



NEVADA'S PROMISE

excellence,
rigor, and
equity

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NEVADA'S PROMISE: EXCELLENCE, RIGOR, AND EQUITY

NEVADA'S CHALLENGE

At this time in the history of our country and our state, there is a critical call to action to address the education of future generations. There is consensus at all levels of our society that for America to remain vibrant as an economy and a civilization, we must assume ultimate responsibility for what our children learn and how effectively they are taught. In Nevada, it is clear we have abandoned this responsibility. By all measures we have failed our children.

Despite some isolated pockets of excellence and hope, when half of our children fail to graduate high school, when post-secondary education enrollment rates are the lowest in the nation, and when the wide achievement gap of African-American and Hispanic children continues to prevail, we have failed. Nevada's diverse student population faces challenges of mobility, poverty, and English language acquisition. As a result, Nevada is 16 points below the national average in student achievement (Quality Counts 2010, Education Research Center). The consequences this portends are obvious—a sad escalation of social needs and a dismal prognosis for our state's desperate economy.

Nevada's unemployment rate of 14.2% is already the worst in the nation and has strained state and county resources. In 2009, personal income fell more rapidly in Nevada than in any other state. The staples of our economy—gaming, tourism, and construction—are no longer sufficient to provide for our children's future. Nevada is confronting the need to overhaul its education system as the first step in transforming the economy of the state to become the renewable, green energy capital of the West by aggressively pursuing and developing geothermal, solar, and wind energy generation. To usher in this new green energy economy, Nevada must renew Pre-K–12 and post-secondary education and align efforts with economic development and industry.

Nevadans will no longer accept 51st place for a student's chance of success (Quality Counts 2010, Education Research Center), and must begin demonstrating a commitment to true reform with *Nevada's Promise: Excellence, Rigor, and Equity*. This reform agenda represents the first truly tough-minded, bold approach to changing the way we do business in education in Nevada.

Compelled by the seriousness of this challenge, more than 200 stakeholders provided input into *Nevada's Promise*, representing the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), Nevada's 17 school districts, local school boards, parents, the Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDP), Nevada System for Higher Education (NSHE), Nevada State Education Association,

state charter schools, the State Board of Education, elected officials, business and community-based organizations, and public foundations.

These stakeholders are committed to achieving *Nevada's Promise*: every school will be led by an effective principal, every class will be taught by an effective teacher, and every student will graduate. A better educated Nevada will be a more prosperous Nevada.

NEVADA'S SUCCESSES

Nevada's Promise will solidify our shared resolve for constructive transformation and will build upon the following educational strengths:

- Nevada has made steady gains in both national and state-level tests and in reducing achievement gaps. Nevada was one of four states and the District of Columbia to show gains in both fourth- and eighth-grade mathematics in 2009, as reported in the Nation's Report Card. Nevada's students increased their National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math scores from 2003 to 2009, and reading scores from 2003 to 2007, at a rate greater than the national average.
- Nevada has the authority to intervene in persistently low-performing schools with a well-defined implementation plan and differentiated support system for successful turnaround.
- Nevada has 100% participation from Local Education Agencies (LEAs), a productive partnership with statewide teacher and administrator associations, and bipartisan support from political and industry leaders.
- Nevada has the critical elements (policies, data, and statewide buy-in) for teacher and principal evaluations that will be based, in part, on student achievement data, with 33% to be based on summative growth data and 17% on local measures of student growth.
- Nevada is the only state that met the rigorous federal criteria based on the superior performance of Nevada Reading First Schools from 2005-2008, and was subsequently awarded \$3.8 million through a Reading First Targeted Assistance Grant.
- Nevada has established a friendly and supportive environment to foster charter school creation and operation, enabling both state- and district-level sponsorship.
- In 2009, the Nevada State Legislature passed statutes requiring a growth model approach to measure student achievement with mandated implementation by January 2011.
- Through the creation of the automated System of Accountability Information for Nevada (SAIN), and a combination of federal and state support, Nevada now meets 11 of the 12 components of the America COMPETES Act.
- In 2005 and 2007, the Nevada State Legislature funded \$92 million to support the Innovation and the Prevention of Remediation program, through which school districts provide mentoring for new and existing teachers to better understand content.

- Efficacy data shows the Instructional Consultation Teams model has led to goal attainment in the 12 school districts that are implementing shoulder-to-shoulder peer coaching for Limited English Proficiency students to master content standards.
- Nevada offers gateway coursework requirements and rewards for students to pursue higher education through the Millennium Scholarship, a visionary state-funded program that has helped 19,072 Nevada graduates attend Nevada colleges and universities.

NEVADA'S PROMISE

Nevada has 436,000 students who are depending on us to deliver *Nevada's Promise*—that every school will be led by an effective principal, every classroom will be led by an effective teacher and every student will graduate. Guiding this work is the Managed Performance/Empowerment (MPE) model, a theory of action based on clear goals and solid accountability that has led to success in educational systems across the country. Managed instruction and earned autonomy are the guiding principles of MPE, which requires:

- Tightly aligned standards, curriculum, instruction, intervention, assessment, and professional development;
- Selection and hiring of high-quality staff;
- Effective and equitable resource allocation based on the needs of students;
- Supportive state, district, and school structures;
- Parent/community engagement;
- Transparent accountability and communication, including holding staff responsible for meeting clear, concrete performance expectations;
- Reliance upon effective data and monitoring systems to track accountability;
- Empowerment-orientation, in which increasing levels of autonomy are granted based on increased performance; and
- Establishment of clear, rigorous goals for students, teachers, principals, schools, districts, higher education, and the state.

Nevada will achieve five specifically-targeted objectives of *Nevada's Promise* by 2014 (data based on 2009 results):

- Increase the graduation rate to 85% using the longitudinal cohort model;
- Reduce the achievement gap by 50% for African American-white and Hispanic-white on NAEP;

- Increase graduates enrolling in post-secondary institutions in- or out-of-state by 50%;
- Increase student achievement percentage of students proficient or advanced on the NAEP fourth-grade mathematics (from 32% to 50%) and eighth-grade mathematics (from 25% to 50%); and
- Increase student achievement percentage of students proficient or advanced on the NAEP fourth-grade reading (from 24% to 50%) and eighth-grade reading (from 22% to 50%).

Operating with the principles of MPE at the forefront, Nevada will sustain a tightly-aligned instructional system, balancing school and district autonomy with comprehensive state and local accountability systems.

NEVADA'S STRATEGIES

To achieve the five targeted objectives, *Nevada's Promise* has outlined four strategies to guide education reform. Each of the four reform strategies will be implemented with particular focus on improving standards and assessments, providing data systems to support instruction, re-cruiting great teachers and leaders, and turning around the lowest-achieving schools.

