

**Nevada Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education**  
**Preliminary Report**

June 2024

# Table of Contents

<b>I. Executive Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II. Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>III. Commission’s Goals and Deliverables</b>	<b>6</b>
Goals	7
Time Horizons	7
Work in Relation to Other Commissions	7
Deliverables	8
<b>IV. The Commission’s Vision: Making the Nevada “Portrait of a Learner” a Reality for All</b>	<b>8</b>
Development Process	9
Competencies	9
The Nevada Future of Learning Network	10
<b>V. The Case for Change: A Swiftly Changing World Challenges Nevada’s Schools</b>	<b>10</b>
Our Young People Face a Changing World	11
How Well is Nevada’s Education System Preparing Students to Develop These Skills?	12
How Can We Prepare Not Only for the World of Today But Also Tomorrow?	13
<b>VI. Initial Policy Considerations</b>	<b>14</b>
A. Portrait of a World-Class Teacher Subcommittee	16
B. Next Generation Career Pathways Subcommittee	19
C. Proficiency-Based Learning Subcommittee	24
D. Measuring What Matters Subcommittee	26
<b>VII. Overview of Process and Next Steps</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>VIII. Conclusion</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>IX. Appendices</b>	<b>33</b>
Appendix A: Commissioners of the Nevada Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education	33
Appendix B. Outside Experts and Thought Partners	35
Appendix C. Resources Consulted	36

## I. Executive Summary

The Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education is intended to create the **future-facing policy framework** needed to deliver on a bold **promise of a world-class, globally competitive, and future-ready education** for every Nevada learner. This means ensuring every learner in Nevada can develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to prosper in an increasingly challenging and uncertain future. To that end, the Commission is charged with developing a statewide vision and implementation plan to redesign the public education system in Nevada.

In partnership with facilitators and thought partners from the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), the Commission has studied how the world has dramatically changed for today's students, who have grown up in a digital age with constant access to technology and information. The labor market is poised for significant changes over the next five years. Many of the jobs that will be important just five years from now do not yet exist.

The current moment offers a collaborative opportunity for education and business to address future skilling and upskilling needs. Schools can, do, and must play a critical role in developing skills that align with future job demands and simultaneously develop future citizens and civic leaders in a healthy society. Skills such as decision making, empathy, and fairness are crucial not only for effective workplaces but also for sustaining thriving democracies, effective institutions, and strong communities.

In order to help all learners develop those skills, the Commission's intended output, "the Nevada Plan for Innovation and Excellence in Education," will include several components:

- a long-term vision for the future of Nevada's learners, articulated in the Nevada Portrait of a Learner;
- a roadmap for getting there, including an implementation plan, timeline, and both short- and longer-term policy recommendations;
- a proposal for ongoing systems evaluation; and,
- a communications and stakeholder engagement plan.

The Commission is diving deep into four interrelated policy areas. These policy areas were determined based on NCEE's research into the policies and practices that underpin the world's highest performing and rapidly improving education systems. They include:

- **world-class teaching** and learning;

- rewarding **pathways to college and career**;
- creating **proficiency-based** opportunities for students to move on when they demonstrate readiness, rather than satisfy seat time requirements; and,
- **measuring what matters** through clear and compelling indicators of whether the system is performing well.

The Commission is currently meeting in subcommittees to study these policy areas in more detail, learn how Nevada compares to global leaders, and eventually craft policy recommendations intended to vault the state to world-class levels of performance. The goal is to build a policy framework that will enable all of Nevada’s learners to develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies that will enable them to compete globally and thrive in careers and communities now and in the future.

## II. Introduction

On behalf of the consultants at the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) and the members of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (“the Commission”), we are pleased to submit this Preliminary Report. This Report fulfills the requirements of Senate Bill 425, which states that “On or before June 30 of each year, the Commission shall submit a report of its findings to the Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Legislative Commission, and the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education” (Nevada Legislature, 2023c).

The Commission was established by Senate Bill 425 during Nevada’s 82nd Legislative Session. The bill established the Commission to develop a statewide vision and implementation plan to redesign the public education system in Nevada.

The Commission is charged with comparing Nevada’s education policies with those of high-performing education systems globally and domestically. The Commission’s work is crucial in ensuring that Nevada’s education policies are innovative, evidence-based, and aligned with global best practices to prepare students for a rapidly changing world. This includes making recommendations to adapt education policies from leading systems and developing a detailed implementation plan to put those recommendations into practice.

The Commission was created in response to two seminal legislative reports on how the world’s strongest education systems are adapting for the future, both produced in partnership between the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and NCEE.

- [No Time to Lose](#) pointed to the alarming decline of the U.S. education system compared to global competitors and urged legislators to take collective action to study the problem more deeply and act collaboratively, systematically, and purposefully to reverse the slide (NCSL, 2016).
- [The Time is Now](#) reaffirmed the urgent call to action articulated by No Time to Lose for a post-pandemic world and laid out a series of policy priorities that legislators should study and consider adapting and implementing in their states to match or exceed the performance of the world’s strongest systems. It also added the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) as a thought partner (NCSL, 2022).

Both former Senator Joyce Woodhouse and current Senator Marilyn Dondero Loop (both now Commissioners) contributed to these efforts.

The Commission consists of 24 members representing various stakeholders, including legislators, educators, administrators, community members, business leaders. The members are appointed by different authorities, including the Governor, the State Superintendent of Education, the Legislature and various education associations, to ensure a diverse and representative group of perspectives is heard. A full list of Commissioners is included in [Appendix A](#).

The Commission has engaged thought partners from NCEE to facilitate its discussions, serve as learning partners, and generate and synthesize the research and policy analysis that will inform much of the deliberations. NCEE is a national nonprofit with a 38-year history of studying global education policies and economic trends and applying insights about how the highest-performing, fastest-improving, and most rapidly innovating education systems are adapting to the changing nature of work and communities. NCEE has worked with states including Maryland, Michigan, Montana, and Pennsylvania on staffing statewide Commissions charged with future-focused education redesign. They have also worked with districts and schools to build the leadership capacity, knowledge base, and strategic thinking skills needed to put those policies into practice and create feedback loops to better connect practice and policy making.

NCEE’s policy, field, research, learning design, and communications teams have come together to support this effort, with Janice Case, Regional Director, West, and Nathan Driskell, Chief Policy Officer, leading the design, strategy, and facilitation.

In addition, partners from KnowledgeWorks, Ed. Xtraordinary and the Nevada Department of Education have deeply informed the Commission’s research and preliminary findings and ensured that our work takes into account the many efforts already underway in the state. We are deeply

grateful to Charlie Brown, Jeannine Collins, Lisa Ford, Felicia Gonzales, Katie King, and Andy Lott for their guidance and support. Nevada educators, such as the 2024 Nevada Teacher of the Year Laura Jeanne Penrod, and students, such as Youth Legislators Alexa Walsh, Hannah Villatoro, and Sebastian Rios, have also generously contributed their time and invaluable expertise.

The Commission’s work is still relatively new, so this report reflects the Commission’s initial observations, findings, and emerging areas of consideration, rather than any firm policy recommendations. This report summarizes the work completed, the research consulted, and the themes identified for further discussion in future meetings. It includes:

- An overview of the Commission’s goals and deliverables.
- The Commission’s case for change— a summary of research consulted on emerging global trends, the changing nature of work and communities and their impact on youth, and an analysis of Nevada’s educational performance in a global context.
- An explanation of the connection between the Commission and the Nevada Portrait of a Learner.
- An overview of emerging insights generated within four broad policy areas covered by the subcommittees of the Commission:
  - Portrait of a World-Class Teacher
  - Next-Generation Career Pathways
  - Proficiency-Based Learning
  - Measuring What Matters
- Process and next steps.

### **III. Commission’s Goals and Deliverables**

In the words of Dr. Vicki Phillips, CEO, NCEE: “In a world that is continually changing, where technology can simultaneously connect and disconnect us, education is critical for building a sense of shared values, understanding, and trust among citizens. It has the power to bring people from diverse socio-economic, racial, and cultural backgrounds together to share, learn, and problem-solve. When that happens, misconceptions are busted, divisions are reduced, and social cohesion flourishes.”

Education also contributes to creating engaged, agile workforces and fostering thriving societies. We know that education systems must be responsive to the evolving demands of the labor market, where many traditional jobs are being replaced by new roles requiring different skill sets. The question for this Commission is whether our public education system is achieving its full potential to build a future-ready Nevada.

