

NEVADA

PHASED ACTION PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2022

In the 2021-22 school year, education stakeholders in Nevada undertook a planning process to develop an action plan based on the state's [opportunity analysis](#) to grow personalized, competency-based learning in the state. This action plan does not include every recommendation from that analysis. Rather, it proposes an initial set of actions based on those recommendations. Successful completion of these action steps will set the state up for future success as it pursues additional recommendations from the opportunity analysis.

Our recommendations fall into three phases, which will ideally occur with strong community engagement from across the state beginning in the 2022-23 school year. The phases outlined should be seen as a way to think strategically about the sequence of activities. However, as the context of implementation shifts, phases may run concurrently for a period of time. Readers interested in exploring each step of the action planning process can review the [Action Planning Synthesis](#).

Note: Responsibility for each step, specific tasks and measures of success are meant to be iterative and should be modified and added to by stakeholders throughout the implementation process.

WHAT IS PERSONALIZED, COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING?

Personalized learning means creating engaging learning experiences customized to each student's strengths, needs and interests.

In a personalized, competency-based learning environment:

1. Students make important decisions about their learning experiences, how they will create and apply knowledge and how they will demonstrate their learning
2. Assessment is a meaningful, positive and empowering learning experience for students that yields timely, relevant and actionable evidence
3. Students receive timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs
4. Students progress based on evidence of mastery or competency, not seat time
5. Students learn actively using different pathways and varied pacing
6. Strategies to ensure equity are embedded in the culture, structure and pedagogy of schools and education systems
7. Rigorous, common expectations for learning are explicit, transparent, measurable and transferable

Source: [Aurora Institute](#)

Personalized, competency-based learning is often used interchangeably with other terms. You may have heard it referred to as student-centered learning, competency-based learning, proficiency-based learning or mastery-based learning.

1 PHASE ONE CAPACITY BUILDING

Phase one should involve community members from across the state coming together to build the framework for a statewide network working group as described in the first action step. This group should identify the structures needed to create a strong statewide consortium that empowers Nevada to collectively take action to advance personalized, competency-based learning including the resources required, tasks to be undertaken and measures of success. In addition to building the framework for the statewide network, the group should also develop a strong communications plan and feedback system as well as explore strategies for securing the financial and human capital needed to advance this work long term.

STEP 1

Build a framework for a statewide network to create and execute on state-level policy recommendations

Description

Statewide education stakeholders collectively develop solutions to the recommendations presented in subsequent phases of this action plan. The group should include a diverse range of stakeholders with the appropriate mix of decision makers to secure buy in from the broader community while ensuring that the recommendations are executed.

Who is responsible?

Nevada Department of Education (NDE), the Nevada State Education Association (NSEA), Clark County Education Association (CCEA), the Nevada Association of School Superintendents (NASS), edXtraordinary, KnowledgeWorks, relevant members of the state workforce and higher education community, other state-level agencies and Jobs for America's Graduates – Nevada.

Specific tasks

- Review participants from the action planning process and identify how to continue engaging the diverse stakeholders that have been involved through the 2021-22 school year
- Invite members from relevant organizations to participate in the statewide network
- Convene education stakeholders to establish a vision, objectives and tasks to get the statewide network up and running
- Develop the systems and structures necessary for the successful launch of the statewide network
- Create an asset map of stakeholders and develop a recruitment strategy to engage others not represented in the initial stakeholder group

Measures of success

- Representation from diverse stakeholders in the planning meetings
- Number of engagements in the fall working group, including both number of participants and representation from different stakeholder groups

STEP 2A

Create a robust statewide communications plan to inform the public about the statewide network

Description

The working group should craft a communications plan to increase awareness of the work being undertaken to build grassroots support, educate the general public, shape the narrative around personalized, competency-based learning and identify additional resources that will need to be secured. The communications plan should ensure that stakeholders not involved in the working group are still provided feedback opportunities at regular intervals. Lastly, the communications plan should consider whether the statewide network's activities should be limited to public schools or should also engage with private and/or home school providers.

Who is responsible?

Members of the working group and the Nevada Department of Education's communications team.

