

# Focus Area: ADVANCING EQUITY

## OVERVIEW

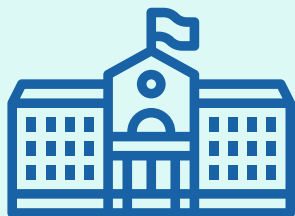
Through three rounds of federal relief funding for education, the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) has received approximately \$1.5 billion to support our COVID-19 response, recovery, and renewal. In each round, 90% of funds were distributed to local education agencies (school districts and the State Public Charter School Authority) on a federal formula basis, while 10% of funds were reserved for Statewide activities. NDE established four focus areas to efficiently and effectively leverage federal relief funding to support students, staff and families: Advancing Equity; Teacher Recruitment and Retention; Social-Emotional Learning and Mental Health; and Efficiencies for Long-Term Success. These four "buckets" ensure alignment of resources with both stakeholder priorities and federal requirements for COVID-19 recovery and renewal.

The **Advancing Equity Focus Area** is focused on closing longstanding opportunity gaps that lead to gaps in achievement between and among student groups. This Focus Area aligns with several NDE Values as established in the Statewide Plan for the Improvement of Pupils (STIP), including **Equity, Access to Quality, Success, and Inclusivity**.

Further, the Advancing Equity Focus Area supports multiple NDE STIP Goals, including:

- *Goal 1:* All children, birth through third grade, have access to quality early care and education.
- *Goal 3:* All students experience continued academic growth.
- *Goal 4:* All students graduate future-ready and globally prepared for postsecondary success and civic life.
- *Goal 5:* All students have access to new and continued educational opportunities supported by funding that is administered transparently, consistently, and in accordance with legislative or grant guidelines.

# FEATURED PROJECTS



## Expanding Access to College-Level Coursework

**Budget:** \$1.6 million

**Project Overview:** Dual enrollment coursework will be expanded in an equitable way to reach all Nevada students, ensuring that every high school student has access to college-level coursework, regardless of their zip code or socio-economic background.

**Rationale:** Despite broad opportunities currently available for dual enrollment in Nevada, there are critical gaps in enrollment, especially for low-income, first generation, and underrepresented student groups.



## Supporting Students to High School Graduation

**Budget:** \$4.2 million

**Project Overview:** Programming and incentives will be provided to students who did not graduate high school due to circumstances created by COVID-19. “Fifth-year seniors” will be supported through programming designed to assist them in meeting requirements for a high school diploma and graduating future-ready and globally prepared.

**Rationale:** Due to circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, several students did not graduate high school with their original cohorts.



## Expanding Pre-Kindergarten Access

**Budget:** \$9.9 million

**Project Overview:** Funding will support the maintenance and expansion of State-funded pre-Kindergarten seats for Nevada’s most vulnerable children, supporting NDE’s goal of all children having access to quality early care and education.

**Rationale:** Investing in early care and education is important because the circumstances of the first 1,000 days of a child’s life can change the course of their future. Nevada Ready! State Pre-K served 3,094 students in the 2019/20 school year, which is approximately 20% of all eligible 4-year-olds.

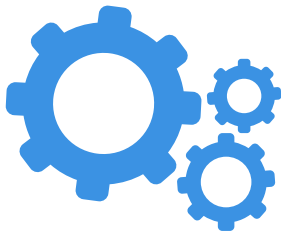


## Providing Translation Services for Key Documents

**Budget:** \$2.0 million

**Project Overview:** To ensure that NDE’s resources can be accessed and understood by every Nevada student and family, resources will support translation services to prioritize public-facing documents for translation into multiple languages, including but not limited to Spanish and Tagalog.

**Rationale:** Based on 2020 Census Bureau Data, Nevada is the third most ethnically diverse state in the United States, with those identifying as Hispanic or Latino making up 29.2% of the population. Further, it is estimated that 21.1% of Nevada’s population live in households where Spanish is the primary language, and 2.8% live in households where Tagalog is the primary language.

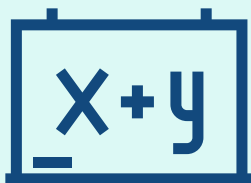


## Building Nevada's Competency-Based Learning Systems

**Budget:** \$3.9 million

**Project Overview:** NDE partnered with KnowledgeWorks to create the Blue Ribbon Commission for a Globally Prepared Nevada, which provided recommendations to adjust our current policy framework to meet today's learning conditions, while leaving room for policies that will support innovation for the next 10 or 20 years. These recommendations were largely passed into law by Senate Bill 215 (2021), and the next phase of work includes a Statewide implementation plan to assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and schools in building capacity to implement competency-based education.

**Rationale:** Students have different sets of learning styles and strengths, yet the current education system and approaches do not provide flexibility to meet individual students where they are. Even prior to the pandemic, work had begun to transform Nevada's education system to a personalized, competency-based learning approach, meaning that students would be met at their level with personalized instruction and supports.



## Supporting Student Achievement in Algebra

**Budget:** \$3.9 million

**Project Overview:** NDE will implement the Algebra Zero Program, which helps students transition from elementary arithmetic to algebra by addressing motivational issues, bridging both visible and invisible gaps, and delivering true real-world comprehension.

**Rationale:** Algebra is a gatekeeper subject nationwide for student success in mathematics and even before the COVID-19 pandemic, it was not uncommon for students to take Algebra multiple times to pass the course. School building closures and the shift to digital learning have exacerbated these challenges; according to current ACT data, 79% of students need additional support in algebra.



## Establishing College and Career Readiness (CCR) Support Programs

**Budget:** \$14.1 million

**Project Overview:** Resources will support an evaluation of the competitive grant and Statewide activities supporting College and Career Readiness to demonstrate impact on school outcomes. Then NDE will build capacity, develop resources, and offer evidence-based training and professional development. Additionally, competitive grants will be offered to all Nevada school districts for several activities, including but not limited to:

- Work-based learning activity costs and coordinator
- Dual Enrollment tuition, fees, books, and activity costs
- Evidence-based teacher training, professional development, interventions, and activities to both strengthen the CCR pipeline and build capacity
- Expansion of access to industry recognized credentials

**Rationale:** Research has shown that when students are exposed to advanced courses and work opportunities which support college and career readiness, they are more likely to attend an institute of higher learning or earn an industry certification. Further, students need support in career-ready skill development in order to be prepared for future success, as approximately 47% of Nevada’s in-demand occupations are middle-skilled and 34% are high-skilled requiring credentials.



For more information on Federal Relief Funding in Nevada, visit:

<https://bit.ly/NV-Fed-Relief-Funding>