NWRPDP

Northwestern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program

2024-2025 Annual Report

August 2025

Ben Dickson

Program Director

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Northwestern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program

Introduction

The 70th Session (1999) of the Nevada State Legislature passed Senate Bill 555, which, under Sections 16 and 17, authorized the establishment of four Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs) in the state. Since that 1999 session, the four programs have been reduced to three. Their collective charge is to support the state's teachers and administrators in implementing Nevada's Academic Content Standards (NVACS) through regionally determined professional development activities. Although the essential mission has remained unchanged, legislative mandates and the pedagogical needs of teachers continue to broaden the program's scope and responsibilities; the programs' expertise is called upon to assist with district and statewide educational committees and assist in statewide efforts to improve instruction through the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF).

The planning and implementation of professional development services in each region is overseen by a governing body consisting of superintendents in the respective regions, master teachers appointed by the superintendents, representatives of Nevada's higher education system, and the State Department of Education. A nine-member Statewide Coordinating Council, consisting of members appointed by the Governor or legislators, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and one member from each of the RPDP governing boards oversees the three regional programs.

As outlined in Standards for Professional Learning (Learning Forward, 2011), there is a relationship between professional learning and student results:

1. When professional learning is standards-based, it has greater potential to change what educators know, are able to do, and believe.

2. When educators' knowledge, skills, and dispositions change, they have a broader repertoire of effective strategies to use to adapt their practices to meet performance expectations and student learning needs.

3. When educator practice improves, students have a greater likelihood of achieving results.

4. When student results improve, the cycle repeats for continuous improvement (p. 16).

The figure below is a visual representation of the relationship between professional learning based on the Professional Learning Standards and improved student learning. (Desimone, 2009).
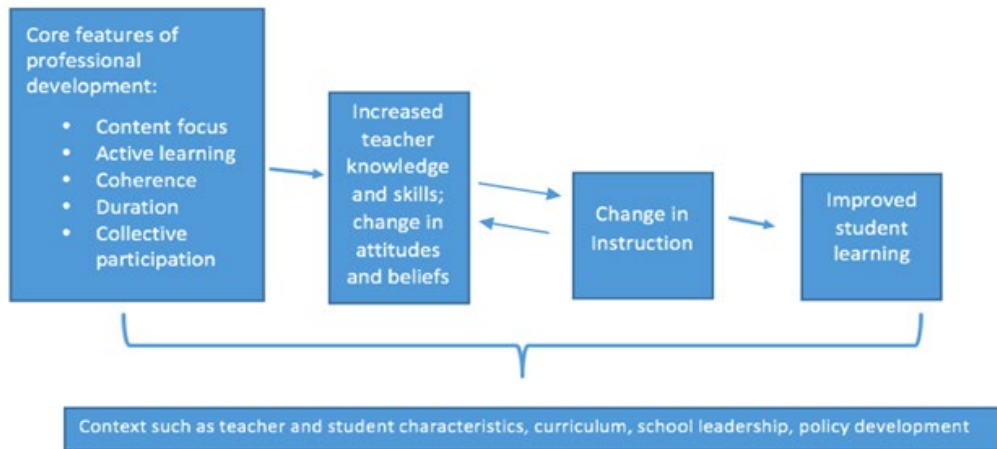
The updated Standards for Professional Learning from the national professional development organization, Learning Forward, were adopted by the Regional Professional Development Programs in 2011. In 2017, Nevada included two additional standards to address equity and cultural competency to become the Nevada Professional Development Standards. These nine standards are used synergistically in order to increase educator effectiveness thereby improving students learning. The standards provide a framework for planning and leading professional learning opportunities.

Part One: NRS 391A.190 1c Evaluation of Regional Training Program

(1) The priorities for training adopted by the governing body pursuant to NRS 391A.175 [391A.175 (a) *Adopt a Training Model, taking into consideration other model programs, including, without limitation, the program used by the Geographic Alliance in Nevada.]*

After conversations with our service requestor to establish the outcome(s) of the professional learning and alignment with the standards for professional development adopted by the State Board, a training model that is best matched to the work is chosen. Training models may include, without limitation, action research, critical friends/professional learning communities, personal learning networks, coaching, mentoring, instructional rounds, lesson study, and educational courses.

391A.175 (b) *Assess the training needs of teachers and administrators who are employed by the school districts within the primary jurisdiction of the regional training program and adopt priorities of training for the program based upon the assessment of needs. The board of trustees of each school district may submit recommendations to the appropriate governing body for the types of training that should be offered by the regional training program.*

391A.175 (c) *In making the assessment required by paragraph (b) and as deemed necessary by the governing body, review the plans to improve the achievement of pupils prepared pursuant to NRS 385A.650 for individual schools within the primary jurisdiction of the regional training program.*

The assessment of training needs of teachers and administrators is determined through a request for service model. This model takes into consideration the needs of our districts and includes a combination of planning tools and strategies, including but not limited to the following:

- Request for services from district personnel or principals based on School Performance Plans (SPP) and needs of teachers on staff;
- Collaborative meetings with superintendents and/or key district personnel to identify priorities and needs on an annual basis guided by District Performance Plans (DPP);
- Collaborative planning meetings with principals and leadership teams to determine goals and objectives for designing a professional development plan;
- Formal and informal needs assessments as needed with districts, departments, and/or schools;
- Input from the RPDP Governing Boards; and/or
- Collaborative work with the Nevada Department of Education on initiatives to design and implement support or roll-out plans for the NVACS as well as other state initiatives.

Evaluation Data

Table 1: 391A.190 1c (8)

An evaluation of the effectiveness of the regional training program, including, without limitation, the Nevada Early Literacy Intervention Program, in accordance with the method established pursuant to paragraph (a), and (10) An evaluation of the effectiveness of training on improving the quality of instruction and the achievement of pupils

RPDP State Approved Evaluation (5-point scale)	Average 2024-25
1. The training matched my needs.	4.75
2. The training provided opportunities for interactions and reflections.	4.87
3. The presenter's/facilitator's experience and expertise enhanced the quality of the training.	4.85
4. The presenter/facilitator efficiently managed time and pacing of activities.	4.85
5. The presenter/facilitator modeled effective teaching strategies.	4.81
6: This training added to my knowledge of standards and/or my subject matter content.	4.76
7. This training will improve my teaching skills.	4.78
8. I will use the knowledge and skills from this training in my classroom or professional duties.	4.81
9. This training will help me meet the needs of diverse student populations.	4.77

Table 2: 391A.190 1c (2)

Type of training offered through the regional training program in the immediately preceding year.

	Consulting	*Instructional*	*Observation and Mentoring*	*Total Trainings*
Carson City	0.00% (0)	100.00% (7)	0.00% (0)	**7**
Charter Schools	0.00% (0)	100.00% (4)	0.00% (0)	**4**
Churchill County	0.00% (0)	100.00% (1)	0.00% (0)	**1**
Douglas County	4.00% (1)	96.00% (24)	0.00% (0)	**25**
Lyon County	0.00% (0)	80.00% (4)	20.00% (1)	**5**
Regional (Multiple Districts)	4.44% (4)	94.44% (85)	1.11% (1)	**90**
Storey County	0.00% (0)	100.00% (1)	0.00% (0)	**1**
Washoe County	6.52% (3)	93.48% (43)	0.00% (0)	**46**
Aggregate	4.47% (8)	94.41% (169)	1.12% (2)	**179**

Note: "Regional" training includes schools not in a district, schools in counties outside the NWRPDP region, and regional training made up of participants from multiple school districts.

Table 3: 391A.190 1c (3)

The number of teachers and administrators who received training through the regional training program in the immediately preceding year.

	Unduplicated Administrators	Unduplicated Teacher	Duplicated Administrators	Duplicated Teachers	Total Trained
Carson City	14	187	9	107	**317**
Charter Schools	13	129	4	28	**174**
Churchill County	2	37	0	25	**64**
Douglas County	12	200	5	252	**469**
Lyon County	7	213	6	109	**335**
Other	4	24	0	0	**28**
Storey County	1	25	3	1	**30**
Washoe County	52	1,602	51	1,192	**2,897**
Aggregate	**105**	**2,417**	**78**	**1,714**	**4,314**

Notes: The "Other" category includes training sessions with schools not in a district, schools in counties outside the NWRPDP region, and regional training made up of participants from multiple school districts.

Unduplicated is the unique number of people in each category that attended at least one training.

Duplicated is the total sum of all *additional* trainings attended after their first training.

Total Trained is the total sum of all people from all training.

Table 4: 391A.190 1c (4)

The number of administrators who received training pursuant to [NEPF] in the immediately preceding year.

	Unduplicated Administrators	Duplicated Administrators	Total Trained
Carson City	13	8	21
Charter Schools	7	1	8
Churchill County	2	0	2
Douglas County	4	2	6
Lyon County	6	4	10
Other	4	0	4
Storey County	1	2	3
Washoe County	45	31	76
Aggregate	82	48	130

Note: The "Other" category includes training sessions with schools not in a district, schools in counties outside the NWRPDP region, and regional training made up of participants from multiple school districts.

Table 5: 391A.190 1c (5)

The number of teachers, administrators, and OLEP who received training [specific to correct deficiencies in performance identified per NEPF evaluation] in the immediately preceding year.

	Carson	*Charter Schools*	*Churchill*	*Douglas*	*Lyon*	*Storey*	*Washoe*	*Aggregate*
Teachers, Admin, OLEP	10	0	0	2	6	3	42	8

Table 6: 391A.190 1c (6)

The number of teachers who received training in [family engagement] in the immediately preceding year.

	Carson	*Charter Schools*	*Churchill*	*Douglas*	*Lyon*	*Storey*	*Washoe*	*Other*	*Aggregate*
Teachers	0	8	4	8	10	0	80	2	112

Note: The "Other" category includes training sessions with schools not in a district, schools in counties outside the NWRPDP region, and regional training made up of participants from multiple school districts.

Table 7: 391A.190 1c (7)

The number of paraprofessionals, if any, who received training in the immediately preceding year.

	Carson	*Charter Schools*	*Churchill*	*Douglas*	*Lyon*	*Storey*	*Washoe*	*Aggregate*
Parapro-fessional	4	10	0	4	34	3	5	60

Table 8: 391A.190 1c (9) I & II

Trainings that included NVACS in the immediately preceding year; III Trainings that included NEPF in the immediately preceding year; IV Trainings that included culturally relevant pedagogy in the immediately preceding year.

	NVACS	NEPF	Culturally Relevant Pedagogy
Carson City	7	6	5
Charter Schools	4	3	3
Churchill County	1	1	1
Douglas County	19	4	0
Lyon County	4	4	3
Regional (Multiple Districts)	60	71	77
Storey County	1	0	1
Washoe County	35	33	35
Aggregate	**131**	**122**	**125**

Note: "Regional" training includes schools not in a district, schools in counties outside the NWRPDP region, and regional training made up of participants from multiple school districts.

NWRPDP

Northwestern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program

Five Year Plan

The three Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs) were established during the 70th Session (1999) of the Nevada State Legislature upon passage of Senate Bill 555, which, under Sections 16 and 17, authorized the establishment of four Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs) in the state; since that 1999 session, the four programs have been reduced to three. Their collective charge is to support the state's teachers and administrators in implementing Nevada's Academic Content Standards (NVACS) through regionally determined professional learning activities. The planning and implementation of professional learning services in each region is overseen by a governing body consisting of superintendents in the respective regions, master teachers appointed by the superintendents, and representatives of Nevada's higher education system and the State Department of Education (Section 16.1-16.8). A Statewide Council for the Coordination of the Regional Training Programs provides oversight statewide and includes members from each regional governing body, the Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee, and several legislatively appointed members.

