

# **Nevada State Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force**

## **Report – June 2022**



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## Introduction

Assembly Bill 276 (2019) established the Nevada State Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force (Task Force). Pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 391.496, the Task Force must:

1. Evaluate the challenges in attracting and retaining teachers throughout this State;
2. Make recommendations to the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education to address the challenges in attracting and retaining teachers throughout this State, including, without limitation, providing incentives to attract and retain teachers; and
3. On or before February 1 of each odd-numbered year, submit a report to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau for transmission to the Legislature describing the findings and recommendations of the Task Force.

During even-numbered years, the Task Force must report its findings and recommendations to the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education (LCE). This report provides an overview of such findings and recommendations.

## Members

The second round of applications for Task Force membership was released by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) in November of 2021. LCE members reviewed and appointed members from each school district during their February 2022 meeting. The current Task Force is comprised of seven reappointed members and 13 new members.

In accordance with NRS 391.492, the current membership includes:

(a), One licensed teacher employed by each school district located in a county whose population is less than 100,000:

- Carson City – Nicole Witkowski
- Churchill – Lance Lattin
- Douglas – Kristen Peck
- Elko – Tammie Smithburg
- Esmeralda – Linda Kile
- Eureka – Meridon Fortune
- Humboldt – Tamara McCord
- Lander – Sandra Ayers
- Lincoln – Sherry Spencer
- Lyon – Linda Flaherty
- Mineral – Travis Ryness
- Nye – Justin Petrillo
- Pershing – Thomas Brooks
- Storey – Viengkhone Peabody
- White Pine – Cherie Reid

(b) Two licensed teachers employed by each school district located in a county whose population is 100,000 or more but less than 700,000:

- Washoe – Maria Cristy Fernandez
- Washoe – Natalia Cui-Callahan

(c) Three licensed teachers employed by each school district located in a county whose population is 700,000 or more:

- Clark – Aaron Watson
- Clark – Antonio Gabarre
- Clark – Magdaline Wells

The work of the Task Force was supported by the following personnel and educational partners:

**Nevada Department of Education (NDE)**

- Jhone M. Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Jessica Todtman, Deputy Superintendent for Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement
- Jeff Briske, Director, Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement (EDLiFE)
- Kathleen Galland-Collins, Assistant Director, EDLiFE
- KellyLynn Charles, Education Programs Professional, EDLiFE
- Anabel Sanchez, Education Programs Professional, EDLiFE
- Belinda Schauer, Education Programs Professional, EDLiFE
- Michael Arakawa, Program Officer III, EDLiFE
- Rick Derry, Administrative Assistant II, EDLiFE

**WestEd**

- Mary Peterson, Co-Director, Region 15 Comprehensive Center at WestEd
- Alex B. Jacobson, Senior Research Associate, Region 15 Comprehensive Center at WestEd
- Andrew F. Morrill, Senior Program Associate, Region 15 Comprehensive Center at WestEd

**Attorney General’s Office**

- David Gardner, Senior Deputy Attorney General

The Task Force wishes to express appreciation to the numerous presenters and the members of the Nevada Coalition for Educator Recruitment and Retention, the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) Teacher Pathways Task Force, and the Superintendent’s Principal Advisory (PAC) and Teacher Advisory Cabinets (STAC) for their expertise, advice, and willingness to contribute to these findings and recommendations.

## Findings and Recommendations

### Recommendations Format and Background

NRS 391.496 clearly states that the primary responsibility of this Task Force is to make recommendations to LCE to address the challenges in attracting and retaining teachers in Nevada. To do this, the Task Force reviewed available data and research as well as consulted with external experts and stakeholder groups. The result is a list of Task Force approved recommendations divided by focus areas:

- Data
- Messaging/Branding and Transparency
- Removing Barriers
- Salary/Compensation and Benefits
- Strategic Use of Funds

This example provides an overview of how each recommendation is organized:

#### **Example Recommendation:**

##### **1. Title of the recommendation**

Recommendation language

*Specifics:* This provides additional details and background on the intent of the recommendation.

*Rationale:* The reason why this recommendation was made.

*Expected Outcomes:* The intended results of successful implementation of the recommendation.

*Evidence Base:* The research and/or data supporting the recommendation. This may be a link to a Google Folder containing the research/data.

**Implementing many of these recommendations will require additional funding to be invested in Nevada's K-12 education system.** The Task Force realizes that the availability in funding is largely dependent on Nevada's tax revenue, but it firmly believes that if the State is committed to addressing the chronic and pervasive educator workforce challenges, new investments must be made and sustained in the long-term.

NDE and school districts are currently investing millions of one-time federal relief funds to provide scholarships and supports to recruit students, paraprofessionals, and others to become teachers. Investments in recruitment are meaningless if the State cannot retain the teachers who are already working in its classrooms. In addition to complementing recruitment efforts with retention efforts, Nevada needs to invest in initiatives that make the State more attractive to out-of-state teachers, encourage current Nevada residents to pursue a career in education, and provide support for current and future educators so that they stay in the profession and continue to positively impact the students and communities of this State. Recruiting and retaining a diverse group of educators is essential. Providing a variety of benefits, and supports, in addition to removing barriers will assist the effort to diversify the educator workforce in Nevada. The

recommendations listed below are possible solutions to expand the size and diversity of Nevada’s teacher workforce.

Four stakeholder groups (groups) met separately and submitted recommendations to the Task Force for consideration.

- The **Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) Teacher Pathways Task Force (TPTF)** is comprised of representatives from NSHE’s four- and two-year institutions, representatives from the Nevada Department of Education, a rural school district superintendent, and the chief human resources officers from Nevada’s two largest school districts (Clark and Washoe).
- The **Nevada Coalition for Educator Recruitment and Retention (Coalition)** is comprised of representatives, mostly human resources personnel, from Nevada’s 17 school districts and the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority. The Coalition is charged with discussing solutions to decrease the number of educator vacancies in Nevada and making recommendations to NDE and the Task Force to assist in this objective.
- The **Superintendent’s Teacher Advisory Cabinet (STAC)** and the **Principal Advisory Cabinet (PAC)** are each comprised of 30 members who provide feedback to NDE on initiatives and opportunities. STAC and PAC members not only provide insight from their experiences, but also gather feedback from peers to help inform NDE’s work.

## List of Recommendations in Alphabetical Order by Focus Area

This summary of recommendations is provided to assist in document navigation. The title of each recommendation below links to the complete recommendation including the specific details, rationale, expected outcomes, and evidence base. All recommendations are numbered and sorted in alphabetical order; the way they are presented should not be construed as prioritization. The historical and current groups that proposed the same or similar solutions are listed in parentheses following each recommendation.

### Data

1. [Exit Survey](#) (recommended in 2021 Task Force report and 3 out of 4 groups)
2. [Study of Educator Workload](#) (recommended by the Coalition and PAC)
3. [Workforce Data Portal](#) (recommended by the NSHE and Coalition)
4. [Working Conditions Survey](#) (recommended in 2021 Task Force report and 3 out of 4 groups)

### Messaging/ Branding and Transparency

5. [Messaging and Branding of the Profession of Teaching](#) (recommended in 2021 Task Force report and by 2 out of 4 groups)
6. [Nevada Aspiring Educators Initiative](#) (recommended by the NSHE group)

### Removing Barriers

7. [Expedited Background Checks](#) (recommended by the Coalition)

8. [Invest to Support the Continuation of State and ESSER Funded Initiatives/ Programs](#) (recommended by the Coalition and NSHE groups)
9. [Loans for In-State Tuition for Teacher Preparation Programs](#) (recommended by STAC)
10. [Study of Teacher Licensure Testing Requirements](#) (recommended by the NSHE group)
11. [Support the Home Is Possible for Teachers Program](#) (recommended by the Task Force)

### **Salary/ Compensation/ Benefits**

12. [Loan Forgiveness Program](#) (recommended in the 2021 Task Force report and STAC)
13. [Public Employee Retirement \(PERS\) Incentive](#) (recommended by the Coalition and PAC)
14. [Statewide Minimum Salary Schedule for Teachers](#) (recommended by all groups and Task Force)

### **Strategic Use of Funds**

15. [Expand Teaching and Training \(T/T\) Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) Programs](#) (recommended by the NSHE group)
16. [Increase Allocation of Funding to Education](#) to support the following priorities: (recommended by all groups and Task Force)
  - A. Administrator professional learning
  - B. Hiring educators
  - C. Mentor programs
  - D. District-led affordable housing/ rental assistance to educators
  - E. District-led recruitment and retention efforts
  - F. Support educator pipeline, retention incentives, career ladder options, and other resources

## Recommendation Details

### Data

#### 1. [Exit Survey](#)

*Recommendation:* Provide funding for NDE to contract with a third party to develop, implement, and analyze the results of a Statewide Exit Survey administered to teachers when exiting their school, district, and/or State regardless of the reason for their exit (recommended in 2021 Task Force report and 3 out of 4 groups).

*Specifics:* Building on the previous Task Force recommendation, a stakeholder group of educators from across the State, in conjunction with NDE and experts from WestEd, have developed a draft [Exit Survey](#) and are in the process of developing the protocols around implementation. This workgroup gathered feedback from a wide range of educators and will continue to do so throughout development; however, to be able to implement a valid and reliable survey and analyze the data for use in reporting, this effort needs to be supported by funding for third-party experts.

*Rationale:* High teacher turnover can negatively impact student achievement and increase district new teacher training costs. A teacher exit survey can help districts and schools better understand why teachers leave and better target efforts to improve retention. Having a third-party implement the survey, along with providing the appropriate protocols, would protect the confidentiality of the entire process and allow exiting employees the opportunity to provide honest feedback.

*Expected Outcomes:* State, districts, and schools would have access to quality data around educator exit decisions to make data-driven decisions to positively impact working conditions to support the retention of educators.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder - DATA](#)

#### 2. [Study of Educator Workload](#)

*Recommendation:* Commission a study to evaluate educator workload including statutory and regulatory requirements (recommended by the Coalition and PAC).

*Specifics:* The study would provide clear information on the requirements within statute and regulations and reveal the true status of educator workload in all Nevada districts and charter schools. This information would be used to guide reviews and changes to statutes, regulations, and policies. Senate Bill (SB) 353 during the 2021 Legislative Session required NDE to review examinations and assessments and to adopt regulations that prescribe certain limitations on examinations and assessments. This recommendation is similar, but it goes a step further in that it is asking for a complete study of educator workload. Educator workload is a very complex issue to study and would require professionals experienced with doing studies of this nature in order to get the quality of information and recommendations needed to make impactful changes.



*Rationale:* Statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements tend to accumulate and build over time. A complete study of the requirements is long overdue.

