



A NEW NEVADA: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND LITERACY INTERVENTIONS IN NEVADA'S K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Introduction

Early Childhood Education and Literacy Intervention Programs Since 2015

“Staying the course” has become Nevada’s mantra for describing Governor Brian Sandoval’s continued support of the education initiatives launched during the 2015 Legislative Session.¹ During his January 2017 State of the State address, Sandoval renewed his financial commitment to several programs aimed at improving educational outcomes in the Silver State. The 2017-2019 biennial budget maintains—and in some cases, expands—programs that aim to ensure that “Generations to come” will have access to high quality, 21st-century jobs.²

To accomplish this objective, several of the programs in the education budget specifically target Nevada’s youngest and most vulnerable student populations. These five initiatives are: (1) preschool expansion, (2) voluntary full-day kindergarten, (3) Nevada K.I.D.S. Read (formerly Read by Grade Three),³ (4) Victory Schools, and (5) Zoom Schools.

Funding for the 2017-2019 biennium for these interventions is as follows:

Table 1. Early Childhood Education and Literacy Intervention Programs, 2017-2019 Biennium Budget

	Account in Budget	2017-2019 Budget	2015-2017 Budget	Change over Biennia (+/-)	Percent Change over Biennia
Pre-Kindergarten	State General Fund	\$13.8M	\$13.8M	–	–
	Distributive School Account	\$170M	\$170M	–	–
Full-Day Kinder.					
NV K.I.D.S. Read	Other State Education Programs	\$45M	\$28M	\$17M	37.8%
Victory Schools	Other State Education Programs	\$80M	\$50M	\$30M	37.5%
Zoom Schools	Other State Education Programs	\$142M	\$100M	\$42M	29.6%

This policy brief provides an update on these educational investments, as discussed in the Kenny C. Guinn Center for Policy Priorities 2015 policy brief, “*Examining Nevada’s Education Priorities: Which Initiatives Are Worth the Investment?*” (with Nevada Succeeds).⁴ That earlier policy brief provided an analysis of each of these initiatives and suggested that many of these proposed interventions are successful only under the specific conditions.

In the pages that follow, the Guinn Center evaluates the implementation and initial outcomes of the five early education and literacy interventions since 2015. In doing so, this policy brief will explain how these five education initiatives, for which there exists strong evidence to suggest that these initiatives – under

certain conditions – are robustly correlated with improved outcomes. To do this, we will also weigh these initiatives against a set of principles, which serves as a means-test for the efficacy of various education initiatives in our State.⁵ Based on this body of data-driven research, we strongly encourage the Nevada Legislature to continue to invest in these programs and ensure that the correct conditions are met to guarantee the strongest outcomes for our students. Long term, we believe districts can and will continue to focus and invest in these programs enabled by a weighted funding model, and aligned with their student improvement strategy. However, we believe that a set of conditions and systems must be in place prior to transition in order to ensure that students will benefit from the focused interventions.

Alignment to Principles for Education Reform

In advance of the 2017 Legislative Session, the Guinn Center developed a set of Principles for Education Reform that serve as a framework for change management through responsible and strategic education policy-making. The Principles for Education Reform framework contain four guiding principles against which we seek to evaluate and improve education policies. Briefly, the four principles are the following:

1. **Every child deserves the opportunity to love school and learn in school.** Policies and resources should be allocated in ways that elevate the educational journey (e.g., the experience and access of our children and families) to the level of educational outcomes (e.g., college and career readiness) in order to better align the overall system to a broader definition of student success.
2. **Teachers and principals have significant impact on the learning and experience of children in school.** Policies and resources should be allocated in a way that elevates the teaching profession. Teachers, principals, and those who support student success should be compensated as professionals, treated as professionals, and held to the high expectations that our students deserve.
3. **Decisions should be made closest to the point of impact and with autonomy comes accountability.** Policies about resource allocation and key decision-making rights should orient around the school site as the unit of analysis. By moving key decisions closer to our teachers, students, and families, we distribute leadership, set strategy responsive to the unique needs of each school community, and enable our system to adapt, respond, and scale success in a more efficient way.
4. **Public education is a system of interconnected pieces.** The overall education ecosystem should be integrated, vertically aligned, responsive, and able to adapt to meet the evolving needs of those within the system.

The following matrix illustrates the status of the five early education and literacy intervention initiatives that are part of the 2017-2019 biennium budget. This matrix provides an overview of how these programs have performed since initiated, and our recommendations for maximizing the return on investment for each. The remainder of this policy brief contains a robust and detailed analysis that illustrates the rationale behind the matrix.

Table 2. Early Childhood Education and Literacy Programs Measured Against Principles for Education Reform

	Principle 1: Student Outcomes and Journey	Principle 2: Educators as Professionals	Principle 3: School as Unit of Impact	Principle 4: Public Education is an Ecosystem
Pre-K	<p>Aligned The Pre-K program in Nevada is part of an ongoing federal grant that targets high-need communities and offers a jump-start on learning that benefits students for many grades to come.</p> <p>The curriculum in all state pre-k programs must follow the Nevada Pre-K Content Standards, which are geared toward preparing students to be ready for the academic rigor they will encounter in kindergarten and throughout their school career.</p>	<p>Somewhat Aligned Pre-K teachers are required to be fully licensed to teach early childhood education. We would encourage ongoing professional development, especially on literacy and language acquisition, to be offered to all pre-k teachers.</p> <p>Teacher recruitment and retention statewide continues to be an ongoing challenge to expanding high-quality pre-K programs. The State should consider offering incentives to help improve recruitment and retention. The State needs to be somewhat cautious in expanding seats without sufficient numbers of highly qualified staff to serve these students.</p>	<p>Somewhat Aligned Pre-K programs are expected to partner with community organizations to provide wraparound services for children. The programs are offered in low-income areas of the state where there had previously been little to no access to pre-k programs, but where having a pre-k program could result in positive outcomes for students going forward.</p> <p>The statewide Nevada Pre-K Content Standards provide for little flexibility in approaching the curriculum. Additionally, some of the requirements for setting up a center have been barriers to expanding the program at the projected scale in low-income neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Somewhat Aligned The parameters of the federal pre-k grant require continuous monitoring and evaluation of programming to ensure high-quality instruction.</p> <p>The State should consider monitoring pre-k enrollment in the poorest zip codes to ensure that the need in this community is being met.</p> <p>The State should also monitor waiting lists at existing pre-k programs and prioritize funding to schools in the highest-need areas with the longest waiting lists.</p>
Full-Day Kindergarten	<p>Aligned Students are receiving early exposure to the Nevada Academic Content Standards.</p> <p>Like pre-k, the opportunities for early learning and language acquisition that result from kindergarten prove to be invaluable to a student's educational outcomes in the long-term.</p>	<p>Somewhat Aligned All kindergarten teachers should be given ongoing professional development, especially on literacy and language acquisition.</p> <p>Teacher recruitment and retention statewide continues to be an ongoing challenge to expanding high-quality programs.</p>	<p>Aligned Schools, especially those in high-need areas, are able to begin making need-based decisions and providing the necessary supports and interventions to help start students on a path toward success.</p>	<p>Aligned We would encourage the state to develop a universal kindergarten assessment and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of kindergarten programs to ensure continuous improvement and high-quality standards.</p>

Nevada K.I.D.S. Read	<p>Somewhat aligned Students are building foundations for literacy and academic success through the strategies implemented through the Read by Three grants.</p> <p>There is a major concern about what could happen in 2019 when the state has mandated that third-graders who are not reading on grade level will be held back. As the system currently stands, a child who is not on grade level could be disadvantaged for the school's inability to provide the right interventions for that child.</p>	<p>Aligned We support the efforts to have literacy specialists and literacy-focused professional development at every school. We would encourage the State and districts to require rigorous reporting requirements for literacy strategist to be sure they are maximizing their impact at the schools and sharing best practices.</p> <p>We would encourage the state and school districts to construct strong accountability measures to ensure evidence-based practices are being used in every classroom and are being emphasized in every professional development.</p> <p>The State should consider offering incentives to help improve recruitment and retention. The State needs to be somewhat cautious in expanding seats without sufficient number of highly qualified staff to serve these students.</p>	<p>Aligned Schools are implementing a series of interventions aimed at getting all early elementary school students to be reading on grade level by third grade, including screening and identifying struggling readers, communicating with parents about the status of their child's reading, providing strategic interventions to struggling readers and more professional development and support for K-3 teachers, especially through the on-site learning strategist.</p> <p>Schools can be flexible in providing interventions that are specific to the needs of their student populations.</p>	<p>Misaligned We would encourage greater accountability measures from the state and school districts to ensure schools are using best practices with fidelity.</p> <p>The State (and districts) should provide technical assistance to principals at schools that support selection of research based literacy programs.</p> <p>They should also have an independent third-party evaluate the effectiveness of the literacy programs. Schools also need to be held accountable in 2019 if large numbers of their third graders need to be held back.</p>

<p>Victory Schools</p>	<p>Aligned At-risk students are receiving needed support services aimed at increasing literacy and achievement.</p> <p>Students at Victory Schools also receive wraparound services that help support their needs as they journey toward academic success. When these needs are not met, it can have a detrimental effect on a student's likelihood of success.</p>	<p>Aligned Teachers are offered professional development on instructional practices and strategies that have proven to be an effective means to increase pupil achievement in populations of pupils like those served by the school.</p> <p>Teachers also receive for hiring and retention incentives. These measures have been linked to a decrease in teacher vacancies at Victory Schools, which shows the positive impact on educators as professionals.</p>	<p>Aligned Schools are given the autonomy and flexibility to develop programs and services specific to the needs of their student population. Schools are offering evidence-based services that have been shown to be effective in boosting the academic achievement of low-income students, such as full-day kindergarten, before and after school programs and summer academies, social and health services, a positive school culture, and increased family engagement.</p>	<p>Somewhat aligned The State lacks robust data that documents the early success of Victory Programs at all schools. The State should continue tracking and reporting data on Victory Schools' performance.</p> <p>The State (and districts) should provide technical assistance to principals at schools that support selection of research based literacy programs. They should also have an independent third-party evaluate the effectiveness of the literacy programs. We are concerned with the limited ability and readiness of schools to maintain the focus and intent of the program in the absence of a categorical allocation of funds.</p>
-------------------------------	--	---	---	--

Zoom Schools	<p>Somewhat aligned</p> <p>English Language Learners are being given the additional support to help them gain the literacy skills they need to be able to succeed in school. There is not yet enough evidence to conclude that Zoom funding is truly contributing to positive student outcomes.</p>	<p>Somewhat Aligned</p> <p>It is unclear if the Zoom program has enabled schools to attract and retain effective teachers (however, this may be reconciled in the Governor’s 2017 proposal to add funds for teacher incentives). While teachers are offered professional development, there is no accountability to require these professional developments to be specifically geared to literacy or the student population in the same way that Nevada K.I.D.S. Read and Victory School professional development does. Literacy coaches, who could be an invaluable asset for helping support teachers, are also not included in Zoom funding.</p>	<p>Somewhat aligned</p> <p>Schools in the Zoom program have little autonomy about how they can use their funds to best serve their students.</p> <p>Schools should be given more flexibility in how they use their funds, including increased teacher incentives and hiring reading strategists who are training in working with ELLs.</p>	<p>Somewhat aligned</p> <p>The number of schools receiving Zoom funding has more than doubled since 2013, but there is limited evidence to indicate that Zoom programming is significantly improving student outcomes in both the short- and long-term.</p> <p>The State should increase accountability measures and create a menu of professional development services that schools can use to ensure teachers are equipped with the right tools to help their student populations. We are concerned with the limited ability and readiness of the school districts to maintain the focus and intent of the program in the absence of a categorical allocation of funds.</p>

Recommendations

Based on our analysis of these programs and their alignment to the Theory of Action Principles, we make the following recommendations to the State and school districts:

1. Hold all interventions and programs to the same level of transparency and reporting requirements that the federal grants programs currently require. Pre-K programs in Nevada are required to participate in both annual and longitudinal evaluations, comply with NDE data reporting requirements and other assessments, and maintain health and safety standards. We recommend that all interventions in the state are held to the same standards. Increased transparency and reporting requirements includes district- and school-level reporting on how the resources allocated are being used to fund evidence-based programs, services, and incentives that increase student achievement.⁶ This level of transparency should continue to be the expectation as Nevada moves toward weighted funding.
2. Increase transparency of data around literacy. Schools should track and report student progress and other school performance indicators to the State and the public. This includes creating and disseminating user-friendly reports to families about the progress of both their child and their child’s

school, holding public meetings about a school's progress, and allowing more parental involvement in decisions about a school.

