and culture are supportive of professional development. Perhaps the strongest evidence of this commitment has been the willingness of the Nevada Legislature to provide funding for the RPDPs. Nevada professional development standards, prepared by the RPDP Statewide Coordinating Council, better ensure the quality of regional and school district professional development efforts. The federal grant requirements and the monitoring of those by NDE staff also ensure a more uniform application of research-based efforts. School district professional development plans pave the way for all teachers of core academic subjects to be receiving high-quality professional development. The Teach for Success data has helped schools with their school improvement planning and in selecting relevant professional development.

- Data from the Education Trust reveal that during the two year period from 2001-2003, education funding for K-12 schools in the state grew by 11% while other state spending grew by only 7%. Further, the rapid growth of the student population within in the state has resulted in increases in federal funding over the past few years. This is in contrast to other states which have actually lost Title I funding over the last couple of years. There are mechanisms in place to support the learning environment for students. While learning is a lifelong process that requires intrinsic motivation, the use of external recognitions and incentives underscores the positive value placed on educational achievement by Nevada's citizens. Putting effort toward planning for and providing a safe environment is a fundamental feature of the educational process. Formalizing this process and disseminating relevant information to parents and the community at large is a step in the right direction.

- Based on the presented information, the rates of attendance are relatively high. This gives some confidence that students are attending frequently enough to help support their opportunities to learn and achieve state expectations. From the performance information, we are able to identify some apparent successes in ELA and math performance at the school level among all student groups. Looking at issues related to college matriculation, there seems to be a trend of greater participation on the college entrance examinations. If this trend continues and the currently observed level of performance among Nevada's participants remains the same or increases, this would be very positive.

AREAS OF CONCERN

- The growth in the student population in both numbers of students and the diversity of students is a challenge in Nevada. Disparities between ethnic groups in terms of test performance and graduation rate are pervasive and longstanding. Similar disparities are exhibited when special populations (low SES, IEP, and LEP students) are compared with the state as a whole. In looking at the disproportionate poverty rate among certain ethnic groups, the interaction between ethnicity and socio-economic status can be seen as contributing to test performance. These relationships must be fully explored to best understand Nevada's educational challenges.

- Alignment of state content and performance standards, curriculum, instructional practices, assessment and professional development is essential for increasing student achievement and closing the achievement gap. There is not a specific process in place to ensure that district curricula are fully aligned to the state content and performance standards. There is no mechanism at the state level to assure that textbook adoptions fully align with state standards. The state must ensure that students have meaningful access to standards-based general education curriculum and materials, including technology that affords them the opportunity to be proficient on the state standards.

- At this time, professional development can be planned at a school, district, RPDP, and state level without a specific requirement for alignment to improvement goals identified through improvement planning processes. Honing the process of planning effective professional development through the comprehensive assessment of student, teacher, and administrator needs, and developing an evaluation plan predicated on teaching effectiveness and student learning continues to be a critical need. Continued disparities in student achievement among student ethnic groups and other student groups (low SES, IEP, and LEP students) require a sustained emphasis on professional development activities aimed at meeting the needs of a

diverse range of students. Key points found in the Teach for Success observation data suggest that professional development in the state might target instructional practices that (a) support standards-based learning, (b) engage and support all students in learning, (c) raise the level of student cognition, and (d) support diverse learners through the use of key vocabulary, scaffolding, and opportunities to elaborate thinking.

- At the current time, the CRTs have been developed to align to the standards so student proficiency on the standards can be measured. The sharing of data and the use of it for multiple purposes are positive but also lead to areas of concern. Significant resources should be dedicated to proper interpretation and use of data.

- Effectively managed classrooms focus on learning and provide greater opportunity for increased student performance. Currently, consistent definitions for behavioral violations have not been established for Nevada's school districts. As a result, information about classroom behavior is not available in a uniform format that can be used in the improvement planning process in order to increase student achievement.

- The need for increased parental involvement in education remains an ongoing goal across the state. While there is a requirement for every district to develop a parental involvement policy, at this time there is no requirement for implementation strategies or to evaluate the effectiveness of these policies.

