

Nevada Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education
Consolidated Policy Recommendations
WORKING DRAFT

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Executive Summary

One pager - to be drafted following consensus on content.

Introduction

The Nevada Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education recognizes the need to **fundamentally transform our education system**. Every learner in Nevada's public education system must achieve the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to thrive in a changing future. This is the bold commitment Nevada must make to fortify a thriving economy, strengthen our vibrant communities, attract new business, and grow our population in the coming decades.

As Commissioners, we have spent the last year deeply studying Nevada's education system, and comparing it to systems all over the U.S. and the globe. We have seen firsthand that there are **many bright spots** in education in our great state:

- Students who are engaged in real-world, authentic learning, driven by a future-forward Portrait of a Nevada Learner.
- Educators who are motivated to push their boundaries, innovate, and transform their practices to meet the needs of all learners.
- School and system leaders who are leading learning communities to ever-greater heights.

We have also seen all the ways that the system as it is currently designed is holding us back. Well-intentioned policies are sometimes outdated, other times misaligned, and too often misunderstood or poorly implemented. Our student learning outcomes are middling within the U.S. and lagging significantly behind global top performers. We lead the nation in our shortage of qualified educators. Many of our students are disengaged, contributing to chronic absenteeism, and parents turning away from public schools in rising numbers. Employers and businesses report that their newest employees arrive with few of the skills needed to thrive in modern workplaces.

This is not the fault of students, educators, parents, or policymakers. It is the inevitable result of an outdated and inflexible system designed for a bygone era.

We can and must fix this problem. In partnership with Nevada's educators, students, parents, legislators, and taxpayers, we can build and implement a roadmap for a transformed, globally competitive Nevada education system. **This will take strong commitments, new investments, new mindsets, bold changes, and substantial changes to the status quo.**

This innovation is precisely our charge. It is necessary to cultivate active, engaged, and curious learners; produce a highly skilled, globally competitive workforce; and contribute to thriving, hopeful communities throughout Nevada. If we deliver on this promise, our students, educators, parents, and taxpayers will all benefit, and collectively contribute to a thriving Nevada.

The Case for Change

The world has dramatically changed for today's students. Today's high schoolers have never known a world without learning constantly available at their fingertips through Google and other platforms. Today's youngest learners will never know a world without artificial intelligence (AI). This generational shift impacts how students learn and interact with the world. (Quidwai, n.d.).

The ongoing pace of these changes means that we must act now to build a system that not only **responds to today's challenges, but also helps us to anticipate the future.**

The labor market will continue to change over the next five years. The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Survey 2023 projects that 83 million jobs will be lost within five years, while 69 million new jobs will be created. Clerical roles – including bank tellers, postal service clerks, cashiers, and data entry positions – are expected to rapidly decline. Significant job growth is projected in education, agriculture, and digital commerce. Even jobs that are forecast to be “stable” will be fundamentally altered by new technologies, priorities, and ways of working. AI technologies are maturing rapidly and finding mainstream applications across various sectors, enhancing human performance and reshaping how we work (World Economic Forum, 2023).

The Future of Jobs Survey also identifies the core skills employers value most as the economy changes. Analytical thinking is highlighted as the most important, followed closely by creative thinking. Self-efficacy skills such as resilience, flexibility, agility, motivation, self-awareness, and lifelong learning also rank highly. (World Economic Forum, 2023). Taken together, these skills are essential for adapting to and thriving in the changing world of work.

Schools can and must play a critical role in developing these skills that align with future job demands. **But the purpose of education is much broader than simply preparing students for work.** Our students will grow up to be spouses, parents, neighbors, taxpayers, voters, and civic leaders. Our educators are responsible for the growth and development of these future Nevada community members. Skills such as decision making, empathy, and fairness are crucial not only for effective workplaces but also for sustaining our democracies, institutions, and communities.

By establishing a **guarantee that every Nevada learner will graduate with these future-ready skills for the world of work and communities,** we can ensure that individuals are well-prepared to navigate the complexities of the future job market and contribute meaningfully to their communities and to society. Meeting this goal will enable Nevada to enhance the quality of life, economic security, and well-being of its residents. It will create a vibrant, thriving, and competitive Nevada that continues to attract and host robust industry partners for decades to come.

The Commission's Shared Vision

Our Commission envisions a Nevada where every learner is equipped to thrive in a changing world. This means that every Nevada graduate will need to **achieve at world-class levels and embody the Portrait of a Nevada Learner**.

Embodying the Portrait of a Nevada Learner: Guaranteeing that every Nevada learner attains these knowledge, skills, competencies, and dispositions means that we must build a personalized, competency-based system. In this system, students are empowered to take ownership of their learning journeys, progressing based on demonstrated mastery of skills and competencies rather than time spent in the classroom. Environments are personalized to each learner's strengths, needs, and interests. Teachers provide differentiated support and ways for learners to demonstrate what they know and know how to do, ensuring each student graduates ready for what's next. Student agency is fostered across classrooms, schools, and districts.

Nevada's educators are central to this vision. They must be equipped with the resources, professional autonomy, and ongoing support needed to personalize learning for every student and give them agency. This is a profoundly new learning dynamic, where educators are facilitators and students are partners in learning. Educator preparation programs must establish robust partnerships with school districts to pilot and strengthen stronger practical experiences for preservice teachers and more robust induction. Inservice teachers must engage in lifelong learning through robust professional learning and collaborative work environments, enabling them to lead as innovators and changemakers. Educators must also be able to envision pathways to career growth and development, through which they can acquire new skills, and develop leadership capacity in an intentional way. This means that they must have access to a well-organized professional learning system that catalogs and categorizes professional learning offerings that are directly correlated to teachers' career growth goals and aligned to the state's personalized, competency-based vision. Fundamentally, educator development becomes about deeply preparing and sustaining teachers and leaders to create the conditions Nevada's young people will need to thrive. School and system leaders and policymakers must ensure that this culture of continuous improvement and support flourishes statewide, and they will require significant professional learning themselves in order to make this happen.

