

MEMORANDUM

To: Nevada Legislative Committee on Education
From: Center for American Progress, K-12 Education Policy Team
Date: May 15, 2018
Re: Recommendations for Consideration: Elevating the Teaching Profession

Recommendations

The Center for American Progress (CAP) and the TeachStrong coalition believe that now is the time to make modernizing and elevating the teaching profession a top education policy priority. CAP applauds the commitment to K-12 public education that the Nevada Legislative Committee on Education (LCE) and Department of Education have made, and it is because of that commitment that **CAP sees Nevada as a place that could very well become a leader in rethinking the way in which teachers are recruited, prepared, licensed, compensated, and supported throughout their careers.**

The following recommendations cover several aspects of the teacher pipeline, which the state of Nevada and several school districts within the state have been focusing on for years. To further these efforts and add capacity to this work, **CAP has provided several policy options for key areas along the teacher career continuum that are specific to Nevada.** The following policy recommendations are intended to supplement CAP's April 20, 2018 presentation to the LCE and are for the consideration of Chair Moises Denis and the LCE members as they prepare for the 2019 legislative session.

Recruitment and Diversity

- Provide support for districts to **build recruitment teams** that:
 - **Employ an intentional and methodical approach** for seeking out teacher candidates beyond career fairs and word-of-mouth referrals
 - **Partner with major universities** to facilitate on-campus opportunities for teacher candidates to learn about career options with district recruitment teams
 - **Set explicit hiring goals**, make offers early in the calendar year, and require and/or incentivize exiting teachers to give enough notice to fill vacancies earlier
- **Develop scholarship programs** specifically for teachers' aides and/or instructional assistants to become fully certified teachers
 - Design scholarship programs to include a **commitment from recipients** to teach at least four years in an underperforming school and/or in the most critically understaffed fields
 - Ensure that **teachers of color are represented** in and made aware of financial assistance and require the Department of Education to compile recipients' demographic data
- **Narrow the existing Teacher Shortage Area Loan Forgiveness program** to the most critical shortage areas, including the hardest to staff schools and subjects
- Require the Department of Education to **track teachers in receipt of state funds** for financial assistance and incentive bonuses, regarding where recipients teach, what subjects they teach, classroom performance, and reasons for exiting their original placement or the profession
- Provide resources to districts seeking to **assist their bilingual support professionals** in becoming full-time, certified teachers

Preparation and Certification

- Ensure all Nevada teacher preparation programs **have high standards for entry** into their programs, **quality clinical training** and practical experience, and **rigorous coursework**, including on classroom management and **culturally responsive teaching** practices
- **Expand high quality alternative preparation programs** with a track record of success, especially those that intentionally recruit and train high-achieving people of color to become teachers
- Require preparation and certification programs to **track, compile, and submit data** to the Department of Education regarding their teachers' demographic information, school placements, performance in the classroom, and length of time in the classroom

Mentoring and Induction

- **Expand mentoring and induction programs**, specifically through Peer Assistance and Review (PAR), for both teachers and administrators throughout the state and especially in Clark County
- **Integrate PAR into other professional frameworks**, including formal career pathways

Career Pathways

- **Commission a study**, conducted by an external and impartial entity, on the efficacy and quality of Washoe County School District's (WCSD) teacher leadership pool
 - Either **expand WCSD's system to other districts** or provide resources for districts to create their own systems for identifying teachers for formal leadership roles
- Provide resources for a state-wide, **formalized career pathway** that includes at least three tiers, alignment with PAR and professional compensation structures, and a requirement that districts track and report the impact of the system on teacher retention and student achievement
 - Ensure that the career pathway includes **hybrid roles** that allow teachers to remain in their classrooms part-time while providing instructional coaching and support to others

Compensation

- Ensure that **compensation structures are aligned** to the above-mentioned career pathway
- Consider a phased increase of the **starting teacher salary** across Nevada to **\$50,000**, a recommendation consistent with CAP's [report](#) entitled "Bold Ideas for State Action"

About CAP

The Center for American Progress is an independent nonpartisan policy institute dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans, through bold, progressive ideas, as well as strong leadership and concerted action. Our aim is not just to change the conversation, but to change the country. **We believe America should be a land of boundless opportunity, where people can climb the ladder of economic mobility.**

In support of this mission, CAP's K-12 education policy team conducts research, generates original data analyses, and produces bold recommendations around strengthening the teacher pipeline. Our past products have included several reports around increasing diversity and selectivity, strengthening teacher preparation, improving working conditions (e.g., induction, professional development, evaluation, etc.), and increasing compensation. In 2015, we convened the [TeachStrong](#) coalition—a group of 67 research and education organizations that believes **all students—especially those from low-income families—should have high-quality teachers who are meaningfully supported at every stage of their careers.**