## Goals

The Commission is intended to create the **future-facing policy framework** needed to deliver on this bold **promise of a world-class, globally competitive, and future-ready education** for every Nevada learner. This means ensuring every learner in Nevada can develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to prosper in an increasingly challenging and uncertain future. These are currently articulated in the [Nevada Portrait of a Learner](#) and are being piloted and implemented throughout the state.

Realizing our goal does not mean throwing out existing efforts underway in Nevada and starting from scratch. Nor does it mean continuing with all the same work that has been done in the past. Currently, the Commission is engaged in deeply discussing:

- how the future is and will continue to change for our young people and our educators.
- ways the education system can adapt to meet the changing needs of the education system today, by stopping existing ineffective or misaligned policies and practices and/or adopting new policies, incentives, structures, or supports.
- existing strengths that can and should be built up, supported, and sustained.
- incentives and structures that can be put into place to enable Nevada's education system to remain nimble and adaptive in the face of an ever-changing future.

## Time Horizons

Getting to this goal will take time, perseverance, and adaptability. The Commission has discussed visualizing its work along multiple time horizons.

- This Commission is building the policy infrastructure needed to launch us down that path **starting in 2026**.
- The Commission will also need to build **interim goals and action steps for 2028**, with progress monitoring and opportunities to learn, adapt, and course-correct along the way.
- **2030 is the end goal:** a world-class education system for Nevada learners.

## How Does this Commission Relate to the Work of Other Commissions?

This Commission is establishing the future-facing policy framework to ensure that Nevada's education system is world-class and globally competitive by 2030. We recognize that the work of the Commission on School Funding, which will make recommendations for ensuring the current

system is fully funded now and in the coming years, is crucially important for getting our work off the ground. We build on the work of the Commission on School Funding to: **establish a future-ready policy framework** that will ensure the Commission on School Funding’s dollars are well-spent and **establish a future roadmap and plan** for the 2030 time horizon (and even beyond.)

The Commission also builds on the work of the Blue Ribbon Commission that established the Nevada Future of Learning Network. As we explain below, the Nevada Portrait of a Learner serves as a guiding vision for this Commission. Our policy work is in service of ensuring that Nevada has a **supportive and systemic policy framework** in place to realize the Portrait for every Nevada learner.

## Deliverables

From the beginning, Commissioners have agreed that a shared vision for future-ready learning is crucial for Nevada. It is for this reason that the Commission is using the Nevada Portrait of a Learner, described below, as its vision. However, vision will not translate into meaningful improvements for students, teachers, parents, and taxpayers unless it is paired with actionable recommendations and aligned metrics. For this reason, the Commission affirmed that its eventual deliverable, “the Nevada Plan for Innovation and Excellence in Education” would include several components.

- A long-term vision for how Nevada could be an innovative world leader in education;
- a roadmap for getting there, including an implementation plan, timeline, and both short- and longer-term policy recommendations;
- a proposal for ongoing systems evaluation; and,
- a communications and stakeholder engagement plan.

## IV. The Commission’s Vision: Making the Nevada “Portrait of a Learner” a Reality for All

Nevada has already begun the process of ensuring that its education system is preparing future-ready learners. The "Nevada Portrait of a Learner" represents a collective effort to create a vision of the essential mindsets, skills, and attributes that young people in Nevada should develop to thrive in the future. The Portrait does not prescribe a set of descriptions that could or should apply to all students. Rather,

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

The Portrait creates a unified vision for all students across the state, one that serves as a guiding framework for policies, practices, and community engagement efforts. It is for this reason that the Commission and all of the subcommittees refer to the Portrait as a “North Star” and have adopted it as a vision for teaching and learning that guides their policy development process.

The Commission’s policy work is ultimately in service of creating the enabling conditions such that all students can achieve the vision articulated in the Portrait of a Learner. These enabling conditions include world-class teaching and learning; rewarding pathways to college and career; opportunities for students to move on when they demonstrate readiness, rather than satisfy seat time requirements; and clear and compelling indicators of whether the system is performing well. Throughout its initial meetings, Commissioners received background information on the Portrait’s development process and explored how the competencies articulated in the Portrait could serve as a lever for student-centered transformation.

## Development Process

The development of the Portrait involved extensive collaboration and input from a diverse group of stakeholders, including educators, students, parents, community leaders, and industry representatives. From October 2022 to May 2023, these stakeholders participated in various workshops and discussions to co-create and co-design the Portrait. This collaborative approach ensured that the Portrait reflects the collective vision and values of the Nevada community. The full process is outlined [here](#).

## Competencies

The Nevada Portrait is structured as a series of questions that invite Nevada’s learners to reflect on their journeys and to consider the competencies they will need to bring their academic learning to life, and ultimately to lead prosperous careers and lives. It incorporates skills like critical thinking, collaboration, resilience, and communication, that are closely correlated to the changing demands of industry and long-term success in life.

<p><b>EMPOWERING</b></p> <p>How will I grow in my learning?</p>	<p><b>Reflect</b> on my personal strengths and unique qualities to leverage them in all aspects of my life.</p> <p>Approach learning and life experiences with <b>curiosity</b> and a growth-focused attitude to find ways to connect them to my passions and interests.</p> <p>Be <b>self-aware</b>, monitor my needs, and advocate for myself in a variety of environments.</p> <p>Strive for <b>balance</b> by asking for support related to my intellectual growth, physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being.</p>
<p><b>CONNECTING</b></p> <p>How do I build and sustain relationships and community?</p>	<p>Build connections by actively listening, sharing ideas, and <b>collaborating</b> toward common goals.</p> <p><b>Communicate</b> effectively, adapting my communication style to different audiences and situations, while using a variety of tools and technologies.</p> <p>Show <b>empathy and respect</b> toward individuals and groups of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences exploring multiple viewpoints.</p>
<p><b>IMPACTING</b></p> <p>How will I contribute to make an impact?</p>	<p>Transfer and apply knowledge and skills across academic disciplines to make a <b>purposeful impact</b>.</p> <p>Evaluate and analyze data, ideas, and interactions as <b>critical thinkers and creative problem-solvers</b> to overcome challenges in all aspects of my life.</p> <p>Be an engaged member of my community, participating in public discourse and decision-making processes, and promoting opportunities of <b>civic engagement</b>.</p>
<p><b>THRIVING</b></p> <p>How will I thrive?</p>	<p>Stay <b>resilient and courageous</b> in the face of challenges and changing contexts, learning from my mistakes and growing as a result.</p> <p>Practice <b>intellectual agility</b>, continuously learning, unlearning, and relearning to adapt to evolving opportunities in my school and community.</p> <p>Be a person of high <b>integrity</b>, making and keeping commitments to my peers and community while staying true to my values and beliefs.</p>

Source: Nevada Future of Learning Network

### The Nevada Future of Learning Network

The Nevada Future of Learning Network connects students, educators, parents, and community members to collectively promote learner-centered practices in Nevada classrooms. This network is at the core of the effort to drive the implementation of the Portrait statewide and ensure its presence in every classroom, school, and district.

## V. The Case for Change: A Swiftly Changing World Challenges Nevada’s Schools

There are many bright spots in education in the great state of Nevada. But the evidence we have reviewed affirms for us that we are not doing all we can to ensure that every school, every teacher, and most importantly, every learner in Nevada can prosper.

Nevada's schools, students, taxpayers, and economy are being held back by well-intentioned policies that are sometimes misaligned and other times misunderstood or poorly implemented.

## Our Young People Face a Changing World

The pace of change makes acting now incredibly urgent.

The world has dramatically changed for today's students, who have grown up in a digital age with constant access to technology and information. Today's high schoolers have never known a world without learning constantly available at their fingertips through Google and a whole host of platforms. Today's youngest learners will have never known a world without artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT. This generational shift impacts how students learn and interact with the world. The result is a demand that schools meet learners in this advanced technological world and provide learning experiences that will equip them to navigate it effectively (Quidwai, n.d.).

The labor market is poised for significant changes over the next five years. The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Survey 2023 reveals that 83 million jobs are projected to be lost, while 69 million new jobs will be created. Even jobs that are projected to be "stable" will still be fundamentally altered by new technologies, priorities, and ways of working. Automation is a significant driver of these changes. Although the pace of automation has been slower than initially projected, its potential scope is expanding. AI techniques are maturing and finding mainstream applications across various sectors, enhancing human performance and reshaping roles (World Economic Forum, 2023).