*Expected Outcomes:* The study would provide clear information on the requirements within statutes, regulations, and policies to reveal the true status of educator workload in all Nevada districts and charter schools to guide revisions to statutes, regulations, and policies.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder - DATA](#)

### **3. Workforce Data Portal**

*Recommendation:* The Legislature should invest funding to sustain the educator workforce supply and demand portal currently being developed using federal relief funds (recommended by the NSHE and Coalition groups).

*Specifics:* The Nevada Department of Education has invested over \$800,000 in federal relief funds to support ongoing analysis of the educator workforce and class sizes in Nevada. As part of the contract for that work, it will initially be made available to school and district staff and then public-facing dashboards will be deployed during the 2023-24 school year that monitor:

- Average class size experience
- Access to experienced teachers
- Use of long-term substitutes
- Teacher workforce age
- Licensed staffing ratios
- Teacher pipeline metrics, including connecting data with NSHE educator preparation programs

To continue support and ongoing development and training, there is an annual licensing fee of \$75,000. In addition to the technical management of the application, the annual licensing fee will include 200 hours of support. The support hours can be used to refine existing dashboards, develop new dashboards, provide training, and/or create summative presentations to provide transparency and accountability to the public.

This system would not require districts to replace their current human capital or human resources management data systems, but instead would be used to supplement as needed and to provide data securely to the State.

*Rationale:* The dashboards will support NDE's role in communicating and advocating for public policy regarding the teacher workforce and class sizes. Most importantly, the public-facing dashboards provide built-in accountability and transparency to support advocacy and ongoing support for educator recruitment and retention.

*Expected Outcomes:* NDE, district, and school personnel as well as State policymakers would be able to easily access real-time educator workforce data to inform decision-making.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder - DATA](#)

#### **4. [Working Conditions Survey](#)**

*Recommendation:* Allocate Funding for NDE to contract with a third-party to develop, implement, and analyze a Statewide working conditions survey of current employees (recommended in 2021 Task Force report and 3 out of 4 groups).

*Specifics:* Building on the previous Task Force recommendation, the 2022 Task Force reiterates that to understand why teachers choose to stay or leave their positions, they must be asked. A valid and reliable teacher working conditions survey can provide a deeper understanding of how teacher working conditions affect student achievement and teacher retention. Targeted support can be provided to encourage teachers to stay in their positions. The working conditions survey would result in a data dashboard similar to the [North Carolina Working Conditions Survey](#). This survey would only need to be administered every other year.

*Rationale:* The Nevada School Climate – Social Emotional Learning Survey (<https://reports.nevadaschoolclimate.org/>) was administered to staff for the first time in spring 2022, but it addresses only a small number of issues related to working conditions as it measures factors related to cultural and linguistic competence, relationships, physical safety, and emotional safety. An exit survey is useful in determining why teachers have left, but a working conditions survey can help the State identify what would encourage teachers to stay. Using working conditions, climate, and exit survey data together, districts and NDE can make informed decisions to help address and resolve any potential problems identified in the working conditions survey and reduce the number of educators leaving the classroom. Having a third-party implement the survey, along with the appropriate protocols would protect the confidentiality of the entire process and allow current employees the opportunity to provide honest feedback.

*Expected Outcomes:* State, districts, and schools would have access to quality data around educator working conditions/student learning conditions to make data-driven decisions to positively impact the working environment to support the retention of educators and reduce the number of educators leaving.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder - DATA](#)

### **Messaging/ Branding and Transparency**

#### **5. [Messaging and Branding of the Profession of Teaching](#)**

*Recommendation:* Allocate additional funds to NDE and districts for frequent (monthly/ weekly) public branding/ messaging that promotes recruitment and retention of educators via advertisement with social media, news outlets, etc. (recommended in 2021 Task Force report and 2 out of 4 groups).

*Specifics:* Building on the previous Task Force recommendation, the 2022 Task Force reiterates the need for funds that would be used to support the creation of professional-quality videos,

public service announcements, social media posts, etc. to promote the entire education profession, Nevada as a desirable State to teach in, and specific district and Statewide recruitment and retention events/ efforts.

*Rationale:* Currently, positive public messaging around education is limited to the recognition of exemplary educators. This is limited to just a few educators a year and does not truly encompass what most educators do every day. Having resources dedicated to promoting the profession and sharing positive aspects with the public will serve to boost the morale of educators and help to develop a more informed public opinion of education in Nevada.

*Expected Outcomes:* Branding/ messaging positively impacts public perception, will help all Nevada districts to attract top talent, and enables districts to distinguish themselves from competing states. The promotion of working as an educator in Nevada serves both recruitment and retention efforts.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder – Messaging/Branding and Transparency](#)

## **6. Nevada Aspiring Educators Initiative**

*Recommendation:* The Legislature should invest in a series of events and supports for aspiring educators, specifically pre-service educators or potential future educators. This is distinct from the current mission of the Nevada Department of Education, districts and schools, and institutions of higher education as it focuses on those not already enrolled in preparation programs or those who do not already hold a license who would benefit from tailored information and mentorship as they consider pathways to careers in education (recommended by NSHE group).

*Specifics:* Pilot a year-long series of events and supports for teacher candidates to include:

- Hotline for aspiring educators: This would serve as the State’s primary source of information for individuals exploring careers in education: This would not duplicate/ replace licensure processing services provided by NDE; this would offer career advisory support to those contemplating teaching for perhaps the first time. It is important to note that NDE’s Licensure operation does not have the capacity to respond to open-ended questions related to licensure and, in most cases, individuals need to initiate a licensure application to get support. Nevada needs a place future educators can call before they have even enrolled in postsecondary programs and/or while they’re proceeding through preparation programs.
- Career Ambassadors: Could be used to ‘staff’ the hotline and facilitate events, solicit experienced/ retired educators who are committed to changing the narrative, and support candidates through the licensure journey.
- Recruiting events paired with licensing labs: After/concurrent with hosting recruiting events, offer a “licensing lab” where candidates have access to computers and support on standby to help them navigate licensure and job applications. (WCSD model)
- Resume-building and interviewing classes: Building on the example of WCSD, offer a series of professional development supports for aspiring educators and existing educators who want to become administrators.

- Financial aid resources: Simple information that helps people determine eligibility for financial aid, scholarships, estimate anticipated aid, and understand the various programs and options available to them.
- Pathways to Teaching Webinar: This would help candidates navigate different routes and credentials (i.e., traditional versus ARL, B&I, etc.). It could be recorded and repurposed.

*Rationale:* When people want to explore careers in education, the first question they need to have answered is “What will it take to become a teacher/counselor/etc.?” The task can be daunting. Anecdotal evidence from administrators’ experience in supporting Alternative Route to Licensure programs demonstrates that this is a significant area of opportunity. This comprehensive suite of proposed events and resources would provide candidates with specific information on benefits, community resources, and practical/ logistical information about joining the profession.

*Expected Outcomes:* Pre-service teachers will have the necessary information and resources to apply for licensure and employment with little to no difficulties. This recommendation also enhances recruitment efforts beyond traditional audiences and ensures people who are interested in the profession have the supports and information they need to earn a license.

*Evidence Base:* This request is based on anecdotal evidence from NSHE faculty, district and school staff, and teacher candidates that are seeking tailored advice to determine the most efficient pathway to teaching. NDE consistently receives these types of requests, but human and resource capacity does not allow NDE to provide guidance to candidates unless they are actively applying for licensure. [NDE Research Folder – Messaging/Branding and Transparency](#)

## Removing Barriers

### 7. [Expedited Background Checks](#)

*Recommendation:* Allocate funding to the Department of Public Safety to support the prioritization of background checks for educator licensure (recommended by the Coalition).

*Specifics:* The Department of Public Safety (DPS) would need to determine the best way to implement this recommendation. DPS would need to determine the most efficient way to prioritize the processing of the fingerprints of educators seeking licensure. Funding would be needed to provide additional personnel or to allow for overtime pay to current personnel. This recommendation would prioritize background checks for educator licensure ahead of recreational licenses. The intent is to expedite the processing of educator background checks for licensure/ employment. Other priority checks such as foster parent background checks would not be negatively affected.

*Rationale:* Between April and September each year, the number of applications for licensure increases significantly. Most of these applications require a background check. This increases the workload on DPS. Background checks can take anywhere from 4 to 10 weeks or longer during this very busy season. NDE processing time usually runs about 3 to 6 weeks during this same

period. This means that there can be hundreds of applications that have been approved by NDE, but are pending the completion of the background checks.

*Expected Outcome:* With expedited background checks, licenses could be issued in a timelier manner; therefore, educators are more likely to get licensed prior to the start of the school year and into classrooms more quickly (reducing the licensure processing time).

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder – Removing Barriers](#)

## **8. Invest to Support Continuation of State and Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funded Initiatives/ Programs**

*Recommendation:* The Legislature should invest through an increase of funding to education to support the initiatives/ programs that are currently being funded through the State and with federal ESSER funds, which include, but are not limited to, support for tuition scholarships, clinical experience stipends, and other costs related to educator preparation which may include the cost of assessments required for licensure (recommended by the Coalition and NSHE groups).

*Specifics:*

- Enhance funding for Teach Nevada Scholarships to increase availability. The budget is approximately \$5M per biennium. With scholarships of up to \$24,000 per candidate, this allows for approximately 170 awards.
- Establish State funding for the Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching Grant Program that was created using federal relief funds. This program provides tuition assistance of \$2,000 to support pre-service educators who are in their final three semesters as well as stipends of \$8,400 (\$700 per week for 12 weeks) to support future educators. Candidates must commit to teaching in a Nevada public school for two years.
- Consider covering the costs to candidates of assessments required for licensure, which may include the Praxis Core and Praxis Content exams.
- This may require a study to determine which ESSER-funded projects are having the most impact as well as the provision of additional State funds after the ESSER funds are exhausted to ensure no loss of service/ impact.

*Rationale:* The cost of a college education has risen over the past few decades as states have shifted an increasing amount of the costs to tuition. These costs have increased at a faster rate than new teacher salaries. Historically, continuing to advance in postsecondary education has also been key to moving up the teacher salary schedule. The State needs to affirm that teachers are of value. With a persistent teacher shortage plaguing Nevada, it needs to accelerate the pace of candidate completion, ensure there are no financial barriers to candidates completing their preparation programs, and attract more candidates into preparation programs.