- It is imperative that collaborative partnerships to improve the state educational system be formed and/or made more effective to maximize use of limited human and fiscal resources. With the identification of more and more schools In Need of Improvement, as well as the emergence of district- and state-sponsored charter schools, the lack of capacity and resources to assist these schools becomes increasingly apparent. The scarcity of resources is compounded by the fact that existing funding lacks flexibility to meet identified school and district improvement needs. State and federal funds tend to be highly regulated, without the flexibility needed for schools and districts to use them most effectively.

- The national comparison of per-pupil funding indicates Nevada is below the national average. An increase in funding would support the significant efforts being undertaken by Nevada's educators to strengthen student achievement.

STATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN PRIORITY GOALS

Based on the priority needs identified through the comprehensive needs assessment above, five priority goals have been identified. The goals are listed below; however, in addition in the following pages the goals are listed individually with correlating objectives and action steps.

- To engage the full community in a cohesive and collaborative statewide improvement planning process that drives all levels (school, district, and state) and that supports improved student performance by maintaining a focus on teaching, student learning, and parental involvement.

- To use consistent and relevant data at all levels (school, district, and state) to drive the improvement planning process and to evaluate the effectiveness of planned programs and activities in order to provide feedback for plan revisions.

- To identify research-based strategies in order to set performance expectations to improve instruction in core academic subjects, to reduce achievement gaps, and to improve the performance of all students.

- To implement a statewide approach to research-based professional development and pre-service educator preparation primarily focused on data-driven needs as identified in school, district, and state improvement plans.

- To implement a statewide initiative to focus on secondary education, including strategies to improve academic achievement, increase graduation rates, decrease dropout rates, improve distribution of information to the public, and increase post-secondary program enrollment and success rates.

ACTION PLAN

Goal #1:

To engage the community in a cohesive and collaborative statewide improvement planning process that drives all levels (school, district, and state) and that supports improved student performance by maintaining a focus on teaching, student learning, and parental involvement.

Measurable Objective Components:

Outcome Indicator – The submission and monitoring of improvement plans.
Baseline –Plans are not yet due.
Timeline – As required by statutory timeline.
Standard or performance level – All schools, districts, and the state will submit improvement plans that contain measurable goals for improved student learning.

Action Steps for Goal #1
1. Identify the components of and the partners in a comprehensive statewide educational system.
2. Work with collaborative partners to bring together a uniform statewide vision for educational improvement and foster a supporting culture.
3. Expand collaborative relationship with parent groups throughout the state.
4. Create a multilevel planning framework in which school plans are explicitly based on needs identified to improve teaching, student learning, and parental involvement; district plans are driven by school needs; and the state plan is driven by district needs.
5. Refine the existing improvement planning process at all levels and identify the components of the state educational system that support learning.
6. Establish/expand methods to communicate new initiatives clearly and regularly to parents and all the collaborative partners.
7. Define the specific roles and structures at the state, district, and school levels to support actions related to the statewide improvement planning process.
8. Review allocated fiscal resources as part of the improvement planning process to determine the need for the reallocation of these resources and the need for additional resources.
9. Review statutes and seek statutory change, if necessary, to provide more flexibility in the following areas: • Expand allowable use of state remediation funds beyond program purchase • Allow for the use of state funds targeted toward school sites to be aggregated to the district or school cluster level as appropriate. • Revise eligibility for and method of allocating state tutoring funds
10. Set an expectation that improvement plans contain strategies to implement policies in the area of parental involvement.

Goal #2:

To use consistent and relevant data at all levels (school, district, and state) to drive the improvement planning process and to evaluate the effectiveness of planned programs and activities in order to provide feedback for plan revisions.

Measurable Objective Components:

Outcome Indicator – The data found in improvement plans.
Baseline – Since this is the first year of plan submission, these plans will be used to establish a baseline for reviewing and evaluating future improvement plans.
Timeline – As required by statutory timelines.
Standard or performance level – Through random sampling, the Department will ensure that all plans reviewed demonstrate the use of consistent and relevant data.

Action Steps for Goal #2
1. Expand methods for data collection and the tracking of academic student progress, including verification that consistent and relevant data is maintained at all levels.
2. Interface other data systems with student performance data systems.
3. Expand and sustain student performance data delivery at all levels (school, district, state).
4. Provide consistent systemic professional development for data analysis and interpretation in order to support improvement planning.
5. Support development of the comprehensive state assessment system to include classroom-based assessments and other forms of local assessment to meet the needs of schools and districts.