The RPDPs target three broad categories of professional learning: 1) Meeting district requests for services (e.g., NVACS, differentiation, student engagement), 2) Fulfilling legislated mandates (e.g., NVACS, NEPF, Parent Engagement), and 3) Supporting individual teachers (e.g., coaching, credit classes, modeling, instructional rounds).

Service Areas of Each Region

The **Northeastern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program** (NNRPDP) serves approximately 1,200 teachers and administrators in schools across six counties in northeastern Nevada, an area of 51,385 square miles. Districts range in size from 300 students in Eureka County to over 9,000 students in Elko County; schools range in size from fewer than 10 students to over 1,600 students. The NNRPDP serves Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Pershing, Lander, and White Pine School Districts, as well as schools governed by the State Public Charter School Authority.

The **Northwest Regional Professional Development Program** (NWRPDP) serves over 4,900 teachers and administrators in schools across six counties in northwestern Nevada, an area of 14,489 square miles. Districts range in size from 445 in Storey County to over 61,000 in Washoe County; schools range in size from 203 students to over 2,200 students. The NWRPDP serves Carson City, Churchill, Douglas, Lyon, Storey, and Washoe County School Districts, as well as schools governed by the State Public Charter School Authority.
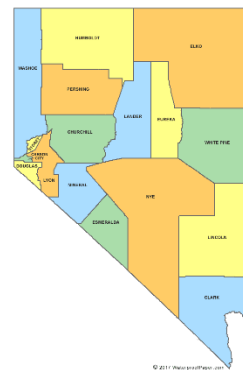
The **Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program** (SNRPDP) serves approximately 18,250 teachers and administrators in schools across five counties in southern Nevada, an area of 44,299 square miles. Districts range in size from 85 students in Esmeralda County to over 310,000 in Clark County; schools range in size from fewer than 10 students to over 3,500 students. The SNRPDP serves educators in Clark, Nye, Lincoln, Esmeralda, and Mineral County School Districts, as well as schools governed by the State Public Charter School Authority.

Mission

The RPDPs provide high-quality professional learning opportunities to enhance student learning within the context of Nevada Professional Development Standards by recognizing and supporting research-based instruction and by facilitating instructional leadership.

Professional Learning Standards

Professional learning opportunities with RPDP align to the *Standards for Professional Learning* as outlined by the national association of professional learning, *Learning Forward*, as well as the *Nevada's Professional Learning Standards* recognized by Nevada Department of Education.

Goals

The mission and governance structure of the RPDPs guide the goals of the organization by providing a framework around which services are provided. The goals meet the broad organizations' directives while continuing to honor and respect the individual regional districts' initiatives, strategic plans, and identities.

- **Provide professional learning opportunities for teachers to strengthen pedagogical content knowledge**.
  - *Develop and maintain positive relationships and trust with teachers*
  - *Create robust professional learning opportunities with specific outcomes*
  - *Communicate opportunities for professional learning to teachers*
- **Partner with administrators to improve instructional leadership and support teacher pedagogical content knowledge**.
  - *Develop positive relationships and trust with administrators*
  - *Create robust professional learning opportunities with specific outcomes*
  - *Participate in district level planning as appropriate*

- o *Communicate opportunities for professional learning to administrators*
- **Partner with stakeholders in Nevada**
  - o *Collaborate with organizations and businesses wherein partnerships benefit educators in Nevada*
  - o *Exchange resources and services within and across RPDPs statewide*
  - o *Create and maintain programs with the Nevada System of Higher Education*
  - o *Liaise with Nevada Department of Education*
- **Sustain and Continue Growth as a Learning Organization**
  - o *Provide professional learning opportunities for RPDP professional learning leaders in order to maintain a high level of expertise*
  - o *Undertake rigorous review of research to drive best practices and continuous improvement*
- **Provide leadership in national and statewide educational priorities**
  - o *Develop and provide professional learning including, but not limited to, interactive and integrative technology, equity and diversity, and science of reading*

Measurement

In order to demonstrate progress of the five-year plan, multiple measures will be applied. The NRS-mandated statewide RPDP evaluation form will be collected and reported in Part I of each RPDP's annual report. Additional means to demonstrate effectiveness of goals within this plan can be found in Part II of each RPDP's annual report. These measures may include educator and/or student assessments aligned to professional learning outcomes, surveys, alignment to the five-level evaluation of professional development framework (Guskey, 2002), impact reports of professional learning provided, and/or in-depth case studies of specific projects. The measurements in Part II are not mandatory, but provide stakeholders a more robust description of the return on investment.

Assessment of Training Needs

The assessment of training needs of teachers and administrators is determined through a request for service model. This model takes into consideration the needs of the districts and includes a combination of planning tools and strategies, including but not limited to the following:

- Request for services from district personnel based on School Performance Plans (SPP) and needs of teachers on staff;
- Collaborative meetings with superintendents and/or key district personnel to identify priorities and needs on an annual basis guided by District Performance Plans (DPP);
- Collaborative planning meetings with principals and leadership teams to determine goals and objectives for designing a professional learning plan;
- Formal and informal needs assessments as needed with districts, departments, and/or schools;
- Input from the RPDP Governing Boards; and/or
- Collaborative work with the Nevada Department of Education to design, implement, support, or roll-out plans for state initiatives.

Two-Year Focus and Budgets

　　　Each RPDP provides professional learning opportunities to districts and schools within their respective regions *and* works collaboratively statewide to provide consistent and equitable opportunities for educators in Nevada. Training programs offered each year vary depending upon the needs and requests of the districts each RPDP serves; RPDPs do not solely determine those training programs without significant input from respective stakeholders. The RPDPs collectively provide learning opportunities across the state and current opportunities can be found online at rpdp.net, nwrpdp.com, and nnrpdp.com.

Total Biennial Budget 2023-2025

NWRPDP $4,542,684.00

Part Two: Individual RPDP Information

391A.190 1c (11) *A description of the gifts and grants, if any, received by the governing body in the immediately preceding year and the gifts and grants, if any, received by the Statewide Council during the immediately preceding year on behalf of the regional training program. The description must include the manner in which the gifts and grants were expended.*

The Nevada Regional Professional Development Programs received 1 Federal Grant in the 2024-2025 academic year: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Kindergarten (DAP K) professional learning sub-grant award.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Kindergarten (DAP K) Professional Learning

NWRPDP received the Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Kindergarten (DAP K) professional learning sub-grant award to work on creating a P3 cohort of Nevada Educators to identify examples of high quality P3 instruction grounded in the Science of Learning and Development with the goal of creating resources to be used across the state of Nevada as coaching tools. This work will continue in the 2025/2026 school year even though the grant funding will cease in December of 2025.

NWRPDP Sponsored Training Programs

The Northwest Regional Professional Development Program (NWRPDP) is a service organization providing professional learning opportunities to districts and schools within our region. Training programs offered each year vary depending upon the needs and requests of the districts we serve; the NWRPDP does not solely determine those training programs without significant input from our stakeholders. In addition to serving the requests of our districts and schools, the NWRPDP has developed and provided training listed for teachers and administrators during the 2023-25 biennium. Below is a sample of those trainings provided to Nevada educators.

- Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) endorsement courses- The NWRPDP, in collaboration with the Washoe County School District has facilitated 6 cohorts of educators for a total of 236 educators served so far since the endorsement began.

- Early Childhood Endorsement Project- This was a statewide collaborative project to design four courses required for an Early Childhood endorsement for teachers who hold a K-8 Elementary license.

- NVACS K-12 Computer Science Standards implementation and professional learning opportunities including Computer Science Endorsement courses, Python Programming with Raspberry Pi, Programming C with Robots, and Code.org courses. Additional endorsement courses were developed in 2023 and offered in 2024 and 2025.

- NVACS Social Studies implementation and instructional resource support.
  - Various book clubs were facilitated with a focus on content and lesson development as a support in social studies classrooms.
  - Regional Social Studies conference
  - ECON Summit

- (NELIP) Early Literacy Cadre/Literacy Cohorts:
  - Year 1 and year 2 of the Early Literacy Cadre were offered for PreK-third grade teachers. Classroom observation and feedback, peer observation, lesson study, and video self-analysis are included. Content to include: strategies for teaching and learning in reading and writing, guided reading, running records, choice of literature, speaking and listening, assessment.
  - Phonological Awareness training
  - Phonics
  - Decodable books

- Math professional learning opportunities
  - Math support will include a variety of models including Math Workshop Model 1 & 2, Building Thinking Classrooms and Productive Math Struggle Book Study
  - Math support was also connected to district initiatives such as Teacher Clarity and new curriculum materials adopted by several districts.

- Teacher Clarity-continuation
  - NWRPDP staff supported 3 elementary schools with content from the *Teacher Clarity Playbook* and continued to provide consultation with the original 5 elementary schools that took on Teacher Clarity in 2023.

- Science of Reading- NWRPDP staff engaged in providing support across the region on high quality literacy instruction and worked on creating multiple courses to support tier 1 and interventions including:
  - Shifting the Balance 3-5 Book Study
  - UFLI Lesson Study

- Innovative Teacher Leadership Institute was Institute work framed on the WCSD Leadership Pathway Project Competencies and focused on creating vision and strategy, working with people to build strong culture, supporting community, focusing on equity, building instructional expertise and understanding how operations and organizational structures support education.

- National Board Certification (NBC) - continuation

- o 78 teachers meet throughout the year in a cohort model to learn the NBC process, work on submissions, receive feedback from facilitators and colleagues, as well as provide feedback and support to other candidates. Teachers are responsible for practicing the NBC expectations in their classrooms and bringing student samples to share and analyze. Classroom observation, peer observation, and video analysis are included.

- NWRPDP received the Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Kindergarten (DAP K) professional learning sub-grant award to work on creating a P3 cohort of Nevada Educators to identify examples of high quality P3 instruction grounded in the Science of Learning and Development with the goal of creating resources to be used across the state of Nevada. 30 teachers and administrators across Nevada, representing 6 different districts began work on collecting video examples of high-quality guided play along with the development of coaching tools to accompany the videos to use by Nevada educators.

Regional Projects: NWRPDP Case Studies

Self-Evaluation Procedures

As outlined in NRS 391A.190, Director Ben Dickson directs the in-house evaluation, assisted by support staff who coordinate data collection and compilation. Based on feedback from the NWRPDP board, staff, NDE and the districts served by the NWRPDP the annual evaluative case studies took on a different look in the 2023-2024 school year. The evaluative case studies still follow the Killion (2002) staff development evaluation model and are aligned with prominent teacher professional development frameworks (Desimone, 2009; Guskey, 2002). They continue to provide in-depth analysis of specific professional development projects, while showcasing the diversity and scope of the support provided by the NWRPDP to schools and educators in the region. The presentations that follow show a graphic representation of the work along with a one-page explanation of the work. These evaluation projects employ both qualitative and quantitative designs and incorporate mixed-methods data collection strategies to assess training outcomes. Collectively, they help to 'tell the story' and document the impacts of the diverse NWRPDP professional development activities this past year and are meant to be delivered as a one-page handout to stakeholders to showcase the valuable work conducted by NWRPDP staff.

Key Findings from 2024-2025 NWRPDP Evaluation Activities:

The NWRPDP staff play a critical role in supporting and enhancing the professional growth of educators across northwestern Nevada. They serve a wide range of districts, including Carson City, Churchill, Douglas, Lyon, Storey, and Washoe counties; and also work with charter schools. In the 2024-2025 school year alone, their efforts resulted in 4,314 educators in the region engaged in NWRPDP training sessions. This extensive work is guided by the needs of each district, focusing on implementing Nevada's Academic Content Standards (NVACS), improving instructional practices through the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF), and providing tailored support to meet specific school and district goals.

