

Nevada State Teacher
and
Education Support Professional Recruitment
and Retention Advisory Task Force

DRAFT Report – June 2024



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Introduction

Senate Bill 71 (2023) established the Nevada State Teacher and Education Support Professional 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 and education support professionals throughout this State;
2. Make recommendations to the Legislative Committee on Education to address the challenges in attracting and retaining teachers and education support professionals throughout this State, including, without limitation, providing incentives to attract and retain teachers and education support professionals; and
3. Make a presentation to the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education on the fourth meeting of the Task Force, in even-numbered years, of the findings and recommendations of the Task Force made pursuant to NRS 391.496.

This report provides an overview of such findings and recommendations.

Members

The application for Task Force membership was released by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) in September 2023. During their February 2024 meeting, the Joint Interim Standing Committee Members on Education (COE) members reviewed and appointed members from each school district. The current Task Force is comprised of 4 reappointed members and 14 new members, with 12 classroom teachers and 6 education support professionals.

In accordance with [NRS 391.492](#), the current membership includes:

- a) One licensed teacher or education support professional employed by each school district located in a county whose population is less than 100,000:
 - Carson City – Kerri Finn
 - Churchill – E. Andrew Campbell
 - Douglas – Louie Trio
 - Elko – Colene Paradise
 - Esmeralda – Vacant
 - Eureka – Suzann Lamaire
 - Humboldt – Jared Kifer
 - Lander – Sandra Ayers
 - Lincoln – Sherry Spencer
 - Lyon – Bridget Perez
 - Mineral – Ann Kee
 - Nye – Rebecca Tate
 - Pershing – Emilee Houston
 - Storey – Viengkhone Peabody
 - White Pine – Vacant
- b) Two licensed teachers or education support professionals employed by each school district located in a county whose population is 100,000 or more but less than 700,000:
 - Washoe – Natalia Callahan
 - Washoe – Esperanza Ramos
- c) Three licensed teachers or education support professionals employed by each school district located in a county whose population is 700,000 or more:

- Clark – Marci Kutzer
- Clark – Marlon Neal
- Clark – Rodney Bell

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
- Christy McGill, 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

- 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

Acknowledgements

The Task Force wishes to express appreciation to the numerous presenters and the members of the Nevada Coalition for Educator Recruitment and Retention (NV Coalition), the Superintendent’s Principal Advisory Cabinet (PAC), and the Superintendent’s Teacher Advisory Cabinet (STAC) for their expertise, advice, and willingness to contribute to these findings and recommendations. The members recognize that as a state, we can collectively create the best education system for our students by implementing policies and legislation appropriate to each stakeholder while aligning across stakeholder groups.

The members of the Task Force also extend their heartfelt appreciation to the 2023 IFC for approving funding for the development and implementation of the surveys and the 2023 Legislature for their unwavering support and cooperation in passing several bills that were recommended by the Task Force. This legislation is beginning to have a positive impact on the recruitment and retention of educators in our State. We have seen an increase in the number of Nevadans choosing to join the workforce, helping to fill the critical shortage of teachers in our schools. Furthermore, legislation also played a crucial role in retaining experienced educators by providing them with better pay and professional development opportunities. Task Force members are grateful for the legislature’s support and are confident that these recommendations will continue to benefit our education system for years to come. The Task Force looks forward to working with COE on the recommendations proposed in this report.

Recommendations Overview and Format

NRS 391.496 states that the primary responsibility of this Task Force is to make recommendations to the Legislative Committee on Education to address the challenges in attracting and retaining teachers and education support professionals in Nevada. To do this, the Task Force not only reviewed available data and research, but it also consulted with external experts and stakeholder groups.

The Task Force work must be infused into other statewide initiatives while supporting other educational efforts. Members felt deeply that no one solution could fix the current struggle and that recruitment and retention efforts must approach challenges from multiple angles and address multiple levels of the education system. As an example, if Nevada revises our state retirement benefits to support recruitment and retention efforts without also improving working conditions, educators may still leave.