3. Combine Nevada K.I.D.S. Read, Victory, and Zoom School programs into a single grant program. Because the three English Language Acquisition programs have duplicative goals, this would remove the artificial barriers between these programs and recognize that all targeted schools have a combination of both ELL and FRL students. This would also move the focus to individual student needs as opposed to creating different labels for schools.
4. Design effective, evidence-based intervention programs that reduce retention rates. The State (and districts) should provide technical assistance to principals at schools funded by English Language Acquisition funds that support selection of research based literacy programs. The Nevada Department of Education (and third party evaluators) should conduct an independent review of the selection of literacy programs.
 - a. The State and school districts need to develop a plan for 2019, when it seems likely that a high number of students in third-grade will be retained. This plan should address how schools will address the needs of these non-proficient readers, prevent further retention for future years, and hold schools accountable when they have high retention rates.
5. Use both formative and summative assessments across K-3 to ensure growth, identify deficiencies, and monitor progress.
 - a. Require districts to test students at the beginning and end of the pre-K programs for skill development.
 - b. Implement a statewide assessment for kindergarten to measure academic outcomes at the end of kindergarten.
6. Continue the availability of high quality professional development for effective teaching and monitor professional development offerings across the state to ensure that they are aligned with district and statewide literacy plans. The professional developments for pre-k teachers, Nevada K.I.D.S. Read, and Victory are targeted toward helping teachers work with their specific student populations. The state and districts should offer a menu of menu of professional development services that schools could use to ensure teachers are equipped with the right tools to help their student populations.
7. Provide flexibility in what evidence-based interventions are allowable: NDE should provide flexibility in the type of interventions that can be provided under Nevada K.I.D.S. Read. All interventions should align to the Nevada State Literacy Plan and should be evidence-based. Each school district or charter school should maintain responsibility for providing evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of interventions included in their literacy plans.
8. Ensure that NDE and schools continue annual external program evaluations for all programs receiving dedicated state funding.
9. Expand pre-K programs and ensure pre-K students filling new classroom seats come from sub-groups that have low levels of language and reading proficiency, including ELLs, Special Education students, and low-income students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRLs).

10. The Nevada Department of Education and the districts should devise a system for identifying which teachers may have had specific training in early intervention and/or literacy programs. We would encourage the State and school districts to develop incentive programs, such as a higher salary and bonuses, to recruit and retain highly effective (and experienced) teachers at these high-need school sites, rather than filling all vacancies at high-need schools with new teachers.
 - a. Zoom schools should leverage incentive dollars to attract and retain effective Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) certified educators.
 - b. The State, districts, and teachers' unions should offer scholarships and incentive programs to assist more teachers in pursuing the TESL endorsement on their license.
 - c. Similar steps should be considered for school leadership training, regulations, and incentives.
11. Focus on teacher recruitment and training through programs such as the Great Teaching and Leading Fund, the Teach Nevada scholarship, and the Nevada Teacher Corps. Schools should also be given greater flexibility in how they can use these funds to provide incentives to teachers.
12. NDE should create a readiness assessment to determine district readiness to keep the focus of the intervention without the set aside of categorical funding. The long-term goal is to move resourcing and decision making rights closest to the point of impact, but first the system must build the infrastructure and leadership capacity to support this transition. NDE should then use the readiness assessment information to set budgetary recommendations (including the amount and distribution method). At present, we have significant concerns with the effort to add new dollars into the Distributive School Account and recommend that all (or most) of the current categorical investments (e.g., in Zoom Schools and Victory schools) remain restricted until there exists an appropriate assessment of program efficacy, analysis of return on investment, and district readiness to maintain the focus of the program as it currently exists in the unrestricted funding context.

Given current conditions (e.g., structural barriers and technological limitations), it is not clear that school districts can effectively direct (spend) a weighted state allocation in alignment with the intended populations. Consequently, there is some concern that should dollars be shifted to the Distributive School Account – without accompanying policy and spending reforms, Zoom School and Victory School dollars would be distributed across the entire district, thus undermining the targeted focus on those select schools with high populations of ELLs and low-income students), or funds might be diverted entirely to other programs. Here we note that Nevada K.I.D.S. Read is one program with the potential to maintain its focus through a nonrestrictive allocation method.

Conclusion

Overall, preliminary evidence indicates that these targeted interventions are helping students achieve, and potentially close the achievement gap. Collectively, these programs contain important elements or characteristics of successful reform efforts around the country. Among these are: targeted and accountable resourcing, leadership, autonomy, teacher leadership, community support, and flexibility. The salient features of these literacy acquisition programs are that, within a broad set of parameters and prescribed services, they have established greater autonomy and flexibility at the school site, allowing school leadership teams to design interventions that support the specific needs of their students and empower their teachers.⁷ The recommended infusion of resources to enable Zoom School programs to implement efforts to attract and retain effective educators demonstrates the continued evolution and improvement of this program. Given the preliminary impact of this program, policy makers should stay the course and continue efforts to monitor and improve the program.



Changes to Funding Mechanisms Since 2015

For the 2017-2019 biennium, several of these interventions will now be funded through different mechanisms than in previous years. First, full-day kindergarten is now funded as part of the Distributive School Account (DSA) because full-day kindergarten is now offered in 100 percent of public school districts and 93 percent of charter schools.⁸ In addition, Senate Bill (SB) 508 (2015) raised the per-pupil funding formula for kindergarten students from 60 percent to 100 percent of the per pupil amount.⁹

Zoom and Victory Schools are now funded under the State Supplement School Support Account, a categorical fund designed to provide money for programs meant to raise student achievement and decrease dropout rates. They were transferred from the School Remediation Trust Fund, which supports the creation and implementation of plans to increase student achievement.¹⁰ NDE is now proposing a budget bill to allow Zoom Schools to use more of their funding toward teacher recruitment and retention.

Moving English Language Acquisition Interventions into the Funding Formula in the Long Term

Governor Sandoval has recommended that the proposed English Language Acquisition programs remain as separate categorical programs and that they be moved into the funding formula at a future date. This guidance is designed to ensure that school districts continue to prioritize these interventions and monitor outcomes. Some stakeholders have argued that these intervention programs should not be placed into the funding formula until they have demonstrated effective results.

In the long term, placing the English Language Acquisition interventions in the funding formula as the funding weights for under-resourced (e.g., FRL) students and English Language Learners can provide schools with the flexibility to implement data-driven practices tailored to student needs. In return for this flexibility and prior to the change in funding streams, strong accountability provisions should be put in place and regularly evaluated.

Current accountability provisions should be revised to include:

- (1) district and school level reporting on the resources allocated to high needs schools as evidence of implementation of the weighted funding formula
- (2) comprehensive integration between the school budget and the goals in the School Performance Plan
- (3) technical assistance to assess and select research-based programs, develop goals, benchmarks and intervention plans, and manage program funds and accountability measures
- (4) oversight by an external entity (NDE and external evaluators) to evaluate progress towards goals, provide technical assistance, and help the school district retool interventions
- (5) concrete interventions for schools that do not make sufficient progress, and
- (6) greater emphasis on teacher quality and effectiveness.

To ensure that there is significant benefit from this intervention, it is also critical that decision makers accelerate efforts to rigorously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions.

Transitions from funding Categorical Programs to Weighted Funding

The long-term goal is to move resourcing and decision making rights closest to the point of impact. However, this shift requires significant systems-change at level of local education agencies (i.e. districts). Districts must build the infrastructure and leadership capacity to support and sustain this fundamental reorientation of the delivery of educational services. There is significant risk to transitioning prematurely before the infrastructure and system supports are in place. First, in the absence of a system to track funds as they follow the student and determine whether interventions have had an impact, there is concern that resources could easily be diverted to other spending priorities. Second, because existing categorical programs are relatively new, it is not clear that there is sufficient information to learn from and codify best practices in effectively educating all children (especially students in underperforming subgroups). Third, in the absence of building leadership capacity, reforms efforts may languish.

Therefore, we propose that NDE take a proactive role in identifying and establishing the conditions for successful transition by developing a simple and clear ‘Readiness Framework’ that districts can leverage to prepare to transition from categorical investments to weighted funding. Through an approach of focus, collaboration, and support, LEAs can continue to benefit from the focus of the restricted funding offered by the categorical model, while empowering the LEA to set its own transition timeline in accordance with the principles of the ‘Readiness Framework.’ We have included a conceptual outline here:

Table 1. Example of Readiness Matrix

Category	1. District Systems in Place	2. Clarity of Strategy	3. Talent Plan
Rationale	The categorical model ensures resources were spent as intended. Districts systems should enable transparent tracking and monitoring of resource and impact	Programs funded through categorical model deliver high intensity interventions for a target student population. Districts should demonstrate continuous improvement and codify lessons learned to inform strategy	Given Nevada’s educator and leader pipeline challenges, a district should demonstrate presence of an effective talent plan for the target student population
Potential Indicators for NDE Matrix	<p>Financial systems (and business practices) are in place that track resource allocation to the point of impact</p> <p>Monitoring and reporting dashboard for student level outcomes for focus student subgroup</p> <p>Full implementation of site based budgeting as articulated in the CCSD reorganization plan would meet this criterion (if actual staff salaries are used)</p>	<p>Research and analysis of impact of programs (through NDE assessments and strengthening LEA research and assessment using allowable federal funds per ESSA and making this a focus area)</p> <p>Use of evidence-based interventions (aligned to the language of Federal ESSA Law)</p>	<p>Target schools exceed district averages in terms of access to effective educators</p> <p>Evidence of an active pipeline program</p>

Table 2. Example of Analysis

Category	1. District Systems in Place	2. Clarity of Strategy	3. Talent Plan	Readiness Level
Nevada K.I.D.S. Read	<p>The 3rd grade proficiency benchmark is very clear and measurable and the effort to add literacy specialists to schools is easy to track and monitor.</p> <p>315 schools were awarded funds in the 2016-17 school year, which means that this program reaches most Nevada elementary schools.</p>	<p>Schools are required report to NDE on their use of evidence-based practices and hold professional developments to ensure that teachers are sufficiently prepared to work with struggling readers.</p> <p>Schools are given some flexibility in choosing reading interventions, provided they are proven, research-backed methods.</p>	<p>The professional development focus for Nevada K.I.D.S. Read is targeted toward helping teachers work with their specific student populations.</p> <p>Literacy specialist roles have been funded and staffed.</p>	Yes – ready for transition to DSA
Zoom Schools and Victory Schools	<p>Current spending at the level of local education agencies (LEA) is misaligned to Zoom and Victory funding. For example, Clark County School District reports that it does not currently fund schools in alignment with Free and Reduced Lunch price student population. The financial systems for school based budgeting or to track the impact of our dollars on student learning is not yet in place (full implementation of CCSD Reorganization may change this eventually).</p> <p>Given that these funds concentrate in a relatively small number of the highest need schools, a school grant funding mechanism ensures that dollars are not diverted (to other programs).</p>	<p>NDE reports that it lacks sufficient data to provide an authentic analysis of Zoom Schools, which suggests more time is required to analyze the impact of categorical investment and optimal strategy.</p>	<p>There is mixed evidence around talent plan in place in Districts. It appears that Victory Schools programs are improving retention compared to past performance but unclear how this compares to district average. We suggest Zoom schools leverage incentive dollars to attract and retain effective Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) certified educators.</p>	No – not ready for transition to DSA

Overview and Analysis of Programs

Pre-Kindergarten

Purpose: To expand access to high-quality pre-kindergarten programs in high-need communities.

Budget Item: \$13.8 million over the biennium, plus \$25.1 million in federal funding.

