

Nevada State Teacher
and
Education Support Professional
Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task
Force

Report – June 2024



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Introduction

Senate Bill 71 (2023) revised Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 391.492, adding education support personnel to the Nevada State Teacher Recruitment and Retentions Advisory Task force and established the Nevada State Teacher and Education Support Professional Recruitment and Retention Advisory Task Force (Task Force).

Pursuant to [Nevada Revised Statutes \(NRS\) 391.496](#), the Task Force must:

1. Evaluate the challenges in attracting and retaining teachers and education support professionals throughout this State;
2. Make recommendations to the Legislative Committee on Education to address the challenges in attracting and retaining teachers and education support professionals throughout this State, including, without limitation, providing incentives to attract and retain teachers and education support professionals; and
3. Make a presentation to the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education on the fourth meeting of the Task Force, in even-numbered years, of the findings and recommendations of the Task Force made pursuant to NRS 391.496.

This report provides an overview of such findings and recommendations.

Members

The application for Task Force membership was released by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) in September 2023. During their February 2024 meeting, the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education (COE) members reviewed and appointed members from each school district. The current Task Force is comprised of 4 reappointed members and 14 new members, with 12 classroom teachers and 6 education support professionals.

In accordance with [NRS 391.492](#), the current membership includes:

- a) One licensed teacher or education support professional employed by each school district located in a county whose population is less than 100,000:
 - Carson City – Kerri Finn
 - Churchill – E. Andrew Campbell
 - Douglas – Louie Trio
 - Elko – Colene Paradise
 - Esmeralda – Vacant
 - Eureka – Suzann Lamaire
 - Humboldt – Jared Kifer
 - Lander – Sandra Ayers
 - Lincoln – Sherry Spencer
 - Lyon – Bridget Perez
 - Mineral – Ann Kee
 - Nye – Rebecca Tate
 - Pershing – Emilee Houston
 - Storey – Viengkhone Peabody
 - White Pine – Vacant
- b) Two licensed teachers or education support professionals employed by each school district located in a county whose population is 100,000 or more but less than 700,000:
 - Washoe – Natalia Callahan
 - Washoe – Esperanza Ramos

c) Three licensed teachers or education support professionals employed by each school district located in a county whose population is 700,000 or more:

- Clark – Marci Kutzer
- Clark – Marlon Neal
- Clark – Rodney Bell

The work of the Task Force was supported by the following personnel and educational partners:

Nevada Department of Education (NDE)

- Jhone M. Ebert, Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Christy McGill, Deputy Superintendent for Educator Effectiveness and Family Engagement
- Jeff Briske, Director; Educator Development, Licensure, and Family Engagement (EDLiFE)
- Kathleen Galland-Collins, Assistant Director, EDLiFE
- KellyLynn Charles, Education Programs Professional, EDLiFE
- Anabel Sanchez, Education Programs Professional, EDLiFE
- Belinda Schauer, Education Programs Professional, EDLiFE
- Michael Arakawa, Chief Compliance Investigator, EDLiFE
- Rick Derry, Administrative Assistant II, EDLiFE

WestEd

- Alex B. Jacobson, Senior Research Associate, Region 15 Comprehensive Center at WestEd
- Andrew F. Morrill, Senior Program Associate, Region 15 Comprehensive Center at WestEd

Attorney General's Office

- David Gardner, Senior Deputy Attorney General

Acknowledgements

The Task Force wishes to express appreciation to the numerous presenters and the members of the Nevada Coalition for Educator Retention and Recruitment (NV Coalition), the Superintendent's Principal Advisory Cabinet (PAC), and the Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Cabinet (STAC) for their expertise, advice, and willingness to contribute to these findings and recommendations. The members recognize that as a state, we can collectively create the best education system for our students by implementing policies and legislation appropriate to each stakeholder by aligning across stakeholder groups.

The members of the Task Force also extend their heartfelt appreciation to the 2023 Interim Finance Committee for approving funding for the development and implementation of the educator surveys and the 2023 Legislature for their unwavering support and cooperation in passing several bills that were in alignment with Task force recommendations.

Task Force members are grateful for the legislature's support and are confident that these recommendations will continue to benefit our education system for years to come. The Task Force looks forward to working with the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education on the recommendations proposed in this report.

Recommendations Overview and Format

NRS 391.496 states that the primary responsibility of this Task Force is to make recommendations to the Legislative Committee on Education to address the challenges in attracting and retaining teachers and education support professionals in Nevada. To do this, the Task Force not only reviewed available data and research, but it also consulted with external experts and stakeholder groups.

The Task Force work must be infused into other statewide initiatives while supporting other educational efforts. Members felt deeply that no one solution could fix the current struggle and that recruitment and retention efforts must approach challenges from multiple angles and address multiple levels of the education system. As an example, if Nevada revises our state retirement benefits to support recruitment and retention efforts without also improving working conditions, educators may still leave.

One of the key challenges facing school districts across the country is the shortage of qualified and diverse teachers. In response to this issue, NDE and school districts in Nevada are utilizing federal relief funds to invest in recruitment efforts by offering scholarships and support to attract new teachers and paraprofessionals. These efforts, however, will be in vain if the State is unable to retain the educators who are already working in its classrooms. It is crucial for Nevada to not only focus on recruiting new educators, but to also prioritize retaining and supporting its existing teaching staff.

To address the issue of recruitment, it is essential for Nevada to invest in initiatives that make the State more appealing to out-of-state educators. This can include offering competitive salaries and benefits, as well as providing support for relocation and housing. Additionally, efforts should be made to encourage current Nevada residents to pursue a career in education. This can be done through targeted outreach and recruitment efforts, as well as providing financial incentives and support for individuals interested in becoming educators.

It is vital for Nevada to prioritize the retention of its educators. This can be achieved by offering a variety of benefits and resources, such as mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and cultural competency training. It is also imperative to remove any barriers that may prevent current educators from staying in the education profession. Retention is recruiting educators to stay.

Moreover, the Task Force recognizes that without proper structures in place, recruitment and retention efforts may not see the intended results. Thus, this Task Force puts forth a large number of recommendations to address infrastructure and systems of support to improve the working conditions of educators across the State. These recommendations take a multi-pronged approach, addressing the perception of education, data collection, and educator benefits packages.

To conclude, recruiting and retaining a diverse group of educators is crucial for the success and growth of Nevada's education system. By investing in initiatives that make the State more attractive to out-of-state educators, encouraging local residents to pursue a career in education, and providing support for current and future educators, Nevada can expand the size and diversity of its educator workforce. These efforts will not only benefit the educators themselves but will also benefit the students and communities they serve.

Implementing many of these recommendations will require additional funding to be invested in Nevada's K-12 education system. The Task Force realizes that the availability of funding is largely dependent on Nevada's tax revenue, but it firmly believes that if the State is committed to addressing the chronic and pervasive educator workforce challenges, new investments must be made and sustained long-term.

The 29 Task Force recommendations are grouped into five essential areas using a holistic, systems-centered approach to creating solutions:

- **Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions** - Recommendations to improve working conditions, climate, and culture to improve retention and recruitment.
- **Recruitment** - Recommendations to positively impact recruitment efforts and grow the profession.
- **Retention** - Recommendations to positively impact retention.

- **Remove Barriers** - Recommendations to remove barriers to entering the education profession.
- **Letters of Support** - Recommendations requesting COE write letters to the appropriate agencies urging them to take action to improve educator recruitment and retention.