Our education system must **seamlessly integrate career exploration** from an early age, offering students real-world experiences through internships, apprenticeships, and hands-on learning that align with classroom instruction. Partnerships with industry should create pathways that equip students with the tangible knowledge and durable skills needed to achieve family-sustaining incomes and adapt to evolving career landscapes. Career pathways must be accessible and equitable, empowering all students to pursue pathways that align with their interests and aspirations. Through early integration, we continue to push back against the mindset that colleague and career pathways represent two fundamentally different choices. Instead, we demonstrate that career exploration helps all students to make more informed choices about

their post-secondary path. We must ensure that opportunities are as accessible and relevant for rural learners as they are for those in Clark and Washoe. And we must enable new career pathways to seamlessly emerge as the world of work changes - through mutually beneficial partnerships with industry, avenues for CTE educator reskilling, and consistent study of how trends on the horizon are affecting the changing world of work.

We know that we must be **transparent with stakeholders and communities about the performance** of the system. Students, educators, parents, communities, policymakers and taxpayers must understand what our students are learning - including the skills, competencies, and dispositions they are acquiring. A performance dashboard that communicates progress and milestones to the public is key to our vision. This dashboard will serve all of our schools, educators, and students, and community members. Through it, Nevadans will understand the story of each school and district. It will reflect students' acquisition of a wide range of knowledge, including both foundational knowledge such as mathematics and literacy, as well as future-ready skills like critical thinking and collaboration. The dashboard will evolve beyond rigid rankings. It should reflect continuous improvement, progress and growth, by offering easily discernible badges that signify to the community the specific accomplishments and areas of strength of our students, educators, and schools, while also highlighting areas for growth and improvement. The dashboard must communicate clearly to stakeholders inside and outside education. It must be transparent, easily accessible, and intuitively navigable.

Our ambition is for other states - and even nations - to look to Nevada as a global leader and innovator in education. If and when we achieve this vision, we see Nevada attracting new residents, new investments, stronger community partnerships, and new economic opportunities for all Nevadans.

The Current Nevada Context

In addition to studying what works around the country and the globe, and considering how to innovate to improve on our competitors, we have also deeply studied our own education system in Nevada. We recognize the strong work of our students, educators, and system leaders - many of whom have joined Commission meetings and Subcommittee meetings, and engaged with us individually. At the same time, we acknowledge significant room for improvement in the ways that our **policies align with one another, support students and educators to grow, enable innovation, and foster partnerships across K-12 and other sectors and stakeholders.**

Despite highly effective work in many of our schools, we know that Nevada has significant room for improvement. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results show that Nevada's student achievement scores in both fourth and eighth grade reading and math have consistently been below the national average. (USDOE, 2022). The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) evaluates 15-year-old students globally on their application of knowledge in reading, mathematics, and science. The United States performance on PISA reveals significant room for improvement compared to top-performing countries around the world. In

PISA 2022, 5 countries outperformed the U.S. in reading by significant margins, 9 countries outperformed the U.S. in science by significant margins, and 25 countries outperformed the U.S. in math by significant margins. Some of these countries are developing countries with resources and infrastructure far below our own. (OECD, 2023)

Given that Nevada performs below the U.S. average on NAEP, and the United States itself ranks poorly on PISA compared to countries like Canada, Estonia, Singapore, and Japan, it is evident that **Nevada is not providing public education that is globally competitive or world class**. We are leaving generations of students behind.

One consequence is a significant and **growing skills gap in the workforce**. Nationally, some 74 percent of U.S. hiring managers report recognizing a skills gap and nearly half say that candidates lack the skills required to fill jobs (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2020). Another consequence is **growing student disengagement** and increasing rates of chronic absenteeism, as students struggle to find meaning and relevance in their schoolwork. At the same time, **parents, taxpayers, and policymakers are raising serious questions** about the strength and relevance of the system, and expressing reluctance to continue supporting our education system without assurances that it will prepare our learners to thrive in the job market and in their communities.

In the midst of this discontent, young people are increasingly turning away from teaching as a viable and family-sustaining profession. Our state faces one of the most **severe teacher shortages** in the nation, with approximately 3,000 open positions statewide and approximately 2,000 vacancies in Clark County alone. This shortage threatens to exacerbate existing performance issues, locking our system into a “vicious cycle” of attrition of students, families, and educators.

The situation is difficult -- but it is by no means insurmountable. The sense of possibility and optimism we feel is bolstered by an array of existing strong work. Although we seek to transform the system, we do not see any value in throwing away what is working well. Our plan for Nevada’s world-class education system should **leverage, scale, sustain, and build** on existing future-forward efforts, while supplementing them with new innovations.

Existing strong work includes:

- The Portrait of a Nevada Learner and Future of Learning Network
- Networks to share best practices across teacher preparation program providers and to improve allocations for teachers’ professional learning time
- Strong growth in career and technical education (CTE), especially at the high school level
- Efforts to re-imagine the School Performance Framework (SPF) in line with the emerging skills of the future.

The Portrait of a Nevada Learner and Future of Learning Network

Nevada has already begun the process of ensuring that its education system is preparing future-

ready learners. The "Nevada Portrait of a Learner" represents a collective effort to create a vision of the essential mindsets, skills, and attributes that young people in Nevada should develop to thrive in the future. The Portrait does not lay out a set of descriptions that could or should apply to all students. Rather,

“By asking thoughtful questions and encouraging students to reflect on what they are learning and why, we can empower them to create their portraits of who they are and who they aspire to be. This approach fosters joy, creativity, and authenticity in the process and expressions of learning. Importantly, it also helps learners develop the self-awareness and resilience necessary to thrive in today’s world.” (Nevada Future of Learning Network, 2023)

The Portrait creates a unified vision for all students across the state. The development of the Portrait involved extensive collaboration and input from a diverse group of stakeholders, including educators, students, parents, community leaders, and industry representatives. From October 2022 to May 2023, these stakeholders participated in various workshops and discussions to co-create and co-design the Portrait.

The Nevada Portrait is structured as a series of questions that invite Nevada’s learners to reflect on their learning journeys, consider how to bring meaning to the skills they have acquired, and ultimately to lead prosperous careers and lives. It incorporates future-ready skills, like critical thinking, collaboration, resilience, and communication, that are closely related to the changing world of work.

