



A LOOK **AHEAD**

PHASE II: PROGRESS MADE AND THE NEXT MILE

Improving Achievement in the
Clark County School District



Superintendent of Schools Dwight D. Jones

September 27, 2012

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

“All students will graduate from high school having the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to achieve academically, prosper economically, and contribute in a diverse global society.”

— Board of School Trustees Vision Statement



(back row) Lorraine Alderman, Clerk; Erin E. Cranor; Chris Garvey; Carolyn Edwards

(front row) Dr. René Cantú, Jr.; Dr. Linda E. Young, President; Deanna L. Wright, Vice President

**“All our efforts have one purpose.
It is to ensure all students are Ready By Exit.”**

— Superintendent Dwight D. Jones

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TO THE COMMUNITY OF THE CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

More than a year ago, the Clark County School District issued a reform road map titled “A Look Ahead.” It described initiatives intended to ensure all students are “Ready By Exit.” Subtitled “Phase I: A Preliminary Reforms Report,” it hinted at change that will occur in phases.

The enclosed pages document accomplishments of the last year, describe work still underway, and point to future efforts. The report has a single message: While strides have been made to turn the corner on improving performance, challenges remain.

Evidence shows that the Clark County School District is moving in the right direction. Though resources have tightened, a sharper focus has led to better results. That is to say, although funding declined, performance improved. Better results were achieved with fewer resources. **More was done with less.**

That does not happen by chance. It happens because a community steps up and answers a call. A letter to our community in February 2011 (“A Few Lessons Learned”), described the futility of doing the same things and expecting better results. A downturn as serious as the one facing our community offers both a challenge and an opportunity to **rethink how work is done.** And look at how our community stepped up.

The enrollment surge that took place between 1985 and 2010 earned the Clark County School District a reputation as the fastest-growing large district in the nation, yet our output slipped to the point where Clark County School District had become the lowest-performing large district in



terms of graduation. That story is changing. Today, we stand poised to shift **from the fastest-growing** large district in the nation **to the fastest-improving one.**

This describes what comes next. The key is not to pile on more change but provide more-useful data, more-helpful tools, and more-focused resources. All are designed to better support great teaching and efforts currently underway. The focus must be on using resources to better support classroom instruction.

The story of the Clark County School District is one of **fast-paced growth that stretched services** and has produced a loosely coupled organization. Rapid growth since the late 80s added nearly 200,000 students and strained the capacity of the District to provide centralized services. As a result, schools learned to fend for themselves. Not surprisingly, schools now operate

"This next stage of reform should focus on rethinking central office support so it clears the way for teachers and leaders to do their very best work."

quite independently. Rapid growth had a similar impact on non-school-based departments. In the words of one, "If the Clark County School District were a football team, it would be hard to count on us to gain a yard. Sure we have talent, but we have a lot of independent operators, and schools and departments sometimes work at cross-purposes. It is exciting to imagine what we can achieve when we all pull in the same direction. Then watch us succeed!"

Today the **greatest challenge is coordinating the actions of many people.** Pressing the football metaphor, it is as if what we need most is for the offensive line to block in unison. When that happens, it clears the way for running backs to gain yardage. If the offensive line is central office, then running backs are the teachers and staff in schools. This next stage of reform should focus on rethinking central office support so it clears the way for teachers and leaders to do their best work. That means greater coordination between departments and schools.

Some may question the pace of change but few can dispute that the Clark County School District is **headed in the right direction.** Recent gains put us in a better position to articulate whether and



how more funds would accelerate improvement and contribute to greater student success. As a result of this past year, it is clear, for instance, how similar districts achieve greater success. In part it is due to their commitment to high-quality early-childhood programming. Other districts with even more challenging student populations than the Clark County School District have translated high-quality English language learning support into greater academic success. And it is now obvious that there is a widespread need among Clark County School District teachers for better support for their efforts to individualize instruction so the needs of diverse learners are met. Still, improvements in the graduation rate and test scores are encouraging. While the Clark County School District cannot rest on its laurels, the narrative emerging from the District is prototypically American. It is **the story of success in the face of adversity.**

Thanks go to our Board of School Trustees which provides direction for the District, as well as the talented teachers, support staff, and administrators who make it happen. Collectively, they are the reason we can be excited. Times are tough and funds are short, but student **success is on the rise** and spreading. Credit goes to them.

Dwight D. Jones
Superintendent of Schools

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Las Vegas loves a winner. It can be a prizefight victor, a box office star, or a championship UNLV basketball team. The effect is the same. The celebrity buzz is undeniable. Whether it involves athletics, entertainment, or politics, the intoxication is familiar. Perhaps we love a winner because we dream of it for ourselves.

In honest moments, we know there is more to it than that. Success is sometimes due to luck; more often it is the result of dedication and hard work. A celebration that follows a win at slots is different from one that follows graduation or a job promotion. **Celebrations that stem from skillful practice bring pride.**

Success that springs from grit and determination has a place in our folklore. Stories like that remind us of our nation's history, and so they have a mythic quality. But for a dream of a brighter tomorrow to mean anything, it must resonate with us all, with every citizen, and with all students of every race, ethnicity, and social station. Success must follow for those willing to work hard. School must maximize the potential of all, not reinforce the advantage of some due to the coincidence of birth. **Academic success and zip code must be unrelated.**

The good news is that today we see more clearly how schools provide the setting for so many personal success stories. With the implementation of a statewide model of academic growth and a School Performance Framework in the District, we can more clearly identify schools that are transforming student **dreams into reality.** The real test is to make that success possible for every school

and each student. The trick is to use what we now know to assist schools that need support, and do it so every school and every student experiences success.

In a world of uncertainty, this much seems true: The way to improve is to **align to what matters most.** Whether it is business, government, or schooling, there ought to be a North Star. Businesses strive to create value for owners and customers. Governments seek to protect the weak and maximize the good. Educators toil to fulfill a pledge to parents to provide every student with a **passport to a better life,** one of promise and possibility.

The Clark County School District has experienced peaks and valleys in the last quarter century. Unparalleled enrollment growth was followed by an unprecedented drop in state funding. By some accounts, the present level of K-12 funding is lower on a per-pupil basis than nearly every other state. Not only has per-pupil state revenue for the District been low on an absolute scale, it has declined in real terms for three successive years. During this period, funding levels dropped and graduation rates tumbled. This educational downturn was matched by an economic downturn that has swept the nation. The combination of soaring unemployment rates, spiking foreclosure rate, and falling graduation rates put the city and District at the top of the wrong lists and the bottom of the right ones.

But **fortunes are changing** in Clark County. Early indications of rebound appear in the business world as well as the school world. Signs of community resurgence appear in a classy

new cultural center, a modern international air terminal, and the Downtown Project that is bringing fresh energy, imagination, and life to the city. A reviving community spirit was matched this year by signs of recovery in the Clark County School District, the fifth largest in the country. Graduation rates inched up for the first time in recent memory. State test **scores for Clark County School District students are upwardly trending in nearly every subject and grade.** Credits earned by Clark

collaboration, and careful execution. So how does that happen?

The answer is simple. **The real rock stars** in Las Vegas these days are the **teachers and leaders of schools who defy the odds** and deliver big wins for students, day after day. While parents have long-loved the teachers of their neighborhood schools, for too long too many of these success stories have been hidden gems. Today new tools allow us to gauge success

more clearly and allow us to identify successful schools and the extraordinary teachers who toil in them.

Yet optimism must be tempered with a hard truth. Modest improvements in graduation rates and test scores are nascent signs that changes are gaining traction, but **the agenda is unfinished.** As long as even one student is unsuccessful in the world after high school, claims of victory ring hollow. Continued change is needed in public education. It is easy to say that improvement is necessary, but the real puzzle

is to know exactly what should change so things improve across the board.

Getting the **ladder on the right wall** means being clear about the problems we are trying to solve and the questions we are trying to answer.

Challenges abound. Expectations are changing. Standards are rising. Competition is increasing. Accountability is growing. Funds are dwindling. In tight times, improvement comes from keenly focusing on what matters most. If the aim is to ensure all students are successful, is it



County School District students are increasing. Remediation courses have disappeared almost altogether from secondary schools in the District. Turnaround schools are turning around. In the initial year of a new star rating system, nearly one-third of Clark County schools earned a 4-Star or a 5-Star rating of excellence. There are indisputable signs that a corner has been turned (see Appendix).

The success in Clark County schools these days has **nothing to do with luck.** It has everything to do with skillful practice, deliberate

enough to preserve opportunity and access? If all students are to be successful, then successful on what, and to what level? Is graduation enough? If college- and career-readiness are the goals, what does that really mean? What evidence of improvement is acceptable? How do we decide what “good enough” is?

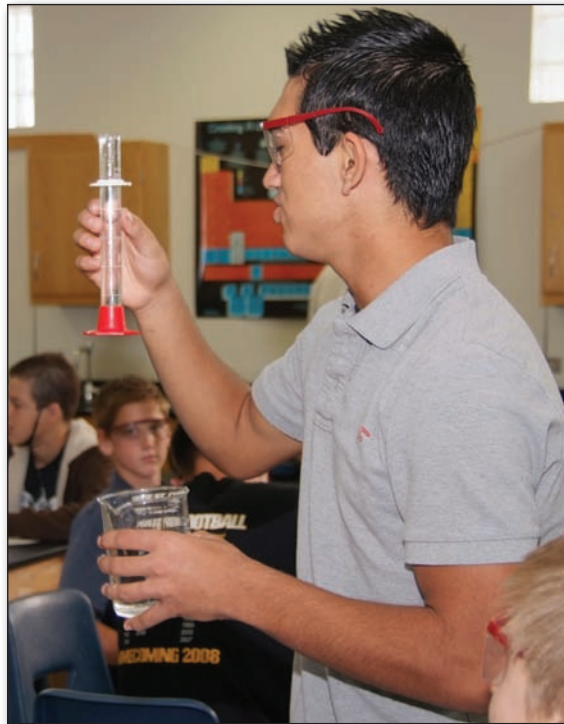
Results from this last year convince us of one thing. The key for this year is straightforward:

- **Stay the course.**
- **Support great teaching.**
- **Learn from each other what works.**
- **Ensure freedom to innovate for those on the reform path.**

Moving ahead this year, the Nevada Growth Model and the School Performance Framework will help us see how well, how many, and which teachers are making the biggest difference in terms of student growth and performance. And what we have seen is that remarkable things are happening for students throughout Clark County.