This example provides an overview of how each recommendation is organized:

Title of the Recommendation: *Recommendation language.*

Specifics: *Additional details and background on the intent of the recommendation.*

Rationale: *Reason why this recommendation was made.*

Expected Outcomes: *Intended results of successful implementation of the recommendation.*

Recommending Entity: *Stakeholder groups putting forth this recommendation.*

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: *Alignment to the priorities in Governor Lombardo's 3-Year Plan.*

Evidence Folder: *Link to the publicly accessible Google Folder containing the research/data supporting the recommendation.*

Three stakeholder groups met separately and submitted recommendations to the Task Force for consideration.

- The **Nevada Coalition for Educator Recruitment and Retention (NV Coalition)** is comprised of representatives, mostly human resources personnel, from Nevada's 17 school districts and the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority. The Coalition is charged with discussing solutions to decrease the number of educator vacancies in Nevada and making recommendations to NDE and the Task Force to assist in this objective.
- The **Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Cabinet (STAC)** and the **Superintendent's Principal Advisory Cabinet (PAC)** are each comprised of approximately 30 members who provide feedback to NDE on initiatives and opportunities. STAC and PAC members not only provide insight from their experiences, but also gather feedback from peers to help inform NDE's work.

List of Recommendations by Focus Area

This summary of recommendations is provided to assist in document navigation. The title of each recommendation below links to the complete recommendation including the specific details, rationale, expected outcomes, and evidence base. The recommendations in each category that have been prioritized by the Task Force are identified as "priority recommendations" others in the same category are in alphabetical order. The groups that proposed the same or similar solutions are listed in parentheses following each recommendation.

Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions

1. [Statewide minimum salary schedule](#) (recommended by The Task Force, PAC, NV Coalition)
2. [Healthcare coverage of educators](#) (recommended by The Task Force, STAC, PAC)
3. [Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and wrap-around services](#) (recommended by The Task Force, PAC,)
4. [Buyout for unused sick leave](#) (recommended by The Task Force, PAC, NV Coalition)
5. [Organizational imaging and perception of education](#) (recommended by The Task Force, STAC, PAC, NV Coalition)
6. [Mentor programs](#) (recommended by The Task Force, STAC, PAC, NV Coalition)
7. [Supply cards for teachers](#) (recommended by The Task Force, PAC)
8. [Double dip eligibility](#) (recommended by The Task Force, PAC)
9. [Duplicative coursework removal](#) (recommended by The Task Force, PAC)
10. [Nevada System of Higher Education coursework](#) (recommended by The Task Force, NV Coalition)

11. [Wrap-around service benefits in Nevada health plans](#) (recommended by The Task Force, PAC)
12. [Prevent stacked classes](#) (recommended by The Task Force, STAC)
13. [Workforce Data-Portal](#) (recommended by The Task Force)

Recruitment

1. [Public Employee Retirement service requirement](#) (recommended by The Task Force, STAC)
2. [Scholarships for specialized instructional support personnel](#) (recommended by The Task Force, PAC)

Retention

1. [Salary incentives for those who stay in special education positions](#) (recommended by The Task Force, NV Coalition)
2. [Teacher advancement scholarship](#) (recommended by The Task Force, NV Coalition)
3. [Targeted training of administrators](#) (recommended by The Task Force, PAC, NV Coalition)
4. [Endorsements in district- or state- designated critical shortage area](#) (recommended by The Task Force, NV Coalition)
5. [Support the Home Is Possible for Teachers program](#) (recommended by The Task Force, STAC)
6. [Loan forgiveness program for current teachers](#) (recommended by The Task Force, STAC)
7. [Longevity pay](#) (recommended by The Task Force, STAC, NV Coalition)

Remove Barriers

1. [Prioritize background checks for educator licensure](#) (recommended by The Task Force, NV Coalition)
2. [Cost-of-living / travel stipends for rural educators](#) (recommended by The Task Force, PAC)
3. [Housing opportunities for educators](#) (recommended by The Task Force, STAC)

Letters of Support

1. [Urge federal support of Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision repeal](#) (recommended by The Task Force, STAC, PAC)
2. [Encourage districts to value and respect teacher autonomy in lesson planning, design, and delivery](#) (recommended by The Task Force, STAC)
3. [Encourage districts and associations to improve explanations of salary schedules and pay raises](#) (recommended by The Task Force, STAC)
4. [Encourage districts to provide career path diagnostics to all students to help guide students' coursework](#) (recommended by The Task Force, PAC)

Recommendations

Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions

The Task Force proposes the following 13 holistic, systems-centered recommendations to improve working conditions, climate, and culture to improve retention and recruitment. Recommendations 1-5 are prioritized with #1 indicating the highest priority recommendation. Recommendations 6-13 are listed in alphabetical order.

Prioritized Recommendations:

Recommendation #1: Implement a statewide minimum salary schedule for licensed personnel to include an annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) in line with the cost-of-living indices.

Specifics: The State should require a minimum salary scale for all districts to reflect the cost of living and include an annual COLA increase to maintain or improve a teacher's standard of living.

Rationale: Competitive compensation is a means to both recruit and retain educators in Nevada. During a national shortage of educators, appropriate and competitive compensation makes Nevada more attractive to future educators and assures all educators are provided an appropriate standard of living that is sustainable for additional years of service.

District alignment will reduce the disparity in salaries across the State, but districts could still negotiate salaries higher than the minimum. The COLA increases should be made on a regular basis (at least biannually) to maintain the teachers' standard of living. In addition, protections must be put in place to ensure current teacher's salary schedules are not negatively impacted prior to implementation.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher recruitment and retention rates if educators earn more competitive salaries and have better benefits.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence Folder: [*Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder*](#)

Recommendation #2: Expand the benefit enrollment umbrella to include healthcare coverage of educators under the state Public Employee Benefit Plan (PEBP).

Specifics: The eligible PEBP enrollment pool should be expanded to include all educational staff.

Rationale: Contributions to healthcare plans can range widely across the state and depend on the health plan that each school district or charter school chooses. Family and dependent coverage can be costly for individual employees and has been cited frequently by educators as a concern; therefore, expanding the eligible enrollee pool would stabilize costs and premiums for educators, increase benefits, and provide educators with peace of mind that they not only have access to care, but that their medical expenses will be paid. Districts would negotiate to switch insurance providers.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in long-term teacher retention rates if educators are provided with access to better benefits and educators will report higher levels of satisfaction in the working conditions survey.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Health & Wellness 3.5.2 and 3.5.3

Evidence Folder: [*Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder*](#)

Recommendation #3: Allocate additional funding for the creation and training of student support teams (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, wrap-around services, etc.) at every school.

Specifics: Funds should be allocated to provide additional support services in schools to help educators meet the needs of all students.

Rationale: While many schools and or districts have systems in place to provide additional student support services to students, services may not be easy to access, equitable, or able to meet the needs of the communities they serve. If all students had access to the mental, social, physical, and academic support they need to be successful, then teachers could focus on instruction and student learning. This network of support would not only benefit the students, but would remove some of that burden from teachers, which could improve teacher job satisfaction and increase retention. This may require a comprehensive look at current supports, their availability, how they are managed, and identify strategies to improve existing programs.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates if educators are supported in meeting the needs of all students.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Health & Wellness 3.5.2

Evidence Folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #4: Increase funding to support the buyout for unused sick leave at the teacher's daily rate of pay or at a set statewide minimum amount upon retirement.

Specifics: Funding should be provided to enable districts to either pay teachers their daily rate of pay or a set statewide minimum amount for unused sick leave when they retire instead of the low payout rate they currently receive from most districts.

