

Nevada Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education
Final Report
June 2025

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Executive Summary..... | 1 |
| The Case for Change..... | 2 |
| Commission Goals and Deliverables..... | 3 |
| The Current Nevada Context..... | 6 |
| Policy Recommendations..... | 12 |
| I. Sustain and accelerate the shift toward personalized, competency-based education..... | 12 |
| II. Build an aligned system for the recruitment, preparation, development, and leadership trajectory of educators..... | 15 |
| III. Strengthen Next Generation Career Pathways for all Nevada learners & enhance partnerships with business and industry..... | 20 |
| IV. Develop and implement a performance dashboard that communicates progress on future-ready metrics to the public..... | 25 |
| Policy Recommendation Implementation and Legislative Process..... | 29 |
| Conclusion:The Path Ahead | 30 |
| Appendix: CIEE 5-Year Strategic Roadmap | |

Executive Summary

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

As Commissioners, we have spent the 18 months studying Nevada's education system, and comparing it to systems all over the United States and the globe. We have seen firsthand that there are **many bright spots** in education in our great state:

- Students who are engaged in real-world, authentic learning, driven by a future-forward Portrait of a Nevada Learner.
- Educators who are motivated to push their boundaries, innovate, and change their practices to meet the needs of all learners.
- School and system leaders who are leading learning communities to ever-greater heights.
- Committed parents and community members, including business leaders, who support innovations and investments in public education in order to propel our state forward.

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 Well-intentioned policies are sometimes outdated, other times misaligned, and too often misunderstood or poorly implemented.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

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

We must do more than modernize our education system. In partnership with Nevada's educators, students, parents, legislators, industry representatives, and taxpayers, we can build and implement a roadmap for a transformed, globally competitive Nevada education system. This is more complex than simply adding more funding. It means **strong commitments, new investments, new mindsets, and bold and future-forward changes to the status quo.**

“Innovation” and “excellence” are our charges. These are necessary to cultivate active, engaged, and curious learners; produce a highly skilled, globally competitive workforce; and contribute to vibrant communities throughout Nevada. If we deliver on the promise of a transformed education system, our students, educators, parents, businesses, and taxpayers will all benefit. The result will be a future-focused, agile Nevada that leads the way both domestically and globally.

The Case for Change

The world has dramatically changed for today's students. Today's high schoolers have never known a world without learning constantly available at their fingertips through Google and other platforms. (Quidwai, n.d.). Today's youngest learners will never know a world without artificial intelligence (AI)—arguably one of the most consequential developments in recent human history.

Today our schools face a daunting threefold responsibility:

1. Equipping students to compete in a rapidly changing job market, and attain family-sustaining careers.
2. Preparing the next generation of Nevada community members, voters, and civic participants, and preserving the wellbeing of our communities and democracies.
3. Ensuring the next generation can shape AI and future emerging technologies, and use them for the common good.

First, our schools **must equip students to compete in a rapidly changing job market**, and succeed in jobs that have already been fundamentally transformed. In Nevada, we are already seeing these changes affecting industries that are crucial to our economy. Hospitality and tourism services and gaming are increasingly reliant on data analytics and digital tools to personalize the consumer experience. Mining, natural resources, and agriculture are becoming increasingly reliant on new technologies that boost efficiency and productivity. Emerging priority industries for Nevada, including aerospace, defense, health, and IT, demand higher levels of technical sophistication. Schools can—and must—play a critical role in developing the skills that align with future job demands in Nevada: analytical thinking, creative thinking, resilience, flexibility, agility, motivation, self-awareness, and lifelong learning. **Public schools are essential for achieving Nevada's stated goal of diversifying the economy, increasing wages, reducing unemployment, and improving the standard of living across the state.**

But the purpose of education is much broader than simply preparing students for work. Our students will grow up to be spouses, parents, neighbors, taxpayers, voters, and civic leaders. **Our educators are responsible for the growth and development of these future Nevada community**

members, and, ultimately, for sustaining our communities, institutions, and democracies. In the wake of the COVID pandemic, our society now has a greater appreciation for the linkage between schools and community wellbeing. In that same vein, Nevada’s statewide system of education has an obligation that goes beyond individual accomplishments to now include community wellbeing and protecting our democratic system of self-government. That means safeguarding truth, calling out disinformation, and making every effort to prevent erosion in our respect for science and facts.

Finally, our schools are the most valuable resource we have for ensuring that our **next generation can use and shape current and emerging AI technologies creatively, responsibly, and for the benefit of all Nevadans (and all humans).** The widespread adoption of ChatGPT (and related models) and the coming generation of AI technologies offer us both a challenge and an opportunity. We face a possible future in which humanity cedes control of our destiny “to the machine.” But we also face an opportunity to guide the development of new technologies in ways that can unlock new possibilities for all. As stewards of education, we must take responsibility for equipping our young people with the technical skills, creativity, morality, and good judgment to make wise decisions as they use, develop, and guide new technologies.

In short, we must ensure that Nevada students **graduate future-ready.** This goal is daunting and urgent. Achieving it requires nothing less than **transforming our education system so that it not only responds to today’s challenges, but also adapts to anticipate the future.** This system transformation is the bold commitment Nevada must make to fortify our economy, support a rapidly diversifying business community and attract new businesses, strengthen our communities and our democracy, and grow our population in the coming decades.

The Commission’s Shared Vision

Our Commission envisions a Nevada where:

- Every student has voice, choice, and agency over their learning journey.
- Every teacher and every school is empowered to organize teaching and learning so that every student can successfully pursue their dreams.
- Our school districts and state systems support and incentivize the bold changes, risk-taking, and disciplined innovation necessary to achieve this learner-centered model.
- Our education system equips every learner with the skills to thrive in a changing world.