Specific tasks

- Develop communications strategies to share vision, objectives and tasks as well as upcoming working group opportunities
- Develop strategies to inform parents, students, families and other community stakeholders about personalized, competency-based learning — what it is and what it is not, how this approach will help meet the needs of Nevada's students, common misconceptions and potential points of public concern
- Develop strategies and resources to communicate with English-language learners, multilingual-learner families and those for whom English is the primary language
- Develop a communications strategy targeting Nevada employers to communicate how this work will benefit workforce development and recruitment in the state of Nevada
- Create personalized, competency-based learning ambassadors to serve as liaisons and catalysts for change in their communities
- Identify appropriate platforms and channels to effectively communicate this work to target audiences (e.g., a website, social media, etc.)

Measures of success

- Digital engagement
(web, social and e-marketing)
- Media coverage
- Participation in public events
- Number of high-quality events
(measured by participant surveys)
- Participation in fall statewide
network meeting(s)

STEP 2B

Create a strategy to secure resources and staffing needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the statewide network

Description

External partners (e.g., KnowledgeWorks, ed.Xtraordinary) will initially provide technical expertise and coordination for the statewide network, however, to make this effort sustainable, the working group should consider how to adequately provide the resources and staffing necessary to sustain a statewide network over time. This could involve identifying an appropriate entity or entities to manage various components of the network, creating new entities (such as an intermediary) and soliciting funds (either state, federal or philanthropic) to ensure that this effort is continued over time.

Who is responsible?

Members of the statewide network working group.

Specific tasks

- Assess the resources needed to sustain the statewide network beyond those already allocated, both in terms of human and financial capital
- Engage relevant stakeholders and potential funders in conversations to secure the needed resources

Measures of success

- TBD



PHASE TWO

FOUNDATIONAL STRUCTURES

Phase two involves launching the statewide network developed by the working group in phase one. The first two tasks of this network from a state policy perspective will be to develop a statewide profile of a learner and the development of statewide competencies. The expectation is not that this work will be completed by the launch of the network, but rather that insights garnered from this phase can be used to inform phase three.

STEP 1

Launch the statewide network

Description

The working group from phase one should successfully launch the statewide network that has been planned over the previous months. This will coincide with the launch of school-based implementation work. Together, these efforts will establish Nevada's capacity to address state-level policy and local-level practice concurrently.

Who is responsible?

Members of the working group from phase one.

Specific tasks

- Establish a team to guide the statewide network meetings including meeting facilitation, agenda setting and logistics
- Create and hold an initial meeting of the statewide network
- Promote initial and subsequent statewide network meetings to the general public
- Consider strategies to ensure optimal engagement including meeting times, communication channels and available modes of participation – reducing barriers and logistical challenges

Measures of success

- Media coverage
- Digital engagement (page views, open rates, public survey engagement, etc)
- Community engagement
- Participation numbers and the demographic makeup of meeting participants

STEP 2

Develop a statewide Portrait of a Learner

Description

The Portrait of a Learner is meant to create specific expectations for how students demonstrate mastery of skills. This effort serves as both a mechanism for the development of shared competencies and as a strategy for involving stakeholders (including students, parents, families and the broader community) in the statewide effort to expand the use of personalized, competency-based learning in schools. District leaders must also have the space and support to ensure that the Portrait of a Learner is supportive of every learning community in the state.

Who is responsible?

All stakeholders should be involved, but the state should also identify facilitators with experience in Portrait of a Learner development, as well as with Nevada's education context.

Specific tasks

- Establish a plan and process for developing the Portrait of a Learner so that it aligns to goals and objectives throughout the state and across different silos
- Launch a statewide collaborative effort through the statewide network to develop a Nevada Portrait of a Learner
- Study other state Portrait of a Learner examples
- Develop initial Portrait of a Learner qualities
- Engage in a robust community feedback process around the Portrait of a Learner
- Develop strategies for how the state-level Portrait of a Learner will interact with schools that may have developed their own portrait
- Finalize and publish the draft Portrait of a Learner for community feedback
- Publish a completed Portrait of a Learner

Measures of success

- Number of community engagements around the Portrait of a Learner
- Media coverage
- Successful development and publication of the Portrait of a Learner
- Stakeholder endorsements of the portrait

STEP 3

Develop statewide competencies aligned to the Portrait of a Learner

Description

Statewide competencies should emphasize transferable skills that show up in any/all post-secondary contexts as well as provide room for each student to explore their interests. In the near term this includes building out learning models while medium-to-long term goals include creating a strong learning community and resources for implementation. This process should engage a broad range of stakeholders including students, parents, families and the community at-large.