Funding stipends for pre-service teachers completing their student teaching at NSHE institutions will strengthen the pipeline and retain/ support students in their progress to completing educator preparation programs. Ensuring that qualified candidates complete graduation/ licensure requirements, including student teaching, by providing financial supports will expand Nevada's

teacher workforce and help ensure equitable access for all students to effective teachers. Providing funds to support pre-service teachers during student teaching removes the financial burden placed on many pre-service teachers and provide support to students who may not have been able to afford to do so otherwise (for example, students may have had to give up part-time jobs to accommodate student teaching in their schedule or incur extra expenses associated with traveling to student teaching sites). This also prioritizes providing equitable access to increase the diversity of teacher candidates in order to better align the demographics of Nevada's teaching workforce to the demographics of its students. Currently the two largest grants for pre-service teachers, Teach Nevada Scholarships (TNVS) and Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching (IPT), have been awarded to 815 recipients who identify as white, 885 who identify as non-white, and 138 who declined to answer. Those that reported as non-white included 7 American Indian/Alaska Native recipients, 94 Asian recipients, 223 Black/African American recipients, 410 Hispanic/Latino recipients, 19 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander recipients, and 133 recipients identifies as being of two or more races.

Continuing and/or increasing funding to programs such as the TNVS and IPT ensures that Nevada can provide resources and supports to prospective teachers and keep the momentum gained with the ESSER-funded projects.

*Expected Outcomes:* The allocation of State funds to continue ESSER initiatives would extend the positive impact the initiatives are having on students, educators, and the education system. Expanding and enhancing the educator pipeline will increase access to a diverse pool of qualified and effective educators including teachers, school counselors, social workers, school psychologists, library media specialists, etc.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder – Removing Barriers](#)

## **9. Loans for In-State Tuition for Teacher Preparation Programs**

*Recommendation:* Provide funding to create and manage a zero-interest loan for in-state tuition for teacher preparation programs (recommended by STAC).

*Specifics:* Nevada would offer a zero-interest loan for 100% of a preservice teacher's in-state tuition. This would be similar to the Home is Possible for Teachers home loan program. A portion of the tuition loan would be forgiven for each year the educator teaches in a public-school classroom in Nevada. For example, in-state tuition of \$9,000/ per year for 4 years equals a zero-interest loan of \$36,000. For each year the educator teaches in Nevada, \$3,600 would be forgiven for each of the 10 years. Should the teacher leave education or Nevada prior to the 10th year in the classroom, the remaining portion of the loan would have to be repaid by the educator.

*Rationale:* If students are provided no-interest loans for teacher preparation programs, then the enrollment and completion rates will increase, thus increasing the potential educator hiring pool and decreasing the teacher shortage rate in Nevada.

*Expected outcomes:* Nevada colleges and universities will see an increase in the number of preservice educators enrolling and completing their degrees. Districts would report a decrease in

educator vacancy rates. Additionally, Nevada will see an increase in the number of teachers of color entering and staying in the profession.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder – Removing Barriers](#)

## **10. Study of Teacher Licensure Testing Requirements**

*Recommendation:* The Legislature should commission and fund a study of Nevada’s licensure requirements, including the “Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators” Tests (NAC 391.036), to identify whether it is a barrier to locally growing a more diverse educator workforce and to ensure that competency requirements are reasonable indicators of a candidate’s future effectiveness as an educator (recommended by NSHE group).

*Specifics:* Given the current educator shortage, it is important to ensure that all educator preparation and licensure requirements are meaningful and necessary to ensuring Nevada’s students have equitable access to effective educators. The “Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators” reading, mathematics, and writing tests are a prerequisite to educator licensure. Some NSHE institutions have aligned their educator preparation program entry requirements with the need to pass the Praxis Core to put candidates on a clear path to being licensure-ready.

*Rationale:* Maintaining high expectations for teacher candidates is necessary. In practice, the Praxis Core has proven to be a barrier to many candidates seeking to pursue educator licensure as they struggle to pass the writing portion of the assessment. Assembly Bill 225 (2021) requires the Commission on Professional Standards to consider alternative means of demonstrating competency for persons with a disability or health-related need that the Commission determines are necessary and appropriate, which has opened the door to consider alternative forms of demonstrating competency.

*Evidence Base:* The National Council on Teacher Quality’s analysis of Praxis tests for elementary teachers (distinct from the Core) found that teacher candidates, regardless of race and ethnicity, are too often poorly prepared and supported to pass their state licensure tests. The data in this report showed 55% of test-takers fail on their first attempt in states that use a well-structured licensure test, which does not exempt some candidates nor allow a candidate’s high score in one subject area (e.g., English language arts) to compensate for a low score in another (e.g., mathematics). The burden of this uniquely high rate of failure is placed on teacher candidates, rather than on an education system that has failed them. This burden is significant, as candidates are beset by costly retakes, delays, and anxiety.

A similar analysis focused on Nevada’s experience with the Praxis Core would empower the Legislature and the Commission on Professional on Standards in Education to review licensure requirements to ensure that competency requirements are reasonable indicators of a candidate’s future effectiveness as an educator and are not a hindrance to increasing the size and diversity of Nevada’s educator workforce. [NDE Research Folder – Removing Barriers](#)

## **11. Support the Home Is Possible for Teachers Program**

*Recommendation:* Legislature to provide State general funds to supplement the current funding structure to support the [Home Is Possible for Teachers](#) program (recommended by the Task Force).

*Specifics:* The Home Is Possible for Teachers program is currently funded through the fees collected by the Nevada Housing Division (NHD). This recommendation would provide dedicated State funds to supplement the limited amount of funding NHD programs generate from fees.

*Rationale:* As housing prices and the number of educators requesting down payment assistance increase, the amount allocated to each teacher decreases. Adding dedicated funds to the program will allow the Nevada Housing Division to increase the amount of funds available and to accept more educators into the program, giving teachers the opportunity to buy a home (especially in areas of low housing inventory or high cost).

*Expected Outcome:* Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates as teachers are able to afford to live in their communities.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder – Removing Barriers](#)

## **Salary/ Compensation/ Benefits**

### **12. Loan Forgiveness Program**

*Recommendation:* Provide funding outside the general fund to create and manage a student loan forgiveness reimbursement program for teachers after they have taught for 5 years in a public-school classroom in Nevada and who continue to teach in a classroom in Nevada (recommended in the 2021 Task Force report and STAC).

*Specifics:* Building on the previous Task Force recommendation, the 2022 Task Force reiterates the need for a school loan forgiveness program. This recommendation is different from recommendation number 9 because it focuses on retaining teachers who are currently repaying student loans and working in Nevada’s classrooms. After teaching in a Nevada public school classroom for five years, teachers would be eligible to submit a request for reimbursement of their student loan payments up to a set amount each year, with a lifetime reimbursement cap. For example, a teacher may request up to \$2,500 per year for each year they continue to teach in the classroom up to a lifetime total of \$20,000.

*Rationale:* Often, loan forgiveness programs do not forgive 100% of an educator’s student loan and/or the loan type is not eligible for forgiveness. If educators are provided State support to reimburse their costs for loan payments each year they teach in Nevada, then districts will maintain a higher retention rate of educators by reducing the financial burden associated with a low starting salary and the high cost of living.



*Expected Outcomes:* Districts will report higher retention rates of teachers. Currently employed educators will feel valued as this program allows them to submit reimbursement requests for their student loans. Districts will be able to use the loan forgiveness program to attract more educators to move to Nevada to teach.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder – Salary/Compensation/Benefits](#)

### **13. Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) Incentives**

*Recommendation:* Implement PERS incentives such as, but not limited to, 90% after 30 years of service (recommended by the Coalition and PAC).

*Specifics:* The details around this recommendation will most likely need to be assigned to the Nevada Retirement Board.

*Rationale:* Nevada does not currently retain educators at a sufficient rate to meet demand. Providing competitive PERS incentives to educators who stay in the classroom will encourage teachers to stay long-term. Competitive PERS benefits can be used by districts to entice educators to move to Nevada to teach.

*Expected Outcomes:* If competitive PERS benefits are provided, then districts will see long-term retention of educators. Competitive PERS benefits results in long-term retention of educators.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder – Salary/Compensation/Benefits](#)

### **14. Statewide Minimum Salary Scale for Teachers**

*Recommendation:* Allocate additional funds to implement a statewide minimum salary scale for licensed teachers to include an annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) in line with the cost-of-living indices (recommended by all groups and Task Force).

*Specifics:* It is recommended that the statewide average base starting salary (without benefits) of \$41,277 become the statewide minimum starting salary and the statewide maximum be no less than the statewide average base maximum salary of \$82,237. This would be a minimum salary scale for all districts to reflect the cost of living and include an annual COLA increase to maintain or improve the teacher standard of living. Districts could still negotiate salaries higher than the minimum. The COLA increases should be made on a regular basis (at least biannually) to maintain the teacher standard of living.

*Rationale:* Competitive compensation is a means to both recruit and retain educators in Nevada. During a national shortage of educators, appropriate and competitive compensation assures a dignified standard of living that is sustainable for many years of service and makes Nevada more attractive to current and future educators. Districts would be able to prioritize higher salaries and benefits packages commensurate with the level of education and experience to increase their ability to recruit and to retain educators. With additional funding, other budgetary priorities would not be negatively impacted by offering higher salaries or benefits.

*Expected Outcomes:* Higher salaries and better benefits for teachers will positively impact retention and recruitment.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder – Salary/Compensation/Benefits](#)

## **Strategic Use of Funds**

### **15. Expand Teaching and Training (T/T) Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs**

*Recommendation:* The Legislature should invest in expanding the availability of CTE Teaching and Training programs in Nevada’s high schools, including covering dual enrollment tuition for students and potential staff support at NSHE institutions to sustain partnerships related to the program (recommended by NSHE group).

*Specifics:* While other states are launching grow-your-own apprenticeship programs for the first time, Nevada is continuing to build on the successes of Teaching and Training (T/T) CTE programs. T/T CTE programs in high schools allow students to earn dual high school and college credits in undergraduate work and teacher education coursework. This training program is a grow-your-own program to encourage Nevada’s high school students to consider careers as educators. Upon graduation, graduates can be employed immediately as a paraprofessional (teacher assistant) in the classroom while they continue in a teacher preparation program.

The start-up costs for these programs exceed what each rural school district receives in federal and State CTE funding without hindering their ability to maintain their existing CTE programs of study. The Nevada Department of Education allocated \$2.2M in federal relief funding to support the start-up of these programs in Carson High School (HS), Churchill HS, and Douglas HS, as well as seven new programs in Elko (Elko, Spring Creek, Carlin, Owyhee, West Wendover, Jackpot, and Wells).

In addition, the Legislature may consider covering the costs of dual enrollment coursework for students participating in CTE T/T programs.

*Rationale:* Nevada’s heavy reliance upon teachers who earn their teacher licensure in other states/ nations is not a long-term and sustainable solution to its educator shortages. Nevada needs to make a bold commitment to locally growing a much higher percentage of its PK-12 teachers.

The Teaching and Training CTE program provides a solid foundation for encouraging high school students to explore careers in teaching. Every high school in the State should be offering the T/T CTE program.