Because the School Performance Framework is just a tool, what really matters is what we do with the tool. Dr. Stephen Augspurger, executive director of the Clark County Association of School Administrators and Professional-technical Employees, reminds us that **“tools that build cathedrals can also tear them down.”** What really matters is the skill of the one using the tool.” Good things are happening in the Clark County School District in part because adult success is being defined in terms of student success. With the School Performance Framework, the District is creating healthy tension and a set of signals that encourage every school to become better tomorrow than it is today.

It is encouraging to see refreshing and welcomed honesty. The star ratings of schools are important



but they are not a beauty contest. What matters most is what staff does with the information found in the School Performance Framework. It is really about what happens next. The information can be used to **learn to get better, faster.** Investing in improved professional training is even more important today so teachers can act on the results from tools. The hardest work lies ahead as all of us learn to use results from the School Performance Framework to **expect more of ourselves as well as our students.**

INTRODUCTION

Three things are evident.

- **First, districts of similar complexity can and do deliver better academic results.** In summer 2011 the District commissioned a study of Educational and Operational Efficiency. Completed in August 2011 by the Gibson Group, the study compared Clark County School District achievement to the performance of three other districts (Miami-Dade, Houston, and Broward County). All three had higher percentages of minority and free and reduced lunch students but all had higher achievement than the Clark County School District.
- **Second, academic success exists in Clark County and is not confined to certain neighborhoods.** Success is found in every corner of our community. Success resides in elementary schools in northwest Las Vegas. This includes schools in the Prime Six area like Quannah McCall and Jo Mackey (5-Star schools), Walter Bracken (another 5-Star school), as well as Kit Carson (formerly a turnaround school but now a 4-Star school). High performance is found in high-poverty areas of east Las Vegas. This includes elementary schools like J. M. Ullom and Cyril Wengert (both 5-Star) and nearby Halle Hewetson Elementary School (also 5-Star), where 100 percent of students live in poverty and 78 percent are English language learners. Nearly one-third of the elementary schools that achieved 5-Star status happen to serve high percentages of English language learners and/or students of poverty. But

high performance in the face of challenge is not restricted to elementary schools. At the middle level, a handful of schools reached the 4-Star mark. They include Thurman White, Lawrence and Heidi Canarelli, Laughlin, Bob Miller, Sig Rogich, and Del E. Webb middle schools. Of these, White and Canarelli middle schools (in Henderson and southwest Las Vegas, respectively) serve the most diverse population, demonstrating it is possible for middle schools to defy odds and close gaps. At the high school level as well, success is found throughout the Clark County School District. Three College of Southern Nevada High Schools (East, South, and West) demonstrate 5-Star excellence. At these schools, students concurrently earn a high school diploma and an associate degree. Also at the high school level, academic distinction is found within the family of magnet schools. Some that are located in the heart of the city enjoy uncommon success (Advanced Technologies Academy, Ed W. Clark, Las Vegas Academy, and West Prep). Comprehensive high schools broaden the range of choices open to students. **High-quality choices can**

*“High performance
is found in high-poverty areas
of east Las Vegas.”*



be found at every azimuth on the compass. Fulfilling their promise to prepare all students so they are “Ready By Exit,” comprehensive high schools that are located in rural communities (led by Moapa Valley High School) as well as in urban and suburban communities (led by Coronado High School, Green Valley High School, and Liberty High School) give students full-featured options that rival schools anywhere in terms of educational quality. Not to be outdone, the career and technical academies of the Clark County School District rely on innovative pathways to deliver excellence daily by furnishing students with the 21st Century skills that prepare them for success in today’s workplace.

- **Third, academic success can be found within every school in the Clark County School District.** In some, excellence lives in every classroom. In others, it is less common. New ways of viewing academic growth allow us to demonstrate that excellent teaching resides in every building.

This leads to the inescapable conclusion that we can and should expect more of students and ourselves. Evidence from schools in some of our most challenging neighborhoods show that Clark County School District teachers and students are experiencing a level of academic success that we know is possible for all teachers and students. These proof points convince us of one thing. That is, **we know enough to act** in ways that deliver the performance we desire.

This is not a story about another new program or one more thing. **It is about working together differently.**

As we look ahead, this document addresses a key question: What must happen so the success of some extends to all?

THEORY OF ACTION



In 2011-2012 the District employed a limited number of organizing principles to lift student performance:

- **Raise expectations** for students and staff in a way that ensures all graduates are “Ready By Exit.”
- **Focus resources more tightly** on what matters most, that is “capacity building with a focus on results.”
- Provide **clearer incentives** and **more transparency** via the School Performance Framework and Growth Model.
- **Define adult success in terms of student success** and increase the reach of successful teachers and schools.
- Provide **better technology, data, and tools** to enhance engagement and promote continuous improvement.
- Invest in people, structures, and processes in ways that **improve the return on investment.**
- Utilize empowerment to **trade increased flexibility in return for improved student performance.**

Going forward, these principles will continue to guide District action.

LOOKING BACK TO LOOK AHEAD

When “A Look Ahead: Phase I” was published, goals were enumerated for key initiatives. Those goals are revisited here and an update of progress is provided. For clarity, the initiatives described in the original are listed below (see pages 7-8 of “A Look Ahead: Phase I”).

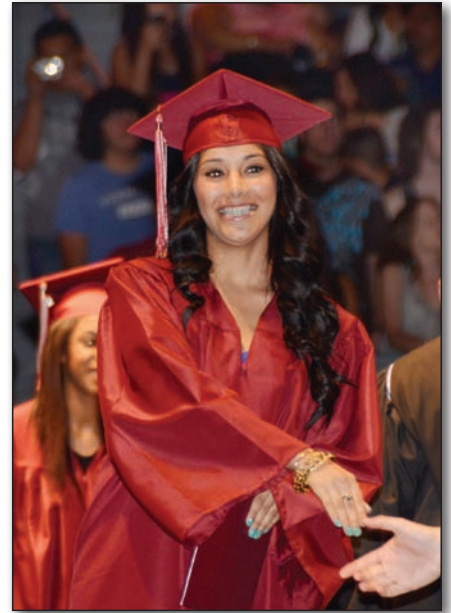
Figure 1: Progress Report

Goal Description	Goal Drafted	Resources Committed	Approval Given for Project Launch	Project Gains Traction (Maintenance of Effort)	Implementation Evaluated	Goal Attained
Raising the Bar: Focus expectations on preparing all students so they are “Ready By Exit.”						
Empowerment: Provide schools with relief from unnecessary oversight in return for high achievement.						
Performance Zone: Reorganize the Area Service Center structure into 13 performance zones.						
Autonomous Zone: Establish a single autonomous zone in the District.						
New Schools Division: Design a New Schools Division to expand innovative school models.						
Turnaround: Use federal funds to restructure schools in ways that improve achievement.						
Growth Model: Launch a system to gauge how each student in Grades 3-8 progresses yearly.						
4-Tier Evaluation: Shift from classifying teachers (satisfactory or unsatisfactory) to a four-tiered system.						
Performance Framework: Make yearly academic growth the centerpiece of a School Performance Framework.						
Return on Investment: Couple growth and financial data to identify schools making high growth at low cost.						
Incentives: Recognize, support, and learn from teachers who get better-than-expected results with students.						
Human Capital: Develop better ways to attract, select, develop, and retain the best educators.						
Public/Private Partners: Use private funding in ways that lead to greater productivity.						
Technology: Combine technology-assisted remote learning with more-traditional, face-to-face education.						
Literacy: Equip teachers with better skills in this arena.						

Raising the Bar

Focus expectations on preparing all students to be “Ready By Exit.” Whether students enter the workforce or postsecondary education after high school, graduation should prepare them to succeed without need to remediate.

Accomplishment: An increase in the number of students that graduated from the Clark County School District the past year shows that “Ready By Exit” has become the rallying cry. Efforts were devoted this year to ensuring student success after high school. This included credit recovery, credit retrieval, and a graduation initiative titled “Reclaim Your Future.” In this context, “credit recovery” and “credit retrieval” refer to students who succeed in coursework that previously was unfinished or unsatisfactory. When the dust settles and the Nevada Department of Education issues official figures in December 2012 it is projected that more students from the Clark County School District will have graduated in the 2011-2012 school year than previously.



Empowerment Schools

Provide schools with relief from unnecessary oversight. Convene a Blue Ribbon Task Force on Empowerment to identify how to broaden the empowerment model so more schools benefit. Driving this is the conviction that greater flexibility comes in exchange for greater accountability for improved results.

Accomplishment: The Board and superintendent adopted Blue Ribbon Task Force recommendations that extend empowerment. The recommendations are designed to:

- Extend stakeholder ownership for the academic success of all students.
- Enhance the achievement and academic growth obtained by school sites.
- Narrow gaps separating subgroups with respect to achievement and growth.
- Broaden site-based autonomy regarding budget, staffing, and programming.

Those recommendations were based on three key ideas:

- Empowerment **is earned by schools that perform well.**
- Empowerment **is a way for schools to improve** performance.
- Over time empowerment **can become the operating system** for the District.

An Advisory Committee on Empowerment took the high-level recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Task Force and turned them into procedures. That involved figuring out how schools can gain or lose flexibility in budget, staffing, or programming. The Board and superintendent approved the procedures that the Advisory Committee on Empowerment developed. The procedures outline how schools can apply for increased flexibility. Those procedures will be put to use in the 2012-2013 school year.

Performance Zones

Reorganize into Performance Zones that are each comprised of feeder-aligned schools. This removes a bureaucratic layer, creates tighter focus, promotes a more nimble and responsive organization, and allows more targeted assistance.

Accomplishment: The Clark County School District was reorganized into 13 Performance Zones that include a zone for Prime 6 schools. Each Performance Zone was comprised of feeder-aligned schools. The restructuring tightened the educational focus and improved support for schools. Principals were surveyed in February of 2012, and overall 82.2 percent of principals responded. Results applauded the District for its direction but also pointed to areas of possible improvement. These included better coordination between operational and academic staff, greater clarity with respect to supervisor responsibilities and expectations, and improved internal communication. The evaluation has contributed to changes that are underway for 2012-2013. These changes include the formation of a Turnaround Zone that is streamlining and synchronizing service to schools in this category.



Autonomous Zone

Establish a single autonomous zone to provide a refuge for schools that are academically successful. Schools in this zone will enjoy greater latitude with respect to budgeting, staffing, and program design. Oversight will be minimal.

