The Public Education Foundation
Leadership Institute of Nevada

2013 Inaugural Cohort
Capstone Projects
Dedicated to the children of the State of Nevada
Overview

The Public Education Foundation understands that the highest-performing organizations, including our public schools, need to recruit and retain top talent. In order to bring about real and lasting change to public education, it is critical that principals and other top administrators have the vision, knowledge and courage to develop innovative solutions that produce results. The Foundation’s Leadership Institute of Nevada is building a network of leaders from Nevada’s public schools and businesses to drive statewide school improvement.

Our Executive Leadership Academy is a 15-month, intensive executive leadership experience for a select group of educational and business leaders. The program prepares participants for strategic problem-solving and the effective use of talent, tools, time and money. Participants engage with world-class leaders in the fields of education, business, finance and public policy to discuss and debate strategic solutions to the problems we face in public education. These solutions balance the needs of children, the state and our nation. Some of the nation’s top scholars and practitioners in education – including those from the American Enterprise Institute, Harvard University, Georgetown University and Rice University – comprise the Academy’s faculty. Participants complete their Academy experience with a capstone project that includes an action plan to solve the state’s most challenging educational issues. The Executive Leadership Academy provides participants with an opportunity to impact public education today and in the future.

The capstone project is an integral part of the Executive Leadership Academy experience. It is designed to engage participants in thinking about and expanding upon ideas, concepts, and strategies presented by instructors during the Executive Leadership Academy. Participants have an opportunity to leverage and integrate their skills and knowledge in order to develop solutions for Nevada’s public schools and districts. The intent of the final product is to provide state and community leaders with solution focused recommendations for public education in Nevada.

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**Capstone Project**

Within existing resources and giving consideration to the current population demographics in Nevada, identify how districts can develop strong family and community engagement that impacts student success. Outline strategies and define ways to measure student success.

**Strategic Plan Overview**

Districts have an opportunity to redefine “engagement” between schools and communities to build stronger partnerships and to help stakeholders understand how these connections can work together to improve student performance.

- Strategy I: Structure and Culture-Building System Support and Setting Expectations
- Strategy II: Get Engaged-Building Parent and Staff Capacity to Support Student Academic Success
- Strategy III: Accountability

**Goals, Objectives and Timeline**

The mission of the project is to redefine how school districts engage with stakeholders by adopting standard business practices, including the establishment of lasting core values that will permeate every school and department in the district. Each district will develop an implementation plan based on the following goals and relevant needs of their community.

**Goal 1: Improve public trust and customer satisfaction.**

- Objective 1.1: Create a brand based on the organization’s purpose and desired culture by end of year one.
- Objective 1.2: Institutionalize the core values by the end of year two.
- Objective 1.3: Communicate the core values by the end of year two.

**Goal 2: Improve service to families and the community.**

- Objective 2.1: Actively seek participation of parents and community groups in major decisions that affect schools and the district.
- Objective 2.2: Determine customer satisfaction levels at each school and the district.
- Objective 2.3: Increase access to parent and community opportunities for volunteerism and partnerships.

**Resources and Estimated Budget**

Many school districts pool local, state, and federal sources to fund a centralized office of family engagement. Nevada school districts that receive these funds can consolidate efforts into a comprehensive program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive of Family Engagement</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent University – staff and materials</td>
<td>100,000 – 500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Visits – staff time per school</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Materials – printing</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology – software/applications</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Information Centers – materials per school</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development – per school</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise Employee Evaluations</td>
<td>Existing resources/process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise Policies and Regulations</td>
<td>Existing resources/process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Needs Assessment

- Evaluate current programs and resources and seek ways to consolidate services and gain efficiencies.
- Survey employees, community members, students, and families to establish a baseline regarding current perceptions of core values and engagement opportunities.
- Determine availability of resources and potential donors to support the initial launch of the strategic plan and assess opportunities for ongoing contributions.
- Utilize year one of plan implementation to initiate and evaluate multiple needs assessments that will drive changes to the initial strategy development and planning.
Family and Community Engagement that Impacts Student Success

By

Katie Decker, Principal, Bracken Elementary School, Clark County School District
Calli Fisher, Manager, Communications, Washoe County School District
Doretha Graham-Easler, Community Relations Manager, NV Energy
Jennifer Mayon, Human Capital Management Director, Clark County School District
Lark McCarthy, Board Member, Public Education Foundation
Nicole Rourke, Executive Director, Government Affairs, Clark County School District
Foreword

This paper exemplifies a collaborative effort of six individuals who were brought together as part of The Public Education Foundation’s inaugural Executive Leadership Academy Program. It represents the research and viewpoints of all six people who actively participated in this project and who work in both the public and private sectors.

Special thanks to Judi K. Steele, Brian Myli, Rick Hess and the Public Education Foundation Board for this incredible opportunity to participate in the Academy program. We have formed lasting bonds that will enhance our ability to contribute to the future of education in Nevada.

With much appreciation,

Katie Decker, Principal, Bracken Elementary School, Clark County School District
Calli Fisher, Manager, Communications, Washoe County School District
Doretha Graham-Easler, Community Relations Manager, NV Energy
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Nicole Rourke, Executive Director, Government Affairs, Clark County School District
Introduction

The conversation about a parent's role in a child's learning experience is not a new one. For years, educators and non-educators alike have discussed the value of parent engagement and looked for programs and solutions to better involve parents in schools. Historically, these conversations have focused on the parent's role at home, and ways parents can support what their children are learning in the classroom.

More recently, the conversation is switching to a much broader and more systemic definition of parent engagement. In a 2011 interview with the U.S. Department of Education, Dr. Karen Mapp, the director of the Education Policy and Management Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, talked about moving family engagement from an event-driven approach to a critical component of school reform that makes an impact on student achievement.

"The definition of family engagement has evolved from a limited focus on a parent's role as a supporter of their child's learning at home, which is important, to a broader definition that recognizes the multiple ways that parents are engaged - at home, at school, and in the community- and not only in their own child's education, but in the efforts to improve the quality of education for all children."

This changing definition of family engagement is shaping policies and education reform platforms around the nation. The focus is on making family engagement a strategic and systemic priority where policy and practice are directly linked to student achievement. School districts are looking at organizational structure and culture, accountability measures tied to family engagement, using data to connect families and educators, and building the capacity of families to become advocates for their children. The concept that parents and guardians play a deeper and more frontline role in the success a child has throughout his or her education experiences is based on "research showing that families play significant roles in supporting their children's
learning not only in the home, but also by guiding their children successfully through a complex school system, and strongly advocating for their children and for effective public schools.” (Harvard Family Research Project [HFRP], 2010). By aligning family engagement directly to specific goals within the school district, families and staff can see the impact on results and are more likely to want to work together to build effective, trusting relationships around student learning because they don't see family engagement as an "add-on," but an essential aspect of school improvement efforts (U.S Department of Education, 2011). This transition in mindset begins by making family engagement non-negotiable at all levels – nationally, statewide, across school districts, and especially at the school and classroom level. The Harvard Family Research Project released a paper in April 2010 that outlined three essential principles as summarized here:  

Family engagement is a shared responsibility by schools, families, and the community. This includes all parties sharing high expectations for all students while in school, and being prepared for post-secondary options, 21st Century careers, and lifelong learning.

Family engagement is continuous across a child's life. In the early elementary years, this includes assisting with literacy efforts, helping with homework, and having proactive and positive relationships with schools and teachers. As students get older, family engagement focuses more on setting high expectations for the future and helping students develop plans and strategies that they can carry out on their own.

Effective family engagement cuts across and reinforces learning in the multiple settings where children learn. Learning must occur at home, in early childhood, in school, after school programs, with faith-based organizations, and community programs. Children learn by observing the values of beliefs they see around them as well as during actual lessons.

Research shows that effective, positive relationships between students, parents, and families and schools leads to a myriad of advantages, including classroom participation, lower
discipline rates, social and emotional development, increased high school completion rates, higher college enrollment rates, and improved educational expectations students have for themselves (as cited in HFRP, 2006-2007).

Knowing these impacts, school districts should ensure family engagement is a system-wide priority that is directly connected to improvement efforts and student achievement. Making this move is especially important for Nevada, a state that is regularly listed as underperforming. In the 2013 Quality Counts study, Nevada’s education system was graded as a C-minus and ranked 50th in the nation. Nevada was given a D (ranked 51) for a student’s chance of success on the same study and received similarly low marks for K-12 achievement (Education Week, 2013). Nevada would strongly benefit from a more aligned approach to family engagement.

Improving student success by strengthening family engagement requires a two-pronged solution: Implementation of clearly defined, measurable family engagement initiatives, and strategic execution of a systemic organizational shift to a franchise blueprint business model and customer service minded culture. If family engagement programs are implemented in isolation without addressing the ongoing inconsistent experiences and customer service expectations throughout a district, the variation of these experiences directly and negatively impacts the sustainability of any engagement program. A district grounded in core values is essential to sustaining engagement in the long term. We believe that based on existing evidence and programs, Nevada school districts should move aggressively to implement this concept while building in data collection and analytics to track and hold staff accountable for family engagement and student achievement. We also believe that adopting the customer service mindset of successful businesses is required.
Although the state of Nevada and its local communities have been discussing the importance of family engagement, there are several underlying challenges that must be addressed to institute and effectively use family engagement as a school improvement strategy.

1. *School districts must educate a diverse population with limited resources.*

Nevada’s student population has become increasingly more diverse. In the last ten years, the percentage of non-white students that make up the K-12 student population in Nevada has increased from 49.24 percent to 63.24 percent (Nevadareportcard.com, 2013). A more diverse population means the system needs to address changing demographics, including socioeconomic impacts in the community.

2. *Beliefs, attitudes, and fears inhibit the ability of schools, families, and communities to join together in support of student learning.*

Every person has their individual experience with schools and school districts, shaping perceptions and expectations. In many situations, this can lead to distrust, or feeling not needed or undervalued. In other situations parents may believe the school knows best, and take a hands-off approach. School districts need to focus on building trusting relationships with families and working to ensure that parents are considered true partners in the learning process.

3. *Current parent involvement strategies and policies lack consistent implementation.*

There are plenty of policy statements expressing the view that family engagement is important, but actions often do not support the stated beliefs. States and school districts must show that engagement is a priority through action, such as alignment of resources, changing organizational structure, professional development, and increasing accountability.
One example, from the Clark County School District (CCSD), shows how parent involvement practices vary widely from school-to-school simply by reviewing school websites. A review of the 217 elementary school websites indicates that only 90 schools have a current parent organization on campus. Only 62 websites had current content, curriculum information, parent volunteer opportunities, student and parent resources, and user friendly information.