The **Nevada Future of Learning Network** is at the core of the effort to create a personalized, competency-based learning experience for every student, in every classroom, school, and district. This network connects students, educators, parents, and community members to collectively promote learner-centered practices in Nevada classrooms.

The Network is launching competency-based learning implementation pilots across districts in Nevada. The purpose of these pilots is to build district capacity to activate the aspirations of the Portrait of a Nevada Learner, build a collaborative and mutually supportive cohort to share knowledge and insights, and deepen the degree to which school and district systems, policies, and practices support personalized, competency-based learning. Participants are engaging in cycles of collaborative learning, practicing, reflecting and sharing. This initial pilot launched in July 2024 and will continue through June 2026. For more information, see the [Future of Learning Network Phased Action Plan](#).

Promising Practices in Teachers’ Pre-service and Professional Learning

Many of our teacher preparation programs are doing tremendous work to continuously improve. Several are studying the learning experiences needed to prepare future teachers for a changing education landscape, and self-assessing and redesigning their offerings and programs based on the results of that analysis. But too often, these innovations are isolated. They are not being

systematically shared, studied, and brought to scale. More can be done to create networks for teacher preparation providers to learn from one another, and ultimately, to incentivize teacher preparation redesign. These networks will be essential to ensuring that all Nevada teachers are prepared at the same high levels.

Some teachers have access to high-quality professional learning experiences and professional working environments to continuously learn on the job, do their very best work, and adapt to the future. Many more teachers do not. Much more work can be done to improve quality, consistency, relevance, and future focus of teacher professional learning, as well as the amount of time available for that learning. We can bolster existing professional learning systems with the functionality for teachers to set goals for their learning and the roles they want to take on, and pursue courses that are in service of those goals and roles.

Even in school districts with schedules that permit substantial professional learning, teachers may not know how to use that time effectively. Strong school leadership is key for ensuring that teachers are set up for success in engaging in collaborative and/or self-directed professional learning that contributes to a thriving system across a school, district and state. Currently, Nevada's school leaders are not being systematically prepared to support a vision of lifelong learning and to support the design of pedagogical practices, instructional design, and learning conditions needed to sustain personalized, competency-based learning for all students. Instead, too often our school leaders are asked to enforce rigid instructional mandates that stifle ongoing learning, innovation, and adaptation to enable our teachers and schools to be future-ready.

Expansion in Career and Technical Education (CTE)

CTE offerings **have grown steadily in recent years** in Nevada and continue to blend practical work experience with industry-recognized credentials and dual enrollment opportunities, allowing students to transition into careers.

The efficacy of Nevada's CTE programming has been bolstered by key policy achievements. The adoption of Assembly Bill 7 in 2017 established the College and Career Readiness Diploma, with the ambitious goal of ensuring that 50% of Nevada's students earn this credential by 2026. In addition, efforts by CTE leadership to alleviate barriers for employer engagement have been successful, offering flexibility in areas such as insurance and background checks while providing resources for training both staff and student employees. The recent update to the work-based learning guide in August of 2023, following Assembly Bill 38, extends career-connected learning opportunities beyond CTE students, making work-based learning more accessible and inclusive. These advances are complemented by a growing emphasis on support and training for educators. Teacher externships are growing and enabling Nevada's educators to have first hand exposure to modern career pathways. We can and must supercharge investments in this capacity-building to build our CTE workforce pipeline.

Nevada's workforce development is also benefiting from robust partnerships between employers and educators. Nevada Workforce Connections, utilizing WIOA funding, actively supports youth facing employment barriers. Funding is also supportive of growing industries across the state including culinary arts, information technology, and green energy. These efforts not only provide students with critical support but also strengthen the pipeline of skilled talent.

The Governor's Office of Economic Development has identified aerospace and defense, healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, logistics, and green energy as key industries to Nevada's economic future, and CTE programs must continue to evolve and must have robust support to ensure that students are prepared for roles in these high-skill sectors. Digital platforms such as Nevada Pathways are available to connect teachers and businesses, fostering collaboration and ensuring that career exploration is integrated throughout the educational experience. Ensuring their use across all schools and districts will ensure that these resources are commonly understood and widely accessible thereby highly beneficial to all students.

There has been an intentional effort to expand career exploration for high school students across the state. The effort to deepen ties between schools, districts, and industry to ensure highly effective partnerships that benefit all students must continue to be a priority. Likewise, there are great advantages to creating opportunities for exploration to happen early and often across a student's school experience. There is a distinct impact on elementary and middle aged students' learning overall when they can identify a connection between academic standards, skills, and potential careers for their futures.

Reimagining the Nevada School Performance Framework (SPF)

Nevada's current school accountability system, the School Performance Framework (SPF), came about as a result of a widespread consensus that Nevada needed a way to transparently communicate how schools were performing, and to measure how schools were growing, for the benefit of students, parents, educators, and community members. The SPF uses a weighted point model where academic achievement, growth, EL proficiency, gap closing, and chronic absenteeism are combined into a total score (Nevada Department of Education, 2023).

Several recently passed bills will lead to ongoing changes to the system, and our Commission will need to account for their requirements in the phasing-in of our own plan. Specifically, SB 98 (2023) articulated flexibility and opportunity for locally determined metrics and opportunities for students to provide input, which have since been developed under the banner of Acing Accountability. AB 241 (2023) establishes new requirements for all students in Nevada to be on track for College and Career Readiness diplomas. SB 72 (2023) and AB 285 (2023) list requirements for school safety measures, with SB 72 specifically requiring a study of the safety and well-being of staff, and AB 285 adding data requirements that seek to connect school staffing levels with student behavior.