Case study projects also showcased the wide-ranging impact of NWRPDP staff work. The sixteen case studies from the 2024-2025 school year revealed a variety of positive outcomes, from supporting new teachers through focused academies to a focus on supporting new teachers going through the Alternative Route to Licensure with their classroom management skills. Other projects highlighted improved teacher practice in areas like parent and family engagement, multicultural education, and the Science of Reading. The staff's innovative approach was also seen in a podcasting initiative designed to support educators, and in a showcase of P-3 work aimed at enhancing knowledge and practice across districts.

Staff dedication is evident in a number of highly attended and specialized training programs. The National Board Certification Cohort empowered 78 educators to pursue this rigorous process, leading to a renewed commitment to growth and improved teaching practices. The Gifted and Talented Endorsement Program was another high-impact initiative, with four cohorts of approximately 30 educators each participating in courses to earn their endorsements. Additionally, a dedicated Science of Reading Project engaged 35 staff members at a Title I elementary school in foundational knowledge and high-impact classroom routines, demonstrating a commitment to research-based literacy instruction, with one teacher commenting, "Amazing! I took away almost all of this book, even teaching 2nd grade."

Case Study Infographics

AI Inquiry Cohort

AI INQUIRY COHORT

Objective: Engage classroom teachers in an inquiry-based process to explore AI tools that streamline and enhance instruction, while building their understanding of ethical use.

TOPICS

- Benefits and basics of AI
- Ethical use for students and teachers
- Exploration of various platforms
- Building AI skills as the "human in the loop"
- The future of AI in education

100% OF PARTICIPANTS REPORTED INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND CONFIDENCE USING AI.

EDUCATOR TESTIMONIALS

- *"I started out afraid of AI and what it meant for me as a teacher. I now feel educated. I understand how it can help me in the same ways as a group of colleagues."*
- *"I've learned so many ways AI can enhance my teaching, from discussion platforms, to graphics, to simple additions to my lessons."*
- *I am more comfortable playing with AI to find ways to add to my instruction. I have found ways to discuss and have conversations about the ethics with my students."*

Work designed and facilitated by Kristin Campbell & Kylie Maddy

NWRPDP
CARSON-CHURCHILL-DOUGLAS-LYON-STOREY-WASHOE

Summary of Project

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into education necessitates an intentional effort to develop teachers' competencies in AI literacy and ethical considerations. Ongoing research and policy initiatives highlight the critical role of teacher education and professional learning in preparing educators to navigate and leverage AI effectively in their classrooms. (Walter, 2024) The AI Inquiry Cohort created an opportunity for educators from five high schools, two middle schools, and 12 elementary schools in northern Nevada to participate in this type of professional learning to benefit more than 1000 students in their classrooms.

Results

The stacked bar chart below compares participant responses before and after the cohort on three key statements:
- Basic AI Knowledge
- AI Integration into Teaching
- Understanding of AI Ethics
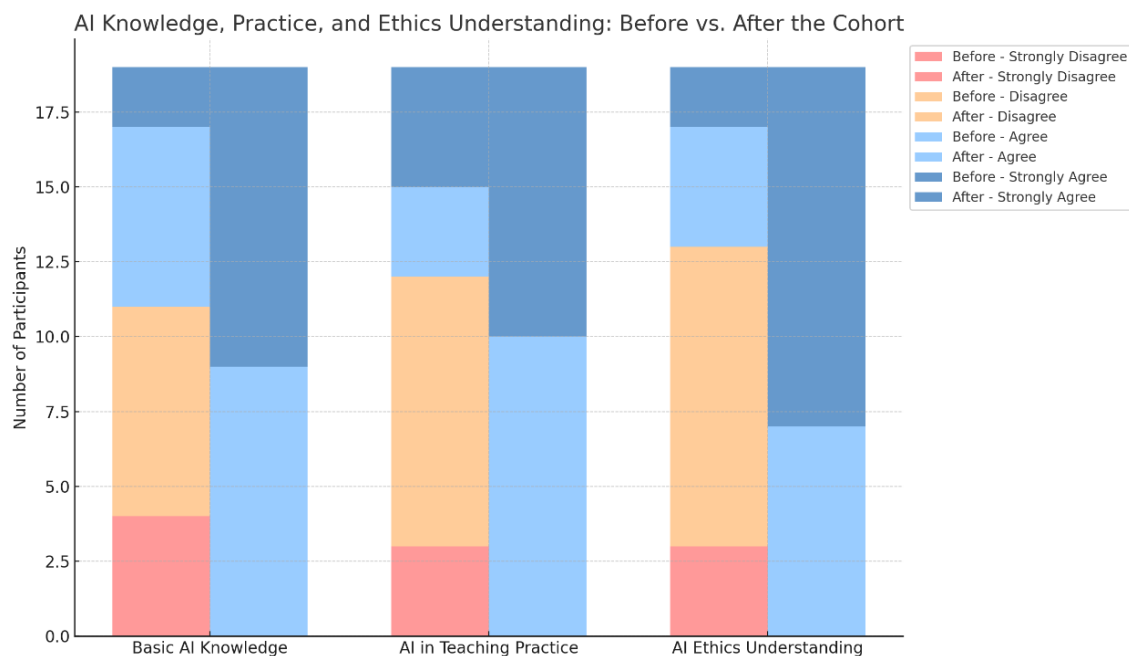
Each bar is segmented by response category; Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree. The results clearly show a significant shift toward stronger agreement in all areas after participation in the cohort.

Conclusion

Participants' responses indicate the cohort was successful, and educators were able to implement and apply AI strategies in their instruction with their students. The ever-changing landscape of AI makes it challenging to replicate these outcomes. Ongoing participation in professional learning that explores the latest AI research findings is necessary for educators to continue to grow.

References

Walter, Y. (2024) Embracing the Future of Artificial Intelligence in the Classroom: The Relevance of AI Literacy, Prompt Engineering, and Critical Thinking in Modern Education. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 21, Article No. 15. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-024-00448-3

Early Childhood Endorsement

Early Childhood Endorsement Cohort 2024-2025

The Early Childhood Endorsement Program is a statewide opportunity for currently K-8 licensed teachers to earn an endorsement that allows them to teach Pre-K. The program consists of four, three credit graduate level courses. Candidates must have at least one year experience teaching kindergarten, which does limit the amount of eligible participants. For that reason, the statewide RPDPs are in the process of creating a practicum experience that will allow more educators to access the opportunity. The practicum is slated to begin with the 25-26 cohort.

Since it's inception in the 23-24 school year. 120 educators have completed the program and eared their endorsement. 60 additional educators have been accepted into the program for the 25-26 school year. With each round of cohorts, the candidates have come from a variety of counties across the state. Priority acceptance is given to rural counties to ensure equal representation as well as any candidate that is already teaching Pre-K on an emergency licensure basis.

23-24 ECC County Distribution
Nye 6.7%
Lyon 1.7%
Douglas 6.7%
Churchill 1.7%
Charter 1.7%
Carson 1.7%
Clark 40%
Washoe 40%

24-25 ECC County Distribution
Carson 9.4%
Elko 7.8%
Washoe 12.5%
Charter 1.6%
Nye 1.6%
Lyon 4.7%
Humboldt 1.6%
Douglas 3.1%
Clark 57.8%

25-26 ECC County Distribution
Pershing County Sc... 1.6%
Nye County School... 4.8%
Churchill County Sch... 4.8%
Lyon County School... 3.2%
Douglas County Sch... 3.2%
Washoe County Sch... 15.9%
Clark 65.1%
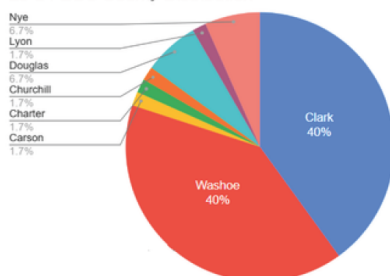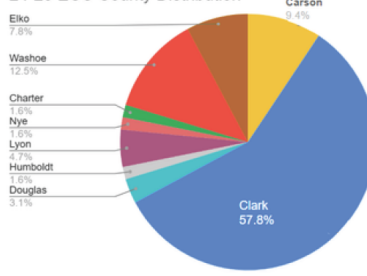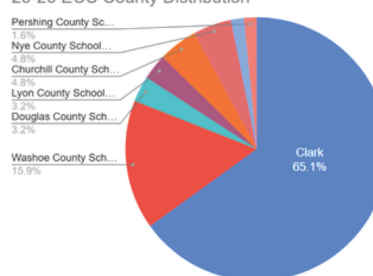
Yearly data: Significant changes from pre to post (<0.001) with large effect size.

Paired Samples T-Test				
Topic	Mean (Pre)	Mean (Post)	p-value	Cohen's d
Knowledge of the continuum of development	2.63	4.87	< .001	-2.302
Domains of Child Development	2.79	4.82	< .001	-2.229
Dominant Play Theories	2.71	4.76	< .001	-1.834
DAP in Practice	2.79	4.84	< .001	-1.695
Early Childhood teaching methods	2.66	4.84	< .001	-1.965
Early Childhood curriculum	2.63	4.84	< .001	-1.778
The Pyramid Model	2.45	4.58	< .001	-2.13
Conscious Discipline	1.68	4.66	< .001	-3.118
Average	2.55	4.78	< .001	-2.561

Note: Data was collected in the form of survey ratings and question responses. The results in the table above reflect the effectiveness of the four Early Childhood Endorsement Courses.

Comparison between year one and year two: Year two started and ended with a significantly higher average score than year one, indicating year two participants started with higher knowledge of the attributes. However, when comparing the average growth from year one to year two data, there was no significant difference. Growth between the two years was the same, meaning the intervention led to similar results with each cohort (mean difference year 1 = 2.128, Mean difference year 2 = 2.139, p = 0.818).

Quotes from 24-25 participants:

"Conscious Discipline has changed the way I think about rituals in my classroom. I want to develop meaningful rituals for my students."

"I am more thoughtful. I have tried new things in my classroom. I am looking forward to trying many things at the start of next year – conscious discipline especially."

"I enjoyed working with the curriculum. The 4 different teachers brought so much experience and joy to the class every week. I thought the assignments, readings, and group discussions were really useful and stayed on topic. Seeing real life examples from classrooms was great too!"

"I have already started changing some of the ways that I teach. I will continue to use the practices learned."

"I have learned a lot about teaching children in early childhood. My practices will change due to the learning from this class."

"I really enjoyed the practical real life experience that these coursed tied into."

"I do think differently about my practice. I am more intentional in what I pick for students to do within the playtime. I loved learning about the developmental milestones which is especially important in special education. The calming strategies from conscience discipline are really helpful, and just the mindset about pre-k being about the process not the product was really a freeing concept."

"This has really given me so much more of an understanding of my incoming kindergarten students. I plan on adapting everything I have learned and applying it into kindergarten especially the conscious discipline. I feel like this course has made me feel confident if I were to ever switch down a grade to preschool."

"I have been able to apply at least one thing learned from every class and every teacher in my own classroom. On a weekly basis I was able to change something and make it better for myself."

Student-Led Literacy Growth through Reciprocal Teaching

RACHEL CROFT, NBCT

RECIPROCAL TEACHING

SCIENCE OF READING

Reciprocal teaching is a cooperative learning strategy that improves students' reading comprehension skills, with four components: predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarizing. Reciprocal Teaching improves engagement while strengthening comprehension skills.

SUPPORT OFFERINGS

1 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Targeted training on Reciprocal Teaching with a focus on the science of reading.