One of the key challenges facing school districts across the country is the shortage of qualified and diverse teachers. In response to this issue, NDE and school districts in Nevada are utilizing federal relief funds to invest in recruitment efforts by offering scholarships and support to attract new teachers and paraprofessionals. These efforts, however, will be in vain if the State is unable to retain the educators who are already working in its classrooms. It is crucial for Nevada to not only focus on recruiting new educators, but to also prioritize retaining and supporting its current ones.

To address the issue of recruitment, it is essential for Nevada to invest in initiatives that make the State more appealing to out-of-state educators. This can include offering competitive salaries and benefits, as well as providing support for relocation and housing. Additionally, efforts should be made to encourage current Nevada residents to pursue a career in education. This can be done through targeted outreach and recruitment efforts, as well as providing financial incentives and support for individuals interested in becoming educators.

It is vital for Nevada to prioritize the retention of its educators. This can be achieved by offering a variety of benefits and resources, such as mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and cultural competency training. It is also imperative to remove any barriers that may prevent current educators from staying in the education profession. Retention is recruiting educators to stay.

Moreover, the Task Force recognizes that without proper structures in place, recruitment and retention efforts may not see the intended results. Thus, this task force puts forth a large number of large number of recommendations to address infrastructure and systems of support to improve the working conditions of educators across the state. These recommendations take a multi-pronged approach, addressing the perception of education, data collection, and educator benefits packages.

To conclude, recruiting and retaining a diverse group of educators is crucial for the success and growth of Nevada's education system. By investing in initiatives that make the State more attractive to out-of-state educators, encouraging local residents to pursue a career in education, and providing support for current and future educators, Nevada can expand the size and diversity of its educator workforce. These efforts will not only benefit the educators themselves but will also benefit the students and communities they serve.

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 of 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 long-term.

The 33 Task Force recommendations are grouped into five essential areas using a holistic, systems-centered approach to creating solutions:

- **Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions** - Recommendations to improve working conditions, climate, and culture to improve retention and recruitment.
- **Recruitment** - Recommendations to positively impact recruitment efforts and grow the profession.
- **Retention** - Recommendations to positively impact retention.

- **Remove Barriers** - Recommendations to remove barriers to entering the education profession.
- **Letters of Support** - Recommendations requesting COE write letters to the appropriate agencies urging them to take action to improve educator recruitment and retention.

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

Title of the Recommendation: *Recommendation language.*

Specifics: *Additional details and background on the intent of the recommendation.*

Rationale: *Reason why this recommendation was made.*

Expected Outcomes: *Intended results of successful implementation of the recommendation.*

Recommending Entity: *Stakeholder groups putting forth this recommendation.*

Governor’s 3-Year Plan Alignment: *Alignment to the priorities in Governor Lombardo’s 3-Year Plan.*

Evidence Folder: *Link to the publicly accessible Google Folder containing the research/data supporting the recommendation.*

Three stakeholder groups met separately and submitted recommendations to the Task Force for consideration.

- The **Nevada Coalition for Educator Recruitment and Retention (NV 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 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. The stakeholder groups that proposed the same or similar solutions are listed in parentheses following each recommendation.

Recommendations

Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions

The Task Force proposes the following 14 holistic, systems-centered recommendations to improve working conditions, climate, and culture to improve retention and recruitment.

Recommendation # : Allocate funding to improve the organizational image of the teaching profession.

Specifics: The 2024 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 education as a profession, Nevada as a desirable State to teach in, the quality of education provided in Nevada, and specific district and Statewide recruitment and retention events/ efforts.

Rationale: Public perception of the education profession is low, and 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. A public relations campaign to share positive stories, successes, and accurate information to dispel misconceptions will help all Nevada districts attract top talent and enable districts to distinguish themselves from competing states. 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. 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.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher recruitment and retention of educators.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC, PAC, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.3

Evidence folder: [*Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder*](#)

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

Specifics: State funding should be allocated to sustain and expand the educator workforce supply and demand portal to ensure the accountability and transparency of educator recruitment and retention efforts.

Rationale: 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, the portal was initially 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, and
- Eventual addition of teacher pipeline metrics, including data connected to NSHE educator preparation programs.