In our vision, Nevada’s learners are preparing for a complex and uncertain future by taking ownership of their learning journeys, and practicing leadership and self-advocacy from an early age. **Students have the voice, choice, and agency** to name their own interests, pursue their own

paths, advocate for themselves when they struggle and need additional support, and showcase their successes and accomplishments. In this vision, the Carnegie Unit is a relic of the past. Students progress not based on seat time in the classroom, but rather on their demonstrated mastery of in-demand, industry-relevant, and future-ready skills and competencies. Learning environments are personalized to each learner's strengths, needs, and interests. By empowering our learners and relying on their voice, choice and agency, we will make education more meaningful and relevant to them. Our students will be able to understand what they are mastering and where they have room to grow, so that time in the classroom does not feel unnecessary at any point. Apathy, absenteeism, and dropouts decline, and motivation and engagement increases.

This vision for what it means to graduate from Nevada's schools is deeply rooted in ongoing work to develop and elevate the Portrait of a Nevada Learner. The Portrait is a collective vision of the future-ready mindsets and skills that bring academic knowledge to life, co-developed by Nevada educators, learners, families, businesses, and community members in 2021 and 2022.

Imagine a 3rd grader in Nevada experiencing this vision of education. They begin the day choosing from a menu of project-based activities aligned with their interests, such as designing a community garden plan that incorporates math, science, and social studies skills. Working alongside peers, they identify areas for growth—measuring accurately and understanding plant needs—and set goals with their teacher, who acts as a mentor rather than a lecturer. They progress at their own pace, demonstrating mastery through hands-on tasks rather than traditional tests.

By middle school, they participate in a robotics club where they design and program a robot, exploring career paths in engineering and technology. They use a personalized dashboard to track their progress in both academic standards and competencies, such as collaboration and critical thinking, earning badges for accomplishments. In high school, they choose a pathway blending advanced courses in renewable energy with internships at a local green tech firm. Throughout, their learning journey is tailored to their aspirations, supported by teachers who guide, industry partners who mentor, and a system that celebrates growth and curiosity.

Upon graduation, their portfolio includes not just a diploma but also industry-recognized credentials and a capstone project addressing real-world challenges. They are equipped to thrive in college, career, and beyond, embodying the Portrait of a Nevada Learner as a confident, adaptable, and innovative individual.

This vision of student-driven learning is at the heart of what educators mean when they talk about a personalized, competency-based system. Making education competency-based is not about abandoning high standards, or turning away from literacy and math. It is about ensuring that every student has the ability to demonstrate that they have met those high standards at their own pace and in an authentic, meaningful way.

Nevada’s educators are central to our vision of fostering voice, choice, and agency for all learners. Educators engage learners as co-designers to identify tailored supports as well as meaningful ways to demonstrate what they know and know how to do, ensuring every learner graduates ready for what’s next. This is a profoundly new learning dynamic, where educators are facilitators and learners are partners in the learning. Educators, then, must be equipped with the resources, professional autonomy, and ongoing support needed to personalize learning for every student. Fundamentally, educator development becomes about **deeply preparing and sustaining teachers and leaders to create the conditions Nevada’s young people need to embody the Portrait of a Nevada Learner.** School and system leaders and policymakers must ensure that this vision-aligned culture of continuous improvement and support flourishes statewide. They will require significant professional learning themselves in order to make this happen. We must create the conditions for leaders to create the conditions for teachers, to create the conditions for students to thrive.

Our education system must also **seamlessly integrate career exploration and work-based learning** from an early age, offering students real-world experiences through internships, apprenticeships, and hands-on learning that align with classroom instruction. Sustainable partnerships with industry should create pathways that equip students with the tangible knowledge and durable skills needed to achieve family-sustaining incomes and adapt to evolving career landscapes. Career pathways must be accessible and equitable, empowering all students to pursue pathways that align with their interests and aspirations. Through early integration, we continue to push back against the mindset that college and career pathways represent two fundamentally different choices. Instead, we demonstrate that career exploration and work-based learning helps all students to make more informed choices about their post-secondary path. We must ensure that opportunities are as accessible and relevant for frontier rural learners as they are for those in Clark and Washoe Counties. And we must be agile enough to enable new career pathways to seamlessly emerge as the world of work changes—through mutually beneficial partnerships with industry, avenues for career and technical training (CTE) educators to reskill, and consistent study of how trends on the horizon are affecting the changing world of work.

We know that we must be **transparent with stakeholders and communities about the**

performance of the system. Students, educators, parents, communities, policymakers, and taxpayers must understand what our students are learning—including the skills, competencies, and dispositions they are acquiring. The Commission is proposing a new performance dashboard that communicates progress and milestones to the public, and which is key to our vision. It will reflect students' acquisition of a wide range of knowledge, including both foundational knowledge such as mathematics and literacy, as well as future-ready skills like critical thinking and collaboration. The dashboard will evolve beyond rigid rankings. It will reflect continuous improvement, progress and growth.

The dashboard will serve all of our schools, educators, students, and community members. Through it, Nevadans will understand the story of each school and district. The dashboard must communicate clearly to stakeholders inside and outside education. It must be easily accessible and intuitively navigable. As such, it will spark ongoing conversations and partnerships across Nevada and will create greater clarity around how our young people are being prepared to face the future.

At the heart of our approach is an attempt to **instill a future-forward culture of innovation and continuous improvement** to Nevada's education system. This approach requires establishing ongoing processes to study and support systems change, ensuring it is sustainable across shifts in personnel and leadership. It means we must continuously ask questions, learn from what is serving our young people well, and change or stop efforts that are not serving our young people as our vision suggests they should. We must benchmark other states and jurisdictions to understand how they are adapting to a changing world, and we must improve and transform their promising ideas to create new innovations fit for Nevada.