2 ONE ON ONE MENTORING
Foster sustainability through feedback, planning support, and strengthening instructional practice.

3 IMPACT
Measurable gains in reading comprehension and collaborative learning skills. MAP scores showed growth in reading levels.

4 SCHOOL WORKSHOPS
Whole school trainings on Reciprocal Teaching to build collective efficacy at five different sites.

5 MODELING
Modeled lessons across diverse learning contexts in order to foster clarity in application.

IMPACT FOR STUDENTS

One school grew from 35% of students on grade level to 60% of students.

3rd grade students improved an average of 10 RIT points.

7th grade students increased the median from 20th to 31st percentile.

Students improved Lexile levels and increased engagement.

NORTHWEST REGIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

26

Research Base: In a time when teachers are stretched thin, they need strategies that are both flexible and impactful. Reciprocal Teaching is an evidence-based strategy proven to improve reading comprehension (Palincsar & Brown, 1984) and aligns directly with the Science of Reading by fostering active engagement, metacognition, and meaning-making. It emphasizes four core skills: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. These strategies are taught through a gradual release model that moves from teacher modeling to student-led discussion. Reciprocal Teaching gives teachers a sustainable tool and gives students the power to take charge of their own learning.

Project Description: This project focused on implementing reciprocal teaching strategies in classrooms across multiple grade levels. The lead facilitator provided direct modeling in K–8 classrooms, allowing teachers to observe the practice live with their own students. Support structures included teacher professional development, peer mentoring, and interactive workshops to deepen implementation.

Scope of Project:

- Teachers Involved: 120 teachers across 9 schools in 3 Districts
- Students Reached: 2,400+
- Conferences: 3

Goal: To improve teacher efficacy with a practical, research-based strategy to improve reading comprehension by modeling Reciprocal Teaching and supporting its implementation to build confidence, increase engagement, and deepen student understanding.

Results:

- At one elementary school, the percentage of students reading at grade level rose from 35% to 60% over the course of the project.
- 3rd grade students raised their median percentile from the 69th to the 75th, showing that reciprocal teaching supports growth even among higher-performing groups.
- 7th grade students increased their median percentile from the 20th to the 31st, demonstrating significant gains among previously underperforming readers.
- MAP test engagement increased, with 7th grade students extending their average testing time from 69 minutes to 91 minutes, suggesting stronger persistence and investment in the task.

Impact: This project strengthened students' comprehension and shifted classroom culture to promote collaborative dialogue and student ownership of learning. Reciprocal teaching proved effective across grade levels, content areas, and learner needs.

Next Steps: Develop peer coaching roles that allow experienced teachers to support colleagues in implementing reciprocal teaching and work to integrate the strategy into content-area literacy efforts, ensuring that students continue to practice and apply these skills across subjects.

Gifted and Talented Endorsement Program

COHORT 6

Gifted and Talented Endorsement Program

DEVELOPING TEACHER CAPACITY

PRACTICAL AND RESEARCH BASED

Ford, D. Y. (2014). *Underrepresentation of Culturally Different Students in Gifted Education:* Reflections about Current Problems and Recommendations for the Future. Gifted Child Today, 37(3), 149–152.

"These courses enhanced my ability to design appropriate curriculum that challenges all students"

FOUR GRADUATE LEVEL COURSES

A yearlong professional learning journey covering identification, assessment, curriculum, and instructional strategies for gifted learners in a virtual format.
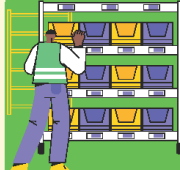
"Everything was very useful and it was FULL of information."

FOCUSED ON DIFFERENTIATION

Teachers learn to meet the needs of gifted students through tiered tasks, project-based learning, and choice-driven instruction.

"I learned so much from all the different classes, presentations, projects, assignments and so forth."

PRE-K TO 12TH GRADE ADMINISTRATION LICENSED PROFESSIONALS

Educators across all grade levels, from early childhood to high school, counselors, nurses, and administrators participate, ensuring gifted learners are supported throughout their academic journey.

"GATE classes showed me ways in which I can support educators."

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS AS FACILITATORS

Passionate, experienced teacher leaders facilitate these courses, bringing energy, expertise, and real-world insight to every session.

"I love the instructors and the energy they provide."

UNLOCKING FUNDING FOR EIGHT NEVADA DISTRICTS

Building regional capacity for gifted education for educators across the state: Carson, Douglas, Lyon, Washoe, Churchill, Storey, Humboldt, and Pershing.

"I am the first GATE endorsed teacher in my district!"

NWRPDP Program Coordinator - Rachel Croft, NBCT

Research Base: Gifted and Talented students remain one of the most underserved student populations in U.S. public education, often due to a lack of educator preparation and systemic under-identification, particularly among students from marginalized backgrounds (Ford, 2014). High-quality professional development is essential to equip educators with the skills to recognize, nurture, and differentiate instruction for gifted learners. NWRPDP's endorsement program is grounded in this research, with a focus on equity, access, and instructional excellence.

Project Description: The Gifted and Talented Endorsement Program is a yearlong cohort-based professional learning model designed to improve teacher efficacy in identifying and serving gifted learners. Educators engage in collaborative learning, complete projects and presentations, and apply their learning in classroom settings. The program includes four integrated courses:

- Characteristics and Needs of Gifted Students
- Assessment of Gifted Students
- Curriculum, Methodology & Strategies for Teaching Gifted Students – Part 1
- Curriculum, Methodology & Strategies – Part 2

Scope of Project:

- Current Cohort Participants (Cohort 6): 51
- Total Educators Served to Date: 236
- Participant Roles: Pre-K through 12th Classroom teachers, counselors, administrators
- Districts Represented: Carson, Douglas, Lyon, Washoe, Churchill, Storey, Humboldt, Pershing

Goal: To increase teacher capacity to effectively serve gifted learners through a rigorous, multi-course endorsement program grounded in current research and best practices.

Results:

- Participants report increased awareness of gifted identification practices and confidence in adapting curriculum for gifted learners
- Participants reported a greater ability to differentiate instruction for gifted learners within mixed-ability classrooms, with many implementing tiered assignments, choice boards, and project-based learning as a result of the coursework.
- Two districts gained their first GATE-endorsed teachers, making them newly eligible for state-level gifted education funding.

Impact: This program has strengthened educator understanding of giftedness and enhanced the instructional quality available to advanced learners across multiple Nevada districts.

Next Steps: Continue growing the program statewide, develop mentorship opportunities among past cohorts, and build district-level teams that can champion identification and enrichment efforts for underrepresented gifted students.

Middle School Standards Revision Committee

Nevada Middle School Career Technical Education Standards Revision Committee

Career Foundations
Think. Build. Work.

Skills Today, Success Tomorrow

State Criteria
- develop a repeatable course
- adjustable to varying timeframes (9 weeks to 3 years)
- engage students in career pathway exploration
- align with current high school state standards and pathways
- flexible enough to fit the diverse needs of Nevada Schools

Statistics

- 3,107 students are enrolled in a Middle School CTE Course
- Carson City, Elko, Lyon, and Clark Counties had three educators each serve
- 56 hours of revising/creating
- designed four-pillar framework

Moving Forward
Present at NVACTE Summer Conference
Pilot across the state
2026-2027 Full Implementation

Summary of Project

We were assigned to create a statewide framework for middle school career exploration. Our partners included the Carson, Elko, Lyon, and Clark school districts. Existing middle school standards restrict alignment with Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways at partner high schools, limiting opportunities to Agriculture, Business and Marketing, Education/Family Consumer Sciences, Health Science and Public Safety, Media Technologies, and Skilled and Technical Sciences, which excludes many other CTE programs. This constraint limits students' opportunities to explore relevant programs and develop their skills. Our objective was to enhance flexibility for a wider variety of CTE pathways through the framework, which will be applicable across all content areas instead of being confined to specific ones.

The framework considers these factors to equip middle school students with their occupational identity and assist them in choosing and finishing high school programs. It includes information about participation in Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO), post-secondary options, industry-recognized certifications, and work-based learning opportunities.

Impact/Next Steps

This course introduces high school CTE pathways and is repeatable, teaching essential concepts and skills for career readiness across various fields. Through hands-on learning, students engage with four pillars: **Understanding Careers and the Nature of Work, Safety and Best Practices**, **Employability Skills,** and **4PBL (Phenomenon, Place, Project, Problem)**. Emphasis is on developing critical thinking, collaboration, and real-world applications. Students deepen their knowledge and expand skills annually with age-appropriate experiences and increasing responsibility. This course lasts from nine weeks to three years, depending on the school's needs.

These updated standards are expected to affect approximately 3,107 students each year across Nevada. We will present at the Nevada Association for Career Technical Education conference in July 2025. The twelve educators who participated on the committee will test the framework.

We Can Do EPIC Things Podcast

We Can Do EPIC Things Podcast

2 Seasons
76 Episodes
6,459 Plays

WE CAN DO EPIC THINGS

Douglas County Schools District

Top 3 Episodes

- The One Where We Go Straight to the Top - 276 plays
- The One Where We Take it Down a Notch - 250 plays
- The One Where We Were on a Break - 231 plays

What Listeners Are Saying

I really enjoy the interviews with teachers about things they are doing in their classrooms.

I like when you're real about the struggles in education.

I love how you can make serious topics fun and engaging!

I like being connected to our district and new ideas that are being used in the classroom.

I like the chemistry of the casters and the flow.

Love hearing what's going on in the district that I wouldn't know about otherwise.

Platform Statistics

- Spotify — 54.5%
- Apple Podcasts — 25.4%
- Spotify for Creators — 15.2%
- Web Browser — 5%

Professional Development Stats

- **93** Teachers and administrators enrolled for in-service credit.
- **82.5** in-service credits earned over two seasons.

Summary of Project:

Enrollment in teacher professional learning in-service classes has decreased dramatically since the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, nearly every in-service class being offered was filled and had a waiting list. We started to wonder why this was happening. We wondered if attending classes in person or virtually in the evening or on weekends was too much for teachers who were already tired and feeling overwhelmed.

We began to rethink the ways we offer professional learning. We wanted to offer alternatives to in-person and virtual classes that would still meet the goals we have for professional learning. We also recognize that teachers love podcasts and that podcasts are extremely popular. We began to brainstorm a podcast option for professional learning. We decided to try and offer an in-service class where teachers could listen to any and all podcasts and keep a journal of the key learning and takeaways in order to receive in-service and salary credit. We released the first We Can Do EPIC Things, EPIC standing for Empower, Prepare, Inspire, and Connect, podcast on August 16, 2023. We recorded and released podcasts every Tuesday during the 2023-24 school year and the 2024-25 school year relating to the educational goals of our district. Over the course of two school years, we released 76 podcasts featuring local teachers, leaders, community members, and students. The podcast has also featured several educational celebrities including A.J. Juliani, Catlin Tucker, Katie Martin, and Fawun Nguyen.

Results:

Currently, there are 93 teachers and administrators enrolled in the We Can Do EPIC Things class for recertification and salary credit. Teachers earn .5 credit for every ten episodes listened to and by completing a journal entry for each episode. To date, 87.5 credits have been issued for salary and recertification credit over the two seasons of the podcast. Anecdotal feedback is very positive with participants stating how much they enjoy the freedom and flexibility of learning in this manner. They report that listening connects them to things going on in Douglas County School District that they would not otherwise know about.

Conclusion:

Season 3 of We Can Do EPIC Things will begin in August 2025 with new episodes every Tuesday during the 2025-26 school year. Listeners have requested more community members on the podcast. We will continue talking to teachers, district leaders, and students about the ways in which Douglas County School District is empowering, preparing, inspiring, and connecting staff, students, and the community.

