

**SB474 (2015) Task Force on
Educator Professional Development**



FINAL REPORT– JANUARY 2017

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I. Executive Summary

SB474 (2015) created a Task Force to study topics related to educator professional development and complete a final report of its findings, including any recommendations. To prepare and retain educators who meet the demands of Nevada's students, it's imperative to provide quality professional development. Included in the report is a description of the process NDE undertook, as directed by SB474, to analyze Nevada's current professional development system(s), as well as the Task Force's findings, including recommendations regarding budgets, possible changes to legislation and the adoption of statewide standards for professional development.

The Advisory Task Force on Educator Professional Development met from January 2016 through January 2017 and included members of the State Board of Education, Senate, Assembly, Statewide Council for the Coordination of the Regional Training Programs, and a member appointed by the Nevada State Education Association. Additionally, the work of the Task Force was supported by NDE personnel throughout the process.

The Task Force proposes a total of nineteen recommendations:

- **4 Professional Development Standards Recommendations** directing the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt a specific set of standards for use by all districts and Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs); aligning proposed standards and student performance outcomes to program evaluations, and updating NRS to reflect the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) definition of professional development.
- **12 Statutory/Regulatory/Policy Recommendations** that districts and RPDPs align all professional development with the NDE priorities and goals; districts submit to the SBE an annual professional development report; Clark County School District participate in a "pilot" program utilizing established *school site-level* budget tracking business rules and a standard budget reporting template; NDE and the Commission on Professional Standards (COPS) collaborate to modernize the process for approving renewal credit professional development coursework, COPS review and update regulations related to initial administrator licensure and renewal; COPS/SBE should only approve teacher and administrator preparation programs which include alignment to the NEPF; districts, schools, and RPDPs should utilize NEPF data to drive professional development; NEPF training should focus on school-based administrators and principal supervisors; the Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) and NDE should continue to monitor NEPF implementation for quality, reliability, validity, fairness, consistency and objectivity.
- **3 Budget Recommendations** that the Great Teaching and Leading Fund (GTLF) appropriations should continue, with certain conditions; adequate initial funding should be appropriated when new statewide initiatives are enacted and strategic determinations should be made regarding continued funding for ongoing implementation with fidelity; and NDE work with school districts to clearly define professional development expenditure categories and develop "business rules" for reporting costs associated with providing professional development in each area, with this work resulting in annual reports to NDE regarding the use of state and federal funds for professional development. The Task Force makes these recommendations in support of the overall goals of Senate Bill 474

(2015) and believes that their implementation will benefit the educators and students of Nevada by helping to ensure that the educator workforce is knowledgeable of, and responsive to, student needs. While this report signals the official end of the work of the Task Force, members recommend that NDE continue to engage stakeholders in the future and consider any additional recommendations that will make statewide professional development more meaningful and useful.

II. Introduction and Overview of Professional Development Task Force

Formed by Section 3.5 of Senate Bill 474 (2015), the Advisory Task Force on Educator Professional Development was created to study issues relating to professional development of teachers, school administrators, and other educational personnel. At the conclusion of this work, the Task Force shall complete a final report for with its findings and any recommendations, including, without limitation, recommendations regarding budgets, changes to regulations and legislation, and the adoption of statewide standards for professional development.

A) Roles/Responsibilities

Directed by Senate Bill 474 (2015), the Task Force areas of study included the following:

- The cost of professional development for teachers and school administrators in this State and the use and availability of regional training programs created pursuant to NRS 391.512;
- Federal funding available for the professional development of teachers and school administrators in this State;
- The effectiveness of the manner in which professional development is delivered to teachers and administrators in this State;
- The standards and quality of professional development provided to teachers and school administrators in this State;
- The effectiveness of the programs for professional development provided to teachers and school administrators in this State;
- Professional development for paraprofessionals and other educational personnel; and
- The structure for the delivery of professional development.