Goal #3:

To identify research-based strategies in order to set performance expectations to improve instruction in core academic subjects, to reduce achievement gaps, and to improve the performance of all students.

Measurable Objective Components:

Outcome Indicator – Improved performance on statewide assessments.
Baseline data – Current data show that a large number of students statewide are not meeting proficiency levels on statewide assessments of English/language arts and math. Baseline data also indicate that many disaggregated groups of students are performing significantly below the performance of the general student population.
Timeline – As reported by results of the statewide assessments in 2005.
Standard or performance level – At minimum, each disaggregated group of students will demonstrate the growth needed to make Safe Harbor as calculated by NCLB.

Action Steps for Goal #3
1. Identify and disseminate information about effective strategies that improve the performance of students in English language arts, math, and science, using research-based solutions.
2. Identify and disseminate information about effective strategies that improve the performance of students with disabilities, Limited English Proficient students, culturally diverse students, economically disadvantaged students, and other at-risk student populations, such as migrant and/or transient students.
3. Using established criteria, identify the factors that specifically impact results in high achieving and exemplary schools that are showing extraordinary growth.
4. Create a mechanism that uses these high performing schools as a resource to other schools and districts to help replicate successful practices.
5. Coordinate with nationally recognized successful schools and districts in order to replicate successful practices.
6. Provide strategies to increase the attendance rate, decrease the drop-out rate, and manage discipline effectively.
7. Provide strategies to integrate technology into instructional planning and delivery in coordination with the Commission on Educational Technology.
8. Work in conjunction with the Council to Establish Academic Standards in Public Schools in its review of academic standards as prescribed in statute.

Goal #4:

To implement a statewide approach to research-based professional development and educator pre-service preparation primarily focused on data-driven needs as identified in school, district, and state improvement plans.

Measurable Objective Components:

Outcome Indicator – Increase the number of professional development activities that are driven by the data included in improvement plans at all levels. Of those, further increase the professional development activities that result in an increase in student performance.
Baseline – Using the data collected this year from the Department of Education, WestEd Regional Laboratories RPDP evaluation, and other sources, a baseline will be established to reflect the number of professional development activities that are based upon improvement plans at all levels. The baseline will identify professional development that has resulted in an increase in student performance.
Timeline – To be completed within three years of establishment of baseline.
Standard or performance level – A system will be created that ties professional development activities to improvement planning and when compared to baseline will demonstrate the increase in student performance.

Action Steps for Goal #4
1. Conduct a comprehensive, data-driven assessment of the professional development needs of Nevada's educators.
2. Design research-based, technologically-delivered professional development as a supplement to current options. This web-based professional development will be multi-modality, available through a variety of providers, and will generate tracking and evaluation data that will lead to enhanced teacher practices.
3. Design professional development processes that follow standards of quality in accordance with 20 USC 7801(34), that reflect the Nevada Professional Development Standards, and that explicitly address each stage of improvement plan implementation (Appendix D).
4. Coordinate with institutions of higher education to ensure that pre-service teachers receive coursework that focuses on improved student performance in a standards-based system, with attention to special population and diversity students.
5. Develop a plan that coordinates the teacher preparation and professional development efforts of all entities – state, RPDP, district, schools, and institutions of higher education – in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
6. Work in conjunction with the Commission on Professional Standards in Education to ensure that the setting or revising of regulations pertaining to educator licensure aligns with identified needs.
7. Collect and analyze data concerning teacher qualifications at high poverty and high diversity schools.
8. Monitor the effect of comprehensive and varied professional development activities on student performance, then revise improvement plans and realign or reallocate resources accordingly.

Goal #5:

To implement a statewide initiative to focus on secondary education, including strategies to improve academic achievement, increase graduation rates, decrease dropout rates, improve distribution of information to the public, and increase post-secondary program enrollment and success rates.

Measurable Objective Components:

Outcome Indicator – Increased academic achievement, increased graduation and post-secondary enrollment and success rates, decreased dropout rates, and improved distribution of information to the public.
Baseline – Determine how issues and information related to secondary education are currently collected and/or disseminated.
Timeline – To be completed within two years of establishment of baseline and development of system.
Standard or performance level – Establish an informational, data collection, and analysis system for secondary education.