NVACS Bootcamp: STEM in the Sierra
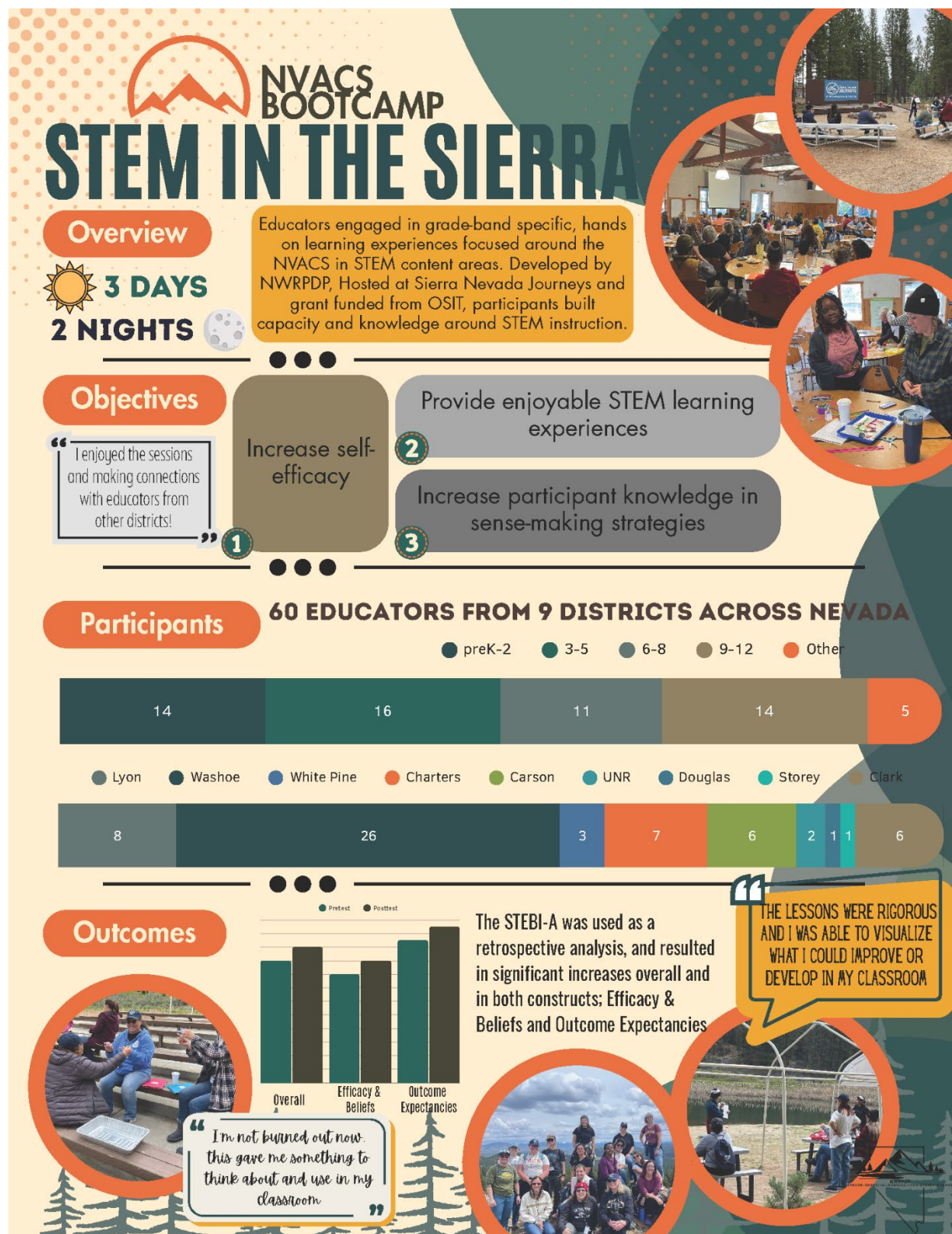
Project Overview:

The NVACS Bootcamp was a three-day, two-night immersive STEM professional learning experience designed for K–12 educators across Nevada. Funded by the Northern Nevada STEM Network grant through the Nevada Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology, the project was organized and facilitated by the Northwest Regional Professional Development Program (RPDP). The RPDP developed the instructional design, daily agendas, and evaluation tools for the event. Key partners included Sierra Nevada Journeys, NevadaTeach at the University of Nevada, Reno, and the Nevada State Science Teachers Association. The Bootcamp was held at Sierra Nevada Journeys' Outdoor Education Camp and provided full lodging and meals for participants.

Sixty participants—including teachers, administrators, and preservice educators from nine districts and charter schools—engaged in 16 hours of grade band–specific, hands-on sessions focused on strengthening STEM content knowledge and instructional practices. In addition to multiple content sessions, the program included opportunities for collaboration, networking, and professional goal-setting.

Project Design and Analysis

Participants completed session-specific evaluations and a comprehensive program evaluation. To assess changes in teacher beliefs and confidence, the Science Teaching Efficacy Belief Instrument for in-service teachers (STEBI-A; Enochs & Riggs, 1990) was administered using a retrospective pre–post design. This approach was selected to reduce response shift bias, given the short duration of the program. The STEBI-A measures two constructs: (1) outcome expectancy and (2) efficacy and beliefs in science teaching. Teachers were also provided with session surveys to determine if they enjoyed the sessions and could use the information in their classrooms. The session surveys used a 4-point Likert scale to determine the usefulness enjoyment in each session.

Results

Of the 60 participants, data was collected on 49. Incomplete or invalid were present in the remaining eleven participant surveys leading to them being eliminated from analysis. Due to the small sample size, and nature of Likert data, a two-tailed, paired samples Wilcoxon signed-ranks test was applied to the data. The power of the test to detect differences with the given parameters was about 92%. Results of the analysis suggest participants' efficacy and beliefs about science instruction significantly increased as did their outcome expectancies for students in science ($p < 0.001$). Spearman rho was calculated for the effect size resulting in high effect sizes for all constructs. The Results of the analysis can be found in table 1.

Table 1: STEBI-A, Wilcoxon signed-ranks analysis.

	Mean		*W*	*p*	*r (effect size)*
	pre-	post-			
Overall	1.80	2.04	49.00	< 0.001	0.90
Efficacy and Beliefs	1.56	1.81	38.00	< 0.001	0.89
Outcome Expectancies	2.06	2.29	50.00	< 0.001	0.88

Session surveys asked participants how much they agreed with three different statements (1) I enjoyed this session and its content, (2) My knowledge and understanding of STEM content was supported in this session, and (3) I could easily use something learned in this session with learners I work with. Results of the survey were all positive, with everyone indicating they agreed with all the statements for all the sessions. Comments listed on the session surveys show participants had positive experiences in the sessions "So fun! I saw lots of new critters and learned more about pond ecology and pH!" suggested many about the pond ecology session. Others indicated they could easily implement the session lessons within their classrooms immediately "Students will love this lesson! It doesn't require background knowledge, and forces students to think and problem solve with their peers!"

Conclusion:

Results of the analysis suggest not only did the Bootcamp make a difference in perceived efficacy and beliefs, and outcome expectancies in science education but also that the difference was very large. Participants loved the location of the Bootcamp and that it provided food and lodging, removing one more barrier to attending. The low key environment allowed participants to engage with others from across the state in diverse ways while providing a mix of targeted learning experiences and community building activities. Providing these opportunities for educators could encourage collaboration vertically from kindergarten through high school as well as across districts and schools in Nevada. The biggest barrier in hosting the event again is funding. The team will be looking for reliable, external funding resources to ensure educators have the same experience in upcoming years.

Productive Math Struggle: A 6-Point Action Plan for Fostering Perseverance

Productive Math Struggle:
A 6-Point Action Plan for Fostering Perseverance

The Productive Math Struggle empowers educators to embrace struggle as a vital part of learning, offering practical strategies to help students persevere and grow through challenging math tasks. It redefines struggle not as failure, but as a pathway to deeper understanding and building confidence in mathematics.
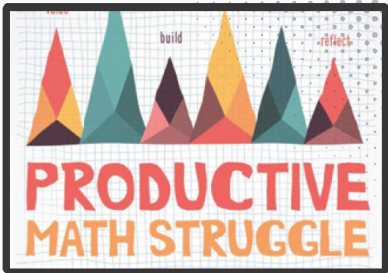
Productive Math Struggle Course Goals:
- Develop a shared understanding of productive struggle and how it supports meaningful math learning and student growth.
- Learn how to design and implement math tasks that appropriately challenge students while fostering perseverance and problem-solving skills.
- Build teacher capacity to support students through struggle by anticipating student thinking, facilitating strategic discourse, and reflecting on student learning and strategies.

Value — Community, Identity, Plan, Support, Reflect

Educators — Elementary, Secondary, Administrators

What participants are saying...

> It's been both validating and enlightening! I was already doing so much of what I read in the book intuitively but now I have tools to drastically improve my instruction.

> This course rekindled my desire to impact my students in such a way that they will be better prepared for learning challenges, not just the ones they face in my class.

Educational Impact

6 Nevada School Districts and 4 Charters
Schools Represented
34
Educators
58
Students Impacted
3050

> It provided me with valuable strategies to better identify and understand my students' math identities. By implementing these strategies, I am now able to tailor my instruction to meet the diverse needs of my students more effectively.
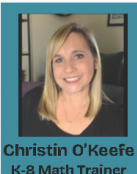
Christin O'Keefe
K-8 Math Trainer
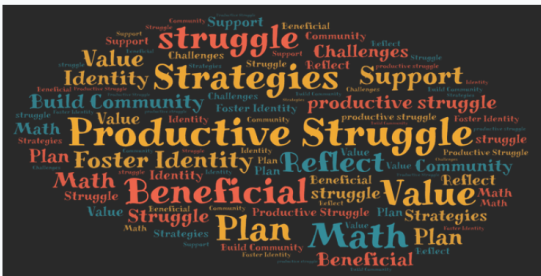
Survey Results
Pre ■ Post
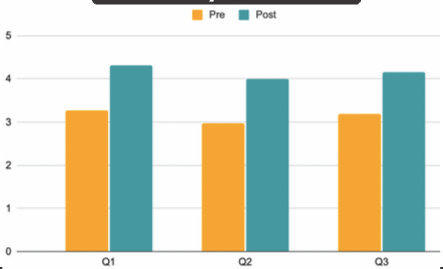
Pre Survey   **Post Survey**
Q1: I am aware of my math identity.
Q2: I am aware of my students' math identities.
Q3: I select high-quality mathematics tasks.
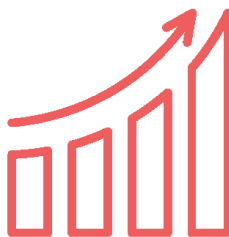
The Data Says

The survey data shows overall growth across all categories from the Pre Class to the Post Class survey, indicating positive impact from the learning experience. Notable areas of improvement include awareness of math identity (3.47 to 4.31), reinforcing math community (3.6 to 4.05), and modifying tasks to provoke struggle (3.47 to 3.78), suggesting increased confidence and intentionality in supporting productive struggle in the classroom.

Project Overview

In the wake of declining math proficiency scores on the Smarter Balanced Assessments and the National Assessment of Educational Progress since 2019, educators faced increasing urgency to deepen students' understanding and perseverance in mathematics. Research underscored the role of student mindset and math identity in fostering productive struggle and long-term success. This case study examined how 58 educators across 34 schools in six Nevada districts worked to shift their instruction using *Productive Math Struggle: A 6-Point Action Plan for Fostering Perseverance* by SanGiovanni, Stevens, and Dykema, aiming to build classroom environments that promoted resilience and meaningful engagement with challenging tasks.