This programming should include a robust dual credit opportunity that allows high school students to jump-start their college career. Simultaneous with efforts to expand CTE T/T programs, NSHE community colleges and educator preparation programs are exploring ways to enhance articulation of dual enrollment credits and standardize coursework to ensure seamless transfer of dual enrollment and other coursework credits. This will help ensure that teacher

candidates are getting credit for the courses they have completed and do not face unnecessary delays on their path to graduation and licensure due to institutional differences. This is a critical step to accelerating candidates' path to being licensure ready.

*Expected Outcomes:* Increase in high school students choosing teaching as a career.

*Evidence Base:* Nevada's PK-12 student body is increasingly diverse; growing our own teachers from within our student population will enhance the diversity of Nevada's licensed educator workforce, resulting in a workforce that better reflects the demographics of Nevada's students. Research shows that the racial and cultural identity of an educator can make a difference, particularly for students from underrepresented groups. For students, having teachers that look like them reinforces their own identity; for the school community, it creates a bridge to increased engagement in schools. In addition, educators of color are more likely than their white peers to remain in the very schools that need them most: the urban schools with high proportions of students of color and from families experiencing poverty. [NDE Research Folder – Strategic Use of Funds](#)

## **16. [Increase Allocation of Funding to Education](#)** (recommended by all groups and Task Force)

*Recommendation:* Increase the allocation of funding to education and prioritize the use of those funds for:

### **A. Administrator professional learning**

*Specifics:* Provide targeted training of administrators in building systemic supports for educator efficacy and increasing job satisfaction. Building and district administrators would participate in professional learning to help them reduce workload and improve life/ work balance for themselves and the educators they supervise. This would include learning how to leverage initiatives or requirements already in place to reduce duplicative efforts and build systems of support for their staff.

*Rationale:* Educators often spend many hours beyond their contract day working. Removing duplicative or unnecessary work will help improve the life/ work balance and give leaders more time to focus on tasks that positively impact students.

*Expected Outcome:* Educators report higher job satisfaction due to reduced workload (improved life/ work balance) and districts report higher educator retention rates.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder – Strategic Use of Funds](#)

### **B. Hiring educators**

*Specifics:* Increasing funding to districts will support the hiring of additional educators and specialists to provide essential and wraparound services to students.

*Rationale:* Students learn best in a safe and welcoming environment. Schools that have the funds necessary to provide well-rounded educational opportunities and supports for students' success have a higher teacher retention rate. With increased State funds, schools will be able to fund additional teaching positions, mentor programs, chronic absenteeism programs, social worker positions, and many other supports for educators. These supports have a history of reducing teacher burn out and increasing student success.

*Expected Outcomes:* If provided more funds, districts will be able to hire more personnel in schools to meet the diverse needs of the school population; support the hiring of specialists to focus on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS), behavior plans; and support teachers with closing the achievement gaps. Additional funds will provide for increased school safety and increased professional development on restorative practices. Educators will be supported in meeting the needs of all students and will feel empowered to manage their classrooms, resulting in increased employee retention rates.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder – Strategic Use of Funds](#)

### **C. Mentor programs including, but not limited to, salaries, stipends, and training for mentor educators.**

*Specifics:* Increasing funding to districts will support the resources needed to develop or sustain mentor programs through which experienced educators build the capacity and skills of novice educators as well as provide career pathways for experienced educators.

*Rationale:* New teachers rely on onsite training for classroom success. If they do not receive strong support and continued growth during the steep learning curve in their first 2 years, they are twice as likely to abandon their career. Mentoring programs train new teachers in a systematic and sequential approach to learn how to provide effective instruction to their deserving students. [TeacherReady: All New Teachers Need Mentoring Programs](#)

*Expected Outcomes:* Providing support to educators through mentoring builds collective educator efficacy, improves working conditions, and ensures that educators will be better prepared to support all students. Additionally, educators will feel supported, resulting in a decrease in the educator vacancy rate by increasing retention.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder – Strategic Use of Funds](#)

### **D. Provide additional funding to districts to provide affordable housing/ rental assistance to educators.**

*Specifics:* This recommendation would provide funding to districts to assist teachers in finding affordable housing. This could include district purchases of affordable housing/ rental units and/or providing monetary incentives for purchase/ rental assistance.

*Rationale:* A lack of affordable housing affects teacher recruitment and retention. Rural and urban school districts that can offer affordable housing options such as district-owned housing or

low-interest mortgage or rental rates are more appealing to teachers looking to relocate for a teaching position.

*Expected Outcomes:* If educators are provided housing assistance, then districts will retain educators by reducing the financial burden associated with a low starting salary and the high cost of living. Additional housing or assistance may be increased by those districts that already offer this benefit.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder – Strategic Use of Funds](#)

#### **E. Resources for districts to support recruitment and retention efforts.**

*Specifics:* Increasing funding to districts would support additional personnel or resources to focus on recruitment and retention. This would not be a mandated position, but instead provide funds to support either a designated position or support for current personnel responsible for recruitment and retention initiatives or efforts.

*Rationale:* Districts often have limited capacity to focus solely on recruitment and retention. Having designated resources/ personnel to do that work would improve their ability to focus on retaining and recruiting to meet the needs of their district.

*Expected Outcomes:* By having designated funds for personnel and/or resources focused on recruitment and retention, districts would be able provide intensive support to internal and external stakeholders to positively impact working conditions, recruitment, and retention.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder – Strategic Use of Funds](#)

#### **F. Support educator pipeline, retention incentives, referral incentives, career ladder options, and other resources to support educators.**

*Specifics:* Increased funding allows each district to prioritize and provide resources/ incentives based on their unique needs. Flexibility in the use of these funds is important, but priority should be given to efforts that lead to improved recruitment and retention.

*Rationale:* Current funding levels do not adequately support all districts in prioritizing pipeline, retention incentives, and career ladder options.

*Expected Outcomes:* Districts will report a higher retention rate as a result of the prioritization of the use of funds provided for retention incentives, career ladder options, and other resources to support educators based on the individual needs of each district.

*Evidence Base:* [NDE Research Folder – Strategic Use of Funds](#)

## **Conclusion**

Nevada's education stakeholders agree that an increase in education funding is necessary to positively impact the State's ability to attract and retain quality educators.

The recommendations above reflect the commitment of the Task Force to collaborate with stakeholders from across the State to seek solutions to Nevada's chronic educator shortage. Many of these recommendations were vetted by multiple stakeholder groups and several were included in the 2021 Task Force report. For example, the Task Force previously recommended the promotion of the education profession through an advertising campaign (#5), working condition and exit surveys (#1 and 4), housing assistance (#11 and 16D), loan forgiveness (#12), and mentoring and other supports (#16 C, E, and F). See Appendices C and D for a complete listing of recommendations from each stakeholder group and the 2021 Task Force.

The Nevada Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force submits this report in fulfillment of its charge pursuant to NRS 391.496. The members of the Task Force acknowledge the support of staff from the Nevada Department of Education in developing this report.

# Appendix A: Additional Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force Information

## Task Force Meetings

The Task Force held nine virtual meetings via video conference. Agendas, minutes, and supporting documents are located on the [Advisory Task Force Meeting Materials](#) webpage.

<p><b>06/17/2021</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide efforts to address R&amp;R efforts</li> <li>• Clark County School District Exit Survey</li> <li>• Exit Survey workgroup update</li> </ul>	<p><b>09/10/2021</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on the NV School Climate Survey</li> <li>• Membership updates</li> <li>• Exit Survey workgroup update</li> </ul>	<p><b>12/10/2021</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NV Housing Division presentation</li> <li>• Task Force report planning</li> <li>• Exit Survey workgroup update</li> </ul>	<p><b>02/11/2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on educator R&amp;R initiatives</li> <li>• Impact &amp; feasibility</li> <li>• Possible recommendations</li> </ul>	
<p><b>03/23/2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New members</li> <li>• Research review</li> <li>• Impact &amp; feasibility</li> </ul>	<p><b>04/08/2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• R&amp;R data presentation</li> <li>• NV teacher workforce</li> <li>• Possible recommendations</li> </ul>	<p><b>04/25/2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NDE's R&amp;R efforts</li> <li>• Draft recommendations</li> </ul>	<p><b>05/12/2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder group presentations</li> <li>• Draft recommendations</li> <li>• Revise Task Force report to LCE</li> </ul>	<p><b>05/18/2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review, finalize, &amp; approve Task Force report to LCE</li> </ul>

The Task Force met nine times between June 2021 and May 2022. Due to a lack of funding for travel, the COVID-19 social distancing guidelines and in accordance with the Governor’s State of Emergency Directives, meetings of the Task Force were held virtually, with livestreaming for public viewing and in -person from the Nevada Department of Education Boardrooms in Carson City and Las Vegas. Public comment was accepted at each meeting via email and read into the record as applicable and in person when restrictions lifted. During these meetings members reviewed research, national best practices, data, and other pertinent information provided by the experts at WestEd, Data Insight Partners, educator preparation programs, districts, and NDE personnel. Additionally, the Task Force sought recommendations from various stakeholder groups working to address teacher Retention and Recruitment in Nevada.

## Task Force Membership Requirements

Per Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 391.494 to qualify for membership eligible teachers must:

- Be a licensed teacher with at least five consecutive years of teaching experience in a public school in this state;
- Be currently employed as a teacher and actively teaching in a public school in this state, and remain employed as a teacher in a public school in this state for the duration of the member's term; and
- Not be currently serving on any other education-related board, commission, task force, or similar governmental entity.

On or before December 1, 2019, the Department shall prescribe a uniform application for a teacher to use to apply to serve on the Task Force. A teacher who wishes to serve on the Task Force must submit an application to the Legislative Committee on Education on or before January 15 of an even-numbered year. On or before February 1 of each even-numbered year, the Legislative Committee on Education shall select one or more teachers, as applicable, to serve as a member of the Task Force.



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## **Appendix C: Recommendations from Each of the Stakeholder Groups as Presented to the Task Force**

### **NSHE Teacher Pathways Task Force Recommendations to the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force**

#### **About the NSHE Teacher Pathways Task Force**

The NSHE Teacher Pathways Task Force (TPTF) is comprised of representatives from NSHE's four- and two-year institutions, representatives from the Nevada Department of Education, a rural school district superintendent, and the chief human resources officers from Nevada's two largest school districts (Clark and Washoe).