The dashboards will support the Department'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, school personnel, and State policymakers would be able to easily access real-time educator workforce data to inform decision-making.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.4.2

Evidence folder: [*Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder*](#)

Recommendation # : Increase the allocation of funding to education and prioritize the use of those funds for District-led recruitment and retention efforts.

Specifics: Funding should be allocated to districts to support hiring additional personnel or providing additional resources to focus on recruitment and retention efforts.

Rationale: Many districts have limited staffing and/or resources to adequately support educator recruitment and retention efforts. Funds could be provided to support either a designated position or for additional compensation for current personnel responsible for recruitment and retention initiatives or efforts. Provisions and requirements would need to be put in place for the use of the funding as well as oversight to ensure the funds are used as intended.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher recruitment and retention.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence folder: [*Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder*](#)

Recommendation # : Allocate additional funding to prioritize the use of those funds for targeted training of administrators in building systemic support for educator efficacy and increasing job satisfaction.

Specifics: Funding should be allocated to provide targeted training for administrators to develop systems of support for their staff.

Rationale: 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 cultivate systems of support for their staff.

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

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence folder: [*Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder*](#)

Recommendation # : 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: Funding should be provided to develop or sustain mentor programs through which experienced educators not only build the capacity and skills of novice educators, but to also provide career pathways for experienced educators.

Rationale: New teachers often must rely on onsite training for classroom success. If they do not receive strong support and continued growth during the steep learning curve of their first 2 years, they are twice as likely to abandon their career as an educator. Successful mentoring programs for new teachers create a supportive environment where educators can learn, grow, and thrive in their profession and play a vital role in helping new teachers develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to become effective educators. Paying experienced, well-trained mentor teachers to support new teachers shows Nevada values their commitment and time and provides them with career pathways that could help keep them in classrooms. In addition, funding could be used to provide training for mentors, improve existing mentoring programs, and increase access to effective mentoring programs. Providing funding to districts could increase retention of both veteran teachers and novice teachers. This should be done in a way that does not impact district Federal/Title II-A funding for mentor 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 as evidenced by the results of the working conditions survey.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC, PAC, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Expand the benefit enrollment umbrella to include healthcare coverage of educators under the state Public Employee Benefit Plan (PEBP).

Specifics: The eligible PEBP enrollment pool should be expanded to include all educational staff.

Rationale: Contributions to healthcare plans can range widely across the state and depend on the health plan that each school district or charter school chooses. Family and dependent coverage can be costly for individual employees and has been cited frequently by educators as a concern. Therefore, expanding the eligible enrollee pool would stabilize costs and premiums for educators, increase benefits, and provide educators with peace of mind that they not only have access to care, but that their medical expenses will be paid. Districts would negotiate to switch insurance providers.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in long-term teacher retention rates if educators are provided with access to better benefits and educators would report higher levels of satisfaction in the working conditions survey.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Health & Wellness 3.5.2 and 3.5.3

Evidence folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Amend the timeline for educators to become eligible to return to employment while drawing Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) benefits (double dip).

Specifics: The timeline for eligibility to double dip in PERS should be revised to allow retirees to return to the teaching profession more quickly.

Rationale: Currently, educators may not return to a teaching position until they have received their first PERS check (roughly two months). This requires a substitute to cover the class in the transition, but Nevada has a shortage of substitute teachers. Some teachers may be discouraged by the wait and decide not to return to the classroom – taking positions outside of the field of education. Getting retired teachers with 30 years of experience back into the classroom as quickly as possible, by allowing them to

double dip without having to wait, can reduce the number of vacancies and ensure children have access to certified teachers.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report a decrease in the number of vacant positions if retired teachers are able to return to the classroom faster while retaining their retirement benefits.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Economic Growth & Business Development 2.1.1 & 2.1.3

Evidence folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Require health plans doing business in Nevada to include extensive wrap around service benefits.

Specifics: Educator health plans should provide educators with more comprehensive health care services.