Accomplishment: When the School Performance Framework was released, 5-Star schools were identified as candidates for the Autonomous Zone. These principals were granted greater autonomy with budgeting, staffing, and program design. Schools were permitted to remain in their originally assigned Performance Zone while receiving the benefits of the Autonomous Zone. This reinforced the effectiveness of the Performance Zone structure while acknowledging the need for more autonomy for successful schools. During the 2011-2012 school year, the autonomies of 5-Star schools were defined and

detailed by the work of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Empowerment and the Advisory Committee on Empowerment. The main idea is that schools receive freedom/assistance commensurate with their performance. In other words, 5-Star schools are in a new Autonomous Zone and have the least oversight and the most flexibility with respect to budget, staffing, and programming. By contrast, 1-Star schools have more oversight and less flexibility, especially with respect to programming.

New Schools Division

Design a New Schools Division to expand innovative school models. These models include empowerment schools, charter schools, and educational management organizations.

Accomplishment: Efforts are underway in the 2012-2013 school year to design and launch an Office of School Reform and Innovation. Once in place, it will increase school choice options for students and families.

Turnaround Efforts

Use federal funds to restructure several schools in ways that improve achievement. Combine this with efforts to prepare leaders for this challenge. Build on and expand initiatives in this direction.

Accomplishment: Once turnaround schools are identified, they typically receive added support for three years. Within the Clark County School District, there have been three waves of turnaround schools. The first wave began three years ago (2009-2010) when Rancho High School and Kit Carson Elementary School were identified. Both have since made gains and will no longer be labeled turnaround. Today, Kit Carson is a 4-Star school and Rancho is a 3-Star school.



At the close of the 2010-2011 school year, five new turnaround schools were identified. They were Western High School (1-Star school), Mojave High School (1-Star school), Chaparral High School (2-Star school), Elizondo Elementary School (2-Star school), and Hancock Elementary School (3-Star school). These schools implemented significant changes, including substantial restaffing. While immediate improvement is expected this coming school year, after one year of added support preliminary signs show that all five schools have made progress in student achievement (scores on state assessment show

60 percent decrease in nonproficient students in math and science) and student performance (elevated graduation rates among each high school).

At the close of the 2011-2012 school year, four new turnaround schools were identified. They were Dr. C. Owen Roundy Elementary School, Sunrise Acres Elementary School, Mike O'Callaghan Middle School, and Canyon Springs High School. The schools are reorganizing and marshaling new resources to help lift student achievement.

Most recently, turnaround-related efforts have led to the creation of a Turnaround Zone. Previously identified schools, along with four new schools, formed this zone and each are receiving more individualized support. Of the four new schools, one is receiving a significant infusion of new federal funding. That school is Canyon Springs High School. The other three schools were identified by the



Clark County School District through its commitment to support schools. New principals were recruited to lead these schools, which resulted in principals from 5-Star schools moving to the Turnaround schools.

Growth Model

Launch (by fall 2011) a system to gauge how each student in third through eighth grade progresses yearly. Data will be available, transparent and understandable. It will help us identify pockets of excellence and take them to scale.

Accomplishment: This project was completed on time, to specification, and under budget. This project called for the statewide launch of an academic growth model that would fulfill the requirements of Assembly Bill (AB) 2009-14. This law required Nevada to choose an academic growth model and then to generate and display online longitudinal growth results for mathematics and reading at the level of student, grade, school, and district. On August 15, 2011, a fully operational version of a Web-based interface called *SchoolView* was launched on the Web site of the Nevada Department of Education. It displays school-level views that are generated by the Nevada Growth Model for all schools in the state. On October 27, 2011, a fully operational enhancement of the Nevada Growth Model that made online individual student-level results available to licensed staff members was launched on the Web site of the Nevada Department of Education. On November 17, 2011,

a fully operational training tool that makes it possible for authenticated users to gain online access to a sample dataset containing simulated growth results for fictitious students was launched on the Web site of the Nevada Department of Education. The tool allows staff to train users on the Nevada Growth Model.

Early in 2012, the Nevada Department of Education submitted an application to the U.S. Department of Education seeking flexibility under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The application substantially restructures how schools are held accountable.



The application puts results from the Nevada Growth Model at the center of a significantly restructured school accountability framework for public schools. Growth Model results form the basis of a School Performance Framework that ranks all schools statewide and classifies according to their performance. The federal government's objective in giving states an opportunity to apply for flexibility is to raise the expectations for all public schools so schooling is focused on ensuring the college and career readiness of all students. It is also to redefine educator performance in terms of educator impact on student achievement, student growth, and student readiness for college and career.

On August 8, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education announced it had approved the Nevada Department of Education application for flexibility.

4-Tier Evaluation

Shift from the current binary system that classifies teachers as either satisfactory or unsatisfactory to a four-tiered system. The categories include highly effective, effective, minimally effective, and ineffective. An important future element of the shift is that the performance of students (i.e., academic growth) is considered during the process of teacher evaluation.

Accomplishment: In 2011, Assembly Bill (AB) 222 created the Teachers and Leaders Council. It requires this body to submit recommendations to the State Board of Education concerning the adoption of regulations for establishing a uniform statewide performance evaluation system for teachers and site-based administrators, to be established no later than June 1, 2013. AB 222 specifically calls for districts to:

- Evaluate educators using multiple, fair, timely, rigorous, and valid methods that include pupil achievement data to account for at least 50 percent of the evaluation.
- Evaluate educators on use of practices and strategies to involve and engage the parents and families of pupils in the classroom.

- Afford educators a meaningful opportunity to improve their effectiveness through professional development that is linked to their evaluations.
- Provide educators with the means to share effective educational methods with other teachers and administrators throughout the state.
- Classify educators under a four-tier design in which each teacher and administrator must be rated as highly effective, effective, minimally effective, or ineffective.

Prior to the adoption of AB 222, the Clark County School District had already fully developed new standards and scoring criteria (or rubrics) that reflect a more-rigorous and -focused attention to instruction. These rubrics also relied in part on the use of student outcome data. As the 2012-2013 school year unfolds, these rubrics will be compared to a similar set of criteria being developed by the Teachers and Leaders Council. Special attention in the Clark County School District will be devoted to five high-leverage instructional practices that are drawn from and informed by the work of Margaret Heritage. The Clark County School District is expected to adopt the five state criteria (adding to the rubrics as needed). All of this work will be informed by a pilot project being conducted by the Clark County School District during the 2012-2013 school year. This pilot focuses on the Turnaround Zone.

Consistent with the work of the Teachers and Leaders Council, the Clark County School District will adopt an approach to evaluation that relies on multiple student outcome measures. The approach that the District adopts will meet the legislative requirement calling for at least 50 percent of the evaluation to be based on student performance. Beginning in 2011, Clark County School District trained educators with regard to growth model data, utilizing it as a key component to help schools, administrators, and teachers identify areas of improvement. Growth model data will be an important component in evaluating principal and teacher performance (in combination with other measures). Care will be taken to ensure that student outcome measures, including growth, are part of a larger examination that includes goal setting, multiple objective measures, and multiple observations. This approach will be used in the initial piloting phase in the Clark County School District, using the Turnaround Zone, during the 2012-2013 school year.

During the 2012-2013 school year, the Clark County School District will work directly with teachers and principals to accomplish the following:

- Finalize a rubric for principal evaluation that is consistent with the Teachers and Leaders Council.
- Finalize observation rubrics for teacher evaluation that is consistent with the Teachers and Leaders Council.
- Pilot the use of a teacher evaluation tool in Turnaround Schools.
- Conduct a communication plan and outreach to ensure input from staff and the community.

Performance Framework

Make the yearly academic growth of students the centerpiece of a School Performance Framework. The chief aim of this framework is to provide the kind of information that enables our staff to learn more easily from each other about what works. Ultimately, it will also provide a way for us to hold ourselves accountable for improved student performance.

Accomplishment: This project was completed following the Board adoption of a School Performance Framework for elementary and middle schools on February 24, 2012, and Board adoption of a School Performance Framework for high schools on May 24, 2012.

The District released results from a School Performance Framework that assigned a star rating to each elementary, middle, and high school (the only exceptions are alternative schools and special schools; during the 2012-2013 school year, work will be completed on a School Performance Framework for these schools). Ratings that schools received range from a low designation of 1-Star to a high of 5-Star and appear now on the District Web site. One third of all schools (105 of 327 schools, or 32 percent) achieved a 4-Star or 5-Star rank, and seven out of ten (227 of 327 schools, or 69 percent) achieved a 3-Star, 4-Star, or 5-Star rating. Based on results from state assessment (proficiency scores as well as results from the Nevada Growth Model), the School Performance Framework includes a variety of other nontest score indicators (e.g., attendance, climate survey results, performance of English language learners, and performance of students on individualized educational plans). Because the emphasis is on using results to learn how to get better faster, information from the School Performance Framework is being used to guide District resources and training to schools most in need. During the first full school year of use (2012-2013), schools will be held harmless and results from the District-developed School Performance Framework will not be part of high stakes decisions. Nor will initial results from the School Performance Framework be used to inform turnaround decisions.

Table 1: Distribution of star ratings for schools by level (for 2011-2012).

Star Ratings	Elementary	Middle	High	Total
5-Star	37 (17.3%)	0 (0%)	14 (29.7%)	51 (15.6%)
4-Star	37 (17.3%)	7 (10.9%)	10 (20.4%)	54 (16.5%)
3-Star	76 (35.5 %)	34 (53.1%)	12 (24.5%)	122 (37.3%)
2-Star	60 (28.0%)	18 (28.1%)	10 (20.4%)	88 (26.9%)
1-Star	4 (1.9%)	5 (7.8%)	3 (6.1%)	12 (3.7%)
	214	64	49	327

On August 6, 2012, the U.S. Department of Education approved an application from the Nevada Department of Education granting the State of Nevada flexibility under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The application calls for a revision in the school accountability system for the state. Predicated on the Growth Model and a School Performance Framework, the application revises the school accountability system for Nevada. Once fully implemented, this will replace Adequate Yearly Progress (from *No Child Left Behind*) and will impact all 636 Nevada public schools, all 23,600 licensed educators, and all 428,947 publicly-enrolled K-12 students.



