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**Nevada College Kick Start Program Launched in
Washoe County School District
Program aims to improve Nevada's college graduation rate**

Carson City—State Treasurer Kate Marshall today was joined by representatives from the Washoe County School District, the Financial Stability Partnership of Northern Nevada, Charles Schwab Bank, and the SSgA Upromise 529 Plan in launching the [Nevada College Kick Start Program](#) during a special Family College Night event hosted by the Boys & Girls Club of the Truckee Meadows. Parents and students from six area elementary schools—Corbett, Kate Smith, Lemelson, Libby Booth, Lincoln Park, and Veteran—attended the Family College Night event. A similar event will be held at Natchez Elementary School in Wadsworth on November 7.

The Family College Night provided parents the opportunity to learn about the *Nevada College Kick Start Program*, which is helping support the dream of a college education by establishing \$50 college savings accounts for each 2013-2014 public school kindergarten student attending school within the pilot program area. Parents and other family caregivers also learned how Nevada families can now open a college savings account with as little as \$15.

“As administrator of Nevada’s 529 program and as Chair of the Board of Trustees of the College Savings Plans of Nevada, it gives me great pride to see this new program move from the planning table into action,” Marshall said. “We have been traveling around the state over the past two months to showcase the program with parents and school officials.”

The *Nevada College Kick Start Program* pilot area includes all fall 2013 kindergarten public school students in 13 Nevada rural counties. Thanks to a grant secured through Charles Schwab Bank, seven Title I schools (about 440 children) in Washoe County are also included in the pilot. In all, the *Nevada College Kick Start Program* pilot includes nearly 3,500 kindergarten students. The goal is to expand the program statewide at the conclusion of the pilot program period.

Washoe County School District Superintendent Pedro Martinez believes in the expansion of access and opportunities for all students and this program begins that process. “The Kick Start Program has the potential to change lives of our students and their families by making a college education less of a dream and more of a reality. Having this program available to our youngest students provides students at an early age along with their families, to plan for their futures. We are incredibly thankful to Treasurer Marshall for spearheading this effort and we are very thankful for a business partner such as Charles Schwab to provide the initial funding for this program.”

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“The Financial Stability Partnership of Northern Nevada is an excellent example of a new type of cross-sector leadership that is emerging in our region,” said Karen Barsell CEO of United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra. “We are working together to deliver collective impact to solve social problems in ways that no single organization can do alone. The Nevada College Kick Start is a program that fits the goals of our organization. We intend to continue to create new ways to come together to help Nevada’s households become financially secure.”

Nancy Brown, Senior Manager of Community Development of Schwab Bank in Reno, said, “The Nevada College Kick Start Program plays an important role in changing the culture of lower income families. It helps plant the seed of opportunity in the minds of kindergartners and their parents that graduating from college is within reach. This grant is very well aligned with Schwab Bank’s commitment to help people achieve better financial outcomes.”

Marshall also stated that Nevada families now have an even greater ability to open an affordable college savings account due to a reduction in the initial registration cost from \$250 to a mere \$15. “Today, you can begin saving for your child’s future higher education needs by opening an account for the cost of a pizza, and then develop a plan to make regular contributions based on what you can afford. Month by month, your savings can grow, and at the same time you’ll be telling your child, ‘you are college bound!’ ”

Marshall said the College Savings Board chose to launch the *Nevada College Kick Start Program* with kindergartners because it provides Nevada families with a 13-year window in which to save and plan for future higher education. She pointed to the fact that studies have shown that children that know they have a college savings account in their name are 7 times more likely to attend an institution of higher learning. Marshall added, “It’s important to note that the study found that even a small account, often not enough to buy books for a semester, improves a child’s determination and preparedness for college and higher education.”

The *Nevada College Kick Start Program* is using a portion of program manager fees, not taxpayer dollars, to open these college savings accounts.

“Remember, it’s not that you have to save for every college expense, but that whatever you can save lowers your or your student’s college debt, while at the same time sending the message to your child that college is in his or her future,” Marshall said

To learn more about the *Nevada College Kick Start Program*, go to <http://CollegeKickStart.nv.gov>. To find out about the many advantages Nevada families have in opening an SSgA Upromise 529 college savings plan account, go to Nevadas529.com.

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Financial Stability Partnership of Northern Nevada

The Financial Stability Partnership, formed to strengthen individuals and families in northern Nevada and the Sierra, was developed to coordinate and promote programs that help individuals and families attain and preserve assets, become more financially stable, and achieve long-term economic independence.