Rationale: The teaching profession is more challenging than ever, and it is affecting the mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing of educators and negatively impacting teacher retention. If educators were provided access to additional healthcare benefits, such as health club memberships, counseling, and vacation/personal days, etc., teachers would be better equipped to face those challenges and retention would improve. In addition, districts could use better health plan coverage as an incentive to recruit new teachers.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher recruitment and retention rates if educators are provided with access to more comprehensive health plan benefits.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Health & Wellness 3.5.2 and 3.5.3

Evidence folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Ask the State the Board of Education to re-evaluate high school graduation requirements to remove duplicative coursework and to ensure coursework aligns with NSHE 'need to know' requirements.

Specifics: Some courses offered in middle school for high school credit are then also required in high school leading to duplicative coursework.

Rationale: Removing duplicative coursework means fewer students in a course, giving administrators the needed flexibility to realign schedules to better meet staffing needs while reducing undue burdens on students.

Expected Outcomes: Class sizes will be reduced as students are not taking duplicative coursework, enabling teachers to better meet student needs and reducing educator workload.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education and Workforce 1.1.2

Evidence folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Increase funding to support the buyout for unused sick leave at the teacher's daily rate of pay or at a set statewide minimum amount upon retirement.

Specifics: Funding should be provided to enable districts to either pay teachers their daily rate of pay or a set statewide minimum amount when they retire instead of the low payout rate they currently receive from most districts.

Rationale: When teachers retire, they are often not fully compensated for their unused sick leave. The unintended consequence is that teachers are incentivized to use up their sick leave before they leave the classroom since they will not be fully compensated for it which negatively impacts student learning in the classroom. Furthermore, the low buyout pay does not incentivize teachers to stay long enough, to full retirement, to receive their buyout. Teacher retention would improve, as would student performance, as teachers would be more likely to stay until retirement and less likely to miss excessive days if they were fairly compensated.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates if educators are provided better incentives to stay until they are eligible for retirement.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Allocate funding to provide supply cards for teachers to purchase classroom materials.

Specifics: A supply card grant program should be implemented to provide all teachers with additional funds to purchase classroom supplies.

Rationale: According to [Donors Choose](#), teachers spend on average more than \$500 out of pocket on classroom supplies per school year. Providing supply grants for all teachers will offset out-of-pocket expenses and relieve them of the burden of having to request or apply for additional funding sources. This will help teachers feel like they have the resources they need in the classroom, improve morale, and increase retention. It is felt that the current method of distributing funds for school supplies is not equitable as **all** teachers do not receive funds.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates if educators do not have to use their own money to provide supplies for their classrooms.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Take action to prevent districts and schools from creating schedules that require one teacher to teach two different content classes in the same room at the same time (stacked classes).

Specifics: Funding should be provided to enable school districts to offer classes with smaller enrollment and/or to compensate teachers for teaching stacked classes.

Rationale: Teachers are often asked to teach two different content classes (stacked classes) in one class period (ex. English 11 and AP English; orchestra and guitar), which has been exacerbated by the teacher shortage. Each stacked class requires double planning, double the workload, and increases classroom management issues for teachers. Students in different content classes but who are assigned to be in the same class at the same time are not getting the teacher's full attention or instruction. The teacher is forced to divide and/or alternate their instruction and time between students as the content and standards differ. Students receive less attention from the teacher in stacked classes and teachers end up with an increased workload. This decreases student achievement and teacher retention. This would not apply to combined classes such as PreK/K, Grades 6-7 combination, or Special Education combined classes.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates if educators are not required to teach multiple courses simultaneously.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Allocate additional funding for the creation and training of student support teams (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, wrap around services, etc.) at every school.

Specifics: Funds should be allocated to provide additional support services in schools to help educators meet the needs of all students.

Rationale: While many schools and or districts have systems in place to provide additional student support services to students, access to services may not be easy to access, equitable, or able to meet the needs of the communities they serve. If all students had access to the mental, social, physical, and academic support they need to be successful, then teachers could focus on instruction and student learning. This network of support would not only benefit the students, but would remove some of that burden from teachers, which could improve teacher job satisfaction and increase retention. This may require a comprehensive look at what supports there already are, their availability, how they are managed, and identify strategies to improve existing programs.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates if educators are supported in meeting the needs of all students.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Health & Wellness 3.5.2

Evidence folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : 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: The State should require a minimum salary scale for all districts to reflect the cost of living and include an annual COLA increase to maintain or improve a teacher's 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 makes Nevada more attractive to future educators and assures all educators are provided an appropriate standard of living and is sustainable for additional years of service.