Three principles guided and informed the development of a School Performance Framework and the Nevada application to the U.S. Department of Education:

(1) the aim of the public K-12 system is to prepare all students for college and career success without the need for remediation, (2) student academic growth is the key indicator of a school's progress towards preparing all students so they are "Ready By Exit," and (3) in order for the School Performance Framework to contribute to continuous improvement and have the healthy impact on teaching practice and student learning that is intended, collaboration among educators and sharing of successful practice is key. The Nevada Growth Model places a vital role in all this. It gives educators and the public access to better information on the progress of individual students, classes, grades, and schools. It provides results that can inform instruction and guide the allocation of resources toward areas of greatest need. Most importantly, it draws our attention to schools that are experiencing uncommon success with students. Thus the Growth Model makes it possible for schools to learn from one another about how to achieve even greater academic success with young people. While the School Performance Framework focuses on results, its primary purpose is to enable educators to learn from each other about how to improve practice in ways that contribute to the academic gains achieved by students.

Return on Investment

Couple growth information from a School Performance Framework with financial information in a way that shines a light on schools that make exceptional growth at low expense.

Accomplishment: Staff members from Finance and Operations as well as from Accountability, Assessment, Research and School Improvement are collaborating to develop the first version of a financial dashboard that merges school-level financial data with growth data from the School Performance Framework. The goal is to provide analytical information that improves instructional strategies and budgetary decisions. It does so by

“The District must be accountable for the return on investment generated by all expenditures of taxpayer funds.”

highlighting investments that contribute to enhanced student growth and performance. In addition to other visualization tools already in development and scheduled for rollout in the fall, the plan is to begin using this new financial/performance reporting tool to assist in strategic decision making needed to assemble the 2013-2014 budget.

The information system that is currently being developed marries financial information with growth and student performance data. The aim is to easily and quickly identify schools that are consistently achieving extraordinary results at low cost. In other words, it quantifies the return on investment. The tool’s strength is its ability to:

- Identify where and how programs provide the greatest benefit to students.
- Uphold our fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers of Nevada.
- Grow more rapidly as education professionals by connecting areas of success.
- Build trust in our schools and pride in our community.

This system will pinpoint high payoff schools and programs that are candidates for possible future funding. It provides an evidence-based way to align financial incentives that lead to the greatest development of our students. Too often in the past, funds have been invested based on hunches or promises. Evidence shows that hunches and good intentions may sometimes work out but too often evidence shows that they do not serve students well. The District must be accountable for the return on investment generated by all expenditures of taxpayer funds. This system provides a transparent way to fund programs that deliver student results that families deserve and taxpayers require.

Incentives

Recognize, support, and learn from teachers who get better-than-expected results with students. To do that, invite them to create curricular tools that the District then loads into an existing and growing online library of support material. Because this library is accessible to other educators, it makes it possible for one teacher to learn from another highly successful colleague. Monetize this by providing a small royalty every time this happens thereby encouraging the healthy collaboration that can lead to improved results with students. These teacher-produced tools are part of an “open source” arrangement so they may be easily and freely shared with teachers in other districts and states.

Accomplishment: Work is underway to lift the academic performance of the District and maximize the impact of educators who most effectively achieve high growth and high proficiency with students. To extend the reach of these highly effective educators, the

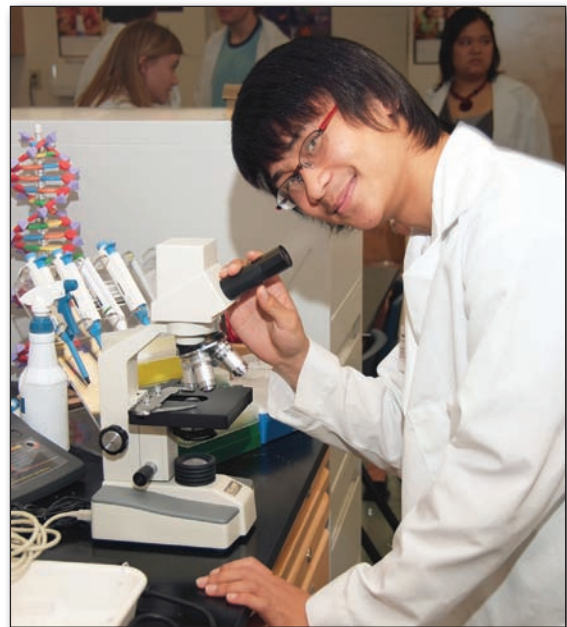
intent is to make additional performance-based pay and leadership opportunities available to them. This is the centerpiece of a comprehensive Human Capital Management System that incorporates a Performance-Based Compensation System.

Evidence shows that limited “leadership, compensation, and career advancement are the top reasons why high-performing teachers say they are planning to leave. Yet effective teachers in large urban districts reported that compensation and career advancement opportunities make them more likely to stay” (The New Teacher Project, 2011). Research has further shown that nonmonetary recognition is valued by educators. This important finding emerged from The New Teacher Project Benchmark Survey (2010). Results from this 2010 Survey demonstrated that schools where high performance is recognized and rewarded see higher rates of retention among teachers.

Utilizing Hassel and Hassel’s (2010) concept of “reach-extended” roles for high quality teachers, and expanding the visual model created by The New Teacher Project, the Clark County School District proposes a system that increases the number of students impacted by highest-performing teachers by giving them opportunities in “extended-reach” career roles. In this way, more students will have access to excellent teachers across the system, resulting in an overall improvement in student achievement.

Additional opportunities can be created by utilizing current resources while maximizing the impact of the highest performers, who, in order to have access to these opportunities, must have previously demonstrated their impact on student growth. Key roles created that utilize this “return on investment,” or “ROI,” concept include more traditional time-related reach-extended roles such as teaching during preparation periods, longer school days, and summer teaching, which are currently funded by existing resources. The District will work closely with the Clark County Education Association, recognizing that some components of the system may be subject to negotiations. There would also be roles not yet developed or implemented, as in the following examples:

- Use technology advances to broaden the reach of great teaching and provide the highest-quality instruction to larger groups of students. For example, use Skype to enable the highest-performing mathematics teachers in the Clark County School District to webcast a course and conduct a “virtual” classroom of 125 students. The virtual class could include 25 students each in five different school locations in the Clark County School District. Each of these groups of 25 students would be attended by an on-site instructional assistant.



- Provide job-embedded professional development. Rather than interrupting instruction for a full day of professional development, instead sponsor half-day professional development for teachers. In this arrangement, one teacher models the instruction and webcasts the lesson to other teachers into real classroom settings with students so that other teachers observe and practice the strategy with their own students.

Human Capital

Provide all students with a great teacher and all schools with a great leader by developing better ways to attract, select, develop, and retain the best educators. These efforts include career ladders and expanded pay for performance.

Accomplishment: The Human Resources Division was reorganized in April 2012, with an increased focus on developing experts in the key Human Resources functions of recruitment, selection, hiring, development, and retention of excellent teachers. As a result of the reorganization, representatives from the Human Resources Division will serve as strategic partners to schools and departments on all of their human capital needs in addition to executing key transactional processes. Each department within the Human Resources Division sets clear goals and metrics to measure success, with the ultimate goal of ensuring students are served by great teachers and great leaders.

For both teachers and administrators, the District will focus on ensuring the highest-need schools in the District will have the earliest access to screened-in candidates. The school and department recruitment team developed a new competency-based selection model for teacher candidates to better screen and select candidates who have the potential to be successful in the Clark County School District. The selection model will be implemented along with a revamped online application system in the 2012-2013 school year.



For administrator recruitment and selection, the Human Resources Division is developing a similar recruitment plan and revamped selection model to ensure a high-quality candidate pool.

Once high-quality candidates are attracted and hired into positions at the Clark County School District, the District is focused on retaining the best educators. Retention efforts start as early as the recruitment and hiring process. The employee Onboarding

and Development Department has focused on ensuring the new teacher onboarding experience includes clear expectations for teachers new to the District on the Clark County School District's priorities and critical training content to prepare teachers to

be successful in their new roles. In addition to the new hire onboarding experience, new teachers will receive mentors who will support them during their first year of teaching. The employee Onboarding and Development Department is in the process of redesigning the current mentoring model.



One of the most important things that can be done to retain excellent teachers is to provide development opportunities to support the ability of teachers to grow in their practice. The employee Onboarding and Development Department has developed a regular survey plan for teachers and administrators to assess the impact of District professional development offerings and to gauge what additional areas of development are needed. Additionally, the employee Onboarding and Development Department has developed a basic framework for a career lattices and created a plan for design and development of the final model.

Public/Private Partners

Use private funding to conduct studies in areas that lead to greater productivity. One is a study of barriers to achievement. A second is a study of operational efficiency and effectiveness. A third is an analysis of communications.

Accomplishment: A number of local community foundations have invested in key initiatives that will ultimately increase student achievement across Southern Nevada.

In April 2011, The UCLA Dream Fund provided the Clark County School District with a generous gift to create an apprentice team staffed with Teach For America alumni from 2011-2013. The vision for this program is to expose young leaders to executive talent and develop the apprentices' leadership skills while enabling the District to gain new perspectives. The team includes the Special Consultant to the Superintendent, who works closely as a mentor to the apprentices. Over the past year, the apprentice team provided support for projects related to the Common Core State Standards, Empowerment, the School Performance Framework, and the Nevada Growth Model. In addition to the apprentice team, The UCLA Dream Fund also financially supports the work of the Special Assistant to the Superintendent, creating a financially independent, contract-driven team that moves the work forward and supports the Superintendent and District.

In January 2012, Windsong Trust made an initial \$800,000 investment in the Clark County School District to create five new prekindergarten general-education programs in

“In January 2012, Windsong Trust made an initial \$800,000 investment in the Clark County School District to create five new prekindergarten general-education programs in Title I classrooms...”

Title I classrooms that will serve more than 150 four-year-olds in the 2012-2013 school year. Additionally, Windsong funded a year-long partnership with a representative of the American Enterprise Institute. This engagement enables the District to use the expertise of Dr. Frederick Hess to support student achievement and effective school District practice.

In March 2012, Windsong Trust contributed an additional \$2,000,000 gift enabling the Clark County School District to create a two-year human resource partnership with The New Teacher Project (TNTP). This makes it possible for the Clark County School District to create efficient human resources practices around the continuum of hiring, developing, and retaining teachers and leaders in a way that will increase student achievement across the District.

Throughout the school year, Communities In Schools has worked with specific school sites to bring students and families extra support for them to flourish.

A longtime Clark County School District partner, the Public Education Foundation, has devoted energy to the design and launch of a leadership institute. This undertaking aims to support teaching and learning by furnishing schools and central office with great leaders.