- **Strategy 1:** Improve student performance through collaboration with key stakeholders such as parents, teachers, principals, employees associations, district administrators, state officials, community leaders, and legislators.
- **Strategy 2:** Improve classroom instruction on rigorous and relevant content including an emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).
- **Strategy 3:** Improve classroom instruction and student performance using data at all levels—student, classroom, school, district, state—to support the improvement planning process, evaluate the effectiveness of planned programs, and drive instructional decisions focused on increased student achievement.
- **Strategy 4:** Improve achievement through best practices that have been proven effective in Nevada.

STRATEGY 1

Improve student performance through collaboration with key stakeholders such as parents, teachers, principals, employees' associations, district administrators, state officials, community leaders, and legislators.

Key sections in *Nevada's Promise* supporting this strategy:

STANDARDS & ASSESSMENTS

- Develop a statewide professional development plan for the roll-out, training, and support of instruction for the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
- Develop college readiness expectations for mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) with the Nevada System of Higher Education

GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS

- Create a transparent system that measures teacher and principal effectiveness with teacher, administrator, and parent associations

DATA SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT INSTRUCTION

- Expand access to the statewide longitudinal data system to include parents and public stakeholders via Electronic Media Access to Leverage Learning (E-MALL)

TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST-ACHIEVING SCHOOLS

- Create partnerships with industry, community, and legislative leaders to ensure that existing resources can be reallocated to impact high-needs schools and ensure equity
- Hire and use a statewide Parent Engagement Specialist to ensure collaboration between the districts and parents in developing and using community resources at turn-around schools

STRATEGY 2

Improve classroom instruction on rigorous and relevant content including an emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

Key sections in *Nevada's Promise* supporting this strategy:

STANDARDS & ASSESSMENTS

- Adopt the CCSS
- Participate in the review and proposed development of the national science education standards framework
- Promote a transition from high school to post-secondary education around the Programs of Study

GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS

- Develop an accelerated pathway to receive full teacher or administrative credentials within two years and focus on STEM subjects and special education
- Enhance existing partnerships that recruit, train, and support teacher and principal candidates in STEM subjects and special education

DATA SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT INSTRUCTION

- Develop STEM curriculum units that will be made available electronically through E-MALL
- Create a common digital library of online resources that are aligned to the CCSS available through E-MALL

TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST-ACHIEVING SCHOOLS

- Support the development of recruitment tools and systems to ensure the hiring of appropriate staff for the lowest-achieving schools

STRATEGY 3

Improve classroom instruction and student performance using data at all levels—student, classroom, school, district, state—to support the improvement planning process, evaluate the effectiveness of planned programs, and drive instructional decisions focused on increased student achievement.

Key sections in *Nevada's Promise* supporting this strategy:

STANDARDS & ASSESSMENTS

- Participate in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium to develop common summative assessments in ELA and mathematics
- Incorporate longitudinal data in reading and mathematics to implement the Nevada Growth Model for Achievement
- Produce an aligned system of statewide interim measures
- Implement Early Reading Interventions using data from Reading First schools

GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS

- Develop the Nevada Growth Model of Achievement to ensure assessment of growth across grades and subjects for every school
- Design and implement a statewide system that differentiates teacher and principal effectiveness using multiple measures of student growth
- Develop and use the COMPASS system to analyze teacher and principal effectiveness data

DATA SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT INSTRUCTION

- Enhance and expand the statewide longitudinal data system to include student achievement growth data, indicators of teacher and principal effectiveness, and links to teacher preparation programs from post-secondary institutions
- Develop and use the Comprehensive Oversight for Managing Performance to Achieve Student Success (COMPASS) system to monitor teacher and principal effectiveness

TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST-ACHIEVING SCHOOLS

- Develop and use focused school profiles to determine appropriate interventions for school improvement
- Develop and use the E-MALL online system to provide templates and online resources for longitudinal school and district improvement planning

STRATEGY 4

Improve achievement through best practices that have been proven effective in Nevada.

Key sections in *Nevada's Promise* supporting this strategy:

STANDARDS & ASSESSMENTS

- Develop the Nevada Curricular Frameworks that are aligned to the CCSS
- Develop a statewide pre-service teacher course of study that is aligned with the CCSS
- Use technology and advanced items to assess complex thinking, with a focus on STEM
- Develop targeted technical assistance for all high-needs schools and districts
- Provide professional development to empower teachers and principals to make data-based instructional decisions
- Conduct statewide professional development on CCSS using E-MALL

TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST-ACHIEVING SCHOOLS

- Build capacity at the state, district, and regional level to turn around schools that might otherwise decline into needs improvement status
- Provide support, mentoring, and guidance to district leaders in the implementation of the chosen intervention model relative to evaluation, facilitative administrative support, and systems interventions
- Gather and share data on the impact of early learning initiatives to help leverage stakeholders to commit to the adoption and sustain Pre-K programs
- Connect schools and districts with comprehensive support programs

DATA SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT INSTRUCTION

- Conduct statewide professional development using the newly developed E-MALL with a focus on building on-line tools for peer-to-peer collaboration
- Develop and use the COMPASS system to create individualized development plans for principals and teachers
- Monitor the effectiveness of professional development through the COMPASS system

GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS

- Create teacher and principal standards to increase instructional effectiveness
- Establish and use individualized development plans for teachers and principals to help enhance knowledge, skills, and/or abilities
- Use the State Professional Development Standards to guide teacher and principal training
- Use the COMPASS system to guide professional development that is content-based, comprehensive, and rigorous
- Expand on successful programs and develop a statewide infrastructure of peer-supported, job-embedded professional development
- Establish measures that evaluate and enable continuous improvement of the effectiveness of professional development offerings and access through the COMPASS system

STRATEGY 1

Improve student performance through collaboration with key stakeholders such as parents, teachers, principals, employees' associations, district administrators, state officials, community leaders, and legislators.

A comprehensive collaboration of key stakeholders has been involved in the creation of *Nevada's Promise*. Educational, political, and industry leaders from Nevada are committed to successfully implementing *Nevada's Promise* to facilitate Strategy 1:

Nevada Education Reform Office (NERO): The NERO will provide leadership and management for all project activities and will be informed by data on implementation and progress. Embedded evaluation efforts that aggregate summative data, and also focus substantially on progress monitoring and interim data collection and analysis, will provide feedback on what is working and what is not.

Five councils will support the work of the NERO by developing guidelines and policy recommendations:

- Standards and Assessments Council
- Data Council
- Teachers and Leaders Council
- Turn Around Schools Council
- STEM Council

Urban and rural districts will be represented on each council, along with representatives from the RPDPs, higher education, teacher and administrator associations, state charter schools, and others as appropriate.