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

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

Transforming our education system may sound daunting. But there is a world of evidence that transformation is very possible. Over the course of the last year, we have studied how the world is changing, how the world's strongest education systems and rapid innovators in the United States are responding, and the ways policymakers can establish processes and structures for futures anticipation. This in-depth study has shown us the steps we must take.

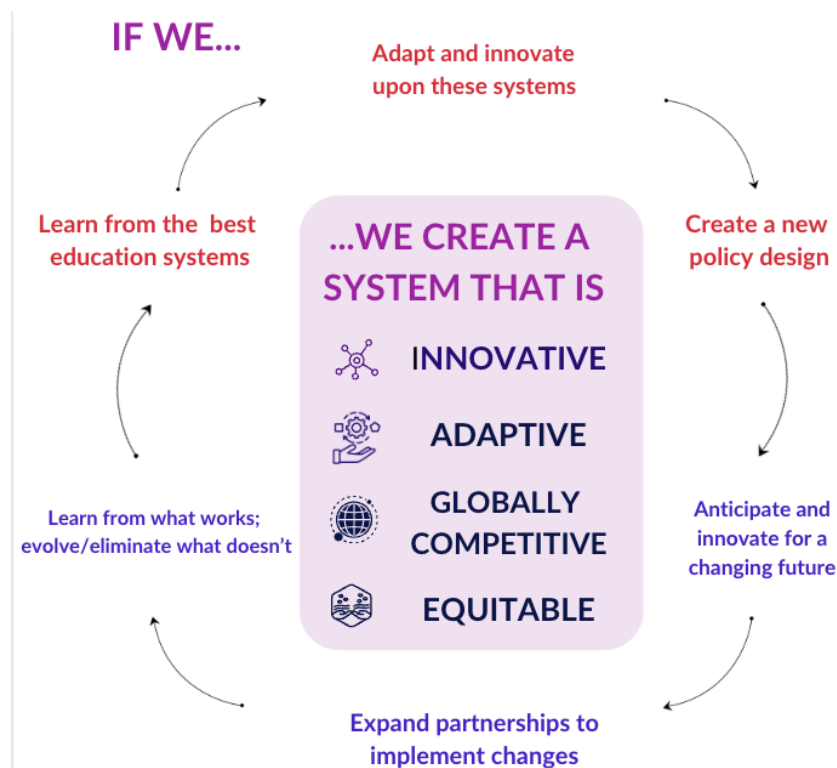
IF we:

- learn from the best education systems,
- adapt and innovate upon them,
- create a new policy design,
- respond to today's challenges, AND anticipate and innovate for a changing future,
- expand partnerships to implement changes,
- learn from what works – and evolve or eliminate what doesn't

THEN we will create a system that is:

- Innovative
- Adaptive
- Globally Competitive
- Equitable

Figure 1. Change Process



Learn from the best education systems

High-performing education systems like Canada, Estonia, and Singapore have consistently produced high levels of student performance and engagement (OECD, 2023), workforce readiness (USDOE, IES, & NCES, 2020), teacher retention and job satisfaction (OECD, 2019), and coherence and alignment (Burns et al., 2016). These systems design their education goals so that they not only advance academic goals, but also enable students to identify misinformation, promote community wellbeing, and sustain democracy.

These systems are not just producing well-prepared, resilient students. The systems themselves are more adaptable and resilient. Their policies are designed to promote strong performance for all, peer-to-peer accountability and support, coherence, futures-thinking, and adaptability.

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

Adapt and innovate upon them

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

But copying ideas from other places, no matter how good they are, will never get us where we want to go. We aspire to exceed those systems, not simply replicate what they have done. More importantly, the policies that have made Canada, Estonia, and Singapore so successful would never work in Nevada if imported wholesale. Instead, our work has involved studying their ideas, distilling their guiding principles, and adapting them to make them work for Nevada.

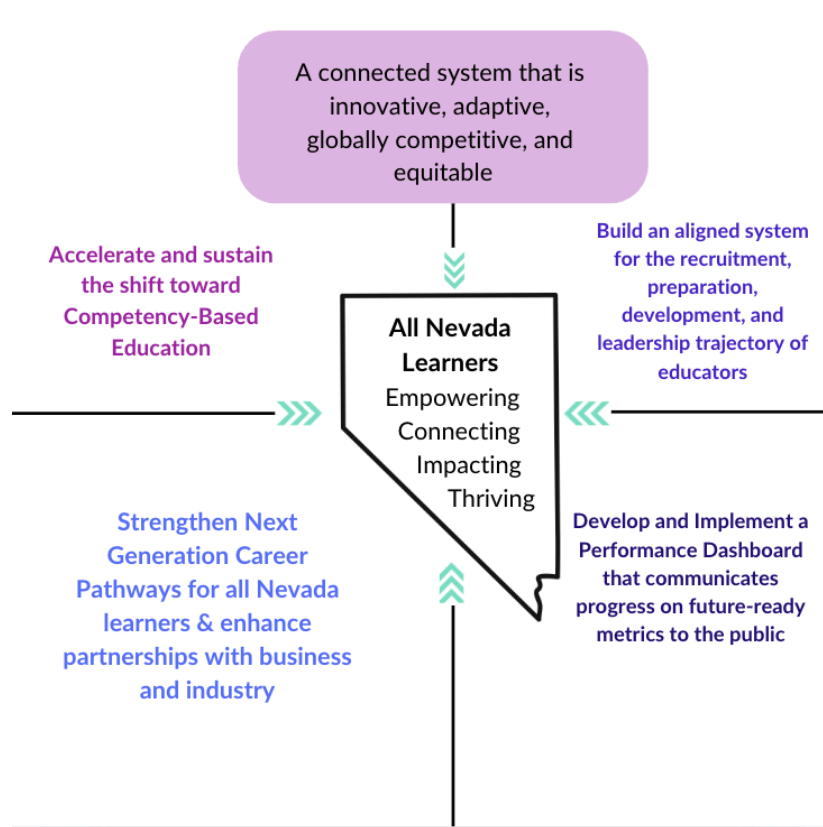
This cycle of deep study, iteration, and transformation to fit boundary-pushing ideas for purpose is at the core of innovation.