This paper looks at several specific family engagement policies and strategies for Nevada school districts to consider.

Family Engagement Action Plan Implementation

Strategy 1: Structure and Culture – Building System Support and Setting Expectations

Business Model Blueprint

We were presented with the challenge of redefining “engagement” between schools and communities, to build stronger partnerships, and to help everyone understand how these connections can work together to improve student performance. In order to successfully implement family engagement strategies, we decided to begin with the underlying relationship between school district and community.

We see a culture assessment as necessary foundation building. If employees are sending different messages to families than stated policy, then the community views the district as ineffective, even hypocritical. Consistency is an essential component of a family engagement initiative and must be addressed before adopting new programs. We suggest looking at the franchise business model to adopt practices for appropriate uniformity throughout the organization.

Business Trends and Customer Service

The franchise model is built on expanding best practices in brand recognition, operations,
and training. In business, the franchisor provides a full range of services and support while the franchisee agrees to operate the business within defined parameters. School districts are structured much like a franchise business – a central office with branches throughout a geographic region – but districts have not capitalized on that structure to promote effective family engagement. Building on the similar structure, school districts can adopt elements of the franchise model for consistent communication and messaging.

Consistent Branding, Core Values, and Communication

Branding is standard practice in business, but one that isn’t found often in school districts. “Maintain the brand and the quality of everything the brand produces.” Martha Stewart. The purpose of branding a school district would be to establish a common image for schools across the district whereby students, parents, businesses, and community members identify with their neighborhood school and the district as a whole. Successful franchise models build a brand that is known for excellent customer service, high-quality products or services, or perceived value. Schools districts can build a branding foundation based on factors adapted from industry (Walter, 2013).

Five Essential Factors for Creating a School District Brand

(as adapted from Ekaterina Walter, Thoughtful Branding: Where The Company Begins And Ends, contributor to Forbes online publications, 9.24.13):

1. **Purpose** - In a school district, the purpose is to provide a quality education for all students. But that purpose is not systemically connected to family engagement. Momentum for building a community of advocates is lost, and employees don’t necessarily see sense of belonging as part of the purpose.

2. **Brand Representation** - What does the brand mean? In answering this question, school districts should review how the purpose of public education is permeated throughout the
organization. The purpose should drive everything that is said and done by all employees.

3. **Core Values** - Walter states, “Core values don’t have to be all things to all people, rather they must be specific and authentic to who you are. They need to demonstrate who you are, not who you want to be.” The Nevada-based online retailer Zappos is not a franchise, but the company is an industry leading example of corporate culture defined by core values. “For individuals, character is destiny. For organizations, culture is destiny.”

*Tony Hsieh.* The Zappos values include:

- **Build Open and Honest Relationships with Communication**
- **Pursue Growth and Learning**
- **Build a Positive Team and Family Spirit**

Zappos displays the core values on its website and in offices, and the importance comes from the way they are expected to be demonstrated in each employee’s work.

4. **Culture** - Culture builds reputation. And that can be a lynchpin for a business or a school. The core values establish the base for the culture that an organization wants to nurture. Building a positive, visible culture will yield the community and employee support needed to move initiatives that are essential to improving student achievement.

5. **Communication**

For school districts, clear and consistent messaging is a major reason to create a brand. For example, families should be greeted the same way in any school or department. It appears to be a small thing, but there’s a reason this practice is required by many hotel chains. It’s a reminder to employees to welcome every guest warmly, every time. There is a 100 percent expectation of staff courtesy.
Part of the mission of this project is to reimagine how school districts engage with stakeholders. We believe school districts can learn from best business practices: adapt franchise business elements and shift to a customer service oriented culture. This shift can begin by implementing the following action plan for establishing core values:

**Goal 1: Improve public trust and customer satisfaction.**

**Objective 1.1:**
Create a brand based on the organization’s purpose and desired culture by end of year one.

- Define the organization’s purpose
- Establish core values

**Objective 1.2:**
Institutionalize the core values by the end of year two.

- Revise relevant policies and regulations to incorporate the core values
- Develop and implement training around the core values, cultural awareness, and customer service
- Increase employee recognition and visibility based on their performance in the core values
- Update hiring practices and employee evaluations to align to core values

**Objective 1.3:**
Communicate the core values by the end of year two.

- Develop press releases and social media based messaging to share with the community
- Increase personalized contact with families
- Use current technologies and develop new applications to communicate with families

**Goal 1:** Improve public trust and customer satisfaction.
Goal 2: Improve service to families and the community.

**Strategy II: Get Engaged! – Building Parent and Staff Capacity to Support Academic Success**

**School Family Engagement Planning**

Families want the best for their children, and students thrive when they know that the people in their lives care and support them. We define that caring community as home, school, school district, businesses, and local and state government. Each of these partners has a role to play in ensuring the success of students.

At the state level, parental involvement is recognized as essential to academic achievement through policy set by the Nevada Legislature and the Nevada State Board of Education. The Nevada Department of Education has an Educational Involvement Accord that all parents sign and pledge to be involved by contributing at least 5 hours of time each school year in areas such as:

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Objective 2.1: Actively seek participation of parents and community groups in major decisions that affect schools and the district.

- Develop a family engagement plan for each school
- Hold staff accountable for plan implementation

Objective 2.2: Determine customer satisfaction with each school and the district.

- Design new customer feedback tools
- Conduct annual, site-specific surveys
- Use baseline data to determine improvement from one year to the next
- Use "secret shoppers" to assess the quality of customer service at each site

Objective 1.3: Increase access to parent and community opportunities for volunteerism and partnerships.

- Revise the District’s website to increase access to volunteer opportunities
- Update school websites with current events, academic resources, and volunteer opportunities

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**Goal 2**: Improve service to families and the community.
• Attending school-related activities;
• Attending organized parent meetings, such as PTA, PTO, or parent advisory committees;
• Attending parent-teacher conference(s);
• Volunteering at the school;
• Chaperoning school-sponsored activities;
• Communicating with my child’s teacher(s) regarding his/her progress, as needed.

(http://www.doe.nv.gov/Family_Engagement_Resources/)

These forms are signed but it is unclear as whether or not they truly impact families engaging with their schools.

At the local level, school districts must also set clear expectations for family engagement and provide examples to schools of how to develop strong programs.

The National PTA has established six components of successful family engagement through their National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. The state has determined that each school’s family engagement plan should be built around these standards to build a school culture where parents are welcome and involved in the success of both the child and the school.
National PTA Standards for Family School Partnerships are summarized below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welcoming All Families</th>
<th>• Families feel welcomed, valued and connected to each other, to staff, and to what students are learning in class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicating Effectively</td>
<td>• Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing Power</td>
<td>• Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and work together to create policies, practices, and programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Student Success</td>
<td>• Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students’ learning and healthy development, both at home and at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating with Community</td>
<td>• Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect all to learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking Up for Every Child</td>
<td>• Families are empowered to be advocates for children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Successful engagement must be aligned at every level as we envision in the following stakeholder flow chart. Additional information regarding engagement action steps at each level can be found in Appendix A.
Engaging Parents in Academic Goals

When the Washoe County School District was moving toward incorporating family engagement in its school performance framework, the district provided example plans and a rubric so schools would understand how their plans would be scored and evaluated. The district added a seventh standard to the PTA model, and provided examples of ways schools should set goals and track progress. In this example, note how Washoe County has added data collection for every standard.

1. Welcoming All Families
   a. Parent climate data disaggregated by population
   b. Family friendly walk-through reports
   c. Customer service surveys
   d. Diverse representation on parent organization or advisory council
   e. Evidence of diverse representation in murals, books, signage, school brochures, newsletters
2. Communicating Effectively
   a. Documentation of positive phone calls home
   b. Meeting agendas or documentation where parents have time to share information about their child
   c. Evidence that workshops, information sessions, etc. have two-way dialogue, not just a one-way flow of information
   d. Interpretation in other languages is considered

3. Supporting Student Success
   a. Documentation from goal setting talks that include families (e.g. student-led parent-teacher conferences)
   b. Documentation from data sharing with families
   c. Workshops on information shared on credits and graduation requirements
   d. Parent University classes or other parent professional learning events
   e. Data on parent usage of student information system

4. Speaking Up for Every Child
   a. Climate survey
   b. Exit surveys from parents at meetings when educational decisions about children are discussed
   c. Family mentoring programs or events for connection with other families
   d. Examining demographic data and documentation that inequities in parent advocacy have been addressed

5. Sharing Power
   a. Evidence from school improvement planning meetings and efforts to include parent participate and voice
b. Evidence from parent participation on hiring committees

c. Documentation from parent participation in building and implementing the family engagement plan

d. Evidence from Title I policy and budget meetings with families

6. Collaborating with the Community

a. Documentation of community partners and efforts of collaboration

b. Evidence that community resources have been offered to families

c. Evidence of partnerships on grants or other initiatives with community-based organizations

7. Building the Capacity of Staff to Engage Families

a. Professional growth system data

b. Agendas from staff meetings

c. Professional learning documentation and exit surveys after professional development

d. Supporting staff to attend state and national conferences where family engagement is presented

e. Staff climate survey

f. Student achievement data

(washoecountyschools.org, 2013)

We see Washoe County as an excellent example of customizing the national PTA standards. Modeling is important because redefined family engagement is different from episodic engagement and schools need examples of how to shift to this new methodology.

Throughout Nevada there are efforts by schools to communicate new programs that actively engage parents through the school’s website, Facebook, and Twitter. Based on the
content of these websites here are some examples of how schools are including parents in educational programs and volunteer opportunities: Watch DOGS, PTA, other parent organizations, literacy events, math events, curriculum documents, homework explanations, and surveys. Schools need to work with the parents and community to build a successful partner program – a school working in isolation will not succeed.

**Develop Tools and Resources**

We found that educators around the country are encouraging engagement. The Fairfax County Virginia Title 1 office published a list of all family engagement activities with contact people at each school site. The Ohio Department of Education posted a Sample of Best Practices giving schools suggestions for involving parents and helping them work with their children at home.

- [http://www.fcps.edu/is/titlei/documents/FIIN6-21-11.pdf](http://www.fcps.edu/is/titlei/documents/FIIN6-21-11.pdf)
- [http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Family-and-Community-Engagement/Getting-Parents-Involved/](http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/Family-and-Community-Engagement/Getting-Parents-Involved/)

**Program and Relationship Development**

In order to build trust, engagement programs must include opportunities to not only build relationships with families, but also implement programs that are meaningful.