Results

Educators reported significant shifts in mindset and instructional practice after engaging with *Productive Math Struggle*, including increased confidence in fostering student perseverance and rethinking the role of struggle in learning. Participants highlighted improved questioning strategies, deeper awareness of student math identities, and tools that complemented existing efforts like *Building Thinking Classrooms*. The course's practical resources, collaborative structure, and support during curriculum adoption left teachers motivated and better equipped to promote meaningful math discourse. Pre- and post-reflective data showed the following results, with a p-value indicating statistically significant changes in participants' responses.

	Pre-Survey Mean	Post Survey Mean	Difference	t-score	Significance (p-value)
I am aware of my math identity.	3.18	4.31	28	-5.616	<.001
I am aware of my students' math identities.	2.92	3.87	37	-3.902	<.001
I modify tasks to provoke struggle.	2.84	3.96	36	-4.532	<.001
I pause in the middle of group work to discuss progress and challenges.	3.18	4.05	37	-5.162	<.001
The class reflects on struggles and strategies for overcoming them.	3.32	3.96	37	-3.363	.002

Conclusion

This case study demonstrated that shifts in teacher mindset and instructional practices could catalyze meaningful change in math instruction. By adopting strategies that promoted productive struggle—such as intentional planning, guiding questions, and student-centered tools like anchor charts—participants reframed their role in the learning process. These changes were expected to deepen engagement, strengthen perseverance, and build conceptual understanding. Continued professional development was recommended to support task design, integrate student math identities, and nurture a classroom culture where struggle was embraced to drive lasting student outcomes.

Science of Reading Project

Science of Reading Project

Project Overview

- Northwest Region
- Title I Elementary School
- 702 Students
- 35 Educators

Project Duration: Spring 2024 – Spring 2025

Professional Learning

Book Study: The Seven Mighty Moves
Trainings on:
- ✔ Phonological Awareness
- ✔ Systematic Phonics
- ✔ Word Recognition Strategies

Results That Matter

Teachers reported growth in:
- Knowledge of phonics and phonological awareness
- Ability to adapt instruction to student needs
- Use of evidence-based strategies

Teachers Say...

"These past two years have changed my teaching more than anything I've ever done. Every time you come, I learn something new and useful. These classes empower teachers in new and beneficial ways."

Why It Matters

- Structured, research-based reading instruction makes a difference
- Empowered teachers = more effective classrooms
- This project shows what's possible with the Science of Reading
- Visuals: Open book with light rays, student reading

✉ dwalker@nwrpdp.com   🌐 nwrpdp.com

Research Base

The Science of Reading is a comprehensive body of research from cognitive psychology, linguistics, neuroscience, and education that explains how children learn to read. It emphasizes that reading is not a natural process and must be explicitly taught—especially in languages like English (Dehaene, 2009). Decades of research highlight five essential components of effective reading instruction: phonemic awareness (hearing and manipulating sounds in words), phonics (connecting letters to sounds), fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000). The Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986) frames reading as a combination of decoding and understanding language. Structured literacy, aligned with this research, focuses on clear, systematic instruction, particularly effective for struggling readers and those with learning differences like dyslexia (Moats, 2020). This approach ensures instruction aligns with how the brain learns to read and supports stronger literacy outcomes for all students.

Project Summary

As part of a broader Science of Reading initiative, one Title I elementary school in the Northwest Region participated in a project from the end of the 2023–24 school year through the end of the 2024–25 school year. The school serves 702 students, and 35 staff members took part in professional learning. All teachers joined a book study focused on *The Seven Mighty Moves*, which provided both foundational knowledge and high-impact classroom routines. During the 2024–25 school year, teachers were also given instructional resources to teach phonological awareness and phonics explicitly and systematically. A mix of required and optional professional learning sessions supported implementation of evidence-based reading instruction. The goal was to improve classroom instruction and raise student achievement through a combination of training and classroom-ready tools.

Results

At the end of the project, teachers completed a reflection on their knowledge and classroom practices. Responses showed an increased understanding of phonological awareness, phonics, and how to adjust instruction based on student needs. Teachers also reported a stronger use of word recognition strategies that combine sound awareness, phonics, and fluency. See the table below:

Knowledge & Application of Evidence-Based Reading Instruction

One teacher shared:

  "These past two years have changed my teaching more than anything I've ever done. Every time you come, I learn something new and useful to apply in my classroom. These classes empower teachers in new and beneficial ways."

This reflection captures the overall sentiment among teachers—greater confidence, deeper knowledge, and meaningful changes in how reading is taught.

Conclusion and Impact

This case study highlights the positive effect of combining research-based practices with sustained professional development. Grounding instruction in the Science of Reading helped teachers strengthen their knowledge and apply proven strategies in the classroom. The use of structured literacy approaches not only benefited educators but also laid the foundation for improved reading achievement among students. As schools seek ways to support literacy for all learners, this project serves as a powerful example of how evidence-based instruction can lead to real, lasting change.

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Empowering Educators Across Northern Nevada Through National Board Certification

Empowering Educators Through National Board Certification

Educator Growth & Mindset Shift

Common Themes from Feedback:
- Increased reflection on instructional decisions
- More purposeful lesson planning
- Deeper student engagement
- Elevated use of data for decisions

"This was an incredibly reflective experience. I now plan with much more intention and purpose, always thinking about the 'why' behind what I'm doing."
— Andrea M.

Empowerment & Professional Identity

- Increased confidence in teaching abilities
- Stronger teacher leadership
- Collegial support networks formed

"The constant support and cheering on really helped push me through. The encouragement made me feel like part of a professional learning community."
— Nicole C.

Reflection & Assessment

- Candidates now consistently:
  - Reflect after lessons
  - Use multiple data sources
  - Adjust the instruction based on reflection

"I have learned a whole lot more about the students and how to evaluate the learning process with more tools and strategies. I reflect more often and use that to adjust my lessons."
— Laura S.

Instructional Impact

National Board Certified Teachers by County
- Washoe: 421 NBCTs (Top 25 in the Nation)
- Carson City: 20 NBCTs
- Douglas County: 23 NBCTs (including 4 newly certified in 2024)
- Lyon County: 21 NBCTs
- Churchill County: 9 NBCTs
- Storey County: 1 NBCT

"It has made me examine my teaching practices and adjust my instruction. I now use assessments more effectively and with a clearer purpose."
— Noelle C.

Sustained Impact Beyond the Cohort

- Many candidates plan to mentor future cohorts
- Greater alignment with NBPTS's Five Core Propositions
- Renewed passion and purpose in their teaching career

"Yes, I do feel that this process has taught me a lot and helped me rediscover my passion for teaching. I'm excited to continue growing and supporting others."
— Amanda F.

Next Steps for NBCT Cohort Program

- Continue support cycles and PLCs
- Expand outreach to rural districts
- Highlight certified NBCTs as leaders across regions

National Board Candidates (2024–25)
Total Participants: 78
Component Completion Progress:
- 60% Year 1 (47 candidates)
- 27% Year 2 (21 candidates)
- 13% Year 3 (10 candidates)

NWRPDP National Boards Cohort 2024-2025

Empowering Educators Across Northern Nevada Through National Board Certification

Introduction: The Northern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (NWRPDP) supported 78 educators across six counties: Washoe, Carson City, Douglas, Lyon, Churchill, & Storey, through the rigorous & transformative journey of National Board Certification. This experience deepens instructional practice, strengthens teacher leadership, & renews professional purpose.

Cohort Structure & Timeline- The 2024–2025 cohort includes:

- 60% Year 1 Candidates (47 educators)
- 27% Year 2 Candidates (21 educators)
- 13% Year 3 Candidates (10 educators)

Educators attended monthly in-person sessions at Sparks High School with weekly virtual & 1:1 in-person support. Candidates completed up to four components across three years.

Common Themes in Candidate Feedback
Positive Aspects of the Experience:

- Support & Feedback – Candidate Support Providers (CSPs) & peers offered ongoing, personalized guidance that helped build confidence & momentum. Candidates received 1:1 support (as needed), submitted drafts for detailed feedback, & benefited from consistent encouragement throughout each stage of the process.
- Structured Collaboration – Monthly meetings created time to reflect, write, & engage in peer discussion.
- Professional Community – Candidates formed supportive groups at their individual school sites, where they collaborated regularly & encouraged one another throughout the process. For example, strong site-based teams emerged at North Valleys HS, Wooster HS, Hug HS, Reno HS, Moss ES, & Pleasant Valley ES.
- Motivation – Encouragement from leaders helped candidates persevere through challenges.

Impact on Teaching Practices & Mindsets:

- Increased Reflectiveness – Teachers now plan with deeper intention & align strategies to outcomes.
- Data-Driven Instruction – Teachers use formative data more effectively to inform decisions.
- Assessment Practices – Candidates now integrate student self-assessment & reflection regularly.
- Instructional Clarity – Many reported more purposeful lesson planning & stronger alignment with goals.
- Empowerment & Confidence – Teachers gained validation in their skills & renewed commitment to growth.
- Improved Relationships – Stronger communication with families & students became a priority.

Instructional & Regional Impact: Washoe County continues to lead the region with 421 NBCTs & is ranked in the top 25 districts nationally. In the most recent release, Washoe tied for 15th in the U.S. for newly certified teachers (36 new NBCTs in December 2024). Douglas,

Carson City, & other rural districts are steadily expanding their NBCT presence. In 2024, Douglas certified 4 new teachers, Carson City added 2 new NBCTs, & Lyon & Churchill counties also celebrated first-time certifications.

Sustained Impact Beyond the Cohort: Candidates are eager to mentor future teachers, expand their leadership, & model NBPTS's Five Core Propositions in their schools. The experience fosters long-term instructional shifts & builds capacity across districts.

Next Steps:

- Continue supporting returning candidates (27%)
- Prepare first-year candidates for Component submission
- Recognize NBCTs as leaders across districts
- Expand outreach to rural teachers
- Support MOC renewals every five years.

Academic Math Conversation

ACADEMIC MATH
CONVERSATION

"Mathematical discussion is not just about getting the right answer—it's about understanding the why behind the how."
– Peter Liljedahl, Mathematics Education Researcher

ASSESSMENT & APPROACH

This training implemented evidence-based practices that benefit all students through structured mathematical discourse while directly addressing compliance requirements for an English Learner Corrective Action Plan that was issued for failing to meet minimum annual yearly growth in mathematics.

AFFECT

The training served 22 educators from Churchill County School District: nine elementary school teachers, ten secondary teachers, and three English Language Learner teachers. These participants collectively have the potential to **impact 880 students** —230 at the elementary level and 650 at the secondary level.

ABUNDANT ADVANTAGES

Strategies designed for English learners enhance learning for *all* students:
- Four Language Domains Integration in Mathematics - Incorporates reading, writing, speaking, and listening into math instruction
- Math Interview Strategy: 4-Step Structured Process - Clear framework for problem analysis and mathematical dialogue
- Explain, Paraphrase, Clarify Framework - Teaches students to articulate thinking and ask clarifying questions using tier 2 vocabulary.
- Structured Mathematical Reasoning Support - Scaffolds help all students communicate math ideas
- Academic Language Development for Every Learner - Math vocabulary building benefits every student

ACHIVEMENTS AND ACCLAIM

Participants were asked on a scale of 1 to 5: How useful and impactful to your teaching was this training?