District alignment will reduce the disparity in salaries across the state, but 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 teachers' standard of living. In addition, protections must be put in place to ensure current teacher's salary schedules are not negatively impacted prior to implementation.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher recruitment and retention rates if educators earn more competitive salaries and have better benefits.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recruitment

The Task Force proposes the following 3 holistic, systems-centered recommendations to positively impact recruitment efforts and grow the profession.

Recommendation # : Allocate additional funding for scholarships to increase the number of qualified specialized instructional support personnel (counselors, social workers, psychologists, etc.) to ensure students have equitable access to qualified service providers.

Specifics: The Legislature should not only continue to invest in pipeline initiatives such as the Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching Grant through an increase of funding, but it should also expand the scope of incentives to include those who would like to become counselors, psychologists, social workers, etc.

Rationale: The cost of a college education has risen over the past few decades, and cost is a barrier for many to take the coursework required to become specialists who provide essential and wraparound services to students. With a persistent teacher and support personnel shortage plaguing Nevada, attracting more candidates into preparation programs, ensuring there are no financial barriers for candidates completing their programs, and accelerating the pace of program completion by providing scholarships to incentivize and support candidates who are preparing to fill hard to staff positions in Nevada’s schools. This may require a comprehensive look at what supports there already exist, their availability, how they are managed, and identifying strategies to improve existing programs.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in educator recruitment and retention of qualified service providers in our schools in hard to staff positions and a reduction of the ratio of specialized instructional support personnel to students served.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.1.3

Evidence folder: [Recruitment Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Provide dedicated funding for districts to provide signing bonuses/longevity pay.

Specifics: Additional funds should be provided to enable districts to give signing bonuses for new teachers and provide longevity bonuses for veteran teachers.

Rationale: Signing bonuses are a great way to attract new teachers. Bonuses could be given out over the course of 3-5 years to ensure the new teachers stay after receiving the money. Longevity pay is needed to help maintain and motivate teachers who have been loyal and committed to their school. It is often demoralizing to veteran teachers to see new teachers receive large signing bonuses while they receive nothing. Longevity bonuses could be awarded in lump sums after 5, 10, 15, etc. years. To be an effective recruitment and retention tool, districts need to offer both signing and longevity bonuses. Current programs can be expanded.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in the recruitment of new educators and the retention of more veteran teachers if educators feel they are valued and appropriately compensated.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence folder: [Recruitment Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Return the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) service requirement from the current 33.3 years to 30 years of service.

Specifics: Competitive PERS incentives should be provided to educators to stay in the classroom long-term.

Rationale: Nevada does not currently retain educators at a sufficient rate to meet demand. Changing the PERS service requirement from 30 years of service to the current 33.3 years, adding an additional 3.3 years to become fully vested, rather than encouraging educators to stay longer, does the opposite and makes many of them less likely to stay in the system long enough to be fully vested. Competitive PERS benefits results in long-term retention of educators and can be used by districts to entice educators to move to Nevada to teach.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report a decrease in the number of vacant positions if competitive PERS benefits are provided to incentivize educators to remain employed long-term.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Economic Growth & Business Development 2.1.1 & 2.1.3

Evidence folder: [Recruitment Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Reduce the number of years required for eligibility to receive Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) benefits from 5 years to 3 years.

Specifics: The timeline for becoming vested in PERS should be amended to incentivize foreign exchange educators, military spouses, etc. to come to Nevada to teach.