Action Steps for Goal #5
1. Expand the statewide informational system to provide information to secondary schools that will inform students, teachers and administrators, counselors and parents in the state concerning: a) the requirements for college admission and opportunities for financial aid, b) the availability of the millennium scholarship, and c) the need for students to make informed decisions regarding course and curriculum choices while attending high school in preparation for post-school success.
2. Coordinate web-based information dissemination systems among collaborative partners (e.g., IHE, RPDP, school districts, NDE) in order to provide secondary education information.
3. Systematically collect and analyze data concerning achievement levels, graduation rate, dropout rate, and post-secondary enrollment patterns.
4. Implement program improvement activities in secondary education, which are driven by data, increase student outcomes, respond to the needs of special population and diversity students, and reflect best practices.

Appendix A

Nevada Revised Statute
State Improvement Plan Requirements

NRS 385.34691 Plan by State Board to improve achievement of pupils: Preparation; contents; submission; annual review.

1. The State Board shall prepare a plan to improve the achievement of pupils enrolled in the public schools in this state. The plan:

(a) Must be prepared in consultation with:

(1) Employees of the Department;

(2) At least one employee of a school district in a county whose population is 100,000 or more, appointed by the Nevada School Boards Association;

(3) At least one employee of a school district in a county whose population is less than 100,000, appointed by the Nevada School Boards Association; and

(4) At least one representative of the Statewide Council for the Coordination of the Regional Training Programs created by NRS 391.516, appointed by the Council; and

(b) May be prepared in consultation with:

(1) Representatives of institutions of higher education;

(2) Representatives of regional educational laboratories;

(3) Representatives of outside consultant groups;

(4) Representatives of the regional training programs for the professional development of teachers and administrators established pursuant to NRS 391.512;

(5) The Bureau; and

(6) Other persons who the State Board determines are appropriate.

2. A plan to improve the achievement of pupils enrolled in public schools in this state must include:

(a) A review and analysis of the data upon which the report required pursuant to NRS 385.3469 is based and a review and analysis of any data that is more recent than the data upon which the report is based.

(b) The identification of any problems or factors common among the school districts or charter schools in this state, as revealed by the review and analysis.

(c) Strategies based upon scientifically based research, as defined in 20 U.S.C. § 7801(37), that will strengthen the core academic subjects, as set forth in NRS 389.018.

(d) Strategies to improve the academic achievement of pupils enrolled in public schools in this state, including, without limitation, strategies to:

(1) Instruct pupils who are not achieving to their fullest potential;

(2) Increase the rate of attendance of pupils and reduce the number of pupils who drop out of school;

(3) Integrate technology into the instructional and administrative programs of the school districts;

(4) Manage effectively the discipline of pupils; and

(5) Enhance the professional development offered for the teachers and administrators employed at public schools in this state to include the activities set forth in 20 U.S.C. § 7801(34), as deemed appropriate by the State Board.

(e) Strategies designed to provide to the pupils enrolled in middle school, junior high school and high school, the teachers and counselors who provide instruction to those pupils, and the parents and guardians of those pupils information concerning:

(1) The requirements for admission to an institution of higher education and the opportunities for financial aid;

(2) The availability of millennium scholarships pursuant to NRS 396.911 to 396.938, inclusive; and

(3) The need for a pupil to make informed decisions about his curriculum in middle school, junior high school and high school in preparation for success after graduation.

(f) An identification, by category, of the employees of the Department who are responsible for ensuring that each provision of the plan is carried out effectively.

(g) For each provision of the plan, a timeline for carrying out that provision, including, without limitation, a timeline for monitoring whether the provision is carried out effectively.

(h) For each provision of the plan, measurable criteria for determining whether the provision has contributed toward improving the academic achievement of pupils, increasing the rate of attendance of pupils and reducing the number of pupils who drop out of school.

(i) Strategies to improve the allocation of resources from this state, by program and by school district, in a manner that will improve the academic achievement of pupils. If this state has a financial analysis program that is designed to track educational expenditures and revenues to individual schools, the State Board shall use that statewide program in complying with this paragraph. If a statewide program is not available, the State Board shall use the Department's own financial analysis program in complying with this paragraph.