The TPTF is charged with increasing the number and diversity of licensure-ready candidates graduating from NSHE educator preparation programs. Its charge includes:

- Scaling up and replicating current teacher pipeline initiatives that have proven to be successful across NSHE institutions
- Identifying and preparing to implement solutions to barriers to locally growing and retaining Nevada's diverse teacher workforce
- Making recommendations to the NSHE Chancellor and Superintendent of Public Instruction for improvement regarding current State policy and practices that govern teacher preparation, licensure, and retention
- Exploring the role of educator preparation programs in supporting districts' and schools' short- and long-term teacher retention efforts

The TPTF held its first meeting in April 2021 and has collected two types of data to inform its work:

- Each NSHE institution conducted a self-assessment of its educator recruitment and retention activities across multiple focus areas including recruiting students, educator preparation program admissions, praxis core and content exams and related supports, retention and on-time completion, alternative/non-traditional supports, and alumni engagement.
- NSHE institutions provided data regarding recent graduates and current enrollment to support projections related to the educator workforce.

In addition, members of the TPTF consistently share best practices and collaborate to address problems of practice at their local institutions and across the system.

The recommendations below reflect the discussions and deliberations of the TPTF to date.

## **Recommendations:**

### *Nevada Aspiring Educators Initiative*

**Recommendation:** The Legislature should invest in a series of events and supports for aspiring educators, which refers to pre-service educators or potential future educators. This is distinct from the current mission of the Nevada Department of Education, districts and schools, and institutions of higher education because it focuses on those not already enrolled in preparation programs or who do not already hold a license who would benefit from tailored information and mentorship as they consider pathways to careers in education.

**Specifics:** Pilot a year-long series of events and supports for teacher candidates to include:

- **Hotline for aspiring educators** that serves as the State’s primary source of information for individuals exploring careers in education. This would not duplicate/replace licensure processing services provided by NDE; this would offer career advisory support to those contemplating teaching for perhaps the first time. It is important to note that NDE’s Licensure operation does not have the capacity to respond to open-ended questions related to licensure and in most cases, individuals will need to initiate a licensure application to get support. Nevada needs a place future educators can call before they have even enrolled in postsecondary programs and while they’re proceeding through preparation programs.
- **Career Ambassadors.** Could be used to ‘staff’ the hotline and facilitate events. Solicit experienced/retired educators who are committed to changing the narrative and supporting candidates through the licensure journey.
- **Recruiting events paired with licensing labs.** After/ concurrent with hosting recruiting events, offer a “licensing lab” where candidates have access to computers and support on standby to help them navigate licensure and job applications. (WCSD model)
- **Resume building and interviewing classes.** Building on the example of WCSD, offering a series of professional development supports for aspiring educators and existing educators who want to become administrators.
- **Financial aid resources.** Simple information that helps people determine eligibility for financial aid, scholarships, etc., and estimate anticipated aid and understand the various programs and options available to them.
- **Pathways to Teaching Webinar** that helps candidates navigate different routes and credentials, i.e., traditional versus ARL, B&I, etc. Can be recorded and repurposed.

**Rationale:** When people want to explore careers in education the first question they need answered is “what will it take to become a teacher/counselor/etc.?” The task can be daunting. Anecdotal evidence from administrators’ experience in supporting Alternative Route to Licensure programs demonstrates that this is a significant area of opportunity. This comprehensive suite of proposed events and resources would help candidates with specific information on benefits, community resources, and practical/logistical information about joining the profession.

**Evidence Base (data/research etc.):** This request is based on anecdotal evidence from NSHE faculty, district and school staff, and teacher candidates that they are seeking tailored advice to

determine the most efficient pathway to teaching. NDE consistently receives these types of requests, but human and resource capacity does not allow NDE to provide guidance to candidates unless they are actively applying for licensure

### ***Enhancing Financial*** Supports for Educators

**Recommendation:** The Legislature should invest to support tuition scholarships, clinical experience stipends, and other costs related to educator preparation, which may include the cost of assessments required for licensure.

#### **Specifics:**

- Enhance funding for Teach Nevada Scholarships to increase availability. The budget is approximately \$5M per biennium. With scholarships of up to \$24,000 per candidate, this allows for approximately 170 awards.
- Establish State funding for the Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching Grant Program that was created using federal relief funds. This program provides tuition assistance of \$2,000 to support pre-service educators who are in their final three semesters as well as stipends of \$8,400 (\$700 per week for 12 weeks) to support educators. Candidates must agree to teach in a Nevada public school for two years.
- Consider covering the costs to candidates of assessments required for licensure, which may include the Praxis Core and Praxis Content exams.

**Rationale:** The cost of a college education has risen over the past few decades as states have shifted an increasing amount of the costs to tuition. These costs have increased at a faster rate than new teacher salaries. Historically, continuing to advance in postsecondary education has also been key to moving up the teacher salary schedule. Our State needs to affirm that teachers are of value. With a persistent teacher shortage plaguing Nevada we need to accelerate the pace of candidate completion, ensure there are no financial barriers to candidates completing their preparation programs, and we need to attract more candidates into preparation programs.

Funding stipends for pre-service teachers completing their student teaching at NSHE institutions will strengthen the pipeline and retain/support students in their progress to completing educator preparation programs. Ensuring that qualified candidates complete graduation/licensure requirements - including student teaching - by providing financial supports will expand Nevada's teacher workforce and help ensure equitable access to effective teachers. Providing funds to support pre-service teachers during student teaching removes the financial burden placed on many pre-service teachers and in particular supports students who may otherwise not have been able to afford to do so (for example, students may have to give up part-time jobs to accommodate student teaching in their schedule or incur extra expenses associated with traveling to student teaching sites). This also prioritizes equitable access to ensure a diverse group of teacher candidates to bring the demographics of Nevada's teaching workforce closer to the demographics of our students.

**Evidence Base (data/research etc.):** Data analyses have shown stark inequities in students' access to effective educators:

- ∄ Students who identify as Black/African American or Hispanic/Latino have significantly less access to experienced teachers compared to their peers who identify as white or Asian.
- ∄ Students attending 1- and 2-star schools have significantly lower access to experienced teachers than those attending 3-, 4-, and 5-star schools.
- ∄ Despite slightly smaller class sizes experiences by students in 1- and 2-star schools, research says the class size difference is not large enough to improve student outcomes.

Expanding and enhancing the educator pipeline will expand access to qualified and effective educators including teachers, school counselors, social workers, school psychologists, library media specialists, etc.

### ***Expand Teaching and Training (T/T) Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs***

**Recommendation:** The Legislature should invest in expanding the availability of CTE Teaching and Training programs in Nevada's high schools, including covering dual enrollment tuition for students and potential staff support at NSHE institutions to sustain partnerships related to the program.

**Specifics:** Teaching and Training CTE programs are programs in high schools where students can earn dual high school and college credits in undergraduate work and teacher education coursework. This training program is a grow your own program to encourage our high school students to consider careers as educators in Nevada. At graduation, graduates can immediately be employed as a paraprofessional (teacher assistant) in the classroom while they continue in a teacher prep program.

The start-up costs for these programs exceed what each rural school district receives in federal and State CTE funding without hindering their ability to maintain their existing CTE programs of study.

The Nevada Department of Education made \$2.2M in federal relief funding available to support the start-up of these programs in Carson HS, Churchill HS, and Douglas HS, as well as 7 new programs in Elko (Elko, Spring Creek, Carlin, Owyhee, West Wendover, Jackpot, and Wells).

In addition, the Legislature may consider covering the costs of dual enrollment coursework for students participating in CTE T/T programs.

**Rationale:** Nevada's heavy reliance upon teachers who earn their teacher licensure in other states/nations is not a long-term and sustainable solution to our educator shortages. Nevada needs to make a bold commitment to **locally** growing a much higher percentage of their PK-12 teachers. Every high school in the State should be offering the T/T CTE program.

The Teaching and Training CTE program provides a solid foundation for encouraging high school students to explore careers in teaching. The curriculum is solid. This programming should

include a robust dual credit opportunity that allows high school students to jump start their college career.

Simultaneous with efforts to expand CTE T/T programs, NSHE community colleges and educator preparation programs are exploring ways to enhance articulation of dual enrollment credits and standardize coursework to ensure seamless transfer of dual enrollment and other coursework credits. This will help ensure that teacher candidates are getting credit for the courses they have completed and do not face unnecessary delays on their path to graduation and licensure due to institutional differences. This is a critical step to accelerating candidates' path to being licensure-ready.

**Evidence Base (data/research etc.):** Nevada's K-12 student body is increasingly diverse; growing our own teachers from within our student population will enhance the diversity of Nevada's licensed educator workforce, resulting in a workforce that better reflects the demographics of Nevada's students. Research shows that the racial and cultural identity of an educator can make a difference, particularly for students from underrepresented groups. For students, having teachers that look like them reinforces their own identity; for the school community, it creates a bridge to increased engagement in schools. In addition, educators of color are more likely than their white peers to remain in the very schools that need them most: the urban schools with high proportions of students of color and from families experiencing poverty

### *Review Educator Competency Requirements*

**Recommendation:** The Legislature should commission and fund a study of Nevada's licensure requirements, including the "Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators" exam (NAC 391.036), to identify whether it is a barrier to locally growing a more diverse educator workforce and to ensure that competency requirements are reasonable indicators of a candidate's future effectiveness as an educator.

**Specifics:** Given the current educator shortage, it is important to ensure that all educator preparation and licensure requirements are meaningful and necessary to ensuring Nevada's students have equitable access to effective educators.

The "Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators" reading, mathematics and writing exam is a prerequisite to educator licensure. Some NSHE institutions have aligned their educator preparation program entry requirements with the need to pass the Praxis Core to put candidates on a clear path to being licensure-ready.

**Rationale:** In practice, the Praxis Core has proven to be a barrier to many candidates seeking to pursue educator licensure as they struggle to pass the writing portion of the assessment.

Assembly Bill 225 (2021) requires the Commission on Professional Standards to consider alternative means of demonstrating competency for persons with a disability or health-related need that the Commission determines are necessary and appropriate, which has opened the door to consider alternative forms of demonstrating competency.



**Evidence Base** (data/research etc.): The National Council on Teacher Quality’s [analysis](#) of Praxis exams for elementary teachers (distinct from the Core) found that teacher candidates, regardless of race and ethnicity, are too often poorly prepared and supported to pass their state licensure tests.

The data in this report showed 55% of test-takers failing on their first attempt in states that use a well-structured licensure test which does not exempt some candidates nor allows a candidate's high score in one subject area (e.g., English language arts) to compensate for a low score in another (e.g., mathematics). The burden of this uniquely high rate of failure is placed on teacher candidates, rather than on an education system that has failed them. This burden is significant, as candidates are beset by costly retakes, delays, and no doubt angst.

A similar analysis focused on Nevada’s experience with the Praxis Core would empower the Legislature and the Commission on Professional Standards in Education to review licensure requirements to ensure that competency requirements are reasonable indicators of a candidate’s future effectiveness as an educator and are not a hindrance to increasing the size and diversity of Nevada’s educator workforce.

#### **Funding Workforce Data Portal**

**Recommendation:** The Legislature should invest funding to sustain the educator workforce supply and demand portal currently being developed using federal relief funds.