Rationale: Recruitment of spouses and others who are licensed educators and whose stay in Nevada is not expected to be long term will help fill vacancies, at least for the short term, with qualified educators who may not otherwise seek a license for a short stay in Nevada. Senate Bill 308 (2023) sponsored by Senator Edgar Flores addressed this idea.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report a decrease in the number of vacant positions if competitive PERS benefits are provided to incentivize short-term residents to become educators.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Economic Growth & Business Development 2.1.1 & 2.1.3

Evidence folder: [Recruitment Research Folder](#)

Retention

The Task Force proposes the following 7 holistic, systems-centered recommendations to positively impact educator retention.

Recommendation # : Increase the funding for the teacher advancement scholarship.

Specifics: Funding should be provided for teacher advancement scholarships to those who would like to become counselors, psychologists, social workers, etc. will ensure qualified service providers in our schools in hard to staff positions.

Rationale: Cost is a barrier to pursuing a course of study to become a specialist to provide essential and wraparound services to students. Nevada universities anticipate 300 applications in Fiscal Year 24. Providing scholarships will create an entry point toward preparing candidates to fill hard to staff positions in Nevada's schools.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention of a diverse body of educators including teachers, school counselors, social workers, school psychologists, library media specialists, etc.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.1.3

Evidence folder: [Retention Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Conduct a study of Nevada System of Higher Education educator preparation coursework to ensure alignment with education staff needs.

Specifics: A study should be conducted of educator preparation coursework to ensure educators are fully prepared for the needs of today's classroom requirements.

Rationale: Research shows first-year teachers entering the profession are unprepared for the challenges they will encounter in today's classroom. They often feel overwhelmed and many leave after 3 years. Aligning their educator preparation coursework to the challenges they will face in their classrooms and schools will support new educators and help with retention.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report a decrease in the number of educators who leave the profession after 3 years and will be reflected in the working conditions survey results.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.1.2

Evidence folder: [Retention Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Provide grant funding for districts to give salary incentives for those who stay in special education positions.

Specifics: Grant funding should be made available for districts to request reimbursement for salary incentives paid to educators who stay in special education positions each year beyond 5 years.

Rationale: Special education is a critical shortage area that already comes with incentives to become a special education teacher; however, special education teachers often leave that field to become general education teachers, thereby creating a vacancy in a hard-to-fill area. Incentivizing them to stay in special education will ensure there are qualified special education teachers in the classrooms where they are most needed.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report a decrease in the number of unfilled special education positions and a reduction of educator turnover in special education positions.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence folder: [Retention Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Allocate dedicated funding to cover the costs associated with gaining an endorsement in a district- or state- designated critical shortage area.

Specifics: Districts should be provided funding dedicated to covering the costs associated with gaining an endorsement in a district- or state-identified critical shortage area.

Rationale: Due to the shortage of teachers, certain subject-area classes are often staffed with substitutes or are not offered at all in some schools and/or districts. Increasing the number of teachers who are licensed to teach in multiple content areas will help schools offer specific classes and staff them with qualified educators.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report a decrease in the number of unfilled positions in critical shortage areas.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence folder: [Retention Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Revise Nevada Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) by returning the benefits percentage 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. Competitive PERS benefits can be used by districts to entice educators to move to Nevada to teach.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in long-term teacher retention rates if competitive PERS benefits are provided.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Economic Growth & Business Development 2.1.1 & 2.1.3

Evidence folder: [Retention Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Provide State general funds to supplement the current funding structure to support the Home Is Possible for Teachers program.

Specifics: Additional dedicated State funds should be provided to supplement the limited amount of funding NHD programs generate from fees.

Rationale: The Home Is Possible for Teachers program is currently funded through the fees collected by the Nevada Housing Division (NHD); however, 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 more teachers the opportunity to buy a home (especially in areas of low housing inventory or high cost).

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates as educators are more likely to stay if they are able to afford to live in their communities.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Rural & Natural Resources 6.3.3

Evidence folder: [Retention Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Provide funding outside the general fund to create and manage a loan forgiveness program for current teachers with at least 5 years' experience in the classroom.

Specifics: Funding should be provided to support student loan forgiveness to current Nevada teachers who have been teaching for at least 5 years and who are not eligible for loan forgiveness by other funding sources.