(j) Based upon the reallocation of resources set forth in paragraph (i), the resources available to the State Board and the Department to carry out the plan.

(k) A summary of the effectiveness of appropriations made by the Legislature to improve the academic achievement of pupils and programs approved by the Legislature to improve the academic achievement of pupils.

3. The State Board shall:

(a) Review the plan prepared pursuant to this section annually to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan; and

(b) Based upon the evaluation of the plan, make revisions, as necessary, to ensure that the plan is designed to improve the academic achievement of pupils enrolled in public schools in this state.

4. On or before December 15 of each year, the State Board shall submit the plan or the revised plan, as applicable, to the:

(a) Governor;

(b) Committee;

(c) Bureau;

(d) Board of Regents of the University of Nevada;

(e) Council to Establish Academic Standards for Public Schools created by NRS 389.510;

(f) Board of trustees of each school district; and

(g) Governing body of each charter school.

(Added to NRS by 2003, 19th Special Session, 8)

Appendix B

Teach for Success Data Chart

WestEd Teach for Success Observation Summary Data

Schools:	Combined Elementary, Middle, and High	Date:	2003-2004 Classrooms	1735	Observed

O.	N.O.	Instructional Practices to Engage and Support All Students in Learning	% Observed	% Not Obs
267	1468	Active Learning	15%	85%
299	1436	Student Conversation	17%	83%
1208	527	Teacher-Led Instruction	70%	30%
1240	495	Student Seatwork with Teacher Engaged	71%	29%
283	1452	Student Seatwork with Teacher Disengaged	16%	84%
72	1663	Total Disengagement	4%	96%

Student Engagement Throughout the Learning				
85%	84%-60%	59-40%	39-20%	19%-0% or One at a Time
586	424	265	187	273
34%	24%	15%	11%	16%

Level of Cognition				
Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyze-Evaluate-Create	
1586	1057	697	267	

O.	N.O.	Instructional Practices Related to Standards/Curriculum/Students	% Observed	% Not Obs
1440	295	Instruction appropriate to grade level standard(s)	83%	17%
771	964	Learning objective(s) communicated to all students	44%	56%
813	922	Learning is made relevant for learners	47%	53%
533	1202	Key vocabulary emphasized (DL)	31%	69%
570	1165	Consistent use of scaffolding techniques throughout learning to assist/support student understanding (DL)	33%	67%
540	1195	Frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion to elaborate between teacher/student and among students (DL)	31%	69%
858	877	Regularly provides specific feedback to students on their output (DL)	49%	51%
737	998	All teacher input, activities, questions and responses are related to objective(s) (DL)	42%	58%

O.	N.O.	Assessing Student Learning	% Observed	% Not Obs
153	1582	Summative assessment to determine mastery of learning	9%	91%
489	1246	Formative assessment to determine instructional needs of all students	28%	72%
1076	659	Monitors and/or adjusts individually or collectively	62%	38%

O.	N.O.	Creating and Maintaining Effective Learning Environments for Student Learning	% Observed	% Not Obs
1539	196	Climate of fairness, caring, and respect is maintained by teacher	89%	11%
1494	241	Standards for behavior are maintained by teacher	86%	14%
1119	616	Reinforces effort and provides recognition	64%	36%
665	1070	Literacy rich environment established	38%	62%
346	1389	Instructional time maximized	20%	80%

Appendix C

Nevada Professional Development Standards

Nevada Professional Development Standards

Standard I:
Professional development is based on what educators need to know and be able to do to assist all students in achieving high academic standards.

Standard II:
Professional development is data-driven. Student performance data is used to determine appropriate targets and priorities for professional development, monitor progress, and make appropriate adjustments.

Standard III:
Professional development is based on findings from sound research, facilitating educators' understanding of the theory underlying the knowledge and skills being learned.

Standard IV:
Professional development is continuous and ongoing, and is part of a comprehensive long-range plan that aligns with school and district School Improvement Plans.

Standard V:
Professional development deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately, and gives foundational knowledge and skill in classroom management.

Standard VI:
Professional development is built into the day-to-day work of educators at the school level, and fosters professional learning communities by employing collaborative and problem-solving work groups both within and across disciplines and grade levels.