Nevada Department of Education (NDE): The following existing offices will serve a substantial support role in the reform agenda:

- *Assessment, Program Accountability, and Curriculum*—implements a statewide balanced assessment system, provides oversight for accountability initiatives, and executes standards and curriculum design
- *Charter School*—provides leadership to the existing 10 state-sponsored charter schools in Nevada, 18 district-sponsored charter schools, and future charter schools

- *Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement Programs*—ensures that students from diverse backgrounds (based on race, disability, poverty, second language, and other factors) have robust opportunities for success in P-12 classrooms, including addressing the needs of schools in improvement
- *Teacher Licensure*—oversees teacher and principal licensure and re-licensure, and staffs the Professional Standards Commission, the entity responsible for developing and adopting state regulations regarding educator licensing
- *Information Technology*—focuses on information technology, data collection, and analysis
- *Career, Technical, and Adult Education Office*—promotes the transition from high school to post-secondary education by developing programs of study

Local Education Agencies (LEAs): Cross-district partnerships that are already in place will be leveraged to further support this collaborative project structure. The partnerships provide regular and immediate access to LEA decision-makers in a manner that supports smooth communication and flow of information. For example, the Nevada Association of School Superintendents—which includes the 17 school district superintendents—and district directors and charter school liaisons of Title I, special education, curriculum, and testing.

Teachers and principals: Between the major urban areas of Washoe County (Reno/Sparks/Tahoe) and Clark County (Las Vegas/Henderson), lie some of the most sparsely populated regions in the country. It is noteworthy that the teachers’ and administrators’ associations have collaborated in developing this proposal and encouraged the LEAs to actively participate in this endeavor. The Nevada State Education Association (NSEA), which represents educators throughout this vast area, as well as the two largest local education associations, the Clark and Washoe County Education Associations, strongly support *Nevada’s Promise*.

Higher education: Nevada’s higher education community has been instrumental in developing *Nevada’s Promise*. Joining the NSHE in supporting *Nevada’s Promise* are the Nevada Parent Teacher Association (NPTA), the Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA), the Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB), the Nevada P–20 Council, and several civil rights, community-based, and other nonprofit organizations.

Nevada State Legislature: State political leadership demonstrated its support for comprehensive education reform with responsive action during a special session that eliminated the one statutory barrier preventing Nevada from competing for federal Race to the Top funds. During the 2010 Special Legislative Session, Senate Bill 2 amended NRS 386.650 to tie student achievement to teacher performance.

Additionally, the legislature has enacted statutes that compel an aligned improvement planning process for schools, districts, and the state; authorize intervention in low-performing schools; and reform the fundamentals of curriculum, instruction, and assessment as the demand for 21st century skills has grown.

Education Reform Blue Ribbon Task Force/Accountability Task Force: On March 15, 2010, Governor Jim Gibbons commissioned the Education Reform Blue Ribbon Task Force to collaborate with stakeholders in developing Nevada's application for the federal Race to the Top grant program for education funds and in recommending long-term reform designed to improve student achievement in the state. The 28 members of the task force are appointed representatives that include elected officials and business, community, political, and education leaders from across the state. Beginning January 1, 2011, the task force will transition into the Accountability Task Force, which will serve as the external monitor of educational reform and will report to the public on the progress of the state's reform efforts. Having key legislators and other policymakers on the Accountability Task Force will assist in ensuring that communication remains constant to help leverage ongoing support.

STANDARDS & ASSESSMENTS

- **Develop a statewide professional development plan for the roll-out, training, and support of instruction for the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)**

Nevada has historically had a strong commitment to uniform academic standards. In the late 1990s, standards were created in English Language Arts (ELA), math, science, social studies, and other non-core subjects. In spring 2009, Governor Gibbons and Dr. Keith Rheault, Nevada superintendent of public instruction, signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors' Association that committed Nevada's support to the development of K-12 internationally benchmarked, CCSS in ELA and mathematics.

- **Develop college readiness expectations for ELA and mathematics with the Nevada System for Higher Education**

The NERO, working with the Standards and Assessment Council and NSHE representatives, will continue to develop college readiness expectations for ELA and mathematics. The NDE will complete common course numbering and descriptions to align instruction to the CCSS.

DATA SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT INSTRUCTION

- **Expand access to the statewide longitudinal data system to include parents and public stakeholders via Electronic Media Access to Leverage Learning (E-MALL)**

By 2013-2014, *Nevada's Promise* proposes to increase the number of dashboard users from 200 to 20,700; increase the annual portal visits by teachers, campus leaders, administrators, parents, and community from 1,000 to 35,000; and increase yearly feedback comments to 3,500 yearly. This will be accomplished by:

- Building on the work of stakeholder groups for the development of an enhanced SAIN;

- Development of Comprehensive Oversight for Managing Performance to Achieve Student Success (COMPASS) for expanded data collection for teacher effectiveness measures and access for teachers of formative and interim assessment data; and
- Increasing training opportunities by making video modules available through E-MALL, providing differentiated access to data through E-MALL, and public access to data through Annual Report of Accountability (ARC).

GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS

- **Create a transparent system that measures teacher and principal effectiveness with teacher, administrator, and parent associations**

LEAs and charter schools will set annual goals to increase teacher and principal effectiveness each year. Nevada will invest heavily in the creation of professional development resources to help teachers and principals improve their effectiveness. Factors critical to the success of a fair and equitable system of evaluation include input from teachers, principals, assessment experts, parents, and students to determine the criteria, additional assessments, and comprehensive elements to measure teacher and principal effectiveness. By 2014, the NDE will partner with the Teachers and Leaders Council to adopt a fair, transparent, and rigorous evaluation system, using multiple measures of student growth for teachers and principals.

Various stakeholders, including local and state teachers' association leadership, have agreed to the following four baseline measures:

- 50% of the evaluation will cover student achievement data (33% will be based on summative growth data and 17% will be based on local measures of student growth);
- 50% of the evaluation will be based on other data and information determined by each LEA (e.g. classroom observations);
- Review of evaluations from the previous three years will be considered; and
- Performance review discussions will include areas of strength, growth, and performance with focused areas for the following school year.

Nevada will create standards for evaluating teachers and principals focusing on six principles:

- The system will be fair, reliable, and accurately assess a teacher or principal's performance, in collaboration with the individual who will be assessed, and include ongoing input for improvement through feedback with principals and teachers.
- The system will be grounded in student growth and achievement data and include a timeline, proposed approach to improvement, and a definition of "significant," as it relates to student growth and achievement data.

- Principal effectiveness will include an analysis of retention and enhancement of faculty members' teaching skills through professional development.
- Evaluations under the proposed system will occur annually.
- Tools will be developed and training will be offered to ensure inter-rater reliability through the use of rubrics that measure performance.
- The system will differentiate effectiveness: highly effective, effective, minimally effective, and ineffective.

TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST-ACHIEVING SCHOOLS

- **Create partnerships with industry, community, and legislative leaders to ensure that existing resources can be reallocated to impact high-needs schools and ensure equity**

School-embedded management will be applied to the lowest-achieving schools, with direct intervention provided through school districts and the NDE at differentiated levels across priority categories. As the schools demonstrate successful turnaround outcomes—evidenced by student growth and achievement data—increasing degrees of autonomy will be phased in over time.

- **Hire and use a statewide Parent Engagement Specialist to ensure collaboration between the districts and parents in developing and using community resources at turnaround schools**

A Parent Engagement Specialist will be on staff in the NERO, and will assist schools and districts in developing plans that fully incorporate the support, abilities, and resources that parents bring to the education of their children. This specialist will convene a yearly Parent Involvement Summit; assist schools in developing transition plans for children and families as they progress from Pre-K to high school and post-secondary schooling; and build capacity through training for schools to develop a school team, including families, to analyze its policies, practices, and culture for including families in the academic success of their children.

STRATEGY 2

Improve classroom instruction on rigorous and relevant content including an emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

Improving classroom instruction on rigorous and relevant content requires clear standards as well as outstanding teachers and principals to guide implementation and monitoring of student learning. Rigor and relevance is particularly important to increase the number of students seeking STEM degrees and skilled careers. The following highlights are the major efforts in *Nevada's Promise* to facilitate Strategy 2:

Adoption of Common Core State Standards: The Academic Standards Council has approved the adoption of CCSS, as drafted with approval by the State Board of Education in June 2010.

Teaching Quality Task Force (TQTF): During the mid-2000s, Nevada engaged in reforming teacher and leader preparation and accountability systems through the creation of the TQTF. The TQTF made recommendations that proposed reform in pre-service preparation, licensure, and ongoing professional development for teachers, including alternative routes to licensure (ARL).

Professional development drives data use and practice: Nevada will provide extensive professional development to educators and parents to help students master the standards and graduate. Just as students will be held to rigorous standards, so too will teachers and principals; this will result in highly-skilled academic teams devoted to increasing student achievement. By refining the Nevada systems of teacher and principal preparation, and enhancing the systems of professional development, educators will acquire and be rewarded for having the skills, knowledge, and ability to impact student achievement in a timely manner.

Nevada STEM Coalition: Gathering Genius, Inc. (G² Inc.), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to improve STEM education in Nevada, raised \$1.1 million and successfully hosted the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Nevada in May 2009. The advisory board of G² Inc. met with a group of 30 stakeholders in April 2010 to discuss the establishment of a Nevada STEM Coalition that will assemble STEM leaders, generate support, and work to effect important and long-term improvements in STEM, P-20 education, and job training for Nevada. The newly-formed STEM Coalition will help Nevada improve the way students study science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and increase the number of students who pursue degrees in STEM.

Nevada already has a rich STEM community that includes industry, business, federal and university laboratories, and education partners. *Nevada's Promise* integrates STEM initiatives that will help Nevada further its agenda to increase capacity, replicate best practices, and engage all students

in STEM initiatives. The primary objectives of the STEM initiatives in *Nevada's Promise* include:

- Secure state funding to increase the capacity of the existing STEM education centers at Nevada's Institution of Higher Education (Center for Math and Science Teaching at University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and Raggio Center for STEM Education at University of Nevada, Reno) to act as clearing houses for coordinating professional development and enhancing their abilities to provide meaningful connections for content instruction, research to support learning, and program evaluation for projects across the state.
- Support the development of new or expanded programs within the NSHE teacher preparation programs to increase the STEM content preparation of new K-8 teachers, including training in the use of technology in teaching, and in integration of STEM content with literacy.
- Expand the Pathways to Nevada's Future project to include additional schools across the state and prepare for eventual placement in the majority schools.
- Support the development of infrastructure and professional development for increased use of handheld technology for classroom instruction and assessment.
- Develop required end-of-course assessments for STEM-related high school courses needed for graduation. Success on specified end-of-course exams could serve as a substitute for meeting the Nevada High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) requirement for graduation.
- Support expansion of the Silver State Summer Advanced Placement Institute to train more teachers to be ready to teach Advanced Placement (AP) courses in Nevada.
- Encourage and support the inclusion of more STEM-based curriculum at the K-8 level, including development of more integrated curriculum models, greater use of technology for elementary schools, and more problem/project based instructional models such as the Engineering is Elementary program developed by the Boston Museum of Science.
- Support the addition of STEM trainers within the existing regional professional development programs. Currently the number of RPDP trainers is not sufficient to provide more than basic support in mathematics, science, and literacy.
- Encourage and support the partnerships between school districts and the NSHE with partners from Nevada STEM-related business and industry to provide classroom support for instruction, and support for professional development for teachers (both funds to support professional development programs and also opportunities for teachers to participate in job shadowing and summer STEM field internships).
- Provide STEM-related online course content for both teachers and students to enable rural LEAs to broaden their available STEM curriculum.

- Expand programs such as the University of Nevada’s Girls Math Camp; the Mathematics, Engineering, Science, and Achievement program; summer engineering camps; and the Upward Bound Program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, to enable greater access for under-represented groups in STEM field education and career opportunities.

STANDARDS & ASSESSMENTS

- **Adopt the Common Core State Standards**

While the adoption of the CCSS in mathematics will support STEM education, the Nevada Science Standards will also incorporate enhanced technology and engineering principles in its 2011 revision. Nevada will gauge all student achievement by the CCSS content guidelines.

- **Participate in the review and proposed development of the national science education standards framework**

Nevada is participating in the review and development of the proposed national science standards framework, to be released in the spring and fall of 2011. The framework serves as the basis for the revision of the Nevada science content standards. The Nevada Science Standards will also incorporate enhanced technology and engineering principles in its 2011 revision.

- **Promote a transition from high school to post-secondary education around the Programs of Study**

The establishment of a secondary to post-secondary education transitional program through sequenced and articulated Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses is a key strategy in the plan for Career and Technical Education Skills for Employment and Lifelong Learning. To start the development and implementation process, the NDE sponsored two statewide Program of Study workshops during the 2009-2010 school year. A statewide goal is for every eligible CTE program at the secondary level to have approved articulation agreements with one or more community colleges.

DATA SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT INSTRUCTION

- **Develop STEM curriculum units that will be made available electronically through E-MALL**

E-MALL will be a continuously updated online environment, accessible to all stakeholders. The NDE will develop a variety of STEM and standards-based curriculum units, curriculum-embedded performance tasks, and professional development materials. E-MALL will be aligned with the RPDP web sites, which contain content-related professional development videos, lessons, and classroom-ready resources.

- **Create a common digital library of online resources that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards available through E-MALL**

E-MALL will also include a common digital library of online resources aligned to the CCSS. In developing E-MALL, Nevada will use open-source platform technology, which will reduce costs in the development of E-MALL.

GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS

- **Develop an accelerated pathway to receive full teacher or administrative credentials within two years and focus on STEM subjects and special education**

Currently, there exist three options for candidates to pursue an ARL in Nevada:

- *Special qualifications license*—certification for persons with aligned work experience and degree in the area in which the certification is being sought—a three-year renewable license;
- *Higher education-based alternative route to certification*—certification through higher education programs that enroll students in a post-baccalaureate teacher preparation program while concurrently employed as a teacher in a local school district; or
- *Principal pathway (starting Fall 2010)*—certification through an alternative route that will enable teachers with three years of experience to pursue education leadership coursework and receive a full administrator’s license upon completion of all requirements.

To fully realize the potential of an ARL option, Nevada will develop an accelerated pathway for candidates to receive full teacher or administrative credentials within two years. This accelerated pathway is designed to fill hard-to-staff positions and serve high-poverty schools. The Accelerated Alternative Route to Licensure (A²RL) criteria will be developed through the Teachers and Leaders Council and brought to the Nevada Professional Standards Commission for adoption in 2011.

- **Enhance existing partnerships that recruit, train, and support teacher and principal candidates in STEM subjects and special education**

Similar to many states across the country, Nevada suffers critical shortages in special education, STEM subject areas, and under-performing schools. One program with a proven record of recruiting outstanding recent college graduates to teach in high-poverty schools and close the achievement gap is Teach For America (TFA). TFA currently manages and trains 98 Pre-K–12 teachers working in high-poverty, high-minority, and persistently low-achieving schools in Clark County public and private schools.

In addition, Nevada will propose the following to the Professional Standards Commission during the 2010-2011 school year and, if necessary, seek statutory changes during the 2011 legislative session:

- Authorize the A²RL pathway to support the expansion of a teacher and principal pipeline that produces effective educators for high-poverty schools and high-needs areas.

- Create a list of criteria for A²RL providers. These criteria will enable Nevada to partner with proven high-quality alternative certification programs and expand ARL providers beyond the scope of higher education institutions. Criteria will be developed by the Teachers and Leaders Council under the direction of the NERO for regulatory adoption by the Nevada Professional Standards Commission.
- Collect data on the effectiveness of teachers and principals (including measures of student growth and achievement) and link these data to the programs in which the individuals received pre-service training for public reporting purposes.
- Invest resources and expand participation in the most effective preparation programs that demonstrate the strongest results in student achievement.

TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST-ACHIEVING SCHOOLS

- **Support the development of recruitment tools and systems to ensure the hiring of appropriate staff for the lowest-achieving schools**

The NDE will coordinate the efforts of the Turn Around Schools Council. The Turn Around Schools Council will create tools to help schools meet expectations for hiring practices at low-performing and high-needs schools, and support the development of recruitment tools and systems to ensure the hiring of appropriate staff. Such tools will support the need for knowledge of cultural competence and other subpopulation considerations.

STRATEGY 3

Improve classroom instruction and student performance using data at all levels—student, classroom, school, district, state—to support the improvement planning process, evaluate the effectiveness of planned programs, and drive instructional decisions focused on increased student achievement.

Data collection and analysis are critical for improving instruction and guiding increased student achievement. *Nevada's Promise* builds upon existing data systems to provide enhanced capability focused on improved planning, evaluation, and decision-making to facilitate Strategy 3:

Teacher data systems to inform instruction through a balanced assessment system: This plan capitalizes on a state longitudinal data system, which supports the capacity to drive decision-making at the student, parent, teacher, principal, school, district, and state level. A P–20 system that focuses on the ability to track student progress and link student data to teacher and principal effectiveness is the key to improving student achievement. Nevada will leverage the data system to ensure that we are making decisions equitably, including employment decisions.

Improved data systems: SAIN downloads data from all 17 school districts' systems nightly, and reports student achievement to each district. This data serves three purposes—accountability reporting, instructional change in the classroom, and data to measure teacher and principal effectiveness through evaluations.

Proposed enhancements include a seamless longitudinal P–20 system connecting all teachers to discrete student-level data for formative, interim/benchmark, and summative assessments; E-MALL, which will include professional development resources; and pre-service and ongoing training on using data to foster decision-making that improves instruction.

STANDARDS & ASSESSMENTS

- **Participate in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium to develop common summative assessments in ELA and mathematics**

Dr. Rheault, Nevada's superintendent of public instruction, signed the Document of Commitment to participate in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). This consortium of states is developing a high-quality balanced assessment system including summative, benchmark/interim, and formative assessments. The consortium supports three primary design principles: teacher engagement and professional development, computer-delivered adaptive testing, and performance assessment.

- **Incorporate longitudinal data in reading and mathematics to implement the Nevada Growth Model for Achievement (NGMA)**

The NDE will use longitudinal student assessment data in reading and mathematics to implement the NGMA at the elementary and middle school levels, and pursue its expansion to high school during the 2010-2011 school year. This model uses data from four consecutive school years to measure growth by establishing percentiles to reflect how students compare to their peers. Summative assessments, including K–2 literacy and mathematics assessments, and possible high school end-of-course exams, will be used in the expansion of the NGMA for all students in grades K–12 and will be fully implemented in the 2013-2014 school year.

- **Produce an aligned system of statewide interim measures**

Unlike classroom-based formative assessments, interim/benchmark assessments will be aggregated and reported at the school and district level. Interim/benchmark assessments provide teachers a valid and reliable way to predict difficulties, diagnose strengths and weaknesses, set instructional goals, and monitor learning. Currently, 15 of the 17 Nevada LEAs have interim/benchmark assessment systems in place. Although many LEAs contract with the same interim assessment vendor, the interim systems are unique to each districts' specifications.

To develop a more comprehensive and aligned system of interim assessments in Nevada, the NDE will provide oversight on an evaluation of the existing interim/benchmark systems across all LEAs and state-sponsored charter schools during the 2010-2011 school year. As a result of this evaluation, the Standards and Assessment Council will make recommendations for changes that will produce an aligned system of interim measures across Nevada by the completion of the 2012-2013 school year. Nevada's membership in the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium will provide opportunities for the development and acquisition of additional resources to support this effort.

- **Implement Early Reading Interventions using data from Reading First schools**

In 2009, the NDE was awarded a \$3.57 million Reading First Targeted Assistance Grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Nevada was the only state in the nation to increase student reading proficiency in its Reading First schools from 2005-2008. This included overall improvement in the percentages of students achieving proficiency in first, second, and third grades and improved performance from each targeted subgroup in the third grade. To achieve this, Nevada Reading First schools used proven comprehensive reading interventions, reliable screening, and progress monitoring assessments. Using lessons from Reading First schools, Nevada will implement Early Reading Interventions in selected schools by January 2012.