The challenge lies in preparing individuals, especially young people, for these new roles. Many of the jobs that will be important just five years from now do not yet exist. This rapidly changing labor market demands strategic adjustments within companies and entire business sectors. Amidst that challenge, the moment offers a collaborative opportunity for education and business to address future skilling and upskilling needs.

Data from the World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Survey provides valuable insights into the fastest growing and declining roles over the past four years, providing a glimpse of what could be on the horizon for the workforce. Clerical roles—including bank tellers, postal service clerks, cashiers, and data entry positions—form the majority of the fastest declining workforce roles. Significant job growth is projected in education, agriculture, and digital commerce (World Economic Forum 2023).

At the same time, the Future of Jobs Survey identifies the core skills needed for future employment and leadership roles. Analytical thinking is highlighted as the most crucial skill, followed closely by creative thinking. Importantly, the significance of creative thinking is growing relative to analytical thinking as workplace tasks become more automated. Self-efficacy skills such as resilience, flexibility, agility, motivation, self-awareness, and lifelong learning are also increasingly valued. Technological literacy and dependability also rank highly among the essential skills (World Economic Forum 2023).

Taken together, these skills are essential for adapting to and thriving in evolving workplaces. The ability to analyze, be creative, be flexible and resilient, and interact effectively in a technology-enabled environment are the broad strokes of the emerging picture of the foundations of success in the workplace of tomorrow.

Schools can, do, and must play a critical role in developing skills that align with future job demands and simultaneously develop future citizens and civic leaders in a healthy society. Skills such as decision making, empathy, and fairness are crucial not only for effective workplaces but also for sustaining thriving democracies, effective institutions, and strong communities.

By fostering these essential skills (which are, we note, reflected in the Nevada Portrait of a Learner) we can ensure that individuals are well-prepared to navigate the complexities of the future job market and contribute meaningfully to society.

### **How Well is Nevada's Education System Preparing Students to Develop These Skills?**

Despite strong work in many of our schools, national and global assessment results show that Nevada has significant room for improvement based on our current assessment metrics, to say nothing of the metrics that will matter even more in the future.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results show that Nevada's student achievement scores in both fourth and eighth grade reading, and math have consistently been below the national average. In 2022, Nevada's eighth grade math score was 269, compared to the national average of 274, with Black and Hispanic students scoring significantly lower than their White peers. Similarly, in eighth grade reading, Nevada scored 259, on par with the national average, but with noticeable gaps among Black and Hispanic students. The state's fourth grade math and reading scores were also below national averages, further highlighting Nevada's educational challenges (USDOE, 2022).

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) evaluates 15-year-old students globally on their application of knowledge in reading, mathematics, and science. The United States performance on PISA reveals significant room for improvement compared to top-performing countries around the world. In PISA 2022, the United States ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> in reading literacy, 39<sup>th</sup> in mathematics literacy, and 25<sup>th</sup> in science literacy. The results indicate that U.S. students on average lag behind their peers, particularly in applying scientific knowledge to unfamiliar situations and modeling complex situations in mathematics. (OECD, 2023)

Given that Nevada performs below the U.S. average on NAEP, and the United States itself ranks poorly on PISA compared to countries like Canada, Estonia, Singapore, and Japan, it is evident that Nevada is not providing public education on the whole that is globally competitive.

One consequence of these realities is significant and growing skills gaps in the U.S. workforce. Some 74 percent of U.S. hiring managers report recognizing a skills gap and nearly half say that candidates lack the skills required to fill jobs (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2020). This situation underscores the urgent need for educational improvement and targeted strategies to improve student outcomes and better prepare them for a rapidly changing world of work.

### **How Can We Prepare Not Only for the World of Today but Also Tomorrow?**

There is a world of evidence that shows our current conditions in Nevada are not immutable. The experience of many high-performing and rapidly improving education systems around the world and across the United States shows that change and real progress are possible.

Top-performing systems like Canada, Estonia, Singapore, and Japan have consistently produced high levels of student performance and engagement (OECD, 2023), workforce readiness (USDOE, IES, & NCES, 2020), teacher retention and job satisfaction (OECD, 2019), and coherence and alignment (Burns et al., 2016).

These systems demonstrate strong connections between their education systems and economic goals. Policies and strategies are intentional and designed to support each other and focus on future readiness. As a result, these systems are not just producing well-prepared, more resilient students, but are themselves more flexible, able to adapt, and resilient.

In the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting impacts on schools and students, the importance of system resiliency has been made clear. In a future that research shows will likely be shaped by a host of megatrends and an unknowable number of new and unforeseen challenges,

systemic resilience combined with an anticipatory capacity to identify new and emerging trends and challenges is vital.

To gain an understanding of this dimension of system change, Commissioners engaged in a workshop led by Dr. Tracey Burns, NCEE's Chief Research Officer. Participants explored global trends and plausible future scenarios in more depth. In doing so, they considered the implications for Nevada's education policy. They developed the ability to stress-test whether policy proposals are sufficiently bold and future-forward.

They discussed how to build the anticipatory capacity to identify new and unforeseen challenges, practice policy innovation, and pivot and prepare for "curve balls." Commission members engaged in small group discussions centered on the future of education and each group received one of four scenarios: schooling extended, education outsourced, schools as learning hubs, and learn-as-you-go schooling. These scenarios provide a framework for considering different directions that education systems might take, helping stakeholders prepare for various possible futures and think strategically about the policies and practices needed to achieve desired outcomes (OECD, 2020). Each group considered actions they could take as leaders to prepare for these future scenarios, including identifying relevant considerations that had not been previously discussed, stopping certain current practices, and addressing new topics in Nevada's education discussions.

As a result, the Commissioners expressed a shared desire to continue to identify and gain insights into the state's strengths and areas for growth. Vital too, from the Commissioners' perspective, is the need to learn from those systems whose students are consistently outperforming U.S. students and, as importantly, those systems that are rapidly improving.

By learning from such systems, distilling their successful principles and practices, and at the same time deeply understanding Nevada's context, we can lay a powerful groundwork for education system transformation.

## **VI. Initial Policy Considerations**

The Commission's policy analysis and development work is primarily taking place within four interconnected subcommittees. These subcommittees meet in between each Commission meeting, and periodically during Commission meetings, to: deeply analyze the Nevada context; consider local-to-global research such as NCEE's international benchmarking as it relates to their policy area; surface preliminary considerations; and eventually, craft recommendations to be stress tested with the Commission and refined. The Commission will continue meeting in Quarter

2, 2025 following the legislative session in order to plan for additional policy implementation, outreach, and support as needed.



Source: NCEE

The subcommittee’s policy areas were determined based on NCEE’s research into the policies and practices that underpin the world’s highest performing and rapidly improving education systems. They include **world-class teaching** and learning; rewarding **pathways to college and career**; creating **proficiency-based** opportunities for students to move on when they demonstrate readiness, rather than satisfy seat time requirements; and **measuring what matters** through clear and compelling indicators of whether the system is performing well.

### *Reinforcing Interconnectedness: The Systemic Nature of Our Work*

At the same time as the subcommittees have been meeting to dive deep into their policy areas, they have also been coming together as a full Commission to share findings, reinforce alignment and coherence, and affirm the theme that “our work is connected.”

The Commission has studied research in the groundbreaking fields of systems theory and systems evaluation to affirm the finding that policies cannot operate in silos and that our efforts can have unintended consequences if they are not well coordinated or strongly aligned. We know from the research that when we work in complex social systems, like education, we cannot rely on linear thinking to ensure that all of our problems are solved.

The Commission learned through this research that a complex system is made up of interdependent components that are connected through a web of relationships, forming a whole that is different from the sum of its parts. To understand complex systems, it is critical to gather multiple perspectives about how the system functions. Changing systems is an iterative process that must occur at multiple levels. Systems transformation happens through deep shifts in structures, programs, relationships, ways of operating, mindsets, and mental models that govern the system (Beer, 2019; Cabaj, 2017).

The subcommittees will not have recommendations drafted until the fall of 2024. The Commission looks forward to releasing those recommendations to the public in due course. In the meantime, this Preliminary Report outlines the global-to-local research the subcommittees have consulted, how those research findings compare to Nevada, and their initial considerations for policy areas to explore further.

## **A. Portrait of a World-Class Teacher Subcommittee**

This **Portrait of a World-Class Teacher Subcommittee** will make recommendations aimed at ensuring that all Nevada's teachers are future-forward, strategic, and adept at facilitating the kind of learning experiences needed to realize the Nevada Portrait of a Learner. Members of this subcommittee are investigating the knowledge, skills, and experiences teachers need and exploring the policies that can ensure that all teachers throughout Nevada develop them.