Create a new policy design

In this document, the Commission proposes a set of policies that create the enabling conditions for that cycle of disciplined innovation:

- Learners empowered by [a personalized, competency-based learning journey](#), built on a “progress at your own pace” foundation.
- **Educators empowered** by robust preservice, strong professional learning, and professional agency and leadership growth.
- **Robust and future-forward career pathways** that equip all Nevada learners with the knowledge, skills, and workforce experiences needed for long-life careers.
- **A dashboard that measures what matters** for students’ and educators’ skill development as well as schools’ and districts’ aggregate achievement.

Figure 2. Enabling Policy Conditions and Outcomes



Respond to today’s challenges AND anticipate and innovate for a changing future

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

Our education system must attend to the needs of the moment. The urgent challenges facing today’s learners, educators, families, and communities cannot be neglected. These include lagging student achievement, historic teacher shortages, significant vacancies in system leadership,

frustration and mistrust stemming from current accountability and reporting requirements, and a lack of shared understanding about the scope of transformation required to realize the Portrait of a Nevada Learner.

Attending only to the needs of 2025 will not position Nevada as a national, much less global, leader. Nor will it set us up to adapt in the face of ongoing changes and shocks. We must build systems and structures that anticipate the future and foster innovation and adaptation. Our policy recommendations are designed to do both of these things, so that we can make today's Nevada better, and also build the Nevada of the future.

Expand partnerships to implement these changes

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

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

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

Learn from what's working – and evolve or eliminate what isn't

We want to create the conditions for educators to practice disciplined innovation that creates equitable, inclusive, and accessible learning opportunities for all students.

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

To do this, we must:

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

Policy Recommendations

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

A. Horizon 1: Respond to Today's Challenges by:

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

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

2. Ensure that the funding and infrastructure exists to **sustain the Future of Learning Network through scaling, and ongoing professional learning phases**.
 - a. Continue to appropriate funding to the Center for the Future of Learning, who can sustain the collaborative development cycles required between communities, schools, districts, higher education partners, and the state.
 - b. Appropriate funding through NDE for competitive grant programs available to school districts to pilot or continue to pilot

learner-centered, future-ready efforts (e.g. [personalized, competency-based education](#)); engage expert partners and evaluators in their process; and continue to improve.

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

3. Fund the Center for the Future of Learning (in conjunction with the Nevada Future of Learning Network) to **develop a suite of tools** that will support educators in implementation of the Portrait, model new approaches in action for the public, and elevate student voice.
 - a. These should include, but are not limited to, professional learning for educators, curriculum scope and sequence, model performance tasks, and rubrics for implementation of the competencies in the Portrait of a Nevada Learner that are most relevant to Pre-K (3 and 4), elementary, middle, and high schools.
 - b. Appropriate public funding for this development process, which should include NDE curriculum experts, educators who have been active participants in the Future of Learning Network, students, intermediaries, districts, nonprofits, and expert consultants. Ensure that curriculum tools and materials are piloted, refined, and improved in partnership with Nevada districts.

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

4. **Support existing efforts already underway to expand access to affordable, high-quality early childhood education and care slots** for families across Nevada. This Commission has considered studies and examples of how early childhood education, coupled with high-quality K-3 learning experiences can set learners up for success in a competency-based learning journey. We have also seen compelling evidence about how high-quality childcare can mitigate the impacts of intergenerational poverty and help families achieve the economic mobility that is our collective aim.

Anticipated Impact: Families have access to an array of high-quality early learning options that work for them, no matter which geographic region of the state in which they live. Learners begin their competency-based learning journey set up for success.

5. While this Commission has primarily focused on the PK-12 space, we have collaborated with postsecondary partners to engage them in our process. As the state shifts to competency-based diplomas and credentials, **we recognize that higher education entry requirements and learning offerings will need to shift to align.** Our higher education partners are urged to collaborate with the Future of Learning Network to develop ambitious yet actionable plans for that transition.

Anticipated Impact: Graduates from a [personalized, competency-based](#) PK-12 space transition to postsecondary learning opportunities that recognize their competencies and offer similarly personalized learning experiences that prepare them to thrive in the world of work, their communities, and our democracy.

B. *Horizon 2: Anticipate and Innovate for a Changing Future by:*

1. Authorizing and requiring the Superintendent of Public Instruction to approve district superintendents' plans for pilot programs for alternative school-day and school-year models that:
 - a. Promote flexibility and [personalized, competency-based learning](#).
 - b. Offer new opportunities for learners to pursue their own interests, explore new topics, and find their passions.
 - c. Enable and encourage learners to proceed at their own pace, receiving more learning time and support when they need it, and accelerating their learning when they do not.
 - d. Enable extended day, reduced day, flexible day, remote, and hybrid learning approaches, as appropriate to the individual learner's needs, passions, and interests.
 - e. Create robust opportunities for out-of-school-time learning, including, but not limited to:
 - i. Work-based learning opportunities with business and industry partners;
 - ii. At-home learning experiences facilitated through innovative family engagement practices;
 - iii. Learning experiences that draw on community assets such as nonprofits, museums, state and national parks, and zoos to promote engagement with Nevada's natural resources and priority industries.