DATA SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT INSTRUCTIONS

- **Enhance and expand the statewide longitudinal data system to include student achievement growth data, indicators of teacher and principal effectiveness, and links to teacher preparation programs from post-secondary institutions**

Nevada's Promise proposes expanding Bighorn (a web-based interface for administrative reporting) and ARC systems to capture and report additional data elements. This plan includes a focus on using student achievement data to drive decisions in regard to teacher pay, promotion, dismissal, teacher and school effectiveness, and the quality of teacher preparation pro-

grams. Three objectives will be achieved through E-MALL and COMPASS: provide principals and district leaders with accurate daily data regarding teacher effectiveness, give teachers and principals access to E-MALL for instructional resources aligned to all standards, and provide access to integrated higher education data that will allow districts and higher education officials to evaluate the quality of teacher preparation programs.

- **Develop and use the COMPASS system to monitor teacher and principal effectiveness**

The web-based COMPASS system will link student achievement to teacher and principal performance to monitor teacher and principal effectiveness. COMPASS will also be integrated with E-MALL, providing access to reports and data that will be used for critical decisions in evaluating teachers and principals as well as guiding and monitoring professional development.

GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS

- **Develop the Nevada Growth Model of Achievement to ensure assessment of growth across grades and subjects for every school**

The NDE piloted the NGMA during the 2009-2010 school year. The 2009 law requires that Nevada establish yearly measurements for the progress and achievement of students enrolled in a public school. The NGMA provides information on the growth of individual students and defines legitimate criteria for determining how much growth can be expected of schools. Using the Student Growth Percentile methodology, the NGMA provides a growth measure that is valid, reliable, evidence-based, and comparable across Nevada.

Currently, the NGMA provides growth data on all students in fourth through eighth grades who take the Nevada statewide criterion-referenced test in reading and mathematics, and links these data to teachers and principals. During the 2010-2011 school year—and following the administration of all new summative assessments—the NGMA will be expanded to high schools, and growth data on all other grade levels will be provided.

- **Design and implement a statewide system that differentiates teacher and principal effectiveness using multiple measures of student growth**

During a special session of the legislature in February 2010, Nevada amended NRS 386.650 to set a clear bar for student achievement to be part of the evaluation for teachers and principals. The statute mandates that all school districts and charter schools use student performance data as part of their principal and teacher evaluation systems.

Summative and formative evaluations will serve as tools to help teachers and principals better understand their performance and help determine more effective professional development opportunities. Formative evaluations serve as an opportunity for teachers and principals to course correct, recognize progress, reflect, and make informed decisions that lead to increased student achievement. The frequency of formative evaluation will depend on the experience, placement, and performance of the teacher or principals.

- **Develop and use the COMPASS system to analyze teacher and principal effectiveness data**

Increasing instructional effectiveness requires continuous discussion between the teacher/principal and the principal/district leader—a regular dialogue that is formalized at specific times of the year. For maximum effectiveness, this effort will be a collaboration between teachers, content specialists, principals, and support from external reviewers trained in the evaluation protocols. The conversations conducted through the performance assessments will align with the formative evaluation process and discussions over the course of a school year.

All quantitative data from observation rubrics and qualitative data will be entered into COMPASS to allow stakeholders to analyze and synthesize the data and make decisions accordingly.

Evaluations will generate five outcomes:

- Educators will receive feedback on performance as indicated in frequent formative opportunities and a summative formal end-of-year review.
- Educators will receive an individualized development plan (IDP) following a summative review. Professional development will be provided as needed.
- Teachers and principals will be held accountable for accessing professional development.
- Outstanding educators who demonstrate extraordinary effectiveness will be identified. LEAs and the NDE will determine how to maximize their talent through opportunities at the school, district, and state level as part of a career ladder.
- Evidence will be provided for licensure renewal, career trajectory, and tenure decisions.

TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST-ACHIEVING SCHOOLS

- **Develop and use focused school profiles to determine appropriate interventions for school improvement**

Utilizing the Decision-Making and Planning Tool developed by the Center on Innovation and Improvement, the NERO will assist the school district to create a focused school profile that outlines the demographics of the student and staff populations in the building.

These profiles will include data on the experience and effectiveness of instructional and leadership personnel at the school and will be informed in part by findings from the Nevada Comprehensive Curriculum Audit Tool for Schools (NCCAT-S). Once the profiles are complete, NDE and district leaders will analyze and use this information to determine, of the four intervention models, which is the best data-driven match for each school—turnaround, restart, school closure, or transformation.

In making decisions about selection of the intervention model, consideration will be given to state and school district priorities for reform as well as statutory and regulatory implications associated with such decisions.

- **Develop and use the E-MALL online system to provide templates and online resources for longitudinal school and district improvement planning**

The Turn Around Schools Council will assist in developing and refining templates and online resources for longitudinal school and district improvement planning to be made available through E-MALL. E-MALL provides teachers with a web-based portal to manage curriculum resources, create assessments for students, score, evaluate and group students, and develop report cards and profiles for each student.

STRATEGY 4

Improve achievement through best practices that have been proven effective in Nevada.

Increasing student achievement requires the use of research-based best practices. Nevada has turned to best practices to improve classroom instruction, and expand its programs and resources to facilitate Strategy 4:

Strategy for turning around the lowest-achieving schools: Leaders of successful turnaround schools agreed that the following research-based elements are essential when working to increase student achievement: creating a positive school climate and develop trusting relationships; integrating data-based decision making; targeting interventions for struggling students; celebrating early, small successes; implementing teacher-led professional development collaboration; and continuing state and federal assistance, including needs assessments and audits (Center for Education Policy, April 2010).

These elements have been embraced in some Nevada schools. As a result, a successful turnaround school in Clark County showed an increase in proficiency scores for mathematics from 44% to 80% and from 54% to 92% in reading.

In addition, the NDE expects that a number of school improvement initiatives will be needed to turn around the lowest-achieving schools. Available strategies will include:

- Extended-day options for specific groups of students to be used for academic improvement or enrichment activities.
- Math coaches to support teachers with the delivery of an effective mathematics curriculum, and interpretation of assessments to provide differentiated math instruction to all students.
- Reading coaches to support teachers with the delivery of an effective ELA curriculum, and interpretation of assessments to provide differentiated ELA instruction to all students.
- Targeted professional development for teachers, focused on the Nevada Professional Development Standards.
- Upper division courses for students through NSHE, which provides dual-credit courses to students in the lowest-achieving high schools, with access to advanced courses (including courses in STEM) that they may not be able to get otherwise in their home districts.
- Credit recovery services for students. Nevada recognizes that students who are more than one year behind academically may not necessarily benefit from individual credit recovery services and will need a structured support or supervision of a graduation coach.