B) Task Force Membership

Pursuant to Section 3.5 of SB474, members of the Task Force included:

- Two members of the State Board of Education, appointed by the President of the Board:
 - Mark Newburn, District 4
 - Victor Wakefield, District 1
- Two members who are Senators:
 - Senator Scott Hammond (Appointed by the Majority Leader)
 - Senator Joyce Woodhouse (Appointed by the Minority Leader)
- Two members who are members of the Assembly:
 - Assemblyman David Gardner (Appointed by the Speaker)
 - Assemblywoman Amber Joiner (Appointed by the Minority Leader)
- One member, a teacher, appointed by the Nevada State Education Association:
 - Samantha Hager, Zoom Schools Performance Zone Project Facilitator
- One member of the Statewide Council for the Coordination of the Regional Training Programs:
 - Dr. Sandra Sheldon, Superintendent of Churchill County School District

The work of the Task Force was supported by the following Nevada Department of Education (NDE) staff:

- Dena Durish, Deputy Superintendent, Educator Effectiveness & Family Engagement Division
- Kelee Dupuis, Education Programs Professional, Office of Educator Development & Support
- Chantel Wakefield, Administrative Assistant II, Office of Educator Development & Support

III. Meetings

The Task Force held seven meetings, which were all video-conferenced between the Nevada Department of Education Las Vegas and Carson City boardrooms. Agendas, minutes, and supporting documents are located on the NDE website at [Advisory Task Force Meeting Materials](#).

Resources used by the Task Force and referenced throughout this report are included in Section VI.

- 1/27/2016
- 3/23/2016
- 5/19/2016
- 6/17/2016 – Cancelled
- 8/29/2016
- 9/28/2016
- 10/21/2016
- 11/15/2016
- 12/16/2016 – Rescheduled
- 1/10/2017

IV. Recommendations

Following the year's meetings of the Advisory Task Force on Educator Professional Development, members developed a list of recommendations, from the adoption of new professional development standards to policy development and revisions. The Task Force sought to ground their recommendations in the reality of today's Nevada schools, so budget and implementation suggestions were also offered to help ensure that the proposed changes are sustainable and meaningful. While engaging in the study, Task Force members frequently noted there were systems limitations which prevented timely, accurate, and actionable access to data for making further recommendations. It is important to note that members expressed an interest in future studies that would address these additional areas.

Below are the Task Force recommendations¹:

A) Statewide Standards Adoption Recommendations

Recommendation 1(a): The Legislature should direct the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt (either by regulation or policy) professional development standards to be used by all school districts and Regional Professional Development Programs (RPDPs).

Recommendation 1(b): When adopting standards, the SBE should consider the nine standards below. These mirror the Seven Learning Forward Standards and include two additional standards, which have been adopted as is or with modifications by many other states. Two additional standards, Equity and Cultural Competency, are modeled after those adopted in California and Connecticut, respectively.

- Proposed Standard #1 (Learning Communities): Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students *occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.*
- Proposed Standard #2 (Leadership): Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students *requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.*
- Proposed Standard #3 (Resources): Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students *requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.*
- Proposed Standard #4 (Data): Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students *uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.*
- Proposed Standard #5 (Learning Designs): Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students *integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.*
- Proposed Standard #6 (Implementation): Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students *applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long-term change.*
- Proposed Standard #7 (Outcomes): Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students *aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.*

¹ For all recommendations, consideration should be given to potential applicability to, and impact on, the State Public Charter School Authority and/or other charter schools.

- Proposed Standard #8 (Equity): Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students *focuses on equitable access, opportunities and outcomes with an emphasis on addressing achievement and opportunity disparities between student groups.*
- Proposed Standard #9 (Cultural Competency): Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students *facilitates educator's self-examination of their awareness, knowledge, skills, and actions that pertain to culture and how they can develop culturally-responsive strategies to enrich educational experiences for all students.*

Recommendation 2(a): Professional development provided by districts and RPDPs should be aligned to proposed standards, and program evaluations should be based on student performance outcomes.

Recommendation 2(b): [NRS 391A.370](#) should be updated to reflect language in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that professional development should be evidence-based, sustained, intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom focused.

B) Statutory/Regulatory/Policy Recommendations

Recommendation 3: School districts and RPDPs (in collaboration with their Governing Boards and the Statewide Coordinating Council) should align all professional development with the NDE priorities and goals outlined in the annual Statewide Improvement Plan and 5-Year Strategic Plan, as adopted by the SBE.