The Clark County School District is grateful for the support of the private sector in general and others in particular (including the Lincy Foundation, the UCLA Dream Fund, Windsong Trust, Communities in Schools, the Public Education Foundation, Nevada Women’s Philanthropy, the Fulfillment Fund, and other donors) for their generosity and support. The District looks forward to continued progress and expanded partnership in the coming year.



Technology

Utilizing hybrid education that combines technology-assisted remote learning with more traditional, face-to-face education has the potential to create more-engaged learning and transform how we think about class size. While this is happening in a modest and limited way now, we will dramatically expand its use.

Accomplishment: Hybrid education, also called blended learning, is quickly garnering interest and favor across the District. The District is moving ahead with ambitious plans to make online and blended learning a reality for 100,000 students by 2015. During the 2011-2012 school year, more than 3,000 Clark County School District teachers extended their classroom reach by creating and maintaining collaborative Web spaces to support classroom instruction. To provide teachers with pedagogy and tools that inspire students, the Online/Blended Teacher Certification program was established in March 2012. This program helps reframe the student/teacher partnership by infusing the traditional classroom experience with blended components. In four short months during 2011-2012, more than 700 professional development education credits were earned in online/blended certification courses.



Blended learning services are offered districtwide in alternative programs for students to earn high school credits toward graduation in the Clark County School District Academy for Individualized Study High School and Virtual High School. Both schools are full-time diploma-granting high schools that also offer part-time concurrent enrollment. Online content is available for credit recovery, as well as original credit in core and elective courses, including honors and Advanced Placement level classes. High school courses are also offered to advanced middle school/junior high students in areas such as Spanish, French, algebra and geometry. In addition, during the 2011-2012 school year, Virtual High School provided teachers of record to support Compass Learning credit recovery programs in comprehensive schools and promoted enrollment with a statewide Healthy Test Drive offer. More than 8,000 Academy for Individualized Study High School and more than 4,000 Virtual High School semester credits were earned during the 2011-2012 school year, with an additional 10,000 semester credits earned via Credit-By-Exam. Looking for additional ways to earn credit online, a variety of blended solutions were implemented in the District, resulting in more than 5,700 semester credits earned.

Literacy

Help children to read by supporting more professional development that equips teachers with better skills in this arena. As well, provide better benchmark assessments to reliably gauge proficiency through the years. Take steps to see the District acquires tools that are better aligned and provide more real-time feedback to teachers, parents, and students.

Accomplishment: In support of the Clark County School District Literacy Initiative, the K-12 Literacy Services Department in the Curriculum and Professional Development Division developed and implemented professional development during the 2011–2012 school year for elementary, middle, and high school teachers. At the elementary school level, Collaborative Reading Academies were offered to approximately 1,100 teachers and literacy specialists. Five professional development sessions to further promote research-based instructional practices focusing on the Common Core State Standards were attended by 857 literacy specialists. In collaboration with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, two Reading Skills Development Centers were designed and implemented with the sole



purpose of increasing literacy outcomes for students. Five Turnaround Teams consisting of two English language arts academic coaches supported a total of 29 underachieving elementary schools by providing job-embedded professional development working alongside teachers to improve teacher effectiveness and build teacher capacity. In support of the Literacy Initiative at the middle school level, five Adolescent Reading Academies were conducted during the 2011–2012 school year with approximately 500 teachers participating. Middle schools with low-achievement/low-growth were given priority. To support the Literacy Initiative at the high school level, five department chairpersons meetings focusing on the new course sequencing and the implementation of the Common Core State Standards for the 2012–2013 school year were provided. Grammar Boot Camp was also provided for 250 fourth- through twelfth-grade teachers during the summer of 2012.

To continue the emphasis of increasing literacy outcomes for the 2012–2013 school year, planning and preparation for professional development opportunities occurred during the spring of 2012. Planning was completed for the Prekindergarten to Third Grade Literacy Institute; the focus included increasing teachers' understanding regarding the alignment of the Nevada Prekindergarten Standards and the Common Core State Standards to create a seamless prekindergarten to third-grade system. Additionally, planning and coordination of the College Board SpringBoard® program for 31 middle schools and three high schools was completed. Content experts coordinated the Summer Bridge professional development which was designed for educators to better prepare students who were identified in need of additional instructional assistance in English language arts as they transition from fifth to sixth grade or from eighth to ninth grade for the 2012–2013 school year. In March 2012, Clark County School District was awarded the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program Grant of \$16.5 million to be spent over a two-year period. The Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program is aligned with the Nevada State Literacy Plan and the Clark County School District Literacy Plan. Implementation of the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program includes site-based literacy coaches, job-embedded professional development, data-based decision-making teams, and community partnerships servicing children, birth through twelfth grade. Additionally, the Clark County School District Literacy Plan will be implemented during the 2012–2013 school year beginning with professional development sessions conducted during Summer Professional Development sessions.

PROGRESS MADE TOWARD SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

When “A Look Ahead: Phase I” was published, it included specific achievement objectives (page 17). Within five years, or by June 2016, certain targets will be reached:

Graduation rate will reach 75 percent

Accomplishment: Although official graduation rate statistics are not issued by the state until December 2012, more students are projected to graduate from the Clark County School District for the 2011-2012 school year than did the previous year.

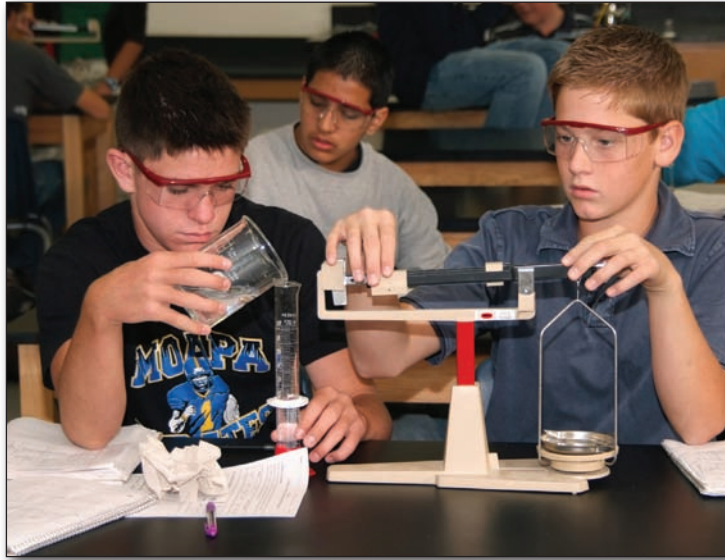
Percentage who are “Ready By Exit” will increase each year

Accomplishment: The assault on this goal includes initiatives designed to ensure students have what they need for life after high school.

For starters, as the nation and Nevada search for a better way to ensure young people are prepared for success after high school, the Clark County School District strives to implement the Common Core State Standards that bring new rigor to expectations. Because a diploma today does not ensure success in college or career, expectations are being raised with respect to what students should know and be able to do. Installation of the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and English language arts focuses attention on college and career readiness. Work to implement these Common Core State Standards is underway in classrooms throughout the Clark County School District.

Once the Common Core State Standards are fully implemented, new tools will be needed to measure whether progress is being made on the percentage of students who are “Ready By Exit.” The design of common yardsticks for use across states is one such effort. Collectively known as Smarter Balanced Assessments, these tools will make it possible to gauge the extent to which increasing percentages of students are departing Clark County’s schools prepared for success in career or the next level of schooling. The Clark County School District has the implementation of Smarter Balanced Assessments in its sights.

Increasing the percentage of students who are “Ready By Exit” is a serious challenge. A challenge as serious as this requires a serious response. In a way, schooling is being redefined. As that happens, the signals are being changed. These include revised incentives and rewards. All of these focus on the yearly academic growth of students toward the goal of college and career readiness. These “signals” include a School Performance Framework that uses a star-rating system to classify schools and gauge improvement. Based on a commitment to continuous improvement, this tool is up and running for all but a handful of alternative schools and



special schools. The intent of this emphasis on academic growth and a School Performance Framework is to create greater accountability for student academic success that is oriented toward a commitment to college and career readiness. This greater accountability takes the best of *No Child Left Behind* and adds expectations that reflect the realities of the current work world.

While the good news is that the conversation is changing with a focus on “Ready By Exit,” the reality is that too many Clark County

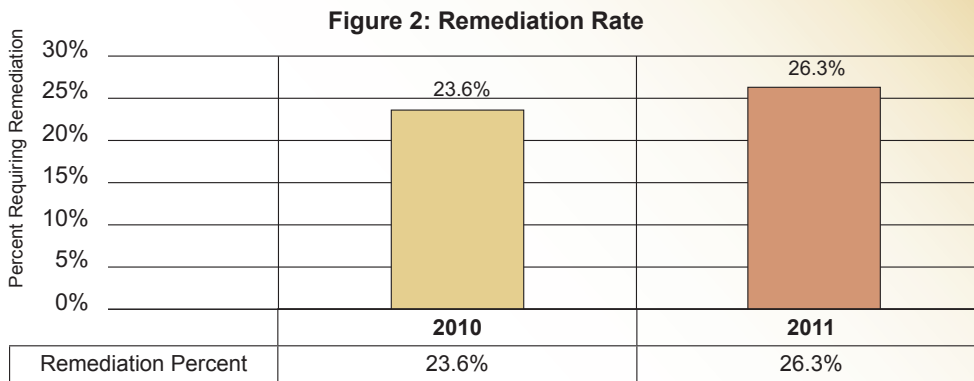
School District students still face a practice called “gatekeeping.” This refers to the tendency at certain schools to view some students as entitled to enrollment in Advanced Placement courses. Yet, others are viewed as merely eligible or even ineligible. Today that practice is under scrutiny. As expectations rise for all students, momentum is increasing to eliminate the practice of “gatekeeping” from all Clark County schools.

High school graduation remains important, but it is not the full story or even the main story. There is a shift in focus. Rather than simply looking at the number of high school graduates each year, attention is now directed toward whether students have what they need for success after high school. The shift is welcomed. For too long, too many students faced a mismatch between what they have been prepared for and the demands they face once they step away from high school. Pipelines must be created that lead to success after high school for every student. Better alignment is needed between K-12, higher education, and the workplace. As yardsticks are created that bridge K-12 and higher education, progress along that continuum can be measured. Until that happens, it will not be possible to consistently and definitively determine whether the percentage of exiting students who are “ready” for college is increasing or not. Nonetheless, the conversation continues to change in a healthy way in the Clark County School District. Work continues to prepare all students for the demands of college and career.