	2017-2019 Budget	2015-2017 Budget	2013-2015 Budget
Pre-Kindergarten	\$13.8M	\$13.8M	\$3.5M

The Governor's proposed budget includes \$13.8 million in matched funds to the \$25.1 million received through a pre-kindergarten grant from the U.S. Department of Education.¹¹ In 2014, Nevada was named as one of five states to receive preschool development grants from the federal government. The purpose of these grants is to build a high-quality preschool program infrastructure in the state.¹²

Leveraging federal funding, Nevada is working toward increasing the number of instructional hours in pre-kindergarten programs and creating new pre-k classrooms. Much of this work is done via sub-grantees, such as local education agencies, private entities, non-profits, and faith-based programs.¹³ To ensure that the programs are delivering high-quality services to students, they are required to address:

- **Teacher licensure:** All teachers providing direct instruction must be fully licensed in early childhood education.
- **Curriculum:** The curriculum must follow the Nevada Pre-K Content Standards. Programs must be full day, with at least five hours per day or 25 hours per week.
- **Child/staff ratios:** No more than 20 children and at least two adults per class, who must be a licensed teacher and a licensed teaching assistant.
- **Participation in program evaluation:** Program sites must participate in both annual and longitudinal evaluations, comply with NDE data reporting requirements and other assessments, and maintain health and safety standards.
- **Parent involvement:** Evaluations will be used to assess the longitudinal effectiveness of parental engagement.
- **Coordination of wrap-around services:** Must be made with existing community services.
- **Equal access/ collaboration with special education and Title I programs:** Families seeking to enroll their child in the program must have an income level below 200 percent of federal poverty line. Students with disabilities must also be provided access to the programs.¹⁴

NDE has identified Clark, Churchill, Lyon, Nye, and Washoe counties as the areas in the state with the greatest need for pre-k infrastructure and development.¹⁵ Through these efforts, the State hopes to more than double the number of students enrolled in pre-k by the end of the grant period. Achieving this goal would mean that roughly 15 percent of four-year-olds in Nevada's high-need communities would be enrolled in a pre-k program.¹⁶

Analysis

Data collected by the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s KIDS COUNT initiative shows that Nevada is slowly reducing the number of three- and four-year-olds living 200 percent or more below the poverty line who are not enrolled in an early childhood education program. Between 2005 and 2009, 18 percent of such children were enrolled in pre-k. Between 2010 and 2014, 25 percent were enrolled, an increase of seven percent. Between 2011 and 2015, 26 percent were enrolled, an increase of one percent.¹⁷ As of 2016, 32.8 percent of three- and four-year olds are enrolled.

While pre-k enrollment is trending positively, there are still an alarming number of children living in poverty in the state—approximately 29,000—who are not receiving the jump start on education that pre-k can provide.¹⁸ And, compared to the Intermountain West, Nevada had the lowest rate of three- and four-year-olds living below 200 percent of the federal poverty line enrolled in school between 2011 and 2015.

Table 3. Low-Income Three- and Four-Year-Olds Enrolled in Pre-K in Intermountain West (2011-2015)¹⁹

State	Percent of Three- and Four-Year-Olds in School
Arizona	28.0%
California	40.0%
Colorado	41.0%
Nevada	26.0%
New Mexico	37.0%
Texas	35.0%
Utah	34.0%

An extensive body of research has well documented the benefits of quality pre-K programs. Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman and Paul Gertler find that when pre-K can successfully close the achievement gap before kindergarten, students are more likely to have greater future academic success, higher lifetime earnings, more developed cognitive skills, and even better health outcomes.²⁰ Heckman et al (2011) estimated that “every dollar spent on early childhood education returns 10 cents annually over the life of a child.”²¹ The landmark Perry Study followed 120 individuals from pre-K to the age of 40 and found that “adults at age 40 who had the preschool program had higher earnings, were more likely to hold a job, had committed fewer crimes, and were more likely to have graduated from high school than adults who did not have preschool.”²² Collectively, these widely respected studies provide convincing evidence that an investment in early childhood education can save the state money over the long term. Additionally, evidence suggests that pre-K interventions have the greatest impact on Special Education students, English Language Learners (ELLs), and African-American students.²³

While the positive gains and improvement in outcomes may not be realized immediately, effective pre-K programs significantly and positively impact student outcomes into third grade and beyond.²⁴ Most recently, a study found that two pre-K programs in North Carolina that successfully exited students from Special Education in pre-K maintained their gains through third grade.²⁵ These gains were very similar across all subgroups and led to significant cost savings for the state.²⁶

Some critics argue that the gains of pre-K are short-lived and fade by the time students reach third grade, if not sooner.^{27,28} Further analysis, however, suggests that the biggest predictor of the ability to sustain the advantages of pre-K interventions over the long-term is the quality of teaching in grades 1-3. Quality of classroom instruction is the most important factor for student success.²⁹ In the absence of high quality teachers at all levels of a child's education, the gains from effective pre-K interventions are likely to diminish over time.

This finding underscores the importance of coupling pre-K programs with initiatives to invest in developing high quality classroom teachers. A high-quality pre-K program requires professional, skilled teachers in the classroom. Studies suggest that pre-K programs have been most successful when teachers are licensed and paid similarly to their K-12 counterparts.³⁰ Additionally, job-embedded, sustained professional development can improve classroom instruction and significantly improve student achievement.³¹ Armed with the necessary training to properly educate our youngest students, these skilled teachers are more likely to close the achievement gap for those students who enter behind their peers.

More importantly, high quality pre-K programs must include rigorous evaluations to ensure that students are meeting expected outcomes. In the short term, students should be able to pass a Kindergarten Readiness Assessment to ensure they begin Kindergarten on grade-level. In the long run, pre-K should help students stay on grade level throughout their academic careers. All pre-K interventions should have a third party external evaluator conduct a program evaluation and assessment.

Nevada conducts an annual evaluation of its existing Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs.³² The 2011-12 evaluation concluded that over the short term, "Nevada ECE children made large cognitive gains in preschool and were clearly better prepared to enter kindergarten academically than if they had not participated in Nevada ECE."³³ Over the long term, the evaluation concluded that children have maintained the significant learning gains achieved in preschool and that participation in the program may have decreased the need for intervention services in elementary school.³⁴

Challenges to pre-K expansion

While the benefits of pre-K are well documented, efforts to expand pre-K in Nevada could face several challenges. The first is related to the shortage of teachers. Nevada currently faces a shortage of teachers, including pre-K teachers. The State, in conjunction with the Nevada System of Higher Education, should work together to develop a plan for addressing the shortage of qualified, professional pre-K teachers.

The second issue is rural access to pre-K programs. As of 2010, most early childhood care in 13 of Nevada's 17 counties is administered by family, friends, and neighbors (FFN) care or home care. In Eureka, Esmeralda and Lincoln counties, 100 percent of early childcare was FFN care or home care.³⁵

A third major concern for school districts is facilities. In Clark and Washoe counties, elementary schools are currently over capacity, which can make it difficult to add additional pre-K classrooms.³⁶ In August 2017, CCSD will open six new elementary schools to help offset overcrowding at its schools.³⁷ Last November, Washoe County voters approved WC-1, a ballot initiative to increase the local sales tax to support building, construction, and maintenance of school buildings.³⁸

Voluntary Full-Day Kindergarten

Purpose: To maintain high numbers of students enrolling in full-day kindergarten, especially in high-need areas.

Budget Item: \$170 million to maintain the program and maintain class-sizes at 21:1.

	2017-2019 Budget	2015-2017 Budget	2013-2015 Budget
Full-Day Kindergarten	\$170M	\$170M	\$80.6M

Background

The Nevada Department of Education (NDE) reports that 100 percent of all public school districts and 93 percent of all eligible charter schools in Nevada had implemented full-day kindergarten by Fiscal Year (FY) 2016. Nevada is currently ranked fifth in the nation for full-day kindergarten enrollment.³⁹ The Governor's proposed budget would provide continued support for these classes.

Senate Bill (SB) 515 from the 2015 Legislative Session stated that school districts and charter schools should first fund schools with high populations of students who are eligible for free and reduced price lunch (FRL). However, if such schools already had full-day kindergarten, tuition-free kindergarten programs that are funded through federal dollars or other funding sources, the funding these schools received could go toward other remediation programs at the school.⁴⁰ School districts and charter schools were given some discretion in how they were allowed to phase-in tuition-free full-day kindergarten after addressing schools with high FRL populations.⁴¹

One of the primary goals of the increased funding in 2015 was to eliminate the tuition-based full-day kindergarten classes offered at some public schools.⁴² Prior to the expansion in 2015, kindergarten students were funded at 60 percent of the funding rate provided for other students, making it difficult for school districts to provide full-day kindergarten without additional funds. In some areas where state-funded full-day kindergarten was not provided, parents could opt to pay for full-day kindergarten.

Tuition-based programs were allowed to continue during the 2016-2017 school year, although schools were encouraged to use other available funds to cover the cost of tuition. For the 2015-2016 school year, districts could use Zoom School funding to cover the cost of full-day kindergarten. But the \$20 million increase in kindergarten funding for 2016-2017 would separate Zoom School and full-day kindergarten, as both programs were transferred from the School Remediation Trust Account.⁴³

Analysis

Academic research on the impact of full-day kindergarten versus half-day kindergarten is mixed. One review of several empirical studies indicates that the weight of evidence shows that full-day kindergarten: (1) contributes to school readiness; (2) leads to higher academic ability that persists over time; (3) improves student attendance; (4) supports literacy and language development; (5) benefits children socially and emotionally; and (6) reduces costs by reducing retention and remediation rates.⁴⁴ Students in full-day kindergarten also receive more instructional time in reading and math than students in half-day

programs. As such, some educators have expressed concern that there is not enough time in the half-day program for students to master the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NVACS).

Other research finds that the academic impact of full-day kindergarten is significant during the kindergarten school year but that positive effects fade as early as first grade.⁴⁵ Other arguments against full-day kindergarten include: (1) the curriculum of full-day kindergarten is overly demanding; (2) half-day kindergarten is more appropriate for the short attention span of five-year olds; (3) half-day kindergarten provides more time for informal play and exploration; (4) half-day kindergarten leads to more parental involvement; and (5) some parents feel as though half-day kindergarten is more developmentally appropriate for their child.⁴⁶

In the context of this debate, several studies suggest that full-day kindergarten programs can be successful in the short-term and the long-term, if certain conditions are set. For example, research suggests that effective kindergarten programs emphasize language development and appropriate pre-literacy experiences, and assess students' progress through close teacher observation and systematic collection and examination of students' work, often by using portfolios.⁴⁷

Impact of Kindergarten in Nevada

Nevada should implement a universal assessment for kindergarten students to measure improved outcomes. The State should also measure long-term outcomes through third grade, when students begin taking state-mandated assessments. Currently, Nevada lacks a universal assessment to determine academic outcomes for kindergarten. Instead, each school district uses its own assessments, which often vary within a school district.

Following the 2015 mandate to expand full-day kindergarten across the state, the University of Nevada Las Vegas School of Community Health Sciences conducted a health impact assessment of the program. The researchers found that Nevada students who attend full-day kindergarten have higher test scores in the short-term compared to students in half-day kindergarten. Moreover, at-risk student populations, including students in poverty, students of color, and English Language Learners (ELLs), that attended full-day kindergarten were found to have higher long-term math and reading scores in third and fifth grade.⁴⁸

Despite the absence of a state-mandated assessment tool, several school districts have conducted research on the effectiveness of full-day kindergarten. CCSD conducted a longitudinal study of students in full- versus half-day kindergarten in FY 2006 and tracked these students through fourth grade.⁴⁹ The study concluded, "The positive effects of attending full-day kindergarten remain through third and fourth grade. When they are in third and fourth grade, students who attended full-day kindergarten continue to outperform students who attended half-day in both reading and mathematics."⁵⁰

Washoe County School District conducted a comparison of student achievement in full- versus half-day kindergarten in FY 2009 using the WCSD Kindergarten Portfolio assessment. The research suggests that students in full-day kindergarten began the school year academically behind their peers enrolled in half-day kindergarten, but caught up by the end of the year. The district also found that ELL students in full-day programs had better academic outcomes than ELL students in half-day programs. In addition, the district's longitudinal data provides evidence that ELL students in full-day programs have acquired English language skills faster than previous cohorts that attended half-day programs in the same schools.

Thus, preliminary results from local Nevada districts support further implementation of full-day kindergarten. Moreover, the fact that some districts, including the two largest districts, have had positive experience with these programs increases the likelihood that an expansion of these programs would be successful. Maintaining high standards in existing programs will be critical to long-term success. It might therefore be necessary to use some of the new funds to support continued improvement in existing programs. There must be a continuing focus on improving skills for students in targeted categories who are at greater risk of being skill deficient.