Recommendation 4(a): The Legislature should require that school districts submit to the SBE an annual professional development report. This report should include, but not be limited to:

- All professional development areas of focus throughout the year
- Demonstrated alignment of areas to statewide and district priorities
- Implementation in accordance with proposed statewide standards
- Funding (state, federal, or other) sources and amounts spent for professional development
- Expenditures delineated by categories to be determined by the NDE
- Evaluation of impact of professional development on educators and/or student outcomes, including identification of those programs which yielded the highest return on investment

Recommendation 4(b): The Legislature shall recommend that, once the school-level data reporting capacity is in place, that Clark County School District participates in a "pilot" program utilizing established *school site-level* budget tracking business rules and a standard budget reporting template. Results should be analyzed to assess efficacy of professional development and return on investments of categorical and competitive local, state, federal, and private funds. When implemented, results should be reported to SBE as appropriate to the study.

Recommendation 4(c): Maintaining all current reporting components, NRS 391A.190 and NRS 391A.205 should be merged into one annual RPDP/district report to reduce redundancy. The report should include information about all professional development provided to districts by RPDPs, in aggregate and disaggregated by individual districts served.

Recommendation 4(d): RPDPs, NDE, and the Statewide Coordinating Council should collaborate to develop a standardized annual report that will include uniformly formatted content across all three regions.

Recommendation 5(a): The Legislature should require that the Commission on Professional Standards (COPS) review and update regulations (NAC 391.065 – 391.077) related to licensure renewal. Prior to holding a Public Workshop in these areas, COPS should request that NDE convene a “Licensure Renewal Focus Group” to get input from a variety of stakeholders regarding licensure renewal modifications/updates. The areas for Focus Group consideration should include, but not be limited to:

- Content and coursework required (i.e. number of credits, in what areas, how many years required prior to renewal, alignment with Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF) identified Standards/Indicators)
- Options for “tiered”/differentiated renewal timelines and/or requirements based on NEPF performance ratings, National Board Certification/renewal, or other “output” measures
- Alignment with district professional growth systems/programs (i.e. Clark County PGP)

Recommendation 5(b): NDE and COPS should collaborate to modernize the process for approving renewal credit professional development coursework as outlined in [NAC 391.075](#), with consideration given to proposed professional development standards, current 21st century needs, trends, options, etc. “Provider” approval should be contemplated, rather than the current method of approving individual courses/conferences/in-services.

Recommendation 6: The Legislature should require that COPS review and update regulations NAC 391.170 and NAC 391.075 related to initial administrator licensure and renewal requirements. Prior to holding a Public Workshop in these areas, COPS should request that NDE convene an “Administrator Licensure Focus Group” to get input from a variety of stakeholders regarding modifications/updates. Consideration should be given to current job responsibilities (i.e. NEPF implementation) and/or contemplation of new “tiered”/differentiated endorsement options (i.e. turnaround/transformation focus, CCSD precinct managers, school-based vs. central office).

Recommendation 7: The Legislature should require that COPS/SBE only approve traditional and alternative route teacher and administrator preparation programs which include alignment to the NEPF. This should include Instructional Practice/Instructional Leadership Standards and Indicators and information regarding the statewide and district-determined assessment requirements in the Student Performance Domain.

Recommendation 8(a): In accordance with NRS 391.460, districts, schools, and RPDPs should utilize data derived from the NEPF (i.e. Standard/Indicator-level scores) to create professional development that enhances the effectiveness of teachers and administrators.

Recommendation 8(b): Given that the goal of professional development is to improve educator performance, and the NEPF is the current statewide measure of educator performance, additional NEPF training should be focused on school-based administrators and principal supervisors to ensure that the system is implemented with fidelity (i.e. inter-rater reliability, evidence collection/documentation, district-determined assessments).

Recommendation 8(c): In accordance with NRS 391.460, the Teachers and Leaders Council (TLC) and NDE should continue to monitor NEPF implementation for quality, reliability, validity, fairness, consistency and objectivity.