Rationale: When teachers retire, they are often not fully compensated for their unused sick leave. The unintended consequence is that teachers are incentivized to use up their sick leave before they leave the classroom since they will not be fully compensated for it. This may negatively impact student learning in the classroom. Furthermore, the low buyout pay does not incentivize teachers to stay long enough, to full retirement, to receive their buyout. If teachers were fairly compensated, retention would improve, as would student performance, as they would be more likely to stay until retirement and less likely to miss excessive days.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates if educators are provided better incentives to stay until they are eligible for retirement.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence Folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #5: Allocate funding to improve the organizational image of the teaching and education support professions.

Specifics: The 2024 Task Force reiterates the need for funds to support the creation of professional-quality videos, public service announcements, social media posts, etc. to promote education as a profession, Nevada as a desirable State to teach in, the quality of education provided in Nevada, and

specific district and statewide recruitment and retention events/ efforts. Additional state and district personnel could be hired to focus on joint recruitment and retention efforts.

Rationale: Public perception of the education profession is low, and currently, positive public messaging around education is limited to the recognition of exemplary educators. This is limited to just a few educators a year and does not truly encompass what most educators do every day. A public relations campaign to share positive stories, successes, and accurate information to dispel misconceptions will help all Nevada districts attract top talent and enable districts to distinguish themselves from competing states. Having resources dedicated to promoting the profession and sharing positive aspects with the public will serve to boost the morale of educators and help to develop a more informed public opinion of education in Nevada. The promotion of working as an educator in Nevada serves both recruitment and retention efforts.

Many districts have limited staffing and/or resources to adequately support educator recruitment and retention efforts. Funds could be provided to support either a designated position or for additional compensation for current personnel responsible for collaborating with the State on recruitment and retention initiatives or efforts. Provisions and requirements would need to be put in place for the allowable use of funds as well as oversight to ensure the funds are used as intended.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher recruitment and retention of educators.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC, PAC, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1 & 1.2.3

Evidence Folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Additional Recommendations:

Recommendation #6: Allocate additional funding to education and prioritize the use of those funds for mentor programs, including but not limited to salaries, stipends, and training for mentor educators.

Specifics: Funding should be provided to develop or sustain mentor programs through which experienced educators not only build the capacity and skills of novice educators, but to also provide career pathways for experienced educators.

Rationale: “New teachers often must rely on onsite training for classroom success, but if they do not receive strong support and continued growth during the steep learning curve of their first 2 years, they are twice as likely to abandon their career as an educator,” ([TeacherReady](#)). Successful mentoring programs for new teachers create supportive environments where educators can learn, grow, and thrive in their profession and play a vital role in helping new teachers develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to become effective educators. Paying experienced, well-trained mentor teachers to support new teachers shows that Nevada values their commitment and time and provides them with career pathways that could help keep them in classrooms. In addition, funding could be used to provide training for mentors, improve existing mentoring programs, and increase access to effective mentoring programs. Providing funding to districts could increase retention of both veteran teachers and novice teachers. This should be done in a way that does not impact district Federal/Title II-A funding for mentor programs. Providing support to educators through mentoring builds collective educator efficacy, improves working conditions, and ensures that educators will be better prepared to support all students.

Expected Outcomes: Educators will feel supported as evidenced by the results of the working conditions survey.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC, PAC, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence Folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #7: Allocate funding to provide supply cards for teachers to purchase classroom materials.

Specifics: A supply card grant program should be implemented to provide all teachers with additional funds to purchase classroom supplies.

Rationale: According to [Donors Choose](#), teachers spend on average more than \$500 out of pocket on classroom supplies per school year. Providing supply grants for all teachers will offset out-of-pocket expenses and relieve them of the burden of having to request or apply for additional funding sources. This will help teachers feel like they have the resources they need in the classroom, improve morale, and increase retention. The Task Force feels that the current method of distributing funds for school supplies is not equitable as all teachers do not receive funds.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates if educators do not have to use their own money to provide supplies for their classrooms.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence Folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #8: Amend the timeline for educators to become eligible to return to employment while drawing Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) benefits (double dip).

Specifics: The timeline for eligibility to double dip in PERS should be revised to allow retirees to return to the teaching profession more quickly.

Rationale: Currently, educators may not return to a teaching position until they have received their first PERS check (roughly two months). This requires a substitute to cover the class during the transition, but Nevada has a shortage of substitute teachers. Some teachers may be discouraged by the wait and decide not to return to the classroom – taking positions outside of the field of education. Getting retired teachers with 30 years of experience back into the classroom as quickly as possible, by allowing them to double dip without having to wait, can reduce the number of vacancies and ensure children have access to certified teachers.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report a decrease in the number of vacant positions if retired teachers are able to return to the classroom faster while still retaining their retirement benefits.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Economic Growth & Business Development 2.1.1 & 2.1.3

Evidence Folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #9: Ask the State Board of Education to re-evaluate high school graduation requirements to remove duplicative coursework and to ensure coursework aligns with the Nevada System of Higher Education's (NSHE) 'need to know' requirements.

Specifics: Some courses offered in middle school for high school credit are then also required in high school, leading to duplicative coursework.

Rationale: Removing duplicative coursework means fewer students in a course, giving administrators the needed flexibility to realign schedules to better meet staffing needs while reducing undue burdens on students.

Expected Outcomes: Class sizes will be reduced as students are not taking duplicative coursework, enabling teachers to better meet the needs of students and reducing educator workload.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education and Workforce 1.1.2

Evidence Folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #10: Conduct a study of Nevada System of Higher Education educator preparation coursework to ensure alignment with education staff needs.

Specifics: A study should be conducted of educator preparation coursework to ensure educators are fully prepared for the needs of today's classroom requirements.

Rationale: Research shows first-year teachers entering the profession are unprepared for the challenges they will encounter in today's classroom. They often feel overwhelmed and many leave after 3 years. Aligning their educator preparation coursework to the challenges they will face in their classrooms and schools will support new educators and help with retention.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report a decrease in the number of educators who leave the profession after 3 years and increased job satisfaction will be reflected in the working conditions survey results.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.1.2

Evidence Folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #11: Require health plans doing business in Nevada to include extensive wrap-around service benefits.

Specifics: Educator health plans should provide educators with more comprehensive health care services.

Rationale: The teaching profession is more challenging than ever, and it is affecting the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of educators and negatively impacting teacher retention. If educators were provided access to additional healthcare benefits, such as health club memberships, counseling, and vacation/personal days, etc., teachers would be better equipped to face those challenges and retention would improve. In addition, districts could use better health plan coverage as an incentive to recruit new teachers.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher recruitment and retention rates if educators are provided with access to more comprehensive health plan benefits.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Health & Wellness 3.5.2 and 3.5.3

Evidence Folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #12: Take action to prevent districts and schools from creating schedules that require one teacher to teach two different content classes in the same room at the same time (stacked classes).

Specifics: Funding should be provided to enable school districts to offer classes with smaller enrollment.

Rationale: Teachers are often asked to teach two different content classes (stacked classes) in one class period (e.g. English 11 and AP English; orchestra and guitar), which has been exacerbated by the teacher shortage. Each stacked class requires double planning, double the workload, and increases classroom management issues for teachers. Students in different content classes but who are assigned to be in the same class at the same time are not getting the teacher's full attention or instruction. The teacher is forced to divide and/or alternate their instruction and time between students as course content and standards differ. Students receive less attention from the teacher in stacked classes and teachers end up with an increased workload. This decreases student achievement and teacher retention. This would not apply to combined classes such as Pre-K/K, grades 6-7 combination, or special education combined classes.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates if educators are not required to teach multiple courses simultaneously.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence Folder: [Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #13: The Legislature should invest state funding to sustain the educator workforce supply and demand portal that is currently being developed using federal relief funds.

Specifics: State funding should be allocated to sustain and expand the educator workforce supply and demand portal to ensure the accountability and transparency of educator recruitment and retention efforts.