Commissioners recognize that the SPF provides public transparency on performance as well as year-on-year growth measures. These are crucial for building common understanding about the health of the education system and public will for sustaining investments in it. At the same time, we all recognize that there is considerable room to build on the SPF's foundations. We have concerns about the feasibility and technical validity of the SPF, as well as the mindsets underpinning the model. We think the SPF can do much more to support schools to improve and incentivize growth. Some of us have raised concerns that the model has exacerbated the current teacher shortage by contributing to stress and negative narratives about Nevada education. All agree that it does not measure the durable, future-ready skills underpinning the Portrait of a Learner, and much of NCEE's global research on what high-performing systems value and measure. All of these areas for improvement must be taken into account as we work to redesign a more future-forward accountability model.

Our Change Process: Getting from the Current Context to our Vision

Transforming our education system may sound daunting. But there is a world of evidence that transformation is very possible.

Over the course of the last year, we have studied how the world is changing, how the world's strongest education systems and the U.S.'s rapid innovators are responding, and the ways policymakers can establish processes and structures for futures anticipation. This in-depth study has shown us the steps we must take.

If we:

1. **Learn from the highest-performing education systems** around the country and the globe
2. Adapt their policies to our context to **create a new policy design** for the entire system
3. Ensure our policy design both
 - a. Responds to **today's challenges**, AND
 - b. **Anticipates and innovates** for a changing future
4. Partner with educators, youth, and communities to **build capacity to implement** changes
5. Establish processes and structures to **learn from what's working – and evolve what isn't**

Then we will create a system that is: **Innovative. Adaptive. Globally Competitive. Equitable.**

1. *Learn from the highest-performing education systems around the country and the globe*
High-performing systems like Canada, Estonia, and Singapore have consistently produced high levels of student performance and engagement (OECD, 2023), workforce readiness (USDOE, IES, & NCES, 2020), teacher retention and job satisfaction (OECD, 2019), and coherence and alignment (Burns et al., 2016). These systems demonstrate strong connections between education systems and economic goals. Policies are designed to promote strong performance for all, peer-to-peer accountability and support, coherence, future-forecasting, and adaptability. These systems are not just producing well-prepared, resilient students. The systems themselves are more adaptable and resilient.

Nevada is not alone among U.S. states who are studying these systems to attempt bold and innovative systems transformation. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future, enacted in 2021, laid the groundwork for an expansive 10-year transformation trajectory. Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Montana, currently have efforts underway to learn from high-performing systems and rapid improvers, and create higher-performing and more future-ready education systems. We can learn from their successes and challenges as well.

2. *Adapt their policies to our context to create a new policy design for the entire system*

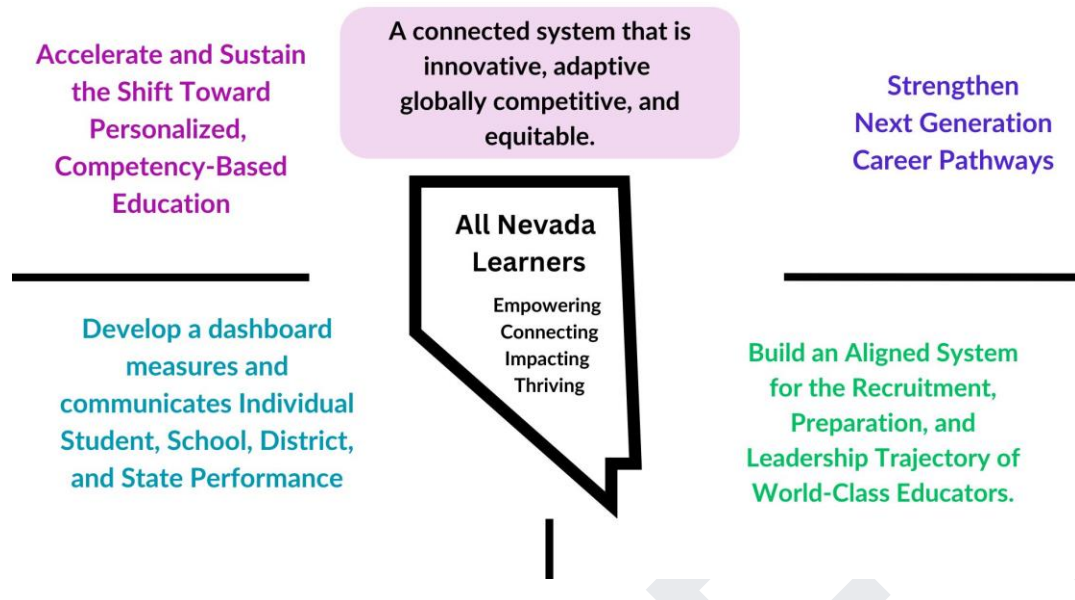
By distilling successful principles and practices from global leaders and innovators, and at the same time deeply understanding Nevada's context, we can lay a powerful groundwork for innovation and education system transformation.

Our goal is not to copy any one system. The policies that have made Canada, Estonia, and Singapore so successful would never work here if imported wholesale. We aspire to innovate to do better than those systems, not simply replicate what they have done.

To do so, we will create new policies that create four enabling conditions:

- **World-class educators** supported by robust preservice, strong professional learning, and professional flexibility
- Learners empowered by a **personalized, competency-based learning journey**, built on a "progress at your own pace" foundation
- **Robust and future-forward career pathways** that equip all Nevada learners with the tangible knowledge, durable skills, and workforce experiences necessary to navigate long-life careers.
- **A dashboard that measures what matters** for students' and educators' skill development as well as schools' and districts' aggregate achievement.

DRAFT - Figure 1. Enabling Policy Conditions and Outcomes.



3. *Ensure our policy design both responds to today's challenges AND anticipates and innovates for a changing future*

To become a world-class education system, we need to change what's not working now and design for what is needed in the future. For this reason, our recommendations below operate on two time horizons: the **challenges of today** and the **opportunities of tomorrow**.

Our education system must attend to the needs of the moment. The urgent challenges facing today's learners, educators, families, and communities cannot be neglected. These include lagging student achievement, historic teacher shortages, significant vacancies in system leadership, frustration and mistrust stemming from current accountability and reporting requirements, and a lack of shared understanding about the scope of transformation required to realize the Portrait of a Nevada Learner.