College remediation rates will decline yearly

Accomplishment: Higher education statistics from Nevada show that Clark County School District graduates have the lowest remediation rate in the state; nonetheless, remediation rates are not yet declining for District graduates (see “Remedial and Developmental Report from the Nevada System of Higher Education” published in March 2011). The Nevada System of Higher Education reported a remediation rate for the Clark County School District graduates in 2011 that was 26.3 percent, a figure that

increased from 23.6 percent in 2010 (see Figure 2 below). Serious work remains to achieve the desired aim in this area.

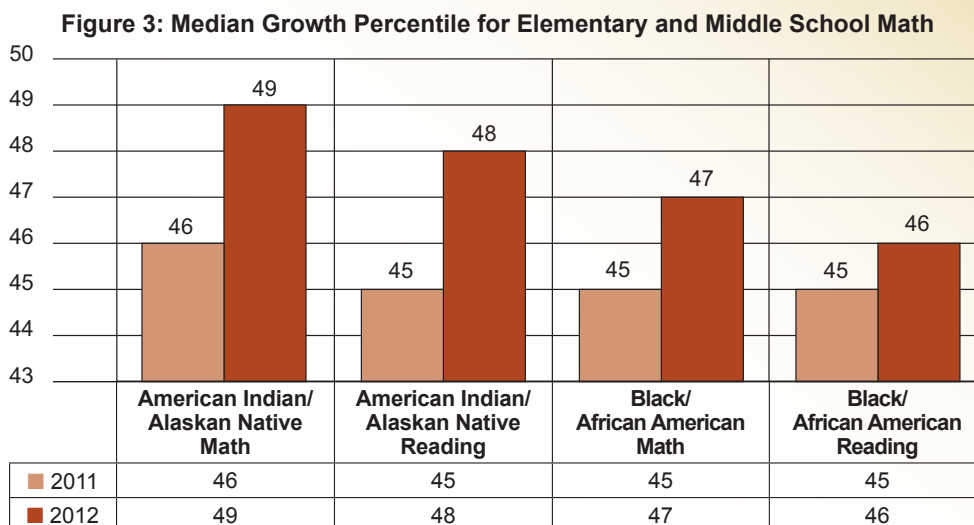


Annual growth rate gaps for ethnic and racial subgroups will narrow by half based on state assessment

Accomplishment: Modest yet positive changes were seen from the 2010-2011 to the 2011-2012 school year in Median Growth Percentiles for various ethnic/racial subgroups.

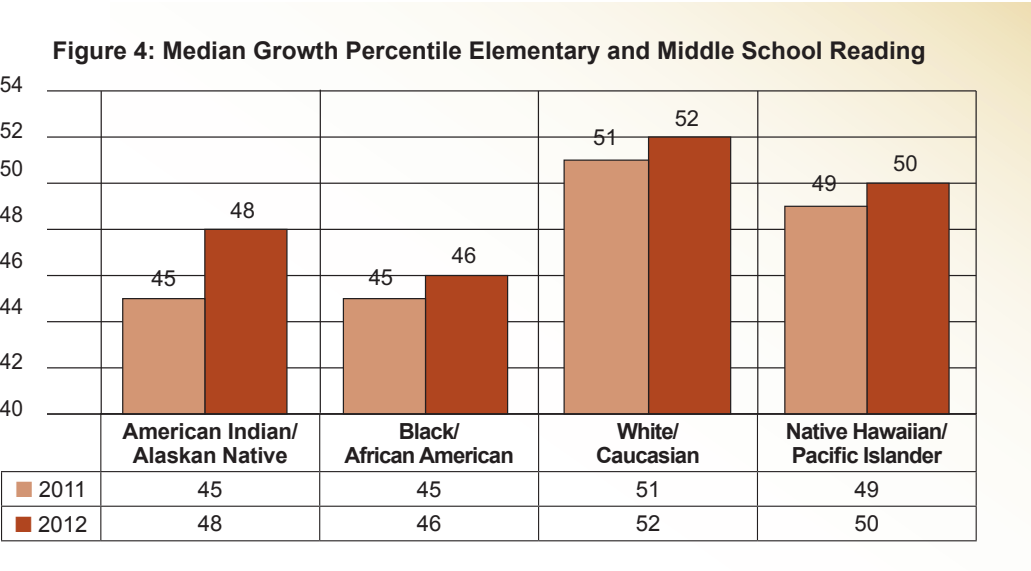
Median Growth Percentiles for Math Overall, Elementary and Middle Schools (see Figure 3 below)

- Areas of Significant Improvement
 - American Indian/Alaskan Native (46 to 49)
 - Black/African American (45 to 47)



Median Growth Percentiles for Reading Overall, Elementary and Middle Schools
(see Figure 4 below)

- Areas of Significant Improvement
 - American Indian/Alaskan Native (45 to 48)
 - Black/African American (45 to 46)
 - White/Caucasian (51 to 52)
 - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (49 to 50)



A small change that is spread across many students represents a substantial change. Likewise, it is noteworthy that if the median growth percentile for a subgroup exceeds 50, it indicates that the yearly academic growth of that subgroup of Clark County School District students outpaced the yearly change of their counterparts statewide.

As a result, these are the changes in growth this year that are most noteworthy:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native increase in both mathematics (3 points) and reading (3 points).
- Black/African American increase in both mathematics (2 points) and reading (1 point).

Percentage taking Advanced Placement and scoring 3 or higher will increase yearly at each high school

Accomplishment: Work remains on this goal. For instance, the percentage of Clark County School District students who are enrolled in Advanced Placement courses remained the same for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012. The District maintained a 24 percent enrollment in Advanced Placement courses despite a decline in the overall number of students enrolled in Grades 11 and 12. The District did see an increase this year from 49 percent to 52 percent in the amount of students earning a 3 or higher on the Advanced Placement exams (College Board School Integrated Summary).



“The District maintained a 24 percent enrollment in Advanced Placement courses despite a decline in the overall number of students enrolled in Grades 11 and 12.”

Percentage admitted to a postsecondary institution and successful in their first year will increase yearly

Accomplishment: To report results in this area it will be necessary to receive data from higher education.

Percentage exiting Grade 5 who read on level on state assessment will reach 80 percent

Accomplishment: Work remains on this goal. Based on the 2011-2012 state assessment results provided by the Nevada Department of Education, 65.6 percent of all fifth-graders who took the assessment scored in the “Meets” or “Exceeds” category (15,743 out of 24,007 total students). By comparison, 61.4 percent of all fifth-graders who took the assessment scored in the “Meets” or “Exceeds” category the previous year. This represents an increase of 4.2 over the previous year ($65.6 - 61.4 = 4.2$). See Figure 5 below.

Percentage exiting Grade 3 who read on level on state assessment will reach 80 percent

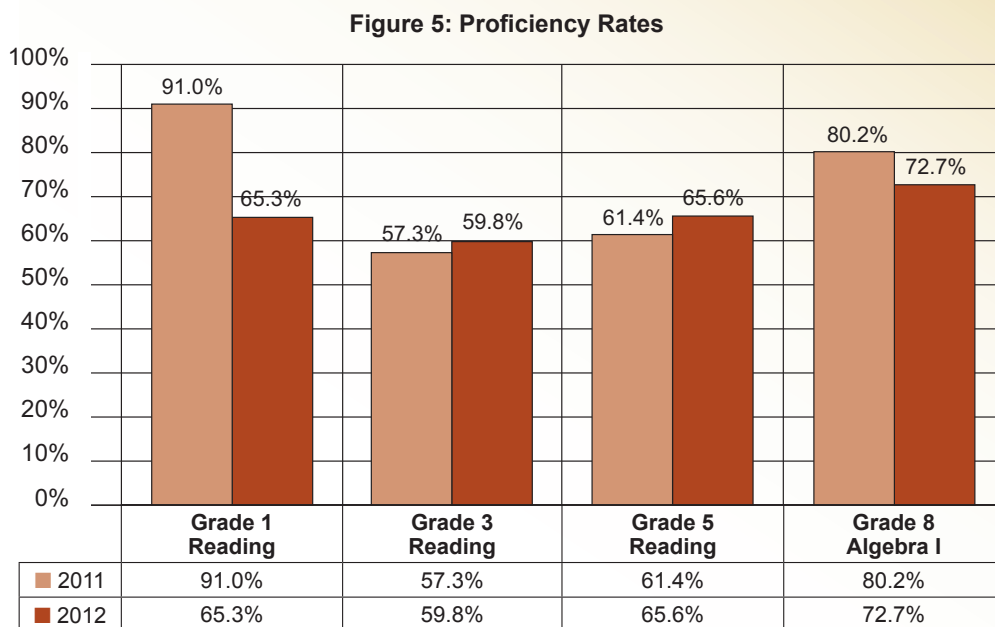
Accomplishment: Work remains on this goal. Based on the 2011-2012 state assessment results provided by the Nevada Department of Education, 59.8 percent of all third-graders who took the assessment scored in the “Meets” or “Exceeds” category (14,109 out of 23,606 students). By comparison, 57.3 percent of all third-graders who took the assessment score in the “Meets” or “Exceeds” category the previous year. This represents an increase of 2.5 percent over the previous year ($59.8 - 57.3 = 2.5$). See Figure 5 below.

Percentage exiting Grade 1 who read on level on a District-developed test will reach 80 percent

Accomplishment: Work remains on this goal. Based on 2011-2012 Grade 1 Assessment for the Clark County School District (Form C), 65 percent of first-graders who took the assessment scored at or above a proficiency rate. The proficiency rate is set at 60 percent. By comparison, 91 percent of first-graders who took the assessment scored at or above the established proficiency rate the previous year. This represents a decline of 26.2 percent from the previous year ($91.0 - 65.3 = 26.2$). See Figure 5 below.

Percentage exiting Grade 8 who are proficient in Algebra I will increase yearly (measured by a standardized end-of-course exam that is adopted and used districtwide)

Accomplishment: Work remains on this goal. Based on results from a District developed, end-of-semester, common exam in middle school Algebra I, the second semester pass was 80.2 percent in 2010-2011 and 72.7 percent in 2011-2012. See Figure 5 below. This constitutes a decline ($80.2 - 72.7 = 7.5$). Students are considered proficient if they score 60 percent or higher on the end-of-course exam **and** receive a grade of C or higher for the course.



Note: Beginning in 2012, the first-grade reading assessment was changed so it aligned with expectations found in the Common Core State Standards. In part, this change to more-lofty expectations accounts for the difference in reading performance from one year to the next.