**Specifics:** The Nevada Department of Education has invested over \$800,000 in federal relief funds to support an ongoing analysis of the educator workforce and class sizes in Nevada. As part of the contract for that work, we will initially roll out to school and district staff and then deploy public-facing dashboards during the 2023-24 school year that monitor:

- Average class size experience
- Access to experienced teachers
- Use of long-term substitutes
- Teacher workforce age
- Licensed staffing ratios
- Teacher pipeline metrics, including connecting data with NSHE educator preparation programs

To continue support and ongoing development and training there will be an annual licensing fee of \$75,000. In addition to the technical management of the application, the annual licensing fee will include 200 hours of support. The support hours can be used to refine existing dashboards, develop new dashboards, provide training, and/or create summative presentations to provide transparency and accountability to the public.

**Rationale:** The dashboards will support NDE’s role in communicating and advocating for public policy regarding the teacher workforce and class sizes. Most importantly the public-facing dashboards provide built-in accountability and transparency to support advocacy and ongoing support for educator recruitment and retention.

**Evidence Base (data/research, etc.):** Access to data will improve the ability of NDE, NSHE, the Legislature, schools, districts, candidates, and educators to understand the challenges and opportunities related to Nevada’s educator workforce and make decisions accordingly

## Nevada Coalition for Educator Recruitment and Retention Recommendations to the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force

### **About the Nevada Coalition for Educator Recruitment and Retention**

The **Nevada Coalition for Educator Recruitment and Retention (Coalition)** is comprised of representatives, mostly Human Resources personnel, from each of the 17 school districts, plus the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority.

The Coalition is charged with discussing solutions to decrease the number of educator vacancies in Nevada; making recommendations to NDE and the Task Force to assist in this objective. Thus far, the Coalition has met six times since its inception on February 8, 2022. Work sessions have included:

1. Review of supply and demand data and data sources
2. Sharing of current recruitment and retention practices
3. Identification of challenges and barriers to recruitment and retention and discussion of possible solutions for each
4. Drafting of recommendations to share with the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force.
5. Development of a plan for the ongoing involvement of the Coalition in informing and advising the NDE on matters related to the recruitment and retention of educators

In addition, members of the Coalition consistently share best practices and collaborate to address problems of practice at their local institutions and across the system.

The recommendations below reflect the discussions and deliberations of the Coalition to date.

### **Recommendations**

#### ***Data***

1. Allocate funding for a readily available Statewide holistic database of educator data including, but not limited to, vacancy, attrition, perception, assignment, and working conditions with additional funds to support each district based on need.

**Specifics:** This would be a statewide database in which districts would upload their data and/or receive data from the State. This would not require districts to replace their current human capital or human resource management data systems, but instead would be used to supplement as

needed and to securely provide data to the state. This system would be used to report and track human capital data.

Rationale: Currently, statewide human capital data is difficult to obtain. A data system to house and share that data is needed to ensure that the state and districts have the most up-to-date information on which to base decisions.

Expected Outcome: If funding is allocated and a holistic system is created, then NDE, districts, and schools can utilize data-based tools to effectively recruit and retain a diverse workforce that meets the needs of all students.

Evidence Base (research/data etc.): [NDE Research Folder- Data](#)

### ***Licensing***

2. Allocate funding to the Department of Public Safety to support the prioritization of background checks for educator licensure.

Specifics: The Department of Public Safety (DPS) would need to determine the best way to implement this recommendation. DPS would need to determine the most efficient way to prioritize the processing of the fingerprints of educators seeking licensure. The funding would be needed to provide additional personnel or to allow for overtime pay to current personnel.

Rationale: Between April and September each year the number of applications for licensure increases significantly. Most of these applications require a background check. This increases the workload on DPS. Background checks can take anywhere from 4 to 10 weeks or longer during this very busy season. NDE processing time usually runs about 3 to 6 weeks during this same period. This means that there can be hundreds of applications that have been approved by a licensure analyst but are pending the completion of the background checks.

Expected Outcome: With expedited background checks the licenses could be issued in a timelier manner, therefore, getting educators licensed prior to the start of the school year and into classrooms quickly (reducing the licensure processing time).

### ***Messaging and Branding***

3. \*Allocate additional funds to NDE and districts for frequent (monthly/weekly) public branding/ messaging that promotes recruitment and retention of educators via advertisement with social media, news outlets, etc.

Specifics: These funds would be used to support the creation of professional quality videos, public service announcements, social media posts, etc. to promote the entire education profession, Nevada as a desirable state to teach in, and specific district and statewide recruitment and retention events/efforts.

Rationale: Currently public positive messaging around education is limited to the recognition of exemplary educators. This is limited to just a few educators a year and does not truly encompass what most educators do every day. Having resources dedicated to promoting the profession and sharing the positive aspects with the public will serve to boost the morale of educators and help the public express a more positive opinion of education in Nevada.

Expected Outcome: Branding/messaging positively impacts public perception and will help all Nevada districts to attract top talent and enables districts to distinguish themselves from competing states. The promotion of working as an educator in Nevada serves both recruitment and retention efforts.

### ***Professional Learning and Supports***

4. \*Allocate additional funding to education and prioritize the use of those funds for targeted training of administrators in building systemic supports for educator efficacy and increasing job satisfaction.

Specifics: Building and district administrators would participate in professional learning to help them reduce workload and improve life/work balance for themselves and the educators they oversee. This would include learning how to leverage initiatives or requirements already in place to reduce duplicative efforts and build systems of support for their staff.

Rationale: Educators often spend hours beyond their contract day working. Removing duplicative or unnecessary work will help improve the life/work balance and give educators more time to focus on tasks that positively impact students.

Expected Outcome: Educators report higher job satisfaction due to reduced workload (improved life-work balance) and districts report higher educator retention rates.

Evidence Base (research/data etc.): [NDE Research Folder - Professional Learning and Supports - Admin Training](#)

5. \* Commission a study to evaluate educator workload, that includes statutory and regulatory requirements.

Specifics: The study would provide clear information on the requirements within statute and regulations and reveal the true status of educator workload in all Nevada districts, and charter schools. This information would be used to guide reviews and changes to statutes, regulations, and policies. SB 353 during the 2021 Legislative Session required NDE to review examinations and assessments and to adopt regulations that prescribe certain limitations on examinations and assessments. This recommendation goes a step further in that it is asking for a complete study of educator workload. Educator workload is a very complex issue to study and would need professionals experienced with doing studies of this nature in order to get the quality of information and recommendations needed to make impactful changes.

Rationale: Statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements tend to accumulate and build over time. A complete study of the requirements is long overdue. SB 353 during the 2021 Legislative Session required NDE to review examinations and assessments and to adopt regulations that prescribe certain limitations on examinations and assessments.

Expected Outcome: The study would provide clear information on the requirements within statute and regulations and reveal the true status of educator workload in all Nevada districts, and charter schools, to guide revisions to statutes, regulations, and policies.

6. \*Allocate additional funding to education and prioritize the use of those funds for mentor programs, including but not limited to salaries, stipends, and training for mentor educators.

Specifics: By providing additional funds to education districts will have the resources needed to develop or support ongoing mentor programs to support their inexperienced educators and provide career pathways for their experienced educators.

Rationale: “New teachers rely on onsite training for classroom success. If they do not receive strong support and continued growth during the steep learning curve in their first 2 years, they are twice as likely to abandon their career. Mentoring programs train new teachers in a systematic and sequential approach to learn how to provide effective instruction to their deserving students.” [TeacherReady All New Teachers Need Mentoring Programs](#)

Expected Outcome: Providing support to educators through mentoring builds collective educator efficacy, improves working conditions, and ensures that educators will be better prepared to support all students. Additionally, educators will feel supported resulting in a decrease in the educator vacancy rate by increasing retention

Evidence Base (research/data etc.): [NDE Folder - Research-Salary/Compensation/Benefits](#)

### ***Salary/Compensation/Benefits***

7. \* Implement a Statewide minimum salary schedule for licensed personnel to include an annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) in line with the cost-of-living indices.

Specifics: This would be a minimum salary scale for all districts that takes into account the cost of living and includes an annual COLA increase that is in line with cost-of-living indices.

Districts could still negotiate salaries higher than the minimum.

Rationale: Competitive compensation is a means to both recruit and retain educators in Nevada. During a national shortage of educators, appropriate and competitive compensation assures a dignified standard of living that is sustainable for many years of service and makes Nevada more attractive to current and future educators.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder - Research-Salary/Compensation/Benefits](#)

8. \*Implement PERS incentives such as, but not limited to, 90% after 30 years of service.

Specifics: The details around this recommendation will most likely need to be assigned to the [Nevada Retirement Board](#).

Rationale: Nevada does not currently retain educators at a sufficient rate to meet demand. Providing competitive PERS incentives to educators who stay in the classroom will encourage teachers to stay long term.

Expected Outcome: Competitive PERS benefits results in long-term retention of educators.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder - Research-Salary/Compensation/Benefits](#)

9. \* Increase funding to support the buyout for unused sick leave at (teacher's daily rate of pay) OR (statewide minimum amount) upon retirement.

Specifics: Upon retirement teachers would be paid at their daily rate of pay or at a legislatively set minimum amount for any unused sick leave.

Rationale: When teachers retire, they often get paid much less than their daily rate of pay for any unused sick leave. This often turns out to be pennies on the dollar and leads to teachers feeling undervalued.

Expected Outcome: Increase in educator average daily attendance rates.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder - Research-Salary/Compensation/Benefits](#)

10. \* Increase allocation of funding to education for salary and benefits with increases each year to cover cost of living adjustments.

Specifics: With increased funding districts can offer salaries that keep pace with or surpass the regional inflation rate, distinguish themselves from other states, and attract and retain educators.

Rationale: Districts in Nevada struggle to recruit and retain educators for many reasons. Increased cost of living, lack of housing etc. Increasing salaries and benefits can help offset some of those challenges.

Expected Outcome: Districts would be able to offer competitive salaries and benefits packages commensurate with level of education and experience to increase their ability to recruit and to retain educators.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder - Research-Salary/Compensation/Benefits](#)

### ***Strategic Recruiting or Retention/Staff Funding***

11. Increase the allocation of funding to education and prioritize the use of those funds for educator pipeline, retention incentives, career ladder options, and other resources to support educators.

Specifics: Increased funding allows each district to prioritize and provide resources/incentives based on their unique needs. Flexibility in the use of these funds is important, but priority should be given to efforts that lead to improved recruitment and retention.

Rationale: Current funding levels do not adequately support all districts in prioritizing pipeline, retention incentives, and career ladder options.

Expected Outcome: Districts will report a higher retention rate as a result of the prioritization of the use of funds provided for retention incentives, career ladder options, and other resources to support educators based on the individual needs of each district.