**Parent University**

Many parents want to help their children become successful in the classroom, but oftentimes, they do not know how. School districts should be looking at ways to provide parents opportunities to expand upon their skills and to learn new abilities to advocate for their child.
Several school districts across the nation have turned to creating a series of classes for parents and other family members. Parent universities have emerged in numerous school districts, including Boston Public Schools and Washoe County School District.

In Boston, the school district has organized its parent university by looking at four key roles that parents play in a child’s educational career. They see parents as teachers, advocates, leaders, and learners. The parent university offers day-long Saturday sessions as well as other classes throughout the year that focus on helping parents gain a better understanding of how children learn and the teaching approaches used in the classroom; building capacity of parents to advocate for their child; developing skills for parents to become leaders in their child’s school; and providing opportunities for parents to build their own personal and professional skills.

(bostonpublicschools.org, 2013)

With strong community support, the Washoe County School District opened up its Parent University in 2011. It partners with more than 20 community-based organizations and individuals to bring classes to parents and other adults in a child’s life throughout the school year. The free classes are offered in various locations throughout the community in locations that are frequently visited by parents. Spanish interpretation and childcare services are also available during the sessions. WCSD’s Parent University provides classes in five topic areas: navigating the education system/student learning, leadership/advocacy, parent, family health and wellness, and parent’s personal growth and development. Parents can sign up for a wide variety of classes, such as “How is my child doing? Understanding your child’s achievement data,” “Basics of College Financial Aid,” “Discovering a Gifted and Talented (GT) Child,” “English Language Learners: Busting the Myths about Learning at Home.”

(washoecountyschools.net/parent_university, 2013)
Through these efforts, school districts like Boston and Washoe County are providing parents with the tools and skills they need to assist their family. They are tying Parent University classes to academics and asking parents to be true partners in the learning process.

**Connecting Parents and Staff**

*Home Visits*

Using relationship-based family engagement with high levels of customer service is important to building successful engagement strategies. Schools and districts must focus on building individual relationships with families. Thinking of all families as identical units that operate and communicate the same way can lead to ineffective solutions. Home visit programs can be a successful tool to build trusting relationships with families that ultimately lead to improved student success. According to The Parent Teacher Home Visit Project, the increased communication and partnerships that arise between parents and teachers during effective home visit programs can lead to increased attendance rates, test scores, decreased suspension and expulsion rates, and decreased vandalism at school sites. The key to a successful home visit program comes down to building trusting relationships. Parents need to know that educators are not there to place blame. Instead, home visits should be based around the ideas of sharing “dreams, expectations, experiences, and tools regarding the child’s academic success.” (pthvp.org, 2013).

**Parent Information Centers (PICs)**

In an effort to strengthen communications with parents, we are recommending that each school create a Parent Information Center. They will act as a welcoming center and one-stop-shop for families to get information about the district, ask questions about the school, and provide resources focused on instruction.
Each center will have the autonomy to engage with families by providing resources to support a student at every level. Students and families will be encouraged to take advantage of resources that are provided. The PICs can be an effective tool in assisting a parent with their child’s academic growth.

Professional Development for Staff

In an effort to effectively implement family engagement strategies and in order to shift the culture from silos to an organization grounded in core values and consistent customer service experiences, the district must develop and implement an ongoing comprehensive professional development plan. Training cannot be "event" based and only occur during staff development days. It must be embedded in ongoing staff activities and meetings that occur at the site/department level. Implementing training and modeling expectations regarding customer service and family engagement must become a part of the daily routine in order to take hold and become habit. As customer feedback data becomes available, it will be critical for sites/departments to design professional development based on data results.

Strategy III: Accountability

Increasing accountability for using family engagement as a core instructional strategy can be challenging, but it can also be the piece of the puzzle that ties everything together. Schools districts are seeing accountability as an essential component because it demonstrates family involvement is a priority.

School Performance Framework and Measuring Family Engagement

D’Lisa Crain, administrator for the Department of Family-School Partnerships in the Washoe County School District, said family engagement data became valuable and useful to schools when it was incorporated into the school district’s performance framework, an accountability model that classifies schools on a 1-5 star system using multiple measures of
student achievement and other data. Knowing that family engagement data could impact their
star classification, school leaders became more interested in improving climate and engagement
data and they used the information to develop their school-based family engagement plans
(personal communication, October 4, 2013)

Similarly, Prince George County Public Schools incorporates family engagement in its
performance management system by requiring each school’s improvement plan to include family
engagement, which it believes is “critical to changing school culture.” (HFRP and PTA, 2009,
pg. 6). Boston Public Schools is another example of a district that has made the move toward
increased accountability. Holding schools accountable for family engagement and evaluating
their plans to engage parents were recommended by a task force that was looking at ways to
improve and streamline family and community engagement. (HFRP, 2008).

While schools are moving toward increased accountability, they are likely to face
challenges as districts build those systems. Setting clear expectations is critical to this process.
And this process starts at the top. “To hold schools accountable, districts need clear buy-in and
guidance from states on required measures for family involvement and more monitoring of those
that do exist. In turn, states need a clear definition and strategy for family involvement, including
key standards for quality, from federal policy for family engagement,” the National Parent
Teacher Association and Harvard Family Research Project wrote in a brief in 2009 about best
family engagement practices.

**Employee Evaluations**

Accountability at the individual level can be a powerful tool as well. To truly change
culture and make family engagement a priority, individuals should be held accountable for their
role and impact in the process. School districts around the nation are adding family engagement
data to the performance evaluations of principals and teachers (HFRP, 2009, pg. 4).
Ensuring accountability matters will not be accomplished without the training to support it. National research shows teachers are not prepared to engage families (HFRP, 2011, pg. 3), so adequate and ongoing training must be included in the family engagement plan. As previously discussed in this paper, an in-depth professional development strategy needs to be integrated into the larger family engagement strategy.

**Recruiting/Hiring for Fit**

Once the core values are created and implemented, they must be included in the recruiting and screening criteria for all candidates. The pool of quality candidates must possess the characteristics that reflect the organization's core values and customer service standards. A high-quality pool can not only impact an organization's retention and turnover rates, it can also directly impact student achievement and customer satisfaction.

**Recognition**

The state should borrow from existing models, such as Florida, with an award structure that highlights effective schools so that other schools have a place to start when seeking information for improvement. We like the Sparkplug award that is given to schools because their program addresses communication, parenting, and student learning volunteering, school decision-making and advocacy, and collaborating with the community.

**Resources and Estimated Budget**

Both Title I and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 require that a portion of the funds be used for parent involvement activities. Many school districts pool these funds and other sources to fund a centralized office of family engagement. Nevada school districts that receive these funds can consolidate efforts into a comprehensive program to finance the suggestions outlined in this paper.
Sample Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Executive of Family Engagement</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent University – staff and materials</td>
<td>100,000 – 500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Visits – staff time per school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Materials – printing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology – software/applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent Information Centers – materials per school</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development – per school</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise Employee Evaluations</td>
<td>Existing resources/process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise Policies and Regulations</td>
<td>Existing resources/process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Setting the Tone – Executive Level Leadership and Centralized Services

The creation of an executive level position for family and community engagement emphasizes the importance of participation among schools, families and community partners to support student learning and achievement. This position should have a seat on the executive cabinet and have input on critical district decisions that impact the lives of students and families. A centralized department under the leadership of the executive provides resources and guidance to schools in the creation of the family engagement plans and assists schools with implementing programs and policies that encourage productive family-school partnerships.

Conclusion

There is an increasing body of evidence that parent engagement is linked to student achievement. School systems around the country are developing programs to promote effective engagement. Nevada schools, on every level, can do more to codify parent involvement policies, hold staff accountable for implementation, and shift from an independent operator mindset to a transparent culture. Nevada can do more to put established business practices, like lasting company core values that permeate every school and department and consistent customer service expectations into action, increasing the likelihood of engaging families and ROI. The conversation on parent involvement has shifted – parents, guardians, educators, businesses,
community organizations have the opportunity to work together to improve student performance and champion a collaborative, accountable workforce that recognizes and embraces strength in numbers of a large growing system that has the capacity to expand family engagement and services by being a part of a large, strong brand/organization.
APPENDIX A

SAMPLE STATE, DISTRICT, SCHOOL, COMMUNITY, FAMILY ACTION STEPS

State Level Actions

- Schools are supported in developing annual Family Engagement Plans with the involvement of staff, students, families, and the community.
- Develop a statewide, public information campaign on the importance of family engagement.
- Provide resources to schools about partner organizations that can help schools with family engagement.
- Inspire action by recognizing excellence in culturally appropriate family engagement practices.
- Develop and distribute a toolkit of shared resources based on research and best practices on family engagement.
- Encourage each district to offer training on family engagement in its schools.
- Encourage professional development in family engagement.
- Develop accessible ways to help every Nevada family be aware of what their child should know and be able to do academically and where they can go for help.
- Make available to families, schools, and districts materials that help them understand what they can do to support student learning. To the extent practicable, these materials should be translated into families’ native languages.
- Formally recognize the role that partnerships play in engaging parents.
- Encourage schools to provide ongoing professional development training to school leadership and staff on culturally appropriate practices and policies, including creating a culturally welcoming environment for community.
- Make parental and student rights under local, state, and federal law easily accessible on the state education website.

District Level Actions

- Develop an action plan for family and community engagement to be updated annually.
- Provide ongoing training for teachers, administrators, and parents on family engagement.
- Local school boards adopt a policy acknowledging the critical importance of family engagement in increasing student achievement.
- Establish policies that support and respect cultural and religious diversity as well as the demands of parenting children with special needs.
- Make available a list of family resources (community, school, faith-based) that is offered in a family’s native language.
- Develop incentives/awards for schools recognizing excellence in culturally appropriate family engagement practices.
- Allow time to build knowledge about partnerships, welcome and engage students and families, and to enhance staff skills in reaching out to families in a way that is collaborative and supports families.
- Create a pilot project modeling all areas of family engagement and incentivize schools to participate.
- Develop and distribute a district “map” (in multiple languages) so parents, students, and community members can easily find information and navigate the school system.
- Devote a section on the district’s website to allow for input on what’s working in the community in terms of student and family support.
- Schedule parent/teacher conferences at times when parents can attend and consider holding them at locations other than the school building.
- Align principals’ performance as it relates to the promotion and support of effective family engagement practices.
- Support the creation of parent organizations at the district and school levels and create teams of parents and professionals to guide decision-making at all levels.
School Level Actions

- Develop a family and community engagement plan with the active participation of students, families, and community members.
- Create a network of mentor parents to assist new families in learning about the school.
- Establish a parent resource room/office to be the hub for support for students and family needs.
- Distribute a family-friendly school walk-through checklist and provide incentives to families to participate.
- Start in the early years. At preschool/kindergarten orientations, share information with parents on how to be engaged.
- Provide parents with student grade-level expectations, report cards, conferences, and follow up as assessments.
- Provide parents and staff with current contact information and include preferred ways and times for parents, teachers, and staff to connect.
- Utilize existing communication systems (Interact, social media, newsletters, Back-to-School information, Robocalls, etc.) to keep parents informed and engaged. The importance of an up-to-date website cannot be over emphasized. The school website is often the first impression that parents get. And it can be a primary tool for ongoing communication. Determine whether texting parents can be utilized.
- Encourage parents and teachers to communicate regarding students’ positive behavior and achievements.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for informal interactions between staff, administration, and families.
- Provide clear information regarding course expectations, student placement, school activities, student services, and optional programs.
- Provide opportunities for parents to join committees that set school policies, goals, or evaluation of programs.
- Provide training to help families understand and prepare for transitions into elementary, middle, and high school.
- Provide information or training for parents about testing so that they understand what type of testing is being given and how results will be used to increase academic success.
- Provide homework help.
- Stage literacy and math nights.