Class-Size Reduction

Part of the funding for full-day kindergarten in the 2017 budget is intended to maintain a student-teacher ratio of 21:1. Between 1991 and 2017, Nevada spent \$2.8 billion on class-size reduction (CSR).⁵¹ However, a research suggests that CSR is not a high-impact investment, according to a meta-analysis conducted by Stanford University professor Dr. Eric A. Hanushek.⁵² Currently, Nevada law allows school districts to submit variance requests when they are unable to meet the staffing requirements for kindergarten through grade 6.⁵³ Under the supervision of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, some schools have applied CSR funding toward evidence-based remediation programs for students in grades 1 through 3.⁵⁴ Kindergarten CSR funding cannot currently be reapplied to alternative intervention programs, even though 67 percent of schools in the state requested CSR variances in the first quarter of FY 2017 because they are unable to meet CSR ratios.⁵⁵

Maximizing Choice

Nevada's two largest school districts, Clark County School District and Washoe County School District, now offer full-day kindergarten exclusively.⁵⁶ Since the mandatory school age remains age 7, parents who do not want their children to participate in a full-day program would have the option of educating their children at home or enrolling their children in a private half-day kindergarten program.^a

Potential Obstacles

Even though full-day kindergarten provides benefits, especially to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, Nevada faces several challenges in expanding full-day kindergarten. Nevada's school districts continue to face high numbers of teacher vacancies. As of January 2017, CCSD had 478 reported teacher vacancies.⁵⁷ For the 2017-2018 school year, NDE estimates that it will need 1,630 kindergarten teachers across the state, nearly 1,000 more than it had in 2014 before the push for universal voluntary full-day kindergarten began.⁵⁸

^a If passed, Assembly Bill 186, currently under consideration in the 79th Legislative Session, would: (1) require the board of trustees of each school district to establish, equip and maintain a pre-K education program and a kindergarten in each elementary school or school attendance area in the district; (2) revise provisions governing the age at which a child is required to be enrolled in and attend school; and (3) authorize a child who is 4 years of age on or before September 30 of a school year to be admitted to a pre-K education program.

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/79th2017/Bills/AB/AB186.pdf>

Language Acquisition Interventions

The following section will discuss the three initiatives (Nevada K.I.D.S. Read, Victory Schools, and Zoom Schools) aimed at ensuring all at-risk students can read on grade level and acquire academic English.

The Governor's proposed intervention programs all seek to ensure that high-risk students can read on grade level and acquire academic English. However, political considerations (namely, concern by lawmakers that local education agencies may not use designated funds as intended) and federal funding constraints, have given rise to different models and approaches. Regardless, we treat these programs collectively as English Language Acquisition programs that seek to ensure students from all backgrounds can read on grade level. Given that targeted literacy interventions, when grounded in evidence-based practices, can positively affect third grade reading proficiency outcomes, the Guinn Center believe that literacy/English language acquisition interventions should be treated as high priority items for consideration.

Nevada K.I.D.S. Read (Read by Grade 3)

Purpose: To ensure all students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade.

Budget Item: \$45M to support effective activities in improving the academic achievement of students in reading across Kindergarten through third grade, such as literacy coaches and grants.

	2017-2019 Budget	2015-2017 Budget	2013-2015 Budget
NV K.I.D.S. Read	\$45M	\$28M	\$0

Background

A cornerstone of Governor Sandoval's education package in 2015 was improved literacy rates for all students in Nevada. Senate Bill (SB) 391, passed during the 2015 legislative session, established the Read by Grade 3 Program, which required the governing bodies of all school districts and charter schools to develop a literacy plan to ensure that students were proficient in reading by the end of third grade. The bill also mandated increased professional development focused on reading and literacy skills for early elementary school teachers and created a new learning strategist position at elementary schools. Additionally, the bill created a series of grants that schools could apply for to use toward reading programs.⁵⁹

The 2017 budget calls for a \$17 million increase in the program, which will be used to support professional development, learning strategists, and grant-based funding for individual reading programs across the state.⁶⁰

In 2010, the Annie E. Casey Foundation published a report titled, *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*, which demonstrated the long-term societal costs of poor literacy by the end of the third grade.⁶¹ High school graduation rates, along with prison construction projections, are correlated with grade level reading proficiency by the end of third grade. The report highlighted the adoption by many states of Florida's Read by 3 law, passed in 2002, which has resulted in significant gains over the last

decade on both the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) assessments.⁶² Referencing the positive results in Florida, Governor Sandoval chose to replicate a similar program here in Nevada, which is outlined in the *Nevada State Literacy Plan: A Pathway to Possibilities*.⁶³ Reading by third grade is the primary goal of the statewide elementary literacy school plan, and middle school and high school literacy interventions are part of the Zoom and Victory Schools initiatives to ensure all students can acquire academic English skills.

Analysis

The Nevada Department of Education and school districts have reported the early success of Read by Grade 3, which has been rebranded as Nevada K.I.D.S. Read (All Nevada K-3 students are “Keeping their Individual Dreams Strong”).⁶⁴ Since the initiative began in July 2015, 34 different reading programs in 379 schools across the state have been implemented.⁶⁵

Some of the early successes of the program include:

- Screening and identifying struggling readers in grades K through 3.
- Communicating with parents about the status of their child’s reading.
- Providing strategic interventions to struggling readers.
- More professional development and support for K-3 teachers, especially through the on-site learning strategist.
- Holding schools and school districts accountable for creating their own literacy plans that are aligned to the state literacy objectives.⁶⁶

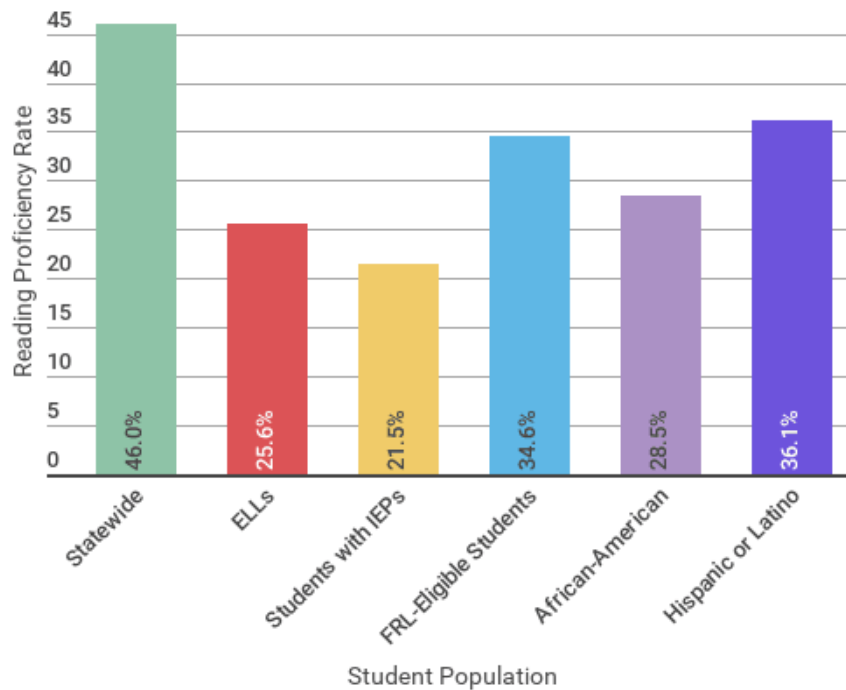
Moreover, during the 2017-2018 school year, the State will administer a K-3 reading assessment that will provide data and an evaluation of the Read by 3 interventions thus far.⁶⁷

Student Retention

A major concern stemming from SB 391 is that students in third grade in 2018-2019 who are not proficient by the end of the school year will be held back.⁶⁸ These students will have been in the first cohort of kindergarten classes participating in the program during the 2015-2016 school year. However, kindergarten is not mandatory in Nevada, and students who did not attend kindergarten are still expected to meet the same literacy benchmarks as their peers, despite not necessarily having the same number of years of support and access to literacy interventions.

On the 2015-2016 Nevada Criterion Referenced Test (CRT) in reading, only 46 percent of students were proficient.⁶⁹ If the rate of reading proficiency on the CRT does not improve in the next two years, it is possible that 54 percent of third graders could be held back in 2019. Moreover, when the 2015-2016 reading proficiency for third graders is further disaggregated, African-American and Latino students, students with IEPs, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, and ELLs have significantly lower pass rates (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Reading Proficiency Rates of Nevada Third Graders on the Criterion Referenced Test (2015-2016)



The potentially large numbers of non-proficient readers that could be retained in third grade in 2019 raises the questions of funding and capacity across the State to: (1) provide sufficient staff and classroom/ school space to accommodate an unprecedented number of third grade students, (2) fund even more targeted interventions to ensure that the third graders in 2019 and going forward are proficient in reading by the end of the school year.



Victory Schools

Purpose: To provide increased literacy support and wraparound services at schools with high concentrations of poverty.

Budget Item: \$50 million in support of existing Victory schools, plus an additional \$30 million to expand the program. Additional funding will be given to underperforming schools in the poorest zip codes in the state to provide wraparound services, especially in the areas of integrated support and family engagement.

	2017-2019 Budget	2015-2017 Budget	2013-2015 Budget
Victory Schools	\$80M	\$50M	\$0

Background

A second critical piece of the literacy funding package is the Victory Schools program, which specifically targets schools that have high numbers of low-income students and a low rating on the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF).^{70,71}

Following the early success of the program since 2015, the governor's budget calls for a 62.5 percent increase in Victory School funding for the upcoming biennium. This \$30 million increase in funding will expand the program to an additional 30 schools.⁷² NDE has indicated that this figure reflects approximately the right amount of resource infusion on a per pupil basis to see improved outcomes.

Per the parameters of Senate Bill (SB) 432, Victory Schools are designed to be more independent than Zoom Schools, and principals will submit a detailed plan outlining how they plan to use additional funds to increase student achievement.⁷³

Fifty-one percent of Victory School funding must be applied toward one or more of the following: (1) a pre-kindergarten program free of charge, if not paid for by another grant or funding source, (2) an expansion of full-day kindergarten classes, if not otherwise paid for through legislative appropriation, (3) a summer academy or other instruction for pupils free of charge at times during the year when school is not in session, (4) additional instruction or other learning opportunities free of charge at times of day when school is not in session, (5) professional development for teachers and other educational personnel concerning instructional practices and strategies that have proven to be an effective means to increase pupil achievement in populations of pupils similar to those served by the school, (6) incentives for hiring and retaining teachers and other licensed educational personnel who provide any of the programs or services, and/or (7) employment of paraprofessionals, other educational personnel and other persons who provide any of the programs.

The remaining 49 percent of a school's Victory funding can be applied toward providing one of more of the following: (1) evidence-based social, psychological or health care services to pupils and their families, including, without limitation, wrap-around services, (2) programs and services designed to engage parents and families, (3) programs to improve school climate and culture, and/or (4) evidence-based programs and services specifically designed to meet the needs of pupils who attend the school, as determined using the needs assessment.⁷⁴

Analysis

The Victory School program has been implemented in 36 schools across Nevada, and each received an additional \$1,137.45 per pupil to support student learning.⁷⁵ Currently, 26 urban schools in Clark and Washoe counties, four rural schools, and five Native American schools are in the program.⁷⁶

Academic Outcomes

Victory Schools have the highest rates of FRL-students in the state, and they are also typically among the lowest-rated schools on the NSPF. As of May 2016, early results from Victory Schools showed mostly positive results, with increases in literacy proficiency rates across most schools.⁷⁷ For the 2015-2016 CRT in reading, third graders at Victory elementary schools had a proficiency rate of 28.5 percent, only 6.1 percent lower than the statewide proficiency rate for all students who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. For eighth graders at Victory middle schools, the reading proficiency rate on the CRT was 27.1 percent, only 8.4 percent lower than the proficiency rate for all FRL students. These results reflect a smaller achievement gap by nearly 2 percent than the difference in reading proficiency between all FRL students in the state and these same schools in 2013-2014, the closest school year for which data is available and prior to the creation of the Victory School program. These small gaps in proficiency suggest that the literacy interventions in place in Victory Schools are working.⁷⁸

Teachers and other stakeholders also reported that they have seen positive results for students through the Victory Schools program. They stated that the increased funding—and the flexibility of how those funds could be spent—allowed the school to make specific and strategic decisions about which interventions would be most beneficial for the student population.⁷⁹

Teachers

Recently, ACS Ventures, the third-party external program reviewer, reported that the program is being implemented as intended and is reaching its targeted high-poverty populations.⁸⁰ Part of Victory School funding must go toward professional development for teachers and other educational personnel that addresses evidence-based, effective instructional practices and strategies that have helped increase pupil achievement in populations of pupils similar to those served by the school. In addition, because Victory Schools can use funding to provide teacher incentives of up to \$3,000 per year, the schools report lower teacher vacancy rates than other schools with similar student demographics and/or star ratings on the NSPF.⁸¹ ACS Ventures found that the financial incentives, along with the increased professional development and the flexibility to implement targeted interventions using Victory School money, have increased teacher retention rates.⁸²

During the 2015-2016 school year, 235 different professional development opportunities were offered for teachers and staff at Victory Schools. All such professional development trainings were focused on alignment with the specific needs of students at the school sites. The most common topics were: instructional capacity, literacy, formative assessment, academic interventions and instructional techniques, and social-emotional learning and school climate.⁸³

Zoom Schools

Overview: To increase literacy and support services for schools with high English Language Learner (ELL) populations.