Rationale: The Nevada Department of Education has invested over \$800,000 in federal relief funds to support ongoing analysis of the educator workforce and class sizes in Nevada. As part of the contract for that work, the portal was initially made available to school and district staff and then public-facing dashboards were deployed during the 2023-24 school year that monitor:

- Average class size experience.
- Access to experienced teachers.
- Use of long-term substitutes.
- Teacher workforce age.
- Licensed staffing ratios; and
- Eventual addition of teacher pipeline metrics, including data connected to NSHE educator preparation programs.

The dashboards will support the Department's role in communicating and advocating for public policy regarding the teacher workforce and class sizes. Most importantly, the public-facing dashboards provide

built-in accountability and transparency to support advocacy and ongoing support for educator recruitment and retention.

Expected Outcomes: NDE, district, school personnel, and State policymakers would be able to easily access real-time educator workforce data to inform decision-making.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.4.2

Evidence Folder: [*Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions Research Folder*](#)

Recruitment

The Task Force proposes the following 2 holistic, systems-centered recommendations to positively impact recruitment efforts and grow the profession. Recommendations 1-2 are prioritized with #1 indicating the highest priority recommendation.

Priority Recommendations:

Recommendation #1: Return the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) service requirement from the current 33.3 years to 30 years of service.

Specifics: Competitive PERS incentives should be provided to educators to stay in the classroom long-term.

Rationale: Nevada does not currently retain educators at a sufficient rate to meet demand. Returning the PERS service requirement to 30 years of service from the current 33.3 years would incentivize teachers to stay longer. Adding the additional 3.3 years to receive full benefits, rather than encouraging educators to stay longer, does the opposite and makes many of them less likely to stay long enough to be fully vested. Competitive PERS benefits results in long-term retention of educators and can be used by districts to entice educators to move to Nevada to teach.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report a decrease in the number of vacant positions if competitive PERS benefits are provided to incentivize educators to remain employed long-term.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Economic Growth & Business Development 2.1.1 & 2.1.3

Evidence Folder: [*Recruitment Research Folder*](#)

Recommendation #2: Allocate additional funding for scholarships to increase the number of qualified specialized instructional support personnel (counselors, social workers, psychologists, etc.) to ensure students have equitable access to qualified service providers.

Specifics: The Legislature should not only continue to invest in pipeline initiatives such as the Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching Grant through an increase of funding, but it should also expand the scope of incentives to include those who would like to become counselors, psychologists, social workers, or other support professionals.

Rationale: The cost of a college education has risen over the past few decades, and cost is a barrier for many to take the coursework required to become specialists who provide essential and wrap-around services to students. Nevada facing a persistent shortage of teachers and support staff, it's imperative to attract more candidates to preparation programs by removing financial barriers, accelerating program

completion through scholarships, and incentivizing individuals preparing to fill critical positions in Nevada's school. This may require a comprehensive look at what supports already exist, their availability, how they are managed, and identifying strategies to improve existing programs.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in educator recruitment and retention of qualified service providers in our schools in hard-to-staff positions and a reduction in the ratio of specialized instructional support personnel to students served.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.1.3

Evidence Folder: [Recruitment Research Folder](#)

Retention

The Task Force proposes the following 7 holistic, systems-centered recommendations to positively impact educator retention. Recommendations 1-7 are prioritized with #1 indicating the highest priority recommendation.

Priority Recommendations:

Recommendation #1: Provide grant funding for districts to give salary incentives for those who stay in special education positions.

Specifics: Grant funding should be made available for districts to request reimbursement for salary incentives paid to educators and education support professionals who stay in special education positions each year beyond 5 years.

Rationale: Special education is a critical shortage area that already comes with incentives to become a special education teacher; however, special education teachers and education support professionals often leave that field to become general education teachers, thereby creating a vacancy in a hard-to-fill area. Incentivizing them to stay in special education will ensure there are qualified special education teachers and education support professionals in the classrooms where they are most needed.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report a decrease in the number of unfilled special education positions and a reduction of educator turnover in special education positions.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence Folder: [Retention Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #2: Increase the funding for the teacher advancement scholarship.

Specifics: Funding should be provided for teacher advancement scholarships to those who would like to become counselors, psychologists, social workers, or other support professionals to ensure qualified service providers are in our schools in hard-to-staff positions.

Rationale: Cost is a barrier to pursuing a course of study to become a specialist who provides essential and wrap-around services to students. Nevada universities anticipate 300 applications in Fiscal Year 2025. Providing scholarships will create an entry point toward supporting candidates to fill hard-to-staff positions in Nevada's schools.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention of a diverse body of educators including teachers, school counselors, social workers, school psychologists, library media specialists, and other support professionals.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.1.3

Evidence Folder: [Retention Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #3: Allocate additional funding to prioritize the use of funds for targeted training of administrators in building systemic support for educator efficacy and increasing job satisfaction.

Specifics: Funding should be allocated to provide targeted training for administrators to develop systems of support for their staff.

Rationale: Building and district administrators would participate in professional learning to help them reduce workload and improve life/ work balance for both themselves, and the educators they supervise. This would include learning how to leverage initiatives or requirements already in place to reduce duplicative efforts and cultivating systems of support for their staff.

Expected Outcomes: Educators will report higher job satisfaction due to reduced workload (improved life/ work balance) and districts will report higher educator retention rates.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence Folder: [Retention Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #4: Allocate dedicated funding to cover the costs associated with gaining an endorsement in a district- or state- designated critical shortage areas.

Specifics: Districts should be provided funding dedicated to covering the costs associated with gaining an endorsement in a district- or state-identified critical shortage areas.

Rationale: Due to the shortage of teachers, certain subject-area classes are often staffed with substitutes or may not be offered at all in some schools and/or districts. Increasing the number of teachers who are licensed to teach in multiple content areas will help schools offer specific classes and staff them with qualified educators.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report a decrease in the number of unfilled positions in critical shortage areas.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence Folder: [Retention Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #5: Provide State general funds to supplement the current funding structure to support the Home Is Possible for Teachers program.

Specifics: Additional dedicated State funds should be provided to supplement the limited amount of funding Nevada Housing Division programs generate from fees.

Rationale: The Home Is Possible for Teachers program is currently funded through the fees collected by the Nevada Housing Division (NHD); however, as housing prices and the number of educators requesting down payment assistance increase, the amount allocated to each teacher decreases. Adding dedicated funds to the program will allow the Nevada Housing Division to increase the amount of funds available and to accept more educators into the program, giving more teachers the opportunity to buy a home (especially in areas of low housing inventory or high cost).

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates as educators are more likely to stay if they are able to afford to live in their communities.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Rural & Natural Resources 6.3.3

Evidence Folder: [Retention Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #6: Provide funding outside the general fund to create and manage a student loan forgiveness program for current teachers with at least 5 years' experience in the classroom.

Specifics: Funding should be provided to support student loan forgiveness to current Nevada teachers who have been teaching for at least 5 years and who are not eligible for loan forgiveness through other funding sources.

Rationale: Research has shown that loan forgiveness programs can successfully recruit and retain high-quality teachers into classrooms and communities where they are most needed. With pay scales varying from state to state, prospective teachers will be more likely to move to a state that offers both a competitive salary schedule and a loan forgiveness program. Districts would be able to use the loan forgiveness program to attract more educators to move to Nevada to teach. It would also improve retention as it would require educators to stay at least 5 years to be eligible for reimbursement. Current educators would also benefit from this program as it would allow them to submit reimbursement requests for their student loans. Economic incentives are needed to help recruit and retain educators.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report higher recruitment and retention rates of teachers if they feel like they are appropriately compensated.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence Folder: [Retention Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #7: Provide dedicated, increased funding for districts to provide longevity pay.