Topics have included the challenges of improving teacher preparation, the need for building in more time for collaborative professional learning, and strategies to address the persistent teacher shortage in Nevada. Future topics will include digging into teacher preparation accreditation and certification requirements more deeply; exploring how to incentivize high-quality professional learning; career progressions; and strategies to recruit and retain a sustainable pipeline of teachers.

In addition to the voices of Commissioners, including current teacher Alysia Byrd, this subcommittee has benefited enormously from the perspective of the 2024 Nevada Teacher of the Year Laura Jeanne Penrod, who has offered feedback on the global comparative research and policy analysis from a practicing teacher's perspective. Future subcommittee meetings will incorporate additional teacher perspectives as well as additional perspectives from higher education institutions.

### ***Current Nevada Context***

Subcommittee members repeatedly affirmed the commitment, tenacity, and professionalism of Nevada's teachers. Nevertheless, all pointed to the enormous challenges facing teachers. Many raised questions about whether all of Nevada's teachers benefitted from the learning experiences and professional working environments to continuously learn on the job, do their very best work, and adapt to the future. Subcommittee members recognized that not all Nevada teachers were being systematically prepared to meet the challenges associated with realizing the Nevada Portrait of a Learner.

Nevada currently faces an enormously challenging and persistent **teacher shortage**. The system needs to fill almost 3,000 positions statewide and 2,000 in Clark County School District alone and leads the nation in teacher shortages (Hernandez, 2022). Subcommittee members noted that addressing that shortage would require a multifaceted approach. The largest barriers identified in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers were the public's perception of teaching and the stressors associated with the job.

There was considerable discussion about the quality, consistency, relevance, and future focus of **teacher professional learning**, as well as the amount of time available for that learning. Some subcommittee members noted that teachers in some school districts had ample time available to them to engage in professional learning and collaboration, but other school districts had next to no time available for that purpose.

Even in school districts with schedules that permit substantial professional learning, teachers may not know how to use that time effectively. **Strong school leadership** was identified as a key lever for ensuring that teachers are set up for success in engaging in collaborative and/or self-directed professional learning.

### ***Findings from High-Performing Systems***

High-performing education systems attract and retain high-quality and diverse teachers. Recruitment focuses on high academic standards, with competitive entry into teacher preparation programs. Teacher preparation and training involve significant coursework in subject-specific pedagogy, significant time in Professional Development Schools (PDS), comprehensive curricula that cover both subject matter and pedagogical skills, and well-developed induction programs. Ongoing professional development includes collaborative work environments and career ladders that provide clear pathways for professional advancement. More details are below. (NCEE, 2024c; 2017; & 2013)

#### **Recruitment and Selection of Teachers**

- **Rigorous Recruiting Process:** High-performing systems recruit teachers from the top tier academically. Admission to teacher preparation programs in these countries is highly competitive. Finland, for instance, has a more stringent selection process for teacher education programs than it does for law school. This rigorous selection ensures that only the most capable candidates, who also demonstrate a passion for teaching and strong interpersonal skills, enter the profession.

#### **Teacher Preparation**

- Professional Development Schools: Finland ensures that all teacher candidates must spend significant time in Professional Development Schools (PDSs). These schools enable teacher candidates to receive coaching and feedback from experienced teachers who are specifically recruited and systematically prepared for this purpose. PDSs serve as sites for ongoing professional development, ensuring that new teachers are well-prepared for the challenges of the classroom.
- Comprehensive Curriculum: High-performing systems ensure that teacher preparation programs include extensive training in both subject matter and pedagogical skills. Candidates learn how to quickly diagnose student difficulties and apply research-based strategies to address them. This comprehensive approach helps teachers develop the deep conceptual understanding necessary to effectively teach complex subjects.

### **Support for New Teachers**

- Structured Induction Programs: High-performing systems have well-developed induction programs that provide robust support to new teachers. These programs include formal mentoring by experienced teachers. Mentor teachers are recruited, selected, and trained according to rigorous criteria.

### **Ongoing Professional Development**

- Collaborative Work Environment: In high-performing systems, teachers spend a significant portion of their work week on professional development activities, such as collaborative lesson planning, peer observation, and research. These activities are designed to foster a continuous improvement culture.
- Career Progressions: These systems have career ladders that provide clear pathways for teachers to advance professionally without leaving the classroom. This structure encourages teachers to continually improve their practice and take on leadership roles, contributing to the overall quality of education.

These policies adopted by globally competitive world leaders in education mirror those in leading and rapidly innovating states—from Massachusetts to Michigan to Maryland to New Mexico—and districts—from Madera, California to McComb, Mississippi to Whitehall-Coplay Pennsylvania—that are adopting similar policies (Maryland Commission on Innovation & Excellence in Education, 2019; Stewart & Morton, 2024).

### ***Emerging Considerations for Policy Development***

Based on this global research, the subcommittee is considering the impact of the following policy initiatives:

- Study the extent to which teachers throughout Nevada have equal time allocated for **teachers' collaborative professional learning** and consider what incentives for districts may be effective to create more time in the day for that purpose.
- Invest more in **world-class professional learning for school leaders**, to ensure that principals come to share the Commission's vision for high-performance education systems and develop the 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.
- Compare the requirements for graduating from leading Nevada **teacher preparation programs** to those in leading systems worldwide, and work with Deans of providers to consider ways to better align course requirements and practical experience with the current and future demands of teaching and to meet the conditions necessary for all of Nevada's young people to fully develop the competencies articulated in the Portrait.
- Explore how **teacher career progressions** adapted from those like the Singapore model might: incentivize teachers to stay in the profession, grow new skills throughout their careers, drive continuous improvement through an explicit coaching/mentoring model, improve the structure and consistency of teacher induction, and ultimately, retain staff in a professional and rewarding work environment.
- Ensure that the **professional learning requirements for licensure renewal** reflect skills and dispositions that will enable teachers to teach all students to be future-ready. These may include familiarity and skill with emerging technologies like generative AI, cultural competence, and a deep understanding of the durable skills embedded in the Nevada Portrait of a Learner.
- Study the impact of school-based **mental health professionals** in promoting stronger teacher and student wellbeing.
- Invest in technology tools that can support teachers in doing their jobs well, while ensuring that teachers have access to the **support they need to use those technologies effectively in their practice**.

## B. Next Generation Career Pathways Subcommittee

The Next Generation Career Pathways Subcommittee is charged with aligning education and the experiences in and out of the classrooms with the growing and state-prioritized industries leading to career outcomes for all Nevada learners. The subcommittee is committed to exploring how all Nevada learners can have access to career exploration and modern career pathways, with a particular consideration of work-based learning models including apprenticeships. Throughout the subcommittee, there is a focus on the employer-identified need for entrepreneurial and

transferable skill development. The subcommittee recognizes that equipping learners with these skills will enable them to navigate among multiple occupations and re-skill throughout their lives. These skills discussed also align directly with the empowering, connecting, impacting, and thriving components of the Portrait of a Learner.

Topics the subcommittee has explored include anticipating the skills and occupations of the future, and the role that employers—both large and small businesses—can engage with education systems at multiple levels. The subcommittee recognizes that employers can not only provide job site experiences such as internships or apprenticeships but also engage with career exploration, curriculum understanding, and project-based learning. Additionally, the subcommittee has identified the need for common career exploration for all Nevada learners, not just Career and Technical Education (CTE) concentrators, highlighting an opportunity to explore how career exploration can expand into earlier years of middle school and elementary school. They also elevated the need to support rural communities to have access to high-quality career exploration.

## Current Nevada Context

### ***Growing Focus on Career and Technical Education***

Nevada has strong Career and Technical Education (CTE) offerings with increasing numbers of participants. CTE offerings combine practical work experience with Industry Recognized Credentials (IRCs), and dual enrollment courses that accelerate students towards readiness to transition into their industry of focus. In Nevada, 84 percent of CTE participants are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (U.S. Department of Education, 2022).

The subcommittee is exploring the number of CTE participants across industries. In the 2021-2022 academic year, the top four career clusters among secondary CTE participants were Arts, A/V Technology & Communications (26.36 percent); Information Technology (14.97 percent); Health Science (12.48 percent); Hospitality & Tourism (11.93 percent) (U.S. Department of Education, 2022).