Mean: 4.53

Participants Said:
"I love learning things I can implement into my room. I think giving these to students to use, will not only have them talk about the math, but also foster more learning from their peers and other perspectives/strategies."
"I very much appreciate the pacing of this training, and feel that I am walking away with something actionable for my classroom."
"One of the best PDs since I started here at the district!" (4 years ago)

Before Class | After Class

- The 8 components of Sheltered Instruction.
- Knowledge of the 4 language domains: reading, writing, speaking & listening.
- Your understanding of the purpose of academic conversations during math instruction.
- Your knowledge about how to implement academic conversation strategies during math instruction like the Math Interview.
- Your comfort level in implementing academic conversation strategies during math instruction like the Math Interview.

0.00   1.00   2.00   3.00   4.00   5.00

AHEAD & BEYOND

For the 2025-26 school year, the Academic Math Conversation training will be offered again alongside a second part designed to extend these strategies further. Additionally, both second and third grade teachers and high school math teachers will receive modified versions of this training tailored to their respective grade levels.

"Mathematics is not about numbers, equations, computations, or algorithms: it is about understanding."

– William Paul Thurston, Mathematician

An EL CAP (English Learner Corrective Action Plan) was issued against students at Numa Elementary and Churchill County Middle School for failing to meet minimum annual yearly growth in mathematics. Research demonstrates that mathematical discourse significantly improves comprehension and problem-solving abilities for all students, with particular benefits for English learners. This intervention addressed the compliance requirement while providing evidence-based strategies that enhance mathematical understanding and language development for every student in the classroom, recognizing that effective practices for English learners strengthen learning outcomes for all.

The Academic Math Conversation Training served all 4th and 5th grade teachers at Numa Elementary and all mathematics teachers at CCMS in direct response to the EL CAP. The program utilized an intensive workshop format with classroom implementation support to provide immediate, practical strategies that benefit all students while addressing specific English learner needs.

Program Focus Areas:

- The 8 Components of Sheltered Instruction
- Four Language Domains Integration: Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening in Math
- Academic Conversation Strategies and Implementation During Math Instruction
- Tier 2 Vocabulary Development Through Scaffolded Mathematical Discussion Handouts
- Comfort Building and Confidence Development in Mathematical Discourse Facilitation

Participants learned to facilitate mathematical conversations using the "Math Interview" strategy—a structured four-step process where students read problems independently, solve collaboratively, then engage in explain-paraphrase-clarify dialogue before switching roles and reflecting on their learning. Teachers acquired strategies to integrate academic language development within mathematical discourse, utilizing this scaffolded discussion protocol that provides systematic language supports beneficial to all students, including native English speakers, struggling learners, and advanced students.

The Academic Math Conversation Training represents a strategic response to the EL CAP compliance requirement while demonstrating how evidence-based practices create equitable learning opportunities for all students in mathematics. Building on this success, the district plans to offer this training again next year and extend the program with grade-level modifications for 2nd and 3rd grade teachers as well as high school mathematics educators, ensuring comprehensive mathematical discourse support across all grade levels while maintaining compliance and enhancing student achievement for every learner.

ARL Classroom Management

ARL Classroom Management

"Effective classroom management is the foundation upon which all great teaching is built." - Harry Wong

The Challenge

Nevada leads the nation in teacher shortages, with many educators entering classrooms through Alternative Route to Licensure (ARL) programs without traditional classroom management training. These capable professionals need immediate access to research-based management strategies to create effective learning environments.

Topics Addressed

- Value of being a positive part of a school community
- 5:1 Positive Specific Feedback Strategy
- Positive Greetings at the Door
- 2x10 Strategy
- Soft Starts
- Methods of instruction for routines
- Strategic Noticing
- Management Techniques
- Deescalation Strategies
- Relationship Building
- Being a reflective educator
- Implementing Classroom Routines

In Their Words

Participants were asked on a scale of 1 to 5: How useful and impactful to your teaching was Classroom Management?

Mean: 4.78

Participants Said:
"It gave me 100 more tools than I had and gave me the opportunity to really plan my strategies."
"I just have more knowledge in management and feel so much more prepared than I was before this class."
"I'm much more mindful of my choices when responding to both positive and negative behaviors, and more aware of better ways to build relationships and routines in the classroom."
"This class did a great job of supporting us"

Future Focus

The ARL Classroom Management course will continue twice annually in Washoe County, providing ongoing support for alternative route educators. This sustained commitment ensures quality classroom management training for teachers entering through non-traditional pathways.

Impact

The ARL Classroom Management course equipped 18 early-career educators with essential skills, impacting approximately 1,800 students annually. Over these educators' careers, this intervention will positively influence tens of thousands of students in well-managed learning environments.

Results

Bar chart comparing Before Class and After Class ratings (scale 0.00 to 5.00) across: Positive Community, 5:1 Feedback, Door Greetings, 2x10 Strategy, Soft Starts, Instruction on Routines, Strategic Noticing, Management Techniques, Deescalation Strategies, Relationship Building, Reflective Educator.
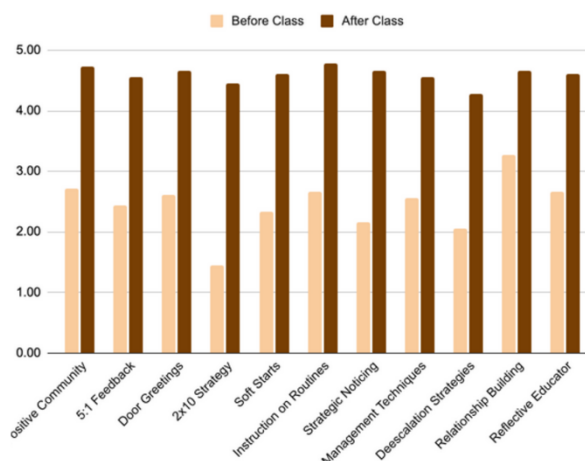
"Nevada's teacher shortage is growing and exacerbating many serious problems in our public education system." - Nevada Advisory Committee Vice Chair, Sondra Cosgrove

This stark assessment reflects Nevada's position as the state with the worst teacher shortage in the country. As school districts scramble to fill classrooms, they increasingly rely on Alternative Route to Licensure (ARL) programs, emergency certifications, and expedited hiring processes that bypass traditional teacher preparation programs. While these pathways successfully place educators in classrooms quickly, they create a critical gap: many capable professionals enter teaching roles without comprehensive preparation in classroom management strategies.

The ARL Classroom Management Course directly addresses this deficit by providing research-based, practical strategies that educators can immediately implement. As Nevada Deputy Superintendent Christy McGill notes, "we can get you in the classroom, get you paid while you are taking those teacher prep classes" - but those classes must include the foundational management skills traditionally developed through comprehensive teacher preparation programs.

Program Focus Areas:

- Value of being a positive part of a school community
- 5:1 Positive Specific Feedback Strategy
- Positive Greetings at the Door
- 2x10 Strategy for relationship building
- Soft Starts and transition management
- Methods of instruction for establishing classroom routines
- Strategic Noticing techniques
- De-escalation strategies for challenging behaviors
- Reflective teaching practices for continuous improvement

The course emphasizes practical application through evidence-based approaches that new educators can implement immediately. Participants learn to leverage positive interactions, establish meaningful connections with students, and create structured environments that promote learning.

Post-course survey data from 19 participants ranging from Pre-K to high school demonstrates significant growth across all competency areas, with participants showing an average improvement of 2 points on a 5-point scale in every measured category. These measurable improvements translate directly to enhanced classroom environments where students experience consistent, positive interactions and clear expectations across all grade levels.

The ARL Classroom Management Course represents a critical investment in addressing Nevada's unprecedented teacher shortage while ensuring student success. As educational hiring practices continue to evolve to meet demand, this targeted professional development ensures that all students receive instruction from educators equipped with essential classroom management strategies, regardless of their pathway into the profession.

New Teacher Academy (Churchill)

New Educator Academy ChurchillCSD

27 Participants

The participants included 4 secondary teachers, 2 Alternative Route to Licensure middle school teachers, and 21 long-term substitute teachers filling open positions from Pre-K through 12th grade in various content areas, including Career and Technical Education (CTE). Participants attended seven live, 3-hour sessions , met with mentors monthly, and completed classroom observations.

Impact

The New Teacher Academy provided professional development to educators who collectively serve approximately 2,400 students district-wide—100 at the elementary level and 2,300 at the secondary level—improving classroom management and instructional quality for these learners.

Moving Forward

Churchill County School District continues to address the needs of incoming staff through the New Teacher Academy. The program will maintain its in-person format to provide comprehensive support and professional development. The academy will focus on delivering targeted training and resources to help these educators succeed in their roles.

Participants said:

- "I have a few classroom management strategies now to implement and reflect on with my classes. I really needed some new, effective strategies to work on and use in class."
- "I've definitely gotten some great ideas for strategies and ideas from other new teachers which would work super well for my classes."
- "I learned amazing strategies that will help me to connect with students and help them to learn in a positive environment."
- "I really enjoyed my time at this training. There were plenty of opportunities to collaborate with my peers and share experiences. Not sitting and listening the whole time."

The Results
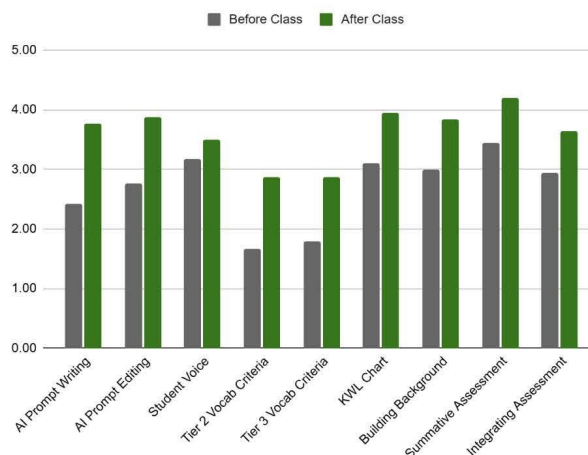
Educators saw an increase in understanding of best practices for teaching methods.

Topics Addressed:

- Classroom Management Techniques: Learn the art of setting clear expectations, maintaining consistency, and proactively managing student behavior for a harmonious and productive classroom environment.
- #WAVE: Student centered learning methods.
- Use of Sophisticated Language in the Classroom: Dive into the basics of morphology tailored to your grade level and content area. Explore effective strategies for enriching classroom dialogue, and learn to create content-rich anchor charts that support student success across all grade levels.
- Content-Specific Instructional Strategies: Customize your teaching to meet your students' unique needs, focusing on building their background knowledge to enhance comprehension and success.
- MTSS: Implementing MTSS to create a safe and predictable environment that nurtures a positive classroom culture and supports all learners.
- AI as an Education Partner: Learn to harness cutting-edge technology to create personalized learning experiences and streamline your teaching process.

"The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery."

– Mark Van Doren, American poet

Building on the success of the inaugural 2023-2024 program, Churchill County School District continues its commitment to supporting new educators through the New Teacher Academy for the 2024-2025 school year. This initiative directly addresses nationwide staffing shortages that have increased reliance on long-term substitutes in unfilled positions, while providing comprehensive training in classroom management and teaching strategies for both new and transitioning educators.

The 2024-25 New Teacher Academy serves participants who primarily consist of long-term substitute teachers filling open unfilled positions, along with new licensed educators in years 1-3 of teaching. The program maintains its proven in-person format to provide targeted professional development and support.

Program Focus Areas:

- Classroom Management Techniques
- NEPF Standard 4 with #WAVE Student Centered Learning Methods
- NEPF Standard 1 and building background knowledge
- NEPF Standard 5 with Formative Assessment and data driven instruction
- Vocabulary Instruction and the criteria for selecting Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 words
- AI as an education partner

The New Teacher Academy's primary objectives are to increase teacher effectiveness to improve student outcomes, boost teacher efficacy and confidence, promote retention rates within the district, and support the conversion of long-term substitute teachers to fully licensed staff members.