Rationale: Research has shown that loan forgiveness programs can successfully recruit and retain high-quality teachers into classrooms and communities where they are most needed. With pay scales varying from state to state, prospective teachers will be more likely to move to a state that offers both a competitive salary schedule and a loan forgiveness program. Districts would be able to use the loan forgiveness program to attract more educators to move to Nevada to teach. It would also improve retention as it would require them to stay at least 5 years to be eligible for reimbursement. Current educators would also benefit from this program as it would allow them to submit reimbursement requests for their student loans. Economic incentives are needed to help recruit and retain educators, and this would ensure that more of a teachers' paycheck stays in their pocket.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report higher recruitment and retention rates of teachers if they feel like they are appropriately compensated.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence folder: [Retention Research Folder](#)

Removing Barriers

The Task Force proposes the following 3 holistic, systems-centered recommendations to remove barriers to entering the education profession.

Recommendation # : Allocate funding to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to support the prioritization of background checks for educator licensure.

Specifics: Funding should be allocated to support the prioritization of processing educator licenses over recreation licenses and, if applicable, the addition of personnel/employee compensation.

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, sometimes longer during the peak

season, while NDE processing time usually runs from 3 to 6 weeks during that same period. This means that there could be hundreds of applications that have been approved by NDE but are pending the completion of the background checks. This is a barrier to employment for the impacted educators. Many educators have stated that the length of time it takes for the background check to come back to get or renew a teaching license is a barrier, and teachers can't get hired if they do not have a license. By prioritizing and expediting background checks, the licensure processing time is reduced, which results in educator licenses being issued in a timelier manner and educators ready to be hired and placed into classrooms more quickly.

The recommendation is that background checks for educator licensure are prioritized ahead of recreational licenses. Other priority checks such as foster parent background checks would not be impacted. Furthermore, additional funding could be provided to hire additional personnel or to fund overtime pay for current personnel to process background checks, thus expediting the process. The Department of Public Safety (DPS) would need to determine the most efficient way to prioritize and expedite the processing of the fingerprints of educators seeking licensure.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in the number of filled educator positions at the beginning of the school year.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Economic Growth & Business Development 2.1.2

Evidence folder: [Removing Barriers Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Appropriate funds to cover cost-of-living / travel stipends for rural educators.

Specifics: Providing additional funding to cover cost-of-living / travel stipends for rural educators.

Rationale: Rural areas have fewer resources for doctors, dentists, lawyers, recreation, housing, contractors, hospitals, mental health professionals, limited school personnel, grocery stores, etc., and access to services in rural areas require more resources including time, travel, and related expenses, resulting in educators incurring higher out of pocket expenses. This may discourage educators from applying for positions in rural communities and make the recruitment of educators in those districts more difficult. Providing additional funding to cover some of these expenses could incentivize the recruitment and retainment of teachers in these areas.

Expected Outcomes: Rural districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates as teachers are able to afford to live in their communities.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence folder: [Removing Barriers Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : Provide funding for districts to offer housing opportunities to all educators to support longevity in the district.

Specifics: Funding should be provided for districts to offer housing support through stipends or district-owned properties to early career educators.

Rationale: The average home cost in many communities is well-beyond what an early-career educator can reasonably afford, so providing housing support to eligible educators would ensure they have access to safe living quarters for themselves and their families. If newer educators are provided housing assistance, then districts will be able not only recruit educators more easily, but also maintain higher educator retention rates by offsetting the high cost of housing with lower salaries. Any district that has similar incentives in place can enhance their existing programs.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher recruitment and retention rates as educators are more willing to move to and stay if they are able to afford to live in their communities.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Rural & Natural Resources 6.3.2

Evidence folder: [Removing Barriers Research Folder](#)

Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education (COE) Letters of Support

The Task Force proposes the following 5 holistic, systems-centered recommendations that ask COE to send letters to the specified entities to take action in recruiting and retaining educators in Nevada.

Recommendation # : COE to write a letter to districts encouraging them to value and respect teacher autonomy in lesson planning, design, and delivery.

Focus Area: Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions

Specifics: Teachers should be permitted to design and implement their own lessons and units, including how lessons are taught, as long as they align to the approved course standards.