Who is responsible?

Nevada Department of Education and district leaders should jointly lead this work, but the use of outside facilitators to support technical details is recommended.

Specific tasks

- Develop a working group to create the competencies housed within the statewide network (this may or may not be a different group from the Portrait of a Learner development group)
- Study other state competency frameworks to determine components to potentially emulate
- Create initial statewide competency framework
- Engage in a robust community feedback process around the competencies
- Consider recommendations for how competencies could be integrated into school accountability structures during the development stages
- Determine how young people might show evidence of prior learning towards the portrait and competencies (e.g., through portfolios or performance tasks)
- Review state regulations and statutes to determine whether additional legal flexibilities will need to be pursued to allow schools and districts to orient instruction around the Portrait of a Learner and aligned competencies
 - If no legal changes are needed, create a change management plan for districts that outlines how they could leverage existing flexibilities to accomplish this
- Finalize and publish competencies

Measures of success

- Successful development and publication of statewide competencies
- Media coverage
- Endorsements of competencies from relevant stakeholders
- Number of schools implementing competencies in their instructional design (long term)



PHASE THREE INTEGRATION – FIRST STEPS

In phase three, the statewide network will engage in the process of considering how to integrate the work conducted on the profile and Portrait of a Learner into other related statewide systems and structures. The relationships built through the process of creating the portrait and competencies, as well as these documents themselves, will form the basis of this work. Unlike the first two phases, these action areas are not intended to be linear, and as such many of these could be pursued concurrently with others.

ACTION AREA 1 – Communications

Develop a communications plan to further disseminate the work of the statewide network from Phases 1 and 2

Description

This communication action plan should highlight work accomplished in phases one and two. This should include developing tools for storytelling that share student voices; highlights schools working to implement personalized, competency-based learning through the existing pilot; elevates conversation about existing and potential funding sources to advance new learning practices; identifies legal mechanisms available to support schools that are interested in implementing personalized, competency-based learning; and messaging that supports legislative and regulatory changes, if necessary. Strategies should also aim to garner support from parents, ensuring they understand the new learning approach and how it will benefit their child’s long-term social, emotional and academic growth. This work should draw on successful implementation where possible. The group should consider how to establish a change management plan to help districts navigate what to do and when, as well as define success and desired learning outcomes (e.g., such as providing a clear portfolio of what competencies are needed for graduation with choices of how to meet those competencies). The state should also examine examples from outside of Nevada to understand what this can look like when implemented effectively.

Who is responsible?

Nevada Department of Education, State Board of Education, Nevada State Education Association, parent groups, Competency Based Education Network pilot schools, NASS, Clark County Education Association, KnowledgeWorks, Ed.Xtraordinary.

Specific tasks

- Convene stakeholders to reexamine the phase one and phase two communications plan and provide updates as needed
- Craft a district-level communications plan to message how to use existing structures (and identify the need for new ones) to spread personalized, competency-based learning practices statewide, as well as publicize the value of this approach
 - If necessary, develop a strategy for districts to connect with lawmakers to advocate for any legal changes identified as necessary in phase two
- Develop specific communications guides targeted towards different stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, educators, K-12 leaders, legislators, other state policymakers, higher education and the workforce sector)
- Develop storytelling resources to communicate early wins and what a successful personalized, competency-based learning model looks like in practice

Measures of success

- Media coverage
- Other measures TBD

ACTION AREA 2 – Statewide Systems and Structures

Improve alignment and integration of statewide student and family support structures within the state’s new Portrait of a Learner and competencies

Description

This action step should encompass a review of programs that provide social-emotional support, foster safe and healthy learning environments and deliver challenging instruction, among others. In doing so, the state should consider how to align these programs to support the pursuit of the Portrait of a Learner and competencies.

Who is responsible

Nevada Department of Education, school and district leaders, parents and other state agencies as needed.

