

# Strategies for Special Population Success

## Practical Tips and Tools for Nevada Educators



### General resources for all categories of special population students

Nevada Department of Education:  
Career and Technical Education

Nevada Department of Health and  
Human Services

Nevada Career Explorer

Nevada 211 Health and Human  
Services: Helping Nevadans

Communities in Schools Nevada

Jobs for Nevada's Graduates

Nevada Association of Career and  
Technical Education

American Civil Liberties Union  
Nevada

National Alliance for Partnerships  
in Equity

Association of Career and Technical  
Education, Resources for Inclusion,  
Access, Equity, and Diversity

U.S. Department of Education,  
Office for Civil Rights, Guidelines  
for Vocational Education Programs

Western Educational Equity  
Assistance Center

This resource will help you develop plans to address the equity gaps for special populations that you uncover during your Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, and it can help connect educators to resources to help them serve Nevada's students. Use this resource with your team to identify potential strategies to address the root causes of your identified gaps in participation and performance. Utilize the recommended Nevada and national organizations to support your efforts and to locate similar local organizations that serve students in your community. Target your strategies to address the needs of each of the special population groups to increase the potential for success. These resources can help educators connect historically underserved students to the right supports so that all students have access to high-quality Career and Technical Education offerings and have the ability to participate in CTE. As a result, all students have the opportunity to achieve incredible results and discover a new world of options.

### Special Populations include:


- ✓ Individuals with disabilities
- ✓ Individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including low-income youth and adults
- ✓ Individuals preparing for nontraditional fields
- ✓ Single parents, including single pregnant women
- ✓ Out-of-workforce individuals
- ✓ English learners
- ✓ Homeless individuals
- ✓ Youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system
- ✓ Youth with a parent who is a member of the armed forces and is on active duty

### Common strategies

- Invest in multiple ways for students to access content through offering in-person, blended, and digital learning environments.
- Explore how systems, policies, power, language, social capital, remote learning and internet/technology access reproduce inequalities in your school/college.<sup>1</sup>
- Learn and use culturally responsive teaching and leadership skills, such as connecting students' cultural background to instruction and valuing cultural diversity as an asset in the learning environment.<sup>2,3</sup>
- Incorporate student, family and community voices into equity audits and development of institutional policies and programs.<sup>4</sup>
- Implement professional development that builds educator capacity to understand how gender, race, class, language, ethnicity, and ability differences are perceived and treated in the institution and influenced by implicit bias and micromessaging.<sup>5</sup>
- Use wise feedback<sup>6</sup> and other strategies to help special populations develop self-determination,<sup>7</sup> self-efficacy<sup>8,9,10</sup> and a growth mindset.<sup>11,12</sup>
- Use Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) as a way for students to build social capital and networks in which they feel welcome and supported.<sup>13</sup>
- Prioritize and focus on increasing the representation of diverse groups with CTSOs.
- Acknowledge, address, and respond to culturally traumatic or celebratory news and events.<sup>15</sup>
- Use role models/mentoring to reinforce student identity and self-efficacy.<sup>16</sup>
- Partner with community-based organizations that support each special population group. Give community-based organization and support agencies the opportunity to conduct outreach and provide services on campus so that they are easily accessible and friendly.<sup>17</sup>
- Involve caregivers in outreach, decision making, and support for special populations. Remove barriers to student and caregiver participation such as transportation, child care, translation, location, and scheduling.<sup>18</sup>
- Implement case management with students who are special populations to ensure that services are coordinated and no one falls through the cracks.<sup>19</sup>


## Individuals with disabilities

- Create opportunities and ways that parents and students with disabilities can advocate for themselves.<sup>20</sup>
- Challenge low expectations.<sup>20</sup>
- Provide professional development with faculty on strategies for providing accommodations for students with disabilities in virtual and face-to-face learning environments, including how to protect privacy and reduce stigma.<sup>20</sup>
- Implement Universal Design for Learning and differentiated instruction with all students in all classrooms.<sup>20</sup>
- Request and implement approved accommodations when students with disabilities are taking industry-based certification or licensure exams.<sup>20</sup>
- Increase Individualized Education Program (IEP) effectiveness by including all individuals who support a student, including career and technical education (CTE) teachers. Train CTE teachers on how to understand a student's IEP, provide appropriate accommodations, raise expectations, and decrease bias.<sup>20</sup>
- Build relationships with companies that have successfully employed students with disabilities and ask them to support your outreach to new employers.<sup>21</sup>
- Use the resources available through the Nevada Department of Employment, Training & Rehabilitation's (DETR) Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation.<sup>21</sup>

 **National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT)** assists State Education Agencies, Local Education Agencies, State VR agencies, and VR service providers in implementing evidence-based and promising practices ensuring students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, graduate prepared for success in postsecondary education and employment. Check out their Effective Practices and Predictors resources.


## Individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including low-income youth and adults

- Provide free books, materials, tools, uniforms, computers, internet hot-spots and other resources necessary for success in a CTE program. Pay dues, activity fees, and other costs for students who are low-income to participate in CTSOs.<sup>18</sup>
- Make financial aid and scholarships easily accessible online, and systematize assistance into the school day to ensure financial assistance is completed for students.<sup>18</sup>
- Provide transportation, transportation vouchers, bus passes, or mileage reimbursement. Ensure that transportation is available at the right time and in the right location so that students are safe.<sup>18</sup>
- Ensure that students have access to healthy food and nutrition by providing meals at school and all family events. Locate local food bank distribution sites for families on campus.<sup>18</sup>
- Offer affordable or free licensed childcare on-site in coordination with the times and locations of all programs.<sup>18</sup>
- Have students manage a free-access, business clothes closet for interviews or work. Seek donations from the community.<sup>18</sup>

 **Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)** helps teachers and schools educate children and youth to be active participants in a diverse society. Their Teaching Tolerance program provides free resources to educators that emphasizes anti-bias and social justice.

## Individuals preparing for nontraditional fields

- Expose students to nontraditional career options early (elementary grades) to broaden their horizons about what careers are available to them. Children develop gender career stereotypes as early as age 3.<sup>22</sup>
- Address math anxiety and spatial visualization skill development for students pursuing nontraditional fields in STEM through instructional scaffolding and tutoring.<sup>23</sup>
- Offer informal, low-risk, hands-on, skill-development experiences for students to try skills in a nontraditional program, especially for girls who need to develop skills before expressing interest. These activities can include a virtual mentoring, brown-bag online lunch, after-school workshop, maker space experience, or summer camp.<sup>16</sup>
- Ensure that safety equipment, safety clothing, uniforms, and tools are available in small to large sizes to accommodate a person of any stature.<sup>25</sup>
- Form informal virtual support groups in which students can share their experiences and build community with other students pursuing a nontraditional career.<sup>16</sup>
- Enroll nontraditional students in cohorts—three or more in the same section—to combat tokenism or gender/racial isolation and encourage peer support and cohort engagement.<sup>16</sup>
- Enforce civil rights and sexual harassment policies and practices—ignoring is the same as condoning. Ensure that students are aware of reporting procedures and that their privacy will be protected.<sup>26</sup>

 **National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE)** provides thought leadership and capacity building to implement effective solutions to increase student access, educational equity, and workforce diversity. NAPE has developed resources and professional development programs that address gender equity in career and technical education and workforce development. Check out NAPE's literature review Nontraditional Career Preparation: Root Causes & Strategies.

## Resources for individuals with Disabilities

Nevada Department of Education:  
Office of Inclusive Education

Nevada Department of  
Employment, Training and  
Rehabilitation, Office of Youth and  
Student Services

PIPELine to Career Success for  
Students with Disabilities

Making Good on the Promise:  
Improving Equity and Access to  
Quality CTE Programs for Students  
with Disabilities

U.S. Department of Education,  
Office for Special Education  
Programs

National Center for Learning  
Disabilities

National Technical Assistance  
Center on Transition

National Dropout Prevention  
Center for Students with  
Disabilities

## Resources for individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including low-income youth and adults

Nevada GearUP

Nevada TRIO Programs  
University of Nevada, Reno  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
Nevada State College  
Community College of Southern  
Nevada  
Truckee Meadows Community  
College

Southern Poverty Law Center

National Center for Children in  
Poverty

## Resources for individuals preparing for nontraditional fields

Nontraditional Career Preparation  
ROOT CAUSES & STRATEGIES

Nontraditional Careers for Men

National Center for Women &  
Information Technology

National Institute for Women in  
Trades, Technology, and Science

National Association of Women in  
Construction

National Girls Collaborative Project



### Resources for single parents, including single pregnant women

Institute for Women's Policy Research

National Women's Law Center

### Resources for out-of-workforce individuals

Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation

Nevadaworks

Workforce Connections

Nevada Job Connect

Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development: SkillsMatch

EmployNV

Nevada 211 Health and Human Services: Emergency Shelter, Housing, and Rental Assistance