While CTE offerings in Nevada are increasing, not all pathways are offered in each district, and work-based learning experiences remain dependent on employer availability, school policy, and availability of educators qualified to teach occupation-specific courses leading to IRCs. Continued research by the subcommittee will explore the alignment of CTE pathways and where there is an opportunity to improve alignment across in-demand industries and industries prioritized by the Governor's Office of Economic Development.

## ***Demand for Career Exploration and Advising for All Learners***

The subcommittee is coalescing around the idea that “Career exploration cannot be an elective.” The subcommittee is committed to identifying strategies and policies that will enable all students, regardless of location, to have a common set of career exploration experiences, that allow them experience career possibilities without locking them into any paths. Additionally, the subcommittee will continue to explore two focus areas related to expanding career exploration. The first is related to future-facing **career advising** to increase training, capacity, and the number of staff members dedicated to career counseling, coaching, and establishing employer partnerships. The second focus area is the **alignment of in-demand skills and employer partnerships**. This requires employers to actively support in validation of skills through credentials or other methods as well as the application of skills from classroom to workplace environments.

## **Findings from High-Performing Systems**

### ***Integration of Academics and Skill Development***

High-performing systems ensure that students achieve high competence in academics, with a focus on both university-based higher education as well as continued vocational training. The curriculum for vocational programs is set to a high academic standard, closely integrated with postsecondary education and aligned with the needs of the economy. Employers are actively involved in designing and providing workplace-based programs, ensuring students acquire the necessary theoretical and practical skills.

An example of this is in the Swiss system, where students are supported by advisors to choose an academic or vocational pathway. Students gain professional experience through apprenticeships under the guidance of mentors. These experiences are directly aligned with academic experiences in the classroom (NCEE, 2023).

### ***Employer Engagement***

Employers are necessary to provide on-site work-based learning experiences. High-performing systems engage employers at multiple levels to ensure that the employer, learner, and educator experience is mutually valuable. Employers should be aware of the academic and skills-based competencies that each work-based learning experience aims to provide to the learner.

Simultaneously, learners should be prepared through education with the skills necessary to be an asset to the employer and complete relevant tasks. Additionally, effective employer engagement is comprehensive, enabling employers to support curriculum development and validation of relevant skills that can be developed in the classroom in addition to through work-site experiences. Finally, effective employer partnerships are institutionally varied. Industry CEOs and decision-makers set the conditions necessary for partnerships, HR and talent acquisition leaders communicate skills and realistic hiring processes, and content experts train, mentor, and coach learners in skill development (Wilson, 2015).

For example, in the Swiss system, employers and education leaders work together to ensure that students are informed of the vocation pathway they are interested in, with over 200 career options available. Employers and education leaders collaborate to implement a schedule where students attend classroom learning for two days weekly with 3 days of apprenticeship experience aligned to a postsecondary credential or credit. Employers serve both as supervisors as well as mentors (NCEE, 2023). The Swiss system actively inspired work locally in Lincoln County, Nevada that enabled flexible learning spaces, real-world learning experiences, and multiple learning pathways.

### ***Systems-level coordination and intermediaries***

Finally, high-performing systems ensure communication, staffing, technology, and data tracking are coordinated effectively across education and industry partnerships. Systems-level coordination, often through identified intermediary organizations or teams, involves dedicated staff capacity to: develop protocols; program manage; track data; develop and sustain relationships; and coordinate the logistics and policies needed to ensure both safe working environments and documented outcomes for all participants - both employers and learners. Identifying procedures and coordinating capacity enables more small businesses and less-resourced education institutions to implement career exploration experiences (Hartung, Hoffman, Loyd, & Niño, 2023).

### ***Emerging Considerations for Policy Development***

The subcommittee has identified an overarching goal to ensure that high-quality career pathways and career exploration opportunities are available to urban, suburban, and rural learners and that learners have opportunities to explore multiple career options. Effective career exploration for all learners will require an increasing capacity of career advisors; effective and varied partnerships from large, small, and mid-sized employers; and a deeper understanding of in-demand and transferable skills necessary for career success today and into the future.

Several priority areas emerging from the subcommittee include:

- **A focus on transferable and entrepreneurial skills development through work-based and project-based experiences:** To successfully achieve this, the subcommittee seeks to leverage employer partnerships to validate and define core employability and entrepreneurial skills that will prepare Nevada learners to achieve across multiple occupations, reskill, and upskill across their lives. Identifying these skills can also inform the development of CTE pathways into new and emerging industries.
- **Career exploration and career exposure for all students starting in middle school or earlier:** Exposure to careers, particularly in new and emerging industries, will support Nevada learners in understanding the options available to them. Career exploration and exposure require the support of guidance staff and educators who are supported with the capacity and training to understand changing industry and work environments as well as credential and skill requirements for career success.
- **Employer partnerships that enable rural and remote career-connected learning:** While CTE experiences are increasing in Nevada, rural communities often lack the economic infrastructure and large employer base to provide the quantity of work experiences, particularly in the form of internships and apprenticeships, in industries prioritized by the state. There is an opportunity to explore technology-based solutions and employer incentives to increase rural career-connected learning experiences.
- **Improved data collection and messaging to understand and communicate the impact of Career and Technical Education.** The subcommittee will continue to explore the impact of CTE on graduates' career trajectories. However, it is difficult to track longitudinal wage and career growth data. Data systems that connect education and workforce development efforts can inform career pathways offerings, relevant IRCs, and strategic dual enrollment opportunities in CTE programs. It can also help efforts to communicate the value of CTE to both students and their families as an opportunity for long-term success.

Subcommittee members are focused on ensuring that all Nevada learners have access to future-focused career exploration and that relevant, real-world experiences are embedded in their education, leading them to prosper as employees and citizens of Nevada. This subcommittee will continue to explore data to better understand current offerings, infrastructure challenges, and opportunities.

## C. Proficiency-Based Learning Subcommittee

**The Proficiency-Based Learning Subcommittee** will make recommendations aimed at transitioning Nevada to a system where all students move on when ready to pathways that are meaningful and rewarding for them, with no dead ends. Their focus includes rethinking the concept of time in education and reimagining classroom instruction to better meet student needs. This focus is closely connected to that of the other three subcommittees.

Accomplishing this task means subcommittee members are exploring topics such as:

- Implementation of the Nevada Portrait of a Learner and the Nevada Future of Learning Network
- Standards, curriculum, and learning progressions
- How to measure future-ready competencies and durable skills
- High school redesign options, certification, and credentialing
- The design of the high school diploma
- Necessary complementary action by post-secondary institutions

### ***Current Nevada Context***

This subcommittee, more than any of the others, builds on the work of the Nevada Future of Learning Network. Members are responsible for examining existing efforts underway to draft and pilot learning progressions aligned to the Nevada Portrait of a Learner, identify gaps, and make recommendations for improvement. Subcommittee members are learning about how the Nevada Future of Learning Network is launching competency-based learning implementation pilots in multiple districts to build, test, and refine learner progressions aligned to the Portrait of a Learner; providing some professional learning for educators to help them incorporate the Portrait's competencies into their teaching practices; and engaging with stakeholders to gather feedback, share progress, and ensure alignment with community needs and expectations.

The Future of Learning Network builds on previous networks related to competency-based education. In 2017, the Nevada Legislature passed Assembly Bill 110, which established the Nevada Competency-Based Education Network and Pilot Program (CBE Network). Assembly Bill 110 specifically defines CBE as “a system of instruction by which a pupil advances to a higher level of learning when the pupil demonstrates mastery of a concept or skill, regardless of the time, place, or pace at which the pupil progresses.” The CBE Network worked to:

1. Study approaches to converting time-based requirements in classrooms into competency measures;
2. Examine tools for personalized learning and CBE;
3. Ensure appropriate examinations are mandated by the State Board of Education; and,
4. Strategize about the integration of technology to enhance CBE. (Nevada Legislature, 2017).

### ***Findings from High-Performing Systems***

High-performing systems show how important clear performance standards, exemplified by authentic student work, are for building proficiency-based learning systems. These systems maintain a relentless focus on ensuring all students stay on track to meet these standards. Assessment for learning provides teachers and students with clear information about progress and challenges, with external assessments occurring only at key levels to ensure readiness for the next stage.

Well-designed curricula are pedagogically and developmentally appropriate, targeting essential skills and competencies for work and life readiness, and offering rigorous personalized pathways in high school. Additionally, there is a strong emphasis on early intervention and support to ensure students are prepared for learning and thrive throughout their education.

