

## Overview of Nevada Department of Education Outcomes Evaluation

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### Introduction

The 78<sup>th</sup> Session of the Nevada Legislature supported programs focused on characteristics of education systems in Nevada requiring improvement, including quality of teachers and administrators, student literacy, professional development, school climate and safety, and access to educational technology. The seven programs included in the legislation were the Great Teaching and Leading Fund (SB 474), Underperforming Schools Turnaround (SB 448), Zoom Schools (SB 405), Social Workers in the Schools (SB 515), Victory Schools (SB 432), Read by Grade 3 (SB 391), and Nevada Ready 21 (SB 515).

An independent evaluation of the outcomes of these programs was included to determine whether the funding for these programs is accomplishing intended goals for a range of stakeholders including Nevada's students, educators, families, and communities. These programs focus on significant long-term goals such as improvements in student achievement. Sufficient data to evaluate many of the intended outcomes are not currently available, though an initial appraisal of implementation strategies will be useful to determine each program's capacity for success.

We describe outcomes and implementation evidence collected in two anticipated phases: 1) shorter-term (i.e., before December 2016) for qualitative and baseline data collection, and 2) longer-term (i.e., 2017-2019) for more comprehensive evaluation addressing longitudinal change.

### Shorter-Term Evaluation (*through December 2016*)

Shorter-term indicators and evidence will provide the foundation for preliminary findings and recommendations that will be included in the December 2016 report to the legislature. Key components of the shorter-term elements of the evaluation include:

- Focus groups and interviews with stakeholders across programs.
- Surveys of stakeholders across programs.
- Document analysis of program implementation artifacts.
- Analysis of student achievement data, as available.
- Identification and collection of empirical baseline data.

### Longer-Term Evaluation (*beginning January 2017*)

A longer-term design for a comprehensive evaluation of these programs relies more heavily on empirical data that can be collected as the program matures. Many of the achievement indicators are designed to evaluate change, requiring multiple years of data to detect an effect. Some of the indicators that apply across programs include:

- Impact on academic achievement and growth.
- Program participants compared with non-participants.
- Impact on types and rates of documented incidents.
- Changes in educator practices.
- Recruiting, selecting, and retaining educators.

The following page illustrates a logic model for one of the programs, but is available for each of the seven in the evaluation.

# Zoom Schools Program

## GOAL

Provide English learners access to intensive educational services with the intent to increase academic achievement and improvements in English language proficiency. The initial focus was on early learners with expansion to other levels to prepare young English learners for academic success in school from kindergarten through high school graduation

## TARGETED OUTCOME LEVELS

Educators, Students, Families of Students

### INTERVENTION

- Pre-Kindergarten program
- Full day kindergarten with reduced class sizes
- Reading centers
- Intercession/Summer academy

### IMPLEMENTATION

- Selection of Zoom schools
- Infrastructure to support interventions
- Educator professional development on interventions
- Family involvement

### EDUCATOR OUTCOMES

#### SHORTER TERM

- Review of Zoom School reports - Educator outcomes
- Use of English language proficiency strategies
- Attitudes and beliefs toward English learners

#### LONGER TERM

- Strategies for effective reading centers
- Engagement and commitment of school to support English learners

### STUDENT OUTCOMES

#### SHORTER TERM

- Review of Zoom School reports - Student outcomes
- Gains in English language proficiency (e.g., WIDA)
- Gains in reading outcomes from reading centers
- Increased credit sufficiency

#### LONGER TERM

- Academic growth
- Language growth

### FAMILY OUTCOMES

#### SHORTER TERM

- Review of Zoom School reports - Family outcomes
- Family engagement in Zoom program

#### LONGER TERM

- Family and community support for students in Zoom schools

## Logic Model Timeframe

Shorter term = outcomes that can be reasonably measured and evaluated by December 2016.

Longer term = outcomes that will require data collection beyond December 2016 to reasonably measure and evaluate. We recommended annually revisiting these outcomes to determine if they remain viable.

## Limitations and Next Steps

In the shorter term the evaluation design will have limitations for each of the programs. Some of these key limitations include:

- Access: Evidence collection and analysis will be limited to documentation and reports available through schools, districts, and the state;
- Availability of student achievement data: Most programs will not have statewide assessment data to inform some of the empirical outcomes questions. Therefore, this evidence may serve primarily as baseline data for future evaluations; and
- Historical policies: Changes in local, state, and/or federal educational policies may affect generalization efforts.

Designing an evaluation plan that addresses shorter and longer term needs requires consideration of qualitative and quantitative data. Because many of these programs are in the very early phases of implementation, evidence currently available is more qualitative in nature and focuses more on the implementation design and processes. To lay a foundation for longer term evaluation efforts to gauge the effectiveness of the programs, an examination of empirical baseline and progress data are required.