THE NEXT MILE

Going forward, the challenge is to **allow changes that are underway in schools to take root.** For that to occur, central office must provide even better service to schools. It means clearing the way so the extraordinary success enjoyed by some can spread to others. It means providing a climate where staff can innovate and take calculated risks.

In short, the emphasis for 2012-2013 is to:

- **Stay the course.**
- **Support great teaching.**
- **Learn from each other what works.**
- **Ensure freedom to innovate for those on the reform path.**

The District is squarely focused on raising the bar (through higher learning expectations and more rigorous curriculum) and simultaneously increasing support to students, teachers, and schools. The best evidence of this comes in the first-ever Summer Graduation exercise. This topped off a year where community volunteers and high school staff joined forces in new ways to create a better web of support for students.



Anchored by activities related to the **Graduation Initiative**, academic programming that began in the 2011-2012 school year will continue and expand in the 2012-2013 school year. In the **“Reclaim Your Future”** door-to-door campaign, staff and community volunteers visited homes of students who recently left high school, on two separate weekends during the 2011-2012 school year, making a personal plea that the students return to complete their studies. These efforts will continue and grow in the 2012-2013 school year.

In addition to “Reclaim Your Future,” the Graduation Initiative was buoyed by an aggressive campaign to help students who were off track complete the credits needed to graduate. Called **“Credit Retrieval,”** this effort was aided by new thinking and fresh approaches. The aim was to motivate, re-engage, and re-energize students. Relying on a variety of technology-based approaches, this project helped hundreds of high schools students get back on the path to successful high school graduation. Approaches included use of online tools like “Advanced Academics,” “Compass Learning,” and an innovative program called “Ombudsman.” In 2012-2013, these projects will gain steam.

Taking advantage of the months separating the end of one school year and the beginning of another school year, the **Summer Bridge Program** provided individualized summer support for students making the transition to middle school or high school. Well received, it has been suggested that this

be expanded in the coming year to reach students who are transitioning into other grades as well. This effort will continue in 2012-2013.

Complementing the Summer Bridge Program, a cadre of secondary teachers was brought together in summer 2012 to offer tutoring to students for their high school proficiency exams. By preparing students for this last big push, teachers helped 314 students achieve their graduation dream this summer (this is the number of students who graduated in a first-time-ever August graduation ceremony in the Clark County School District). These efforts are expected to continue and expand in 2012-2013.

On the curriculum and professional development front, momentum will grow in 2012-2013 as work continues with the **upgrading of academic content standards**. To ensure students have what is needed for success on the new Common Core State Standards, efforts to provide summer professional development began in 2012 and reached more than 5,000 teachers. Called “Beat the Heat,” these professional development efforts will be enhanced in 2012-2013.

Likewise, work will continue in the 2012-2013 school year to implement **more-demanding middle level curricula**. This includes implementing Springboard, as well as Project Lead the Way (featuring science, technology, engineering, and mathematics or STEM), and International Baccalaureate (or IB) at 37 middle schools.



Preliminary steps will be extended to build a runway of support leading to greater student success in high school and beyond. These efforts will include the complete **removal of all remedial courses** from all secondary schools. The runway leading to greater student access to (and success) in college will broaden in 2012-2013 through a **public-private partnership with the National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI)**. Beginning in 2013 and in collaboration with

NMSI, the District will enhance the preparation of students by making training in pre-Advanced Placement a central feature of the professional development for all middle level teachers of mathematics, science, reading, and writing. This will help extend the reach of Advanced Placement courses to high school students in the Clark County School District. Through this partnership, the District intends to:

- Increase annually the number and percentage of high school students enrolling in mathematics, science and English Advanced Placement courses (and scoring 3 or higher on Advanced Placement exams) at comprehensive high schools.
- Increase annually the districtwide Advanced Placement participation rate, the districtwide pass rate, and the District average Advanced Placement score until all exceed the national average.
- Increase the number and percent of high school students entering two- or four-year colleges and successfully completing the first year of college on time (without need for remediation).

- Increase the number and percent of first-generation college students.
- Decrease gaps in Advanced Placement enrollment and performance by gender, race/ethnicity, and school.
- Close high school achievement gaps in mathematics and science.

While all of these endeavors at the secondary school level are designed to help students cross the graduation finish line, efforts to support students in their aspirations to graduate begin well before students step foot in secondary school. Among all the factors that come into play, none is more important than literacy. The knowledge and skill of **language acquisition** are important to all students and especially in elementary school and particularly for English language learners. With nearly 60,000 students qualifying as English language learners, knowledge of **literacy is the pathway to academic success** in every subject. For sound literacy instruction to flourish in all schools, certain things must be true. Teachers must have the knowledge and skill related to literacy. To work successfully with students of widely varying skill level so they achieve proficiency in cognitive academic English, classroom teachers



need principal support. To provide that support with respect to literacy, elementary principals must themselves understand the principles of sound literacy instruction. Once understood, they must:

- Expect it.
- Model it.
- Coach it.
- Inspect it.
- Reward it.

Efforts in the Clark County School District to augment literacy professional development will continue and be expanded in the 2012-2013 school year.

To help promote this, steps to expand literacy in elementary school will begin even before students enter kindergarten. High quality early childhood options for students that began in the 2011-2012 school year (with the donation of a \$800,000 gift from the Windsong Foundation) will be used to leverage future federal funds for this purpose. A new federal option that allows districts to petition directly for Race to the Top grant funds may soon enable the District to address **urgent literacy needs of second language students** in elementary school. This effort seeks to accelerate educational reform by targeting the urgent literacy needs of the prekindergarten to fifth-grade English language learner student population in elementary schools within the Turnaround Zone. As it does so, it will address the academic needs of one of the District's highest need student populations. The aim is to provide prekindergarten students with support needed to ensure English language fluency by the time they enter kindergarten. Focusing squarely on "preparation and prevention," the overarching goals at the elementary level will be to **"personalize the learning environment"** in every classroom

for every student. These added supports for our youngest learners will be possible through intensive professional development for teachers and principals that support implementation of research-based programs in prekindergarten to fifth-grade literacy. The expressed goal is to prepare all students for the academic expectations awaiting them in elementary school and beyond and to prevent in the long term the need for turnaround efforts. Fully implemented, the effect will be more students who are more successful on more-challenging curriculum. By expanding the reach and array of district-based early childhood options and the quality of student learning experiences, this early childhood initiative is intended to prepare all students so they are **“Ready By Entry”** into kindergarten.

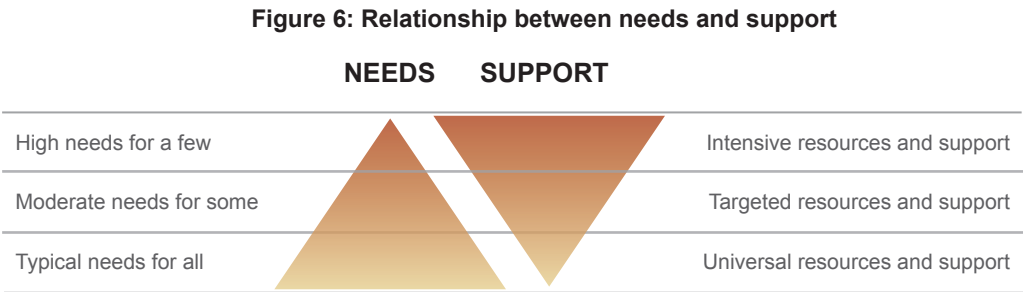
An initiative that began in 2011-2012 and which spans the K-12 continuum will continue in 2012-2013. Titled the **“Proficiency Academy for Student Success”** or P.A.S.S., it provides a way for principals and their staffs to customize funding so it is tailored to the unique needs the school’s student population. Expanding the reach of Title I funding (given to schools where 40 percent or more of the population qualifies for free or reduced lunch), this initiative enables more schools to access federal funding to support the learning needs of young people.

As the District strives to stay the course, temptations arise that threaten to divert attention from the main task at hand. The challenge is to keep our focus on two things. One is to more-tightly focus scarce resources on what matters most. The other is to provide greater flexibility and freedom to schools. The puzzle comes in achieving both at the same time. To solve this puzzle, the District is capitalizing on the empowerment work that was accomplished in 2011-2012. Recommendations from a Blue Ribbon Task Force on Empowerment and an Advisory Committee on Empowerment provide a solid platform for the 2012-2013 school year.

The District will build on and extend the notion of empowerment by establishing an **office for school reform and innovation**. The purpose is to speed the spread of high quality innovation by developing structures and processes that help more schools achieve even greater success. The goal is to clear out the underbrush that can impede creativity and progress. The ultimate aim is to enhance parent satisfaction, maximize student performance, and narrow subgroup gaps. The goal is to build on the principles of empowerment (like flexibility in budget, staffing, and programming) and link them more closely to important new structures like a turnaround zone, performance zones, the growth model, and a School Performance Framework. The intent is to wire these in a way that enables innovation to thrive more readily. The office of school reform and innovation will be both the glue and the grease. Acting like glue, the office will fuse the important elements that innovators need to accomplish this work. Acting like the grease, the office will lubricate the bureaucratic gears so that change can be accomplished at a faster-than-normal rate. Altering roles and responsibilities will provide greater freedom to schools and will allow staff members to overcome barriers that impede healthy change.

The 2012-2013 school year will bring a renewed District commitment to transparency and accountability. This begins with a series of **technology-based tools**. These initiatives include expansion of a **one-to-one project** that puts an iPad in the hands of all students in a school. A total of ten schools now participate in this project, up from five a year ago. School enrollment in the project will grow in 2012-2013.

A large challenge involves making good on the idea of flowing resources toward need. The following display illustrates this relationship between need and support (see Figure 6 below).



The School Performance Framework identifies and allows the District to replicate effective learning programs throughout the District. Granting schools greater flexibility is a large part of reforming the Clark County School District. Five-Star schools will enjoy **greater flexibility and less oversight**. This flexibility extends to areas of:

- Budget.
- Instructional practices.
- Supplemental programs and materials.
- Staffing and scheduling.
- Professional development and meeting requirements.

Support for high-need schools extends to the following:

- With respect to hiring, 1- and 2-Star schools have access to the hiring pool first.
- These schools are the first to receive high-quality training for teachers.
- When professional development opportunities arise, seats are reserved for all staff at 1- or 2-Star schools.
- The lowest-performing schools are buffered from staff turnover during periods of staff surplus.
- Interim assessments are used at 1-, 2-, and 3-Star schools; for 4- or 5-Star schools, they are initially optional.
- Reinstate what have been called “SWISS teams” (School-wide Instructional Support Services).
- Unlimited budget carryover so schools can marshal funds and apply them to highest needs.
- Greater flexibility for qualifying schools so they can swap services for salaries and vice versa.
- Support for the priority placement and transfers of assistant principals and deans into high-need schools.

