



Parent Involvement ●—● Student Achievement

## Report On *Nevada's Second Parent Involvement Summit*

Offered in collaboration with  
Assemblywoman Debbie Smith,  
Nevada State Parent Information &  
Resource Center (PIRC) at the Education  
Collaborative, Clark County School District,  
WCSD Early Childhood Department,  
Nevada Parent Teacher Association,  
and the Nevada Department of Education

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Northwest Career and Technical Academy  
8200 West Tropical Parkway  
Las Vegas, Nevada



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## History & Purpose

In 2001 Assembly Bill 201 (NRS 392.457), sponsored by Assemblywoman Debbie Smith, required that the Nevada Department of Education and the seventeen school districts adopt a parent involvement policy based on the six national standards for parent involvement. The NRS has since been revised to also include requirements for school and district parent involvement policies under the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the Nevada State Educational Involvement Accord and the Nevada Report to Parents

In order to support schools and districts in their implementation of the policy, the first State Parent Involvement Summit “Connect the Dots – Parent Involvement & Student Achievement” was held in Reno in March of 2006. Summit Steering Committee Chair Barbara Clark, Assemblywoman Debbie Smith, Nevada Department of Education Consultant Janie Lowe and Joanne Everts, Director of Early Childhood Education for Washoe County School District, leveraged resources to host a full day of professional development for school staff, administrators, parents, legislators and community members. A concluding session also identified systemic needs for parent involvement in the state, and a final report on the Summit was presented to the legislature in November of 2006.

In 2006 the Education Collaborative of Washoe County, Inc. applied for and received the federal Parent Information & Resource Center grant for the State of Nevada. One of the identified strategies in the grant was to continue funding and support for a second Statewide Parent Involvement Summit in Las Vegas. The steering committee included the original members and added representatives from Clark County School District, Nevada Parent Teacher Association, Washoe County School District and the Nevada State PIRC at the Education Collaborative.

With accountability, student achievement and systemic educational change in mind, the steering committee chose to focus on parent involvement and school improvement as the theme for the 2008 Summit. The purpose of the second Summit was to continue providing support for schools in their implementation of effective and meaningful parent involvement policies, and to maintain the focus for statewide changes needed for systemic parent involvement.

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> Nevada State Parent Involvement Summit – “At a Glance”

Keynote speaker, Karen L. Mapp, Ed.D., Lecturer from the Harvard Graduate School of Education shared with participants the “Why, What and How of Family-School Partnerships.” The participants learned about the current research, the link between family-school partnerships and student achievement as well as information on practical strategies.

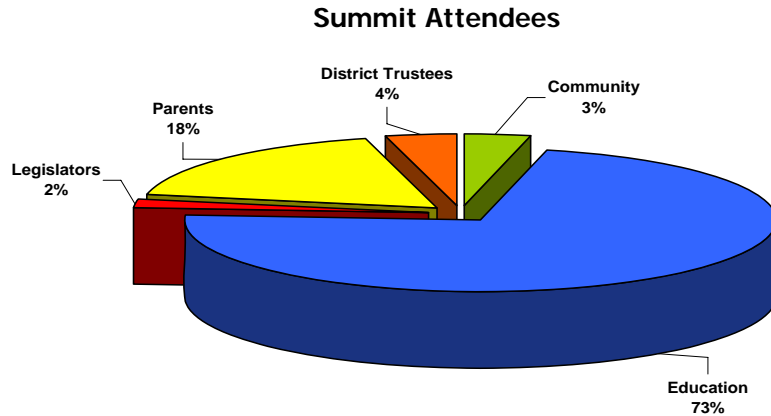
Concurrent breakout sessions following the keynote speech included:

- Closing Gaps and Opening Doors
- Involving Parents in the School Improvement Plan
- Student-Led Parent Teacher Conferences
- Parental Involvement Leads to School Success for Students with Disabilities
- Parent Centers Model from Clark County School District
- Linking Parent Involvement and Student Achievement by Involving Parents in the Academic Process
- The Why, What and How of Family School Partnerships, part 2
- Parent Power! A Positive “Media Diet”
- Title I Parent Involvement Policies – Are they Working?
- Resources, Resources, Resources! The Nevada State PIRC Can Help You!
- The Robert L. Ford K-8 School in Massachusetts, a Model School for Parent Involvement
- The Nevada Parent Network: Building a Bridge to Parental Involvement
- Connecting with Diverse Families
- ENLACE – Engaging Latino Communities for Education
- Strengthening Both Sides of the Partnership, Helping your School Staff to Engage Parents

## Audience

Two hundred and one participants attended the Summit including parents, legislators, school administrators and staff as well as community members. Twelve of Nevada's seventeen school districts were represented, and many districts brought a team of parents, school staff and administrators.

Nevada's leadership was also represented and included Assembly Speaker Barbara Buckley, Assemblywoman Barbara Cegavske, Assemblyman Moises Denis and Summit Co-Founder, Assemblywoman Debbie Smith. Nevada Superintendent of Public Instruction, Keith Rheault and Deputy Superintendent Gloria Dopf were in attendance as well as the Superintendent of Clark County School District, Dr. Walt Ruffles.



## Closing Session

Assemblywoman Debbie Smith led the closing session by asking school teams to design a plan for parent involvement utilizing the research based strategies and best practices that had been highlighted throughout the day. School and district teams were provided a school improvement plan template, and spent an hour tying chosen strategies to student academic achievement goals. Summit participants concluded by reviewing the recommendations from the 2006 Summit and after discussion confirmed that these should remain the priorities for state implementation.

## Next Steps

The Summit Steering Committee will convene a key group of stakeholders this fall to revisit the findings from the first Summit and prioritize the needs for implementation. The next Summit is planned for 2010 in Reno. Local stakeholders are encouraged to host a smaller conference in the interim years in both the north and south.

The recommendations from the first Summit still remain valid and should be considered as necessary steps to further parent involvement in education in the state. These recommendations were:

1. **The Need for Leadership and Coordination** – a structure for parent involvement at the state and district levels needs to be in place in order to share best practices and coordinate efforts. The committee strongly suggests this as a first step. Establishing a Parent Involvement Council, a Parent Involvement Consultant position at the Nevada Department of Education and a designated staff person in each District is critical to supporting our schools and parents.
2. **Resources are a Barrier** – not all schools have the resources of our Title I schools, however the need for funding to implement programs and outreach is just as critical. Participants from the first Summit also requested technical assistance and training to further parent involvement in their schools and districts. Both of these requests require funding at the state level.
3. **Building Trust (Relationships) is Critical** – building relationships and trust with parents is essential to the parent involvement partnership. Schools need examples of effective outreach efforts to connect with our most disenfranchised families.
4. **Recognized Need for Collaboration** – those who attended both the first and second Summits indicated a willingness to continue working together to further parent involvement. Several participants indicated that additional policies to support parent involvement should be considered.

## **Sponsors & Supporters**

Governor Jim Gibbons  
Senator William Raggio  
Assembly Speaker Barbara Buckley  
Assemblywoman Debbie Smith  
Assemblyman Moises Denis  
Nevada State Parent Information & Resource Center (PIRC), Education Collaborative of Washoe County  
Nevada Parent Teacher Association  
Nevada Department of Education  
Clark County School District  
Washoe County School District  
WCSD Early Childhood Education  
GROW Network  
Regional Technical Institute, Reno

## **Summit Steering Committee**

Barbara Clark, Chair  
Assemblywoman Debbie Smith  
D’Lisa Crain, Washoe County School District Parent Involvement Coordinator and Nevada State Parent Information & Resource Center (PIRC) Grant Administrator, Education Collaborative of Washoe County, Inc.  
Joanne Everts, WCSD Director of Early Childhood Education  
Denise Hedrick, Executive Director, Education Collaborative of Washoe County, Inc.  
Janie Lowe, Title I Consultant, Nevada Department of Education  
Eva Melendrez, Parent Services Coordinator, Community and Government Relations, Clark County School District  
Alison Turner, President Elect, Nevada Parent Teacher Association (PTA)