That said, attending only to the needs of 2025 will not position Nevada as a national, much less global, leader. Nor will it set us up to innovate in face of ongoing changes and shocks. We must build systems and structures that anticipate the future and foster innovation, and adaptation. These systems enable us not only to make today's Nevada better, but also to build the future Nevada we all want to live in.

4. *Partner with educators, youth, and communities to build capacity to implement these changes*

Nevada's education system cannot thrive in isolation. We will create and coordinate robust partnerships with educators, youth, businesses, communities, and other sectors. Mechanisms for shared leadership, communication, and data infrastructure are necessary.

Students, families, and educators should be engaged as meaningful partners in scaling and sustaining the transformation of our education system. Without them, we cannot hope to ensure that students derive meaning, joy, and the skills that are essential to their long-term success from their learning experience. We cannot expect fundamental changes to educators' practice and long-term leadership trajectories.

The education system we create and iterate should be innovative. But it must also clearly communicate the purpose and intent of that innovation to a broad public audience. Our students, parents, communities, businesses, and taxpayers are the consumers of our public schools. We must communicate clearly, transparently, empathetically - and in ways that move beyond education jargon and speak to their realities, pain points, and opportunities.

5. *Build processes and structures to learn from what's working - and evolve what isn't*

We want educators to practice disciplined innovation that creates equitable, inclusive, and accessible learning opportunities for all students. Meeting this goal will require that educators be given considerably more resources, guidance, and learning opportunities on how and when to innovate.

Our recommendations should identify and challenge existing policies that inhibit innovation and continuous learning and growth. Our recommendations will rarely take the form of mandates. That said, appropriate guardrails must be put in place to ensure that innovations are effective at meeting the needs of all learners and propelling Nevada to world-class outcomes. Nevada's new education system should be piloted, refined, and improved continually, based on evidence of effectiveness. This includes how the Commission's policies are, or are not, leading to: first, changes in learning environments; then, eventual systemic changes; and, ultimately, dramatically improved student learning at scale.

To do this, we must:

- a. Proactively build in systems and structures that enable ongoing systems evaluation
- b. Design pilots that can adapt to future trends and evolving student needs, while also enabling scalability across all districts and schools in Nevada
- c. Stress-test new metrics and competencies against current, emerging, and future community and labor market needs
- d. Enable the system to pivot, refine, and improve as new evidence emerges

1. **Develop and Implement a Dashboard System that Measures Individual Student, School, District, and State Performance and Communicates those Results to the Public**

A. *Respond to Today's Challenges by:*

1. Transitioning from the existing STAR rating system to a Portrait of a Nevada Learner-aligned, student-centered Dashboard that students, educators, schools and families can use to set goals, monitor their progress towards goals, attain “badges” indicating their accomplishments, and chart their attainment and journey, from PreK-postsecondary.
2. The Dashboard should be useable by (and useful to):
 - Individual students, as they set their own goals for competency development, attain badges when they demonstrate certain competencies, and take ownership for charting their development
 - Individual educators, as they do the same to build an “Educator Passport” that demonstrates the learning they have completed, the skills they have acquired, and the leadership roles they are prepared to take on as a result (see Recommendation #3 below)
 - School leaders and system leaders, as they set goals for school, district, and state performance
 - Parents, policymakers, and taxpayers, as they seek transparent information about the outcome of the system (including progress toward the Nevada Guarantee outlined below)
 - Higher education and business, who will need to monitor that the dashboard includes measures of success and competencies that are meaningful to their ability to enroll in and attain career-ready credentials and higher education.
 - Economists and the state’s Workforce Development Agency, as they seek to measure the ROI of new career exploration and career and technical education resources established under Recommendation #4 below.
3. Appropriate funding for the development, implementation, and ongoing improvement of this dashboard, including the costs for:
 - a. **Initial development of the Dashboard.** Educators, students, parents, and policymakers will need to partner with a world-class development firm in order to make this tool transparent, actionable, and meaningful.

- b. **Piloting, refining, and improving the transparency, accessibility, and navigability of the Dashboard.** This system will provide real-time data, available to all stakeholders, on school and district performance, allowing families and communities to track progress, so it is essential that diverse stakeholders across our state can access and interpret it.
 - i. Engage communities through listening sessions, surveys, and stakeholder meetings to gather input on the design and implementation of new metrics.
 - ii. Involve students, educators, and other key stakeholders in the development and continuous improvement of the accountability system. Ensure that the system reflects the voices of those it impacts the most—students and educators.
- c. **Continuing to update the metrics included on the Dashboard to ensure that they are holistic and future-forward.**
 - i. In addition to foundational skills acquisition, schools and districts should select relevant metrics from a set of key indicators. Schools will have the option to showcase their strengths in categories such as literacy, STEM, arts, military-dependent, and ELL.
 - ii. Develop new metrics that measure progress and success at the student, school, and system levels, for schools to choose from. These should include growth-based measurements of student learning outcomes, and holistic indicators such as student well-being, social capital, and civic engagement.
- d. **Offering high-quality professional learning for educators and system leaders on how to use the Dashboard for continuous improvement**
 - i. Educators must have the tools and training necessary to understand and effectively use the new dashboard and assessment systems. This professional learning should focus on data-driven decision-making, flexible instructional strategies, and innovative assessment practices.
- e. **Project managing the overall efforts.**
 - i. The Department must have the resources necessary to set clear goals, timelines, deliverables, and benchmarks, coordinate with vendors and partners, and oversee the development, piloting, and implementation of the project with quality.