Specifics: Additional funds should be provided to enable districts to provide longevity bonuses for veteran education personnel.

Rationale: Longevity pay is needed to help maintain and motivate teachers who have been loyal and committed to their school. It is often demoralizing to veteran teachers and education support professionals to see new teachers and education support professionals receive large signing bonuses while they receive nothing. Longevity bonuses could be awarded in lump sums after 5, 10, 15, etc. years. To be an effective recruitment and retention tool, districts need to offer both signing and longevity bonuses. Current longevity programs can be expanded.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in the retention of more veteran teachers if educators feel they are valued and appropriately compensated.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence Folder: [Retention Research Folder](#)

Removing Barriers

The Task Force proposes the following 3 holistic, systems-centered recommendations to remove barriers to entering the education profession. Recommendations 1-3 are prioritized with #1 indicating the highest priority recommendation.

Priority Recommendations:

Recommendation #1: Allocate funding to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to support the prioritization of background checks for educator licensure.

Specifics: Funding should be allocated to support the prioritization of processing educator licenses over recreation licenses and, if applicable, the addition of personnel/employee compensation.

Rationale: Between April and September each year, the number of applications for licensure increases significantly. Most of these applications require a background check. This increases the workload on DPS. Background checks can take anywhere from 4 to 10 weeks, sometimes longer during the peak season, while NDE processing time usually runs from 3 to 6 weeks during that same period. This means that there could be hundreds of applications that have been approved by NDE but are pending the completion of the background checks. This is a barrier to employment for the impacted educators.

Many educators have stated that the length of time it takes for the background check to come back to get or renew a teaching license is a barrier, and teachers can't get hired if they do not have a license. By prioritizing and expediting background checks, the licensure processing time is reduced, which results in educator licenses being issued in a timelier manner and educators ready to be hired and placed into classrooms more quickly.

The recommendation is that background checks for educator licensure are prioritized ahead of recreational licenses. Other priority checks, such as foster parent background checks, would not be impacted. Furthermore, additional funding could be provided to hire additional personnel or to fund overtime pay for current personnel to process background checks, thus expediting the process. The DPS would need to determine the most efficient way to prioritize and expedite the processing of the fingerprints of educators seeking licensure.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in the number of filled educator positions at the beginning of the school year.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, NV Coalition

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Economic Growth & Business Development 2.1.2

Evidence Folder: [Removing Barriers Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #2: Appropriate funds to cover cost-of-living / travel stipends for rural educators.

Specifics: Providing additional funding to cover cost-of-living / travel stipends for rural educators.

Rationale: Rural areas have fewer resources for doctors, dentists, lawyers, recreation, housing, contractors, hospitals, mental health professionals, school personnel, grocery stores, etc. Access to many of these services often requires additional time, travel, and related expenses, which results in educators incurring higher out-of-pocket expenses. This may discourage educators from applying for

positions in rural communities and make the recruitment of educators in those districts more difficult. Providing additional funding to cover some of these expenses could incentivize the recruitment and retention of teachers in these areas.

Expected Outcomes: Rural districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates as teachers are able to afford to live in their communities.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence Folder: [Removing Barriers Research Folder](#)

Recommendation #3: Provide funding for districts to offer housing opportunities to all educators to support longevity in the district.

Specifics: Funding should be provided for districts to offer housing support through stipends or district-owned properties to early career educators.

Rationale: The average home cost in many communities is well-beyond what an early-career educator can reasonably afford, so providing housing support to eligible educators would ensure they have access to affordable living quarters for themselves and their families. If newer educators are provided housing assistance, then districts will be able not only recruit educators more easily, but also maintain higher educator retention rates by offsetting the high cost of housing with lower salaries. Any district that has similar incentives in place could enhance their existing programs.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher recruitment and retention rates as educators are more willing to move to and stay if they are able to afford to live in their communities.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Rural & Natural Resources 6.3.2

Evidence Folder: [Removing Barriers Research Folder](#)

Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education (COE) Letters of Support

The Task Force proposes the following 4 holistic, systems-centered recommendations that ask COE to send letters to the specified entities to take action in recruiting and retaining educators in Nevada. Recommendations 1-5 are prioritized with #1 indicating the highest priority recommendation.

Prioritized Recommendations:

Recommendation #1: COE to write a letter to our federal delegation urging them to sponsor legislation to repeal the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision.

Focus Area: Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions

Specifics: The Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision should be repealed to encourage retirees from other industries to become teachers by ensuring their Social Security worker's benefits are not reduced.

Rationale: The Windfall Act adjusts a Social Security worker's benefit for those who receive non-covered pensions and qualify for Social Security benefits based on other Social Security-covered earnings. A non-covered pension is a pension paid by an employer that does not withhold Social Security taxes from employee salaries, typically, state, and local governments or non-U.S. employers. Nevada's PERS is a non-covered pension. Retirees from industries who may be considering a second career in teaching are

choosing not to become teachers because participation in PERS will reduce their Social Security. It is not financially feasible for them to teach, and it makes it especially difficult for Nevada to recruit content and business and industry professionals to teach our CTE programs.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher recruitment rates if second-career teachers feel like they are not being penalized for becoming a teacher.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.4.2 and 1.4.3

Evidence Folder: [*COE Letters of Support Research Folder*](#)

Recommendation #2: COE to write a letter to districts encouraging them to value and respect teacher autonomy in lesson planning, design, and delivery.

Focus Area: Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions

Specifics: Teachers should be permitted to design and implement their own lessons and units, including how lessons are taught, as long as they align to the approved course standards.

Rationale: Teachers are experts in their field and know their students, so they should be able to make instructional decisions based on their own expertise and knowledge of their pupils. After all, teachers should be differentiating their instruction based on the needs of their students, and in fact, are held accountable for doing so on their annual evaluations. For early career teachers, the emphasis should be on providing useful guidance and exemplars, rather than adding additional demands or unnecessary compliance documents. Preventing teachers from making instructional decisions is not in the best interest of the students they serve, and not only could it have a negative impact on student learning, but it could also lead to job dissatisfaction and result in lower teacher retention.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates if teachers are treated like professionals and feel valued for their training and expertise and job satisfaction will be reflected in the results of the working conditions survey.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence Folder: [*COE Letters of Support Research Folder*](#)

Recommendation #3: COE to write a letter to districts and associations encouraging them to improve communication to teachers explaining salary schedules and the processes for salary advancement.

Focus Area: Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions

Specifics: Districts and associations should create a website/webpage to inform educators of salary scales and salary advancement requirements.

Rationale: Educators often do not take advantage of or understand the process for advancing on their district's salary scale. Creating a website/webpage would help educators better understand the salary scales in their districts and inform them of the actions required to advance on the salary scale.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates if teachers feel like they are able to effectively navigate the salary advancement system.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, STAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.2.1

Evidence Folder: [*COE Letters of Support Research Folder*](#)

Recommendation #4: COE to write a letter to districts encouraging them to provide career path diagnostics to all students to help guide students' coursework.

Focus Area: Systemic Support and Infrastructure to Improve Working Conditions

Specifics: Students should be provided with the opportunity to participate in career path diagnostics to identify possible career opportunities based on their interests and talents.

Rationale: When students have an idea of possible career opportunities based on their own interests and talents, schools and teachers can align coursework and courses of study to help students meet their career goals. Students are more engaged in their learning and have fewer behavior incidents when they see the connection between school and the real-world, and teachers are more likely to stay when they do not have to deal with unmotivated and disruptive students.