C) Budget Recommendations

Recommendation 9: The Legislature should continue to appropriate funds for the Great Teaching and Leading Fund (GTLF), with the following conditions:

- Applications should include demonstrated alignment with proposed professional development standards.
- Awards should be allocated based on evidence-based best practices that impact educator preparation, recruitment, retention, leadership, and professional growth, as well as student outcomes.
- Program/project evaluation should be based on student performance and/or NEPF “outputs.”
- Previous awardees with demonstrated implementation success and strong fiscal management should be given priority consideration.
- Future funding amounts and priorities should be responsive to supply/demand, and statewide priorities and/or initiatives.
- Funding for the external evaluation should be continued, with focus on short and long-term implementation impacts.

Recommendation 10: When new statewide initiatives are enacted, the Legislature and Governor should appropriate adequate initial funding to implement the initiative with fidelity. Additionally, strategic determinations should be made as to how much, and for how long, resources should be allocated to successfully build LEA capacity for full ongoing implementation.

Recommendation 11: The Task Force recommends that the NDE work with school districts to clearly define professional development expenditure categories and develop “business rules” for reporting associated costs associated with providing professional development in each area. No later than FY19, state and federal funds used for professional development shall be reported annually to NDE and be disaggregated by the defined categories.

V. Summary/Conclusion

This Task Force was charged with studying various Professional Development resources and, echoing the 2015 reform implementations, discovered a need for aligned systems at all levels of Educator Professional Development. Since quality professional development not only recognizes educators as professionals, it also determines the quality of an effective teacher and school leader; which is a large component of preparing and retaining talented human capital. Task Force members were honored to provide an opportunity to propose changes that address not only various Professional Development resources and systems, but also the changing demographics/needs of Nevada's students.

The statutory, regulatory, and policy recommendations outlined above, along with the budget recommendations to make the proposed changes viable, will support Nevada's goal of *all students being served by effective educators*. These recommendations will not only ensure that quality professional development is offered to Nevada's educators, but will also support the NDE, district, and RPDPs with aligned implementation of all statewide initiatives to ensure that all students are college and career ready.

VI. References/Resources

State and Federal Legislation

- [SB474 \(2015\) Legislation](#)
- [Every Student Succeeds Act Federal Legislation](#)
- [No Child Left Behind Act Federal Legislation](#)

Nevada Revised Statutes

- [Regional Professional Development Programs \(RPDPs\) \(NRS 391A.105, 391A.120, NRS 391A.125\)](#)
- [Statewide Coordinating Council for the Coordination of Regional Training Programs \(NRS 391A.110, NRS 391A.130, NRS 391A.135, NRS 391A.140 \)](#)
- [Great Teaching and Leading Fund \(NRS 391A.500-515\)](#)

Nevada Administrative Code

- [Licensure Renewal \(NAC 391.065, 391.060, 391.073, and 391.075\)](#)

Additional Nevada Resources

- [NDE 2015 Legislative Implementation and Quarterly Reports](#)
- [Nevada Educator Performance Framework for Teachers and Administrators](#)
- [2015 Nevada Education Data Book – Chapter 5: Educational Personnel](#)
- [Clark County School District Professional Growth System and Educator Plan](#)
- [School District Staffing Allocations Related to Professional Development/Mentoring/Coaching/Etc.](#)
- [School District Compensation and Salary Schedules](#)
- [FY16 & FY17 Great Teaching and Leading Fund Award Process, Results, and Evaluation](#)
- [Reforming Professional Development to Improve Literacy Outcomes in Nevada](#), Guinn Center for Policy Priorities & Nevada Succeeds
- [RPDP Annual Reports \(14-15 and 15-16\)](#)
- [RPDP Annual Budgets \(FY15 and FY16\)](#)

Reports

- [Nine Standards for Professional Learning, Learning Forward](#)
- [Five Critical Levels of Professional Development Evaluation](#), Thomas R. Guskey
- [The Mirage, Confronting the Hard Truth About Our Quest for Teacher Development](#), TNTP
- [Best Practices in Evaluating Teacher Professional Development](#), Hanover Research
- [Beyond PD: Teacher Professional Learning in High-Performing Systems](#), NCEE/CEIB
- [National Professional Development Landscape Comparisons/Analysis](#)