4. Invest in Showcasing Nevada “Bright Spots” via Innovative Communications:

- Storytelling around the bright spots and opportunities in Nevada schools is crucial. This kind of a campaign would help Nevada communities (including business leaders, parents, policymakers, and the public) to begin to see how the world is changing for our schools, communities, and workplaces, and how schools in Nevada are beginning to transform to create stronger, more innovative learning opportunities that position our learners as future-ready.
- This storytelling campaign is needed to ensure that the public understands how and why we may change what we measure, why those changes will ultimately benefit our learners and all of Nevada.
- Host community forums, parent focus groups, student advisory panels, and business forums to engage communities in: championing the work in Nevada's schools that is going well; building a groundswell of support for needed changes; giving input on the new design. Ensure ongoing communication with these groups as the system evolves.
- In addition, to personal outreach, this campaign should include:
 - i. Video Testimonials: Produce short videos of students, teachers, and parents sharing their positive experiences with CBE.
 - ii. Social Media: Use X, Instagram, LinkedIn and Facebook to run campaigns focused on storytelling. Use the hashtag (e.g., #NevadaCBE) to create a digital community.
 - iii. Infographics: Create visually engaging infographics that explain key milestones in the pilot, student progression, and community impact.
 - iv. Podcasts/Webinars: Launch a series of podcasts or webinars where participants share their journeys, and experts discuss CBE's benefits.
 - v. School Websites: Dedicate a section of school or district websites to CBE updates, stories, and student progress showcases.
 - vi. Television/News: Invite the media to attend events and PR

Anticipated Impacts:

- *Students, educators, and system leaders are able to take ownership for their personalized, competency-based development. Their accomplishments are recognized via a system of badges developed to both: showcase to the broader*

community the expertise that has been developed; and serve as marks that they are qualified to take on new pathways and new leadership roles.

- *Partnerships between K-12, higher education, and business and industry are strengthened as a result of consistent, ongoing, and easily accessible communication about progress and the role of the community in the education system's success.*
- *The health of the system, its outcomes for youth, and the return on taxpayers' investments, are broadly communicated and understood. Successes are elevated, faith in public education is renewed, and willingness to invest is improved.*

B. Anticipate and Innovate for a Changing Future by:

1. Developing and implementing a plan for **evaluating the effectiveness of the whole Nevada education system** in adapting to a changing and unknowable future. Appropriate funding to contract with a systems evaluator to:
 - a. Clearly articulate the vision and goals of the transformation; commit to evaluation being embedded throughout the process, not just at the end
 - b. Map the current system to establish boundaries, identify key components and dynamics of the system, codify interactions and interdependencies
 - c. Articulate a Theory of Change (TOC) with associated rationales
 - d. Develop evaluation frameworks and affirm goals and theory of change explaining how the collection of planned changes will impact how the system functions; codify assumptions.
 - e. Establish systems for monitoring and feedback loops; and mechanisms to adjust based on emerging patterns and unintended outcomes
 - f. Facilitate ongoing discussions with stakeholders about complex systems change; ensure their input can shape the evaluation process
 - g. Design processes where stakeholders can engage in collective sensemaking of findings to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered

Anticipated Impact: Nevada has processes, structures, and capacity in place to monitor the progress of systems transformation, adjust based on unintended consequences or unexpected shocks, and enable this policy design to remain continually adaptive.

2. Accelerate and Sustain the Shift Toward Personalized, Competency-Based Education

A. Respond to Today's Challenges by:

Ensuring that **CBE is authentically realized in Nevada today**, through necessary adjustments to statute, alignment of definitions, research and development investments, and sustained funding.

1. **NRS definitions and requirements** will need to be adapted accordingly.
 - a. Have legislative staff compare **current seat time requirements** in Chapter NRS 392 to recent shifts in seat time requirements made by leading CBE states such as [Utah](#) and [South Carolina](#) to ensure that the principle of “learning is the constant and time the variable” is true across Nevada.
 - What shifts in NRS would be necessary to fully align with these leading state approaches?
 - Other than NRS, what other policies may be barriers here? Conduct an analysis of relevant NDE regulations to ensure alignment and coherence.
 - b. Align NRS’s **definition of competency-based education** with the current definition of personalized, competency-based learning in use by the Future of Learning Network.

Anticipated Impact: Statutory language is aligned, barriers are removed, and a baseline understanding of what is possible is established.

2. Ensure that the funding and infrastructure exists to **sustain the Future of Learning Network through the phases of its pilot, scaling, and capacity-building**.
 - i. Continue to appropriate funding to an intermediary who can sustain the collaborative development cycles required between communities, schools, districts, and the state.

Anticipated Impact: Educators continue to be supported in a cohort-based pilot to collaborate, refine, and improve competency-based learning models.

3. Fund the intermediary supporting the Future of Learning Network to **develop a suite of tools** that will support educators in CBE implementation and model CBE in action for the public.
 - i. These should include, but are not limited to, curriculum scope and sequence, model performance tasks, and rubrics for implementation of the competencies in the Portrait of a Nevada Learner that are most relevant to Pre-K (3 and 4), elementary, middle, and high schools.

- ii. Appropriate public funding for this development process, which should include NDE curriculum experts, educators who have been active participants in the Future of Learning Network, intermediaries, and expert consultants. Ensure that curriculum tools and materials are piloted, refined, and improved in partnership with Nevada districts.

Anticipated Impact: Educators have access to a robust and “living” suite of tools and examples of personalized, competency-based learning in action, and can continue to grow that suite of tools as they refine and improve.

B. Anticipate and Innovate for a Changing Future by:

1. Establishing a bold Nevada Education Guarantee (“the Guarantee”, that by 2030, EVERY Nevada learner will graduate from our system embodying the Portrait of a Nevada Learner.

- i. This means they will be prepared with the future-ready skills needed to succeed in family-sustaining jobs and thrive as active, engaged members of Nevada communities.
- ii. Use the funding in 2.A.2 in order to:
 - Create authentic work samples that students would use to demonstrate that they met the Guarantee by graduation
 - Backwards-map these work products to competencies and skills in elementary, middle, and early high school in order to affirm students’ progress toward the Guarantee

Anticipated Impacts:

- All Nevadans understand that a degree from Nevada high schools signifies that they have achieved the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to take on higher education pathways and/or the world of work without remediation.
- Educators, students, parents, and community at all levels of the system understand what is required to achieve the Nevada Guarantee, and how to support all learners in their journey to achieve it.
- Students’, parents’, businesses’, and taxpayers’ satisfaction and faith in the system improves as they recognize, tangibly, the opportunities it affords them and their communities. Absenteeism and attrition are reduced, and public will for sustained investments grows.