U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration

Center for Law and Social Policy

### Resources for English learners

Nevada Department of Education: English Language Learners

Nevada WIDA

Sample District Specific Resources

Clark County  
Elko County  
Washoe County

U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition

EL Achieve

TESOL International Association

## Single parents, including single pregnant women

- Do not isolate teen parents in separate programs where access to CTE is not available. Access to CTE programs that lead to employment in an occupation with family-sustaining wages is critical.<sup>27</sup>
- Allow for attendance flexibility and alternative course completion options, especially for teen parents who may be struggling to manage parenting responsibilities.<sup>28</sup>
- Provide transportation for the teen parent's child to childcare and the student to school, ideally in the same location.<sup>28</sup>
- Provide parenting/child development classes for teen parents to develop coping skills and stay in school.<sup>28</sup>
- Offer affordable or free licensed childcare on-site in coordination with the times and locations of all programs.<sup>28</sup>
- Offer courses in many ways—asynchronous online, synchronous online, face-to-face, hybrid—at different times of the day and in different locations to accommodate single parenting responsibilities and schedules.<sup>29</sup>
- Conduct family-friendly outreach activities, and incorporate family into student events.<sup>29</sup>
- Conduct single parent support groups and/or study groups to build a community of support and social networks.<sup>29</sup>



Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR)'s Student Parent Success Initiative conducts research and policy analysis, provides technical expertise and assistance, and communicates its research increase equity in higher education for student parents and other underserved student populations. Check out their briefing paper on Prioritizing Student Parents in COVID-19 Response and Relief.

## Out-of-workforce individuals

- Coordinate services with the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs and services through Nevada's Workforce System.<sup>30</sup>
- Help students identify transferrable skills to connect instructional relevance and build opportunity in a high-demand nontraditional career field that supports economic self-sufficiency and offers good benefits.<sup>16</sup>
- Organize support groups and study groups that build community and social capital. Hold these virtually or provide transportation, childcare, and food to encourage participation.<sup>18</sup>
- Provide career-planning services such as resume writing, goal setting, interview skills, stress management, job-shadowing, and work-based learning.<sup>18</sup>
- Identify employment-based training such as work-study, subsidized employment, and apprenticeships that provide wages while attending school.<sup>31</sup>
- Offer short-term programs with stackable certifications, credentials, or licensure that have value in the workplace.<sup>32, 33</sup>



Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) advocate for federal, state, and local policies to improve access to education and training that lead to better-paying jobs by promoting bridges between adult basic education, workforce skills training, and postsecondary education and leveraging education and training opportunities in public benefits programs. Check out their report on Career Pathways in Career and Technical Education.

## English learners

- Engage families and community in supporting English learners' engagement in CTE and CTSOs.<sup>41</sup>
- Provide interpreters for students and their families.<sup>18</sup>
- Support English learners with scannable technology if students have smart phones, such as word walls, scannable vocabulary lists, and audio directions.<sup>43</sup> Use technology to facilitate language translation such as visual dictionaries and translation apps.
- Facilitate collaboration between CTE and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers.<sup>44</sup>
- Connect content learning to language acquisition. Position English learners as competent classroom community members by sharing ideas in pairs, using cooperative learning strategies, and engaging in classroom discussion.<sup>45, 46</sup>
- Provide instructional materials in multiple languages or implement a flipped classroom with prep materials in the English learner's language.<sup>47</sup>



National Clearing House for English Language Acquisition (NCELA) collects, coordinates, and conveys a broad range of research and resources in support of an inclusive approach to high quality education for English Learners. Check out their practice briefs and podcast episodes on instructional strategies for educators.