## **Staff Who Supported the Summit**

Ana Anderson, Washoe County School District & Education Collaborative  
Sandra Arguello, Clark County School District  
Joyce Haldeman, Clark County School District  
Cassandra Hemsley, Washoe County School District  
Jeff Lehman, Washoe County School District  
Valerie Martino, Washoe County School District  
Steve Mulvenon, Washoe County School District  
Matt Oates, Education Collaborative  
Frank Pesce III, Clark County School District  
David Phillipi, Clark County School District  
Laura Saunders, Education Collaborative  
Nanette Sison, Education Collaborative  
Beki Strauss, Education Collaborative  
Jo Walsh, Washoe County School District

## **Evaluation**

The evaluation brief on the following page was prepared by the Center for Program Evaluation at the University of Nevada, Reno. CPE is the independent evaluator for the Nevada State PIRC Grant and compiled the results of the Summit survey as part of the overall evaluation for the grant.

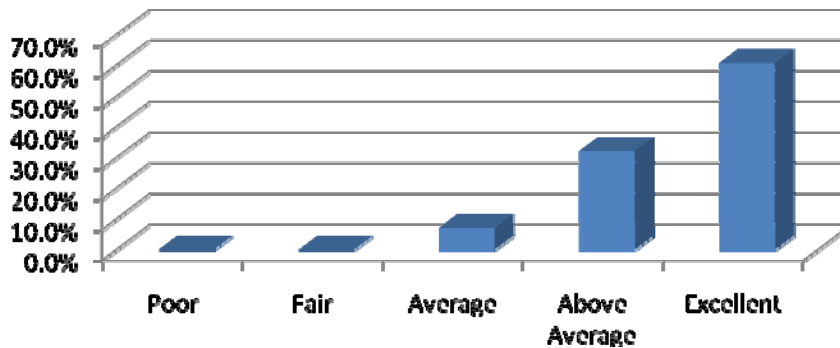
## Evaluation Brief: Connecting the Dots 2008 Parent Involvement Summit

The Summit Steering Committee in collaboration with the Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC) held the Connecting the Dots Parent Involvement Summit in Las Vegas on February 29, 2008. An evaluation form was completed by 142 summit participants.

### Summit Evaluation Highlights

- Feedback from summit participants was very positive.
- The majority of respondents (93%) rated the Parent Involvement Summit as “Excellent” or “Above average.”
- Mean level of agreement with statements about the summit ranged from 4.3 to 4.5 (between agree and strongly agree).
- More than 88% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with each item.
- 89% would “very likely” attend the next parent involvement summit.
- 99% would recommend the parent involvement summit to others.

**Summit Rating**



Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with several statements about the summit on a scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. In the table below, strongly disagree and disagree are combined into one category as are agree and strongly agree.

	Mean Rating	Strongly Disagree or Disagree (1-2)	Neutral (3)	Strongly Agree or Agree (4-5)
Attending the Parent Involvement Summit was a positive experience for me.	4.5	4.9%	2.8%	92.3%
I learned information that will impact student achievement through parent involvement.	4.3	6.4%	4.3%	89.4%
I have ideas about how I will apply the information learned.	4.3	4.9%	4.2%	90.8%
I was treated as a valued participant at the Summit.	4.4	4.9%	2.8%	92.3%
The Summit was well organized.	4.5	4.9%	2.1%	93.0%
Overall, I found the information from the Parent Involvement Summit to be <b>useful</b> .	4.4	5.7%	2.8%	91.5%
Overall, I found the Summit to be <b>relevant</b> to my work.	4.3	5.7%	5.7%	88.6%
Overall, I found the Summit to be <b>high quality</b> .	4.4	5.1%	2.2%	92.8%

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