Specific tasks

- Identify the universe of programs that need to be reviewed
- Identify the universe of state agencies that need to be engaged in the review process
- Establish a cross-agency team (including school and district leaders as well as parents that utilize these programs) to participate in the review
- Undertake a review of existing programs that provide whole child support to identify opportunities for greater alignment between programs and services offered
- Make recommendations to integrate these programs with personalized, competency-based learning approaches to ensure individual student needs are being met and that resources are being allocated equitably
- Develop resources to help families use the Portrait of a Learner as a tool to help their children graduate and to increase general engagement around these changes
- Work with the relevant agencies and organizations to implement the recommendations and to develop changes to state statute as needed
- Develop a support structure for school districts implementing the state’s Family Engagement Framework

Measures of success

- TBD

ACTION AREA 3 – Statewide Systems and Structures

Redefine seat time and attendance policies

Description

This action step empowers the state to act on the recommendations made via the Blue Ribbon Commission regarding attendance flexibilities ([specifically](#) that “Nevada should begin the migration from traditional measures of attendance to measures of engagement or participation as well as demonstrated competencies”). This should be drafted in close collaboration with legislators and should be objective and equitable.

Who is responsible?

Nevada Department of Education, members of the state legislature (both the Senate and Assembly), school and district leaders (especially those from districts participating in the Competency Based Education pilot).

Specific tasks

- Create a working group charged with developing changes to current attendance and seat time statutes (specifically looking at NRS 392.122)
- Identify whether additional changes to state policies (e.g., grading, graduation) may also need to be pursued in tandem with changes to attendance and seat time requirements

Measures of success

- Increased graduation rates (long term)
- Increased credit attainment (long term)

ACTION AREA 4 – Educator Development

Improve professional learning opportunities related to personalized, competency-based learning instruction for educators

Description

Teachers need to understand what competency-based education is, what it looks like when implemented effectively and how to implement over a multi-year period. This action step should include creating professional learning opportunities for teachers and building communities of practice and training programs (both in person and virtual) that prepare prospective teachers for personalized, competency-based learning environments. Teachers need to understand the components of a personalized, competency-based learning system, such as how this work connects to the state's vision, as well as more technical pieces such as how personalized, competency-based learning practices look when implemented at the classroom level. This work should include listening sessions to ensure that teachers' voices are heard and their feedback is incorporated into the design of new structures. Training should be appropriately paced and not rushed so that teachers have time to process it. Professional development must be continuous and designed to help educators improve over time.

Who is responsible?

Nevada Department of Education, Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs), school leaders, educators and higher education institutions.

Specific tasks

- Create an educator working group to identify both immediate and long-term strategies to improve training and professional learning opportunities for educators that enable them to implement personalized, competency-based learning strategies in the classroom
- Develop a needs assessment that schools and districts can use to determine the current state of their professional development systems and structures and assess what new structures, including resources, training and time are needed for educators to fully and meaningfully engage with personalized, competency-based learning practices
- Develop a set of key instructional practices and resources that can be utilized to advance personalized, competency-based learning and instruction
- Identify funding opportunities, either through state, federal or philanthropic sources, to support the development and execution of new professional development structures

Measures of success

- Positive educator feedback (short and long term)
- Positive student perception feedback data
- Improved student performance (long term)

ACTION AREA 5 – Educator Development

Build out the spaces and resources for educator professional development related to the Portrait of a Learner and competencies

Description

Educators must have a clear sense of what professional development opportunities exist by developing a map, visual aid or catalog. There should also be a long-term working group to build educator pathways and professional development for continued improvement.

Who is responsible?

Appropriate members of the statewide network.

Specific tasks

- Develop recommendations for how schools and districts can ensure that educators, including both teachers and administrators, are given adequate time to participate in on-the-job professional development along with normal duties
- Develop a needs assessment that schools and districts can use to determine the current state of their professional development systems and structures and assess what new systems, resources, training and time are needed for educators to meaningfully engage
- Develop a set of key instructional practices and resources that can be utilized related to personalized, competency-based learning instruction
- Identify funding opportunities, either through state, federal or philanthropic sources, to support the development and execution of new professional development structures

Measures of success

- Positive educator feedback (short and long term)
- Positive student perception feedback data
- Improved student performance (long term)

ACTION AREA 6 – Educator Development

Ensure assessment literacy is included in a new suite of professional learning afforded to educators

Description

Educators should develop formative and performance-based assessment skills so that students may demonstrate their learning in more authentic and experiential ways. Educators will need to be given space to build their data literacy skills through practice and iterative improvement with other educators. Professional development must be continuous and designed to help set educators on a path towards continuous improvement. This is a critical step before the state assessment system can be aligned to this work.

Who is responsible?