Anticipated Impact: Nevada’s learners have broader and more innovative opportunities to experience learning that is relevant and meaningful to them and explore their passions. Learners, educators, and system leaders collectively surface innovative “anytime, anywhere” learning practices. Building a future-forward competency-based learning experience for all becomes a shared endeavor among schools, families, and communities.

2. Appropriating funding for the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) to study these pilots – their enabling conditions, successes, and challenges – in order to create an evidence base of alternatives to Carnegie Unit and seat time requirements, creating more opportunities for early promotion, graduation and/or extended learning offerings for those who need it.

Anticipated Impact: Nevada has a robust knowledge base about the enabling conditions that allow learners to thrive in models that may offer alternatives or complements to seat time.

3. Authorizing NDE to create a timeline and action plan to consider alternatives to Carnegie Units, and/or ways to enable Carnegie Units to flexibly co-exist with personalized, competency-based advancement, and giving NDE the authority to revise or eliminate regulations that stifle innovation and restrict student voice, choice, and agency, and inhibit flexible, competency-based pathways to graduation.

Anticipated Impact: Nevada has an equitable and actionable plan in place for creating graduation pathways that enables students to remain in high school for varying lengths of time based on need, and graduate based on demonstrations of competency. Nevada serves as a national model of evolving the time-based progression that has too-long characterized Nevada’s – and America’s – schools.

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

A. Horizon 1: Respond to Today’s Challenges by:

1. Appropriating funding for **competitive grant programs available to collaboratives of school districts and higher education institutions** that commit to redesigning preservice and professional learning to equip teachers with the skills to create [personalized, competency-based learning environments](#) and experiences for all Nevadans. This will require making teacher preparation and ongoing professional learning more relevant, practical, and aligned to the Commission’s vision and Recommendations I, III, and IV.

- a. In service of this goal, authorize NDE to establish metrics for rating applications and determining how to make awards, within the following parameters. Successful applications will:
 - i. Demonstrate strong collaboration between preparation programs and PK-12 schools in order to strengthen pre-service teachers' real-world experiences [in personalized, competency-based learning](#) via strategies including, but not limited to:
 1. Lengthening the amount of time required in practical experiences partnered with teachers engaged in [personalized, competency-based learning](#)
 2. More strategically spreading the practicum over the course of a pre-service teacher's four years, and/or establishing new clinical models
 3. Establishing new ways of awarding course credits that enable pre-service teachers to meet distribution requirements through practicum coursework
 4. Strengthening, monitoring, and reporting on the professional learning required of mentor teachers (for both practicum and induction)
 5. Creating opportunities for pre-service teachers to reskill through collaborative professional learning in PK-12 schools
 - ii. Show creativity in creating new blocks of time and staffing models during the school day for teachers (and potentially, pre-service teachers of practice) to engage in team-based collaborative professional learning around [personalized, competency-based learning](#)
 - iii. Create new leadership roles for teachers (coaches, mentors, professional learning leads, content experts – all in service of the Portrait of a Nevada Learner) that allow them to diversify their responsibilities and take on new leadership roles without leaving the profession or the classroom.
 - iv. Propose tangible metrics to report on (e.g., # teachers prepared and retained.)

Anticipated Impact: Innovation is fostered across teachers' pre-service and in-service professional learning, leading to stronger alignment with the Portrait of a Nevada Learner, more relevant learning experiences, better-prepared teachers, and strong opportunities to grow in collaboration with peers. Teachers' job satisfaction and self-efficacy improve, leading to higher teacher retention. Ultimately, student learning improves and all students embody the Portrait of a Nevada Learner.

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

Anticipated Impact: Pilots' innovations are documented, leveraged, and brought to scale, in order to realize and systematize the Portrait of a Nevada Learner.

3. **Requiring fully aligned and structured induction to support new teachers:**
 - a. Require that mentors for induction programs are highly competent teachers, selected by the district based on established and consistent criteria, to instill in the next generation of teachers the skills, attitudes, values and knowledge needed to enable all learners to engage in [personalized, competency based learning](#) and embody the Portrait of a Nevada Learner.
 - b. Appropriate funding for NDE to develop training and upskilling modules for induction mentors. Require completion of these modules as a prerequisite for the selection as mentors.
 - c. Ensure staffing and scheduling regulations allow for provisionally certified teachers and mentor teachers to have the time and space necessary to participate in induction programs. Wherever possible, teacher mentors should be a half-day classroom teaching / half-day mentoring position.

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

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

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

5. As Commissioners, we encourage school districts and bargaining units to create collective bargaining agreements that provide stipends or salary advancements and other incentives for teachers to pursue professional learning that is Portrait-aligned and builds teachers' capacity to create [personalized, competency-based learning](#) environments for all young people.

B. *Horizon 2: Anticipate and Innovate for a Changing Future by:*

1. Creating the functionality for an educator Digital Wallet to enable users (educators) to set goals for their learning and the roles they want to take on, and organize and curate professional learning offerings that are directly correlated to individual users' identified career growth goals, by:
 - a. Appropriating funding to NDE to EITHER:
 - i. Contract with the provider of the existing LMS (Canvas) to evolve into a Digital Wallet that could enable the functionality described in II.B.2; OR
 - ii. Contract with a new vendor to develop and roll-out a custom system that includes the functions described in II.B.2
2. Ensuring that the Digital Wallet has the functionality to:
 - a. Enable educators to set goals for their learning and the roles they want to take on in realizing the Portrait of a Nevada Learner, and pursue courses that are in service of those goals and roles.
 - b. Organize and curate professional learning offerings that are directly aligned to individual educators' career growth goals, as well as the north star that is the Portrait and the skills outlined therein.
 - c. Provide clear guidance for educators on how to set meaningful goals for their professional growth, learn about and pursue learning opportunities aligned to their growth goals, and enable them to realize the goal of all students embodying the Portrait of a Nevada Learner.
 - d. Allow educators to measure their progress, and assemble a profile of their accomplishments.