Budget Item: \$100 million to support existing Zoom Schools, plus an additional \$42 million over the biennium to support 25 new Zoom middle and high schools with high ELL populations.

	2017-2019 Budget	2015-2017 Budget	2013-2015 Budget
Zoom Schools	\$142M	\$100M	\$50M

Background

In 2013, Nevada legislators authorized the Zoom Schools program to allow more customized interventions in low-performing schools with high concentrations of ELLs.⁸⁴ Since the program began, an estimated 45,800 students in 108 schools in Nevada have benefited from the increased interventions provided through Zoom School funding.⁸⁵

The 2017-2019 budget calls for an increase of \$42 million from 2015. The additional funding will expand the Zoom School initiative to 25 middle and high schools across the State to provide increased English language acquisition and long-term ELL services. High schools were not previously eligible for Zoom School designation, but the new budget allocates funds to high schools with high populations of ELLs.

Unlike the flexibility with Victory Schools, Zoom Schools are required to follow a prescribed list of interventions. Elementary schools are required to provide all of the following services: (1) tuition-free pre-kindergarten programs, (2) tuition-free, full-day kindergarten classes, (3) reading skills centers, (4) summer academy or intersession activities, (5) professional development opportunities for teachers, (6) recruitment and retention incentives, and (6) family engagement opportunities.

Middle and high schools are required to provide all of the following services: (1) an extended school day, (2) a summer academy or an intersession academy, which may include transportation, (3) professional development for teachers and other licensed educational personnel regarding effective instructional practices and strategies for pupils who are limited English proficient, (4) recruitment and retention incentives for teachers and other licensed educational personnel, (5) family engagement opportunities, and (6) other approved evidence-based programs and services that are specifically geared toward ELLs.⁸⁶ No more than 2 percent of Zoom School funding can be used for teacher incentives, teacher recruitment, or family engagement for all schools in the program.

Analysis

Senate Bill 504 (2013 Legislative Session) targeted Washoe and Clark County School Districts, which have the highest concentrations of ELLs in Nevada. Roughly 31,300 students at 38 schools in CCSD, 11,500 students at 23 schools in WCSD, and 3,000 students in 47 charters schools and other districts across the state are designated as Zoom Schools for the 2016-2017 school year.⁸⁷ This is nearly triple the number of students and more than double the number of schools that were served in the first year of this initiative.

Academic Outcomes

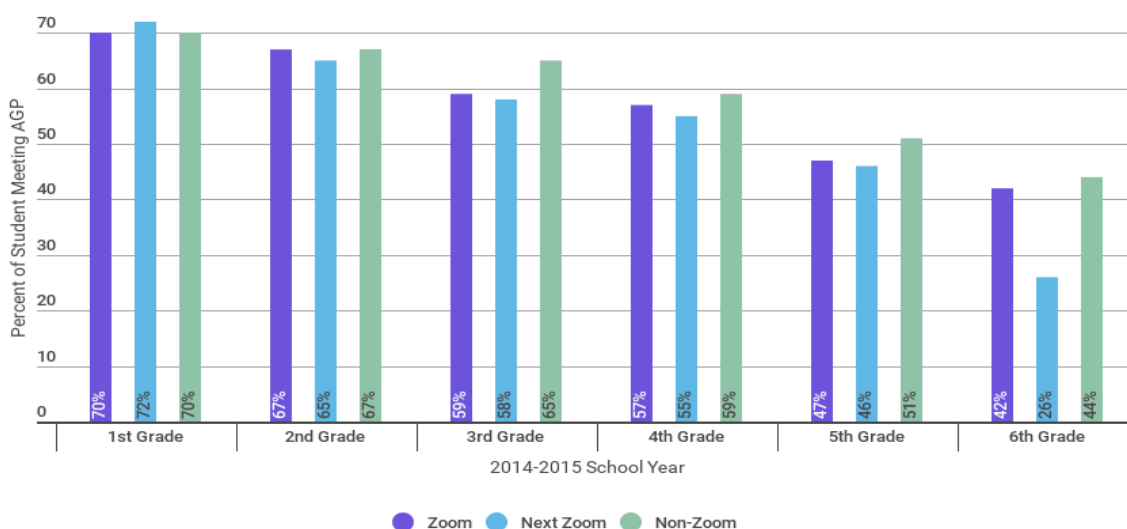
Earlier this year, NDE and ACS Ventures reported that their preliminary findings suggest the Zoom Schools literacy intervention has had a slightly positive effect on student literacy.⁸⁸ However, more data is needed to confirm the impact of Zoom in the short-term. Additional time is also needed to determine whether these early positive results translate to positive gains for students as they reach higher grades. Many schools self-reported an increase in oral language proficiency among Pre-K students based on local assessments. All Zoom Schools also said that service delivery was consistent with the goals of the program, including increased support for literacy among students, more professional development opportunities, and a decrease in credit deficiency.⁸⁹

Adequate growth percentile (AGP) data is only available for the 2014-2015 school year and therefore cannot be compared across years.⁹⁰ There is also not yet any comparative data for the CRT tests on the new standards because this standardized test was only first given in 2015-2016. The State has asked the legislature for more time to assess the effectiveness of the program, but notes that the preliminary evidence it has gathered thus far indicates the program will lead to improved outcomes for students.⁹¹

Specifically, NDE reported that the AGP for ELL students in Zoom elementary schools is nearly on track with ELLs in non-Zoom elementary schools for the 2014-2015 school year. Zoom elementary school students had an AGP of 61.3 percent, only 1.9 percent lower than the AGP for non-Zoom students.⁹² Broken down by elementary grades, ELL students in early elementary school grades, which are the primary targets of Zoom literacy interventions, met AGP at a rate equal to their non-Zoom counterparts.

The State also compared these 2014-2015 results for Zoom Schools with schools that were designated as Next Zoom Schools.⁹³ These schools began services in 2015-2016, and accordingly, their school test results from 2014-2015 do not reflect any ZOOM services.⁹⁴ These schools are the most similar in student population and school performance to the original Zoom Schools. NDE's analysis of these schools found that the AGP for these students was mostly lower than the Zoom School students (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. English Learner Adequate Growth Percentile (AGP), by Grade Level (2014-2015)



Teachers

Unlike Victory Schools, Zoom Schools continue to struggle with teacher recruitment and retention. They did not report the decrease in vacancies and job satisfaction found in Victory Schools. As of June 2016, Zoom Schools accounted for 14.7 percent of all teacher vacancies in CCSD, but Victory Schools accounted for only 5.0 percent of vacancies.⁹⁵ This difference is likely due to the high prescriptive nature of Zoom programming, and the low amounts of incentives teachers can receive. In Clark County School District, for example, district officials set a flat rate of \$350 per year per teacher for incentives at Zoom Schools.⁹⁶

Professional development to provide supports for teachers in Zoom Schools continues to be a challenge. Moreover, it is not clear that best practices for teaching ELLs have been effectively implemented at Zoom Schools. A comprehensive review of studies of interventions for struggling readers, including ELLs, identified that the best programs have a strong focus on classroom instruction and use licensed teachers to provide one-to-one, phonetic tutoring to students who experience difficulties.^{97,98} The authorizing legislation deferred to the judgment of the school districts regarding which reading practices would be implemented under the program. In CCSD, Reading Skills Centers were implemented using paraprofessionals, and student teachers conduct small group tutoring under the supervision of a licensed teacher.⁹⁹

Additionally, while there are a handful of individual schools that have been very successful in determining strategies that ensure academic English Language achievement among most of their students, no district or charter school network in Nevada has mastered a system that works across multiple sites to consistently increase academic English Language proficiency. This owes in part to a lack of prioritization but also a weak system of monitoring and evaluation so that education officials can identify what interventions are working and scale them up.

Many teachers and administrators expressed frustration at the changes in curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices under the Zoom Program. They reported to the NDE's external outcomes evaluation team that they were not given sufficient instruction on the new expectations under the Zoom School program. Overall, however, 83 percent of teachers said the Zoom program was having a positive effect in their classrooms.¹⁰⁰



Progress Since 2015 and Recommendations

In 2015, the Guinn Center created a series of benchmarks that these five interventions [(1) preschool expansion, (2) voluntary full-day kindergarten, (3) Nevada K.I.D.S. Read (formerly Read by Grade Three), (4) Victory Schools, and (5) Zoom Schools] should strive to meet to demonstrate a return on investment and to support further expansion of these programs, as applicable.¹⁰¹ In this section, we tie these benchmarks together with our recommendations.

Pre-Kindergarten 2015 Benchmarks

1. Higher numbers of students enrolled in high quality pre-K programs
2. For those students in pre-K programs, an increase in the percentage of students who can pass the required Kindergarten entry readiness assessment
3. An increase in the percentage of students reading on grade level in third grade
4. An increase in the percentage of quality instructional personnel
5. A decrease in the achievement gap among language poor subgroups (ELLs, FRLs, and Special Education students)

Table 4. Pre-Kindergarten 2015 Benchmarks

Benchmark	Met? (Y/N)	Rationale	Recommendation
Higher numbers of students enrolled in high quality pre-K programs	Yes	More three- and four-year-olds living below 200 percent poverty were enrolled in school per recent figures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure pre-K students filling new classroom seats come from sub-groups that have low levels of language and reading proficiency, including ELLs, Special Education students, and low-income students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRLs).
For those students in pre-K programs, an increase in the percentage of students who can pass the required kindergarten entry readiness assessment.	TBD	NDE has not released this data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use both formative and summative assessments across K-3 to ensure growth, identify deficiencies, and monitor progress. Require districts to test students at the beginning and end of the pre-K programs for skill development.
An increase in the percentage of students reading on grade level in third grade.	TBD	The effects of the pre-k expansion on third grade reading levels will not be available until 2020 at the earliest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design effective, evidence-based intervention programs that reduce retention rates. The State (and districts) should provide technical assistance to principals at schools funded by English Language Acquisition funds that support selection of research based literacy programs. NDE/3rd party evaluators should conduct an independent review of the selection of literacy programs.
An increase in the percentage of quality instructional personnel.	No	Teacher vacancies continue to be a challenge statewide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on teacher recruitment and training through programs such as the Great Teaching and Leading Fund, the Teach Nevada

MARCH 2017
POLICY REPORT
www.guinncenter.org

			<p>scholarship, and the Nevada Teacher Corps. Schools should also be given greater flexibility in how they can use these funds to provide incentives to teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nevada Department of Education and the districts should devise a system for identifying which teachers may have had specific training in early intervention and/or literacy programs.
A decrease in the achievement gap among language poor subgroups (ELLs, FRLs, and Special Education students)	TBD	While pre-k programs are enrolling more children from high poverty areas, data on whether these programs have helped closed the achievement gap is not yet know.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase transparency of data around literacy. Schools should track and report student progress and other school performance indicators to the State and the public. • Ensure pre-K students filling new classroom seats come from sub-groups that have low levels of language and reading proficiency, including ELLs, Special Education students, and low-income students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRLs).

Kindergarten 2015 Benchmarks

1. Higher number of children enrolled in kindergarten.
2. Improved achievement in reading/phonics and mathematics during kindergarten.
3. An increase in the percentage of students reading on grade level in third grade.