State and district leaders should work together to establish a statewide structure for educator collaboration.

Specific tasks

- Develop recommendations for how schools and districts can ensure that educators, including both teachers and administrators, are given the time to participate in on-the-job professional development along with normal duties
- Develop a needs assessment that schools and districts can use to determine the current state of their professional development systems and structures and assess what new structures, including resources, training and time are needed for educators to meaningfully engage
- Develop a set of key instructional practices and resources that can be utilized related to personalized, competency-based learning
- Identify funding opportunities, either through state, federal or philanthropic sources, to support the development and execution of new professional development

Measures of success

- Positive educator feedback (short and long term)
- Positive student perception feedback data
- Improved student performance (long term)

ACTION AREA 7 – Educator Recruitment and Retention

Grow the number of qualified teachers for college- and career-oriented courses to expand student opportunities

Description

College and career pathway opportunities provide an essential opportunity for students to take ownership of their own learning and demonstrate mastery of competencies. This is especially true at the middle and high school levels. To increase the number and scope of college- and career-ready opportunities for students, the number of qualified educators to teach these courses must be increased. Programs targeted should include career and technical education, work-based learning and dual credit, among others. The pipeline of instructors in these courses needs to be grown and staff need to better understand how to empower all students to take advantage of these opportunities.

Who is responsible?

Nevada Department of Education, local school districts, legislature, governor's office, higher education institutions and nonprofits.

Specific tasks

- Create a cross-sector team to undertake this work
- Analyze existing deficiencies in college- and career-oriented coursework across the state
- Develop a strategy to grow teacher recruitment and expand staff training for college- and career-oriented programs
- Engage with communities to test these strategies for increasing the number of educators with the qualifications necessary to teach these courses
- Identify whether legislative action is needed, either through modifying teacher qualification requirements or through additional funding for teacher preparation and development

Measures of success

- Reduced shortages in college- and career-oriented teacher postings
- Increased numbers of reported educators teaching college- and career-oriented courses
- Increased course offerings of college- and career-oriented courses

ACTION AREA 8 – Data/School Performance

Integrate personalized, competency-based learning strategies more fully into the school-performance planning (SPP) process

Description

When examining the school-performance planning process, stakeholders should explicitly examine where personalized, competency-based learning could be more explicitly integrated, identify how different resources for school improvement could be leveraged to advance personalized, competency-based learning implementation as a strategy for school improvement and offer professional development on how to use the data being collected through the school-performance planning process to advance personalized, competency-based learning.

Who is responsible?

Nevada Department of Education, school leaders and local stakeholders who have engaged in the school-performance planning process.

Specific tasks

- Convene department staff, with support from stakeholders in the field, to evaluate the school-performance planning process as well as the state's school improvement process to identify how to better leverage both and encourage the adoption of personalized, competency-based learning strategies
- Study successful models of personalized, competency-based learning implementation in Nevada and other states to identify best practices
- Create professional development resources specifically designed for school-performance planning members that are interested in personalized, competency-based learning approaches to support integration into the school-performance planning process
- Develop guidance on frequently asked questions that schools and districts can refer to about system changes needed to implement a personalized, competency-based learning system (e.g., the impact on staff contracts, grading policies, resource allocations, school calendars, etc.)
- Develop guidance for how schools and districts can leverage existing flexibilities (e.g., empowerment schools, programs of school-based decision making, credit for performance) to implement personalized, competency-based learning strategies
- Develop communications strategies specific to personalized, competency-based learning that school-performance planning members can use as they adopt new systems and strategies
- Develop a continuous cycle of improvement involving tracking adoption of personalized, competency-based learning strategies in school-performance planning, collecting feedback from school-performance planning team members as well as students, parents and families and adjusting the school-performance planning process as needed
- Establish a cross-agency research and development team to support personalized, competency-based learning schools and evaluate the efficacy of personalized, competency-based learning practices; communicate findings among districts, schools and stakeholders; and inform future policy development and Nevada Department of Education strategies

Measures of success

- Increased numbers of districts utilizing personalized, competency-based learning strategies in their school-performance planning
- Positive feedback on school-performance planning resources, specifically related to personalized, competency-based learning

ACTION AREA 9 – Data/School Performance

Develop new data dashboards to communicate statewide information

Description

Create a unified reporting system that includes space for student portfolios and school performance dashboards.