Through the New Teacher Academy, educators serving approximately 2,400 students district-wide—100 at the elementary level and 2,300 at the secondary level—receive comprehensive training that directly benefits classroom instruction and student learning experiences.

Churchill County School District remains committed to the continuous improvement of the New Teacher Academy, adapting content and delivery methods to meet the evolving needs of educators and students. This ongoing investment reflects the district's proactive approach to addressing teacher recruitment and retention challenges while building a skilled, confident educator workforce.

Parent Involvement and Family Engagement

Parent Involvement and Family Engagement

"When effective, sustained partnerships are in place, everyone benefits."

-Dr. Karen L. Mapp, Leading expert on family engagement

183 educators

The participants included 92 elementary teachers, 81 secondary teachers, and an additional 10 individuals from various roles such as administrator, counselor, social worker, nurse, and speech pathologist, from 6 Nevada school districts. They met for eight two-hour Zoom classes, completed assignments related to each module, asynchronous reading, and a final project.

On a scale of 1 to 5 rate the statement:

This course offered useful and important information about Parent Involvement and Family Engagement.

Mean: 4.66

Participants said:

(The most beneficial aspect of this course was) "The final project. Walking away with a product I will actually use."

"Learning about how to communicate with parents in different ways, how to reach out when needed without it getting too personal. The tools I've learned here, I'll use throughout my career."

"I learned about how recognize Children in Transition. It's so important to pick up on clues so we can provide services..."

(The most beneficial aspect of this course was) "Learning how much I did not know about communication with families."

Impact Potential

- Students and families of 1,871 elementary students.
- Students and families of 12,690 secondary students.

The Results

Before Class / After Class
(categories: NRS/NAC, DCF/PTA, SFE, Comms, Diverse, CRFEP, McKinney, Trauma)

Educators left the class with a strong understanding of best practices related to family engagement, preparing them to cultivate stronger and more equitable school-family partnerships in the future

Parent and Family Topics Addressed:

1. Knowledge of Parent Involvement and Family Engagement NRS 391.019 and NAC 391.030

2. Dual Capacity Framework and PTA Standards

3. Implications of Diverse Family Structures

4. Ideas to Support Family Engagement at Your School Site

5. Culturally Responsive Family Engagement Practices

6. Effective Communication Strategies for Working with Families

7. McKinney-Vento Act and Help for Families in Transition

8. Trauma Informed Practices

Looking ahead...

23% of participants developed collaborative initiatives that will strengthen parent involvement strategies by sharing with broader educational stakeholders, extending research backed family engagement frameworks throughout our educational community.

72% of participants created sustainable projects grounded in evidence-based practices that will welcome new families and establish lasting systems to strengthen school-family partnerships for years to come.

"As state superintendent, I feel I have the opportunity and responsibility to build a system of education that is as beneficial for families today as American education was in lifting up my family."

-Dale Erquiaga, former Nevada Superintendent of Public Instruction

The Office of Parental Involvement and Family Engagement was created in 2011 to actively promote and support the participation and engagement of families and communities in a child's education. Pursuant to NRS 391.019 and NAC 391.030 effective July 2015, initial licensees require at least 3 semester credits (45 hours) regarding parental involvement and family engagement that: is consistent with the elements and goals for effective involvement and engagement set forth in NRS 392.457; and includes an emphasis on building relationships, outreach to families, and developing an appreciation and understanding of families from diverse backgrounds.

Course Construction

In 2020, a NWRPDP trainer collaborated with the professional development coordinator in Carson City School District to develop a learning model and process for teachers and administrators that would fulfill the NRS requirements. The resulting course resources provided research-based best practices, tools, and supports needed to create partnerships between school and families.

Results

Topic	Pre	Post	Change +
Knowledge of the Parent Involvement and Family Engagement NRS 391.019 and NAC 391.030	3.00	4.37	1.37
Dual Capacity Framework and PTA Standards	2.47	4.23	1.76
Ideas to Support Family Engagement at Your School Site	3.23	4.56	1.33
Effective Communication Strategies for Working with Families	3.44	4.57	1.13
Implications of Diverse Family Structures Children in Transition, Military, Divorce, etc.)	3.30	4.45	1.15
Culturally Responsive Family Engagement Practices	3.32	4.50	1.17
McKinney-Vento Act and Help for Families in Transition	2.64	4.36	1.72
Trauma-Informed Practices	3.17	4.46	1.29

Shifting the Balance 3-5

Shifting the Balance 3-5 Book Study PD

"Effective reading instruction is systematic, explicit, and based on scientific evidence about how children learn to read." -National Reading Panel

Building Momentum

This inaugural cohort included 2 administrators, a literacy specialist, 2 middle school teachers, and 9 elementary school teachers, represnting 4 school districts, for a **total possible impact of 1,370 elementary students and 225 middle school students.**

Based on the positive outcomes of this Shifting the Balance book study, NWRPDP will offer this book study again next year along with additional literacy strategy courses to strengthen evidence-based instruction across our region.

Behind the Book

As Nevada districts work to strengthen literacy outcomes, Shifting the Balance 3-5 was chosen for its focus on science-backed practices that support diverse learners. The book's emphasis on explicit instruction directly addresses regional literacy improvement goals.

Book Club Buzz

Participants were asked on a scale of 1 to 5: How useful and impactful to your teaching was the Shifting the Balance Book Study?

Mean: 4.83

Participants said:
"Amazing! I took away almost all of this book, even teaching 2nd grade. "
"I felt this course was a great asset to revisiting areas I had a good amount of knowledge in, but in a more updated way and in ways that targeted the immediate needs and growing demands of literacy being a low achieving area in the state of Nevada."
"I have a great deal of tools and new innovative ways to incorporate reading and writing ..."
"I have changed the way that I think about morphology instruction and especially about scaffolding orthographic mapping."

Before & After Breakdown

Chart legend: ■ Before Class ■ After Class

Categories (left to right):
- I intentionally incorporate strategies to build background knowledge with my students.
- I intentionally choose vocabulary words to build content knowledge with my students.
- I intentionally use implicit and explicit vocabulary teaching strategies with my students.
- I am intentional about teaching reading strategies to students so they can apply them independently to support text comprehension.
- I explicitly teach morphology to students.
- I incorporate orthographic mapping techniques into teaching multisyllabic words.
- I intentionally incorporate fluency practice into instructional time.

"*The single most important factor in determining whether students will succeed in reading is the extent to which they are taught to read.*" – Jan Burkins and Kim Yaris, Shifting the Balance

In response to the need to strengthen foundational reading instruction, educators participated in a comprehensive book study on *Shifting the Balance 3-5*. This online book study, which included educators from Carson, Churchill, Lyon and Washoe County school districts, addressed gaps in student literacy by focusing on evidence-based practices rooted in the science of reading that support all learners.

The book study was designed to promote best practices in literacy instruction for upper elementary and middle school educators. The program provided strategic shifts that strengthened the teaching of reading through explicit structured literacy approaches, and intentional vocabulary development methods. Participants engaged in six virtual training sessions via Zoom, focusing on practical classroom applications for grades 3-8.

Program Focus Areas:

- Background knowledge and vocabulary instruction fundamentals
- Explicit teaching of reading strategies and student independence
- Morphology instruction and orthographic mapping techniques
- Fluency development in intermediate grades

Participants utilized the CTR (Choose, Try, Reflect) framework to implement a high-leverage instructional routine from each of the six shifts. This systematic approach allowed educators to choose specific strategies, try them in their classrooms, and reflect on their effectiveness while building a deeper understanding of science of reading principles.

Course evaluation and reflection revealed substantial improvements across all measured competencies. The most significant gains occurred in orthographic mapping techniques (2.00 point increase), explicit and implicit vocabulary instruction (2.00 and 2.33 point increases respectively), and instructional supports for independent reading (2.17 point increase). These improvements reflect enhanced educator confidence and competency in evidence-based reading instruction practices.

Based on these positive outcomes and participant feedback, NWRPDP plans to offer this book study again next year to train additional educators in evidence-based literacy practices. As educational practices continue to evolve to meet diverse learner needs, this targeted professional development ensures that all students receive instruction from educators equipped with evidence-based literacy strategies.

Teacher Book Clubs

TEACHER BOOK CLUBS

Promoting a Culture of Professional Relationships

This case study involved 32 educators from four school districts who participated in three or more book studies during the 2024-2025 school year.

Key themes included building relationships, fostering calm environments, and promoting self-regulation.

KEY RATINGS

Degree the book club built a strong sense of professional community.
4.79/5

Offered useful and important information that improved student performance.
4.68/5

MINDSET SHIFTS

- Control → Co-regulation
- Reaction → Reflection
- Judgement → Curiosity
- Burnout → Balance

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL TRANSFORMATION

"*These courses build a sense of community and shared purpose, which inspired positive changes in my teaching practices and in my life.*"

"*The books' messages of extending kindness even when it's difficult encourages me to view student mistakes as learning opportunities rather than just failures. I need to approach challenging students with more compassion, recognizing their inherent worth and potential, even when their behavior is difficult.*"

"*I love the gentle nature of these book clubs that makes it easy to open up, be vulnerable, and collaborate ways to improve on things like self-care, mental health, fostering and practicing kindness, reaching difficult students, dealing with difficult staff etc.*"

NWRPDP - DESIREE GRAY

Impact of Teacher Book Clubs on Instructional Practice and Student Outcomes

Teacher book clubs are a research-backed model of professional development that enhance teacher efficacy, instructional practice, and student achievement. Rooted in collaborative inquiry and reflective dialogue, these clubs allow educators to explore evidence-based strategies related to brain science, social-emotional learning (SEL), trauma-informed care, and culturally responsive teaching (Amendum et al., 2019; Hendricks et al., 2023).

This case study involved 32 educators from four school districts who participated in three or more book studies during the 2024–2025 school year. Key themes included building relationships, fostering calm environments, and promoting self-regulation.

Survey Results

	Knowledge Before	Knowledge After	Change +
Building Positive Relationships with **Students**	3.6	4.79	+1.19
Building Positive Relationships with **Colleagues**	3.2	4.74	+1.54
Utilizing Social Emotional Learning Strategies (Welcoming/Inclusion, Engaging, Optimistic Closures),	3.4	4.74	+1.54
Utilizing Trauma-Sensitive Strategies (Check-ins, Strengths-Based Language, Regulation and Safety, Empathy)	2.83	4.63	+1.8
Creating a Calm Classroom Environment (Calming Corners, Classroom Lighting, etc.)	2.92	4.68	+1.76
Self Regulation (Regulate, Relate, Reason)/Brain Research	2.89	4.68	+1.79
De-escalation Techniques for Difficult Behaviors	3.1	4.63	+1.53
Developing and Implementing Professional and Personal Goals	3.36	4.84	+1.48
Maximizing Your Time and Energy	2.89	4.63	+1.74
Ideas for Self Care/Addressing Stress	2.79	4.74	+1.95

All results showed statistically significant gains ($p < 0.001$).

Key Outcomes
- **Improved Practice:** Teachers reported shifts in mindset—from punitive discipline to co-regulation, empathy, and relationship-centered approaches.
- **Student Impact:** Educators noted greater student emotional safety, engagement, and well-being.
- **Conclusion:** Teacher book clubs foster professional and personal growth through dialogue, collaboration, and practical application. They empower educators to implement SEL and trauma-informed strategies that enhance classroom culture and student outcomes; reminding teachers that caring for themselves is essential to supporting others.