2. Build the capacity within our state for ongoing futures forecasting.

- i. Appropriate funding for NDE to contract with an organization with expertise in futures forecasting who can advise on incubating, capacity-building, and sustaining that function within NDE and/or a designated intermediary
- ii. Use that forecasting function to determine the knowledge and skills students need to thrive in Nevada’s future economy and an increasingly complex world and using this analysis to establish the standards for the Nevada Education Guarantee
- iii. Stress-test the Portrait’s design against current, emerging, and future community and labor market needs, and revise as needed

Anticipated Impact: Nevada is continually refining its target to ensure that the state’s graduates are prepared with the knowledge, skills, competencies, and attributes needed to succeed in the future.

2. Pilot programs for extended school-day and school-year models that:

- i. Offer opportunities for students to pursue their own interest, explore new topics, and find their passions,
- ii. Promote flexibility and personalized, student-centered learning.

Anticipated Impact: Additional opportunities for Nevada’s learners to discover their intrinsic motivation based on what is relevant to them, explore their passions, and surface innovative “anytime, anywhere” learning experiences to realize the Portrait of a Learner.

III. Build an Aligned System for the Recruitment, Preparation, Development, and Leadership Trajectory of World-Class Educators:

A. *Respond to Today’s Challenges by:*

- 1. Appropriating funding for **competitive grant programs available to collaboratives of school districts and higher education institutions** that commit to redesigning preservice and professional learning to make it more relevant and practical. Authorize the State Department of Education to establish metrics for rating applications and determining how to make awards, within the following parameters. Successful applications will:
 - a. Demonstrate strong collaboration between preparation programs and K-12 schools in order to strengthen pre-service teachers’ real-world experiences through strategies including, but not limited to:

- i. Lengthening the amount of time required in practical experiences
 - ii. More strategically spreading the practicum over the course of a pre-service teacher's four years, and/or establishing new clinical models
 - iii. Establishing new ways of awarding course credits that enable pre-service teachers to meet distribution requirements through practicum coursework
 - iv. Strengthening, monitoring, and reporting on the professional learning required of mentor teachers (for both practicum and induction) and aligning those professional learning opportunities to the badges established under the Dashboard in 1.A.1.
 - v. Creating opportunities for pre-service teachers to reskill through collaborative professional learning in K-12 schools
- b. Show creativity in creating new blocks of time and staffing models during the school day for teachers (and potentially, pre-service teachers of practice) to engage in team-based collaborative professional learning
 - c. Leverage the badges established under the Dashboard initiative to create new leadership roles for teachers (coaching, mentoring, professional learning leads, content expertise) that allow them to diversify their responsibilities and take on new leadership roles without leaving the profession or the classroom.
 - d. Propose tangible metrics to report on (e.g., # teachers prepared and retained.)

Anticipated Impact: Innovation is fostered across teachers' pre-service and inservice professional learning, leading to more relevant learning experiences, better-prepared teachers, and strong opportunities to grow in collaboration with peers. Teachers' job satisfaction and self-efficacy improve, leading to higher teacher retention. Ultimately, student learning improves.

- 2. Once lessons learned have been gathered from pilot programs and providers have had time to pilot, reflect, and build capacity, **revise the teacher preparation accreditation regulations to align and systematize best practices** across the state.
 - a. Develop analogous accreditation for alternative pathways to ensure that mid-career changers and others have experiences that are comparable in quality if not duration.

Anticipated Impact: Innovations from pilots are documented, leveraged, and brought to scale.

3. Require better aligned and structured induction to support new teachers:

- a. Require that mentors for induction programs are highly competent teachers selected by the district, based on established and consistent criteria, to instill in

the next generation of teachers the kinds of skills, attitudes, values and knowledge they want in the people they hope to attract to teaching in their district.

- b. Appropriate funding for NDE to develop training and upskilling modules for induction program mentors and require them to participate in order to continually be selected as mentors.
- c. Ensure staffing and scheduling regulations allow for provisionally certified teachers and mentor teachers to have the time and space necessary to participate in induction programs. Wherever possible, teacher mentors should be a half-day classroom teaching / half-day mentoring position.

Anticipated Impact: Self-efficacy of new teachers improves, stronger relationships are forged between new teachers and induction mentors, and retention increases.

- 4. Provide **professional learning for school leaders** that is evidence-based, Portrait-aligned, and focused on redesigning schools as higher-performing systems:

- a. Appropriate funding for providers who offer comprehensive, evidence-based professional learning for school principals, ensuring they are prepared to lead schools and design systems that foster teacher growth, innovation, and collaborative learning.
 - i. Principals' professional learning should center on deeply understanding the Portrait of a Nevada Learner, their role as designers of world-class schools and systems, and the state's plan for education system transformation.
 - ii. Professional learning offerings should develop school leaders' capacity to redesign schools as learner-centered higher-performance organizations, leverage data-driven decision-making, improve school culture, and create the conditions for teachers to continually improve their practice in service of student learning.
- b. We recommend that NDE, in partnership with key community agencies, create awards that recognize and reward school leaders who demonstrate exemplary practices in fostering teacher leadership, creating school environments that are conducive to learner-centered, future-ready practices, and embed the Nevada Portrait of a Learner into their school's culture.

Anticipated Impact: More school leaders across Nevada demonstrate the knowledge and skills to redesign schools to support personalized, competency-based learning and realize the Portrait for all.

B. Anticipate and Innovate for a Changing Future by:

1. Include a series of badges for professional learning that teachers can earn within the new Nevada Dashboard as part of a **“Teacher Passport” that allows every teacher to set goals for their personal learning, and monitor progress** toward their learning, development, and growth goals.
 - a. Direct, as part of the contract, developers of the Dashboard to build in functionality for teachers to track their own professional learning and attainment of badges through a “Teacher Passport” function.
 - b. Much like the dashboard measuring the development of students’ ongoing skills and competencies, this passport will serve as a tool for educators to set goals for their professional growth, learn about and pursue learning opportunities aligned to their growth goals, measure their progress, and assemble a profile of their accomplishments.
 - c. Pass a law to allow NDE to create regulations for the recognition and significance of badges. These badges will be used to signify that teachers are qualified to take on new leadership roles, such as leading peer-to-peer learning. Authorize and fund NDE to develop examples of the leadership roles that teachers may play and the collection of badges that should be required to assume them.
 - d. The development of this functionality and the validation of badges will require collaboration between NDE, the System of Higher Education, and contractors.
 - e. Appropriate funding for project management for this collaboration, the cost of the development of the dashboard, the cost of the yearly maintenance of the dashboard, and the cost of FTE's to monitor, and evaluate the submissions.