- Dropout prevention programs through the expansion of Nevada’s current partnership with Communities In Schools.
- Collaborative support for participating LEAs to develop strategic initiatives appropriate for lowest-achieving feeder schools.

Early childhood outcomes: Nevada’s Promise promotes school readiness for Nevada’s Pre-K students by providing high-quality early education while supporting parent involvement. The Nevada Pre-K Longitudinal Study clearly demonstrates that students participating in Pre-K programs develop school readiness skills, which has closed the gap between English Language Learners and high-needs students with their average peers.

STANDARDS & ASSESSMENTS

- **Develop the Nevada Curricular Frameworks that are aligned to the Common Core State Standards**

The NERO, with support from the Standards and Assessment Council, will draw on the experience and innovation of its most effective P–20 teachers to design the Curricular Frameworks and classroom assessments aligned to the CCSS, which will serve as a foundation for a unified Pre-K–12 instructional resource system. These frameworks will ensure that students who transfer across schools and districts will not be disadvantaged by missing or repeating critical instructional units. By 2013, the Nevada Curricular Frameworks will be developed in science and social studies with a goal of implementation. Additionally, common templates will aid tracking of student progress in the mastery of the CCSS for each grade in ELA and mathematics.

- **Develop a statewide pre-service teacher course of study that is aligned with the CCSS**

In conjunction with the NDE teacher licensure office, the Teachers and Leaders Council will develop a statewide course of study for pre-service teacher instruction to ensure alignment to the CCSS and assessments. Knowledge of CCSS and the components of a balanced assessment system will be embedded in the teaching and principal standards and reinforced through the licensure system in coordination with the Commission on Professional Standards in Education.

The RPDPs will create and implement training opportunities for teachers and administrators that recommend instructional strategies and resources to support the CCSS, including specific strategies for standards-based instruction of special populations, such as students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

- **Use technology and advanced items to assess complex thinking, with a focus on STEM**

With the support of the SMARTER Balanced Consortium, the NDE will also investigate new ways to measure student achievement in all content areas, with particular focus on STEM. This work includes using technology and advanced items to assess complex thinking at the formative, interim/benchmark, and summative levels.

- **Develop targeted technical assistance for all high-needs schools and districts**

The Turn Around Schools Council, as supported by the NERO, will develop targeted technical assistance for all high-needs schools and districts. This will support mastery of standards, enhancing the statewide system of school support. A targeted assistance team will be matched to the needs of each school or district, as determined by the NCCAT-S. NCCAT-S is a statewide needs-assessment tool that describes the characteristics of high-performing schools in curriculum and instruction, assessment and accountability, and leadership. The results of the NCCAT-S will be used to determine the types of focused technical assistance and support that a school will need, and guide the district in its development of the school's restructuring or turnaround plan.

- **Provide professional development to empower teachers and principals to make data-based instructional decisions**

One perceived deficiency in educator knowledge is the lack of consistent understanding of a balanced assessment system, including the formative assessment process and the ability to interpret and evaluate data to inform instructional decisions. *Nevada's Promise* will ensure that such professional development will empower educators to make informed decisions regarding student instruction.

- **Conduct statewide professional development on Common Core State Standards using E-MALL**

The NDE will include a professional development series through E-MALL that will be available for all teachers in Nevada. Information on E-MALL will include common digital tools and a library of online resources aligned to the CCSS, resources, data for research and evaluation, and a reporting portfolio that exceeds the current portfolio with standardized and customized reports.

DATA SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT INSTRUCTION

- **Conduct statewide professional development using the newly developed E-MALL with a focus on building on-line tools for peer-to-peer collaboration**

Professional development on data use and practice is delivered by the RPDP to rural districts throughout Nevada. These include analysis of student achievement data and using a collaborative peer-to-peer model with teachers and administrators to drive instructional change. In larger school districts, professional development is conducted at each school and assistance is provided by RPDP upon request for low-performing schools.

- **Develop and use the COMPASS system to create individualized development plans for principals and teachers**

COMPASS will be a new web-based system to link student achievement to teacher and principal performance. Through IDP's, teachers and principals will have access to a professional development database aligned to educator growth needs. The system will be designed for continual evaluation of professional development opportunities to ensure increased teacher effectiveness and greater levels of student achievement.

- **Monitor the effectiveness of professional development through the COMPASS system**

COMPASS will be a tool for monitoring teacher and principal effectiveness to support student achievement improvement efforts. Furthermore, access to reports and data through COMPASS will enable districts to understand and manage instructional quality. COMPASS will be integrated with E-MALL and will be used for critical decisions in evaluating teachers and principals as well as guiding and monitoring professional development.

GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS

- **Create teacher and principal standards to increase instructional effectiveness**

Teacher and principal standards will clearly delineate the specific and measurable behaviors necessary to positively effect student learning. To assess the performance of these standards, a comprehensive observation rubric will be developed, instruments will be made available, and training will be provided to maintain reliability across settings and evaluators. The comprehensive evaluation system also includes reviews of evaluations from the previous three years and end-of-year performance review conversations to discuss areas of strength, growth, and performance focus areas for the following school year. Principals will be accountable for ensuring that opportunities are made available for teachers, and teachers will be held accountable for implementing data-driven instruction.

- **Establish and use individualized development plans for teachers and principals to help enhance knowledge, skills, and/or abilities**

All professional development opportunities for teachers and principals will be designed to address performance deficiencies as indicated through observations and/or student achievement outcomes. School districts will hold principals accountable for working with teachers to create IDP's. District leaders will then be responsible for developing an IDP for every principal. In turn, principals and district leaders will be responsible for evaluating the extent to which professional development was effective. State Professional Development Standards will guide the provision of all training for teachers and principals that is offered in response to evaluation results.

- **Use the State Professional Development Standards to guide teacher and principal training**

The Nevada Professional Development Standards will provide the guidance for all teacher and principal development. Currently, some professional development is built on the following standards, while other programs currently do not align with the standards. Through *Nevada's Promise*, all professional development will adhere to these eight criteria:

- Professional development is based on what educators need to know and be able to do to assist all students in achieving high academic standards.
- Professional development is data-driven. Student performance data is used to measure progress, and make appropriate adjustments.

- Professional development is based on findings from sound research, facilitating educators' understanding of the theory underlying the knowledge and skills being learned.
- Professional development is continuous and ongoing, and is part of a comprehensive long-range plan that aligns with school and district School Improvement Plans.
- Professional development deepens educators' content knowledge, provides them with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards, prepares them to use various types of classroom assessments appropriately, and gives foundational knowledge and skill in classroom management.
- Professional development is built into the day-to-day work of educators at the school level, and fosters professional learning communities by employing collaborative and problem-solving work groups both within and across disciplines and grade levels.
- Professional development is evaluated on the basis of impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning/achievement.
- Professional development is connected with and supportive of larger initiatives for comprehensive school reform at all levels (individual school, district, state, and federal), and is an integral part of broad school-wide and district-wide educational improvement plans.
- **Use the COMPASS system to guide professional development that is content-based, comprehensive, and rigorous**

COMPASS will be developed in conjunction with the evaluation system and will enable Nevada to provide content-based, comprehensive, and rigorous professional development for all educators statewide. Data will be a critical component of the system and will be included in the IDPs that effectively support our teachers and principals.