Community Level Actions

- Encourage business organizations to collaborate with schools.
- Work with elders and longstanding respected individuals in the community who can share clear messages with families about the value of education.
- Provide ongoing support for families to know what to do and who to turn to when they are not sure.
- Continually assess needs and share information about family resources and opportunities with families and schools.
- Community agencies collaborate with schools to educate and support parents in sharing power in decision-making that impacts policies and programs affecting children.
- Partner with schools to provide social work and case management to support families of children with extended absences.
- Community advocacy groups, partnering with school districts, work with groups such as School Business Partnerships, Chambers of Commerce, and Rotaries to educate business owners on the importance of family engagement and what they can do to help.

Family Level Actions

- Begin work to develop a collaborative relationship with your child’s teacher and principal early in the school year.
- Maintain high expectations for your children and share them with the teacher.
- Build relationships with other families and talk about how to help each other in supporting children.
- Provide teachers with important information you feel may impact your child’s learning (changing family circumstances).
- Inform the teacher when you notice your child having difficulty with homework.
• Read all materials sent home from school and ask questions when an item is unclear to you.
• Help set goals and develop a personalized education plan for each child.
• Attend school meetings on learning expectations, assessments, and grading procedures.
• Work with your child to find a place for homework that is comfortable and create regular routines at home (meals, homework, sleep).
• Discuss your child’s school day and homework daily.
• Talk to your children often about the value of education and its importance to their future.
• Attend school activities and training opportunities that will help you support your child’s learning.
• On homework, let your child find the solution if at all possible. Give guidance, not answers.
REFERENCES


30
http://www.nevadareportcard.com/di/main/demoprof


http://www.washoecountyschools.net/parent_university/
Executive Summary - Reduction of Extended Vacation Time for Students in Order to Improve Student Achievement

Strategic Plan Overview

- Strategy I – Use design thinking methodology to build a three-year pilot program for a school-based extended year master calendar.
- Strategy II – Team with central office staff to develop and implement systems and processes that will not only support the Closing The Achievement Gap pilot, but that can also be replicated for other school sites in the future.

Goals and Objectives

- Use innovation and change to develop an equitable formula for educating students fairly from all areas of the Clark County School District.
- Focus on improving academic learning for our English Language Learner students, the fastest growing student population in the Clark County School District.
- Reduce, if not eliminate, the achievement gap caused by a three-month summer vacation for students from low income families, specifically in reading comprehension.
- Increase student proficiency in math, language arts and science by fifteen percent above the 2012-13 CRT test results for students at “High Risk” Elementary Schools.
- Develop a cost neutral extended year model that can be used by additional schools over the next five years.
- Reduce the cost of immediate and long term remediation strategies by fifty percent for students who are not working on grade level by ninth grade.

Implementation Timeline

- The extended year calendar benchmark would have a start date of August 6, 2014 and go through June 30, 2017.
- For the first year, August 1st, 4th and August 5th would be teacher preparation time for the beginning of the 2014 school year. Last day of school for students would be June 30, 2015 and July 1, 2015 for staff members.

Needs Assessment

- Analyzed past and present research-based data and trends concerning summer loss of learning.
  - Strong supporting documentation included in the proposal
- Determine the impact of the extended year schedule for families in the community.
  - Community meetings have been held and will continue on a monthly basis. Additional meeting to continue during 2013-14 school year.
- Assessed human capital support.
  - A waiver request for CCEA needs 80% teacher support. Actual percentage of current teacher support at time of survey was 90%.
Budget

- Actual cost of the proposal - cost neutral versus the expense of operating year-round 12 month calendars.
  - Projected additional cost of $90,000 (Transportation - $29,000, Food Services – $61,000). *Energy Costs are cost neutral*
- Cost savings to Offset additional cost
  - *Substitute expense for Friday coverage equals 30% of the days instructors miss school.*
  - *Sixty percent or $70,000 savings in substitute teacher costs using innovative strategies for covering instructor absences.*
  - *$1,500 per student cost reduction for time spent in remediation of forgotten learning (soft).*
- Return on Investment – Fifty percent reduction of students who follow a feeder school alignment of extended year schedules having to participate in 9th grade remedial initiatives. Graduation rates for students of low income families will increase by fifty percent for students on extended year calendar.
Reduction of Extended Vacation Time for Students in Order to Improve Student Achievement

By

Gerald Bustamante, Principal, Global Community High School
John S. Haynal, Principal, Owen Roundy Elementary School
Brian Knudsen, Administrative Officer, City of Las Vegas Managers Office
Dr. Robert Slaby, Superintendent, Storey County School District
Isaac Stein, Director, Education Services Division
Introduction

In today’s world of education, traditional student schedules have been a question of great debate. The agrarian schedule of a nine-month school year is not as effective now that many of the schools in the Clark County School District are populated with a majority of at-risk students from low income families. It is apparent that the achievement gap for students from low socio-economic families continues to widen, even though we push for the hiring and training of highly effective instructors and add the rigor of Common Core State Standards.

Summer Loss and Achievement

Research shows that the loss of knowledge for at-risk students during the three-month summer could be as much as two months loss of academic reading level. The magnitude of summer academic loss varies by grade level, subject matter and family income. The greatest disparity between low income and middle income students is in reading. Family income plays an important role in reading loss during the summer break. While children from middle-class families show gains in reading achievement during the summer, children from lower income families tend to lose ground. Multiply this loss over twelve years of education, and the result is an achievement gap of over two years in reading skills between middle-class students and students from lower income families. (Entwisle & Alexander, 1992; Entwisle, Alexander & Olsen, 1997; Heyns, 1987)

Brian Williams, NBC anchor best depicts how the summer learning gap between students from middle income families and students from low income families widens during the course of a twelve year public school education.
The video clip posted on September 29, 2011, can be found on the home page for the National Opportunity to Learn Campaign at http://www.otlcampaign.org. The reteaching of prior year skills during the months of September and October gives at-risk students a seven month calendar for new learning each year instead of the nine months of gaining new knowledge that students of middle income families benefit from. The subsequent article below, “What We Know About Summer Slide,” attaches a dollar value to the summer loss of achievement due to unequal access to summer learning opportunities for low income families:

**What We Know About Summer Slide**

The goal of the Horizons program is to stop what is widely known as the summer slide—a term that suggests a playful amusement park attraction but actually describes a grim reality. The phenomenon was studied extensively by Johns Hopkins University researchers Karl Alexander, Doris Entwisle, and Linda Olson (2007), whose longitudinal study tracked Baltimore students from 1st grade through age 22. Although low-income children in the study made as much progress in reading during the academic year as middle-income children did, the poorer children's reading skills slipped away during the summer months. The researchers concluded that two-thirds of the 9th grade reading achievement gap can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities during elementary school. This achievement level is a huge determinant of whether students stay in school and follow a college-preparatory track.

More recent findings have reached equally alarming conclusions. In a comprehensive analysis published by the RAND Corporation, McCombs and colleagues
(2011) note that elementary students' performance falls by about a month during the summer, but the decline is far worse for lower-income students.

Most disturbing, it appears that summer learning loss is cumulative and that, over time, these periods of differential learning rates between low-income and higher-income students contribute substantially to the achievement gap. These researchers concluded that efforts to close the achievement gap during the school year alone may be unsuccessful.

The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, a collaborative effort among dozens of foundations, lists summer learning loss as one of the three major obstacles to reading proficiency at the end of 3rd grade (Gewertz, 2011). (The others are children starting kindergarten unprepared to succeed and chronic absenteeism in the early grades.) This early learning gap has far-reaching negative consequences. According to a recent study by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, "one in six children who are not reading proficiently in 3rd grade do not graduate from high school on time, a rate four times greater than that for proficient readers" (Hernandez, 2011, p. 3).

Trying to rectify the learning loss that occurs in the summer is costly. There are estimates that reteaching forgotten material when students return to school after the summer costs more than $1,500 per student each year, or more than $18,000 over the course of a K–12 career (Fairchild & Boulay, 2002). Schools can ill afford these expenses at a time when their budgets are already stretched to the breaking point. Speaking on behalf of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading at a U.S. Department of Education event, Annie E. Casey Foundation executive vice president Ralph Smith (2011) summed up the urgency of the summer learning loss problem:
Too many children are losing too much ground over summer vacation, especially low-income children. This is not a school problem; this is a community problem, and we’ve got to organize ourselves to solve that (http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec11/vol69/num04/Slowing-the-Summer-Slide.aspx).

Summer Interventions

Voluntary interventions may be used to reduce summer academic loss. Availability of books in the home, close proximity to a library and accessible family transportation all support reading gains for students of middle-class families. The above-mentioned reasons for success during the summer months are reasons for failure in lower income family communities. A lack of books in the home, limited local access to a public library and a lack of family transportation are all contributors to widening the achievement gap during the summer months.

Conclusion

The one-size-fits-all mentality for educating students is in need of change. The purpose of this document is in support of the implementation of a more effective 2014-15 school calendar for students of low income families by using the CCSD/CCEA contract as it applies to total minutes of student seat time. This eleven-month, extended year proposal would become a three year benchmark for this initiative with the intent of developing a future plan of action for schools with a majority of students from low income families.

Proposed Calendar
The primary purpose for the eleven month calendar is reduction of learning loss from the end of the prior school year and the beginning of a new school year (SEE Appendix A). The proposed eleven-month extended year calendar is similar to a year-round school calendar, but with strategic differences.