Who is responsible

The state should convene those closest to the work (especially families and educators) to ensure the system that is developed is user-centric.

Specific tasks

- Launch a task force or working group to explore building out data dashboards/new data systems to more effectively communicate the state's progress towards implementing personalized, competency-based learning
- Engage with the community to receive feedback on the proposed models and make modifications in alignment with identified community needs
- Consider creating a pilot program with state-level supports for schools and districts to pilot their own school quality indicators, which could then be incorporated into a statewide system

Measures of success

- TBD

ACTION AREA 10 – Data/School Performance

Integrate school climate surveys into the state’s school performance framework

Description

School climate surveys are currently given but are not integrated into the state’s performance framework. This action step would ensure that the framework reflects each learning community’s values and cultural responsiveness to locally-identified needs.

Who is responsible

Nevada Department of Education, community members from across the state, possibly legislators if changes in statute are needed.

Specific tasks

- Engage a team to develop a strategy for integrating the results of school climate surveys into the state’s school performance framework
- Identify action steps necessary to implement that strategy
- Develop best practices to inform how schools and communities can engage with school climate surveys to ensure accurate representation of the entire student body
- Develop recommendations for how school climate surveys can be fully integrated into the school performance framework
- Create a data privacy/security plan to ensure that the system and its accompanying processes are secure

Measures of success

- Improvements on school climate surveys
- Evidence of school climate surveys being integrated into school performance planning processes

APPENDIX

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONSIDER (JULY 2023 AND BEYOND)

These recommendations from the opportunity analysis are not explicitly included in the phased action plan presented in this document. However, the goal of this action plan is to allow the state to make progress on establishing the systems and structures required to begin acting on these additional recommendations in the future. The text of these recommendations has been drawn jointly from our opportunity analysis as well as language developed during the action planning process.



Building Capacity Recommendations

Work with leaders in districts across the state to ensure alignment between state and local visions.

Create a resource to draw essential connections between the state's vision statement and other K-12 initiatives and programs in the state with differing visions.

Convene stakeholders to make personalized, competency-based practices more central to the Statewide Plan for the Improvement of Pupils (STIP).

Create a statewide learning community to inform state and local efforts to expand personalized, competency-based learning.

Establish a clear link between the Multicultural Education State Advisory Task Force and the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force.

Align educator credentials to reflect teaching roles in personalized learning.

Partner with institutions of higher education and the Teacher Pipeline Taskforce to ensure that educator preparation programs emphasize preparation for personalized, competency-based learning.

Expand on the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendation to create a "unified method" – a clear and unified way for schools to implement various flexibilities and programs – to center community voices in the creation of rich pathways for learning that are responsive to each student's needs.

Use state and federal resources to strengthen alignment of the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) and the state's Regional Professional Development Providers.

Consider ways to work with district, school leaders and educators through the educator credentialing system.



Empowering Student Learning Recommendations

Support school districts to implement the Family Engagement Framework and convene diverse stakeholders who are representative of their local communities to identify inequities and solutions to improve outcomes for historically underserved students.

Identify opportunities for culturally responsive and trauma-informed instruction programs for educators to be expanded and integrated into licensure requirements to ensure that all school districts have access to technical assistance and trainings – and that all students have access to high-quality educators with competency in these areas.

Identify steps to ensure that the variety of holistic student supports available at Nevada Department of Education are targeted to districts with the greatest need and not just for districts who opt in.

Convene a group of diverse stakeholders to explore ways to intentionally collect, communicate and use data related to the whole child and holistic student supports. These efforts should be aligned with the state's equity commitment for use in accountability and reporting systems.

In the state's periodic review and approval of teacher preparation programs, explore ways to ensure these programs align with the states' efforts through the Social, Emotional and Academic Development Center and the Nevada Positive Behavior Support Technical Assistance Center.

Ensure that Nevada's pathways opportunities allow and encourage students to demonstrate mastery of essential skills through the forthcoming statewide competencies. Strategies could include providing flexibilities in state law that expands access to credit through demonstration of mastery as well as incorporating mastery of competencies into the state's college- and career-ready high

school diploma as proof of readiness for college and careers.

Ensure college in high school coursework is accessible and affordable for all students through strategies such as adopting the universal pricing amounts for college credit-bearing courses developed through the dual enrollment task force or creating a need-based funding stream to help students pay for costs associated with college in high school coursework.