Standard VII:
Professional development is evaluated on the basis of impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning/achievement.

Standard VIII:
Professional development is connected with and supportive of larger school, district, state and federal initiatives for comprehensive school reform, and is an integral part of broad school-wide and district-wide educational improvement plans.

Nevada Professional Development
Regional Professional Development Program, Statewide Coordinating Council
August 2003

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Appendix D

No Child Left Behind Professional Development Definition

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT
Professional Development
DEFINITION

The remainder of this document can be referenced at http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA02/index.html

SEC. 9101.(34) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

THE TERM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT' —

(A) includes activities that —

(i) improve and increase teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach, and enable teachers to become highly qualified;

(ii) are an integral part of broad schoolwide and districtwide educational improvement plans;

(iii) give teachers, principals, and administrators the knowledge and skills to provide students with the opportunity to meet challenging state academic content standards and student academic achievement standards;

(iv) improve classroom management skills;

(v) (I) are high quality, sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom; and

(II) are not 1-day or short-term workshops or conferences;

(vi) support the recruiting, hiring, and training of highly qualified teachers, including teachers who became highly qualified through state and local alternative routes to certification;

(vii) advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are —

(I) based on scientifically based research (except that this subclause shall not apply to activities carried out under part D of title II); and

(II) strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers; and

(viii) are aligned with and directly related to —

(I) State academic content standards, student academic achievement standards, and assessments; and

(II) the curricula and programs tied to the standards described in subclause (I) except that this subclause shall not apply to activities described in clauses (ii) and (iii) of section 2123(3)(B);

(ix) are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, parents, and administrators of schools to be served under this Act;

(x) are designed to give teachers of limited English proficient children, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments;

(xi) to the extent appropriate, provide training for teachers and principals in the use of technology so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and core academic subjects in which the teachers teach;

(xii) as a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on increased teacher effectiveness and improved student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development;

(xiii) provide instruction in methods of teaching children with special needs;

(xiv) include instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice; and

(xv) include instruction in ways that teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents; and

(B) may include activities that —

(i) involve the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education to establish school-based teacher training programs that provide prospective teachers and beginning teachers with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers and college faculty;

(ii) create programs to enable paraprofessionals (assisting teachers employed by a local educational agency receiving assistance under part A of title I) to obtain the education necessary for those paraprofessionals to become certified and licensed teachers; and

(iii) provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in activities described in subparagraph (A) or another clause of this subparagraph that are designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned by the teachers are implemented in the classroom.

Appendix E

Nevada State Board of Education Goals

NEVADA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
NEVADA STATE BOARD FOR OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

STATE BOARD PLAN

STATE BOARD PLAN

VISION

QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL

MISSION

THE NEVADA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION/NEVADA STATE BOARD FOR OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION IS DEDICATED TO FOSTERING EXCELLENT EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED TO ALL LEARNERS BY SUSTAINING A COHERENT, ALIGNED SYSTEM OF INSTRUCTION AND SUPPORT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ALL EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITIES.

PHILOSOPHY/VALUES

THE STATE BOARD SERVES AS AN ADVOCATE FOR ALL LEARNERS, SETS THE POLICY THAT ALLOWS EQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, AND PROVIDES A VISION FOR A PREMIERE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN COLLABORATION WITH ALL COMMUNITIES TO FOSTER HIGH LEVELS OF SUCCESS.

STATE BOARD GOALS

GOAL 1

All learners will have the opportunity to achieve high levels of academic proficiency and career preparedness; achievement gaps between population groups will be closed.

GOAL 2

Every learner will receive quality instruction and learning experiences.

GOAL 3

Educational programs, services and activities will continually evolve and improve, measured by reliable and valid criteria.

GOAL 4

Educational communities will be supported and developed.

GOAL 5

All learning environments will be healthy, safe and secure.

GOAL 6

Funding will be sought to adequately support educational achievement for all learners.

NOTE: State Board action steps in process

Appendix F

Implementation Plan Template

Implementation Plan Template

Goal #

Measurable Objective Components:

Outcome Indicator:
Baseline:
Timeline:
Standard or Performance Level:

Statutory Reference	Action Steps	Action Steps Implemented	Data Concerning Financial Resources	Partners
	1.			
	2.			
	3.			
	4.			
	5.			
	6.			