The 2014-15 school year for instructors will begin on August 1, 2014. As with the traditional 184 day calendar, instructors will begin the year with three days of professional development. The students’ first day of school will be August 6, 2014. The last day of school for students will be June 30, 2015. The teachers’ last day of work will be on July 1, 2015. For eleven months, both instructors and students will attend school four days a week, Monday through Thursday, with an additional 24 minutes added to the instructional day for students and 29 minutes added to the work day for teachers. The four-day week schedule will have 169 student days, which is seven fewer days than the standard 180 day student calendar utilized by the Clark County School District (NOTE: Actual student days in the traditional calendar equals 176 as CCSD counts four professional development days without students as student days). The 25 extra minutes each day for students and 29 minutes extra each day of contracted teacher time creates additional student seat time that is equal to or greater than the total subject allocations that are part of the traditional calendar that Clark County School District utilizes and meets the requirements of the Clark County Education Association’s contracted agreement for teachers (Appendix B).

Recommended daily instructional time will be increased for students to offset the eleven day difference by increasing Reading from 110 minutes a day to 118 minutes, Math from 70 minutes a day to 75 minutes and Language Arts from 48 minutes a day to
51 minutes. There are four additional minutes per week for the Science/Social Science block of time. The Science/Health allocation will be 95 minutes per week and the Social Studies allocation will be 69 minutes per week. Transition time to and from specialist classes will be five-minutes. Students will attend either fine arts or physical education classes for 55 minutes daily. Instructor contracted preparation time will be 55 minutes each day (Appendix C). Student seat time for the actual 176 student days of the current calendar equals 65,296 minutes. With the new eleven-month calendar of 169 days, student seat time will be 66,755 minutes. This equates to 1,459 additional minutes or 24.3 hours of additional instruction.

Part of the Title I funding will be used for a supplemental two week summer lab and will be scheduled during the second and third weeks of July for students working one year or more below grade level.

In comparison to the year-round track calendar that gives students a three-week vacation every nine weeks, the longest time away from school for students attending school with the eleven-month, four-day week calendar and attending summer lab would be the two week winter break. This proposal effectively eliminates the three-month vacation associated with the traditional agrarian calendar and gives low income students an even playing field in closing the achievement gap. It allows for a continuum of instruction with less time needed in re-teaching prior skills due to loss occurring during long vacation periods.

**Implementation & Timeline**

The proposed eleven-month, four-day week calendar timeline would be scheduled for a beginning date of August 1, 2014. As a benchmark school, a three-year pilot would
be needed to validate a gap reduction in academic learning for our at-risk students. The benchmark period would end on June 30, 2017. Based on successful results, consideration for expansion of this model into secondary schools could be a phase II implementation.

**Assessment**

Multiple measures, both formative and summative, will be maintained during the course of the eleven-month calendar. A combination of assessments that could include the STAR Assessment, evaluate monthly benchmark assessments (Edison), AIMSweb Fall, Winter and Spring universal screenings, RTI data, CRT results, WIDA results and different content-related unit pre-test and post-test assessments would be part of a student portfolio to analyze growth. The key assessments would be designated formative year-end assessments administered during the last two weeks of June for each year of the benchmark and the initial beginning formative assessments administered during August of each subsequent year of the benchmark. The data would validate a reduced effect in achievement loss. The ultimate indicator would be a larger percentage of students demonstrating growth towards proficiency and a 10% growth of proficient students in all CRT content areas and for all grade levels tested.

**Community Support**

Parent meetings, at schools working to implement this model, have been held and a possible change to the academic calendar discussed with a large portion of parents of students in all grade levels. Parent and community meetings will continue to be held monthly during the remainder of the 2013-14 school year to inform families and community stakeholders of the possible shift to an eleven-month calendar in order to
validate support for the proposed calendar change. A request for a CCSD survey to validate parent support for this proposal has been made to the department of Assessment Accountability Research and School Improvement (AARSI) to validate support for this calendar. A registration process will be held during April to start the enrollment process for the 2014-15 school year.

**Professional Development**

Professional development for instructors will be held on Fridays four times each year during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years. Friday professional development opportunities will be voluntary. The contracted 180 student days will be spread over 169 student days with increased seat time for students by eliminating professional development days called student days in this calendar. Instructors will be paid for six hours of professional development time per day, 4 times during the school year. The expense for professional development will be included as part of the Title I budget or the Flex general budget as a Turnaround Zone School. Fifty instructors attending 24 hours (4 days times 6 hours) of paid professional development time at $30 per hour will be expensed. Funding of $36,000 will be allocated for the four professional development days.

**Parental Concerns**

One area of possible concern for working parents would be childcare for their children on Fridays. A partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Las Vegas is actively in place. Currently, over 200 students from the schools proposing this calendar attend the before and after school programs. To address these concerns, a representative from the City of Las Vegas has agreed to facilitate decision makers from the affected local
jurisdictions and nonprofit providers about the opportunities and challenges with the proposal. It is anticipated that the City/County, Boys and Girls Club, and other service providers will need to meet early in the planning stages to identify how best to provide service to children and their families on Fridays. In order to accomplish a fully comprehensive community approach to this strategy, once the plan is supported by the School District, the proposal will be shared with the affected stakeholders to identify an approach to out-of-school time programming that is in the best interest of the child. There is already a strong partnership between the Clark County School District, the Safekey programs, and the Boys and Girls Club. It is anticipated those relationships will help move this proposal forward.

**Special Education/Title I Pre-K Classes**

Students with special needs who have an IEP would be able to continue to have services provided with the proposed eleven-month, four-day week. A revision to each IEP would need to be conducted to adjust the weekly minutes of services provided for specially designed instruction. The same formula would be used to calculate the total number of minutes students are provided in a school-year, whether it applies to special education services (in a self-contained or general education class) or related services. For example, a student who needs 300 minutes/week of services in a traditional nine-month school year, would receive 258 minutes/week in the proposed eleven-month, four-day week (300 min x 36 weeks = 10,800/ 42 weeks =257.14 minutes).

**Support Staff**

Support staff employees can have their traditional nine-month schedule modified to meet the requirements of the eleven-month calendar and meet all the required minutes
of their current work week. Eleven-month office staff employees will retain their current
 eleven-month schedule and work a five day, eight hour work week. Support staff
 employees who work directly with students can have their six or seven hour daily
 schedule modified and give them the same amount of time on campus without a need to
 offer overtime pay. An example would be as follows, an instructional assistant working 6
 hours a day for five days would work 30 hours a week for thirty-six weeks. This would
 equal 1,080 hours in a nine-month traditional schedule. If the time is spread over the 42
 week eleven-month schedule, the same employee would work 6 hours per day for the
 entire 169 day calendar and work one extra hour per month which can be scheduled at the
 discretion of the administrative team to equal the same number of hours they now work
 for the year. The administration would continue with their eleven-month, five-day week
 schedule.

**Student Attendance**

Additional attendance measures during the months of June and August will be
implemented. Office staff will make daily phone calls home to parents of students who
are not present at school. If necessary, the administration team and/or attendance officers
will make home visits to families of students with multiple absences. This immediate
interaction will allow immediate identification of any possible attendance issues and give
the school team an opportunity to address potential attendance concerns.

**Utilities**

Utility costs are almost neutral or “Basically a Wash” with the 42 week, eleven-
month calendar versus the current traditional nine-month calendar. (David Lasic and
Byron Green, Instructional Unit, April 4, 2013). With eleven fewer days of operation on
a 169 day calendar, there will be a daily savings to the utility cost based on operations of 
the building at full capacity. An additional savings could be attained by localized zone 
management of utilities during the four-day student week, with the assumption that the 
principal of the school has control over the management of the utilities. Utility usage 
could be reduced an additional 10% compared to prior year expenses due to efficient 
localized site management during the eleven-month extended calendar.

**Transportation**

One hundred percent of the general education students that attend the schools 
referred to in the application are students that walk to school. General education students 
are cost neutral as it pertains to transportation expense. There are five school buses in the 
a.m. and nine school buses in the p.m. that service the 40 students with special needs. 
The daily expense to run buses to the sister school configuration is $1,530 per day. Data 
provided by the Instruction Unit represents a $29,000 additional expense to operate buses 
for IEP students during the months of June and August (David Lasic and Byron Green, 
Instructional Unit, April 4, 2013). This is a legitimate cost of operation that will be offset 
by savings in other areas of operation explained later in this document.

**Food Services**

There is a possible revenue reduction of approximately $75,000 to the food 
service department due to the lack of federal reimbursement on the fifth day of the week 
and additional expense of salary and benefit costs for employees that would result in 
number of days worked increasing from 170 to 210 days (David Lasic and Byron Green, 
Instructional Unit, April 4, 2013).
The additional cost for employees working the months of August and June was calculated to be $13,666.42 for salaries and benefits and additional overhead of $29,227.35 (David Lasic and Byron Green, Instructional Unit, April 4, 2013). The addition of four year-round schools and the need to feed students of year-round schools carries additional expense also. Adding additional schools to the summer feeding schedule for year-round schools should have an incremental reduction of expenses for each of these schools.

As for lost revenue, students will continue to eat lunch and universal breakfast during August and June. The notion that there will be lost revenue for the fifth day each week or Fridays, equates to feeding students only seven fewer days during the course of the eleven-month calendar. The nine-month calendar projection (estimates based on FY 2012), income would have been $473,010.67. Based on revenue of $473,010.67 divided by 176 student days (nine-month calendar), daily revenue would be $2,687.56. This amount, $2,687.56 times the seven fewer student days on the eleven month calendar would be a revenue loss of $18,812.92.

The total financial impact would be ($61,706.69) of lost revenue and additional expense. This number can be offset with cost savings in other areas of the site and central office budget.

**Cost Savings Opportunity to Offset Additional Expense**

One of the largest expenses to the Clark County School District can be one our greatest opportunities for savings. Over $28,000,000 is being spent annually to pay substitute teachers to cover instructor absences. Using one school’s substitute Services expense during the prior year (FY 13), the following absence events have been logged
over the first seven months of the fiscal year: Three hundred nineteen days of long term substitutes in service at $110 per day at an expense of $35,090 and six hundred twenty days of substitute teachers at a daily rate of $90 per day at an expense of $55,800. The total expense for the two is $90,890.

If this trend continues over the final two months of the school year, the total cost for substitute teachers supporting teacher absences would be $116,858. A plan of action has been developed and is being used that will eliminate the need for some substitute positions and absorb an additional 192 days of non-substitute teacher coverage. These cost savings will offset the additional expense created for transportation and food services.