Anticipated Impact: Teachers have a centralized system to accrue and track a “common currency” for professional learning statewide. As a result, they are able to build a profile of their acquired knowledge, competencies, and accomplishments that will signify across the state the leadership roles they are prepared to take on.

IV. Strengthen Next Generation Career Pathways for All Nevada Learners & Enhance Partnerships with Business and Industry

A. Respond to Today’s Challenges by:

Expanding CTE pathways and ensuring that all students, especially younger students and those from rural communities, can access them, through additional funding, hiring, and capacity building. This will require:

1. Making further investments in career exploration and career exposure offerings to ensure they are a **prioritized experience in the middle school grade levels**, and are accessible to elementary school students.
 - i. Expanding the existing work-based learning framework to increase developmentally relevant career exploration activities outlined for grades 4-9, with increased exposure to STEAM career pathways.
 - ii. Additions to the framework should include mechanisms for ensuring all students, regardless of geographic location, have the opportunity for multiple career exploration experiences each year.
 - iii. Appropriate funding to create and align resources to support CTE offerings in middle school. Currently, only a small portion of Nevada school districts leverage Perkins funding to support middle school CTE programming. However, funds that are used for middle school efforts deplete the resources available for high school programs.

Anticipated Impact: Applied equitably, this targeted early intervention aims to support middle school students in better understanding options for career pathways as they transition to high school and beyond.

2. Appropriating funding to hire and develop **career coaches in partnership with Nevada Workforce Development Boards. Career coaches are industry-recognized professionals responsible for ensuring all students have awareness of the career pathways, training opportunities and credentialing options available to them.** Through investing in staff that are dedicated to career development, Nevada can ensure that learners remain well-informed of career and technical education, work-based learning, and emerging industries.
 - i. All middle and high schools should have access to, at a minimum, a part-time career coach dedicated to individualized career plans, employer partnerships, and collaborating with guidance staff and teachers to ensure access to opportunities
 - ii. Career coaches should receive ongoing professional development through regional workforce development boards including analysis of labor market trends, employer engagement, and career-connected learning technology. This professional learning should be “badged” as part of the dashboard established in 1.A.1.
 - iii. Career coaches and relevant classroom teachers should experience externships to ensure understanding of emerging industry work

environments and trends. These externships should be “badged” as part of the dashboard established in 1.A.1.

- iv. Efforts and policies to support career coaches engage in continuous learning from states with similar policies such as Mississippi and Maryland. This collaborative, cross-state learning should be “badged” as part of the dashboard established in 1.A.1.

Anticipated Impact: Career coaches are a tangible commitment to career development priorities and ensure that career and technical education, work-based learning, and career advising is responsive to evolving workforce demands and aligns to the individual interests of students.

- 3. Enhance mechanisms to **intentionally connect employers, particularly in industries prioritized by the Governor’s Office of Economic Development, systematically and consistently with educators** to enhance curriculum development and work-based learning opportunities. While workforce boards and CTE leaders have established connections with employers, school leadership and classroom educators seek a more seamless avenue to connect with employers in curriculum development or career exploration. As a result, career exploration experiences are dependent upon the social capital and relationships of individual educators. This can be significantly improved. We recommend developing a centralized process supported by digital infrastructure and timely communications that share information and resources focused on the following priorities:
 - i. Communicating and developing transferable employability and entrepreneurial skills to benefit learners and employers
 - ii. Connecting to small and mid-sized employers for career exposure, curriculum development, and experiential and work-based learning experiences
 - iii. Providing targeted supports for rural learners
 - iv. Connecting to human resources and talent acquisition professionals to establish not only an understanding of skills needed for success in an occupation, but job also placement and career development skills
 - v. Understanding emerging skills for future tech-enabled and STEAM career pathways
 - vi. Supporting relevant skill development to meet the needs of a global, digital and remote workforce.

Anticipated Impact: Labor market information is communicated consistently to career coaches and school administrators, so school-based staff understand alignment opportunities and can effectively support student access and career exploration. This centralized process also will help educators with small and mid-sized employers, and ensure all rural and remote learners have access to relevant opportunities.

B. Anticipate and Innovate for a Changing Future by:

1. **Build appropriate conditions to leverage advancements in career exploration technology and career-connected learning.**
 - Invest in scalable career exploration technologies, such as augmented and virtual reality and digital platforms for virtual site visits, career training, mentorships and career interest inventories.
 - Establish and formalize a review committee consisting of cross-sector leaders to identify and vet implementation opportunities and needs. This committee, overseen by state-level economic development leaders and informed by education experts, will embrace the potential of technology to enhance career-connected learning experiences.
 - Technology reviewed could include:
 - i. Augmented and Virtual Reality technology that provides direct career exposure and facilitates hands-on technical skills development.
 - ii. Platforms that leverage virtual convening to career mentorship, virtual site visits, and employer connections. These platforms promote the reality of the future of remote and virtual work environments.
 - iii. Digital career interest inventories that support career exploration and are developmentally appropriate for elementary, middle, and high school levels.
 - iv. Targeted resources for rural access and distance learning

Anticipated Impacts:

- *Currently technology is introduced in small pilots or ad-hoc localized partnerships. Not only does this perpetuate the divide in access, but it prevents effective evaluation or scale of impact. This recommendation will bridge gaps in access, particularly for rural and remote*

communities that have minimal access to employers or in-person career exploration opportunities.

- *It will enhance the student experiences by allowing them to directly interact with emerging workforce trends and the future of work.*
- *As a result of actively embracing the potential of technology and proactively building systems to vet rapidly evolving technologies for career exploration, Nevada will be positioned to more quickly implement, inform development, and measure impact.*

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