Expand publicly-available data around college- and career-readiness programs through strategies such as increasing visibility of dual credit participation and work-based learning opportunities on state dashboards.

Encourage the growth and development of college- and career-pathway programs through strategies such as establishing a statewide system of regional intermediaries to develop work-based learning opportunities, expanding training for counselors and educators about how to empower students to navigate these opportunities through resources such as lifeworksNV or Nepris, growing the pipeline of instructors for these courses and providing consistent training to district-level, work-based learning coordinators.

Leverage existing technology systems to provide professional development to educators around supporting students that are navigating learning pathways and increase access to pathways opportunities in underserved areas of the state. This could include strategies such as leveraging the statewide learning management system to provide professional development for educators and counselors, expanding the list of distance education providers that deliver career and technical education coursework or leveraging technology to expand access to virtual college and career coursework to areas of the state with less access to these programs.

Cultivating Systems Change Recommendations

Prioritize use of state funding and other state resources to build capacity of districts, schools and community partners to design and expand high-quality personalized learning experiences for students, particularly in areas with the greatest need.

Commit to achieve “optimal funding” for districts and schools, as defined by the Commission on School Funding, in response to lingering concerns regarding the adequacy of school funding and also to establish critical foundations necessary for student success.

Revisit and revise state strategies for leveraging federal and state funding to advance personalized, competency-based learning. Prioritize resources for schools identified for comprehensive and targeted support.

Study opportunities for creating new flexibilities where needed to empower schools to pursue personalized, competency-based learning practices. Consider engaging with groups such as Competency-Based Education Network to identify existing roadblocks as well as needed changes in law or regulation.

In partnership with the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE), engage the Nevada Teacher Pipeline Taskforce in a comprehensive study on how to better integrate personalized learning practices throughout the state’s teacher preparation, credentialing, professional development and evaluation systems. This should emphasize successful teacher training models such as the Social, Emotional, Academic Development (SEAD) Center.

Continue to remove punitive school turnaround policies and ensure that schools and districts have the resources to engage in a continuous cycle of improvement. This should include rethinking how school rankings are used and supporting schools as they exit from school turnaround status (e.g., Comprehensive Support and Improvement /Targeted Support and Improvement) designations.

Ensuring Quality Recommendations

Make sure a process is in place to ensure that competencies that are used across the state are high quality. This process should include Nevada Department of Education technical support.

Create and use guidelines and other tools, as needed, to strengthen inclusivity and equity through the use of instructional practices that appropriately reflect cultural differences that influence student learning.

Explore ways to build on the existing competency-based education pilot and related efforts so that all districts and schools have access to research and strategies on learning progressions, assessing student mastery and effective personalized, competency-based learning.

Create opportunities for educators to experiment with and adopt new approaches.

Examine the quality and use of local assessments, including ways they are or could be used to support personalized learning.

Study the ways other states design and use balanced assessment systems, particularly ones that are focused on personalized and competency-based learning environments.

Use existing resources to make sure that practitioners, parents and students understand what effective assessment practices look like and can use the data that they produce to improve outcomes for every student.

Provide more opportunities for students to use alternatives to traditional tests to prove their mastery of knowledge, such as portfolios or performance assessments. Teachers should be supported in learning how to implement these alternatives.

Create a pilot program that gives some districts the flexibility to try innovative assessments, which could potentially be used to replace current state assessments that don't advance student-centered learning.

Give schools credit on state performance measures of college and career readiness for high school students that demonstrate mastery of competencies that are aligned to postsecondary and workforce expectations.

Build a shared understanding of expectations for student success between K-12, postsecondary and workforce entities, specifically identifying what success looks like at each level.

Create local accountability pilot programs that allow for measures of quality and support systems which are closely aligned with community values.

Determine the extent to which the state's education dashboard that provides information on school and student performance on assessments and other measures might pose a barrier to the implementation of personalized, competency-based learning within a school or district.

KnowledgeWorks is a national nonprofit organization advancing a future of learning that ensures each student graduates ready for what's next. For more than 20 years, we've been partnering with states, communities and leaders across the country to imagine, build and sustain vibrant learning communities. Through evidence-based practices and a commitment to equitable outcomes, we're creating the future of learning, together.

Get more resources to help make personalized learning a reality at KnowledgeWorks.org.