Appendix G

Glossary of Acronyms

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ACT	American College Test
AP	Advanced Placement
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
CRT	Criterion Referenced Test
HSPE	High School Proficiency Examination
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
ELA	English Language Arts
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
FRL	Free or Reduced Price Lunch
IEP	Individualized Educational Program
INOI	In Need of Improvement
LAS	Language Assessment Scale
LEA	Local Educational Agency
LEP	Limited English Proficient
NAC	Nevada Administrative Code
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act
NDE	Nevada Department of Education
NERA	Nevada Education Reform Act
NRS	Nevada Revised Statutes
NRT	Norm Referenced Test
OI	Other Indicator
PLC	Professional Learning Community
PSAT	Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test
RPDP	Regional Professional Development Programs
SAGE	Student Achievement Gap Elimination
SAT	Scholastic Aptitude Test
SBE	State Board of Education
SCAAN	Skills and Competencies Alternate Assessment of Nevada
SEA	State Educational Agency
SES	Socio-Economic Status
UCCSN	University and Community College System of Nevada

Appendix H

Glossary of Terms

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) - An accountability system prescribed by the federal government to determine annually if schools are making progress toward narrowing the achievement gap and ensuring that all students are proficient in the areas of mathematics and English language arts by the 2013-2014 school year.

All Levels - As used throughout this document, this refers to all education agencies that are required under state or federal laws to develop and implement improvement plans, schools, districts and the Nevada Department of Education.

Alignment of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Professional Development - Refers to the match between student learning expectations, what students are taught, what students are tested on, and the ongoing preparation of teachers.

Content and Performance Standards **-** Content Standards define what students should know and be able to do. Performance standards also known as achievement standards define the level of achievement (what students have to do to demonstrate knowledge/skill).

Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT) - Tests specifically designed to compare student performance against Nevada's content and achievement standards.

Curriculum Mapping - A procedure for collecting data in a school or district about what is being taught and when it is being taught that can be used in conjunction with assessment data to make cumulative revisions in instruction.

Disaggregated Data - Information reported separately for major racial/ethnic groups, students living in poverty, students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency and other student groups.

Full Community - Within this document, full community refers to all partners in the education process, such as parents, business organizations, non-profit organizations, schools, institutions of higher education, etc.

Home Language Survey - When a parent enrolls a child in a Nevada school, the parent must complete a form that states the language used in the child's home. If the survey indicates a language other than English is used in the home, the school is responsible for testing the child to determine if the student requires assistance with English language acquisition.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) - Refers to students who are learning English as a second language and qualify for English language learner services. Also commonly referred to as English language learners (ELL).

Millennium Scholarships – Scholarships funded by tobacco settlement funds for eligible Nevada students to attend institutions of higher education in Nevada.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)—Known as the Nation's Report Card, NAEP is a national assessment given to representative groups of students in each state for purposes of looking at state performance over time and comparing states to one another.

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (and its various Titles, such as I, II, III, IV, V) - The commonly used name to refer to House Referendum 1, the 2001 Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act ESEA).

Norm-Referenced Test (NRT) - Tests designed to compare student performance against the national average of student performance.

Paraprofessional - Individual who works under direct supervision of a licensed teacher to provide instructional assistance to students.

Persistently Dangerous Schools - In accordance with No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Nevada has developed and adopted an Unsafe School Choice Option Policy (USCOP) that includes a state definition of "persistently dangerous schools" based on the percentage of criminal citations issued for various violent criminal offenses. This policy also allows school choice to students who become victims of certain violent offenses.

Professional Learning Communities - A school that operates as a community of continuous inquiry and improvement characterized by supportive and shared leadership, shared values and vision, collective learning and application of that learning, supportive conditions, and shared personal practice.

Schools In Need of Improvement - This refers to schools, districts, or states which have not demonstrated adequate yearly progress (AYP) in the same area for two consecutive years or more.

Supplemental Education Services – These services are defined in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) as tutoring and other high-quality academic enrichment services provided in addition to instruction during the school day to increase the achievement of eligible children. Supplemental education services are included in the list of consequences for failure to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for three consecutive years.