

# Presentation to the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education



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***Vision:***

***A community united to ensure every public school student in Clark County can succeed.***

***Mission:***

***The Public Education Foundation partners with the community and the Clark County School District to meet immediate, critical education needs that will strengthen our public schools.***

# The Public Education Foundation (PEF)

- **Scholarships Plus** provided almost \$6.7 million in college scholarships this year to help students pursue their dreams of attending college or vocational school.
- **PEF Teacher Superstore** provides free and low-cost school supplies for teachers to distribute so students can participate in the classroom and do their homework. This year we distributed over \$1 million in supplies.
- The **Book Bus** connects students with free books to increase literacy and spark interest in reading among students and their families. We've given out over 100,000 books during our inaugural year.
- PEF is helping to lead the community's response to student absenteeism through the **Go to Grow Coalition**, housed at NVFamily.org, which wraps families with support to remove barriers to school attendance and success. More than 20 community organizations have partnered with PEF to address this chronic issue.
- **Teacher FastTrack** addresses the teacher shortage crisis by identifying school employees who dream of becoming licensed teachers and preparing them for a fast-track preparation program at UNLV. We also mentor hundreds of new teachers through the first three years in their own classrooms.

# Teacher FastTrack (TFT) Overview

- The Clark County School District has not started the school year fully staffed since 1994. On the first day of school for the 2023-2024 school year, CCSD still had more than 1,100 open teaching positions. This is a problem of recruitment and retention. The problem is statewide.
- The teacher shortage has the greatest effect on our most underserved and under-resourced schools. Historical patterns show that students in high-poverty, high-minority schools are most likely to be taught by underprepared and inexperienced teachers who are often asked to teach subjects outside of their field of expertise.
- Paraprofessionals and Guest Teachers need the economic lift that becoming a teacher will provide, as the average classroom aide makes \$22,000 annually. Yet these teaching candidates face many barriers on their path to the classroom.
- It's critical that we mentor new teachers to retain them; more than 44% of new teachers leave the profession within five years. We must remove the barriers!

# TFT Recruit

## **PEF recruits future teachers and provides pre-apprenticeship support by:**

- Identifying current school employees and community members who dream of becoming licensed teachers,
- Assisting them while they earn the prerequisite credits needed to enter UNLV's Paraprofessional Pathway Project (PPP)
- Provide stipend, mentorship, scholarships, funds for books, technology, and;
- Providing them with free resources to study for and pass the Praxis Core as required for all new teachers
- Participation:
  - 63 in fall, 2022 - grew to 101 by end of 22-23 (45 just graduated and will be teaching this fall - 34 more should graduate mid-year)
  - 150 in fall, 2023 (most have already moved on to PPP)
  - Anticipate over 250 for fall, 2024

# TFT Retain

**PEF then retains teachers who graduated from UNLV's apprenticeship programming (PPP and AARL) by:**

- Providing an online library of tools and resources cultivated for new teachers,
  - Providing Bridge Out PD as they transition from graduate to teacher,
  - Linking new teachers with experienced "Guides on Demand" who are available every day to help them with problems they encounter in the classroom, and;
  - Providing them with free resources to study for and pass the Praxis Core as required for all new teachers
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- Participation:
    - During the 23-24 school year we worked with over 220 new teachers
    - This year we will be working with over 450 new teachers

# TFT Exchange

## **PEF helps to retain teachers who work in CCSD as part of the J1 Cultural Exchange program:**

- Providing an online library of tools and resources cultivated for new teachers,
  - Providing mentorship from experienced Cultural Exchange teachers, and;
  - Linking Cultural Exchange teachers with experienced “Guides on Demand” who are available every day to help them with problems they encounter in the classroom
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- Participants:
    - PEF will be working with 133 new Cultural Exchange teachers for the 24-25 school year and have hired 15 Cultural Exchange mentors to provide wrap-around support

# Praxis as a Barrier

**In late 2022 – early 2023 an NDE Praxis Core Workgroup was charged with the following tasks:**

- Review the statute adopted during the 2021 session
- Gather information about other states current regulations and requirements
- Research if the Praxis Core has any correlation/impact on student outcomes
- Draft regulation changes if found appropriate
- Prepare a final report and presentation for the Commission on Professional Standards in Education for their consideration



# Praxis Research

Passing the Praxis I in Arkansas (2005, Shuls) is not a significant indicator of teacher quality. **In both math and ELA, the difference between those who pass and those who fail is negative, but the difference is not statistically significant. This means that the Praxis I exam is screening out some individuals who may be ineffective teachers, but it is also screening out some potentially effective teachers.**

As reported by Graham and Garton (2003), **tests are a good predictor of future test-taker performance on standardized tests** (e.g. Villeme, Hall, & Phillippy, 1982; Wakeford, 1988; Williams & Wakeford, 1990), **but they have not found enough evidence to support a strong relationship between test-taker performance and teacher performance in the classroom.**

*Performance and Passing Rate Differences of African-American and White Prospective Teachers on Praxis Examinations (Nettles et al., 2011).* This research included almost 75,000 test-takers for Praxis I between November 2005 and November 2009. Only 11% of the Praxis test-takers were African-American and only 2% were Hispanic, while approximately 80% were White. First time pass rate for White was approximately 80%. **First time pass rate for African-American students was approximately 40%.**

**Hanushek et al. (2005) found no difference between the effectiveness of teachers who had not passed a state's licensure exam and those who had.**

**Currently there are at least 20 states that do not require a basic skills test to obtain teacher certification. Four of those states are ranked in the top 10 nationally. Four of the states that do not require a basic skills test border Nevada - Arizona, Utah, Idaho, Oregon. Other states require the Praxis II (subject area) but not the Praxis Core (basic skills)**

# Workgroup Results

- The Commission on Professional Standards met on March 8, 2023 to discuss possible changes to the Praxis Core cut scores. By unanimous decision, the commission voted to change the acceptable passing score by one standard error of measurement.

	Old Cut Score	New Cut Score
Mathematics	150	144
Reading	156	150
Writing	162	156

- SAT exam score of **at least 1100**
- ACT exam score of **at least 21**

# Final Thoughts

**Nevada is on an island when it comes to the Praxis Core requirements. States to the north, east, and south do not require the Praxis at all, while California to the west allows alternative means to show competency.**

**Given the crisis we face when it comes to teacher recruitment and retention, and the evidence that confirms little correlation (if any) to teacher effectiveness AND the evidence that suggests the test disqualifies a disproportionate number of people of color from the profession, there is literally no plausible reason as to why we would leave the Praxis requirements as is.**

# Thank You

*Questions/Comments?*

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