Anticipated Impact: Educators across Nevada engage in self-directed lifelong learning that prepares them to actively contribute to the vision of a learner-centered, future-ready Nevada. The state has an organized system in place for ensuring that educators' professional learning is preparing them in this way. The professional learning system recognizes and validates professional learning that is aligned to the Portrait of a Nevada Learner and the statewide vision for 2030. Educators are able to set clear goals for their own growth and development, determine the professional learning experiences that are best aligned to those goals, and build a profile of their acquired knowledge, competencies, and accomplishments that will signify the leadership roles they are prepared to take on across the state.

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

A. *Horizon 1: Respond to Today's Challenges by:*

1. Making further investments in career exploration and career exposure offerings to ensure they are a **prioritized experience in the middle school grade levels**, and are accessible to elementary school students, by:
 - a. Expanding the existing work-based learning framework to increase developmentally relevant career exploration activities outlined for all students in grades 4-9, with increased exposure to STEAM career pathways. Career exploration in early grades must proactively seek to expose students to a variety of career opportunities, enable student agency in career exploration, and leave students with an understanding of the durable skills necessary to achieve in emerging industries.
 - b. Ensuring that additions to the framework include mechanisms for ensuring all students, regardless of geographic location, have the opportunity for multiple career exploration experiences each year, including employer-based site visits, skill-building internships, and opportunities for students to interact directly with industry leaders and gain hands-on understanding of the world of work.
 - c. Appropriating funding to create and align resources to support career-connected learning offerings in middle school. (Currently, only a small portion of Nevada school districts leverage Perkins funding to support middle school career-connected programming. However, funds that are used for middle school efforts deplete the resources available for high school programs.)

Anticipated Impact: Applied equitably, this targeted early intervention aims to support middle school students in better understanding options for career pathways as they transition to high school and beyond. Through exposure to a variety of skills, industries, and occupational pathways, middle school students are better equipped to make decisions about high school courses, dual enrollment, relevant after-school and part-time work experiences, and career-connected pathways options available to them.

2. Appropriating funding to hire and develop site-based **career coaches in partnership with Nevada Workforce Development Boards and economic development groups.**

- a. Career coaches are industry-recognized professionals responsible for ensuring all students have awareness of the career pathways, training opportunities and credentialing options available to them. Where possible they broker work-based learning and relevant employment opportunities to support career exploration, work-based learning and apprenticeship, and skills development of all students, not just CTE concentrators.
- b. Through investing in staff that are dedicated to career development, Nevada will ensure that learners and educators remain well-informed of career and technical education, career-connected learning, work-based learning, and emerging industries and their relevance to the academic core.
- c. All middle and high schools should have access to, at a minimum, a part-time career coach dedicated to individualized career plans, employer partnerships, and collaborating with guidance staff and teachers to ensure access to opportunities.
- d. Career coaches are hired directly by school districts, using funding appropriated for that purpose.
- e. Career coaches will receive ongoing professional development co-designed through a partnership with Nevada Workforce Development Boards and economic groups facilitated by the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) and NDE. Appropriate funding for NDE and GOED to facilitate this work.

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

3. Authorizing NDE to develop a centralized process to **intentionally connect employers, particularly in industries prioritized by the Governor's Office of Economic Development, systematically and consistently with educators** to enhance work-based learning opportunities. While workforce boards and CTE leaders have established connections with some employers, school leadership and classroom educators seek a more seamless avenue to connect with employers in work-based learning opportunities or career exploration. As a result, work-based learning opportunities and career exploration experiences are dependent upon the social capital and relationships of individual educators. This can be significantly improved. NDE's process must be supported by digital

infrastructure and timely communications, and share information and resources focused on the following priorities:

- a. Communicating and developing transferable employability and entrepreneurial skills to benefit learners and employers
- b. Connecting to small and mid-sized employers for career exposure and experiential and work-based learning experiences
- c. Providing targeted supports for rural learners
- d. Connecting to human resources and talent acquisition professionals to establish not only an understanding of skills needed for success in an occupation, but also job placement and career development skills
- e. Understanding emerging skills for future tech-enabled and STEAM career pathways
- f. Supporting relevant skill development to meet the needs of a global, digital and remote workforce.

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

B. *Horizon 2: Anticipate and Innovate for a Changing Future by:*

1. Supporting NDE to leverage advancements in career exploration technology and career-connected learning by:

- a. Appropriating funding to scalable career exploration technologies, such as augmented and virtual reality and digital platforms for virtual site visits, career training, mentorships and career interest inventories.
- b. Establishing and formalizing a review committee consisting of cross-sector leaders to identify and vet implementation opportunities and needs. This committee, overseen by state-level economic development leaders and informed by education experts, will embrace the potential of technology to enhance career-connected learning experiences.
- c. Technology reviewed could include:

- i. Augmented and Virtual Reality technology that provides direct career exposure and facilitates hands-on technical skills development.
- ii. Platforms that leverage virtual convening to career mentorship, virtual site visits, and employer connections. These platforms demonstrate the reality of today’s remote and virtual work environments.
- iii. Digital career interest inventories that support career exploration and are developmentally appropriate for elementary, middle, and high school levels.
- iv. Targeted resources for rural access and distance learning

Anticipated Impacts: Currently, technology is introduced in small pilots or ad-hoc localized partnerships. Not only does this perpetuate the divide in access, but it prevents effective evaluation or impact at scale. This recommendation will bridge gaps in access, particularly for rural and remote communities that have minimal access to employers or in-person career exploration opportunities. It will enhance the student experiences by allowing them to directly interact with emerging workforce trends and the future of work. As a result of actively embracing the potential of technology and proactively building systems to vet rapidly evolving technologies for career exploration, Nevada will be positioned to more quickly implement, inform development, and measure impact.