### ***Emerging Considerations for Policy Development***

Based on this global research and initial discussions, the subcommittee is considering the impact of the following policy initiatives:

1. Incentives to customize instruction tailored to the learner. How can we help educators provide support to students that meets their individual needs, with the intention that students move onto more rigorous material when they have developed proficiency versus based on a schedule?
2. Providing high-quality professional learning to teachers to build their capacity to engage students in this way.
3. Examining the role of time (both as it applies to the progression of learning and to how teachers use it) to determine paths forward that make learning the constant and time the variable. How is current time mandated? How will it shift?

4. Examining the role of high-quality leadership in designing and leading schools with proficiency-based models at their core.

Likewise, the subcommittee indicated a need to coordinate with other subcommittees and experts to explore the following:

1. How does the work of the PBL subcommittee support the current statewide effort around competency-based education? What obstacles have been revealed based on this effort and how can the subcommittee policy recommendations help mitigate those obstacles? How might the subcommittee help bridge the understanding of the larger commission around the concepts of proficiency-based, competency-based, and mastery?
2. How will the subcommittee's learning around assessment in a proficiency-based learning model correlate with the outcomes/learning from the Measuring What Matters subcommittee?
3. What is happening in Nevada at the post-secondary level to ensure that the current methods used to vet the admissions of high school students to two and four-year institutions are considered in light of the way grading and transcripts could shift with the long-term evolution of a proficiency-based approach?
4. How do we distinguish between proficiency-based, competency-based, and mastery in the Nevada context?

## D. Measuring What Matters Subcommittee

The **Measuring What Matters Subcommittee** will make recommendations aimed at ensuring that Nevada's K-12 system is focused on setting fair and clear targets and expectations for the growth of the system, ensuring equitable access and outcomes, and providing targeted support to those who need it. It will also focus on communicating a clear and compelling storyline about education to the Nevada public; ensuring that the data systems that communicate that message are clear, transparent, and navigable; and assessing whether the message reaches a broad, diverse, and representative set of stakeholders (for example, communities, families, policymakers, learners, and the country as a whole).

The subcommittee has discussed the importance of clear goals, aligned roles, and consistent reporting structures, emphasizing horizontal accountability and stakeholder engagement, improving metrics, transparency and accountability, and balancing standardization and personalization in education.

## **Current Nevada Context**

Nevada's education accountability system has undergone significant changes and adaptations in recent years (Legislative Committee on Education, 2000). The passage of Assembly Bill 222 in 2011 led to the establishment of the Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) and the development of the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF). This framework aimed to improve teacher effectiveness by finding new ways to support student learning and growth. The passage of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, necessitated that Nevada's school accountability system, the School Performance Framework (SPF) be adjusted to adapt to these new changing guidelines. Currently, Nevada's SPF uses a weighted point model common to many states. Academic achievement, growth, English Learner (EL) proficiency, gap closing, and chronic absenteeism are combined into a total score (Nevada Department of Education, 2023).

Concerns have been raised across the subcommittee about the feasibility and technical validity of the SPF, as well as the mindsets underpinning the model and the degree to which it can and does support schools to improve and incentivize growth. Some members raised concerns that the model has exacerbated the current teacher shortage by contributing to stress and negative narratives about Nevada education. Others worried that it did not measure the durable, future-ready skills underpinning the Portrait of a Learner, and much of NCEE's global research on what high-performing systems value and measure.

Several recently passed bills may affect what schools prioritize in the current accountability regime. Specifically, SB 98 (2023) requires the development of metrics to assess "(1) the growth and proficiency of pupils in literacy, mathematics, and science; (2) the engagement and proficiency of pupils in courses for college and career readiness; and (3) the retention and recruitment of teachers and education support professionals." Any additional metrics of performance may be developed by each district or charter school, with approval by the Superintendent of Public Instruction to identify and meet the needs of students and schools.

AB 241 (2023) establishes new requirements for all students in Nevada to be on track for College and Career Readiness diplomas. SB 72 (2023) and AB 285 (2023) list requirements for school safety measures, with SB 72 specifically requiring a study of the safety and well-being of staff, and AB 285 adding data requirements that seek to connect school staffing levels with student behavior.

## ***Findings From High-Performing Systems***

High-performing systems maintain a clear focus on horizontal and vertical alignment across the system. High-performing systems effectively bring actors together to set a forward-looking and unified vision for the education system and establish goals and a strategy for realizing that vision. It must hold every actor in the system accountable for those goals while providing robust support to make the vision a reality. This includes clarifying responsibilities, sharing data on progress, strengthening capacity, and reducing inefficiency at every level (NCEE, 2014 & 2024b; Van Der Ark, 2020).

Their accountability systems include long-term shared strategic vision, clear and aligned goals and roles, and system capacity to support schools in achieving these goals. Accountability is designed in service of continuous improvement, and support for struggling schools and educators is built throughout the system. Fair and stable funding provides all students with the resources and opportunities to succeed and is tied to the vision and strategy of the education system.

## ***Emerging Considerations for Policy Development***

At the heart of the subcommittee’s analysis of the current system was a recognition of a fundamental tension: The need to successfully measure individual and system growth at the same time and incentivize the improvement of both.

All subcommittee members acknowledged the difficulty of shifting the accountability system at the current moment. Whatever system replaces the current one will have to communicate the performance of schools and the overall education system to policymakers, parents, and taxpayers—the investors in that system—at large. At the same time, that system must incentivize continuous improvement and growth and support schools to improve. And, finally, the system must pass muster under the current federal accountability requirements or qualify for a federal waiver from that process.

Ultimately, the subcommittee aims to create a transparent and equitable accountability system that supports continuous improvement and effectively communicates with all stakeholders. The subcommittee is considering the following policy areas and will be exploring the potential impact of each more deeply:

- **Align future-forward yet achievable education goals with actionable performance metrics:** How can Nevada think beyond the current measurement constraints of the day to

measure the things we ultimately care about, including durable skills as well as academic skills, multiple ways to develop and demonstrate knowledge, and multiple ways to gain knowledge? How can Nevada incorporate more student-centered measures of performance, like student well-being? How can Nevada ensure that performance metrics are incorporated into meaningful and supportive measurement and accountability systems that provide support for schools that need it most? How can Nevada make a pilot of this approach work in the current system, given current constraints (e.g., the federal requirements)?

- **Data transparency, dashboards, and communications tools:** Current data gathering processes at all levels of the system might be examined to ensure that all data gathered is useful, relevant, and actionable. The subcommittee will also consider how data dashboards and communications tools can be clear, supportive, celebratory of bright spots, and enable continuous improvement.
- **Public communications strategy:** The subcommittee discussed the need to build a public communications strategy to communicate the strategy, goals, and current outcomes of the system to businesses, communities, families, and taxpayers, and ensure that all Nevadans understand how the system is performing, where it is going, and their role in that change process. This would involve not only a new approach to communicating and visualizing data but also capacity-building around messaging and storytelling. The subcommittee recognizes the value of conducting robust stakeholder analysis to better understand messages that resonate with the public and how to best communicate them.
- **Federal flexibilities:** The subcommittee will investigate opportunities available within the federal waiver process to better understand current flexibilities in the assessment and accountability model and consider action currently underway in Nevada on that front.

## VII. Overview of Process and Next Steps

To fulfill its charge and achieve its goals over its 18-month authorization period, the Commission determined that it will organize its work into three phases:

- Phase I: Establish Norms, Processes, and Foundational Learning (three months)
- Phase II: Subcommittees Craft Policy Recommendations with Full Commission Input (nine months)

- Phase III: Commission Develops Long-Term Implementation Plan & Next Steps (six months)

The Commission is pleased to have completed Phase I and has entered Phase II. The next 12 months will be devoted to completing the policy recommendations in Phase II and developing the implementation plan in Phase III.

### **Phase I: Establish Norms, Processes, and Foundational Learning (January 2024 - April 2024)**

In this initial phase, spanning approximately three months, the Commission has:

- Held an inaugural meeting on January 18, 2024, to agree on goals, processes, and norms, while selecting a Chair and Vice Chair, as well as staff and consultants. In this meeting, Commissioners reviewed research designed to help them consider:
  - the opportunity Nevada has to build a competitive, world-class education system, building on promising practices in the state, and drawing on the policies and practices from leading systems across the country and the globe;
  - changing global trends, new technologies, and unexpected innovations, and how are redefining what young people need to know and be able to do to thrive in work and life and, in turn, are creating the demand for a stronger, more equitable, and more resilient education system; and,
  - how the United States, as a whole, and Nevada, in particular, compares to other top-performing domestic and international systems by comparing Nevada’s demographics, outcomes, policies, and practices to those systems.
- Held a second in-person meeting on April 23, 2024, to:
  - consider the impact of global mega-trends and the need to practice future anticipation in more detail;
  - agree on a subcommittee structure;
  - receive an overview briefing of each policy area covered by the subcommittees; and,
  - appoint four subcommittees from among the Commission to address specific policy areas in more detail, and begin surfacing bright spots, needs, barriers, and opportunities for each of those policy areas.