- **Expand on successful programs and develop a statewide infrastructure of peer-supported, job-embedded professional development**

Active peer-to-peer collaboration will provide principals and teachers with opportunities to analyze student data and monitor student progress. Twelve rural districts are implementing the Instructional Consultation Teams Model, which targets shoulder-to-shoulder skills development regarding the assessment of student need, and the differentiation of instruction to meet identified needs.

Nevada has instituted mentoring and coaching programs, such as the Urban Teacher Mentoring Program. In the past, Nevada has not collected data to assess the effectiveness of these mentoring and coaching programs. The Teachers and Leaders Council will require that such programs collect information to gauge their effectiveness. These programs will be continued and enhanced if preliminary evaluations reveal that the programs positively impact student achievement. The Teacher and Leader Council, in concert with stakeholders, will create statewide standards for Professional Learning Communities for teachers and principals and Structured Teacher

Planning Time teams as well as resources to successfully implement active peer-to-peer programs. These resources will be available in E-MALL and professional development will be provided using these resources. The Regional Development Programs will also create a framework for a leadership mentor program for principals in high-poverty/high-minority schools and/or persistently low-achieving schools.

- **Establish measures that evaluate and enable continuous improvement of the effectiveness of professional development offerings and access through the COMPASS system**

The impact on a teacher or principal's effectiveness, and the achievement of Nevada's students, will frame the evaluation of professional development programs. All professional development opportunities must meet the Nevada Professional Development Standards and include the following criteria: specific learning outcomes for participants, clear examples of how the learning goals will translate to increased effectiveness/student achievement, and survey participants and managers to check for outcomes. Currently, the RPDPs assess participant evaluations using the RPDP Activity Evaluation Forms for all professional development activities. These forms contain questions designed to ascertain the quality of training, the responses of which will provide immediate formative feedback on the quality of the professional development.

These questions will be incorporated into COMPASS to measure, evaluate, and enable continuous improvement of the effectiveness of Nevada's professional development offerings. Additionally, follow-up surveys with participants and the leaders who observe them will provide opportunities to cross-check for actual change in behavior as a result of professional development.

TURNING AROUND THE LOWEST-ACHIEVING SCHOOLS

- **Build capacity at the state, district, and regional level to turn around schools that might otherwise decline into needs improvement status**

Each school will have specific targeted outcomes; the NDE will provide direct support to district administrators, the RPDP staff, and school personnel through focused training and technical assistance. The NDE and district leaders will also partner to resolve issues of school equity.

- **Provide support, mentoring, and guidance to district leaders in the implementation of the chosen intervention model relative to evaluation, facilitative administrative support, and systems interventions**

After a model is chosen by the NDE and school district, technical assistance will be provided to help the district select and negotiate relationships with partners and programs that will best support the implementation of the model at the school. To ensure sustained effectiveness and high fidelity of implementation, a Memorandum of Understanding will be created with the NDE, the school district, and the RPDPs, which will detail the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders and partners engaged in the work and their relationship to various aspects of implementation. This Memorandum of Understanding will describe expectations for data

collection, reporting, and continuous monitoring and evaluation practices.

- **Gather and share data on the impact of early learning initiatives to help leverage stakeholders to commit to the adoption and sustain Pre–K programs**

Early learning outcomes: Initiatives such as the state-funded Nevada Early Literacy Intervention Program, state-funded Early Childhood Programs, full-day kindergarten (funded through Title I and via state funds until 2011), and others have been embraced when resources have been made available. Part of the work of the Turn Around Schools Council will be to gather and share data on the impact of early learning initiatives and to help leverage stakeholders to commit to the adoption and sustenance of Pre–K programs, especially attached to those schools that serve the Nevada’s highest needs students.

- **Connect schools and districts with comprehensive support programs**

Comprehensive behavioral and supplemental services: It is well established that students who receive breakfast and lunch at school achieve higher test scores, have higher attendance and less tardiness, and have greater student participation in the classroom. *Nevada’s Promise* proposes to connect schools and districts with comprehensive support programs such as health, mental health, nutrition, family support services, and supplemental educational services. Staff will assist schools and districts in developing comprehensive plans to meet the needs of their students. Programs such as the Nevada Family Resource Centers, the Nevada Afterschool Network and Communities In Schools will provide training and technical assistance to LEA and school leaders to engage in the appropriate programs and services.

Schools will receive technical assistance through the NDE, school district leaders, and non-profit partners such as the Nevada Food Bank and the Three Square Program, to implement nutrition programs—especially free breakfast programs. Schools will be encouraged to do so through publicly reported data regarding program participation, and, for non-participants, include the reasons the school chose not to provide the children with breakfast. This effort aligns with the plan to End Hunger by 2015, which is built on incorporating and expanding federal nutrition programs.

NEVADA'S RESPONSIBILITY

Educational opportunity is now a moral imperative and a quality of life issue for Nevadans. Since the emergence of the current tourist-based economy 50 years ago, Nevada has prospered without much attention to the changing nature of educational systems in the rest of the nation and the world. While Nevada's primary industries have been gaming, tourism, and most recently construction, college readiness has not been a high priority for the student population. For the future of Nevada, this must change.

Nevada must create and maintain an educated, well-prepared workforce. More than 436,000 students are depending on Nevada leaders to establish new attitudes and expectations. The work begins today, and the effort to implement *Nevada's Promise* must be a unanimous commitment to statewide reform. We received unprecedented collaboration during the development phase of the reform agenda, and it will require that same diversity of perspectives and representation to fulfill our promise.

Nevada's Promise contains a pledge to achieve significant, positive, and transformative changes for education in Nevada—every school will be led by effective principals, every classroom will be led by effective teachers and every student will graduate. *Nevada's Promise* is not only a blueprint for education reform in the state, but also a call to action for the continued support of all sectors in implementing this agenda.

This is not merely an educational exercise. Nevada's economic health and, ultimately, Nevadans' quality of life, is reliant on our ability to produce young people with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to succeed. *Nevada's Promise* makes a clear and decisive link between the state of education in Nevada and the economic distress that it faces, and we will only solve the problem through major reforms in education.

Reform is a process, not an event. We do not underestimate the enormity of this task, nor the dire consequences if left unaddressed. We are prepared to make our case beginning with you.