**Danya Peters**

**Capstone Project Proposal**

In a comparison of high school graduation rates across the United States for the class of 2011, Nevada ranked among the worst (at 62%) with only Washington D.C. rates coming in lower. Over the last five years, much effort has been expended state-wide to increase Nevada’s graduation rates. The current analysis will primarily focus on the students in Washoe County School District. It is the second biggest school district in Nevada and covers much of Reno, Sparks, Incline Village, and surrounding areas in Northern Nevada.

The current analysis will address the following questions:

1. How have the Washoe County School District graduation rates compared to the state of Nevada rates as a whole?
2. What has the trend in graduation rates been over the last five years, both statewide and in Washoe County School District?
3. Which groups of students have shown the biggest gains in graduation rates in Washoe County School District?
4. Which groups of students have shown the smallest gains in graduation rates in Washoe County School District?

Results from these analysis will provide Washoe County School District with information about the groups of students whom they can focus on to continue to improve their overall graduation rates. Those groups of students who have shown the least gains over the last five years represent the biggest opportunities for improvements in the future. Data will be drawn from the Nevada Annual Reports of Accountability, which are released annually by the Nevada Department of Education. Aggregated graduation rates will comprise the outcome data, with no individual level results. Data will be downloaded from <http://www.nevadareportcard.com/di/main/cohort>.

Analyses will focus on developing an improvement model that compares successive cohorts of graduating seniors in Washoe County School District and the state of Nevada over a five year period. A positive change will represent improvement at the district and state level, while a negative change will represent a lack of improvement. Exploratory plots of the aggregated graduation rates will be used to analyze trends over five cohorts of seniors (classes of 2011-2015).

Deliverables for these analyses will include code and a slide deck that shows improvements (or lack thereof) of subgroups within the Washoe County School District, as well as exploratory plots.