Table 5. Kindergarten 2015 Benchmarks

Benchmark	Met? (Y/N)	Rationale	Next Steps
Higher number of children enrolled in kindergarten.	Yes	Nevada is fifth in the nation for full-day kindergarten enrollment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on teacher recruitment and training through programs such as the Great Teaching and Leading Fund, the Teach Nevada scholarship, and the Nevada Teacher Corps. Schools should also be given greater flexibility in how they can use these funds to provide incentives to teachers. • The Nevada Department of Education and the districts should devise a system for identifying which teachers may have had specific training in early intervention and/or literacy programs.
Improved achievement in reading/phonics and mathematics during kindergarten.	Unknown	There is no statewide assessment for kindergarten in Nevada.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use both formative and summative assessments across K-3 to ensure growth, identify deficiencies, and monitor progress. Implement a statewide assessment for kindergarten to monitor progress.
An increase in the percentage of students reading on grade level in third grade.	TBD	The long-term effects of universal full-day kindergarten will not be measurable until 2019 at the earliest, when the kindergarteners from the first districts to implement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design effective, evidence-based intervention programs that reduce retention rates. The State (and districts) should provide technical assistance to principals at schools funded by English Language Acquisition funds that support selection of research based literacy programs. NDE/3rd party evaluators

MARCH 2017

POLICY REPORT

www.guinncenter.org

		the program will be in third grade.	<p>should conduct an independent review of the selection of literacy programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold all interventions and programs to the same level of transparency and reporting requirements that federal grants programs require. • Increase transparency of data around literacy. Schools should track and report student progress and other school performance indicators to the State and the public.
--	--	-------------------------------------	---

Language Acquisition Interventions 2015 Benchmarks

1. An increase in the percentage of students reading on grade level in third grade and beyond.
2. An increase in high school graduation rates.
3. A decline in the retention gap between students of color and the general population.
4. A decline in the achievement gap between ELL/FRL students and the general population as measured by grade level reading.
5. Identification of a measure of relative effectiveness of teachers/schools in completing successful student interventions.
6. An Increase in the percentage of students exiting ELL status each year as measured by World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Scores.
7. An increase in the percentage of teachers who are determined effective or highly effective on the NEPF in these schools.

Table 6. Language Acquisition 2015 Benchmarks

Benchmark	Met? (Y/N)	Rationale	Next Steps
An increase in the percentage of students reading on grade level in third grade and beyond and decrease achievement gaps.	TBD	The reading proficiency of third graders in 2019 will be the measure of the initiative's effectiveness, per the retention clause in SB9291.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design effective, evidence-based intervention programs that reduce retention rates. The State (and districts) should provide technical assistance to principals at schools funded by English Language Acquisition funds that support selection of research based literacy programs. NDE/3rd party evaluators should conduct an independent review of the selection of literacy programs. • Hold all interventions and programs to the same level of transparency and reporting requirements that the federal grants programs require. • Increase transparency of data around literacy. Schools should track and report student progress and other school performance indicators to the State and the public.
An increase in high school graduation rates.	TBD	The first kindergarten class to participate in Read by 3 will not graduate until 2028.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design effective, evidence-based intervention programs that reduce retention rates. The State (and districts) should provide technical assistance to principals at schools funded by English Language Acquisition funds that

MARCH 2017

POLICY REPORT

www.guinncenter.org

			<p>support selection of research based literacy programs. NDE/3rd party evaluators should conduct an independent review of the selection of literacy programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use both formative and summative assessments across K-3 to ensure growth, identify deficiencies, and monitor progress. • Provide flexibility in what evidence-based interventions are allowable: (Department of Education) NDE should provide flexibility in the type of interventions that can be provided under Read by 3. All interventions should align to the Nevada State Literacy Plan and should be evidence-based. Each school district or charter school should maintain responsibility for providing evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of interventions included in their literacy plans.
An increase in the percentage of teachers who are determined effective or highly effective on the NEPF in these schools.	TBD	This data is not yet publicly available on the NSPF.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the availability of high quality professional development for effective teaching and monitor professional development offerings across the state to ensure that they are aligned with district and statewide literacy plans. The professional developments for pre-k teachers, Nevada K.I.D.S. Read, and Victory are targeted toward helping teachers work with their specific student populations. The state and districts should offer a menu of menu of professional development services that schools could use to ensure teachers are equipped with the right tools to help their student populations. The Nevada Department of Education and the districts should devise a system for identifying which teachers may have had specific training in early intervention and/or literacy programs. Zoom schools should consider creating reading strategist positions that should be filled by teachers with extensive experience working with ELLs and can offer support to both educators and ELLs.

Recommendations

Based on our analysis of these programs and their alignment to the Theory of Action Principles, we make the following recommendations to the State and school districts:

1. Hold all interventions and programs to the same level of transparency and reporting requirements that the federal grants programs currently require. Pre-K programs in Nevada are required to participate in both annual and longitudinal evaluations, comply with NDE data reporting requirements and other assessments, and maintain health and safety standards. We recommend that all interventions in the state are held to the same standards. Increased transparency and reporting requirements includes district- and school-level reporting on how the resources allocated are being used to fund evidence-based programs, services, and incentives that increase student achievement.¹⁰² This level of transparency should continue to be the expectation as Nevada moves toward weighted funding.
2. Increase transparency of data around literacy. Schools should track and report student progress and other school performance indicators to the State and the public. This includes creating and disseminating user-friendly reports to families about the progress of both their child and their child's school, holding public meetings about a school's progress, and allowing more parental involvement in decisions about a school.
3. Combine Nevada K.I.D.S. Read, Victory, and Zoom School programs into a single grant program. Because the three English Language Acquisition programs have duplicative goals, this would remove the artificial barriers between these programs and recognize that all targeted schools have a combination of both ELL and FRL students. This would also move the focus to individual student needs as opposed to creating different labels for schools.
4. Design effective, evidence-based intervention programs that reduce retention rates. The State (and districts) should provide technical assistance to principals at schools funded by English Language Acquisition funds that support selection of research based literacy programs. The Nevada Department of Education (and third party evaluators) should conduct an independent review of the selection of literacy programs.
 - a. The State and school districts need to develop a plan for 2019, when it seems likely that a high number of students in third-grade will be retained. This plan should address how schools will address the needs of these non-proficient readers, prevent further retention for future years, and hold schools accountable when they have high retention rates.
5. Use both formative and summative assessments across K-3 to ensure growth, identify deficiencies, and monitor progress.
 - a. Require districts to test students at the beginning and end of the pre-K programs for skill development.
 - b. Implement a statewide assessment for kindergarten to measure academic outcomes at the end of kindergarten.

6. Continue the availability of high quality professional development for effective teaching and monitor professional development offerings across the state to ensure that they are aligned with district and statewide literacy plans. The professional developments for pre-k teachers, Nevada K.I.D.S. Read, and Victory are targeted toward helping teachers work with their specific student populations. The state and districts should offer a menu of menu of professional development services that schools could use to ensure teachers are equipped with the right tools to help their student populations.
7. Provide flexibility in what evidence-based interventions are allowable: NDE should provide flexibility in the type of interventions that can be provided under Nevada K.I.D.S. Read. All interventions should align to the Nevada State Literacy Plan and should be evidence-based. Each school district or charter school should maintain responsibility for providing evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of interventions included in their literacy plans.
8. Ensure that NDE and schools continue annual external program evaluations for all programs receiving dedicated state funding.
9. Expand pre-K programs and ensure pre-K students filling new classroom seats come from sub-groups that have low levels of language and reading proficiency, including ELLs, Special Education students, and low-income students eligible for Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRLs).
10. The Nevada Department of Education and the districts should devise a system for identifying which teachers may have had specific training in early intervention and/or literacy programs. We would encourage the State and school districts to develop incentive programs, such as a higher salary and bonuses, to recruit and retain highly effective (and experienced) teachers at these high-need school sites, rather than filling all vacancies at high-need schools with new teachers.
 - a. Zoom schools should leverage incentive dollars to attract and retain effective Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) certified educators.
 - b. The State, districts, and teachers' unions should offer scholarships and incentive programs to assist more teachers in pursuing the TESL endorsement on their license.
 - c. Similar steps should be considered for school leadership training, regulations, and incentives.
11. Focus on teacher recruitment and training through programs such as the Great Teaching and Leading Fund, the Teach Nevada scholarship, and the Nevada Teacher Corps. Schools should also be given greater flexibility in how they can use these funds to provide incentives to teachers.
12. NDE should create a readiness assessment to determine district readiness to keep the focus of the intervention without the set aside of categorical funding. The long-term goal is to move resourcing and decision making rights closest to the point of impact, but first the system must build the infrastructure and leadership capacity to support this transition. NDE should then use the readiness assessment information to set budgetary recommendations (including the amount and distribution method). At present, we have significant concerns with the effort to add new dollars into the Distributive School Account and recommend that all (or most) of the current categorical investments (e.g., in Zoom Schools and Victory schools) remain restricted until there exists an appropriate assessment of program efficacy, analysis of return on investment, and district readiness to maintain

the focus of the program as it currently exists in the unrestricted funding context.

Given current conditions (e.g., structural barriers and technological limitations), it is not clear that school districts can effectively direct (spend) a weighted state allocation in alignment with the intended populations. Consequently, there is some concern that should dollars be shifted to the Distributive School Account – without accompanying policy and spending reforms, Zoom School and Victory School dollars would be distributed across the entire district, thus undermining the targeted focus on those select schools with high populations of ELLs and low-income students), or funds might be diverted entirely to other programs. Here we note that Nevada K.I.D.S. Read is one program with the potential to maintain its focus through a nonrestrictive allocation method.

Conclusion

Overall, preliminary evidence indicates that these targeted interventions are helping students achieve, and potentially closing the achievement gap. Collectively, these programs contain important elements or characteristics of successful reform efforts around the country. Among these are: leadership, autonomy, teacher leadership, community support, and flexibility.¹⁰³ The salient features of these literacy acquisition programs are that, within a broad set of parameters and prescribed services, they have established greater autonomy and flexibility at the school site, allowing school leadership teams how to best design interventions that support their students and empower their teachers.


Board of Directors

Phil Satre
President

Tom Gallagher
Vice President

Stephanie Tyler
Vice President

Missy Young
Secretary/Treasurer

Deane Albright, CPA

Joe Crowley, Ph.D.

Dr. Michael Daubs

Jill Derby, Ph.D.

Dan Hamilton, Ph.D.

Carol Harter, Ph.D.

Doreen Hartwell

Pat Hickey

Mick Hitchcock, Ph.D.

Ken Ladd

Dana Lee

Debbie Leonard

Erin McMullen

Chris Roman

Douglas Seastrand

About the Kenny C. Guinn Center for Policy Priorities

The Kenny C. Guinn Center for Policy Priorities is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, bipartisan, independent research center focused on providing fact-based, relevant, and well-reasoned analysis of critical policy issues facing Nevada and the Intermountain West. The Guinn Center engages policy-makers, experts, and the public with innovative, data-driven research and analysis to advance policy solutions, inform the public debate, and expand public engagement.

© 2017 Kenny C. Guinn Center for Policy Priorities. All rights reserved.