Evidence Base (research/data etc.): [NDE Research Folder – Strategic Recruiting or Retention](#)

12. Increase the allocation of funding to education to support the initiatives/programs that are currently being funded with ESSER funds.

Specifics: This may require a study to determine which ESSER funded projects are having the most impact, and the provision of additional state funds after the ESSER funds are exhausted to ensure no loss of service/impact.

Rationale: Continuing and/or increasing funding to programs such as the Teach Nevada Scholarships and Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching ensures that Nevada can provide resources and supports to prospective teachers and keep the momentum gained with the ESSER funded projects.

Expected Outcomes: The allocation of State funds to continue ESSER initiatives would extend the positive impact the initiatives are having on students, educators, and the education system.

Evidence Base: [NDE Research Folder – Strategic Recruiting or Retention](#)

13. Allocate additional funds to districts to fund designated personnel to focus on supporting recruitment and retention efforts.

Specifics: These would provide additional personnel designated to supporting recruitment and retention efforts in all districts. This would not be a mandated position, but instead would provide funds to support either a designated position or supports for current personnel responsible for recruitment and retention.

Rationale: Districts often have limited capacity to focus solely on recruitment and retention. Having designated resources/personnel to do that work would improve their ability to focus on retaining and recruiting to meet the needs of their district.

Expected Outcomes: By having designated personnel focused on recruitment and retention, Districts would be able provide intensive support to internal and external stakeholders to positively impact working conditions, recruitment and retention.

Evidence Base: [NDE Research Folder – Strategic Recruiting or Retention](#)

14. Increase the allocation of funding to education and prioritize the use of those funds for housing assistance, recruitment efforts, referral incentives, and hiring incentives for educators.

Specifics: Increased funding allows each district to prioritize and provide resources/incentives based on their unique needs. Flexibility in the use of these funds is important, but priority should be given to efforts that lead to improved recruitment and retention. Districts may even choose to use the funds to provide housing or housing assistance.

Rationale: Districts often have to make hard decisions regarding the use of their funds. Additional funds would allow them to provide supports to educators based on the unique needs of their district.

Expected Outcome: Recruitment incentives, including housing assistance, for educators, will reduce financial barriers to increase the ability to recruit and retain educators so that students receive instruction from a qualified teacher.

Evidence Base: [NDE Research Folder – Strategic Recruiting or Retention](#)

15. Provide funding for NDE to contract with a third-party to develop, implement, and analyze the results of a Statewide Exit Survey given to educators when exiting their school, district, and/or state.

Specifics: A stakeholder group of educators from across the state in conjunction with NDE and experts from WestEd have developed a draft [Exit Survey](#) and are in the process of developing the protocols around implementation. The third party would be responsible for implementing the survey, analyzing, and providing data to NDE and each district.

Rationale: High teacher turnover can negatively impact student achievement and increase district new teacher training costs. A teacher exit survey can help districts and schools better understand why teachers leave and better target efforts to improve retention.

Expected Outcomes: State, District and Schools would have access to quality data around educator exit decisions to make data-driven decisions to positively impact working conditions to support the retention of educators.

Evidence Base: [NDE Research Folder – Strategic Recruiting or Retention](#)

### ***Working Conditions/Strategic Recruitment/Retention***



16. \*Allocate Funding for NDE to contract with a third-party to develop, implement, and analyze a statewide working conditions survey of current employees.

Specifics: The working conditions survey would result in a data dashboard similar to the North Carolina Working Conditions Survey.

Rationale: An exit survey is useful in determining why teachers leave, but a working conditions survey is needed if Nevada wishes to know how educators are feeling about the conditions in which they work and students learn. Having working conditions data and exit survey data, districts and NDE can make informed decisions to help address and resolve any potential problems identified in the working conditions survey and prevent educators from leaving.

Expected Outcome: State, District and Schools would have access to quality data around educator working conditions/student learning conditions to make data-driven decisions to positively impact working conditions to support the retention of educators.

Evidence Base (research/data etc.): [NDE Research Folder – Working Conditions](#)

\* Identified as High Impact recommendations.

## **Superintendent’s Teacher Advisory and Principal Advisory Cabinet Recommendations to the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force**

### **About the Superintendent’s Teacher Advisory Cabinet and Principal Advisory Cabinet**

As key stakeholder groups, the primary purpose of the Superintendent’s Teacher Advisory Cabinet (STAC) and Principal Advisory Cabinet (PAC) is to provide feedback to the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) on initiatives and opportunities. Members not only provide insight from their experiences, but also gather feedback from peers to help inform the NDE. Members also expand their understanding of each NDE Department, as well as the NDE’s Mission, Vision, and Goals.

The mission of the Superintendent’s Advisory Cabinets is to elevate educators as experts and leaders in and beyond the classroom. STAC and PAC Members collaborate with colleagues, NDE leaders, and various stakeholders in order to:

- Develop small work groups to focus their work
- Improve effective strategies for teacher recruitment, retention, and recognition
- Capitalize on personalized learning to improve educational access
- Innovate in education in Nevada
- Implement family engagement and systems of support in schools

The STAC and PAC meet at least quarterly with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and NDE Leadership. Their respective Recruitment and Retention Workgroups meet independently to formalize their recommendations.

The recommendations below reflect the discussions and deliberations of the STAC and PAC to date.

### ***STAC Recommendations:***

1. Salary/Compensation/Benefits: **Implement a statewide minimum salary schedule with an annual COLA increase.**

Specifics: This would be a minimum salary scale for all districts that takes into account the cost of living and includes an annual COLA increase that is in line with cost-of-living indices. Districts could still negotiate salaries higher than the minimum.

Rationale/expected outcomes: If all school districts offer a competitive salary that takes into account the cost of living, districts will be able to recruit and retain educators at the level necessary to meet student needs.

Evidence Base: [NDE folder - Research-Salary/Compensation/Benefits](#)

2. Strategic Recruiting or Retention / Staff Funding: **Increase allocation of funding to education to hire educators**

Specifics: Increasing the funding to districts will support the hiring of additional educators and specialists to provide essential services to students.

Rationale/expected outcomes: If provided more funds, districts will be able to hire more adults in schools to meet the diverse needs of the school population; support the hiring of specialists to focus on CBT, PBIS, behavior plans; and support teachers with closing the achievement gaps. Additional funds will provide for increased school safety and increased professional development on restorative practices.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder- Strategic Recruiting or Retention](#)

3. Strategic Recruiting or Retention: **Provide funding outside the general fund to create and manage a loan forgiveness for teachers after 5 years in the classroom and who continue to teach in a classroom.**

Specifics: After teaching in a classroom for 5 years, teachers would be eligible to submit for reimbursement of their student loan payments up to a set amount each year. For example, a teacher may request up to \$2,500 per year they continue to teach in the classroom.

Rationale/expected outcomes: If educators are provided loan forgiveness funds, then districts will maintain a higher retention rate of educators by reducing the financial burden associated with a low starting salary and high cost of living.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder- Strategic Recruiting or Retention](#)

4. Strategic Recruiting or Retention / Staff Funding: **Provide funding to focus on Teacher Retention Incentives**

Specifics: Nevada does not currently retain educators at a sufficient rate to meet demand. Providing an incentive to educators who stay in the classroom shows Nevada values educators.

Rationale/expected outcomes: If districts are provided additional funds for teacher incentives each year they stay in the classroom, districts will report a higher retention rate.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder- Strategic Recruiting or Retention](#)

5. Strategic Recruiting or Retention: **Provide funding to create and manage a zero-interest loan for in-state tuition for teacher preparation programs.**

Specifics: A portion of tuition would be forgiven each year the educator teaches in a public-school classroom in Nevada. This would be similar to the Home is Possible for Teachers home loan program.

Rationale/expected outcomes: If students are provided no interest loans for teacher prep programs, then the enrollment and completion rates will increase, thus decreasing the teacher shortage rate in Nevada.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder- Strategic Recruiting or Retention](#)

6. Strategic Recruiting or Retention: **Provide additional funding to districts to provide affordable housing/rental assistance to educators.**

Specifics: A lack of affordable housing contributes to the teacher shortage. Rural and urban school districts that can offer affordable housing options such as district-owned housing or low-interest mortgage or rental rates are more appealing to teachers looking to relocate for a teaching position.

Rationale/expected outcomes: If educators are provided housing assistance, then districts will maintain a higher retention rate of educators by reducing the financial burden associated with a low starting salary and high cost of living.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder- Strategic Recruiting or Retention](#)

7. Strategic Recruiting or Retention: **Provide increased funding for school safety and behavior management support for families and educators.**

Specifics: With an increase in school violence against teachers and students, many staff and students do not feel safe at school. Students learn best in a safe and welcoming environment. Funding should be increased to provide schools with the necessary supports to protect staff and students from acts of violence and to ensure a safe and positive learning environment.

Rationale/expected outcomes: If an increase in funding for school safety is provided, then teachers are supported with student discipline and feel empowered to manage their classrooms resulting in increased employee retention rates.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder- Strategic Recruiting or Retention](#)

8. Strategic Recruiting or Retention: **Provide funding for NDE to contract with a third-party to develop, implement, and analyze the results of a Statewide Exit Survey given to educators when exiting their school, district, and/or state.**

Specifics: High teacher turnover can negatively impact student achievement and increase district new teacher training costs. A teacher exit survey can help districts and schools better understand why teachers leave and better target efforts to improve retention.

Rationale/expected outcomes: If a statewide educator exit survey is funded and implemented, then State, District and Schools would have access to quality data around educator exit decisions to make data-driven policies to positively impact working conditions to support retention of educators.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder- Strategic Recruiting or Retention](#)

9. Work Conditions / Strategic Recruiting or Retention: **Allocate Funding for NDE to contract with a third-party to develop, implement, and analyze a statewide working conditions survey of current employees**

Specifics: To understand why teachers chose to stay or leave their positions, they must be asked. A quality teacher working conditions survey can provide a complete understanding of how teacher working conditions affect student achievement and teacher retention. Targeted support can be provided to prevent teachers from leaving their positions.

Rationale/expected outcomes: If a statewide educator working conditions survey is funded and implemented, then State, District and Schools would have access to quality data around educator working conditions/student learning conditions to make data-driven decisions to positively impact working conditions to support retention of educators.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder- Research- Working Conditions](#)

### ***PAC Recommendations***

1. Strategic Recruiting or Retention / Staff Funding: **Competitive PERS benefits will attract employees to the field of education and enhance probability of long-term retention in the career.**

Specifics: The details around this recommendation will most likely need to be assigned to the [Retirement Board of NVPERS](#)

Rationale: Nevada does not currently retain educators at a sufficient rate to meet demand. Providing competitive PERS incentives to educators who stay in the classroom will encourage teachers to stay long term.