2. **Providing incentives for business and industries to create work-based learning opportunities for young people, and provide part-time and full-time CTE educators.**
 - a. Authorize the appropriate state agency to revise the process to apply for a Nevada state business tax abatement so that businesses are incentivized to put forward strategic plans for how they would accomplish things such as:
 - i. Creating work-based learning opportunities for school district students, including career exploration, apprenticeships, and other opportunities; and
 - ii. Providing employees to serve as part-time or full-time instructors for CTE courses.
 - b. Authorize the board charged with reviewing and approving businesses’ applications for state tax abatements to promulgate

regulations to articulate the specific requirements to receive tax abatements, the oversight mechanisms for businesses who receive them, as well as other incentives for small businesses who may not qualify for state tax abatements but still wish to contribute meaningfully to CTE and work-based learning opportunities.

IV. Develop and Implement a Performance Dashboard that Communicates Progress on Future-Ready Metrics to the Public.

A. Horizon 1: Respond to Today's Challenges by:

1. Transitioning from the existing NSPF Star rating system to a **Portrait of a Nevada Learner-aligned, student-centered Dashboard** that students, educators, schools and families can use to set goals, monitor their progress towards goals, attain “badges” indicating their accomplishments, and chart their attainment and journey, from PreK-postsecondary. The Dashboard should be useable by (and useful to):
 - a. Individual students, as they set their own goals for competency development, attain badges when they demonstrate certain competencies, and take ownership for charting their development
 - b. Educators, school leaders and system leaders, as they set goals for student, school, district, and state performance
 - c. Parents, policymakers, and taxpayers, as they seek easily consumable information about collective student outcomes and outcomes of the system in service of understanding progress of their local districts and districts across the state
 - d. Higher education and business, who will find benefit in monitoring the dashboard as it includes measures of success and competency development of students that can inform these community groups as to graduates’ ability to enroll in and attain career-ready credentials and succeed in higher education.
2. Appropriate funding to NDE for the development, implementation, and ongoing improvement of this dashboard, including the costs for:
 - a. Initial development of the Dashboard.
 - b. Piloting, refining, and improving the transparency, accessibility, and navigability of the Dashboard. This system should provide real-time data to all stakeholders, allowing families and communities to track progress, so it is essential that diverse stakeholders across our state can access and interpret it.

- i. Engage communities through listening sessions, surveys, and stakeholder meetings to gather input on the design and implementation of new metrics.
 - ii. Involve students, educators, and other key stakeholders in the development and continuous improvement of the Dashboard. Ensure that the system reflects the voices of those it impacts the most—students and educators.
- c. Continuing to update the metrics included on the Dashboard to ensure that they are holistic and future-forward.
 - i. Schools and districts should select relevant metrics from a set of key indicators. In addition to overall performance literacy and mathematics, schools must have the option to showcase their strengths in categories including STEM, arts, military-dependent, ELL, extra- and co-curricular offerings, career-connected learning, dual-credit and AP offerings.
 - ii. In partnership with schools and districts, build off of the additional metrics developed via Acing Accountability to continue to articulate broader metrics that measure progress and success at the student, school, and system levels, for schools and districts to choose from. These should include growth-based measurements of student learning outcomes (including the development of skills, competencies, and dispositions aligned to the Portrait of a Nevada Learner) and holistic indicators such as student well-being, social capital, and civic engagement.
- d. Appropriating funding for the development of an asynchronous virtual learning module for educators and system leaders on how to use the Dashboard for continuous improvement
 - i. Educators must have the tools and training necessary to understand and effectively use the new dashboard and assessment systems. This professional learning module should focus on data-driven decision-making, flexible instructional strategies, and innovative assessment practices.
- e. Project managing the overall efforts.
 - i. Appropriate funding to NDE in order to set clear goals, timelines, deliverables, and benchmarks, coordinate with

vendors and partners, and oversee the development, piloting, and implementation of the project with quality.

Anticipated Impacts: Students, educators, and system leaders are able to take ownership for the skills and competencies that Nevada’s students develop. A public-facing, transparent and intuitive Dashboard showcases the expertise that has been developed to the broader community.

3. Appropriate funding to a campaign that showcases Nevada “Bright Spots” via innovative communications:
 - a. Storytelling around the bright spots and opportunities in Nevada schools is crucial. This campaign would help Nevada communities (including business leaders, parents, policymakers, and the public) to begin to see how the world is changing for our schools, communities, and workplaces, and how schools in Nevada are beginning to transform to create stronger, more innovative learning opportunities that position our learners as future-ready. This storytelling campaign is needed to ensure that the public understands how and why we are changing and will continue to change, and why those changes will ultimately benefit our learners and all of Nevada.
 - b. Host community forums, parent focus groups, student advisory panels, and business forums to engage communities in: championing the work in Nevada’s schools that is going well; building a groundswell of support for needed changes; and giving input on the new design. Ensure ongoing communication with these groups as the system evolves.
 - c. In addition, to personal outreach, this campaign should include:
 - i. Video Testimonials: Produce short videos of students, teachers, and parents sharing their positive experiences with CBE.
 - ii. Social Media: Use X, Instagram, LinkedIn and Facebook to run campaigns focused on storytelling. Use the hashtag (e.g., #NevadaCBE) to create a digital community.
 - iii. Infographics: Create visually engaging infographics that explain key milestones in the pilot, student progression, and community impact.