## Homeless individuals (preferred terminology: People experiencing homelessness)

- Have a process in place to identify students experiencing homelessness, including training and professional development opportunities for staff so they can identify and meet these student's needs.<sup>40</sup>
- Connect with the State of Nevada Department of Education for administration of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (MVHAA). Ensure that students experiencing homelessness and their families know their rights under the MVHAA.<sup>41</sup>
- Know what support services are available in your district under Title I, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act that help students experiencing homelessness maximize credit accrual and complete high school.<sup>42</sup>
- Provide enriched supplemental instruction, tutoring, credit recovery, partial coursework, independent study, and online learning options for students experiencing homelessness to keep up or catch up with their learning.<sup>61</sup>
- Become familiar with Nevada state laws about reporting suspected abuse or neglect, or a suspected runaway to local authorities, Child Protective Services, or the Crisis Support Services of Nevada.<sup>43</sup>
- Provide access to free meals, shower and laundry facilities, a secure place to store personal belongings, quiet place to study, free school supplies, and access to technology and the internet.<sup>44</sup>
- Coordinate school and community resources that provide trauma-informed wraparound services such as transportation, referrals to health care, shelters, housing, and employment.<sup>45</sup>
- Access financial support for dues, activity fees, and transportation resources through the MVHAA for students experiencing homelessness for extracurricular activities and participation in CTSOs.<sup>46,47</sup>
- Ensure access to school-based programs such as Upward Bound, Gifted Ed, Special Ed, AP courses, CTE, athletics, band, theater arts, and other programs.<sup>45, 48</sup>
- Pair students with mentors who encourage them to attend school every day, and provide accountability through attendance monitoring, and follow-up with students and parents/guardians when students miss school to determine the cause of the absence and how that barrier can be overcome.<sup>48</sup>
- Revise policies that may inadvertently decrease student attendance such as severe penalties for tardiness and/or suspending students from school because of excessive absences.<sup>49</sup>



National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) provides technical assistance and resources to schools, service providers, parents, and other interested stakeholders to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness can enroll and succeed in school. Check out NCHE's Homeless Education Issue Briefs and their joint publication with Advance CTE, *Improving Equity in and Access to Quality CTE Programs for Students Experiencing Homelessness*.

## Youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system

- Be familiar with the requirements of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 as it relates to education.<sup>49</sup>
- Learn about your students in foster care. They may have experienced abuse, neglect, and multiple placements, so safety is their number one priority—not school. Build a relationship of trust with them and their foster family.<sup>50</sup>
- Be flexible with homework, due dates, and testing, and stay in touch with foster parents to know when a student will have a birth parent or biological family member visitation because these times may create emotional unrest.<sup>51</sup>
- Help students who are transitioning out of foster care to develop a transition plan using the Foster Care Transition Toolkit. Nevada funds foster care until age 18 and then independent living supports up to age 21 to youth previously in foster care.
- Connect students with federal TRIO<sup>52</sup> programs at your local community college. These include Upward Bound<sup>53</sup>, Talent Search<sup>54</sup>, Educational Opportunity Centers<sup>55</sup>, and Student Support Services.<sup>56</sup>



Legal Center for Foster Care & Education serves as a central clearinghouse of information on foster care and education and provides training and technical assistance. Check out their ESSA Implementation Toolkit. Learn more about Supporting Students Living in Foster Care and the U.S. Department of Education Students in Foster Care resources.

## Youth with a parent who is a member of the armed forces and is on active duty

- Understand the unique needs of a child with a parent in the military on active duty during deployment. Promptly refer a student for counseling who continues to show signs of stress, inability to function in school, or has high levels of emotional response after a family member deploys.<sup>15</sup>
- Retain classroom routines and maintain predictable, structured class schedules.<sup>15</sup>
- Help students access free, online tutoring and homework help at [military.tutor.com](http://military.tutor.com).<sup>58</sup>
- Use competency checklists that students can share with their next school to ensure their continued learning in a similar CTE program, if their family moves due to deployment or reassignment.<sup>59</sup>
- Be familiar with the education support services available from the military branch your student's parent(s) serve. Know the local point of contact. The Veteran's Administration's Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance program provides education and training opportunities to eligible dependents and survivors of certain Veterans.<sup>60</sup>



Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA) serves school districts with a high concentration of military children and works with local school leaders and commanders to highlight best practices and partnerships that can meet the needs of military families. Start exploring the MISA resource with their Promising Practices.

## Resources for homeless individuals

Nevada Department of Education: Students Experiencing Homelessness

Sample District Specific Resources  
Clark County  
Humboldt County  
Washoe County

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

Hidden in Plain Sight - Homeless Students in America's Public Schools

Making Good on the Promise: Improving Equity in and Access to Quality CTE Programs for Students Experiencing Homelessness

## Resources for youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system

Nevada Department of Education: Foster Care

Nevada System of Higher Education: Foster Youth Success Initiative

National Foster Youth Institute

Legal Center for Foster Care and Education

## Resources for youth with a parent who is a member of the armed forces and is on active duty

Nevada Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission

Nevada Military Children in Our Schools Course

Nevada Purple Star Schools Program

Nellis & Creech Air Force Bases, and Nevada Test and Training Range School Liaison Page

Child Mind Institute Military Families

MilitaryChild.org

MilitaryFamily.org

Military OneSource

DoDEA The Military Interstate Compact

MIC3 Guide for Parents and Schools



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