## Phase II: Subcommittees Craft Policy Recommendations with Full Commission Input (April 2024 - January 2025)

The Commission has recently begun more focused policy discussions by dividing members into subcommittees. Subcommittees are engaged in deeper analysis and more focused and robust discussions of their respective policy areas. Eventually, they will develop comprehensive policy recommendations to bring to the Commission. Each subcommittee will meet approximately four times virtually, while the Commission will hold quarterly in-person meetings to review and refine the considerations and eventual recommendations of the subcommittees.

More specifically, the subcommittees are:

1. Discussing bright spots and opportunities for growth in their designated policy area by considering:
  - a. Existing studies of their policy area within Nevada.
  - b. Examples of that policy area within other states/jurisdictions.
  - c. Recommendations from stakeholder groups, advocates, and other sources.
2. Identifying gaps in existing studies and recommendations and ways to iterate on existing findings and recommendations by getting feedback and engagement.

In the coming months they will:

3. Draft potential recommendations to be stress-tested with the Commission, including:
  - a. Identifying influential actions: What incentives, structural changes, and supports are necessary to move from our current state to a future vision.
  - b. Translating into policy levers: How can the actions be translated into policy including legislation, pilots, initiatives, and frameworks in a 2- to 5-year horizon?
  - c. Testing across perspectives: How can we build stakeholder engagement and garner public input and support along the way?
  - d. Plan with state timelines: What legislative recommendations will be needed to start the process first thing in 2025?
4. Consider full Commission feedback on those recommendations.
5. Revise recommendations as needed.

During this phase, the Commission will also need to meet with other Commissions and bodies

throughout the state (like the Commission on School Funding) to seek input, share findings, solicit feedback, and reinforce the interconnectedness of our work.

### **Phase III: Finalize and Approve Recommendations (January 2025 - June 2025)**

The Commission's eventual goal is to produce a long-term plan for a globally competitive and future-ready education system in Nevada. This will include not only legislative recommendations but also regulatory action and actions for the interim session. It will also incorporate plans for stakeholder engagement and systems evaluation so that impact can be documented and communicated. The implementation plan will serve as the final report required by SB 425 (2023).

## **VIII. Conclusion**

The Nevada Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education is committed to ensuring that Nevada's learners develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies that will enable them to compete globally and thrive in careers and communities now and in the future.

We recognize that ensuring our schools are both globally competitive today and resilient enough to face a changing future is no small task. It will take more than any individual investment, program, or intervention. What is required is bold, future-forward education system transformation. We know from our research into global leaders and innovators that it is possible to design a system where proficiency-based, learner-centered, and future-ready education is the expectation for every learner. These are systems where learners have voice, choice, and agency over their learning, and can explore and choose among many rigorous pathways leading to higher education and high-paying, sustainable careers. They are systems where every educator can excel as a life-long learning professional. And they are systems where meaningful data on what truly matters for students' success is collected and reported to the public in clear and compelling ways.

The task ahead is to create the education system that the future demands. Designing that system will take commitment and dedication to marshaling evidence, engaging in deep collaboration, and committing to shared purpose. The policy framework and roadmap this Commission is developing over the next 12 months is only one piece of that work. But we hope it will galvanize and support much great work to come from our students, teachers, leaders, and communities.

The Commission is united in its sense of urgency and commitment to the work ahead. Our shared well-being and success as a state depends on it.

## IX. Appendices

### Appendix A: Commissioners of the Nevada Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education

#### Elysia Byrd

- Current position: Teacher Strategist at John F. Miller School
- Appointed by: Clark County Education Association

#### Patty Charlton

- Current position: Chancellor
- Member as provided by SB 425

#### Teresa Dastrup

- Current position: President of the Board of Trustees at Elko County School District
- Appointed by: Member appointed by the Nevada Association of School Boards

#### Marilyn Dondero Loop

- Current position: Member of the Nevada Senate, Chair of the Nevada Senate Finance Committee, and Member of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education
- Appointed by: Majority Leader of the Senate

#### Jhone Ebert

- Current position: Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Member as provided by SB 425

#### Dr. Mariluz Garcia

- Current position: Washoe County Commissioner
- Appointed by: The Nevada Association of Counties

#### Tim Hughes

- Current position: Member of the Nevada State Board of Education, District 1
- Appointed by: President of the State Board of Education

#### Paul Johnson

- Current position: Chief Financial Officer for the White Pine County School District
- Appointed by: Appointed by Association of School Business Officials International

#### Dr. Gregory Koenig

- Current position: Member of the Nevada Assembly, Nevada Assembly Education Committee, and Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education (alternate)
- Appointed by: Minority Leader of the Assembly

#### Roberta Lange

- Current position: Member of the Nevada Senate, Assistant Majority Leader, Chair of the Nevada Senate Education Committee, and Vice Chair of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education
- Appointed by: Majority Leader of the Senate

#### Kali Fox Miller

- Current position: President of the Nevada Parent Teacher Association Board of Managers
- Appointed by: Nevada Parent Teacher Association

#### Erica Mosca

- Current position: Member of the Nevada Assembly and the Nevada Assembly Education Committee
- Appointed by: Speaker of the Assembly

### **Anthony Nuñez**

- Current position: Principal at Cheyenne High School
- Appointed by: Nevada Association of School Administrators

### **Sean Parker**

- Current position: Teach For America Las Vegas' Executive Director
- Appointed by: State Superintendent representing an organization advocating for public instruction

### **Tina Quigley**

- Current position: President & CEO of Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance
- Appointed by: Governor of Nevada

### **Malinda Riemersma**

- Current position: 3rd Grade Teacher at Sonoma Heights Elementary School
- Appointed by: Nominated by The Nevada State Education Association

### **Nicole Rourke**

- Current position: Director of Government and Public Affairs for City of Henderson
- Appointed by: Member appointed by the Nevada League of Cities

### **Maite Salazar**

- Current position: Owner and Co-founder at 3F Initiatives LLC
- Appointed by: Governor of Nevada

### **Amy Stephenson**

- Current position: Director of the Governor's Finance Office
- Member as provided by SB 425

### **Dr. Angie Taylor**

- Current position: Member of the Nevada Assembly, and Vice Chair of the Nevada Assembly Education Committee
- Appointed by: Speaker of the Assembly

### **Dr. Robin Titus**

- Current position: Member of the Nevada Senate, Senate Minority Leader, Member of the Nevada Senate Education Committee, and Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education (alternate)
- Appointed by: Minority Leader of the Senate

### **Joyce Woodhouse**

- Current position: Commissioner on the Commission on School Funding
- Appointed by: The Commission on School Funding

### **Peter Zierhut**

- Current position: Vice President of Outside Operations with Haas Automation, Inc
- Appointed by: Governor of Nevada

### **Adam Young**

- Current position: Superintendent of the White Pine County School District
- Appointed by: Nevada Association of School Superintendents

## Appendix B. Outside Experts and Thought Partners

### National Center on Education and the Economy (contracted facilitators and thought partners)

**Dr. Vicki Phillips**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Nathan Driskell**  
Chief Policy Officer

**Dr. Tracey Burns**  
Chief Research Officer

**Janice Case**  
Regional Director, West

**Leah Moschella**  
Designer, Leader Experiences

**Charlotte Notaras**  
Research and Policy Analyst

**Jahmair Stewart**  
Policy Analyst

### Other Experts Consulted

**Jeanine Collins**  
Chief Innovation Officer, Ed. Xtraordinary

**Julianna Charles Brown**  
Senior Director, Systems Transformation, KnowledgeWorks

**Felicia Gonzales**  
Consultant to the State Superintendent, Nevada Department of Education

**Katie King**  
Senior Director, Strategic Engagement, KnowledgeWorks

## Appendix C. Resources Consulted

Beer, T. (2019). *Complex Social Change*. Center for Evaluation Innovation. <https://www.evaluationinnovation.org/topics/#Complex-Social-Change>

Better Evaluation. (2013). *Planning an evaluation: Using the rainbow framework*. <https://www.betterevaluation.org/frameworks-guides/rainbow-framework>