Expected Outcomes: Districts will report an increase in teacher retention rates if students are more engaged in their learning and less disruptive in the classroom.

Recommending Entity: The Task Force, PAC

Governor's 3-Year Plan Alignment: Education & Workforce 1.1.2

Evidence Folder: [*COE Letters of Support Research Folder*](#)

Appendix A: Recommendations from Each of the Stakeholder Groups as Presented to the Task Force

Nevada Coalition for Educator Recruitment and Retention Recommendations

About the Nevada Coalition for Educator Recruitment and Retention

The **Nevada Coalition for Educator Recruitment and Retention (Coalition)** is comprised of representatives, mostly Human Resources personnel, from each of the 17 school districts, plus the Nevada State Public Charter School Authority. The Coalition is charged with discussing solutions to decrease the number of educator vacancies in Nevada; making recommendations to NDE and the Task Force to assist in this objective.

Recommendation #1: Allocate additional funds to NDE and districts for a public messaging campaign that promotes recruitment and retention of educators.

Specifics: Branding/messaging positively impacts public perception and will help all Nevada districts to attract top talent and enable districts to distinguish themselves from competing states. The promotion of working as an educator in Nevada serves both recruitment and retention efforts.

Rationale: Currently, positive public messaging around education is limited to the recognition of exemplary educators. This is limited to just a few educators a year and does not truly encompass what most educators do every day. Having resources dedicated to promoting the profession and sharing positive aspects with the public will serve to boost the morale of educators and help to develop a more informed public opinion of education in Nevada.

Recommendation #2: Allocate additional funding to education and prioritize the use of those funds for mentor programs, including but not limited to salaries, stipends, and training for mentor educators.

Specifics: Providing funding to districts will support the resources needed to develop or sustain mentor programs through which experienced educators build the capacity and skills of novice educators as well as provide career pathways for experienced educators.

Rationale: New teachers rely on onsite training for classroom success. If they do not receive strong support and continued growth during the steep learning curve in their first 2 years, they are twice as likely to abandon their career. Mentoring programs train new teachers in a systematic and sequential approach to learn how to provide effective instruction to their deserving students.

Recommendation #3: Allocate funding to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to support the prioritization of background checks for educator licensure.

Specifics: With expedited background checks the licenses could be issued in a timelier manner, therefore, getting educators licensed prior to the start of the school year and into classrooms quickly (reducing the licensure processing time).

Rationale: Between April and September each year, the number of applications for licensure increases significantly. Most of these applications require a background check. This increases the workload on DPS. Background checks can take anywhere from 4 to 10 weeks or longer during this very busy season. NDE processing time usually runs about 3 to 6 weeks during this same period. This means that there can be hundreds of applications that have been approved by NDE but are pending the completion of the background checks.

Recommendation #4: Allocate additional funding to prioritize the use of those funds for targeted training of administrators in building systemic supports for educator efficacy and increasing job satisfaction.

Specifics: Increase the allocation of funding to provide targeted training of administrators to develop systems of support for their staff.

Rationale: Building and district administrators would participate in professional learning to help them reduce workload and improve life/ work balance for themselves and the educators they supervise. This would include learning how to leverage initiatives or requirements already in place to reduce duplicative efforts and cultivate systems of support for their staff.

Recommendation #5: Implement a Statewide minimum salary schedule for licensed personnel to include an annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) in line with the cost-of-living indices.

Specifics: Competitive compensation is a means to both recruit and retain educators in Nevada. During a national shortage of educators, appropriate and competitive compensation assures a dignified standard of living that is sustainable for many years of service and makes Nevada more attractive to current and future educators.

Rationale: This will have districts aligned to limit disparity in salaries across the state.

Recommendation #6: Increase funding to support the buyout for unused sick leave at (teacher's daily rate of pay) OR (statewide minimum amount) upon retirement.

Specifics: Provide funding to districts to enable them to pay teachers their daily rate of pay or a statewide minimum set amount when they leave instead of the payout rate they currently receive.

Rationale: When teachers retire or leave the school district, they are not fully compensated for their unused sick leave. For example, a teacher may be compensated for 20% of their sick leave value. The unintended consequence is that teachers are incentivized to use their sick leave more during the school year since they will not be fully compensated for it. This impacts student learning in the classroom.

Recommendation #7: Allocate additional funds to districts to support designated personnel to focus on supporting recruitment and retention efforts.

Specifics: Provide funding to districts for the support and training of recruitment and retention personnel.

Rationale: Recruitment and retention of educators is key to Nevada's success. A dedicated person in each person will facilitate an effective recruitment and retention effort in each district.

Recommendation #8: Allocate dedicated funding to cover the costs associated with gaining an endorsement in a critical shortage area.

Specifics: Provide districts with funding dedicated to covering the costs associated with gaining an endorsement in a district identified critical shortage area.

Rationale: Due to the shortage of teachers, classes are often staffed with substitutes or not offered. Increasing the number of licensed teachers to teach multiple content areas will help schools offer and staff classes with qualified educators.

Recommendation #9: Increase the funding for recruitment incentives.

Specifics: Increase the allocation of funding to prioritize funds for housing assistance, recruitment efforts, referral incentives, and hiring incentives for educators.

Rationale: Recruitment incentives, including housing assistance for educators, will reduce financial barriers to increase the ability to recruit and retain educators so that students receive instruction from a qualified teacher.

Recommendation #10: Create a grant fund for districts to provide a salary adjustment incentive for those who stay in special education positions.

Specifics: This grant would provide funds for districts to request reimbursement for salary incentives paid to those who stay in special education each year beyond 5 years.

Rationale: Special education is a critical shortage area with incentives to become a special education teacher, however often special education teachers will leave to become general education teachers creating a vacancy. Incentivizing them to stay will maintain qualified special education teachers in the classroom.

Recommendation #11: Increase the funding for the teacher advancement scholarship.

Specifics: Providing scholarships to those who would like to become counselors, psychologists, social workers, etc. will ensure qualified service providers in our schools in hard to staff positions.

Rationale: Cost is a barrier to pursuing a course of study to become a specialist to provide essential and wrap-around services to students. Providing scholarships will create an entry point toward preparing candidates to fill hard to staff positions in Nevada's schools.

Recommendation #12: Conduct a study of Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) coursework aligned with education staff needs.

Specifics: A study of college coursework to ensure educators are fully prepared for the needs of today's classroom requirements.

Rationale: Research shows first-year teachers entering the profession are unprepared for the challenges they will encounter in today's classroom. They feel overwhelmed and often leave after 3 years. Aligning their educator preparation coursework to current needs will support new educators and help with retention.

Recommendation #13: Increase the funding to support educator pipeline efforts.

Specifics: The Legislature should continue to invest in pipeline initiatives such as the Incentivizing Pathways to Teaching grant through an increase of funding to education to support the initiatives/ programs that are currently being funded through the State and with federal ESSER funds.

Rationale: The cost of a college education has risen over the past few decades as states have shifted an increasing amount of the costs to tuition. With a persistent teacher shortage plaguing Nevada, it needs to accelerate the pace of candidate completion, ensure there are no financial barriers to candidates completing their preparation programs, and attract more candidates into preparation programs. This will allow Alternate Route to Licensure providers to increase requests for scholarships.

[**Superintendent's Teacher Advisory and Principal Advisory Cabinet Recommendations**](#)

About the Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Cabinet and Principal Advisory Cabinet

As key stakeholder groups, the primary purpose of the Superintendent's Teacher Advisory Cabinet (STAC) and Principal Advisory Cabinet (PAC) is to provide feedback to the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) on initiatives and opportunities. Members not only provide insight from their experiences, but also gather feedback from peers to help inform the NDE. Members also expand their understanding of each NDE Department, as well as the NDE's Mission, Vision, and Goals.