The additional expense (transportation and food services) as outlined in prior sections of this white paper is equal to $90,706. The leadership team goal is to reduce Substitute Services expense by 60% for FY 14, so that, the savings can offset the additional expense quoted to move to an eleven-month calendar. When this goal is met, $70,115 of substitute teacher expenses will be eliminated and reduce the additional cost of the eleven-month, four-day week calendar from $90,706 to $20,591.

Summary

There are estimates that re-teaching prior year standards when students return to school after summer vacation costs more than $1,500 per student each year, or more than $18,000 over the course of a K–12 career (Fairchild & Boulay, 2002). If just one third or 300 students at the proposed schools do not need re-teaching of prior year standards there would be a savings of time and effort equal to $450,000 each year. The payback would be rewarding and immediate as our students close the achievement gap by
receiving eleven months of new instruction versus two months of prior year standards and seven months of new instruction.

The benefits outweigh the risk when looking at a three year benchmark model to improve the education of schools that have a high percent of students of low income families and a lack of consistent growth. It also has been demonstrated in different ways how cost reduction benefits would be available with this model. Many school districts and charter schools across the United States have made attempts to use a longer school calendar by adding additional days, only to lose momentum in year two due to added expense (Rich, 2012).

Change is needed to develop an equitable formula for educating students fairly from all areas of Clark County School District. The leadership teams of the proposed benchmark schools are committed to making the dream of a fair and equitable education for low income families a reality. The recommended calendar follows the lead of Superintendent Pat Skorkowky’s motto of: “Every student in every classroom, without exceptions, without excuses” as a school district. To close the achievement gap, schools and communities must have the opportunities to think outside the box to meet the needs of at-risk students with utilization of a more effective extended year. The eleven-month calendar provides the level playing field at-risk students need.
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<tr>
<td>S. V.</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Factors:
T2 = Tier 2, T3 = Tier 3, SE = special education, PO = pull out intervention, T = tutoring, S/L = speech/language, B = behavior, N = newcomer, I = Imagine Learning
Appendix B

Negotiated Agreement between the Clark County School District and the Clark County Education Association

ARTICLE 21

WORK YEAR

21-1 The work year of the teachers covered by the classroom teacher salary schedule (other than new personnel who may be required to attend five (5) additional orientation days) shall consist of not more than one hundred and eighty-four (184) school days and shall be distributed according to the calendar determined and officially adopted by the Board of School Trustees. Two (2) of the five (5) abovementioned days shall be set aside for routine personnel functions and association business but may not compel association membership. Every attempt shall be made to provide teachers a block of time of at least half-day (3.5 hours) before classes begin to prepare their classroom/work area for the school year. Teachers assigned to a year round schedule may be required to work the equivalent amount of days as calculated in minutes.

21-2 Notwithstanding the provisions of 21-1 above, teachers who are assigned to a year round school may be required to work additional days beyond those provided for in 21-1 above. The assignment of such additional days shall be determined by the year round school calendar for the particular teacher's attendance cycle. The teachers assigned to work additional days at a year round school beyond the one hundred and eighty-four (184) or equivalent school days provided for in 21-1 shall be compensated at their daily rate for each day worked beyond the one hundred and eighty-four (184) school days.

21-3 For the purpose of 21-2 above, a teacher's daily rate of pay shall be the teacher's annual salary as reflected on the teacher salary schedule divided by the number of contract days of service.

21-4 The work year shall meet the criteria established by Nevada Statutes. The teacher work year shall consist of no more than one hundred and eighty-four (184) or equivalent school days as provided for in 21-1.

21-4-1 The work year shall begin no earlier than the third Monday in August and shall end in accordance with the calendar adopted by the Board of School Trustees. This section does not apply to early reporting dates for employees (such as but not limited to counselors, librarians, in-service participants) who are required to report prior to the official first day, nor does it apply to new hires.

21-4-2 The work year shall end no later than the second Friday in June. The school year shall end at the completion date specified in the individual contracts. The school year for teachers assigned to year round schools shall end in accordance with the calendar adopted by the Board of School Trustees.

21-4-3 Consideration shall be given for teacher attendance at university summer sessions. Such consideration shall not be construed as to dictate school starting times nor school ending times.

21-4-4 The work year shall include all state-approved holidays.

21-4-5 The work year shall include the winter, Thanksgiving, and spring breaks as adopted through the school calendar by the Board of School Trustees.

21-5 Teachers on extended or add-on days contracts must complete the number of days of work specified in their individual contract. In order not to exceed the number of contracted days, time-out days may be taken during the school year with the approval of the principal. Add-on days contracts are at the discretion of the District.
21-6 The District and the Association agree to establish a joint committee to make recommendations regarding operations involving year round schools.

21-7 The principal shall have the right to permit a modification of the calendar year for school facilitators. Agreements shall be reduced to writing.

ARTICLE 22
HOURS OF WORK

22-1 Classroom teachers covered by this Agreement shall be required to work at the school premises a regular workday of seven (7) hours and eleven (11) minutes including the duty-free lunch period provided below (the workday). This is not applicable to teachers whose work year is less than one hundred and eighty-four (184) days as provided for in Article 21-1. The daily starting and departure time for classroom teachers shall be set in each school by the principal, subject to any limitations due to transportation, enrollment or other aspects of the student day. Except in cases of temporary changes necessitated by emergencies, the principal shall seek the advice of the Teacher Advisory Council regarding any revision in the daily schedule. The principal shall seek the advice of the Teacher Advisory Council regarding any revision to the daily starting and departure times for teachers once they have been set. Individual teacher schedules, within the established starting and departure times, may be revised by the principal without seeking the advice of the Teacher Advisory Council.

22-2 During each workday, classroom teachers referred to in 22-1 above shall be granted a duty-free lunch period of thirty (30) minutes. This duty-free lunch period will not be interrupted except when emergencies make it necessary to alter a teacher's assignment or special events as determined by the Teacher Advisory Council, if one exists at the school, in conjunction with the principal, alter the foregoing. The School District will continue to allow elementary teachers to combine classes during student recess periods to a level approved by the principal in order to provide a break for teachers on as many days as possible.

22-3 The principal shall have the authority to permit divergence by teachers within the workday.

22-4 Assignments of classroom teachers of the bargaining unit during their workday to lunch duty, yard or playground duty, hall duty and other functions, such as nonpaying extracurricular assignments outside their workday, shall be determined by the principal with the advice of the Teacher Advisory Council, if one exists at the school.

22-5 It is recognized that certain meetings for educational, not extra-curricular, activities may be scheduled to extend beyond the day without additional compensation for the purposes listed below:

22-5-1 Attendance at general faculty meetings.

22-5-2 Special meetings may be called by the superintendent or school principal. It is agreed, however, that there shall be no more than three (3) such meetings per school year. Reasonable notice shall be given.

22-6 Individual parent conferences which exceed the workday may be scheduled at the mutual convenience of both teacher and parent. When this is not successful, the principal shall schedule the conference at an appropriate time.

22-7 Non-paying extracurricular assignments exceeding the workday may be made when volunteers are not available. Involuntary assignments shall be made on an equitable basis. Every reasonable attempt shall be made to give at least ten (10) working days notice.
Appendix C

Allocation of Academic Time

**Traditional Nine-Month Schedule**

Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Area</th>
<th>Minutes</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Yearly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Academics</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>19,360</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>8,448</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>12,320</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science/Health</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,960</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,880</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist Period(s)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Proposed Eleven-Month Schedule**

Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Area</th>
<th>Minutes</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Yearly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Academics</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>19,942</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>8,619</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>12,675</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science/Health</td>
<td>95</td>
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<td>3,990</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,898</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist Period(s)</td>
<td>220</td>
<td></td>
<td>9,240</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Student Day Calculation: 371 minutes per day x 11 days = 3,751 minutes divided by 169 days = 24.15 extra minutes per day.

* Teacher day Calculation: 431 minutes per day x 11 days = 4,741 minutes divided by 169 days = 28.05 extra minutes per day.
Bibliography


Additional References


### Executive Summary - Expanding and Enhancing a More Diverse Teacher Workforce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do we identify, enlist, grow, and mentor a pool of diverse, promising, and talented individuals so they represent the racial/ethnic demographic of the student population and are prepared to step successfully into the role of leaders of District schools and/or operational units?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Challenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At the core of the problem is the demographic disparity that exists within the Clark County School District. Minorities make up 60% of the student population and only 25% of the district teaching workforce.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In researching the lack of teacher diversity, we discovered various contributory factors such as high school dropout rates, minorities not seeing teaching as a viable career path, and lack of support once teachers are hired. When analyzing the district’s recruitment data, we noticed how few minorities are offered and/or accept teaching positions after applying with Clark County School District.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our solution will propose suggestions on how to recruit and retain more high quality minority candidates, working with applicants in a mentoring capacity to assist them in the hiring process as well as how to retain and develop these individuals into leaders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To address attracting more minority candidates to apply to the Clark County School District and to address keeping these individuals through hire, the following two strategies are being recommended: Adding a Community Liaison to the Recruitment and Retention Strategies and Creating a Leadership Academy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost Considerations</th>
</tr>
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<td>Based on the 2013-2014 recruitment data there were 2,411 minority applicants. The number of candidates a Community Liaison may mentor within their minority group needs to be taken into consideration and effectively assigned. Funds allocated for new teacher hire and recruitment advertising will be repurposed to cover the costs of adding a Community Liaison to the recruitment to hire process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both general and federal funds, previously allocated for the professional development of both teaching and administrative personnel will be repurposed for the Leadership Academy.
Expanding and Enhancing a More Diverse Teacher Workforce

By

Dr. Roger Gonzalez, Area Superintendent, Washoe County School District
Aaron Hansen, Leadership Trainer, Northern Nevada Professional Development Program
Kristine Minnich, Assistant Superintendent, Student Services Division
Dr. Celese Rayford, Principal, Mabel Hoggard Elementary School
Hanan Sabri, Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Bank of George
Introduction

The issue we are addressing in our Capstone Project thesis is the following question: How do we identify, enlist, grow, and mentor a pool of diverse, promising, and talented individuals so they represent the racial/ethnic demographic of the student population and are prepared to step successfully into the role of leaders of District schools and/or operational units?

At the core of the problem is the demographic disparity that exists within the Clark County School District. Minorities make up 60% of the student population and only 25% of the district teaching workforce. We, along with community stakeholders and district leaders, see the value added to the students in hiring talented teachers that are representative of the student population. In this paper we will purpose recommendations in an effort to close this gap.