- iv. Podcasts/Webinars: Launch a series of podcasts or webinars where participants share their journeys, and experts discuss CBE's benefits.
- v. School Websites: Dedicate a section of school or district websites to CBE updates, stories, and student progress showcases.
- vi. Television/News: Invite the media to attend events and PR

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

B. Horizon 2: Anticipate and Innovate for a Changing Future by:

1. Charging a diverse and representative group of Nevadans (either reflecting similar membership to this Commission, or not dissimilar in representation)) with overseeing **implementation, innovation, ongoing systems evaluation, and futures anticipation**. More specifically, this group will:
 - a. Oversee an ongoing systems evaluation study, which may include:
 - i. Mapping the current system to establish boundaries, identify key components and dynamics of the system, codify interactions and interdependencies
 - ii. Articulating a Theory of Change with associated rationales;
 - iii. Developing evaluation frameworks;
 - iv. Establishing systems for monitoring and feedback loops, and mechanisms to adjust based on emerging patterns and unintended outcomes;
 - v. Facilitating ongoing discussions with stakeholders about complex systems change, and ensuring their input can shape the evaluation process

- vi. Designing processes where stakeholders can engage in collective sensemaking of findings to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered
 - b. Monitor the state’s progress in implementation of the recommendations and offering support if required;
 - c. Consider whether unanticipated future shocks necessitate a rapid and agile change in course; and
 - d. Make ongoing recommendations for how the state’s policies and priorities may need to shift in light of unintended consequences, unexpected changes, or other developments.
2. Appropriating funding for NDE to project manage this oversight Commission, and to contract with an organization with expertise in systems evaluation, implementation support, and futures anticipation.

Anticipated Impact: Nevada has a broad and diverse stakeholder group in place with the processes, structures, and capacity needed to monitor, support, and guide the progress of systems transformation, adjust based on unintended consequences or unexpected shocks, and enable this policy design to remain agile and adaptive in the face of an ever-changing future.

Legislation and Implementation of Policy Recommendations

In the 83rd (winter and spring 2025) the recommendations developed by the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education were included in SB403 under the leadership of Commissioner Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop. Although it passed the Senate unanimously, the bill ultimately failed when the Assembly took no action before adjournment on June 3, 2025.

SB 403 was designed as a comprehensive proposal designed to catalyze Nevada’s transition toward a future-ready education system. Key provisions of SB 403 included establishing a Subcommittee on Metrics to develop holistic performance metrics; broadening pilot programs to support personalized, competency-based learning with flexible schedules; enhancing career-exploration initiatives; and requiring businesses to tie certain tax credits to work-based learning commitments. While SB 403 was not enacted, several related and aligned bills were; these enable the Commission to continue to refine strategies and build alignment across stakeholders to drive long-term educational innovation.

Two additional bills advanced key components of the Commission’s recommendations. SB 460 enables a continued study on metrics, including those relevant to both educators and business, with a goal of streamlining duplicative and outdated measures. AB 539 successfully enabled creating new provisions for middle school career coaching and expanding access to early

work-based learning opportunities. AB 571 authorizes the Commission to continue its work with a focus on future-ready metrics.

Several policy recommendations were not addressed through legislation, but the CIEE continues to develop action plans and alternative strategies for implementation including alignment of definitions for personalized, competency-based learning, expanding professional learning for educators and school leaders, and creating conditions for strong career-connected learning and employer engagement systems.

To maintain momentum and bring the Commission’s recommendations to life, a series of implementation tools and planning resources have been developed:

- [A Five-Year Implementation Strategy Roadmap](#), inclusive of milestones, was presented to Commission members in April 2025 and refined for consensus in May 2025. Each phase outlines relevant commission actions and learning objectives, legislative actions, policy implementation, stakeholder and community engagement, and evaluating and measuring change.
 - *Phase 1: Mobilizing Commission Learning & Advancing Initial Legislation*
 - Fall 2024 - Summer 2025
 - *Phase 2: Statewide Alignment around Policy Implementation: Vertical Alignment & Feedback Loops*
 - Fall 2025 - Summer 2027
 - *Phase 3: Sustaining Impact and Reinvigorating Innovation*
 - Fall 2027 - Summer 2029
- [A Comprehensive Action Plan](#), aligned to the roadmap, that outlines timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties to support execution of policy recommendations. Note that this is a “living document” and is continuing to evolve as Commissioners deliberate.

Together, these tools ensure that the Commission’s vision continues to guide state and local action—even as the legislative landscape evolves.

Conclusion: The Path Ahead

Although not all legislative proposals from the Commission advanced during the 83rd Session, the work of transforming Nevada’s education system continues with urgency and dedication through the leadership of the Commission membership and via broad legislative support of bills such as SB 460 and SB 571. The Commission has laid a strong foundation through bold recommendations, statewide engagement, and strategic implementation tools.

As Nevada moves forward as an innovative national leader in education, sustained leadership, cross-sector collaboration, and iterative learning will be essential to realize the vision of a future-ready education system. The path ahead will require continued investment, aligned policy,

and courageous action—but the destination is clear: a Nevada where every learner is prepared to thrive in a changing world, and where education fuels economic growth, civic vitality, and opportunity for all.