Burns, T., Köster, F., & Fuster, M. (2016). *Education Governance in Action: Lessons from Case Studies*. Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264262829-en>

Cabaj, M. (2017). *What we know so far about Sets of Principles for Evaluating Systems Change Efforts*. Tamarack Institute. [https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/316071/Events/Multi-Day%20Events/Evaluation%20+%20Design/Resources/WhatWeKnowSoFar-Systems-Change-Evaluation\\_update.pdf](https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/316071/Events/Multi-Day%20Events/Evaluation%20+%20Design/Resources/WhatWeKnowSoFar-Systems-Change-Evaluation_update.pdf)

Cabaj, M. (2019). *Evaluating Systems Change Results: An Inquiry Framework*. Tamarack Institute. <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/hubfs/Resources/Publications/Paper%20Evaluating%20Systems%20Change%20Results%20Mark%20Cabaj.pdf?hsCtaTracking=2797ccdf-cfd3-4309-a6e0-c70b6a7ed5de%7Cfb84904f-568e-4e7f-b063-8040401998b4>

Care, E. & Fowler, B. (2021). *Evaluating Systems Change: A Blog*. New Philanthropy Capital (NPC). <https://www.thinknpc.org/blog/evaluating-systems-change/>

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), S.1177, 114th Congress, 2015-2016 (2015). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1177>

Gates, E., Walton, M., Vidueira, P., & McNall, M. (2021). Introducing systems- and complexity-informed evaluation. *New Directions for Evaluation*, 2021(170), 13-25. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.20466>

Hargreaves, M. (2010). *Evaluating System Change: A Planning Guide*. Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research. <https://www.mathematica.org/publications/evaluating-system-change-a-planning-guide>

Hargreaves, M. (2018). *Leveraging Systemic Change: Evaluating What Works*. Chicago, IL: NORC @ the University of Chicago. [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JbPiQzfdpH\\_b-OQPEw5HJZEil3Seq8wv/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JbPiQzfdpH_b-OQPEw5HJZEil3Seq8wv/view)

Hartung, K., Hoffman, N., Loyd, A., & Niño, D. (2023). *Intermediary Functions, Features, Pathways*,

and Systems. (JFF) <https://www.jff.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Intermediary-Functions-Features-Pathways-Systems.pdf>

Hernandez, R. (2022). *Districts grapple with worsening teacher shortage as new school year nears*. The Nevada Independent. <https://thenevadaindependent.com/article/districts-grapple-with-worsening-teacher-shortage-as-new-school-year-nears>

Legislative Committee on Education. (2000). *Comprehensive review of education reform in Nevada*. Nevada Legislature. <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/InterimCommittee/REL/Document/25245>

Maryland Commission on Innovation & Excellence in Education. (2019). *Interim Report*. Department of Legislative Services. <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc5300/sc5339/000113/023600/023691/20190075e.pdf>

National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). (2022). *The Time is Now*. <https://www.ncsl.org/education/the-time-is-now>

National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). (2016). *No Time to Lose: How to Build a World-Class Education System State by State*. <https://documents.ncsl.org/wwwncsl/Education/EDU-InternationalEdu-Revised-30523.pdf>

NCEE. (2024a). *Blueprint for a High Performing Education System*. The National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE). Forthcoming July 2024.

NCEE. (2024b). *Reimagining Assessment*. The National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE). <https://ncee.org/whitepaper/reimagining-assessment/>

NCEE. (2024c). *Top Performers Reimagine the Teaching Profession*. The National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE). <https://ncee.org/whitepaper/top-performers-reimagine-the-teaching-profession/>

NCEE. (2023). *Global Models of Career Pathways*. The National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE). <https://ncee.org/whitepaper/global-models-of-career-pathways/>

NCEE. (2017). *Empowered Educators: How High-Performing Systems Shape Teaching Quality Around the World*. The National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE). <https://ncee.org/book-report/empowered-educators-how-high-performing-systems-shape-teaching-quality-around-the-world/>

NCEE. (2014). *Fixing Our National Accountability System*. The National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE). <https://www.ncee.org/wp->

<content/uploads/2014/08/FixingOurNationalAccountabilitySystemWebV4.pdf>

NCEE. (2013). *Beyond PD: Teacher Professional Learning in High-Performing Systems*. The National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE). <https://ncee.org/book-report/beyond-pd-teacher-professional-learning-in-high-performing-systems/>

Nevada Department of Education. (2023). *Nevada School Performance Framework*. Office of Accountability. <https://doe.nv.gov/offices/office-of-assessment-data-and-accountability-management-adam/accountability/nspf/>

Nevada Department of Education. (n.d.). *Portrait of a Nevada Learner*. Nevada Future of Learning. [https://www.nvfutureoflearning.org/files/ugd/edc730\\_4d8bc57c3d84481d8e26d50b8a72b3f0.pdf](https://www.nvfutureoflearning.org/files/ugd/edc730_4d8bc57c3d84481d8e26d50b8a72b3f0.pdf)

Nevada Future of Learning Network. (2023). <https://www.nvfutureoflearning.org/>

Nevada Legislature. (2023a). Assembly Bill No. 400. <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/82nd2023/Bill/10344/Text>

Nevada Legislature. (2023b). Senate Bill No. 98. <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/82nd2023/Bill/9719/Overview>

Nevada Legislature. (2023c). Senate Bill No. 425. <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/82nd2023/Bill/10434/Overview>

Nevada Legislature. (2023d). Assembly Bill No. 241. <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/82nd2023/Bill/9999/Overview>

Nevada Legislature. (2023e). Senate Bill No. 72. <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/82nd2023/Bill/9651/Overview>

Nevada Legislature. (2023f). Assembly Bill No. 285. <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/82nd2023/Bill/10094/Overview>

Nevada Legislature. (2017). Assembly Bill No. 110. <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/79th2017/Bill/4844/Overview>

Nevada Legislature. (2011). Assembly Bill No. 222. <https://legiscan.com/NV/text/AB222/id/331377/Nevada-2011-AB222-Enrolled.pdf>

Noble, J., O'Flynn, P., & Kazimirski, A. (2020). *Understanding Impact: Using your theory of change to develop a measurement and evaluation framework*. New Philanthropy Capital. <https://www.thinknpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Understanding-Impact-.pdf>

OECD. (2023). *PISA 2022 Results (Volume I): The State of Learning and Equity in Education*. PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/53f23881-en>

OECD. (2020). *Back to the Future of Education: Four OECD Scenarios for Schooling*. Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/178ef527-en>.

OECD. (2019). *TALIS 2018 Results (Volume I): Teachers and School Leaders as Lifelong Learners*, TALIS, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/1d0bc92a-en>.

Parsons, B. (2010). *ZIPPER: A Mnemonic for Systems-Based Evaluation*. InSites. <https://insites.org/resource/zipper-a-mnemonic-for-systems-based-evaluation/>

Quidwai, S. (n.d.). *Designing Schools*. <https://designingschools.org/>

Stewart, J. & Morton, A. (2024). *#PANeedsTeachers Solutions Playbook: Locally Developed Strategies for Attracting, Preparing, and Retaining Teachers*. PA Needs Teachers. <https://www.paneedsteachers.com/solutions-playbook>

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. (2020). *Closing the Skills Gap*. <https://www.uschamber.com/workforce/education/closing-the-skills-gap>

U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). (2022). Perkins Collaborative Network, Nevada State Enrollment Data. <https://cte.ed.gov/pcrn/profile/state/enrollment/2022/NV/participant/secondary/gender/allstudents>

U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). (2022). Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2022 Math and Reading Assessment. <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/>

U.S. Department of Education (USDOE), Institute of Education Sciences (IES), & National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (2020). *PIAAC International Highlights Web Report*. [https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/international\\_context.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/piaac/international_context.asp).

U.S. Department of Education. (2022). *Career and Technical Education (CTE) enrollment by gender for secondary participants in Nevada*. <https://cte.ed.gov/pcrn/profile/state/enrollment/2022/NV/participant/secondary/gender/allstudents>

Vander Ark, T. (2020). *Pandemic Opportunity: Rethink Education Accountability*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tomvanderark/2020/10/14/pandemic-opportunity-rethink-education-accountability/?sh=3feaf0c66887>

Wilson, R. (2015). *A Resource Guide to Engaging Employers*. Jobs for the Future.  
<https://www.jff.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/A-Resource-Guide-to-Employer-Engagement-011315.pdf>

World Economic Forum. (2023). *Future of Jobs Report 2023*.  
<https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2023/>