The mission of the Superintendent's Advisory Cabinets is to elevate educators as experts and leaders in and beyond the classroom. The STAC and PAC meet at least quarterly with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and NDE Leadership. Their respective Recruitment and Retention Workgroups met independently to formalize their recommendations.

STAC Recommendations:

Recommendation #1: Allocate funding to improve the organizational image of the teaching profession.

Specifics: Public perception of the education profession is at a low. A public relations campaign to share positive stories, successes, and accurate information to dispel misconceptions will help all Nevada districts attract top talent and enable districts to distinguish themselves from competing states. The promotion of working as an educator in Nevada serves both recruitment and retention efforts.

Rationale: Improving the perception and respect of Nevada's teachers and student learning will help all districts recruit and retain educators.

Recommendation #2: Provide dedicated funding for stipends for mentor teachers.

Specifics: Providing funding to districts will support the resources needed to develop or sustain mentor programs through which experienced educators build the capacity and skills of novice educators as well as provide career pathways for experienced educators. This should be done in a way that does not supplant district Federal/Title II-A funding for mentor programs.

Rationale: New teachers rely on onsite mentoring during their early years for classroom success. Paying mentor teachers to support new teachers shows Nevada values their commitment and time.

Recommendation #3: Expand the benefit enrollment umbrella to include healthcare coverage of educators under the state Public Employee Benefit Plan (PEBP).

Specifics: Expand the eligible PERS enrollment pool to include all education staff. Districts would negotiate to switch insurance providers.

Rationale: Expanding the eligible enrollee pool would stabilize costs and premiums for teachers, increase benefits, ease of mind in access to care and lack of worry over non-payments to healthcare workers.

Recommendation #4: Take action to prevent the scheduling of stacked classes (1 teacher teaching 2 classes in the same room at the same time).

Specifics: Due to the teacher shortage, teachers are being asked to teach multi-level and/or multi-content in one class period (ex. English 11 and Honors English; Orchestra and guitar). This requires double planning and double workload for teachers.

Rationale: Students in different content classes, assigned to be in the same class at the same time, are only getting the instruction and teacher's attention for half the time as the teacher is forced to divide their instruction and time between students. Students get less from the teacher in a stacked class and teachers end up with twice the workload. This impacts student achievement and teacher retention.

Recommendation #5: Provide funding outside the general fund to create and manage a loan forgiveness program for current teachers with at least 5 years' experience in the classroom.

Specifics: Provide funding to those who are currently teachers in Nevada for at least 5 years to qualify for state loan forgiveness funds to apply to loans not currently eligible for forgiveness by other funding sources.

Rationale: Economic incentives are needed to help recruit and retain educators. With pay scales varying from State to State, prospective teachers will be more likely to sign with a State that offers both a competitive salary schedule and a loan forgiveness program, ensuring that more of the teacher paycheck stays in their pocket.

Recommendation #6: Return the PERS service requirement from the current 33.3 years to 30 years of service.

Specifics: Incentivize teachers to stay long term. Nevada does not currently retain educators at a sufficient rate to meet demand. Providing competitive PERS incentives to educators who stay in the classroom will encourage teachers to stay long-term. Competitive PERS benefits can be used by districts to entice educators to move to Nevada to teach.

Rationale: If competitive PERS benefits are provided, then districts will see long-term retention of educators. Competitive PERS benefits results in long-term retention of educators.

Recommendation #7: Provide State general funds to supplement the current funding structure to support the Home Is Possible for Teachers program.

Specifics: The Home Is Possible for Teachers program is currently funded through the fees collected by the Nevada Housing Division (NHD). This recommendation would provide dedicated State funds to supplement the limited amount of funding NHD programs generate from fees.

Rationale: As housing prices and the number of educators requesting down payment assistance increase, the amount allocated to each teacher decreases. Adding dedicated funds to the program will allow the Nevada Housing Division to increase the amount of funds available and to accept more educators into the program, giving teachers the opportunity to buy a home (especially in areas of low housing inventory or high cost).

Recommendation #8: Provide housing opportunities to all educators for longevity in the district.

Specifics: Provide funding for districts to offer housing support through stipends or district owned properties to early career educators.

Rationale: This would ensure the educators safe living quarters for them and their families. If educators are provided housing assistance, then districts will maintain a higher retention rate of educators by reducing the financial burden associated with a low starting salary and high cost of living.

Recommendation #9: Provide dedicated funding for district to provide signing bonuses/longevity pay.

Specifics: Additional funds would allow districts to give signing bonuses for new teachers. Bonuses could be given out over the course of 3-5 years to ensure the new teachers stay after receiving the money. Longevity bonuses could be awarded in lump sums after 5, 10, 15, etc. years.

Rationale: Signing bonuses are a great way to attract new teachers. Longevity pay is needed to help maintain and motivate teachers who have been loyal and committed to their school. There is nothing more demoralizing to veteran teachers who have stayed for 20 years at a school than watching new teachers receive large signing bonuses while they receive nothing. To be an effective recruitment and retention tool, districts need to offer both signing and longevity bonuses.

Recommendation #10: Change the PERS vesting requirement from 5 years to 3.

Specifics: Revising the timeline for vesting will incentivize foreign exchange educators, military spouses, etc. to come to Nevada to teach.

Rationale: Recruitment of spouses and others who are licensed educators and whose stay in Nevada is not expected to be long term will help fill vacancies with qualified educators who may not otherwise seek a license for a short stay in Nevada.

Recommendation #11: COE to write a letter to districts encouraging them to value and respect teacher autonomy in lesson planning, design, and delivery.

Specifics: Teachers are permitted to design and implement their own lessons and units, including how lessons are taught, as long as they are teaching to standards.

Rationale: Teachers are experts in their field; know their students; teachers are best left to decide based on their own expertise and knowledge of their pupils. Early career teachers the emphasis should be on providing useful guidance and exemplars, rather than adding additional demands on early career teachers.

Recommendation #12: COE to write a letter to districts encouraging them and associations to better explain their salary schedule and raise process (creating distinct pages with updated information).

Specifics: Educators often do not take advantage of or understand the process for advancing on their district's pay scale. A site/page like this would help to elucidate educators on the types of pathways and involvements that would help improve their understanding of how to improve their pay in a direct way as opposed to step increases.

Rationale: Many young teachers leave due to not understanding the pay-raise schedule and feeling as though step increases are far too low in accommodating their desire for higher salaries commensurate with their improvement as teaching professionals.

Recommendation #13: COE to write letters to the appropriate entities to encourage school districts to pay 1.5 hours additional per day outside of student day (7.5 hours per week).

Specifics: Research shows teachers spend unpaid hours at school completing job-related tasks. Additionally, due to a shortage of substitute teachers, many teachers are called to cover classes during their prep period, causing more preparation to be completed on unpaid hours. Paying teachers for extended hours outside of the student day would serve both recruitment and retention efforts. Teachers who receive compensation for time worked feel valued and stay.

Rationale: Teachers who receive compensation for time worked feel valued and stay.

Recommendation #14: COE to write a letter to our federal delegation urging them to sponsor legislation to repeal the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision.

Specifics: The windfall Act adjusts a Social Security worker's benefit for those who receive "non-covered pensions" and qualify for Social Security benefits based on other Social Security-covered earnings. A non-covered pension is a pension paid by an employer that does not withhold Social Security taxes from your salary, typically, state and local governments or non-U.S. employers. Nevada's PERS is a non-covered pension.

Rationale: Retirees from industry looking for a second career in teaching are looking elsewhere because PERS will reduce their SS. It is not financially feasible for them to teach. Nevada cannot recruit content and trade experts to teach in our CTE classes because of this.