In researching the lack of teacher diversity, we discovered various contributory factors such as high school dropout rates, minorities not seeing teaching as a viable career path, and lack of support once teachers are hired. When analyzing the district’s recruitment data, we noticed how few minorities are offered and/or accept teaching positions after applying with Clark County School District. We believe that this discovery is something addressable within the scope of this project. The recruitment data for the 2013 – 2014 school year show 2,411 minority applications received and only 445 of these applicants accepted an offer. We targeted our focus on this discrepancy, as an area we could be most impactful in offering solutions to address the run off of candidates from application to hire.

Our solution will propose suggestions on how to recruit and retain more high quality minority candidates, working with applicants in a mentoring capacity to assist them in the hiring process as well as how to retain and develop these individuals into leaders.
Scope of the Problem

The schools in the United States have grown more diverse over the past several decades. According to the Center for American Progress, in 2011, minorities (Blacks/African Americans and Latinos/Hispanics) comprised 40% of the student population in public schools. Minority teachers represented nearly 15% of the teaching force. Clearly, the percentage of minority teachers in American schools is disproportionate to the student population. The teaching workforce is still predominantly comprised of White/Caucasian female teachers (Learning Point Associates, undated). Nationally, minority teachers do not represent the diversity of the public school student population. The research indicates that there is a shortage or lack of minority teachers in the teaching profession. So, why is this?

Many believe that the shortage of minority teachers is due to many district’s unsuccessful recruitment and retention efforts. In fact, minority recruitment and retention has been a concern across the United States for the past couple of decades for many of the nation’s school districts (Ingersoll & May, 2011). Diversity recruitment is a challenge for several reasons. First, the lack of minority teachers may be an indication that fewer minorities are interested in selecting teaching as a career path (Bireda & Chait, 2011). Gordon (cited by Landis, Ferguson, Carballal, Kuhlman, & Squires, 2007) purported that minority students are not selecting teaching as a viable career path because they are not encouraged by their families or communities to enter the profession. Teaching is rejected because of the negative experiences encountered by the family and/or community members. Kirkpatrick (2011) found that minorities are less attracted to teaching because there is an underrepresentation of minority role models in the education profession; thus, diminishing the diverse workforce. Others (Allen, 2005; The Education Alliance, 2004; Learning Point Associates, undated) suggested that there is a shortage in
minority teachers because there are more desirable occupations/careers that have a better pay incentive.

A second reason for the challenge in diversity recruitment is the low number of teacher recruits (Bireda & Chait, 2011). There are a low number of minority teacher candidates in the selection process, which may be caused by lack of skill set and/or required qualifications necessary to enter the teaching profession. Other barriers include the teaching entry examinations, low numbers of minorities completing college, and the increasingly high dropout rate among minorities in high school (Ingersoll & May, 2011; The Education Alliance, 2004).

The aforementioned barriers are factors that contribute to the minority teacher shortage. However, Ingersoll and May (2011) would argue that many school districts have drastically increased their diversity efforts in this area. The number of minority teachers doubled from 325,000 to 642,000 since the late 1980s. The fifth largest school district in the United States has data to support this claim. Clark County (Las Vegas, Nevada) has increased the percentage of minority applications by 145% from the 2012-2013 school year to 2013-2014 school year. They had 222% more Blacks/African Americans apply for the current school year with a 75% increase in job offers and 182% more Latinos/Hispanics apply with a 130% increase in job offers. For the 2013-2014 school year, 10,086 applications were received. Out of these applications, 1,015 Blacks/African Americans applied and only 140 accepted a job offer; 758 Latinos/Hispanics applied with only 187 accepting an offer; and 3,381 Caucasian/Whites applied with 1,265 accepting an offer. Refer to Tables 1 and 2 which show the Clark County School District data for recruitment for two consecutive school years.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th># of Applications Received</th>
<th># Accepted Offer</th>
<th>% of Total Candidates Offered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African Americans/Black</td>
<td>1,015</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islanders</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/White</td>
<td>3,381</td>
<td>1,265</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>758</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/2 or More Ethnicities</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*10,086 applications/interest forms received

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th># of Applications Received</th>
<th># Accepted Offer</th>
<th>% of Total Candidates Offered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African Americans/Black</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islanders</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian/White</td>
<td>1,799</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/2 or More Ethnicities</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*4,113 applications/interest forms received

Even with the significant increase in the number of minority applicants, the gap between the percentage of minority students and the percentage of minority teachers still exists.

According to the *Clark County School District Accountability Report* (2012), the district had approximately 308,237 students in 2011-2012. Minorities comprised 62.5% (American Indian – 1.1%, Asian – 5.6%, Black/African American – 9.6%; Latino/Hispanic – 39.6%, Multi-Race – 5.3%, and Pacific Islander – 1.3%) of the student population. Based on the *Ethnic Distribution Report* (Clark County School District, 2013), for this same year, there was 17,412 licensed staff at elementary, middle, and high schools. Minorities comprised 21.9% (Asian – 3.1%,
Black/African American – 6.1%, Latino/Hispanic – 9%, Multiracial – 2.7%, Native American -.6%, and Native American/Pacific Islander -.4%) of the workforce and Caucasians 77%.

Finally, challenges in diversity recruitment persist due to the inability to retain highly effective minority teachers; thus, contributing significantly to higher teacher attrition rates. Many minority teachers are employed in schools that have a higher minority student population, lower socio-economic status, lower academic achievement, and/or located in urban communities (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Allen, 2005). It is reported that minority teachers serve in these types of settings two to three more times than their White/Caucasian colleagues. The Education Commission of States (2005) indicated that minority teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching due to the poor working conditions. Minority teachers expressed they lack support at the school and district level, there are insufficient resources and training as well as they are not participants in the decision making process at the school level (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Allen, 2005). Other factors that contribute to high attrition rates of minority teachers are pay incentives and personal career objectives (Ingersoll & May, 2011). Many policy makers believe that the school faculty and staff should be more reflective of the student population that they serve and that once highly effective minority teachers have been employed, the challenge becomes retaining them in the education profession (Bireda & Chait, 2011). So, what are states and districts throughout the United States doing to address this problem?

**Recruitment Strategies**

The recruitment of minority teachers can be a difficult and time intensive task for school districts across the nation. According to the Center for American Progress (2011), traditional
teacher education programs produce the majority of teachers in the United States. Yet, in an
effort to diversify the teaching pool, states and districts are also using other programs not
typically found in traditional teacher education. These programs include alternative certification
programs, grow your own programs, early outreach programs and district partnerships with
universities. Following are several examples of successful non traditional approaches to
increasing the pool of minority teachers.

Teach for America

Teach For America (TFA) is widely known as one of the country’s largest certification
programs. TFA recruits college graduates to teach in underserved areas across the country for
two years. Extremely high-achieving candidates are selected to become corps members who
fulfill traditional teacher licensure requirements although they do not necessarily have an
undergraduate background in education or a commitment to a long-term teaching career. The
program has experienced success at attracting minority teacher candidates.

The key to TFA’s success in recruiting high numbers of minority teachers appears to be the
intensive relationship building the organization undertakes with individual candidates. TFA
uses alumni to recruit and train new corps members.

The New Teacher Project

The New Teacher Project (TNTP) operates fellowship programs in districts across the
country. They facilitate alternative certification programs for high-achieving postgraduates and
mid-career professionals who typically lack a traditional educational background. The program
contracts with districts in nearly 20 cities and specifically recruits teachers for hard-to-staff
schools. TNTP tailors its fellowship programs to the needs of districts. Districts concerned with
the homogeneity of its teachers have turned to TNTP to create targeted recruiting campaigns for
minority candidates. TNTP staff study demographic data in each of their districts to determine the potential pool of applicants. A marketing campaign is developed to specifically resonate with likely candidates. TNTP uses an array of recruitment tools including the Internet, grassroots messaging, and referrals from current teachers.

*Urban Teacher Enhancement Program*

The Urban Teacher Enhancement Program (UTEP), established in 2004, prepares teachers who have a commitment to urban schools and “who have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to promote high achievement in urban schools and who have a commitment to remaining in urban schools.” The program is a partnership between the University of Alabama at Birmingham and three high-needs school districts in the Birmingham, Alabama metropolitan area. The program recruits mid-career professionals, recent college graduates who did not major in education, and prepares paraprofessionals and other school staff in the participating school districts to teach in high-needs areas.

The teacher preparation curriculum is specifically focused on developing a set of competencies related to urban teaching. In addition, coursework is co-taught by university faculty and master teachers from the partner districts. UTEP uses a variety of recruitment methods to reach minority candidates. They ask administrators in their partner districts to refer promising school staff. They also do direct mailings to paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, and other school staff. They also reach out to community leaders.

*School-to-College Partnerships*

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) (Bolich, 2003) conducted a study of recruitment programs initiated in their 13 member states. The study found that many SREB states have school-to-college partnerships to introduce middle and high school students to careers
in teaching. One of these, the South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment (SCCTR), has vigorously addressed the minority teacher shortage by appropriating funds from the state to create recruitment programs on many fronts. From 1989 to 2001, the percentage of minority education graduates increased from 9% of all certified candidates to 21.4%. The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program is an example of this.

The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program

The North Carolina Teaching Fellows (NCTF) Program was enacted by the State’s General Assembly in 1986 with a mission to recruit talented high school graduates into teaching and to help them develop leadership skills. The program is funded by the state and provides a $6,500 yearly scholarship to 500 participants for four years. Participants must be accepted to one of the 17 public and private colleges or universities in the state that participate in the program and complete a teacher preparation program at one of these schools. In 2010, 2,000 high school seniors applied for 500 slots. In return for the scholarship, participants had to agree to teach four years after college graduation in one of North Carolina’s public schools.

The program also provides supplementary educational experiences that enrich participants’ education and develop their leadership skills. NCTF staff members engage in aggressive recruitment to find talented candidates and to recruit higher proportions of minority and male candidates than traditional teacher preparation programs in North Carolina. One of the primary recruitment strategies is called Project Teach. Through Project Teach, recruiters identify school districts that have high populations of minority students and have average to above-average achievement.

California State University Teacher Diversity Program

School district-university programs focus on nontraditional candidates for teaching
positions, including paraprofessional classroom aides and those who may be changing careers. One such program is the California State University Teacher Diversity Program. The goal of this program is to encourage racial and ethnic minority populations to attend one of the California State campuses and earn a teaching certificate. Recruitment efforts and intervention strategies vary from campus to campus; however, participants receive academic support and basic skills preparation focused on remediation in subject matter content and the passing of competency tests. Other supports include tutoring, academic advising, career counseling, and supervised field experiences guided by a mentor.