Contact information:

Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities

c/o inNEVation Center

6795 Edmond Street, Suite 300/Box 10

Las Vegas, Nevada 89118

Phone: (702) 522-2189; Email: info@guinncenter.org

Nancy E. Brune, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Email: nbrune@guinncenter.org

Victor Wakefield

Senior Fellow

Megan K. Rauch

Director of Education Policy

Email: mrauch@guinncenter.org

Meredith Levine

Director of Economic Policy

Email: mlevine@guinncenter.org

Lorena Rodriguez Rios

Chief Organizer and Bilingual Policy Analyst

Email: lrdriguez@guinncenter.org

REFERENCES

- ¹ Bertolin, Greg (for the Nevada Department of Education). "Governor Sandoval's Education Initiatives Aimed at Making Nevada the Fastest-Improving State in the Nation." Nevada Department of Education. January 17, 2017. http://www.doe.nv.gov/News_Media/Press_Releases/2017/Governor_Sandoval_s_Education_Initiatives_Aimed_at_Making_Nevada_the_Fastest_Improving_State_in_the_Nation/.
- ² Nevada Department of Education. "Education Initiatives for the New Nevada: Governor Sandoval's Recommended Budget (2017-2019 Biennium)." State of Nevada. January 17, 2017. http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/nde.doe.nv.gov/content/News_Media/Press_Releases/2017docs/EducationOverview2017_SCFinal.pdf.
- ³ Nevada K.I.D.S. Read is defined as "All Nevada K-3 students are 'Keeping (their) Individual Dreams Strong.'"
- ⁴ Guinn Center and Nevada Succeeds. 2015. Examining Nevada's Education Priorities: Which Ones are Worth the Investment? <https://guinncenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Guinn-Center-Nevada-Succeeds-Education-Priorities-FINAL.pdf>
- ⁵ Guinn Center. April 2017. Principles of Education Reform. *forthcoming*
- ⁶ NDE's external outcomes evaluation report also recommended common measurement and data systems are being used to manage how districts implement and manage program indicators. (Nevada Department of Education. "External Outcomes Evaluation: Final Report." December 30, 2016.)
- ⁷ https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/education/wp/2017/03/07/radical-change-for-struggling-schools-its-reliably-doable/?utm_term=.a4c691213282
- ⁸ Canavero, Dr. Steve (Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Nevada Department of Education). "The Executive Budget – DSA and Related K-12 Budgets: 2017-2019 Biennium (Presented to the Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee)." State of Nevada. January 31, 2017. <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/InterimCommittee/REL/Document/9841>
- ⁹ 78th (2015) Session of the Nevada Legislature. "Senate Bill 508." State of Nevada. May 31, 2015. <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/78th2015/Bill/2237/Overview>.
- ¹⁰ Canavero, Dr. Steve (Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Nevada Department of Education). "The Executive Budget – DSA and Related K-12 Budgets: 2017-2019 Biennium (Presented to the Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee)." State of Nevada. January 31, 2017. <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/InterimCommittee/REL/Document/9841>
- ¹¹ Nevada Department of Education. "Education Initiatives for the New Nevada: Governor Sandoval's Recommended Budget (2017-2019 Biennium)." State of Nevada. January 17, 2017. http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/nde.doe.nv.gov/content/News_Media/Press_Releases/2017docs/EducationOverview2017_SCFinal.pdf.
- ¹² Office of Early Learning at the U.S. Department of Education. "Preschool Development Grants." U.S. Department of Education. 2014. <https://ed.gov/programs/preschooldevelopmentgrants/index.html>.
- ¹³ Nevada Department of Education. "Nevada Ready! High-Quality Preschool Development Grant: Building upon a Foundation of Success." State of Nevada. http://www.doe.nv.gov/Early_Learning_Development/PreKGrant/.
- ¹⁴ Nevada Department of Education. "Nevada Ready! Pre-K: Frequently Asked Questions – High-Quality Program Requirements." State of Nevada. 2015. http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/nde.doe.nv.gov/content/Early_Learning_Development/PKGrant/FAQPreGrant.pdf.
- ¹⁵ Nevada Department of Education. "Nevada Ready! High-Quality Preschool Development Grant: Building upon a Foundation of Success." State of Nevada. http://www.doe.nv.gov/Early_Learning_Development/PreKGrant/.
- ¹⁶ Nevada Department of Education. "Nevada Ready! High-Quality Preschool Development Grant: Building upon a Foundation of Success." State of Nevada. http://www.doe.nv.gov/Early_Learning_Development/PreKGrant/.
- ¹⁷ KIDS Count Data Center. "Nevada: Young Children Not in School, by Poverty Status." Annie E. Case Foundation. 2016. <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/9011-young-children-not-in-school-by-poverty-status?loc=30&loct=2#detailed/2/30/false/1572,1485,815/5599,5600/17979,17980>.
- ¹⁸ KIDS Count Data Center. "Nevada: Young Children Not in School, by Poverty Status." Annie E. Case Foundation.

2016. <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/9011-young-children-not-in-school-by-poverty-status?loc=30&loct=2#detailed/2/30/false/1572,1485,815/5599,5600/17979,17980>.

¹⁹ KIDS Count Data Book. “Young Children Not in School by Poverty Status.” Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2016. <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/9011-young-children-not-in-school-by-poverty-status?loc=1&loct=2#detailed/2/2-52/false/1572/5599/17979>.

²⁰ James Heckman and Paul Gertler. 2014. Labor Market Returns to an Early Childhood Stimulation Intervention in Jamaica. *Science* (Vol 344: 6187) pp. 998-1001. <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/344/6187/998>. Gregory Camilli. 2010. Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Early Education Interventions on Cognitive and Social Development. Teachers College at Columbia University. http://rci.rutgers.edu/~camilli/Papers/38_15440.pdf. James Heckman and Paul Gertler. 2014. Labor Market Returns to an Early Childhood Stimulation Intervention in Jamaica. *Science* (Vol 344: 6187) pp. 998-1001. <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/344/6187/998>; Frances Huang. November 2016. *Does attending a state-funded preschool program improve letter name knowledge?* *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* Vol 38:1 (116-126). <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S088520061630062X>; Kenneth A. Dodge, Yu Bai, Helen F. Ladd, Clara G. Muschkin. November 2016. *Impact of North Carolina's Early Childhood Programs and Policies on Educational Outcomes in Elementary School*. Child Development. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cdev.12645/abstract>

²¹ Gregory Camilli. 2010. Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Early Education Interventions on Cognitive and Social Development. Teachers College at Columbia University. http://rci.rutgers.edu/~camilli/Papers/38_15440.pdf.

²² Lawrence J. Schweinhart, Jeanne Montie, Zongping Xiang, W. Steven Barnett, Clive R. Belfield, & Milagros Nores. 2005. *Lifetime Effects: The HighScope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.

²³ Lawrence J. Schweinhart, Jeanne Montie, Zongping Xiang, W. Steven Barnett, Clive R. Belfield, & Milagros Nores. 2005. *Lifetime Effects: The HighScope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.

²⁴ James Heckman and Paul Gertler. 2014. Labor Market Returns to an Early Childhood Stimulation Intervention in Jamaica. *Science* (Vol 344: 6187) pp. 998-1001. <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/344/6187/998>.

²⁵ C. Muschkin, H. Ladd H., and K. Dodge. 2015. *Impact of North Carolina's Early Childhood Initiatives on Special Education Placements in Third Grade*. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis. Duke University. <http://epa.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/12/04/0162373714559096.full.pdf+html?ijkey=rro4HwVYfleHc&keytype=ref&siteid=spepa>.

²⁶ C. Muschkin, H. Ladd H., and K. Dodge. 2015. *Impact of North Carolina's Early Childhood Initiatives on Special Education Placements in Third Grade*. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis. Duke University. <http://epa.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/12/04/0162373714559096.full.pdf+html?ijkey=rro4HwVYfleHc&keytype=ref&siteid=spepa>

²⁷ US Department of Health and Human Services. January 2010. *Head Start Impact Study: Final Report*. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/executive_summary_final.pdf.

²⁸ J. Lyons. 2013. *Academic Accountability and Early Literacy in Challenging Fiscal Times in the School District of Philadelphia*. <http://thenotebook.org/sites/default/files/ARC-report.pdf>.

²⁹ S. Davis, C. Lake, N. Madden, & R.E. Slavin. 2009. *Effective Programs for Struggling Readers: A Best-Evidence Synthesis*. Baltimore: Center for Research and Reform in Education. Available: http://www.bestevidence.org/word/strug_read_Jul_07_2011.pdf.

³⁰ Ellen Frede, Kwanghee Jung, W. Steven Barnett, Cynthia Esposito Lamy, and Alexandra Figueras. June 2007. *The Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study (APPLES)*. National Institute for Early Childhood Education. <http://nieer.org/publications/policy-reports/abbott-preschool-program-longitudinal-effects-study-apples>.

³¹ G. Biancarosa, A.S. Bryk, & E.R. Dexter. 2010. Assessing the value-added effects of Literacy Collaborative professional development on student learning. *The Elementary School Journal*, 111(1): 7-34. Available: <http://www.literacycollaborative.org/docs/research/ESJ-value-added.pdf>; W.M. Saunders, C.N. Goldenberg, & R. Gallimore. 2009. Increasing achievement by focusing grade-level teams on improving classroom learning: A prospective, quasiexperimental study of Title I schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 46(4): 1006–1033. Available: <http://aer.sagepub.com/content/early/2009/03/20/0002831209333185>.

³² Nevada Department of Education. *Early Childhood Evaluation Reports and Executive Summaries*. http://www.doe.nv.gov/Early_Learning_Development/Reports_and_Summaries/.

³³ Nevada Department of Education. *Early Childhood Evaluation Reports and Executive Summaries*. http://www.doe.nv.gov/Early_Learning_Development/Reports_and_Summaries/.

³⁴ Nevada Department of Education. *Early Childhood Evaluation Reports and Executive Summaries*.

http://www.doe.nv.gov/Early_Learning_Development/Reports_and_Summaries/.

³⁵ Linda Smith. 2010. Childcare Challenges in Rural Areas. National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies.

³⁶ Clark County School District. Portables in the Clark County School District. May 22, 2014.

[http://www.boarddocs.com/nv/ccsdlv/Board.nsf/files/9KB7EK77BCBE/\\$file/05.22.14%20Reference%207.03.pdf](http://www.boarddocs.com/nv/ccsdlv/Board.nsf/files/9KB7EK77BCBE/$file/05.22.14%20Reference%207.03.pdf)

³⁷ Pak-Harvey, Amelia. "Six New Schools Expected to Alleviate Overcrowded CCSD Classrooms." *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. March 3, 2017. <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/education/6-new-schools-expected-alleviate-crowded-ccsd-classrooms>.

³⁸ McAndrew, Siobhan. "Washoe County School District \$30 Million Deficit Could Mean Larger Class Sizes." *Reno Gazette-Journal*. March 3, 2017. <http://www.rgj.com/story/news/education/2017/03/03/wcsd-30-million-deficit-could-mean-larger-class-sizes/98710642/>.

³⁹ Canavero, Dr. Steve (Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Nevada Department of Education). "The Executive Budget – DSA and Related K-12 Budgets: 2017-2019 Biennium (Presented to the Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee)." State of Nevada. January 31, 2017. <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/InterimCommittee/REL/Document/9841>.

⁴⁰ Senate Committee on Finance of the 78th Session of the Nevada Legislature. "Senate Bill 515 – ensuring sufficient funding for K-12 public education for the 2015-2017 biennium." State of Nevada. June 11, 2015 (enrolled). <http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/78th2015/Reports/history.cfm?billname=SB515>.

⁴¹ For example, school districts and charter schools were allowed to use ratings on the Nevada School Performance Framework, random lottery, or an already existing tuition-based program.

⁴² Erquiaga, Dale A.R. "Guidance Memorandum #15-11 – Re: Request for Guidance Concerning Full Day Kindergarten (to Clark County Superintendent Pat Skorkowsky and All School Districts and Charter Schools)." Nevada Department of Education. July 2, 2015.

⁴³ Erquiaga, Dale A.R. "Guidance Memorandum #15-11 – Re: Request for Guidance Concerning Full Day Kindergarten (to Clark County Superintendent Pat Skorkowsky and All School Districts and Charter Schools)." Nevada Department of Education. July 2, 2015.

⁴⁴ R. Gallimore, B. Ermeling, W. Saunders, & C. Goldenberg. 2009. Moving the learning of teaching closer to practice: Teacher education implications of school-based inquiry teams. *The Elementary School Journal*, 109(5), 537-553.

⁴⁵ Regional Education Laboratory: Northeast and Islands. 2013. http://www.relnei.org/wp-content/referencedocs/RELNEI_RD0140_Kindergarten_Research_Support.pdf; De Cicca, Phillip. "Does full-day kindergarten matter? Evidence from the first two years of schooling," *Economics of Education Review*, Volume 26, Number 1, February 2007, pp. 67-82. <http://www.ernweb.com/educational-research-articles/economist-sees-little-benefit-from-full-day-kindergarten/>.

⁴⁶ NASP Center: Kindergarten - Full Versus Half-Day: Information for Parents and Early Childhood Educators. http://www.naspcenter.org/assessment/kindergarten_ho.html.

⁴⁷ Amanda Miller. Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative. 2001. <http://ecap.crc.illinois.edu/poptopics/fullday.html>.

⁴⁸ UNLV Health Impact Assessment Team (Callahan, Clark, Coker, Coughenour, Gakh, and Pharr). "Full-Day Kindergarten in Nevada: A Health Impact Assessment." UNLV School of Community Health Sciences. May 2, 2015. www.doe.nv.gov/Legislative/Full_Day_Kindergarten/FullDayKindergartenHIA_Final/.