Rationale: Teachers are experts in their field and know their students, so they should be able to make instructional decisions based on their own expertise and knowledge of their pupils. After all, teachers should be differentiating their instruction based on the needs of their students, and in fact, are held accountable for doing so on their annual evaluations. For early career teachers the emphasis should be on providing useful guidance and exemplars, rather than adding additional demands or unnecessary compliance documents. Preventing teachers from making instructional decisions is not in the best interest of the students they serve, and not only could it have a negative impact on student learning, but it could also lead to job dissatisfaction and result in lower teacher retention.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates if teachers are treated like professionals and feel valued for their training and expertise and will be reflected in the results of the working conditions survey.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence folder: [COE Letters of Support Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : COE to write a letter to districts and associations encouraging them to improve communication to teachers explaining salary schedules and the processes for salary advancement.

Focus Area: Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions

Specifics: Districts and associations should create a website/webpage to inform educators of salary scales and salary advancement requirements.

Rationale: Educators often do not take advantage of or understand the process for advancing on their district's salary scale. Creating a website/webpage would help educators better understand the salary scales in their districts and inform them of the actions required to advance on the salary scale. Many early career teachers leave when after realizing that the difficulty/time required to meet the requirements necessary for advancement on the pay scale is not commensurate with the actual pay increases and may not even contribute to their improvement as teaching professionals.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates if teachers feel like they are adequately compensated.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence folder: [COE Letters of Support Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : COE to write a letter to our Federal Delegation urging them to sponsor legislation to repeal the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision.

Focus Area: Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions

Specifics: The Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision should be repealed to encourage retirees from other industries to become teachers by ensuring their Social Security worker's benefits are not reduced.

Rationale: The Windfall Act adjusts a Social Security worker's benefit for those who receive non-covered pensions and qualify for Social Security benefits based on other Social Security-covered earnings. A non-covered pension is a pension paid by an employer that does not withhold Social Security taxes from your salary, typically, state, and local governments or non-U.S. employers. Nevada's PERS is a non-covered pension. Retirees from industries who may be considering a second career in teaching are choosing not to become teachers because participation in PERS will reduce their Social Security. It is not financially feasible for them to teach, and it makes it especially difficult for Nevada to recruit content and business and industry professionals to teach our CTE programs.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher recruitment rates if second-career teachers feel like they are adequately compensated.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.4.2 and 1.4.3

Evidence folder: [COE Letters of Support Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : COE to write a letter to districts encouraging them to provide career path diagnostics to all students to help guide students' coursework.

Focus Area: Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions

Specifics: Students should be provided the opportunity to participate in career path diagnostics to identify possible career opportunities based on their interests and talents.

Rationale: When students have an idea of possible career opportunities based on their own interests and talents, schools and teachers can align coursework and courses of study to help students meet their career goals. Students are more engaged in their learning and have fewer behavior incidents when they see the connection between school and the real-world, and teachers are more likely to stay when they do not have to deal with unmotivated and disruptive students.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates if students are more engaged in their learning and less disruptive in the classroom.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.1.2

Evidence folder: [COE Letters of Support Research Folder](#)

Recommendation # : COE to write letters to districts and associations encouraging school districts to pay educators for an additional one and one half hours per day outside of student day.

Focus Area: Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions

Specifics: Teachers spend additional hours outside their contract hours working to meet current workload requirements. Teachers should be compensated for the additional hours they work outside of the traditional school day.

Rationale: Research shows teachers spend unpaid hours at school completing job related tasks. According to a [new survey](#) by the RAND Corporation, teachers work an estimated 53 hours a week—seven more hours than the average working adult. Additionally, due to a shortage of substitute teachers, many teachers are asked to cover classes during their prep period or teach combined classes, causing even more grading and preparation to be completed on unpaid hours. Paying teachers for extended hours outside of the student day would serve both recruitment and retention efforts as teachers feel valued if they are compensated for the time they work and are more likely to stay.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher recruitment rates if educators feel like they are adequately compensated.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence folder: [COE Letters of Support Research Folder](#)