*Teach Tomorrow*

Teach Tomorrow in Oakland, California, is a partnership between the Oakland mayor’s office and Oakland Unified School District (OUSD). The goal of Teach Tomorrow is to recruit and retain excellent teachers who “reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity” of Oakland. The program works collaboratively with university and community partners to attract and prepare talented teachers who are committed to ensuring that all students achieve at high levels.

The program recruits participants and staff from Oakland civic, community, and faith based organizations. It also includes alumni of Oakland schools. Teach Tomorrow supports middle school teaching clubs and implements Education Academies at several Oakland high schools. Additionally, they provide financial assistance to OUSD alumni who enroll in programs that provide them with teacher certification and plan to return to Oakland to teach.

*Clark County School District Recruitment Strategies*

For the 2013-14 school year, the Clark County School District, assisted by The New Teacher Project, worked to identify and develop its brand of “Teach.Live.Grow.” and “Teach Vegas” campaign. Social media sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest,
StumbleUpon, and Foursquare were used to promote the brand and to attract a large pool of applicants. Print advertisements in journals, magazines, and featured publications such as Historical Black College and Universities Careers, Teachers of Color, California Association for Bilingual Education, African American Career World, Hispanic Career World, and the Mexican American Sun. Recruitment efforts included job fairs, attendance at national conferences, alumni connections, as well as local community advertisement. Yet despite efforts to recruit minority candidates, out of the 2,411 applications received from minorities, only 445 applicants accepted an offer with the Clark County School District for the 2013-14 school year. From July 1, 2012 to April 18, 2013, the district spent $45,018.58 on diversity efforts. Below is the full budget breakdown.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clark County School District Advertising Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journal/Magazine</td>
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<tr>
<td>$40,519.00</td>
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<td>Newspaper</td>
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<td>$28,049.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Media</td>
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<tr>
<td>$21,977.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel/Conferences/Booths</td>
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<tr>
<td>$16,866.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>University/Career Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,123.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website/Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$116,542.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>$225,078.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Importance of the Problem

Increasing the minority teacher workforce in the Clark County School District is important for two reasons. First, many district school administrators expressed that it is highly beneficial for the teaching workforce to be reflective of the student population. They believed that students benefit from having role models on campus that are representative of their ethnic group. According to Bireda and Chait (2011), when teachers are culturally responsive, understanding the background of students and how that relates to their education, they have a foundation to build upon the strengths of the students. Additionally, administrators in the inaugural cohort of the Public Education Foundation Executive Leadership Program believed that students were more likely to consider teaching as a profession because they witness others similar to them in the occupation; ultimately, increasing the minority teaching workforce.

Secondly, based on the recruitment data from the Clark County School District, minority teachers are applying for teaching positions, but are not accepting employment offers. No data from the Human Resources Department has been collected that indicate the reasons minority teachers are less likely to accept job offers in the district. However, an employee from the department stated that teaching candidates have mentioned that the application process is prolonged. With a premium on minority teaching candidates and the recruitment efforts of many large districts focused on recruiting quality minority candidates, Clark County School District is losing candidates to other districts where the process is streamlined. The Clark County School District is missing the opportunity to increase the minority teaching pool by losing perspective candidates during the application process. So, how can the district connect with minority candidates throughout the application process? Also, when minority candidates
accept employment, how can the district retain and assist with their career path within the profession?

**Solutions to Problem**

To address attracting more minority candidates to apply to the Clark County School District and to address keeping these individuals through hire, the following two strategies are being recommended.

*Recruitment/Retention Strategies*

Currently, the Clark County School District engages minority candidates through college and university career centers, military outlets, print advertising and online/social media resources. These recruitment methods will be continued; however, a Community Liaison will be utilized as part of the recruitment process.

Based on the research (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Allen, 2005), minority candidates drop out of the hiring process for two main reasons: (a) a perceived lack of support and (b) they do not view teaching as a viable career path with competitive pay and equal opportunity. A solution to these problems is having a Community Liaison to help candidates throughout the application process. Community leaders representing various ethnic and racial backgrounds will join forces with the Clark County School District Human Resource Department to engage minority candidates through the existing channels of communication. The Community Liaison may be a retired district employee, alumnæ of sororities/fraternities, or members of minority businesses, organizations and associations. The Community Liaison would be a paid Clark County School District employee but community leaders interested in volunteering would be encouraged and welcomed.

*Prior to Hire.*
A dialogue box will be added to the online Clark County School District application following the section where race and gender is selected. If a candidate indicates a desire to be contacted by a Community Liaison, then the appropriate liaison will follow-up with the individual. The liaison will ensure the candidate has support in navigating through the application process to address any concerns or difficulties that may arise prior to hire.

**Community Liaison Recruitment Participation.**

- When a candidate has been recruited in person, a Community Liaison would be onsite to reach out to minority candidates to inform the candidate of their role and ask whether they would be interested in being assigned a liaison to answer any questions about the city, neighboring communities, and/or assist them through the application to hire process.

- For online recruitment, this would translate into a live chat session where a potential candidate would be directed through a series of clicks to engage a liaison from their ethnic or racial group or leave a number/email for follow-up.

**Application to Hire.**

- If a Community Liaison has made contact with the applicant leading up to hire, then the liaison will stay with the candidate through the application process to hire. If the applicant did not request contact or have the opportunity to engage with a liaison, they may do so at any time during the application phase.

**When Hired.**

- The Community Liaison will take on a new role once the applicant has been hired and has taught three years in the district. At this time, the Community Liaison becomes a Leadership Liaison or the teacher may be assigned a different person that serves in this capacity. The role of the Leadership Liaison will be to assist the teacher in developing a
career path in the field of education. Teachers who possess leadership qualities will be
groomed and mentored to enter the Leadership Academy.

Cost Considerations.

- Based on the 2013-2014 recruitment data there were 2,411 minority applicants. The
  number of candidates a Community Liaison may mentor within their minority group
  needs to be taken into consideration and effectively assigned. Funds allocated for new
teacher hire and recruitment advertising will be repurposed to cover the costs of adding a
Community Liaison to the recruitment to hire process.

Leadership Academy

The Leadership Academy will nurture the leadership capabilities of talented teachers and
instructional leaders, guiding them on the path to a leadership role. The Leadership Academy
aims to develop more minority educational leadership personnel within school districts
throughout Nevada. Although many minority school personnel have broken through the glass
ceiling to attain administrative positions within the field of education, the unfortunate reality is
that minority personnel are still underrepresented in positions of educational leadership. At four
specific levels—superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal, and assistant principal — the
national breakdown is as follows: 6.5% of the nation’s superintendents, 17.3% of the assistant
superintendents, 20.6% of the principals, and 28.5% of the assistant principals are individuals
from racial or ethnic minority groups (Hodgkinson & Montenegro, 1999). Administrative
ethnic distribution for the Clark County School District are in Table 4.
Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Ethnic Distribution</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Racial</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The challenge of ensuring more minorities pursue administrative preparation programs parallels the struggles minorities face in pursuing education as a career choice. These barriers include (1) the status of the education pipeline (fewer minorities graduate from high school in general); (2) recruitment of minorities into other fields once they get to college; (3) barriers within the education pathways (for example, subtly biased testing, or being passed over for promotions); (4) inadequate salaries; (5) traditional leadership programs that do not often teach prospective leaders about their ethnic influence as leaders; and (6) a lack of multicultural perspectives within a leadership program's curriculum (Sanchez, Thornton, & Usinger, 2008).

Career development is critical. Career development strategies should include setting goals, preparing career path plans, and professional development opportunities to realize the specific plans. One of the new diversity initiatives should include a coaching component, which builds on the belief that individual mentoring and coaching is an important part of professional development for all educational personnel and is particularly essential to the career progression
of minority leaders. The following components should be included in the career planning framework:

- Assessment of Personnel – to include skills, interest, values, and other career assessments and information
- Exploration of Careers – to include exposure to pathways and specific school-based and central office administrative options
- Creation of Plan and Setting of Goals – to include both short- and long-term career goals
- Identification of Professional Development – to include specific content, as well as leadership development
- Assignment of Mentor – to include on-going support, and resources for overcoming barriers

The result of these efforts will be to create a pool of diverse leaders who will be better equipped to address the current and future challenges facing the educational system in Nevada. Each personnel that is encouraged and each barrier that is removed provides one more opportunity to increase diversity in education leadership. Both general and federal funds, previously allocated for the professional development of both teaching and administrative personnel will be repurposed for these efforts.

**Challenges to Solution**

- One of the challenges is to better gather data around recruitment, job offers, job acceptance, retention, and leadership development among all demographics. By doing so, the district Human Resources Department will be better able to inform their efforts.

Better data management may result in some increase in man hours due to data entry in the current system. However, it is believed by the authors that a return on investment will
make the solution cost neutral or a cost savings in the long run by improving recruitment and retention efforts to be more effective and efficient.

- A few of the challenges that exist with creating a liaison program are: (1) Recruiting enough quality liaisons that know the system of the Clark County School District, state licensing processes, and the Clark County Communities, will be difficult. (2) The process could require a lot of time to help each candidate adequately. (3) Liaisons will have to have in-depth recent experience in the Clark County School District to help do meaningful career planning as described above. (4) Resources that are needed may make this proposed solution cost prohibitive. However, connecting potential candidates to organizations and volunteer groups within the community is an easy starting place that can be enabled through candidates electing to allow the district to release their contact information to community groups with which candidates identify.

- Another challenge is keeping diversity as a priority goal in the Clark County School District with the other many challenges that the district and education in general faces in this era. Despite the fact that most of the solutions presented herein are cost neutral, or are low cost, people have to care enough about the value of diversity to undergo change in practices.

- Specific to leadership development, the challenge of repurposing the leadership development programs from procedural knowledge attainment to leadership skill development will require a shift in thinking from district leadership.

**Recommendations**

To better identify, enlist, grow, and mentor a pool of diverse, promising, and talented individuals so they represent the racial/ethnic demographic of the student population and are
prepared to step successfully into the role of leaders of district schools and/or operational units, the following recommendations are being made:

- Create a system to track all teacher applicants and design a mentoring/community liaison program for minority teacher applicants. The tracking system will inform the Human Resources Department at which stage in the application process they may be losing viable candidates; thus, allowing a strategic plan to be developed to successfully recruit teachers. The mentoring/community liaison program will assist candidates throughout the application process to hire. The purpose of the mentoring program would be to answer questions about the district, available community resources and assist with any questions or concerns that may arise from the point of recruitment to hire.

- Design a leadership program aimed to assist minority teachers with goal setting, career path planning, and professional development opportunities.
References


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