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MEMORANDUM

TO: Alex Drozdoff, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau

FROM: Jessica Todtman, Deputy Superintendent for Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement

DATE: January 31, 2022

SUBJECT: Committee on Education – January 20th Meeting Follow-up

This memorandum is a follow-up to the questions received via email following the Nevada Department of Education's presentation to the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education.

1. If there are reports or data on Nevada's staffing vacancies compared to national numbers, and what those reports reflect?

There is no centrally organized, publicly available data set that would provide real-time information regarding teacher staffing to provide apples-to-apples comparisons across or within states. Data from the most recent licensed personnel and teacher shortage area report collected at the beginning of November 2021 by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) show that the number of vacancies or unfilled positions statewide was 1,130 earlier this school year. The number of positions filled by long-term substitutes is 1,496.23 for a total of 2,626.23 vacancies. These numbers reflect a snapshot in time (i.e., they are static).

The Education Commission of the States completed a report in October of 2019 (pre-pandemic) related to teacher shortages. It includes a report for each state that has education preparation program completion numbers, shortage area reports, and other relevant information. The link to the Nevada report and the website for other state reports are included below:

- Nevada Profile: <https://reports.ecs.org/comparisons/view-by-state/347/NV>
- All States: <https://www.ecs.org/teacher-recruitment-and-retention-state-profiles/>

In addition, federal teacher shortage area data (found at <https://tsa.ed.gov/#/home/>) includes the list of educator positions that are considered to be critical shortage areas. The 2022-23 report reflects the shortage area data collected in 2020-21.

While we only have static vacancy data Statewide as noted above, the Clark County School District (CCSD) does report staff separation data regularly at their Board of Trustees meetings. Analyses of publicly available data from this school year compared to data from school years dating back to 2011-12 demonstrate that in CCSD:

- There have been 67% more licensed staff separations (Aug - Jan) compared to a typical school year (970 vs 581)
- There have been 291 more licensed staff separations (Aug - Jan) than the next highest year (970 vs 679)
- Vacancy rates for licensed staff are rising as the school year progresses.

Currently, CCSD is experiencing an estimated vacancy rate of 4.4%, compared to an average rate of 2.4% since 2011-12. If CCSD was experiencing a vacancy rate of 2.4%, it would be in line with other states that are struggling to fill teaching positions, but those states are not experiencing significant increases in staff separations.

The current national narrative regarding teacher vacancies is that the COVID-19 pandemic is causing an exodus of educators. *There is no national data to support this narrative.* Much of the narrative of a teacher exodus stems from a [survey conducted by the Rand Corporation](#) in 2021. The survey results stated that 1 in 4 teachers said they were likely to leave by the end of the 2020-21 school year. That did not come to pass. For example:

- Chad Aldeman, policy director of Edunomics Lab at Georgetown University, published an [article](#) on January 17, 2022 refuting the notion of a ‘big quit’ in K-12 education. Using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), he demonstrated that there has been no mass exodus of employees in education. The BLS data is the closest resource available to a central repository of real-time staffing data in education, but it is very high level. It is not broken down to types of positions (e.g. teacher, support staff, etc.) and it does not allow for comparison across states and districts.
- Chicago Public Schools (CPS), the third largest district in the United States, has seen its teacher vacancy rate improve (decrease) throughout this school year. As noted in an article in [Chalkbeat](#), “The overall vacancy rate has gone down since the start of the year, when Chicago Public Schools reported a 3.3% vacancy rate the first week of school — a stronger staffing position than in previous years.” [As of January 3](#), CPS's teacher vacancy rate was down to 2.7%.
- In Washington state, the [National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research \(CALDER\)](#) concluded that, across all districts, for all teaching categories, the vacancy rate was below 2%. They also [looked at year over year teacher](#) attrition in Washington and as of November 22, 2021, and so far have found “no evidence from state longitudinal data of a pandemic-related exodus from teaching.”

2. What are other states doing to address recruitment and retention issues?

Nevada's State federal relief funding¹ projects related to educator recruitment and retention are summarized in [this document](#). NDE has hired an additional staff member using State federal relief funds whose focus is solely on educator recruitment and retention, including the successful implementation of highlighted projects.

In addition, the Nevada Department of Education is working with a broad coalition of partners to address shortages in Specialized Instructional Support Personnel per Senate Bill 89 (2019). Recent work in this area includes:

- NDE has invested \$7.5 million in State federal relief funds to support districts and schools in hiring an additional 100 school-based mental health professionals. Across the State, district and charter schools have expressed a need to retain existing school-based mental health professionals as well as to hire additional licensed providers to support their staff and student populations with pandemic recovery.
- NDE has identified \$1.7 million in State federal relief funds to hire Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) coaches to assist districts and schools in providing interventions to address students' behavioral, social, and academic challenges as we continue to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Research recommends that schools use a framework of interventions and supports to address challenges that interfere with students' ability to learn. This framework, MTSS, helps schools to identify struggling students early so that they can receive timely support and includes strong universal teaching approaches to reduce the number of students needing interventions. MTSS is a way of doing business that leverages high-quality evidence-based instruction, intervention, and assessment practices to ensure that every student receives the appropriate level of support to be successful. MTSS helps schools and districts organize resources through alignment of academic standards and behavioral expectations, implemented with fidelity and sustained over time, to accelerate students' growth.

When looking at the national landscape, preliminary research shows a wide variety of efforts including retention incentives, allowing retired educators to return to classrooms while collecting their pensions, and increasing salaries.

On January 24, 2022, [POLITICO's Weekly Education](#) newsletter focused on teacher pay raise proposals nationwide. Additionally, on a smaller scale than Nevada's \$20.7M Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching grant and the Teach Nevada Scholarship, Virginia [allocated](#) \$2M to assist aspiring educators to earn full licensure by covering the cost of required coursework.

On January 13, 2022, the Tennessee Department of Education "announced it has pioneered a new way to develop teacher pipelines, and is the first state to be approved by the U.S. Department of Labor to establish a permanent [Grow Your Own](#) model, with Clarksville-Montgomery County

¹ All references to investments of federal relief funding refer to the three rounds of federal relief funding for K-12 education made available to states on a formula basis, through which Nevada received nearly \$2 billion. In each round of funding, 90% of funds were awarded directly to local education agencies (school districts and the State Public Charter School Authority) on a formula basis, while 10% was awarded to the state education agency (NDE) for Statewide activities. Investments noted in this document are funded from the 10% of funding available to NDE to use for the Statewide education pandemic response and all projects are subject to approval of the Interim Finance Committee of the Nevada Legislature. More information can be found on NDE's [Federal Relief Funding webpage](#).

School System and Austin Peay State University's [Teacher Residency program](#) becoming the first registered apprenticeship program for teaching in the country.” NDE is reviewing TN’s approach to determine whether this is a viable avenue to support educator pathways in our State.

The Nevada Department of Education will continue to keep an eye on what other states are doing to support the recruitment and retention of educators so we can identify and replicate best practices. The Teacher Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force, the Commission on Professional Standards, the Nevada System of Higher Education Teacher Pathways Task Force, and the Superintendent’s Teacher Advisory Cabinet and Principal Advisory Cabinet are all focused on identifying and minimizing obstacles to recruiting, preparing, and retaining a highly qualified cadre of future educators that reflect Nevada’s diversity.

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