Expected outcomes: If competitive PERS benefits are provided, then districts will see a long-term retention of educators.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder - Research-Salary/Compensation/Benefits](#)

2. Strategic Recruiting or Retention: **Increase the allocation of funding to education to prioritize the use of those funds for retention incentives for educators.**

Specifics: Nevada does not currently retain educators at a sufficient rate to meet demand. Providing an incentive to educators who stay in the classroom shows Nevada values educators.

Rationale/expected outcomes: If there is a prioritization of the use of funds provided for retention incentives, then districts will report a higher educator retention rate.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder- Strategic Recruiting or Retention](#)

3. Work Conditions / Strategic Recruiting or Retention: **Allocate funding for NDE to contract with a third-party to develop, implement, and analyze a statewide working conditions survey of current employees**

Specifics: To understand why teachers chose to stay or leave their positions, they must be asked. A quality teacher working conditions survey can provide a complete understanding of how teacher working conditions affect student achievement and teacher retention. Targeted support can be provided to prevent teachers from leaving their positions.

Rationale/expected outcomes: If a statewide educator working conditions survey is funded and implemented, then State, District and Schools would have access to quality data around educator working conditions/student learning conditions to make data-driven decisions to positively impact working conditions to support retention of educators.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder- Research- Working Conditions](#)

4. Strategic Recruiting or Retention: **Allocate funding for NDE to contract with a third-party to develop, implement, and analyze the results of a Statewide Exit Survey given to educators when exiting their school, district, and/or state.**

Specifics: High teacher turnover can negatively impact student achievement and increase district new teacher training costs. A teacher exit survey can help districts and schools better understand why teachers leave and better target efforts to improve retention.

Rationale/expected outcomes: If a statewide educator exit survey is funded and implemented, then State, District and Schools would have access to quality data around educator exit decisions to make data-driven policies to positively impact working conditions to support retention of educators.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder- Strategic Recruiting or Retention](#)

5. Salary/Compensation/Benefits: **Implement a Statewide minimum salary schedule for licensed personnel to include an annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) in line with the cost-of-living indices.**

Specifics: This would be a minimum salary scale for all districts that takes into account the cost of living and includes an annual COLA increase that is in line with cost-of-living indices.

Districts could still negotiate salaries higher than the minimum.

Rationale/expected outcomes: Competitive compensation is a means to both recruit and retain educators in Nevada. During a national shortage of educators, appropriate and competitive compensation assures a dignified standard of living that is sustainable for many years of service and makes Nevada more attractive to current and future educators.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder - Research-Salary/Compensation/Benefits](#)

6. Salary/Compensation/Benefits: **Increase allocation of funding to education for salary and benefits with increases each year to cover cost of living adjustments.**

Specifics: Districts can offer salaries that keep pace with or surpass the regional inflation rate distinguish themselves from other states and attract and retain educators.

Rationale/expected outcomes: Districts would be able to offer competitive salaries and benefits packages commensurate with level of education and experience to increase their ability to recruit and to retain educators.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder - Research-Salary/Compensation/Benefits](#)

7. Professional Learning and Supports - PD Admin: **Allocate additional funding to education and prioritize the use of those funds for targeted training of administrators in building systemic supports for educator efficacy and increasing job satisfaction.**

Specifics: Building and district administrators would participate in professional learning to help them reduce workload and improve life/work balance for themselves and the educators they oversee. This would include learning how to leverage initiatives or requirements already in place to reduce duplicative efforts and build systems of support for their staff.

Rationale/expected outcomes: Educators will report higher job satisfaction due to reduced workload (improved life-work balance) and districts report higher educator retention rates.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder Research- Professional Learning and Supports- Admin Training](#)

8. Professional Learning and Supports - PD Admin: **Commission a study to evaluate educator workload, and statutory and regulatory requirements.**

Specifics: The study would provide clear information on the requirements within statute and regulations and reveal the true status of educator workload in all Nevada districts, and charter schools. This information would be used to guide reviews and changes to statutes, regulations, and policies. SB 353 during the 2021 Legislative Session required NDE to review examinations and assessments and to adopt regulations that prescribe certain limitations on examinations and assessments. This recommendation goes a step further in that it is asking for a complete study of educator workload.

Rationale/expected outcomes: The study would provide clear information on the requirements within statute and regulations and reveal the true status of educator workload in all Nevada districts, and charter schools, to guide revisions to statutes, regulations, and policies.

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder- Research- Working Conditions](#)

9. Strategic Recruiting or Retention / Staff Funding: **Allocate additional funding for the creation of and training for student support teams (MTSS, Wrap around services, etc.) at every school.**

Specifics: Schools that have the funds necessary to provide well-rounded educational opportunities and supports for students' school success have a higher teacher retention rate. Schools will be able to fund mentor programs, chronic absenteeism programs, social worker positions, and many other supports for educators. These supports have a history of reducing teacher burn out and increasing student success.

Rationale/expected outcomes: If funds are provided for additional support services in schools, educators will be supported in meeting the needs of all students

Evidence Base: [NDE Folder- Strategic Recruiting or Retention](#)



## **Appendix D Previous Task Force Recommendations – February 2021**

- 1. The Legislature fund the implementation of an advertising campaign to promote the education profession in Nevada.**
  - a. *Purpose: Highlight positive impact of educators, illustrate the positive aspects of the profession, and create opportunities for students and educators to provide testimony and otherwise advocate for the profession.*
  - b. *Rationale: Nevada’s in-state educator preparation programs produce approximately 700 – 900 teachers per year in a state in which the largest district alone usually hires over 1000 teachers each year. The in-state supply of teachers is woefully short of the demand.*
  
- 2. LCE write a letter to district superintendents requesting districts ensure that potential employees are provided with information such as:**
  - *specific benefits to serving in their community*
  - *community services/resources*
  - *practicalities such as housing, pay schedules, resources etc.*
  - a. *Purpose: Ensure candidates for employment are provided information that will make the transition to the community less burdensome.*
  - b. *Rationale: Potential employees have the information necessary to make an informed decision regarding the realities of living and working in that location.*
  
- 3. The Legislature fund the development of a statewide education specific job openings website/repository.**
  - a. *Purpose: Support educators seeking positions with access to a list of education position openings from across the state.*
  - b. *Rationale: Currently, candidates for employment must search each district website for openings. A repository of teaching positions would provide one user-friendly, virtual location on which all districts post openings and provide district-specific information to help candidates select the location that best fits their needs.*
  
- 4. LCE write a letter to school district superintendents asking them to ensure that training/professional development on new programs/practices occurs prior to the implementation of those practices.**
  - a. *Purpose: Ensure that employees are fully trained on and knowledgeable of new programs/practices to ensure fidelity of implementation, reduce stress, allow time for strategic planning, and minimize resistance.*

5. ***The Legislature explore and fund a variety of evidence-based options and best practices, including mentoring programs, to support new and experienced teachers.***
  - a. *Purpose: Provide guidance and/or set statewide criteria for the supports to meet the unique/specific needs of new teachers (e.g., mentoring program components/criteria, reduced workload), and experienced teachers (e.g., peer assistance/coaching) to increase the retention of educators in Nevada.*
6. ***The Legislature fund the implementation of an online platform for teacher support.***
  - a. *Purpose: Provide an avenue for educators to receive timely supports for immediate issues and concerns from experienced teachers to promote best practices.*
7. ***Require student teacher ratio calculations be reported at the school level and not as an average at the district level.***
  - a. *Purpose: Ensure that the ratio of students per licensed teacher are reported in a manner that is transparent, provides data to inform decisions that are equitable, and accurately reflects class sizes at each school.*
  - b. *Rationale: Members believe that districts are reporting a district wide average of students per licensed teacher while the actual class sizes vary greatly from school to school. This practice lacks transparency.*
8. ***The legislature fund the implementation of a study of class size/student teacher ratios that also includes data on the equitable distribution of high-needs students.***
  - a. *Purpose: Increase transparency regarding the equitable distribution of high needs students (e.g. special needs – including, but not limited to intellectual, language and behavioral needs)*
  - b. *Rationale: Teachers report that in some schools an overwhelming number of high-needs students are placed into one classroom rather than being distributed more evenly among teachers in the same subject/grade level. A study of this would reveal to what extent this is happening and provide data on which to base policy recommendations.*
9. ***The Legislature fund and implement a statewide school loan forgiveness program that prioritizes repayment of school loans for teachers in rural or traditionally hard to staff schools.***
  - a. *Purpose: Provide an alternative way for educators to find relief from school loans.*
  - b. *Rationale: Federal Student Loan Forgiveness programs are very difficult to successfully acquire, and school loan debt becomes overwhelming.*
10. ***Legislative changes to education policies/practices are funded adequately and the start dates of the new statutory requirements are implemented on January 1 immediately***

*following a legislative session to ensure that training/professional development on new programs/practices occurs prior to the implementation of those policies/practices.*

- a. Purpose: Ensure that educators are fully trained on new programs/practices to ensure fidelity of implementation, reduce stress, allow time for strategic planning, and minimize resistance.*

**11. The Legislature work with appropriate entities/developers to conduct a feasibility study and cost analysis for providing affordable or subsidized housing to educators in all areas across the state including, but not limited to rural and urban settings.**

- a. Rationale: housing can be difficult to find in remote areas of the state and/or may be very expensive in other urban/suburban areas. This is a barrier to recruiting and retaining teachers in those schools.*

**12. LCE select and fund third-party to develop, implement, and analyze the results of a statewide educator exit survey in consultation with the Task Force and districts.**

- a. Rationale: Nevada does not have consistent data regarding why teachers leave schools/districts. A statewide survey developed in collaboration with education stakeholders and implemented by a third party would provide a consistent source of data for districts, policy makers, and other education partners for the purposes of informing continuous improvement efforts. Retention cannot be effectively addressed without knowing why educators leave.*

**13. LCE select and fund a third-party to develop, implement, and analyze (in consultation with the Task Force) a statewide climate/working conditions survey of current employees.**

- a. Rationale: One data gap identified by Task Force members is statewide data from educators regarding working conditions and school climate. A statewide survey developed with education stakeholders and administered by a third party will provide a consistent source of data for districts, policy makers, and other education partners for the purposes of informing continuous improvement efforts. It is the position of this Task Force that this data should in no way be used punitively against educational personnel, schools, or districts.*

**14. The Legislature fund and require evaluators of teachers to receive Inter-Rater Reliability training on the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF).**

- a. Rationale: Members report inconsistent scoring of teacher performance by evaluators. Additional supports are needed to ensure consistent implementation of the NEPF.*

**15. The Legislature fund and create a task force to study the implementation of the NEPF.**

- a. *Rationale: Members believe that a study of the NEPF is necessary to determine the challenges and successes of NEPF implementation. To provide additional guidance and support.*