High-performing schools will work collaboratively with lower-performing schools to share best practices and learn from each other. The high-performing schools take the lead in areas such as developing peer coaching models, mentoring other leaders or serving as forums for developing talent, and cultivating new programs.

Five-Star schools receive recognition through a program supported by our community business partners that celebrates and rewards some of the schools’ success stories. Each school also receives a banner signifying its status.

CLOSING

All our efforts are designed with one goal in mind. That is preparing all students so they are **“Ready By Exit.”**

As the agenda moves forward, it is helpful to bear in mind the advice of former McKinsey analyst Charlie Baum, who says there are really three kinds of wins. “Insight wins” are those epiphanies we have about how the work ought to be done. “Process wins” follow. These are the result of changes in behavior, given new insights. These culminate in what Charlie Baum calls “Result wins.”

As we consider the insights that are helping the Clark County School District achieve more with less, one jumps out. It has to do with the way that change occurs. Traditionalists, for instance, typically focus on making change through people. As a result, training, it is believed by traditionalists, leads to altered attitudes and ultimately changed behavior. On the other hand, more recently, private sector leaders have turned to making change through structure. For instance, a focus on new learning standards changes the rules of the game and prompts people to adapt. The culture that emerges is one that is more adaptive. When people and structures interact, learning occurs.

Examples of this can be seen last year. New structures that have emerged include performance zones, a School Performance Framework, the Common Core State Standards, and a statewide growth model. In the wings, and soon to be implemented, there is a statewide accountability system that will be based on academic growth and a School Performance Framework.

Collectively, these have changed the educational landscape.

In the end, of course, all of this is about marshaling **people, time, and money toward** cheaper, better, and faster. All of this is in pursuit of “Ready By Exit” for our students and **better return on investment.**



*“In the wings, and soon
to be implemented,
there is a statewide
accountability system that
will be based on
growth and a School
Performance Framework.”*

APPENDIX: DISPLAY OF STATE ASSESSMENT RESULTS FOR CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Figure 7: Elementary School Mathematics CRT Results 2010-2012

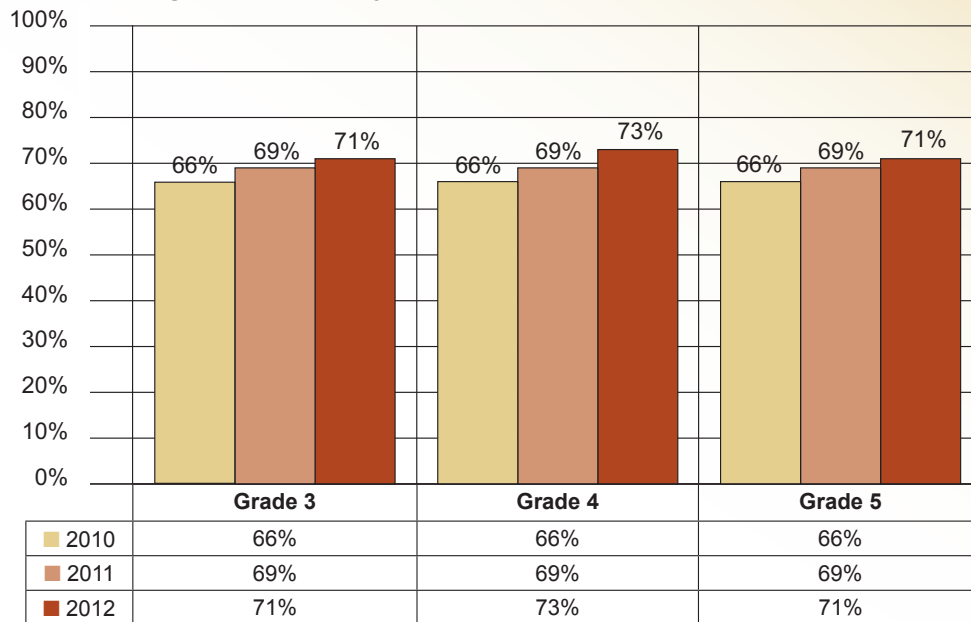


Figure 8: Elementary School Reading CRT Results 2010-2012

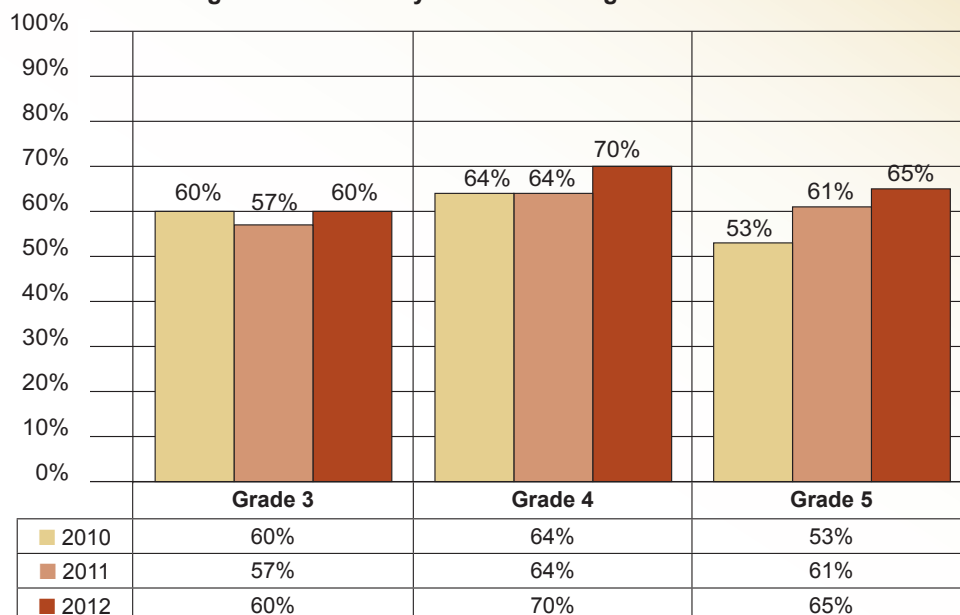
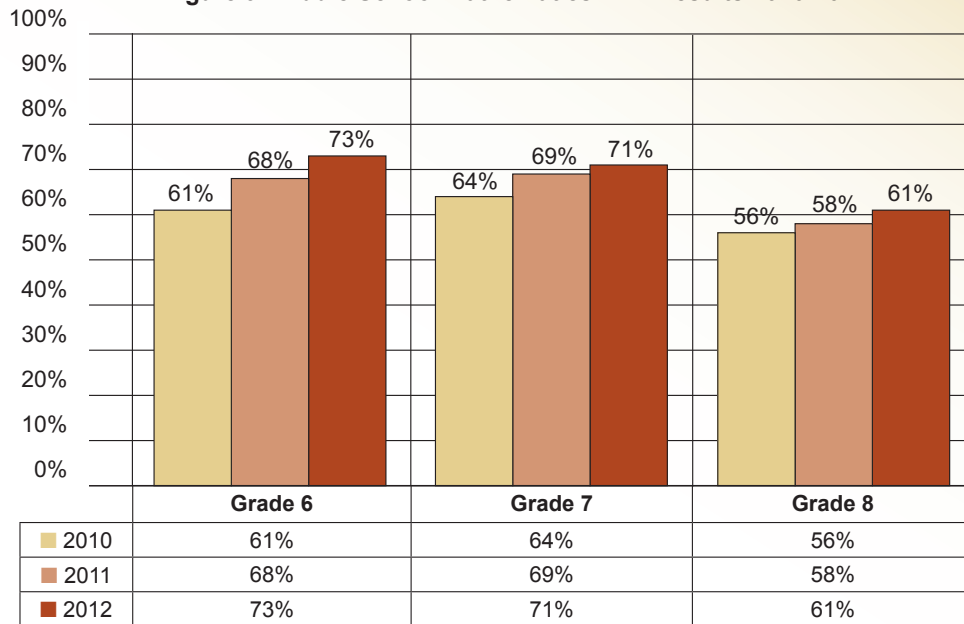
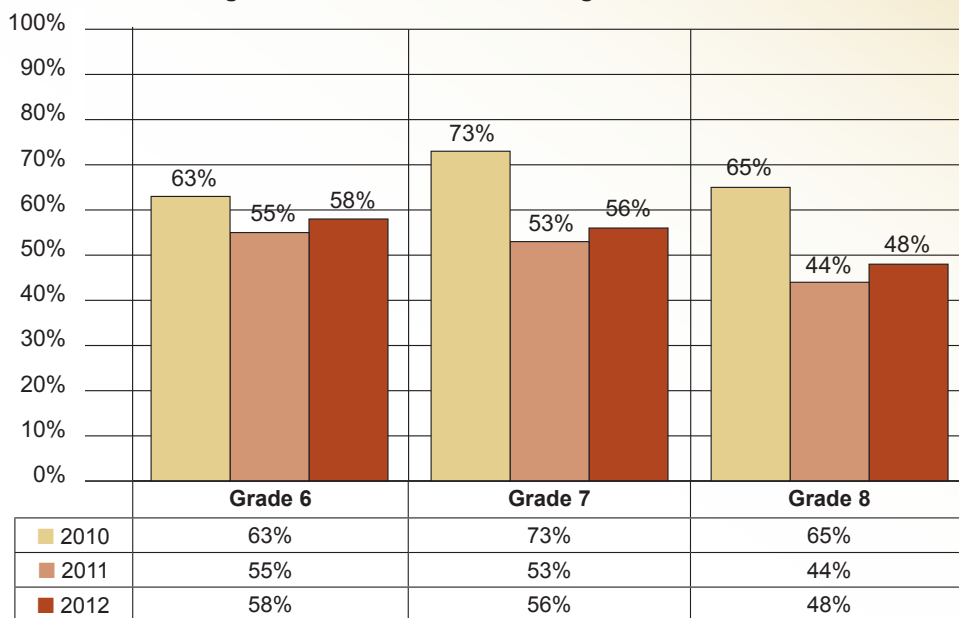


Figure 9: Middle School Mathematics CRT Results 2010-2012**Figure 10: Middle School Reading CRT Results 2010-2012**

Note: Beginning in 2011, the state raised the performance levels required for middle school students to achieve proficiency. This, in part, explains the decline in 2011.