⁴⁹ L. Pitch and B. Campbell. 2011. Long-term effects of full-day kindergarten in third and fourth grades (FEDS~L4). Clark County School District Department of Research. <http://www.ccsd.net/resources/assessment-accountability-research-school-improvement-division/long-term-effects-of-full-day-kindergarten-2011.pdf>.

⁵⁰ L. Pitch and B. Campbell. 2011. Long-term effects of full-day kindergarten in third and fourth grades (FEDS~L4). Clark County School District Department of Research. <http://www.ccsd.net/resources/assessment-accountability-research-school-improvement-division/long-term-effects-of-full-day-kindergarten-2011.pdf>.

⁵¹ Nevada Department of Education. "Expanded Program Narratives: 2015 Legislative Session." State of Nevada. 2015. www.doe.nv.gov/.../ExpandedProgramNarrativesCoverSheet/.

⁵² Hanushek, Eric A. *The Evidence on Class Size*. Stanford University and the Brookings Institution. 1999. <http://hanushek.stanford.edu/publications/evidence-class-size>.

⁵³ Nevada Legislature. "Nevada Revised Statutes Chapter 388.700, 710, 720." State of Nevada. Revised 2015. <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/nrs/nrs-388.html#NRS388Sec700>.

⁵⁴ Nevada Department of Education. "Expanded Program Narratives: 2015 Legislative Session." State of Nevada. 2015. www.doe.nv.gov/.../ExpandedProgramNarrativesCoverSheet/.

⁵⁵ Canavero, Dr. Steve (Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Nevada Department of Education). "The Executive Budget – DSA and Related K-12 Budgets: 2017-2019 Biennium (Presented to the Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee)." State of Nevada. January 31, 2017. <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/InterimCommittee/REL/Document/9841>.

⁵⁶ Kynaston, Marissa. "Schools Offering Full Day Kindergarten Classes." KNTV. August 29, 2016. <http://www.ktnv.com/news/schools-offering-full-day-kindergarten-classes/>; Campbell, Victoria; Anderson, Michelle (for Washoe County School District). "Continuing Commitment to Academic Success: WCSD to Implement Free Full-Day Kindergarten District-Wide in 2015-2106." Washoe County School District. August 5, 2015. <http://www.washoeschools.net/site/Default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=4&PageID=1&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&FlexDataID=7911>.

⁵⁷ Pak-Harvey, Amelia. "CCSD Struggles for Solutions to Special Education Teacher Shortage." *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. February 26, 2017. <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/education/ccsd-struggles-solutions-special-education-teacher-shortage>.

⁵⁸ Canavero, Dr. Steve "The Executive Budget – DSA and Related K-12 Budgets: 2017-2019 Biennium (Presented to the Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee)."

⁵⁹ 78th Session of the Nevada Legislature. "Senate Bill 391 (Revises provisions governing educational instruction in the subject of reading)." State of Nevada. June 3, 2015 (approved by the Governor). <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/78th2015/Bill/2012/Overview>.

⁶⁰ Nevada Department of Education. "Education Initiatives for the New Nevada: Governor Sandoval's Recommended Budget (2017-2019 Biennium)." State of Nevada. January 17, 2017. http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/nde.doe.nv.gov/content/News_Media/Press_Releases/2017docs/EducationOverview2017_SCFinal.pdf.

⁶¹ L. Fiester. 2010. Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters. Annie E. Casey Foundation. http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-Early_Warning_Full_Report-2010.pdf.

⁶² Information from the Foundation for Florida's Future. http://www.foundationforfloridasfuture.org/pages/Florida_Formula/Celebrating_Floridas_Literacy.aspx.

⁶³ Nevada Department of Education. *The Nevada State Literacy Plan: A Pathway to Possibilities*. State of Nevada. 2015. <http://www.doe.nv.gov/RBG3/NSLP/>.

⁶⁴ Canavero, Dr. Steve "The Executive Budget – DSA and Related K-12 Budgets: 2017-2019 Biennium (Presented to the Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee)."

⁶⁵ Nevada Department of Education. "Nevada's Read by Grade 3 Program." State of Nevada. July 2016. <http://www.doe.nv.gov/RBG3/Home/>.

⁶⁶ Canavero, Dr. Steve "The Executive Budget – DSA and Related K-12 Budgets: 2017-2019 Biennium (Presented to the Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee)."

⁶⁷ Canavero, Dr. Steve "The Executive Budget – DSA and Related K-12 Budgets: 2017-2019 Biennium (Presented to the Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee)."

⁶⁸ Nevada Department of Education for the Clark County School District. "Read by 3 Questions and Answers for Nevada's Parents." Clark County School District. May 9, 2016. <http://ccsd.net/resources/literacy-social-studies-library-services/readgrade3phaseiidoc62416english.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Data Interaction for Nevada Report Card. "Statewide Assessment Results → Group Summary Report → CRT (New NV Standards) → 2015-2016 → Grade 3 → State." Nevada Department of Education. <http://nevadareportcard.com/di/main/assessment>.

⁷⁰ Nevada Department of Education. "Victory Schools Program (SB 432)." State of Nevada. 2016. http://www.doe.nv.gov/Legislative/Victory_Schools_Program/.

⁷¹ The Victory School model is a direct response to the public concern that Zoom Schools primarily focus on ELLs and not on all students who are struggling, especially African American male students, who have the lowest academic performance of any subgroup in the state, as well as students in schools in Native American tribal lands.

⁷² Canavero, Dr. Steve "The Executive Budget – DSA and Related K-12 Budgets: 2017-2019 Biennium (Presented to the Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee)."

⁷³ 78th Sessions of the Nevada Legislature. "Senate Bill 432: Victory Schools." State of Nevada. 2015.

http://www.leg.state.nv.us/Session/78th2015/Bills/SB/SB432_EN.pdf.

⁷⁴ Nevada Department of Education. "Nevada's Victory Schools Guidance." State of Nevada. July 2015.

http://www.doe.nv.gov/Legislative/Victory_Schools_Program/.

⁷⁵ Nevada Department of Education. "Nevada Victory Schools, School Year 2015-2016." State of Nevada. July 2015.

http://www.doe.nv.gov/Legislative/Victory_Schools_Program/.

⁷⁶ Canavero, Dr. Steve "The Executive Budget – DSA and Related K-12 Budgets: 2017-2019 Biennium (Presented to the Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee)."

⁷⁷ Morton, Neal. "Mostly Positive Gains Reported at Victory Schools." *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. May 1, 2016.

<http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/education/mostly-positive-gains-reported-victory-schools#>.

⁷⁸ Because the content standards for statewide CRT testing in elementary and middle school changed between the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years, the upcoming results from this year's CRT tests for elementary and middle school standards will be critical in assessing the adequacy of the interventions in Victory Schools.

⁷⁹ Nevada Department of Education. "Nevada External Outcomes Evaluation: Final Report." ACS Ventures, UNLV Center for Research Evaluation and Assessment, MYS Project & Brand Management. December 30, 2016.

⁸⁰ Canavero, Dr. Steve "The Executive Budget – DSA and Related K-12 Budgets: 2017-2019 Biennium (Presented to the Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee)."

⁸¹ Pak-Harvey, Amelia. "CCSD Struggles for Solutions to Special Education Teacher Shortage." *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. February 26, 2017. <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/education/ccsd-struggles-solutions-special-education-teacher-shortage>.

⁸² Canavero, Dr. Steve "The Executive Budget – DSA and Related K-12 Budgets: 2017-2019 Biennium (Presented to the Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee)."

⁸³ Nevada Department of Education. "Nevada External Outcomes Evaluation: Final Report." ACS Ventures, UNLV Center for Research Evaluation and Assessment, MYS Project & Brand Management. December 30, 2016.

⁸⁴ Senate Bill 504, Section 16.2, Chapter 515, Statutes of Nevada 2013

⁸⁵ Canavero, Dr. Steve "The Executive Budget – DSA and Related K-12 Budgets: 2017-2019 Biennium (Presented to the Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee)."

⁸⁶ Nevada Department of Education. "Nevada's Zoom Schools (Clark and Washoe): SB405 Guidance." State of Nevada. July 2015. [http://www.doe.nv.gov/English_Language_Learners\(ELL\)/SB405_Home/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/English_Language_Learners(ELL)/SB405_Home/).

⁸⁷ Canavero, Dr. Steve "The Executive Budget – DSA and Related K-12 Budgets: 2017-2019 Biennium (Presented to the Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee)."

⁸⁸ Nevada Department of Education. "Zoom Schools Performance Levels and Outcome Indicators – Part 1: Overview." Nevada State Board of Education. April 28, 2016.

[http://www.doe.nv.gov/English_Language_Learners\(ELL\)/SB405_Home/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/English_Language_Learners(ELL)/SB405_Home/).

⁸⁹ Nevada Department of Education. "Nevada External Outcomes Evaluation: Final Report." ACS Ventures, UNLV Center for Research Evaluation and Assessment, MYS Project & Brand Management. December 30, 2016.

⁹⁰ Adequate Growth Percentile is a measure that projects a needed proficiency level score in order for a student to be reach for proficiency in five years.

⁹¹ Canavero, Dr. Steve "The Executive Budget – DSA and Related K-12 Budgets: 2017-2019 Biennium (Presented to the Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee)."

⁹² Nevada Department of Education. "Zoom Schools Performance Levels and Outcome Indicators – Part 1: Overview." Nevada State Board of Education. April 28, 2016.

[http://www.doe.nv.gov/English_Language_Learners\(ELL\)/SB405_Home/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/English_Language_Learners(ELL)/SB405_Home/).

⁹³ Canavero, Dr. Steve "The Executive Budget – DSA and Related K-12 Budgets: 2017-2019 Biennium (Presented to the Legislative Commission's Budget Subcommittee)."

⁹⁴ Nevada Department of Education. "Zoom Schools Performance Levels and Outcome Indicators – Part 1: Overview." Nevada State Board of Education. April 28, 2016.

[http://www.doe.nv.gov/English_Language_Learners\(ELL\)/SB405_Home/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/English_Language_Learners(ELL)/SB405_Home/).

⁹⁵ Morton, Neal. "Teacher Salary Programs Help Some Clark County Schools, Not Others." *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. June 4, 2016. <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/education/teacher-salary-programs-help-some-clark-county-schools-not-others>.

⁹⁶ Morton, Neal. "Teacher Salary Programs Help Some Clark County Schools, Not Others." *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. June 4, 2016. <http://www.reviewjournal.com/news/education/teacher-salary-programs-help-some-clark-county-schools-not-others>.

⁹⁷ S. Davis, C. Lake, N. Madden, & R.E. Slavin. 2009. Effective Programs for Struggling Readers: A Best-Evidence Synthesis. Baltimore: Center for Research and Reform in Education. Available: http://www.bestevidence.org/word/strug_read_Jul_07_2011.pdf.

⁹⁸ Research based findings on effective interventions include: (1) Cooperative learning, where students work in teams of four to five to help each other learn academic content; (2) Professional development is key to ensuring quality instruction; (3) One-to-one tutoring is very effective in improving reading performance; (4) Tutoring models that focus on phonics are associated with much better outcomes than others; (5) Teachers are more effective than paraprofessionals and volunteers as tutors; (6) Small-group, phonetic tutorials can be effective, but are not as effective as one-to-one phonetically-focused tutoring; and (7) Lessons that emphasis on vocabulary and writing.

⁹⁹ In the original Reading Skills Development Centers, the paraprofessionals were UNLV student teachers that were closely supervised by their university professors. Under the current system in CCSD, that is no longer the case and the paraprofessionals often lack the direct training, supervision and support that existed under the previous model.

¹⁰⁰ Nevada Department of Education. "Nevada External Outcomes Evaluation: Final Report." ACS Ventures, UNLV Center for Research Evaluation and Assessment, MYS Project & Brand Management. December 30, 2016.

¹⁰¹ See Guinn Center and Nevada Succeeds. February 2015. *Examining Nevada's Education Priorities: Which Initiatives are Worth the Investment?*

¹⁰² NDE's external outcomes evaluation report also recommended common measurement and data systems are being used to manage how districts implement and manage program indicators. (Nevada Department of Education. "External Outcomes Evaluation: Final Report." December 30, 2016.)

¹⁰³ https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/education/wp/2017/03/07/radical-change-for-struggling-schools-its-reliably-doable/?utm_term=.a4c691213282