PAC Recommendations:

Recommendation #1: Provide funding for a Public Relations (PR) Campaign to become a teacher.

Specifics: Public perception of the education profession is at a low. A PR campaign to share positive stories, successes, and accurate information to dispel misconceptions will help all Nevada districts attract top talent and enable districts to distinguish themselves from competing states. The promotion of working as an educator in Nevada serves both recruitment and retention efforts.

Rationale: Currently, positive public messaging around education is limited to the recognition of exemplary educators. This is limited to just a few educators a year and does not truly encompass what most educators do every day. Having resources dedicated to promoting the profession and sharing positive aspects with the public will serve to boost the morale of educators and help to develop a more informed public opinion of education in Nevada.

Recommendation #2: Allocate funding for stipends for mentor teachers.

Specifics: Providing funding to districts will support the resources needed to develop or sustain mentor programs through which experienced educators build the capacity and skills of novice educators as well as provide career pathways for experienced educators. Paying mentor teachers to support new teachers shows

Nevada values their commitment and time. This should be done in a way that does not impact district Federal/Title II-A funding for mentor programs.

Rationale: New teachers rely on onsite training for classroom success. If they do not receive strong support and continued growth during the steep learning curve in their first 2 years, they are twice as likely to abandon their career. Mentoring programs train new teachers in a systematic and sequential approach to learn how to provide effective instruction to their deserving students.

Recommendation #3: Expand the benefit enrollment umbrella to include healthcare coverage of educators under PEBP.

Specifics: Expand the eligible PEBP enrollment pool to include all education staff. Districts would negotiate to switch insurance providers.

Rationale: Expanding the eligible enrollee pool would stabilize costs and premiums for teachers, increase benefits, ease of mind in access to care and lack of worry over non-payments to healthcare workers.

Recommendation #4: Allocate additional funding for administrative leadership training focused on supporting teachers.

Specifics: Increase the allocation of funding to provide targeted training of administrators to develop systems of support for their staff.

Rationale: Building and district administrators would participate in professional learning to help them reduce workload and improve life/ work balance for themselves and the educators they supervise. This would include learning how to leverage initiatives or requirements already in place to reduce duplicative efforts and cultivate systems of support for their staff.

Recommendation #5: Implement a Statewide minimum salary schedule for licensed personnel to include an annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) in line with the cost-of-living indices.

Specifics: Competitive compensation is a means to both recruit and retain educators in Nevada. During a national shortage of educators, appropriate and competitive compensation assures a dignified standard of living that is sustainable for many years of service and makes Nevada more attractive to current and future educators.

Rationale: This will have districts aligned to limit disparity in salaries across the state.

Recommendation #6: Increase funding to support the buyout for unused sick leave at (teacher's daily rate of pay) OR (statewide minimum amount) upon retirement.

Specifics: Provide funding to districts to enable them to pay teachers their daily rate of pay or a statewide minimum set amount when they leave instead of the low payout rate they currently receive.

Rationale: When teachers retire or leave the school district, they are not fully compensated for their unused sick leave. For example, a teacher may be compensated for 20% of their sick leave value. The unintended consequence is that teachers are incentivized to use their sick leave more during the school year since they will not be fully compensated for it. This impacts student learning in the classroom.

Recommendation #7: Allocate additional funding for the creation and training of student support teams (MTSS, wrap-around services, etc.) at every school.

Specifics: If funds are provided for additional support services in schools, educators will be supported in meeting the needs of all students.

Rationale: This may require a comprehensive look at what supports there are, and how they are available, managed, strategies and system to address.

Recommendation #8: Require health plans doing business in Nevada to include extensive wrap-around service benefits.

Specifics: Expand mental health supports and health care services by requiring services such as health club benefits, counseling, and days off coverage be included benefits in their plans.

Rationale: Including mental, emotional, and fitness in the comprehensive wellbeing of educators will support retention and recruitment of educators.

Recommendation #9: Allocate funding to provide supply cards for teachers to purchase classroom materials.

Specifics: Implement a supply card grant program to provide all teachers with additional funds to purchase classroom supplies.

Rationale: Providing supply grants for all teachers will offset out-of-pocket expenses and relieve the burden of having to apply for funds.

Recommendation #10: Revise the timeline for PERS double dip eligibility.

Specifics: Currently, educators need to retire for 2 months before they can restart in a classroom and double dip. This requires a substitute to take the class in the transition. Nevada has a shortage of substitute teachers. Teachers also don't often return to the classroom because of the wait.

Rationale: Getting teachers with 30 years of experience back in the classroom as quickly as possible and allowing them to double dip can fill vacancies and ensure children have access to a certified teacher.

Recommendation #11: Allocate additional funding for scholarships to become qualified to provide student support services to students.

Specifics: Providing scholarships to those who would like to become counselors, psychologists, social workers, etc. will ensure qualified service providers in our schools in hard to staff positions. This may require a comprehensive look at what supports there are, and how they are available, managed, strategies and system to address.

Rationale: Cost is a barrier to pursuing a course of study to become a specialist to provide essential and wrap-around services to students. Providing scholarships will create an entry point toward preparing candidates to fill hard to staff positions in Nevada's schools.

Recommendation #12: Appropriate funds to cover cost-of-living / travel stipends for rural educators.

Specifics: Rural areas have fewer resources for doctors, dentists, lawyers, recreation, housing, contractors, hospitals, mental health professionals, limited school personnel, grocery stores, etc.

Rationale: Access to services in rural areas require more resources including time, travel, and related expenses, resulting in educators incurring higher out of pocket expenses.

Recommendation #13: COE to write letters to the appropriate entities to encourage school districts to pay 1.5 hours additional per day outside of student day (7.5 hours per week).

Specifics: Research shows teachers spend unpaid hours at school completing job-related tasks. Additionally, due to a shortage of substitute teachers, many teachers are called to cover classes during their prep period, causing more preparation to be completed on unpaid hours. Paying teachers for extended hours outside of the student day would serve both recruitment and retention efforts.

Rationale: Teachers who receive compensation for time worked feel valued and stay.

Recommendation #14: COE to write a letter to districts encouraging them to provide career path diagnostics to all students to help guide students' coursework.

Specifics: Career path diagnostics help students identify possible career opportunities based on their interests and talents.

Rationale: When students have an idea of a possible career path schools can create relevant and meaningful paths for student learning and align coursework to help students meet their career goals. Students are more engaged in their learning with fewer behavior incidents when they see the connection between coursework and their future.

Recommendation #15: COE to write a letter to our federal delegation urging them to sponsor legislation to repeal the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision.

Specifics: The windfall Act adjusts a Social Security worker's benefit for those who receive "non-covered pensions" and qualify for Social Security benefits based on other Social Security-covered earnings. A non-covered pension is a pension paid by an employer that does not withhold Social Security taxes from your salary, typically, state and local governments or non-U.S. employers. Nevada's PERS is a non-covered pension.

Rationale: Retirees from industry looking for a second career in teaching are looking elsewhere because any PERS benefit will reduce their SS benefit. It is not financially feasible for them to enter teaching as a second career. Nevada cannot recruit content and trade experts to teach in our classrooms. CTE classes are highly affected because of this.

Recommendation #16: Ask the State the Board of Education to re-evaluate high school graduation requirements to remove duplicative coursework and to ensure coursework aligns with universities 'need to know' requirements.

Specifics: Some courses offered in middle school for high school credit are then also required in high school leading to duplicative coursework.

Rationale: Removing duplicative coursework means fewer students in the course at one time, giving administrators the needed flexibility to realign schedules to better meet staffing needs while reducing undue burdens on students.